OPEN SECRETS
WIKILEAKS, WAR AND AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

COMPLETE AND UPDATED COVERAGE BY THE NEW YORK TIMES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY BILL KELLER

The New York Times
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I. Introduction

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—from “The Boy Who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest”
By Bill Keller
The Boy Who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest

By BILL KELLER

In June 2010, Alan Rusbridger, the editor of the London daily newspaper The Guardian, phoned me and asked, mysteriously, whether I had any idea how to arrange a secure communication. Not really, I confessed. The Times doesn’t have encrypted phone lines, or a Cone of Silence. Well then, Alan said, he would try to speak circumspectly. In a roundabout way, he laid out an unusual proposition: An organization called WikiLeaks, a secretive cadre of anti-secrecy vigilantes, had come into possession of an enormous amount of classified U.S. government communications. WikiLeaks’s leader, an eccentric former computer hacker of Australian birth and no fixed residence, had offered The Guardian half a million military dispatches from the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq. There might be more after that, including an immense bundle of confidential diplomatic cables. The Guardian had suggested — both to increase the impact and to share the labor of handling such a trove — that The New York Times be invited to share this exclusive bounty. The source had agreed. Was I interested?

I was interested.

The adventure that ensued over the next six months combined the cloak-and-dagger intrigue of handling a vast secret archive with the more mundane feat of sorting, searching and understanding a mountain of data. As if that was not complicated enough, the project also entailed a source who was elusive, manipulative and volatile (and ultimately openly hostile to both The Times and The Guardian), an international cast of journalists, company lawyers committed to keeping us within the bounds of the law, editors wrestling with some potent ethical questions and an array of government officials who sometimes seemed as though they couldn’t decide whether they wanted to engage us or arrest us. By the end of the year, the story of this wholesale security breach had outgrown the story of the actual contents of the secret documents, and had generated much breathless speculation that something — journalism, diplomacy, life as we knew it — had profoundly changed forever.

The fruits of this endeavor — the scores of articles produced by The Times and the documents that support them, along with the commentary published in our opinion pages — are compiled in this volume, in the belief that they will be of interest to anyone who follows America’s relationship with the rest of the world. We have included an expanded profile by our London bureau chief, John Burns, and his collaborator Ravi Somaiya of Julian Assange, the man who set this curious story in motion. We have also included a summary of the feverish reactions, pro and con, and essays by some of the correspondents involved on what it all means. In this introduction I will lay out in some detail what we did and why we did it.

Soon after Alan Rusbridger’s call, we sent Eric Schmitt from our Washington bureau to London. Eric has covered military affairs expertly for years, has read his share
of classified military dispatches, and has excellent judgment and an unflappable demeanor. His main assignment was to get a sense of the material. Was it genuine? Was it of public interest? He would also report back on the proposed mechanics of our collaboration with The Guardian and the German magazine Der Spiegel, which Assange had invited in as a third consumer of his secret smorgasbord. Eric would also meet the WikiLeaks leader, who was known to a few Guardian journalists but not to us.

Eric’s first phone call home was encouraging. There was no question in his mind that the Afghanistan dispatches were genuine. They were fascinating, a ground-up diary of a troubled war. And there were intimations of more to come — especially classified cables from the entire constellation of American diplomatic outposts. WikiLeaks was holding those back for now, presumably to see how this venture in dealing with the establishment media worked out. Over the next few days, Eric huddled in a discreet office at The Guardian, sampling the trove of war dispatches and discussing the complexities of this project: how to organize and study such a voluminous cache of information; how to securely transport, store and share it; how journalists from three very different publications would work together without compromising their independence; how to publish responsibly material laden with risks; and how we would ensure an appropriate distance from Julian Assange. We regarded Assange throughout as a source, not as a partner or collaborator, but he was a man who clearly had his own agenda.

By the time of the meetings in London, WikiLeaks had already acquired a measure of international fame, or, depending on your point of view, notoriety. Shortly before I got the call from The Guardian, The New Yorker had published a rich and colorful profile of Assange by Raffi Khatchadourian, who had embedded with the group. WikiLeaks’s biggest coup to that point had been the release, last April, of video footage taken from one of two U.S. helicopters involved in firing down on a crowd and a building in Baghdad in 2007, killing at least 18 people. While some of the people in the video were armed, others gave no indication of menace; two were in fact journalists for the Reuters news agency. The video, with its soundtrack of callous banter, was horrifying to watch, and was an embarrassment to the U.S. military. But WikiLeaks, in its zeal to make the video a work of antiwar propaganda, also released a version that didn’t call attention to an Iraqi who was toting a rocket-propelled grenade and packaged the manipulated version under the tendentious rubric “Collateral Murder.” [To access both videos, go to http://nyti.ms/opensec]

Assange was, throughout our dealings, coy about where he had obtained his secret cache. But the suspected source of the video, as well as the military dispatches and the diplomatic cables to come, was a disillusioned Army private first class named Bradley Manning, who had been arrested and was being kept in solitary confinement.

On the fourth day of the London meeting, Julian Assange slouched into The Guardian’s office, a day late. Eric took his first measure of the man who would be a large presence in our lives: “He’s tall — probably 6-2 or 6-3 — and lanky, with pale skin, gray eyes and a shock of white hair that seizes your attention,” Eric wrote to me later. “He was
alert but disheveled, like a bag lady walking in off the street, wearing a dingy, light
colored sports coat and cargo pants, dirty white shirt, beat-up sneakers and filthy white
socks that collapsed around his ankles. He smelled as if he hadn’t bathed in days.”

Assange shrugged a huge backpack off his shoulders and pulled out a stockpile of
laptops, cords, cellphones, thumb drives and memory sticks that held the WikiLeaks
secrets.

The reporters had begun preliminary work on the Afghanistan field reports, using a
large Excel spreadsheet to organize the material, then plugging in search terms and
combing the documents for newsworthy content. They had run into a puzzling
incongruity. Assange had said the data included dispatches from the beginning of 2004
through the end of 2009. But the material on the spreadsheet ended abruptly in April
2009. A considerable amount of material was missing. Assange, slipping naturally into
the role of office geek, explained that they had hit the limits of Excel. Open a second
spreadsheet, he instructed. They did, and the rest of the data materialized — a total of
92,000 reports from the battlefields of Afghanistan.

The reporters came to think of Assange as smart and well-educated, extremely
adept technologically, but arrogant, thin-skinned, conspiratorial and oddly credulous. At
lunch one day in The Guardian’s cafeteria, Assange recounted with an air of great
conviction a story about the archive in Germany that contains the files of the former
Communist secret police, the Stasi. This office, Assange asserted, had been thoroughly
infiltrated by former Stasi agents who were quietly destroying the documents they were
entrusted with protecting. The Der Spiegel reporter in the group, John Goetz, who has
reported extensively on the Stasi, listened in amazement. That’s utter nonsense, he said.
Some former Stasi personnel were hired as security guards in the office, but the records
were well protected.

Assange was openly contemptuous of the American government, and certain that he
was a hunted man. He told the reporters that he had prepared a kind of doomsday option.
He had, he said, distributed highly encrypted copies of his entire secret archive to a
multitude of supporters, and if WikiLeaks was shut down, or if he was arrested, he would
disseminate the key to make the information public.

Eric told me that for all his bombast and dark conspiracy theories, Assange had a
bit of Peter Pan in him. One night, when they were all walking home from dinner,
Assange suddenly started skipping down the sidewalk. Eric and John Goetz stared,
speechless. Then, just as suddenly, Assange stopped, got back in step with the group and
returned to the conversation he had interrupted.

For the rest of the week, Eric worked with David Leigh, The Guardian’s
investigations editor, Nick Davies, an investigative reporter for the paper, and Goetz, of
Der Spiegel, to organize and sort the material. With help from two of The Times’s best
computer minds — Andy Lehren and Aron Pilhofer — they figured out how to assemble
the material into a conveniently searchable and secure database.

Journalists are characteristically competitive, but the group worked well together.
They brainstormed topics to explore and exchanged search results. Der Spiegel offered to check the logs against incident reports submitted by the German Army to its Parliament — partly as story research, partly as an additional check on authenticity.

Assange had provided us the data on the condition that we not write about it before specific dates when WikiLeaks planned to post the documents on a publicly accessible Web site. The Afghanistan documents would go first, after we had had a few weeks to search the material and write our articles. The larger cache of Iraq-related documents would go later. Such embargoes — agreements not to publish information before a set date — are a commonplace in journalism. Everything from studies in medical journals to the annual U.S. budget is released with embargoes. They are a constraint with benefits, the principle benefit being the chance to actually read and reflect on the material before launching it into public view. Embargoes also, as Assange surely knew, tend to build suspense and amplify a story, especially when multiple news outlets broadcast it at once. The embargo was the only condition WikiLeaks would try to impose on us. What we wrote about the material was entirely up to us. Much later, some American news outlets reported that they were offered last-minute access to the WikiLeaks documents if they signed contracts with financial penalties for early disclosure. The Times was never asked to sign anything or to pay anything. For WikiLeaks, at least in this first big venture, exposure was its own reward.

Back in New York we assembled a team of reporters, data experts and editors and quartered them in an out-of-the-way office. Andy Lehren, of our computer-assisted reporting unit, did the first cut, searching terms on his own or those suggested by other reporters, compiling batches of relevant documents and summarizing the contents. We assigned reporters to specific areas where they had expertise and gave them password access to rummage in the data themselves. This became the routine we would follow with subsequent archives.

An air of intrigue verging on paranoia permeated the project, perhaps understandably, given that we were dealing with a mass of classified material and a source who acted like a fugitive — changing crash pads, e-mail addresses and cellphones frequently. We used encrypted Web sites. Reporters exchanged notes via Skype, believing it to be somewhat less vulnerable to eavesdropping. On our periodic conference calls, we spoke in amateurish code. Assange was always “the source.” The latest data drop was “the package.” When I left New York for two weeks to visit bureaus in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where we assume communications may be monitored, I was not to be copied on message traffic about the project. I never imagined that any of this would defeat a curious snoop from the National Security Agency or Pakistani intelligence. And I was never entirely sure whether that prospect made me more nervous than the cyberwiles of WikiLeaks itself. At a point when relations between the news organizations and
WikiLeaks were rocky, at least three people associated with this project had inexplicable activity on their e-mail that suggested someone had been hacking into our accounts.

From consultations with our lawyers we were confident that reporting on the secret documents could be done within the law, but we speculated about what the government — or some other government — might do to impede our work or exact recriminations. And, the law aside, we felt an enormous moral and ethical responsibility to use the material responsibly. While we assumed we had little or no ability to influence what WikiLeaks did, let alone what would happen once this material was loosed in the echo chamber of the blogosphere, that did not free us from the obligation to exercise care in our own journalism. From the beginning, we agreed that in our articles and in any documents we published from the secret archive we would excise material that could put lives at risk.

Guided by reporters with extensive experience in the field, we redacted names of ordinary citizens, local officials, activists, academics and others who had spoken to American soldiers or diplomats. We edited out any details that might reveal continuing intelligence-gathering operations, military tactics or locations of material that could be used to fashion terrorist weapons. Three reporters with considerable experience of handling military secrets — Eric Schmitt, Michael Gordon and C. J. Chivers — went over the documents we considered posting. Chris Chivers, a former Marine who has reported for us from several battlefields, brought a practiced eye and cautious judgment to the business of redaction. If a dispatch noted that Aircraft A left Location B at a certain time and arrived at Location C at a certain time, Chris edited it out on the off chance that this could teach enemy forces something useful about the capabilities of that aircraft.

The first articles in the project, which we called the war logs, were scheduled to go up on the Web sites of The Times, The Guardian and Der Spiegel at 5 p.m. on Sunday, July 25. We had approached the White House days before that to get its reaction to the huge breach of secrecy as well as to specific articles we planned to write — including a major one about Pakistan’s ambiguous role as an American ally. On July 24, the day before the war logs went live, I attended a farewell party for Roger Cohen, a columnist for The Times and The International Herald Tribune, that was given by Richard Holbrooke, the Obama administration’s special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. A voracious consumer of inside information, Holbrooke had a decent idea of what was coming, and he pulled me away from the crowd to show me the fusillade of cabinet-level e-mails ricocheting through his BlackBerry, thus demonstrating both the frantic anxiety in the administration and, not incidentally, the fact that he was very much in the loop. The Pakistan article, in particular, would complicate his life. But one of Holbrooke’s many gifts was his ability to make pretty good lemonade out of the bitterest lemons; he was already spinning the reports of Pakistani duplicity as leverage he could
use to pull the Pakistanis back into closer alignment with American interests. Five months later, when Holbrooke — just 69, and seemingly indestructible — died of a torn aorta, I remembered that evening. And what I remembered best was that he was as excited to be on the cusp of a big story as I was.

We posted the articles on NYTimes.com the next day at 5 p.m. — a time picked to reconcile the different publishing schedules of the three publications. I was proud of what a crew of great journalists had done to fashion coherent and instructive reporting from a jumble of raw field reports, mostly composed in a clunky patois of military jargon and acronyms. The reporters supplied context, nuance and skepticism. There is much in this collection worth reading, but my favorite single piece in the first round of war logs was one of the simplest. Chris Chivers gathered all of the dispatches related to a single, remote, beleaguered American military outpost and stitched them together into a heartbreaking narrative. The dispatches from this outpost represent in miniature the audacious ambitions, gradual disillusionment and ultimate disappointment that Afghanistan has dealt to occupiers over the centuries.

If anyone doubted that the three publications operated independently, the articles we posted that day made it clear that we had followed our separate muses. The Guardian, which is an openly left-leaning newspaper, used the first war logs to emphasize civilian casualties in Afghanistan, claiming that the documents disclosed that coalition forces killed “hundreds of civilians in unreported incidents,” underscoring the cost of what the paper called a “failing war.” Our reporters studied the same material, but determined that all of the major episodes of civilian deaths we found in the war logs had been reported in The Times, many of them on the front page. (In fact, two of our journalists, Stephen Farrell and Sultan Munadi, were kidnapped by the Taliban while investigating one major episode near Kunduz. Munadi was killed during an ensuing rescue by British paratroopers.) The civilian deaths that had not been previously reported came in ones and twos, and did not add up to anywhere near “hundreds.” Moreover, since several were either duplicated or missing from the reports, we concluded that an overall tally would be little better than a guess.

Another example: The Times gave prominence to the dispatches reflecting American suspicions that Pakistani intelligence was playing a double game in Afghanistan — nodding to American interests while abetting the Taliban. We buttressed the interesting anecdotal material of Pakistani double-dealing with additional reporting. The Guardian was unimpressed by those dispatches and treated them more dismissively.

Three months later, with the French daily Le Monde added to the group, we published Round 2, the Iraq war logs, including articles on how the United States turned a blind eye to the torture of prisoners by Iraqi forces working with the U.S., how Iraq spawned an extraordinary American military reliance on private contractors and how extensively Iran had meddled in the conflict.

By this time my paper’s relationship with our source had gone from wary to hostile. I talked to Assange by phone a few times, and heard out his complaints. He was angry
that we declined to link our online coverage of the war logs to the WikiLeaks Web site, a
decision we made because we feared — rightly, as it turned out — that their trove would
contain the names of low-level informants and make them Taliban targets. “Where’s the
respect?” he demanded. “Where’s the respect?” Another time he called to tell me how
much he disliked our profile of Bradley Manning, the Army private suspected of being
the source of WikiLeaks’s most startling revelations. The article traced Manning’s
childhood as an outsider and his distress as a gay man in the military. Assange
complained that we had “psychologicalized” Manning and given short shrift to his
“political awakening.”

The final straw was a front-page profile of Assange by John F. Burns and Ravi
Somaiya, published Oct. 24, that revealed fractures within WikiLeaks, attributed by
Assange’s critics to his imperious management style. Assange denounced the article to
me, and in various public forums, as “a smear.”

Assange had been transformed by his outlaw celebrity. The derelict with the
backpack and sagging socks now wore his hair dyed and styled, and favored fashionably
skinny suits and ties. He had become a kind of cult figure for the European young and
leftish, and was evidently a magnet for women. Two Swedish women had filed police
complaints alleging that Assange had insisted on having sex without a condom; Sweden’s
strict laws on nonconsensual sex categorize such behavior as rape, and a prosecutor had
issued a warrant to question Assange, who initially described it as a plot concocted to
silence or discredit WikiLeaks.

I had come to think of Julian Assange as a character from a Stieg Larsson thriller —
a man who could figure either as hero or villain in one of the mega-selling Swedish
novels that mix hacker counterculture, high-level conspiracy and sex as both recreation
and violation.

In October, WikiLeaks gave The Guardian its third archive, a quarter of a million
communications between the State Department and its outposts around the globe. This
time, Assange imposed a new condition: The Guardian was not to share the material with
The New York Times. Indeed, he told Guardian journalists, he had opened discussions
with two other American news organizations, The Washington Post and the McClatchy
chain, and intended to invite them in as replacements for The Times. He also enlarged his
recipient list to include El País, the leading Spanish-language newspaper.

The Guardian was uncomfortable with Assange’s condition. By now journalists
from the Times and The Guardian had a good working relationship. The Times provided
a large American audience for the revelations and access to the U.S. government for
comment and context. And, given the potential legal issues and public criticism, it was
good to have company in the trenches. Besides, we had come to believe that Assange was
losing control of his stockpile of secrets. An independent journalist, Heather Brooke, had
obtained material from a WikiLeaks dissident, and had joined in a loose alliance with The Guardian. Over the following weeks, batches of cables would pop up in newspapers in Lebanon, Australia and Norway. David Leigh, the Guardian investigations editor, concluded that these rogue leaks released The Guardian from any pledge, and he gave us the cables.

On Nov. 1, Assange and two of his lawyers burst into Alan Rusbridger’s office, furious that The Guardian was asserting greater independence and suspicious that The Times might be in possession of the embassy cables. Over the course of an eight-hour meeting, Assange raged intermittently against The Times — especially over the front-page profile we published — while the Guardian journalists tried to calm him. In midstorm, Rusbridger called me to report on Assange’s grievances and relay his demand for a front-page apology in The Times. Alan knew that was a nonstarter, but like a good diplomat he was buying time for the tantrum to subside. In the end, both Alan and Georg Mascolo, editor in chief of Der Spiegel, made clear that they intended to continue their collaboration with The Times. Assange could take it or leave it. Given that we already had all of the documents, he had little choice. Over the next two days the news organizations agreed on a timetable for publication.

The following week we sent Ian Fisher, a deputy foreign editor who was a principal coordinator on our processing of the embassy cables, to London to work out the final details. The meeting went smoothly, even after Assange arrived. “Freakishly good behavior,” Ian e-mailed me afterward. “No yelling or crazy mood swings.” But after dinner, as Ian was leaving, Assange smirked and offered a parting threat: “Tell me, are you in contact with your legal counsel?” Ian replied that he was. “You had better be,” Assange said.

Ian left London with an understanding that we would continue to have access to the material. But just in case, we took out a competitive insurance policy. We had Scott Shane, a Washington correspondent, pull together a long, just-in-case article summing up highlights of the cables, that we could quickly post on our Web site. If WikiLeaks sprung another leak, we would be ready.

Because of the range of the material and the very nature of diplomacy, the embassy cables were bound to be more explosive than the war logs. Dean Baquet, our Washington bureau chief, gave the White House an early warning on Nov. 19. The following Tuesday, two days before Thanksgiving, Dean and two colleagues were invited to a windowless room in the State Department, where they encountered an unsmiling crowd: representatives of the White House, the State Department, the office of the director of national intelligence, the C.I.A., the Defense Intelligence Agency, the F.B.I. and the Pentagon, gathered around a conference table. Others, who never identified themselves, lined the walls, and a solitary note-taker tapped away on a computer.
The meeting was off the record, but it is fair to say the mood was tense. Scott Shane, one reporter who participated in the meeting, described “an undertone of suppressed outrage and frustration.”

Subsequent meetings, which soon gave way to daily conference calls, were more businesslike. Before each discussion, our Washington bureau sent over a batch of specific cables we intended to use in the coming days. They were circulated to regional specialists, who funneled their reaction to a small group at State, who came to our daily conversations with a list of priorities and arguments to back them up. We relayed the government’s concerns, and our own decisions regarding them, to the other news outlets.

The administration’s concerns generally fell into three categories. First was the importance of protecting individuals who had spoken candidly to American diplomats in oppressive countries. We almost always agreed on those, and were grateful to the government for pointing out some we had overlooked.

“We were all aware of dire stakes for some of the people named in the cables if we failed to obscure their identitities,” Scott wrote to me later, recalling the nature of the meetings. Like many of us, Scott has worked in countries where dissent can mean prison or worse. “That sometimes meant not just removing the name, but also references to institutions that might give a clue to an identity and sometimes even the dates of conversations, which might be compared with surveillance tapes of an American embassy to reveal who was visiting the diplomats that day.”

The second category included sensitive American programs, usually related to intelligence. We agreed to withhold some of this information, like a cable describing an intelligence-sharing program that had taken years to arrange and might be lost if exposed. In other cases, we went away convinced that publication would cause some embarrassment but no real harm.

The third category consisted of cables that disclosed candid comments by and about foreign officials, including heads of state. The State Department feared publication would strain relations with those countries. We were mostly unconvinced.

The embassy cables were a different kind of treasure from the war logs. For one thing, they covered the entire globe — virtually every embassy, consulate and interest section the United States maintains. They contained the makings of many dozens of stories: unvarnished American appraisals of foreign leaders, narratives of complicated negotiations, allegations of corruption and duplicity, countless behind-the-scenes insights. Some of the material was of narrow local interest, some of it had global implications. Some provided authoritative versions of events not previously fully understood. Some consisted of rumor and flimsy speculation.

Unlike most of the military dispatches, the embassy cables were written in clear English — sometimes with wit, color and an ear for dialogue. (“Who knew,” one of our English colleagues marveled, “that American diplomats could write?”)

Even more than the military logs, the diplomatic cables called for context and analysis. It was important to know, for example, that cables sent from an embassy are
routinely dispatched over the signature of the ambassador, and those from Washington are signed by the secretary of state — regardless of whether the ambassador or secretary had actually seen the material. It was important to know that much of the communication between Washington and its outposts is given even more restrictive classification — top secret, or higher — and was thus missing from this trove. We searched in vain, for example, for military or diplomatic reports on the fate of Pat Tillman, the former football star and Army Ranger who was killed by friendly fire in Afghanistan. We found no reports on how Osama bin Laden eluded American forces in the mountains of Tora Bora. (In fact, we found nothing but second- and third-hand rumors about bin Laden.) If such cables exist, they were presumably classified top secret or higher.

And it was important to remember that diplomatic cables are versions of events. They can be speculative. They can be ambiguous. They can be wrong.

One of our first articles drawn from the diplomatic cables, for example, reported on a secret intelligence assessment that Iran had obtained a supply of advanced missiles from North Korea, missiles that could reach European capitals. Outside experts had long suspected that Iran had obtained missile parts, but not the entire weapons, so this glimpse of the official view was revealing. The Washington Post fired back with a different take, casting doubt on whether the missile in question had been transferred to Iran, or whether it was even a workable weapon. We went back to the cables — and the experts — and concluded in a subsequent article that the evidence presented “a murkier picture.”

The tension between newspapers’ obligation to inform and governments’ responsibility to protect is hardly new. At least until this year, nothing The Times had done on my watch had caused nearly so much agitation as two articles we published about tactics employed by the Bush administration after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. One article, which was published in 2005 and won a Pulitzer Prize, revealed that the National Security Agency was eavesdropping on domestic phone conversations and e-mail without the legal courtesy of a warrant. The other, published in 2006, described a vast Treasury Department program to screen international banking records.

I have vivid memories of sitting in the Oval Office as President George W. Bush tried to persuade me and the paper’s publisher to withhold the eavesdropping story, saying that if we published it, we should share the blame for the next terrorist attack. We were unconvinced by his argument and published the story, and the reaction from the government — and conservative commentators in particular — was vociferous.

This time around, the Obama administration’s reaction was different. It was, for the most part, sober and professional. The Obama White House, while strongly condemning WikiLeaks for making the documents public, did not seek an injunction to halt publication. There was no Oval Office lecture. On the contrary, in our discussions before the publication of our articles, White House officials, while challenging some of the
conclusions we drew from the material, thanked us for handling the documents with care. The secretaries of state and defense and the attorney general resisted the opportunity for a crowd-pleasing orgy of press-bashing. There has been no serious official talk — unless you count an ambiguous hint by Senator Joseph Lieberman — of pursuing news organizations in the courts. Though the release of these documents was certainly embarrassing, the relevant government agencies actually engaged with us in an attempt to prevent the release of material genuinely damaging to innocent individuals or the national interest.

The broader public reaction was mixed — more critical in the first days, more sympathetic as readers absorbed the articles and as the sky did not fall; more hostile to WikiLeaks in the United States than in Europe, where there is often a certain smug pleasure in seeing the last superpower brought down a peg.

In the days after we began publishing our respective series based on the embassy cables, Alan Rusbridger of The Guardian and I went online to answer questions from readers. The Guardian, whose readership is more sympathetic to the guerrilla sensibilities of WikiLeaks, was attacked for being too fastidious about redacting the documents: How dare you censor this material? What are you hiding? Post everything now! The mail sent to The Times, at least in the first day or two, came from the opposite field. Many readers were indignant and alarmed. Who needs this? How dare you? What gives you the right?

Much of the concern was heartfelt, reflecting a genuine conviction that particularly in perilous times like ours governments need wide latitude and a measure of secrecy to do their job of keeping us safe. That is compounded by a popular sense that the elite media has become too big for their britches and by the fact that our national conversation has become more polarized and strident.

Although it is our aim to be impartial in our presentation of the news, our attitude toward these issues is far from indifferent. The journalists at The Times have a large and personal stake in the country’s security. We live and work in a city that has been tragically marked as a favorite terrorist target, and in the wake of 9/11 our journalists plunged into the ruins to tell the story of what happened there. Moreover, The Times has nine staff correspondents assigned to the two wars still being waged in the wake of that attack — plus a rotating cast of photographers, visiting writers and scores of local stringers and support staff. They work in this high-risk environment because, while there are lots of places you can go for opinions about the war, there are few places, and fewer by the day, where you can go to find honest, on-the-scene reporting about what is happening. We take extraordinary precautions to keep them safe, but we have had two of our Iraqi journalists murdered for doing their jobs. We have had four journalists held hostage by the Taliban — two of them for seven months. We had one Afghan journalist killed in a rescue attempt. Last October, while I was in Kabul, we got word that a photographer embedded for us with troops near Kandahar had stepped on an improvised mine and lost both his legs.

We are invested in the struggle against murderous extremism in another sense. The
virulent hatred espoused by terrorists, judging by their literature, is directed not just against our people and our buildings. It is also aimed at our values, and at our faith in the self-government of an informed electorate. If the freedom of the press makes some Americans uneasy, it is anathema to the ideologists of terror.

So we have no doubts about where our sympathies lie in this clash of values. And yet we cannot let those sympathies transform us into minions, even of a system we respect.

I’m the first to admit that news organizations, including this one, sometimes get things wrong. We can be overly credulous (as in some of the prewar reporting about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction) or overly cynical about official claims and motives. We may err on the side of keeping secrets (President Kennedy reportedly wished, after the fact, that The Times had published what it knew about the planned Bay of Pigs invasion, which possibly would have helped avert a bloody debacle) or on the side of exposing them. We make the best judgments we can. When we get things wrong, we try to correct the record. A free press in a democracy can be messy. But the alternative is to give the government a veto over what its citizens are allowed to know. Anyone who has worked in countries where the news diet is controlled by the government can sympathize with Thomas Jefferson’s oft-quoted remark that he would rather have newspapers without government than government without newspapers.

The intentions of our founders have rarely been as well articulated as they were by Justice Hugo Black 40 years ago, concurring with the Supreme Court ruling that stopped the government from suppressing the secret Vietnam War history called the Pentagon Papers: “The government’s power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure the government. The press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people.”

There is no neat formula for maintaining this balance. In practice, the tension between our obligation to inform and the government’s obligation to protect plays out in a set of rituals. As one of my predecessors, Max Frankel, then the Washington bureau chief, wrote in a wise affidavit filed during the Pentagon Papers case: “For the vast majority of ‘secrets,’ there has developed between the government and the press (and Congress) a rather simple rule of thumb: The government hides what it can, pleading necessity as long as it can, and the press pries out what it can, pleading a need and a right to know. Each side in this ‘game’ regularly ‘wins’ and ‘loses’ a round or two. Each fights with the weapons at its command. When the government loses a secret or two, it simply adjusts to a new reality.”

In fact, leaks of classified material — sometimes authorized — are part of the way business is conducted in Washington, as one wing of the bureaucracy tries to one-up another, or officials try to shift blame, claim credit, advance or confound a particular policy. For further evidence that our government is highly selective in its approach to secrets, look no further than Bob Woodward’s all-but-authorized accounts of the innermost deliberations of our government.
The government surely cheapens secrecy by deploying it so promiscuously. According to the Pentagon, about 500,000 people have clearance to use the database from which the secret cables were pilfered. Weighing in on the WikiLeaks case in The Guardian, Max Frankel remarked that secrets shared with such a legion of “cleared” officials, including low-level army clerks, “are not secret.” Governments, he wrote, “must decide that the random rubber-stamping of millions of papers and computer files each year does not a security system make.”

Beyond the basic question of whether the press should publish secrets, criticism of the publication of the documents obtained by WikiLeaks generally fell into three themes: 1. That the documents were of dubious value because they told us nothing we didn’t already know. 2. That the disclosures put lives at risk — either directly, by identifying confidential informants, or indirectly by complicating our ability to build alliances against terror. 3. That by doing business with an organization like WikiLeaks, The Times and other news organizations compromised their impartiality and independence.

I’m a little puzzled by the complaint that most of the embassy traffic we disclosed did not profoundly change our understanding of how the world works. Ninety-nine percent of what you read or hear on the news does not profoundly change our understanding of how the world works. News mostly advances by inches and feet, not in great leaps. The value of these documents — and I believe they have immense value — is not that they expose some deep, unsuspected perfidy in high places or that they upend your whole view of the world. For those who pay close attention to foreign policy, these documents provide texture, nuance and drama. They deepen and correct your understanding of how things unfold, they raise or lower your estimation of world leaders. For those who do not follow these subjects as closely, the stories are an opportunity to learn more. If a project like this makes readers pay attention, think harder, understand more clearly what is being done in their name, then we have performed a public service. And that does not count the impact of the revelations on those most touched by them. WikiLeaks cables in which American diplomats recount the extravagant corruption of Tunisia’s rulers helped fuel a popular uprising that has overthrown the government.

As for the risks posed by these releases, they are real. WikiLeaks’s first data dump, the publication of the Afghanistan war logs, included the names of scores of Afghans that The Times and other news organizations had carefully purged from our own coverage. Several news organizations, including ours, reported this dangerous lapse, and months later a Taliban spokesman claimed that Afghan insurgents had been perusing the WikiLeaks site and making a list. I anticipate, with dread, the day we learn that someone identified in those documents has been killed.

For its seeming indifference to the safety of those informants, WikiLeaks was roundly criticized, and in its subsequent postings it has largely followed the example of
the news organizations and redacted material that could get people jailed or killed. Assange described it as a “harm-minimization policy.” In the case of the Iraq war documents, WikiLeaks applied a kind of robo-redaction software that stripped away names (and rendered the documents almost illegible). With the embassy cables, WikiLeaks posted mostly cables that had already been redacted by The Times or its fellow news organizations. And there were instances in which WikiLeaks volunteers suggested measures to enhance the protection of innocents. For example, someone at WikiLeaks noticed that if the redaction of a phrase revealed the exact length of the words, an alert foreign security service might match the number of letters to a name and affiliation and thus identify the source. WikiLeaks advised everyone to substitute a dozen upper-case Xs for each redacted passage, no matter how long or short.

Whether WikiLeaks’s “harm-minimization” is adequate, and whether it will continue, is beyond my power to predict or influence. WikiLeaks does not take guidance from The New York Times. In the end, I can only answer for what my own paper has done, and I believe we have behaved responsibly.

The idea that the mere publication of such a wholesale collection of secrets will make other countries less willing to do business with our diplomats seems to me questionable. Even Defense Secretary Robert Gates called this concern “overwrought.” Foreign governments cooperate with us, he pointed out, not because they necessarily love us, not because they trust us to keep their secrets, but because they need us. It may be that for a time diplomats will choose their words more carefully — or circulate their views more narrowly — but WikiLeaks has not repealed the laws of self-interest. A few weeks after we began publishing articles about the embassy cables, David E. Sanger, our chief Washington correspondent, told me: “At least so far, the evidence that foreign leaders are no longer talking to American diplomats is scarce. I’ve heard about nervous jokes at the beginning of meetings, along the lines of ‘when will I be reading about this conversation?’ But the conversations are happening … American diplomacy has hardly screeched to a halt.”

As for our relationship with WikiLeaks, Julian Assange has been heard to boast that he was a kind of puppet master, who recruited several news organizations, forced them to work in concert, and choreographed their work. This is characteristic braggadocio — or, as my Guardian colleagues would say, bollocks. Throughout this experience we have treated Julian Assange and his merry band as a source. I will not say “a source, pure and simple,” because as any reporter or editor can attest, sources are rarely pure or simple, and Assange was no exception. But the relationship with sources is straightforward: You don’t necessarily endorse their agenda, echo their rhetoric, take anything they say at face value, applaud their methods or, most important, allow them to shape or censor your journalism. Your obligation, as an independent news organization, is to verify the material, to supply context, to exercise responsible judgment about what to publish and what not, and to make sense of it. That is what we did.

But while I do not regard Julian Assange as a partner, and I would hesitate to
describe what WikiLeaks does as journalism, it is chilling to contemplate the possible
government prosecution of WikiLeaks for making secrets public, let alone the passage of
new laws to punish the dissemination of classified information, as some have advocated.
Taking legal recourse against a government official who violates his trust by divulging
secrets he is sworn to protect is one thing. But criminalizing the publication of such
secrets by someone who has no official obligation seems to me to run up against the First
Amendment and the best traditions of this country. As one of my colleagues asks, if
Assange was an understated professorial type rather than a character from a missing Stieg
Larsson novel, and if WikiLeaks was not suffused with such glib antipathy toward the
United States, would the reaction to the leaks be quite so ferocious? And would more
Americans be speaking up against the threat of reprisals?

Whether the arrival of WikiLeaks has fundamentally changed the way journalism is
made I will leave to others, and to history. Frankly, I think the impact of WikiLeaks on
the culture has probably been overblown. Long before WikiLeaks was born, the Internet
had transformed the landscape of journalism, creating a wide-open and global market
with easier access to audiences and sources, a quicker metabolism, a new infrastructure
for sharing and vetting information, and a diminished respect for notions of privacy and
secrecy. Assange has claimed credit on several occasions for creating something he calls
“scientific journalism,” meaning that readers are given the raw material to judge for
themselves whether the journalistic write-ups are trustworthy. But newspapers have been
publishing texts of documents almost as long as newspapers have existed — and ever
since the Internet eliminated space restrictions, we have done so copiously.

Nor is it clear to me that WikiLeaks represents some kind of cosmic triumph of
transparency. If the official allegations are to be believed, most of WikiLeaks’s great
revelations came from a single anguished Army private — anguished enough to risk
many years in prison. It’s possible that the creation of online information brokers like
WikiLeaks and OpenLeaks, a breakaway site announced in December by a former
Assange colleague named Daniel Domscheit-Berg, will be a lure for whistle-blowers and
malcontents who fear being caught consorting directly with a news organization like
mine. But I suspect we have not reached a state of information anarchy. At least, not yet.

As 2010 wound down, The Times and its news partners had a conference call to
discuss where we go from here. The initial surge of stories drawn from the secret cables
was over. More articles would trickle out, but without a fixed schedule. We agreed to
continue the redaction process, and we agreed we would all urge WikiLeaks to do the
same. But this period of intense collaboration, and of regular contact with our source, was
coming to a close.

Just before Christmas, Ian Katz, The Guardian’s deputy editor, went to see
Assange, who had been arrested in London on the Swedish warrant, briefly jailed, and
bailed out by wealthy admirers, and was living under house arrest in a country manor in East Anglia while he fought Sweden’s attempt to extradite him. The flow of donations to WikiLeaks, which he claimed had hit 100,000 euros a day at its peak, had been curtailed when Visa, MasterCard and PayPal refused to be a conduit for contributors — prompting a concerted assault on the Web sites of those companies by Assange’s hacker-sympathizers. He would soon sign a lucrative book deal to finance his legal struggles.

The Guardian seemed to have joined The Times on Assange’s enemies list, first for sharing the diplomatic cables with us, then for obtaining and reporting on the unredacted record of the Swedish police complaints against Assange. (Live by the leak …) In his fury at this perceived betrayal, Assange granted an interview to The Times of London, in which he vented his displeasure with our little media consortium. If he thought this would ingratiate him with The Guardian’s rival, he was naïve. The paper happily splashed its exclusive interview, then followed it with an editorial calling Assange a fool and a hypocrite.

At the mansion in East Anglia, Assange seated Katz before a roaring fire in the drawing room and ruminated for four hours about the Swedish case, his financial troubles and his plan for a next phase of releases. He talked vaguely about secrets still in his quiver, including what he regards as a damning cache of e-mails from inside an American bank.

He spun out an elaborate version of a U.S. Justice Department effort to exact punishment for his assault on American secrecy. If he was somehow extradited to the United States, he said, “I would still have a high chance of being killed in the U.S. prison system, Jack Ruby style, given the continual calls for my murder by senior and influential U.S. politicians.”

While Assange mused darkly in his exile, one of his lawyers sent out a mock Christmas card that suggested at least someone on the WikiLeaks team was not lacking a sense of the absurd.
The message:
“Dear kids,
Santa is Mum & Dad.
Love,
Wikileaks.”
II. Background

“Within WikiLeaks, and perhaps even within Assange himself, a tension was emerging. He had spoken, and written, of pioneering a new era of ‘scientific journalism’.... But from the start, this concept was cast in an uneasy alliance with what Assange referred to in WikiLeaks’s earliest days as a fight against global injustice - the judgment of which, it seemed clear, would be rendered primarily by himself.”

—from “Who Is Julian Assange?”
by John F. Burns and Ravi Somaiya
Who Is Julian Assange?

By JOHN F. BURNS and RAVI SOMAIYA
Who Is Bradley Manning?

By GINGER THOMPSON
Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks.
Who Is Julian Assange?

By JOHN F. BURNS and RAVI SOMAIYA

As 2011 began, Julian Assange found himself a cosseted houseguest in a stately British country house, dressed for the part in an expensive brown herringbone tweed jacket and V-neck cashmere sweater. With studied nonchalance, he posed sitting atop farm gates; on other occasions he tossed snowballs, sipped martinis and hosted lengthy exchanges with selected journalists and admirers in a “drawing room” nearly the size of a basketball court, warmed by a roaring log fire. A Hollywood scriptwriter would have struggled to find a more incongruously opulent location for Assange, the embattled, live-out-of-a-backpack founder of WikiLeaks, to mark the arrival of the new year, and to revel in his sojourn from the globalized turmoil he generated in the departing year.

Ellingham Hall, 100 miles from London in the manicured East Anglian countryside memorialized by the 19th-century landscape paintings of Thomas Gainsborough and John Constable, is a three-story Georgian mansion set beside a graceful man-made lake. It anchors 650 acres of private pasture and woodland that can be rented out for weddings and country-house shooting parties hunting pheasant and grouse. The estate’s owner, Vaughan Smith, is a former officer in one of Britain’s most aristocratic regiments, the Grenadier Guards, a sometime combat cameraman of distinction, and currently the wealthy proprietor of the Frontline Club, a cozy journalists’ hangout that has been Assange’s London redoubt for long periods in the past year.

Before Assange arrived at Ellingham Hall, he had been released by a British judge after 10 days in a segregation unit at Wandsworth Prison in London, and vouchsafed into the safekeeping of Smith, one of a group of friends and celebrities who posted $370,000 bail. Awaiting possible transfer to Sweden to face criminal investigation in a sexual abuse case, Assange indignantly denied allegations of the “rape, sexual molestation and forceful coercion” of two women who had relationships with him during a visit to Sweden in the summer of 2010 — a journey, ironically, that he had undertaken with a view to gaining legal sanctuary in Sweden from the risk of American prosecution. In Assange’s reckoning, the allegations were the product of a “smear campaign,” possibly orchestrated by hostile government agencies and abetted by the punitive legal climate for sexual abuse cases in Sweden, which he described as “the Saudi Arabia of feminism.”

With his British lawyers vowing to fight the extradition case all the way to Britain’s highest courts and, if necessary, to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, which has intervened in the past to strike down British deportation rulings, the legal battle seemed likely to run well into 2011, and perhaps beyond. Along the way, Assange’s lawyers planned to argue that sending their client to Sweden would open the way for the United States to subject him to “illegal rendition” to the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, or even to the death penalty. When The Guardian and The New York Times published portions of the 68-page Swedish police report on his case, the man
responsible for the largest leak of official documents in history complained to the BBC that the Swedish prosecutors had been “deliberately, and illegally, selectively taking bits of material and giving them to newspapers.” He called it “an abuse of power” and denied any conflict with WikiLeaks’s practices. “We are an organization that does not promote leaking,” he said. “We’re an organization that promotes justice.”

Beyond the legal drama lay the serious questions at the heart of the political intrigue that has unfolded around Assange and his brainchild, WikiLeaks, since it released troves of classified American documents onto the Internet: Was he, as he claimed, the harbinger of a new world order in which nations and generals and corporations and the rich and powerful will no longer be able to hide their peccadilloes and wrongdoing — their crimes, even — behind walls of law-enforced confidentiality and secrecy? Or was he an egomaniacal, crypto-anarchic destroyer of diplomatic traditions that have served for centuries, of the secrecy basic to Western security and military operations and of the privacy essential to democratic life and civil society?

All those are questions that have cast angry divisions among the millions who have followed the WikiLeaks story — especially, but by no means only, in America. It is an epic clash that has drawn impassioned support for Assange from many on the liberal left and libertarian right, from human rights activists and those grown tired of America’s wars and the superpower shadow the United States has cast across the globe, as well as from legions of anarchists and dissidents and back-room computer hackers. On the opposing side, there has been a tide of indignation and recrimination, most prominently from top officials of the Obama administration, who have identified in WikiLeaks a new and menacing threat to American national security, and impaneled a task force to review possible criminal prosecution of Assange.

For his part, Assange had little difficulty claiming a place in history. In a BBC interview at Ellingham Hall, he compared his importance to that of Martin Luther King Jr. when he recounted how a black guard at Wandsworth had handed him a card saying he had “only two heroes in the world — Martin Luther King and you”; without any apparent sense of unease at the grandiosity of the idea, Assange added, “That is representative of 50 percent of people.” John Humphrys, one of Britain’s best-known television and radio presenters, picked up the theme, asking if Assange saw himself as a martyr or as “some sort of messianic figure,” unflattering characterizations made by some disaffected WikiLeaks associates. Assange responded with reflection on his “feeling of betrayal” — by the Swedish women who had accused him of sexual improprieties, as well as by his detractors within WikiLeaks, then added: “The world is a very ungrateful place. Why should I continue to suffer simply to do some good in the world?”

Over 6 feet tall with naturally ice-white hair, Assange has an ambivalent personality, charming some and alienating others; admirers who have met him compare
him to a comic-book hero, while detractors say he could more readily be cast as a supervillain. Often dressed in elegant suits — but insisting that they are borrowed, consistent with the austere personal habits of his past — he has a style that is both serene and laconic. Weighing his thoughts for a few beats, he then speaks in long, carefully structured sentences in the style of a practiced polemicist. His friends describe him as funny, loyal and kind. But those who have displeased him have found that his calm, deep voice is also quick to rise to righteous anger.

He seems to revel in his rootlessness, changing his cellphones and e-mail addresses like other men change their shirts. He continued to sleep on the floors and couches of friends long after he became a celebrity figure. A New York Times reporter who spent days with him in London in the summer of 2010, Eric Schmitt, said he appeared to be carrying all his worldly belongings on his back. “He sloughed off a huge backpack from his shoulder from which disgorged a couple of laps, cords, cellphones and other gear,” Schmitt told colleagues later. “His nomadic life seemed to tumble out of this unassuming rucksack.”

Julian Paul Assange was born on July 3, 1971, in Townsville, a small tropical city on Australia’s northeastern coast. Little is publicly known of his biological father, but after Julian’s first birthday his mother married a theater director, Brett Assange, the man who gave Julian his last name, and the two founded a traveling puppet theater. His childhood, Assange told The New Yorker magazine, was spent on the move, a propensity he has suggested could be genetic. When she was 17, around the time Assange was born, his mother, Christine, burned her schoolbooks and left home on a motorcycle. The two of them, he has said, had decamped 37 times by the time he was 14.

If any one place can be described as his childhood home, it is perhaps Magnetic Island, a tiny, mountainous mass off the coast of Townsville in a protected marine national park. The island’s legend is that its magnetism skewed the compass readings of early seafarers; by the 1970s, it was home to a community of proud nonconformists who donned hats made of coconut-palm leaves to ward off the fierce sun. The editor of the island’s newspaper Magnetic Times, George Hirst, has described it as “a place you came to when you didn’t fit in anywhere else.”

Christine and her son, according to the newspaper The Australian, lived there three times before his 11th birthday. His mother wrote of their experiences on the island in the guestbook at a visitor center when she returned in 2009, according to The Australian. “I lived in a bikini, ‘going native’ with my baby and other mums on the island,” she wrote, recalling how she lived in an “old abandoned pineapple farm.” She recalled slashing her “way to the front door with [a] machete,” and shooting Taipan snakes — 12-foot predators that have the most deadly venom on land — “in the water tank and on son’s bed.” Food had to be suspended from the ceilings “to protect from possums.”

Assange was mostly home-schooled, he has said, and his mother has explained that she felt formal education would lead her children to an unhealthy respect for authority. His stepfather, Brett, told reporters that in any interactions with other children Assange
“always stood up for the underdog,” and was “always very angry about people ganging up on other people.” In 1979, when Julian was 8, his mother, who had separated from Brett and remarried, had another child, Julian’s half brother. Her new partner was reportedly a musician with links to a new-age cult called The Family that experimented with LSD and sometimes persuaded mothers to give their children up to its leader, Anne Hamilton-Byrne.

As the new couple traveled, according to The Australian, Julian briefly attended a small school in an east-coast village called Goolmangar. Classmates there told the newspaper that they remembered a shy boy whose parents’ alternative lifestyle was well known. One of them, Peter Graham, recalled his compassion. “He was the sort of kid who moved a spider and let it free when the others wanted to kill it,” Graham said. “He was always a nurturing sort of fellow.” When he was not in school, Assange told The New Yorker, he took correspondence classes and studied informally with university professors. But he was also an avid reader, drawn to science, devouring one library book and then pulling similar texts from the shelves, following the trail of footnotes.

In 1982, Mrs. Assange’s new relationship, too, deteriorated. Fearing for her safety when her husband turned abusive, she has told reporters, she went on the run for five years while Julian was between 11 and 16. “Now we need to disappear,” Assange remembered his mother saying. The young boy suspected that her estranged husband had moles in the government, and cult connections, and could track them. By the time he was a teenager, Assange, the perpetual wanderer, had grown to embrace his outsider status. He and a friend, he wrote later, “were bright sensitive kids who didn’t fit into the dominant subculture and fiercely castigated those who did as irredeemable boneheads.”

In the late 1980s he found computers when the family lived across the street from a store selling a Commodore 64, a rudimentary machine. Assange was fascinated, and eventually his mother bought it for him. A fast learner, he graduated quickly, he has said, to hacking into networks, including those of the U.S. Department of Defense, on a primitive precursor to the Internet. And he found love. When he was 18, his son, Daniel, was born to a girlfriend, who quickly became his wife. But the couple split in 1991 and fought a custody battle that his mother says put him in the hospital for a few days — exhausted and depressed, he was so stressed that the pigmentation leached from his hair. The couple eventually reached a custody agreement eight years later. Yet the inconstancy of Assange’s life, and long periods of absence from Daniel, left the two with an arms-length relationship by the time the boy reached adulthood.

Prompted by Assange’s increasingly bold hacking with a group called the International Subversives, the police raided his home at around the same time he split with his wife. When the case came to court five years later, he pleaded guilty to 24 charges of computer crimes. In sentencing him, the Australian judge, Leslie Ross, was lenient, noting that Assange had done no harm to the networks he had entered. In court the judge spoke of the “unstable personal background that you have had to endure,” and referenced “the rather nomadic existence that your mother and yourself were forced to
follow and also the personal disruption that occurred within your household.” He avoided a 10-year jail sentence and was fined $2,100. Still, Assange railed at “a great misjustice” he felt had been done.

He was burned out, The New Yorker reported, and spent the next years motorcycling across Vietnam, trying to start a computer security consulting firm and supporting his son as best he could. He attended the University of Melbourne, where he studied physics. It was a lifestyle that those who knew him best saw as engendered by an upbringing that encouraged him to think of himself as an innate rebel against an unjust establishment. In 2006, the year Assange founded WikiLeaks, his son, now a computer programmer in Melbourne, wrote online that his father “just has a tendency to follow the path of highest resistance simply for the sake of defiance.”

Assange’s own reasons for starting an organization that would lead him into conflict with the most powerful government in the world are partly documented on a sprawling blog he maintained at that time. A picture he posted shows a smiling and rumpled figure, standing in bright sunlight as the wind takes his long, white hair. Writing eclectically, in a scientifically rendered prolix style, he expounded on the social difficulties faced by brilliant children, presenting graphs and statistics to back up his points about maladjustment. He wrote of carbon offsetting and of Kurt Vonnegut, and he quoted the science fiction writer Douglas Adams.

But as the blog developed, his attentions turned to injustice and action, conspiracies and leaks, peppered with mathematical phrases and an underlying sense of his own mission. On New Year’s Eve 2006 he posted what is now seen by many as WikiLeaks’s founding manifesto. “The more secretive or unjust an organization is, the more leaks induce fear and paranoia in its leadership and planning coterie,” he wrote. “This must result in minimization of efficient internal communications mechanisms (an increase in cognitive ‘secrecy tax’) and consequent system-wide cognitive decline resulting in decreased ability to hold onto power as the environment demands adaption.

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“Hence in a world where leaking is easy, secretive or unjust systems are nonlinearly hit relative to open, just systems,” he continued. “Since unjust systems, by their nature induce opponents, and in many places barely have the upper hand, mass leaking leaves them exquisitely vulnerable to those who seek to replace them with more open forms of governance. Only revealed injustice can be answered; for man to do anything intelligent he has to know what’s actually going on.”

A few days later he simplified his views in a statement that seemed to come from the withdrawn little boy who gently saved spiders while on the run from a fearsome stepfather, the hacker who believed that entering closed systems was his right and the young father who fought bitterly for custody of his child. “Every time we witness an injustice and do not act,” he said, “we train our character to be passive in its presence and thereby eventually lose all ability to defend ourselves and those we love.” He stopped maintaining the blog shortly afterward and turned his full attention to his new project, WikiLeaks.
By early 2006, Assange had barricaded himself inside his Melbourne house, near the university, drawing diagrams of WikiLeaks’s structure on the walls and doors in fits of creativity. It was the realization of his years of theorizing, planning and rehearsing for what amounted to the hacking world’s equivalent of breaking into Fort Knox.

His vision for WikiLeaks was of an elaborate network of computer servers, globally distributed, that could be used as dead drops for leaks, and for encrypting, storing and releasing material on the Internet, supported by an opaque financial infrastructure dependent on anonymous donors. Like Jules Verne’s Nautilus for a new age, this high-tech vessel was to be run under the iron hand of its inventor, Assange, and crewed by activist volunteers possessed with what he would later describe as “quasi-religious zeal.” By 2010, he told the Times reporters in the lengthy interview in London, there were 800 volunteers, led by 40 core members, with only a handful drawing salaries, Assange’s own a reported $86,000 in 2010.

That figure was reportedly two-thirds of all the money paid by WikiLeaks in salaries in 2010 — a point dear to many in the organization’s inner circle, who have an almost monastic vision of their commitment. Like other closed communities embarked on visionary endeavors, WikiLeaks, from the outset, was founded on the principle that it would survive and prosper on the enthusiasms of a worldwide network of activists, hackers and left-wing campaigners, their reward to be taken from the new, more just world that would be forged by their efforts.

While acknowledging Assange’s high-intensity intelligence, reckoned by many who have met him to be in the genius range, denizens of the cyberworld have argued about the credit he can claim for the technological breakthrough represented by WikiLeaks, if not about the impact of the purloined documents he would come to post. Many have argued that his place in the pantheon should allow him to be recognized not for the kind of intellectual leap that had Archimedes leaping from his bath, but for his grasping, sooner than others, the possibilities for a new generation of superhacking that came with the computer age and the storage of vast amounts of secret, or at least confidential, information. From this perspective, Assange has been less the nonpareil innovator than the Henry Ford among hackers, a man who exploited, brilliantly, the technologies, and the ideas, pioneered by others.

Some have identified the man who paved the way: an American engineer named Timothy C. May, whose “Crypto-Anarchist Manifesto,” written in 1992, explored the possibilities of the nascent Internet, data storage and encryption, and the anonymity of the accomplished cyber-subversive to engage in all manner of high-tech mischief, including the outing of national secrets. May called his imaginary vehicle for this, a sort of prototype for WikiLeaks, BlackNet, though nobody at the time did much of anything to realize the idea’s potential.
The classified documents that would be WikiLeaks’s lifeblood came, at first, from siphoning material as it passed across the Internet. But soon, a steady stream of whistle-blowers and hackers were proffering secrets, and a series of widely lauded coups followed. WikiLeaks made news as it posted documents on the Guantánamo Bay detention operation, the contents of Sarah Palin’s personal Yahoo e-mail account, reports of extrajudicial killings in Kenya and East Timor and the membership rolls of the neo-Nazi British National Party. Praised for providing a window through which a cleansing sun could shine, Assange named the umbrella organization that shielded WikiLeaks the Sunshine Press.

But within WikiLeaks, and perhaps even within Assange himself, a tension was emerging. He had spoken, and written, of pioneering a new era of “scientific journalism” — presenting raw documents drawn from the darkest recesses of power and allowing a global audience to judge the facts for itself. In this vision, WikiLeaks’s mission was to be impartial. Birgitta Jonsdottir, a crucial WikiLeaks volunteer in its early days, told The New York Times that many of its members understood it to be a sort of black box into which whistle-blowers of every stripe and nationality, and whatever their cause, could drop their material without fear of reprisal.

But from the start, this concept was cast in an uneasy alliance with what Assange referred to in WikiLeaks’s earliest days as a fight against global “injustice,” the judgment of which, it seemed clear, would be rendered primarily by himself. At times, the new world he was intent on creating seemed borrowed from other millennial visions, from Plato to Thomas More and Karl Marx, where evil would be banished and repressive authority dismantled by a new, “scientific” process that would transcend the imperfect human endeavors of the past and replace flawed governing conducted in smoke-filled rooms with a brighter, purer form of democracy. In this new Utopia, he told the Frontline Club in London, the nation state and its laws would recede before a new, global community liberated by the dismantling of all barriers to knowledge. “The right of all people to know what is happening transcends all others,” he said.

In 2010, WikiLeaks turned to exploiting its biggest leak of all — a vast cache of Pentagon and State Department documents downloaded by an equally idealist — and solitary — Army private in Iraq named Bradley Manning, then 22, onto what he said was a Lady Gaga CD. As he prepared to release the files, Assange increasingly focused on the perfidy of the U.S. government. At the Frontline Club and elsewhere, he spoke of the United States’ having abandoned the principles of the founding fathers, to the point that it had become “the greatest threat to democracy,” with a government and society dominated by the military, its people cowed into conformity by what he called “the security state,” its principal newspapers serving as “stenographers of power,” and its people denied the “knowledge” they needed to countervail. Pressed to explain why so much of his energy was directed at America, instead of China, Russia or other repressive states, he told the Times reporters in the October interview that covert American power, as represented by its intelligence agencies, “is equivalent to the rest of the world combined.”
In the spring of 2010, WikiLeaks took its first high-profile swipe at the American military. It published a classified 2007 combat video showing American Apache helicopters in Baghdad killing at least 12 people, including two employees of the Reuters news agency. Assange unveiled the video, which he had entitled “Collateral Murder,” at the National Press Club in Washington. It was one of the last times he would step foot in the United States. He told reporters he had published “the full source material” — an unedited 40-minute video — in an effort to help “keep journalism honest.” But five times as many people, more than 10 million by early 2011, had viewed an 18-minute version, edited to emphasize the crimes Assange judged to have taken place. Some claimed that the edited video misrepresented events to score a political point. Assange himself argued that posting the unedited footage allowed him leeway in presenting his version, but that he hoped the material would “result not simply in the prosecution of those pilots or their immediate commanders, but some higher-level reform.”

By June 2010, Assange was preparing even more explosive materials, related to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and secret State Department cables. This time, he planned to reach a still wider audience by creating an uneasy alliance with what he called his “media partners,” initially the British newspaper The Guardian, The New York Times and the German news magazine Der Spiegel. Eric Schmitt of The New York Times recalled that he was particularly disdainful of the American military. Later, he would tell Der Spiegel, referring to a release of classified U.S. material, that he loved “crushing bastards.” And when reporters pressed him to review the classified Afghan material and remove the names of Afghans working for U.S. forces, or acting as informants, he was defensive, insisting initially, against the evidence, that all the redaction had already been done. The next day he recanted, and promised to do the redacting before it was released.

Several weeks later, he held a copy of The Guardian aloft at a news conference to announce the leak of 77,000 classified U.S. documents on the war in Afghanistan. At the time, he sounded almost indifferent to Bradley Manning’s prospects, predicting that the soldier would get a sentence of no more than 20 years, and would serve no more than 10. When the issue was pressed later on, he shifted to saying that WikiLeaks had made a “significant contribution” to Manning’s defense fund, a statement he would repeat in interviews through the winter. (Jeff Paterson, the project director for the defense fund, said in December that no donation had arrived, despite promises made in July. As a controversy began to brew, WikiLeaks finally made a $15,000 transfer in early January.)

As ever, Assange’s political aim was paramount. “This material,” he told Der Spiegel in July, “shines light on the everyday brutality and squalor of war. The archive will change public opinion and it will change the opinion of people in positions of political and diplomatic influence.” Later, it emerged that the release contained hundreds of Afghan names after all, and that Assange alone had made the decision not to remove them. In the October interview he told the reporters from The Times that he had judged that a greater good was served by airing the documents promptly, saving the time it would have taken to remove all potentially harmful details.
It was an issue that would continue to dog him in the following months, with his critics, particularly in Washington, saying he was careless of threats to human life. Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a Washington news conference, “Mr. Assange can say whatever he likes about the greater good he thinks he and his source are doing, but the truth is they might already have on their hands the blood of some young soldier or that of an Afghan family.” While a Taliban spokesman in Afghanistan said that the insurgents had formed a nine-member commission to “find about people who are spying,” Assange challenged the Pentagon to name anybody who had been harmed. No clear evidence of harm to any of those named has yet emerged.

The spotlight turned on Assange after the Afghan documents were released gave him a new level of international celebrity, his public appearances attracting intense media overage and legions of fans. He unveiled a new, more dapper self, and his self-assurance, never lacking but hitherto more carefully veiled, seemed to grow in bounds; he talked of “tremendous success,” and of seismic changes he felt WikiLeaks, and the documents, would effect in the way the world was governed. Under attack from critics, he referred repeatedly to his millennial mission, or what he called his “duty to history.” And he began to talk of himself as a likely casualty to his mission, predicting that the United States would not rest until it had found a legal formula for putting him, and WikiLeaks, out of business.

For millions, Assange became a blank slate onto which they could project their hopes for a brighter and more open future, and for a world in which American power, at least in its more arbitrary forms, could be reined in. WikiLeaks volunteers, many of them drawn from Britain, Iceland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland, have said that their resolve to carry on has been steeled by the pressure the U.S. government has applied to the group and its leader in the wake of the publication of its secrets. Kristin Hrafnsson, a steely haired Icelandic journalist who has become WikiLeaks’s effective second-in-command — a man as tough and acerbic as Assange, and frequently encountered at his side — has said that donations to the organization and offers to volunteer began “pouring in” as the confrontation with the United States sharpened.

Any effort to categorize the principal players faces an inherent problem in the organization’s emphasis on secrecy, including a deliberate obscurity about who its most important figures are. What is known is that WikiLeaks’s core members, the 40 or so who run the operation, are drawn from overt hacking communities like the Chaos Computer Club in Berlin, a large organization that has dedicated itself to using the tools of hacking and cryptography to undermine the powerful. At the club’s conference in December last year, an undisguised glee surfaced whenever establishment figures were seen to have been brought low by superior programming skills — speakers were met with cheers and whoops by audiences of hundreds as they revealed loopholes in the
banking and mobile telephone systems. The club has developed so-called cryptophones, theoretically immune to interception, which for a short time Assange would insist that his core leaders use.

In Iceland, many of WikiLeaks’s activists have been campaigners for the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative, which propagates legal measures that would make Iceland a haven for unfettered journalism and freedom of information — a safe harbor, for those intent on obtaining and publishing secrets, of the kind that Switzerland provided over many decades for banking. At lower levels, WikiLeaks’s volunteers are usually young, left-leaning idealists who see in Assange a rebel leader fashioned for the cyber age, someone who can fight oppression by breaking open the secret world of the powerful, without the clash of arms that insurgency demanded in an earlier age, including people like Angel Spasov, 30, an unemployed college graduate in London, who has attended some of Assange’s public appearances. “Someone is finally fighting the governments,” Spasov said as he balanced precariously on a crowd-control barrier in London, a red bandanna tied over his nose and mouth, to catch a glimpse of Assange as he left a hearing on the Swedish extradition bid in late 2010. “He’s exposing their secrets,” he said. “He’s the man.”

But for all the adulation, the tide of success for Assange did not take long to turn. Two weeks after the Afghan documents were released, he flew to Stockholm at the expense of the Swedish Association of Christian Social Democrats, a political group, to give a keynote speech on his work the following Saturday. When he arrived, he told The New York Times, he was celebrated by many as a hero. Rick Falkvinge, a friend of Assange’s who spent time with him in Stockholm, described a new swagger in the Australian — “the charisma of a star.” This, he said, had “an effect” on those he met.

Ten days later, the bubble burst when the two Swedish women went to the police with their allegations of sexual abuse. Assange has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing, saying that the sex he had with the women was entirely consensual and dismissing the allegations as an attempt to discredit him, and by extension his work. No evidence of such a vendetta has emerged, but many details of the allegations have been revealed in Swedish police documents obtained by The Times and other media organizations, in court testimony and in interviews with Assange, his associates in Sweden and a lawyer for the two women.

When Assange arrived in Stockholm his liaison with the political group was a blonde, left-wing, feminist activist in her early 30s who has not been officially named, but who has been referred to in legal proceedings as Ms. A. The two had built a rapport by telephone and e-mail and had agreed that Assange would stay at her comfortable Stockholm apartment, with soft lighting and modern art on its white walls, as she would be away until the day of the speech. Meanwhile, in Enkoping, a town 30 miles north of Stockholm, another woman, known as Ms. W, a sometime artist in her mid-20s, had been following Assange avidly in the media. While Googling him one evening, she said, she discovered that he was to speak in Stockholm and immediately contacted Ms. A, who
was listed as his liaison, to volunteer her help. She heard nothing.

Two days after Assange arrived in Stockholm, Ms. A returned a day earlier than planned and agreed, over dinner and tea with her guest, that he would stay on with her. According to The Guardian, which obtained an unredacted version of the police document, she told the police that that night, Assange began stroking her leg before pulling off her clothes and snapping her necklace. The Guardian quoted her as having told the police that she realized that he was trying to have unprotected sex with her when he pinned her arms and legs to stop her from reaching for a condom. Eventually one was used but, she told her police interviewer, he appeared to have “done something” with it, resulting in its tearing. She said he ejaculated without withdrawing. In his own interview with the police, Assange refused to discuss details of the encounter, though he insisted that he had done no wrong.

The next morning Ms. W, who had not received a response to her offer to help with Assange’s speech, decided to take the day off work and attend the lecture anyway. After the speech, she joined a group dinner for the guest of honor and sat next to Assange, who fed her bread and cheese, she said, and put his arm around her. Two days later, they took a train together to her small apartment in Enkoping. He could not use a credit card to buy his ticket, he told Ms. W, “because it could be traced,” leaving her to buy both their fares. She was upset, she said, when he ignored her on the journey and instead used his smartphone to read about himself online.

The unredacted police report obtained by The Guardian says that after arriving at her apartment the two had sex using a condom. In the report, she described waking up to find him having sex with her again, without a condom. Under Sweden’s strict sex laws, the claim that he had sex with Ms. W without a condom, and while she slept, led prosecutors to list rape among the possible charges against him. Later that morning, Ms. W told the police, Assange ordered her to get some water and orange juice for him, and later demanded breakfast, which she left the apartment to buy. She told the police that “she didn’t like being ordered around in her own home but got it anyway.” Worried about leaving him alone in her apartment, she said, “Be good.” His answer, she said, was “Don’t worry, I’m always bad.”

From Enkoping, Assange returned to Ms. A’s apartment in Stockholm, despite what she describes as growing tension between them after their previous sexual encounter. Then, the following day, according to statements given later in court, Assange tried to initiate sex again by rubbing “his erect penis” against her. This, lawyers for the Swedish government have said, is the grounds for one of the allegations of “sexual molestation.”

Later the same week, according to the police report, Ms. W got in touch with Ms. A to try to find Assange after he had failed to call her, and the women realized that both had had sex with Assange without a condom. A friend of Ms. A’s said in an interview this summer that the two women resolved to insist that Assange have a test for sexually transmitted diseases. At around this time, Ms. A asked Assange to leave her apartment, according to a friend. Later that day, when he had not taken the test, the two women went
to Stockholm’s Klara police station, where they “wanted to get some advice” and were “unsure of how they should proceed.” Prosecutors promptly issued an arrest warrant for Assange, prompting him to complain to reporters that his accusers were unknown to him. “Their identities have been made anonymous so even I have no idea who they are,” he told the Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet.

When Assange spoke to investigators in Stockholm, he declined to answer almost all of their questions about sexual details. “I had no reason to suspect that I would be accused of something like this,” he said. The complaints made against him to the police, and repeated in the Swedish press, he added, included “a number of false statements” and “a bunch of incredible lies.”

Assange’s suspicions of political interference in the case were aroused, he said later, by a series of reversals in the prosecution process. A day after the initial arrest warrant, another prosecutor decided to downgrade the investigation to one of “molestation,” a minor offense, and to revoke a warrant for Assange’s arrest. The decision was again changed in late August when a senior state prosecutor, Marianne Ny, who specializes in sexual crimes, overruled subordinates in Stockholm and restored the original allegations, saying rape was the appropriate charge for the evidence on file.

To press home Assange’s claims of political interference, Mark Stephens, Assange’s lead lawyer in London, has repeatedly said that “a senior political figure” worked to have the case reopened, without identifying him. The reference appears to have been to Claes Borgstrom, the lawyer for the two Swedish women, who is Sweden’s former equal opportunities ombudsman, and the spokesman on gender equality issues for the Social Democratic Party, the main opposition group in the Swedish Parliament. In an interview in Stockholm, Borgstrom, 66, said it was common under Sweden’s rape laws for men who force sex on women without a condom to face prosecution. “It’s a violation of sexual integrity, and it can be seen as rape,” he said.

Borgstrom said that by presenting the allegations against him as part of a political conspiracy, Assange had made “victims” of the two women, who now faced vilification on the Internet and regular death threats. “There are three persons who know for a fact that this has nothing to do with WikiLeaks, the C.I.A. or the Obama administration, and they are Julian Assange and my two clients,” he said.

Assange was asked to appear for questioning again, according to prosecution documents obtained by The Guardian, but he left Sweden instead and headed for London after, he has said, seeking permission from the prosecutor. Shortly afterward, his application for a Swedish residence permit was rejected, and he refused to return to Stockholm. Iceland, another country with generous press freedoms and a strong WikiLeaks base, had also lost its appeal, with Assange concluding that its government, like Britain’s, is too easily influenced by Washington. In his native Australia, the authorities had signaled their intent, too. Assange told The Times that a senior Australian official had told him, “You play outside the rules, and you will be dealt with outside the rules.” Under British law his Australian passport entitled him to remain for only six
months. His options, it seemed, were rapidly dwindling.

In mid-October Assange agreed to a sit-down interview with The Times, his first with the paper. When he arrived at a noisy Ethiopian restaurant in London’s rundown Paddington district for what would be a four-hour lunch, he moved like a hunted man, back in his nomadic mode. Although he sported an expensive brown leather Belstaff jacket — borrowed, as he insisted — he had a woolen beanie pulled down low over his brow. He trailed a youthful, largely silent, entourage that included a filmmaker assigned to document any unpleasant surprises, and insisted on pitching his voice barely above a whisper, saying it was a ploy to foil the Western intelligence agencies he presumed were listening. He spoke of cyberattacks on WikiLeaks’s servers, saying alarms on its computers had been triggered, and he spoke of his fears of being prosecuted by the United States.

Over lamb skewers and hot flatbreads he said that WikiLeaks, then preparing to release nearly 400,000 documents on the Iraq war, was entering its most hazardous time yet. “By being determined to be on this path, and not to compromise, I’ve wound up in an extraordinary situation,” he said. “When it comes to the point where you occasionally look forward to being in prison on the basis that you might be able to spend a day reading a book, the realization dawns that perhaps the situation has become a little more stressful than you would like.”

Despite the risks, he said, he was convinced that his work would “produce justice and save lives.” He spoke of his determination to “right wrongs” and said that his leaks would “provide a guide for all our decisions, civilization’s decisions.” He had expected WikiLeaks to change the world by 2008, he said, and was surprised that it had taken much longer — four years from WikiLeaks’s founding — to make such a widespread impact. At times, he sounded resigned to an unhappy ending to his venture, suggesting that others might have to carry his legacy forward. “I have no illusions about it being a path that’s not easy,” he said. But “retiring on some sunlit upland for some 15 years of pleasant decline is not in my nature.” He added, with a hint of a valedictory, “If we are victorious, then many others will follow my lead.”

His problems in Sweden, and the threats of prosecution by the United States, were not the only challenges. As the sex scandal broke, he began to face growing restiveness within WikiLeaks, too. Smari McCarthy, a WikiLeaks insider who eventually left the organization, said that “about a dozen” disillusioned volunteers had left in late summer, in the face of what many characterized as Assange’s imperious and dictatorial leadership style. Some of these departures were hastened by a discontent over what seemed to be Assange’s determination to conflate his private problems in Sweden with the wider worldwide struggle for which his WikiLeaks associates had signed on.

In August, Assange suspended Daniel Domscheit-Berg, a German who had been
the WikiLeaks spokesman under the pseudonym Daniel Schmitt, accusing him of unspecified “bad behavior.” And when Herbert Snorrason, a 25-year-old political activist in Iceland, questioned Assange’s judgment over a number of issues in an online exchange in September, Assange was uncompromising. “I don’t like your tone,” he said, according to a transcript. “If it continues, you’re out.” He also complained that his associates had abandoned him during his troubles in Sweden. “No legal help, no $, no accommodation, passports, positive press spins, private investigators, hacking those with information,” he wrote. He added, “Wake up and stop being a jerk.”

A core WikiLeaks volunteer, who requested anonymity, pleaded with Assange to temper his imperiousness. Forty-two seconds later, according to the transcript of an online conversation obtained by The Times, he responded with one crisp, dismissive paragraph: “I am the heart and soul of this organization, its founder, philosopher, spokesperson, original coder, organizer, financier and all the rest. If you have a problem with me, piss off.”

When asked about reports of dissent over the lunch, Assange, who had been affable, raised his voice. “Who has told you that?” he asked, repeatedly demanding a list of names as his rapt entourage fell silent beside him. Assange denied that any important volunteers had quit, apart from Domscheit-Berg. The rest, he said, were “not consequential people.” He also responded testily to questions about WikiLeaks’s opaque finances, the fate of Manning, the Army private accused of leaking the documents to the group, and what appeared to be WikiLeaks’s lack of accountability to anybody but himself, calling the questions “cretinous,” “facile” and reminiscent of “kindergarten.” Asked about his anger, he embraced it. “I’ve been angry for a while,” he said. “I like my anger. It’s directed effectively.”

In late November and early December, WikiLeaks’ release of American embassy cables dominated news reports. But for Assange, the celebrations were quickly stifled. On Dec. 6, Ny, the Swedish prosecutor who had wanted to question Assange on the allegations of sexual misconduct in Stockholm, issued European and Interpol arrest warrants, seeking his extradition to Sweden. Assange’s lawyer, Stephens, effectively declared legal war, comparing Ny in public statements to Lavrenti Beria, chief of Stalin’s secret police, and arguing that his client should be allowed to give answers by telephone or at the Swedish Embassy in London instead of returning to Sweden.

Many of Assange’s supporters, including some prominent public figures, like the filmmaker Michael Moore, hinted that the Swedish charges were a thinly veiled conspiracy to silence him. The socialite Bianca Jagger, who frequently appeared to support Assange in London, told reporters that she was “very concerned that this case is becoming politicized,” adding that justice and freedom of expression were at stake. Ms. A and Ms. W, the women who had accused him of sexual crimes, quickly became reviled
figures for many WikiLeaks supporters, their names and addresses posted online, their lives pored over by those determined to discredit them.

It was to little effect. On a dark, cold Tuesday morning, Assange, his lawyers and close supporters, gathered at a nondescript cafe for a final meal before he turned himself in to the British police at a north London police station. There, he made a show of his defiance, telling officers he would not submit to the standard procedures. He would not give a British residential address, fingerprints or a DNA sample, and he would not submit to a picture. After he repeated his refusal to give an address at his initial bail hearing in court, he was sent to Wandsworth Prison as a flight risk, sweeping out of a London courthouse in an armored police van as his fans shouted, “We love you, Julian!”

The day the thick door of his solitary confinement cell slammed shut, legions of online supporters rose up in what many of the world’s newspapers quickly dubbed a cyberwar. There was a tenfold increase in downloads of software used by the online activist group Anonymous to attack the Web sites of companies like MasterCard, Visa and PayPal, who had refused to process donations to WikiLeaks, saying that the organization had flouted their commercial rules. Later, the Web sites of the Swedish prosecutor’s office and of Claes Borgstrom, the lawyer for the two Swedish women, were brought down, too, collapsing under mass “attacks” when thousands of activists bombarded the sites simultaneously.

The cyberattacks, which WikiLeaks has said it was not involved with, were a blow for freedom of speech, according to one Anonymous activist in the United States, Gregg Housh, who saw no gap between the sexual allegations and Assange’s work. “To all of us,” said Housh, who disavows any illegal activity on the Internet himself, “there is no distinction. He is a political prisoner, and the two things are completely entwined.”

When Assange was granted bail, he emerged from his cell into an explosion of photographers’ flashbulbs and spotlights under the grand arch of the Royal Courts of Justice. Pictures of his face, stylized to resemble the iconic image of Che Guevara, bobbed above the crowd on placards. “Exposing War Crimes Is No Crime,” said one. As the cheers subsided, he stood defiant, backed by his entourage and flickering lights within the courthouse, and raised his release papers. “Well, it’s great to feel the fresh air of London again,” he said before thanking his supporters and railing against his “time in solitary confinement in the bottom of a Victorian prison.”

Later, as he walked through a bitterly cold London evening, fluffy snowflakes landing silently on the shoulders of the suit he had worn in court, a reporter asked Assange how he felt. “I have enough anger to last me 100 years,” he said. “But I will channel that into my work.”
Pfc. Bradley Manning is accused of leaking classified documents to WikiLeaks.
Who Is Bradley Manning?

By GINGER THOMPSON

He spent part of his childhood with his father in the arid plains of Central Oklahoma where classmates made fun of him for being a geek. He spent another part with his mother in a small, hardscrabble corner of southwest Wales, where classmates made fun of him for being gay. Then he joined the Army, where his social life was defined by the need to conceal his sexuality under the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy, and he wasted brainpower fetching coffee for officers.

But it was two years ago, when Pfc. Bradley Manning visited Cambridge, Mass., to see a man with whom he had fallen in love, that he finally seemed to have found a place where he fit in, joining a circle that included politically motivated computer hackers and his boyfriend, a self-described drag queen. So when Manning’s military career seemed headed nowhere good, the private turned increasingly to those friends for moral support. Today, some of those friends wonder whether his desperation for acceptance and recognition, together with a deepening disenchantment with the war in Iraq, may have played a role in leading him to disclose the largest trove of government secrets since the Pentagon Papers — a disclosure that would land him in solitary confinement in a military prison.

“I would always try to make clear to Brad that he had a promising future ahead of him,” said Daniel J. Clark, who is starting his own computer business and became a friend to Manning. “But when you’re young, and you’re in his situation, it’s hard to tell yourself things are going to get better, especially in Brad’s case, because in his past, things didn’t always get better.”

Much remains unknown about Manning’s journey to prison from the small Oklahoma town where he was born. However, interviews with those who know him, along with e-mail exchanges between Manning and the computer hacker who eventually turned him in, offer some insights into how he grew up, why he joined the Army and why his last several months before the document leaks seemed so troubled.

“I’ve been isolated so long,” Manning wrote in May 2010 to Adrian Lamo, a computer hacker who later turned the chat logs over to the authorities and the media. “But events kept forcing me to figure out ways to survive.”

Survival was something Manning began learning as a child in Crescent, Okla. His father, Brian Manning, was also a soldier and spent a lot of time away from home, former neighbors recalled. And his mother, Susan Manning, drank to help cope with the culture shock of having moved to the United States from her native Britain. Jacqueline Radford, a former neighbor, recalled that when students at Manning’s elementary school went on field trips, she would send additional food or money to make sure Manning had something to eat. “I’ve always tried to be supportive of him because of his home life,” Radford recalled about Manning. “I know it was bad, to where he was left to his own, and
had to fend for himself.”

At school, little Bradley Manning was clearly different from most of his peers. He preferred hacking computer games rather than playing them. And he seemed opinionated beyond his years about politics and religion, and even about keeping religion out of politics. In a hometown that he once mockingly described in an e-mail as having “more pews than people,” Manning refused to recite the parts of the Pledge of Allegiance that referred to God, or to turn in any homework that had to do with the Scriptures. And if a teacher challenged his views, he was quick to push back. “He would get upset, slam books on the desk if people wouldn’t listen to him or understand his point of view,” said Chera Moore, who attended elementary and junior high school with Manning. “He would get really mad, and the teacher would say, ‘O.K., Bradley, get out.’”

It was something he would hear a lot throughout his life.

After Manning’s parents split up, Manning, then a teenager, moved with his mother to Haverfordwest, her hometown in Wales, and began a new chapter of isolation. Haverfordwest is several times bigger than Crescent. It is centuries older, with traditions that run much deeper. And as a bustling market town, life there moved at a significantly faster pace.

Former students at his school, Tasker Milward, recalled that Manning got teased about his accent. He got teased because he loved Dr Pepper. He got teased because he spent most of his time huddled in front of a computer. And then, students began to suspect that he was gay.

Manning’s reactions were all over the place, his classmates said. At times, he idly boasted about stealing other students’ girlfriends. Other times, he openly flirted with boys. Often, with only the slightest provocation, he would fly into fits of rage. “It was probably the worst experience anybody could go through,” said Rowan John, a former classmate who was openly gay in high school. “Being different like me, or Bradley, in the middle of nowhere is like going back in time to the Dark Ages.”

Life ahead did not get immediately brighter for Manning. People who know him said his mother sent him back to live with his father and older sister in Oklahoma because of his troubles at school. He was hired and quickly fired from a small software company, where his employer recalled him as a clean-cut, highly intelligent and well-spoken young man with an almost innate sense of programming, and the personality of a bull in a china shop. Then he was kicked out of the house, friends said, after his father learned he was gay. Clark, the Cambridge computer businessman, said Manning told him he had spent a short period of time living out of his car, working a series of minimum-wage retail jobs and secretly showering at a gym.

Later, Manning moved to Potomac, Md., to live with an aunt. In 2007, he enlisted in the Army, friends said, to try to give his life some direction and earn money for college. He was granted a security clearance as an intelligence analyst, trained at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and then assigned to the Second Brigade, 10 Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y.
Before being deployed to Iraq, Manning met a young, eccentric classical musician named Tyler Watkins. The student and the soldier had little in common, a friend said, but Manning fell deeply in love. Watkins, who did not respond to interview requests, was a student at Brandeis University, near Cambridge. On trips to visit him in Massachusetts, Manning got to know many people in Watkins’s broad network of friends, including some who were part of the tight-knit hacker community.

Friends said Manning found the atmosphere in Cambridge to be everything the Army was not: openly accepting of his geeky side, his liberal political opinions, his relationship with Watkins and his ambition to do something that would get attention. Although hacking has come to mean a lot of different things, at its core, say those who do it, is the philosophy that information should be free and accessible to all. And Manning had access to some of the most secret information on the planet.

In computer chats with Lamo, the hacker, Manning wrote that he wanted people to see the truth “because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public.”

Those chat logs, published by Wired magazine, provide the clearest insight into Manning’s thinking and motivations. They chronicle his growing disillusionment with the Iraq war, his disdain for the military, how easy it was for him to gain access to hundreds of thousands of classified documents and his sense that exposing the government’s secrets would do more good than harm. In one passage from the chat logs, Manning described being ordered to investigate 15 Iraqi detainees who had been charged with hostile acts against the government.

Manning wrote that his investigation found that the men had written a “benign political critique” of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki of Iraq and posed no serious security threat to the government. But, he wrote, his commanding officer refused to accept that finding. “He didn’t want to hear any of it,” Manning wrote. “He told me to shut up and explain how we could assist the [federal police] in finding MORE detainees.”

Later, Manning wrote that he had always questioned the way things worked and investigated to find the truth. “But that was a point where I was a PART of something,” he wrote. “I was actively involved in something that I was completely against.”

In another passage from the logs, Manning wrote further about his motivations for leaking the classified material. “What if I were someone more malicious,” he wrote. “I could’ve sold to Russia or China, and made bank?” When Lamo asked why he didn’t sell the material, Manning responded: “Another state would just take advantage of the information try and get some edge. If it’s out in the open it should be a public good.”

Even as he worked as an intelligence analyst in a unit stationed east of Baghdad, his military career was anything but stellar. He had been reprimanded twice, including once for assaulting a soldier. He wrote that he felt “regularly ignored” by his superiors, “except when I had something essential, then it was back to ‘Bring me coffee, then sweep the floor.’” And it seems the more isolated he felt in the military — he wore custom dog tags that said “Humanist,” and friends said he kept a toy fairy wand on his desk in Iraq — the
more he clung to his hacker friends.

According to Wired, Manning told Watkins last January that he had gotten his hands on a secret video showing an American military helicopter attack in 2007 that killed 12 people, including two employees of the Reuters news agency. In a computer chat with Lamo, Manning said he gave the video to WikiLeaks in February. Then after WikiLeaks released it in April, Manning hounded Watkins about whether there had been any public reaction.

“He would message me, ‘Are people talking about it?’” Watkins told Wired. “That was one of his major concerns once he’d done this. Was it really going to make a difference?”

In his chats with Lamo, Manning described how he downloaded the video and lip-synched to Lady Gaga as he copied hundreds of thousands of diplomatic cables. “Hillary Clinton and several thousand diplomats around the world are going to have a heart attack,” he boasted. “Everywhere there’s a U.S. post, there’s a diplomatic scandal that will be revealed.” But even as he professed an inflated sense of purpose, he called himself “emotionally fractured,” and “a wreck,” and he said he was “self-medicating like crazy.”

Today, Manning awaits trial in the Quantico Confinement Facility in Virginia. His lawyer, David E. Coombs, wrote a blog post in December about the conditions under which he was being detained. Coombs said Manning was confined 23 hours a day to his cell, 6-feet wide by 12-feet long, where he eats all his meals. Coombs said that Manning was prohibited from doing any exercises — including situps or push-ups — in the cell, had no conversations with guards or other inmates and was allowed to receive visitors for only three hours on weekends and holidays.

Coombs wrote that guards had never “tried to bully, harass or embarrass” Manning. But, he wrote, to make sure Manning did not try to hurt himself, the guards checked on him every five minutes, asking whether he was O.K., and requiring him to answer. “At night, if the guards cannot see PFC Manning clearly because he has a blanket over his head or is curled up towards the wall,” Coombs wrote on his blog, “they will wake him to make sure he is okay.”

Dozens of antiwar activists and friends of Manning’s have staged protests in New York, Oklahoma City and Quantico to demand the soldier’s release, arguing that his exposure of war crimes makes him a hero, not an outlaw. Those supporters have raised tens of thousands of dollars to help pay for his legal defense. Their cause has won the support of the filmmaker Michael Moore and of Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers. However, the City Council in Berkeley, Calif., tabled a resolution to honor Manning for releasing the video of a laughing United States Apache helicopter crew shooting a group of men in Baghdad.

As Manning faces the possibility of a lengthy prison term if convicted, some of his remarks now seem somewhat prophetic. “I wouldn’t mind going to prison for the rest of my life, or being executed so much,” he wrote, “if it wasn’t for the possibility of having
pictures of me plastered all over the world press.”
III. State’s Secrets

A cache of diplomatic cables provides a chronicle of the United States’ relations with the world.
President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, left, and William Burns, a State Department official.
OVERVIEW
Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy

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Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy

By SCOTT SHANE and ANDREW W. LEHREN

WASHINGTON — A cache of a quarter-million confidential American diplomatic cables, most of them from the past three years, provides an unprecedented look at backroom bargaining by embassies around the world, brutally candid views of foreign leaders and frank assessments of nuclear and terrorist threats.

Some of the cables, made available to The New York Times and several other news organizations, were written as recently as late February, revealing the Obama administration’s exchanges over crises and conflicts. The material was originally obtained by WikiLeaks, an organization devoted to revealing secret documents. WikiLeaks posted 220 cables, some redacted to protect diplomatic sources, in the first installment of the archive on its Web site on Sunday.

The disclosure of the cables is sending shudders through the diplomatic establishment, and could strain relations with some countries, influencing international
affairs in ways that are impossible to predict.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and American ambassadors around the world have been contacting foreign officials in recent days to alert them to the expected disclosures. A statement from the White House on Sunday said: “We condemn in the strongest terms the unauthorized disclosure of classified documents and sensitive national security information.”

The White House said the release of what it called “stolen cables” to several publications was a “reckless and dangerous action” and warned that some cables, if released in full, could disrupt American operations abroad and put the work and even lives of confidential sources of American diplomats at risk. The statement noted that reports often include “candid and often incomplete information” whose disclosure could “deeply impact not only U.S. foreign policy interests, but those of our allies and friends around the world.”

The cables, a huge sampling of the daily traffic between the State Department and some 270 embassies and consulates, amount to a secret chronicle of the United States’ relations with the world in an age of war and terrorism. Among their revelations, to be detailed in The Times in coming days:

¶A dangerous standoff with Pakistan over nuclear fuel: Since 2007, the United States has mounted a highly secret effort, so far unsuccessful, to remove from a Pakistani research reactor highly enriched uranium that American officials fear could be diverted for use in an illicit nuclear device. In May 2009, Ambassador Anne W. Patterson reported that Pakistan was refusing to schedule a visit by American technical experts because, as a Pakistani official said, “if the local media got word of the fuel removal, ‘they certainly would portray it as the United States taking Pakistan’s nuclear weapons,’ he argued.”

¶Thinking about an eventual collapse of North Korea: American and South Korean officials have discussed the prospects for a unified Korea, should the North’s economic troubles and political transition lead the state to implode. The South Koreans even considered commercial inducements to China, according to the American ambassador to Seoul. She told Washington in February that South Korean officials believe that the right business deals would “help salve” China’s “concerns about living with a reunified Korea” that is in a “benign alliance” with the United States.

¶Bargaining to empty the Guantánamo Bay prison: When American diplomats pressed other countries to resettle detainees, they became reluctant players in a State Department version of “Let’s Make a Deal.” Slovenia was told to take a prisoner if it wanted to meet with President Obama, while the island nation of Kiribati was offered incentives worth millions of dollars to take in Chinese Muslim detainees, cables from diplomats recounted. The Americans, meanwhile, suggested that accepting more prisoners would be “a low-cost way for Belgium to attain prominence in Europe.”

¶Suspicions of corruption in the Afghan government: When one of Afghanistan’s two vice presidents visited the United Arab Emirates last year, local authorities working with the Drug Enforcement Administration discovered that he was carrying $52 million
in cash. With wry understatement, a cable from the American Embassy in Kabul called the money “a significant amount” that the official, Ahmed Zia Massoud, “was ultimately allowed to keep without revealing the money’s origin or destination.” (Mr. Massoud denies taking any money out of Afghanistan.)

¶A global computer hacking effort: China’s Politburo directed the intrusion into Google’s computer systems in that country, a Chinese contact told the American Embassy in Beijing in January, one cable reported. The Google hacking was part of a coordinated campaign of computer sabotage carried out by government operatives, private security experts and Internet outlaws recruited by the Chinese government. They have broken into American government computers and those of Western allies, the Dalai Lama and American businesses since 2002, cables said.

¶Mixed records against terrorism: Saudi donors remain the chief financiers of Sunni militant groups like Al Qaeda, and the tiny Persian Gulf state of Qatar, a generous host to the American military for years, was the “worst in the region” in counterterrorism efforts, according to a State Department cable last December. Qatar’s security service was “hesitant to act against known terrorists out of concern for appearing to be aligned with the U.S. and provoking reprisals,” the cable said.

¶An intriguing alliance: American diplomats in Rome reported in 2009 on what their Italian contacts described as an extraordinarily close relationship between Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian prime minister, and Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime minister and business magnate, including “lavish gifts,” lucrative energy contracts and a “shadowy” Russian-speaking Italian go-between. They wrote that Mr. Berlusconi “appears increasingly to be the mouthpiece of Putin” in Europe. The diplomats also noted that while Mr. Putin enjoyed supremacy over all other public figures in Russia, he was undermined by an unmanageable bureaucracy that often ignored his edicts.

¶Arms deliveries to militants: Cables describe the United States’ failing struggle to prevent Syria from supplying arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon, which has amassed a huge stockpile since its 2006 war with Israel. One week after President Bashar al-Assad promised a top State Department official that he would not send “new” arms to Hezbollah, the United States complained that it had information that Syria was providing increasingly sophisticated weapons to the group.

¶Clashes with Europe over human rights: American officials sharply warned Germany in 2007 not to enforce arrest warrants for Central Intelligence Agency officers involved in a bungled operation in which an innocent German citizen with the same name as a suspected militant was mistakenly kidnapped and held for months in Afghanistan. A senior American diplomat told a German official “that our intention was not to threaten Germany, but rather to urge that the German government weigh carefully at every step of the way the implications for relations with the U.S.”

The 251,287 cables, first acquired by WikiLeaks, were provided to The Times by an intermediary on the condition of anonymity. Many are unclassified, and none are marked “top secret,” the government’s most secure communications status. But some
11,000 are classified “secret,” 9,000 are labeled “noforn,” shorthand for material considered too delicate to be shared with any foreign government, and 4,000 are designated both secret and noforn.

Many more cables name diplomats’ confidential sources, from foreign legislators and military officers to human rights activists and journalists, often with a warning to Washington: “Please protect” or “Strictly protect.”

The Times, after consultations with the State Department, has withheld from articles and removed from documents it is posting online the names of some people who spoke privately to diplomats and might be at risk if they were publicly identified. The Times is also withholding some passages or entire cables whose disclosure could compromise American intelligence efforts. While the White House said it anticipated WikiLeaks would make public “several hundred thousand” cables Sunday night, the organization posted only 220 released and redacted by The Times and several European publications.

The cables show that nearly a decade after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the dark shadow of terrorism still dominates the United States’ relations with the world. They depict the Obama administration struggling to sort out which Pakistanis are trustworthy partners against Al Qaeda, adding Australians who have disappeared in the Middle East to terrorist watch lists, and assessing whether a lurking rickshaw driver in Lahore, Pakistan, was awaiting fares or conducting surveillance of the road to the American Consulate.

They show officials managing relations with a China on the rise and a Russia retreating from democracy. They document years of effort to prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon — and of worry about a possible Israeli strike on Iran with the same goal.

Even when they recount events that are already known, the cables offer remarkable details.

For instance, it has been previously reported that the Yemeni government has sought to cover up the American role in missile strikes against the local branch of Al Qaeda. But a cable’s fly-on-the-wall account of a January meeting between the Yemeni president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, and Gen. David H. Petraeus, then the American commander in the Middle East, is breathtaking.

“We’ll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours,” Mr. Saleh said, according to the cable sent by the American ambassador, prompting one of Yemen’s deputy prime ministers to “joke that he had just ‘lied’ by telling Parliament” that Yemen had carried out the strikes.

Mr. Saleh, who at other times resisted American counterterrorism requests, was in a lighthearted mood. The authoritarian ruler of a conservative Muslim country, Mr. Saleh complains of smuggling from nearby Djibouti, but tells General Petraeus that his concerns are drugs and weapons, not whiskey, “provided it’s good whiskey.”

Likewise, press reports detailed the unhappiness of the Libyan leader, Col.
Muammar el-Qaddafi, when he was not permitted to set up his tent in Manhattan or to visit ground zero during a United Nations session last year.

But the cables add a touch of scandal and alarm to the tale. They describe the volatile Libyan leader as rarely without the companionship of “his senior Ukrainian nurse,” described as “a voluptuous blonde.” They reveal that Colonel Qaddafi was so upset by his reception in New York that he balked at carrying out a promise to return dangerous enriched uranium to Russia. The American ambassador to Libya told Colonel Qaddafi’s son “that the Libyan government had chosen a very dangerous venue to express its pique,” a cable reported to Washington.

The cables also disclose frank comments behind closed doors. Dispatches from early this year, for instance, quote the aging monarch of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah, as speaking scathingly about the leaders of Iraq and Pakistan.

Speaking to another Iraqi official about Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, the Iraqi prime minister, King Abdullah said, “You and Iraq are in my heart, but that man is not.” The king called President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan the greatest obstacle to that country’s progress. “When the head is rotten,” he said, “it affects the whole body.”

The American ambassador to Eritrea reported last year that “Eritrean officials are ignorant or lying” in denying that they were supporting the Shabab, a militant Islamist group in Somalia. The cable then mused about which seemed more likely.

As he left Zimbabwe in 2007 after three years as ambassador, Christopher W. Dell wrote a sardonic account of Robert Mugabe, that country’s aging and erratic leader. The cable called him “a brilliant tactician” but mocked “his deep ignorance on economic issues (coupled with the belief that his 18 doctorates give him the authority to suspend the laws of economics).”

The possibility that a large number of diplomatic cables might become public has been discussed in government and media circles since May. That was when, in an online chat, an Army intelligence analyst, Pfc. Bradley Manning, described having downloaded from a military computer system many classified documents, including “260,000 State Department cables from embassies and consulates all over the world.” In an online discussion with Adrian Lamo, a computer hacker, Private Manning said he had delivered the cables and other documents to WikiLeaks.

Mr. Lamo reported Private Manning’s disclosures to federal authorities, and Private Manning was arrested. He has been charged with illegally leaking classified information and faces a possible court-martial and, if convicted, a lengthy prison term.

In July and October, The Times, the British newspaper The Guardian and the German magazine Der Spiegel published articles based on documents about Afghanistan and Iraq. Those collections were placed online by WikiLeaks, with selective redactions of the Afghan documents and much heavier redactions of the Iraq reports.

Fodder for Historians
Traditionally, most diplomatic cables remain secret for decades, providing fodder for historians only when the participants are long retired or dead. The State Department’s unclassified history series, titled “Foreign Relations of the United States,” has reached only 1976.

While an overwhelming majority of the quarter-million cables provided to The Times are from the post-9/11 era, several hundred date from 1966 to the 1990s. Some show diplomats struggling to make sense of major events whose future course they could not guess.

In a 1979 cable to Washington, Bruce Laingen, an American diplomat in Tehran, mused with a knowing tone about the Iranian revolution that had just occurred: “Perhaps the single dominant aspect of the Persian psyche is an overriding egoism,” Mr. Laingen wrote, offering tips on exploiting this psyche in negotiations with the new government. Less than three months later, Mr. Laingen and his colleagues would be taken hostage by radical Iranian students, hurling the Carter administration into crisis and, perhaps, demonstrating the hazards of diplomatic hubris.

In 1989, an American diplomat in Panama City mulled over the options open to Gen. Manuel Noriega, the Panamanian leader, who was facing narcotics charges in the United States and intense domestic and international political pressure to step down. The cable called General Noriega “a master of survival”; its author appeared to have no inkling that one week later, the United States would invade Panama to unseat General Noriega and arrest him.

In 1990, an American diplomat sent an excited dispatch from Cape Town: he had just learned from a lawyer for Nelson Mandela that Mr. Mandela’s 27-year imprisonment was to end. The cable conveys the momentous changes about to begin for South Africa, even as it discusses preparations for an impending visit from the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson.

The voluminous traffic of more recent years — well over half of the quarter-million cables date from 2007 or later — show American officials struggling with events whose outcomes are far from sure. To read through them is to become a global voyeur, immersed in the jawboning, inducements and penalties the United States wields in trying to have its way with a recalcitrant world.

In an era of satellites and fiber-optic links, the cable retains the archaic name of an earlier technological era. It has long been the tool for the secretary of state to send orders to the field and for ambassadors and political officers to send their analyses to Washington.

The cables have their own lexicon: “codel,” for a Congressional delegation; “visas viper,” for a report on a person considered dangerous; “démarche,” an official message to a foreign government, often a protest or warning.

But the drama in the cables often comes from diplomats’ narratives of meetings with foreign figures, games of diplomatic poker in which each side is sizing up the other and neither is showing all its cards.

Among the most fascinating examples recount American officials’ meetings in
September 2009 and February 2010 with Ahmed Wali Karzai, the half brother of the Afghan president and a power broker in the Taliban’s home turf of Kandahar.

They describe Mr. Karzai, “dressed in a crisp white shalwar kameez,” the traditional dress of loose tunic and trousers, appearing “nervous, though eager to express his views on the international presence in Kandahar,” and trying to win over the Americans with nostalgic tales about his years running a Chicago restaurant near Wrigley Field.

But in midnarrative there is a stark alert for anyone reading the cable in Washington: “Note: While we must deal with AWK as the head of the Provincial Council, he is widely understood to be corrupt and a narcotics trafficker.” (Mr. Karzai has denied such charges.) And the cables note statements by Mr. Karzai that the Americans, informed by a steady flow of eavesdropping and agents’ reports, believe to be false.

A cable written after the February meeting coolly took note of the deceit on both sides.

Mr. Karzai “demonstrated that he will dissemble when it suits his needs,” the cable said. “He appears not to understand the level of our knowledge of his activities. We will need to monitor his activity closely, and deliver a recurring, transparent message to him” about the limits of American tolerance.

Not All Business

Even in places far from war zones and international crises, where the stakes for the United States are not as high, curious diplomats can turn out to be accomplished reporters, sending vivid dispatches to deepen the government’s understanding of exotic places.

In a 2006 account, a wide-eyed American diplomat describes the lavish wedding of a well-connected couple in Dagestan, in Russia’s Caucasus, where one guest is the strongman who runs the war-ravaged Russian republic of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov.

The diplomat tells of drunken guests throwing $100 bills at child dancers, and nighttime water-scooter jaunts on the Caspian Sea.

“The dancers probably picked upwards of USD 5000 off the cobblestones,” the diplomat wrote. The host later tells him that Ramzan Kadyrov “had brought the happy couple ‘a five-kilo lump of gold’ as his wedding present.”

“After the dancing and a quick tour of the premises, Ramzan and his army drove off back to Chechnya,” the diplomat reported to Washington. “We asked why Ramzan did not spend the night in Makhachkala, and were told, ‘Ramzan never spends the night anywhere.’ ”

Scott Shane reported from Washington, and Andrew W. Lehren from New York. Reporting was contributed by Jo Becker, C. J. Chivers and James Glanz from New York; Eric Lichtblau, Michael R. Gordon, David E. Sanger, Charlie Savage, Eric Schmitt and...
Ginger Thompson from Washington; and Jane Perlez from Islamabad, Pakistan.

—This article was originally published on November 28, 2010
Around the World, Distress Over Iran

By DAVID E. SANGER, JAMES GLANZ and JO BECKER

In late May 2009, Israel’s defense minister, Ehud Barak, used a visit from a Congressional delegation to send a pointed message to the new American president.

In a secret cable sent back to Washington, the American ambassador to Israel, James B. Cunningham, reported that Mr. Barak had argued that the world had 6 to 18 months “in which stopping Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons might still be viable.” After that, Mr. Barak said, “any military solution would result in unacceptable collateral damage.”

There was little surprising in Mr. Barak’s implicit threat that Israel might attack Iran’s nuclear facilities. As a pressure tactic, Israeli officials have been setting such deadlines, and extending them, for years. But six months later it was an Arab leader, the king of Bahrain, who provides the base for the American Fifth Fleet, telling the Americans that the Iranian nuclear program “must be stopped,” according to another cable. “The danger of letting it go on is greater than the danger of stopping it,” he said.

His plea was shared by many of America’s Arab allies, including the powerful King
Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, who according to another cable repeatedly implored Washington to “cut off the head of the snake” while there was still time.

These warnings are part of a trove of diplomatic cables reaching back to the genesis of the Iranian nuclear standoff in which leaders from around the world offer their unvarnished opinions about how to negotiate with, threaten and perhaps force Iran’s leaders to renounce their atomic ambitions.

The cables also contain a fresh American intelligence assessment of Iran’s missile program. They reveal for the first time that the United States believes that Iran has obtained advanced missiles from North Korea that could let it strike at Western European capitals and Moscow and help it develop more formidable long-range ballistic missiles.

In day-by-day detail, the cables, obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to a number of news organizations, tell the disparate diplomatic back stories of two administrations pressed from all sides to confront Tehran. They show how President George W. Bush, hamstrung by the complexities of Iraq and suspicions that he might attack Iran, struggled to put together even modest sanctions.

They also offer new insights into how President Obama, determined to merge his promise of “engagement” with his vow to raise the pressure on the Iranians, assembled a coalition that agreed to impose an array of sanctions considerably harsher than any before attempted.

When Mr. Obama took office, many allies feared that his offers of engagement would make him appear weak to the Iranians. But the cables show how Mr. Obama’s aides quickly countered those worries by rolling out a plan to encircle Iran with economic sanctions and antimissile defenses. In essence, the administration expected its outreach to fail, but believed that it had to make a bona fide attempt in order to build support for tougher measures.

A Sense of Urgency

Feeding the administration’s urgency was the intelligence about Iran’s missile program. As it weighed the implications of those findings, the administration maneuvered to win Russian support for sanctions. It killed a Bush-era plan for a missile defense site in Poland — which Moscow’s leaders feared was directed at them, not Tehran — and replaced it with one floating closer to Iran’s coast. While the cables leave unclear whether there was an explicit quid pro quo, the move seems to have paid off.

There is also an American-inspired plan to get the Saudis to offer China a steady oil supply, to wean it from energy dependence on Iran. The Saudis agreed, and insisted on ironclad commitments from Beijing to join in sanctions against Tehran.

At the same time, the cables reveal how Iran’s ascent has unified Israel and many longtime Arab adversaries — notably the Saudis — in a common cause. Publicly, these Arab states held their tongues, for fear of a domestic uproar and the retributions of a powerful neighbor. Privately, they clamored for strong action — by someone else.
If they seemed obsessed with Iran, though, they also seemed deeply conflicted about how to deal with it — with diplomacy, covert action or force. In one typical cable, a senior Omani military officer is described as unable to decide what is worse: “a strike against Iran’s nuclear capability and the resulting turmoil it would cause in the Gulf, or inaction and having to live with a nuclear-capable Iran.”

Still, running beneath the cables is a belief among many leaders that unless the current government in Tehran falls, Iran will have a bomb sooner or later. And the Obama administration appears doubtful that a military strike would change that.

One of the final cables, on Feb. 12 of this year, recounts a lunch meeting in Paris between Hervé Morin, then the French defense minister, and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. Mr. Morin raised the delicate topic of whether Israel could strike Iran without American support.

Mr. Gates responded “that he didn’t know if they would be successful, but that Israel could carry out the operation.”

Then he added a stark assessment: any strike “would only delay Iranian plans by one to three years, while unifying the Iranian people to be forever embittered against the attacker.”

In 2005, Iran abruptly abandoned an agreement with the Europeans and announced that it would resume uranium enrichment activities. As its program grew, beginning with a handful of centrifuges, so, too, did many Arab states’ fears of an Iranian bomb and exasperation over American inability to block Tehran’s progress.

To some extent, this Arab obsession with Iran was rooted in the uneasy sectarian division of the Muslim world, between the Shiites who rule Iran, and the Sunnis, who dominate most of the region. Those strains had been drawn tauter with the invasion of Iraq, which effectively transferred control of the government there from Sunni to Shiite leaders, many close to Iran.

In December 2005, the Saudi king expressed his anger that the Bush administration had ignored his advice against going to war. According to a cable from the American Embassy in Riyadh, the king argued “that whereas in the past the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Saddam Hussein had agreed on the need to contain Iran, U.S. policy had now given Iraq to Iran as a ‘gift on a golden platter.’ ”

Regional distrust had only deepened with the election that year of a hard-line Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

During a meeting on Dec. 27, 2005, with the commander of the United States Central Command, Gen. John P. Abizaid, military leaders from the United Arab Emirates “all agreed with Abizaid that Iran’s new President Ahmadinejad seemed unbalanced, crazy even,” one cable reports. A few months later, the Emirates’ defense chief, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed of Abu Dhabi, told General Abizaid that the United States needed to take action against Iran “this year or next.”

The question was what kind of action.

Previously, the crown prince had relayed the Emirates’ fear that “it was only a
matter of time before Israel or the U.S. would strike Iranian nuclear facility targets.” That
could provoke an outcome that the Emirates’ leadership considered “catastrophic”: Iranian missile strikes on American military installations in nearby countries like the Emirates.

Now, with Iran boasting in the spring of 2006 that it had successfully accomplished low-level uranium enrichment, the crown prince began to argue less equivocally, cables show. He stressed “that he wasn’t suggesting that the first option was ‘bombing’ Iran,” but also warned, “They have to be dealt with before they do something tragic.”

The Saudis, too, increased the pressure. In an April 2008 meeting with Gen. David H. Petraeus, then the incoming Central Command chief, the Saudi ambassador to Washington recalled the king’s “frequent exhortations to the U.S. to attack Iran,” and the foreign minister said that while he preferred economic pressure, the “use of military pressure against Iran should not be ruled out.”

Yet if the Persian Gulf allies were frustrated by American inaction, American officials were equally frustrated by the Arabs’ unwillingness to speak out against Iran. “We need our friends to say that they stand with the Americans,” General Abizaid told Emirates officials, according to one cable.

By the time Mr. Bush left office in January 2009, Iran had installed 8,000 centrifuges (though only half were running) and was enriching uranium at a rate that, with further processing, would let it produce a bomb’s worth of fuel a year. With that progress came increased Israeli pressure.

After the Israeli defense minister issued his ultimatum in May 2009, the chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, followed up in November.

“There is still time for diplomacy, but we should not forget that Iran’s centrifuges are working day and night,” he told a delegation led by Representative Ike Skelton, the Democratic chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

That, in turn, led Arab leaders to press even more forcefully for the United States to act — before Israel did. Crown Prince bin Zayed, predicting in July 2009 that an Israeli attack could come by year’s end, suggested the danger of appeasing Iran. “Ahmadinejad is Hitler,” he declared.

Seemingly taken aback, a State Department official replied, “We do not anticipate military confrontation with Iran before the end of 2009.”

So it was that the United States had put together a largely silent front of Arab states whose positions on sanctions and a potential attack looked much like Israel’s.

**Banks and Businesses**

Despite an American trade embargo and several rounds of United Nations sanctions, the Bush administration had never forged the global coalition needed to impose truly painful international penalties on Iran. While France and Britain were supportive, countries like Germany, Russia and China that traded extensively with Iran
were reluctant, at best.

In the breach, the United States embarked on a campaign to convince foreign banks and companies that it was in their interest to stop doing business with Iran, by demonstrating how Tehran used its banks, ships, planes and front companies to evade existing sanctions and feed its nuclear and missile programs.

The cables show some notable moments of success, particularly with the banks. But they also make it clear that stopping Iran from obtaining needed technology was a maddening endeavor, with spies and money-laundering experts chasing shipments and transactions in whack-a-mole fashion, often to be stymied by recalcitrant foreign diplomats.

One cable details how the United States asked the Italians to stop the planned export to Iran of 12 fast boats, which could attack American warships in the gulf. Italy did so only after months of “foot-dragging, during which the initial eleven boats were shipped,” the embassy in Rome reported.

Another cable recounts China’s repeated refusal to act on detailed information about shipments of missile parts from North Korea to Beijing, where they were loaded aboard Iran Air flights to Tehran.

The election of Mr. Obama, at least initially, left some countries wondering whether the sanctions push was about to end. Shortly after taking office, in a videotaped message timed to the Persian New Year, he reiterated his campaign offer of a “new beginning” — the first sustained talks in three decades with Tehran.

The United Arab Emirates called Mr. Obama’s message “confusing.” The American Embassy in Saudi Arabia reported that the talk about engaging Iran had “fueled Saudi fears that a new U.S. administration might strike a ‘grand bargain’ without prior consultations.”

In Europe, Germany and others discerned an effort to grab market share. “According to the British, other EU Member states fear the U.S. is preparing to take commercial advantage of a new relationship with Iran and subsequently are slowing the EU sanctions process,” the American Embassy in London reported.

The administration, though, had a different strategy in mind.

The man chosen to begin wiping out the confusion was Daniel Glaser, a little-known official with a title that took two breaths to enunciate in full: acting assistant secretary of the Treasury for terrorist financing and financial crimes.

The first big rollout of his message appears to have come in Brussels on March 2 and 3, 2009, during what the cables called “an unprecedented classified briefing” to more than 70 Middle East experts from European governments.

Mr. Glaser got right to the point. Yes, engagement was part of the administration’s overall strategy. “However, ‘engagement’ alone is unlikely to succeed,” Mr. Glaser said. And to those concerned that the offer of reconciliation was open-ended, one cable said, he replied curtly that “time was not on our side.”

The relief among countries supporting sanctions was palpable enough to pierce the
cables’ smooth diplomatese. “Iran needs to fear the stick and feel a light ‘tap’ now,” said Robert Cooper, a senior European Union official.

“Glaser agreed, noting the stick could escalate beyond financial measures under a worst case scenario,” a cable said.

The Czechs were identified as surprisingly enthusiastic behind-the-scenes allies. Another section of the same cable was titled “Single Out but Understand the E.U. Foot-Draggers”: Sweden, considered something of a ringleader, followed by Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg, Spain, Austria, Portugal and Romania.

The decoding of Mr. Obama’s plan was apparently all the Europeans needed, and by year’s end, even Germany, with its suspicions and longstanding trading ties with Iran, appeared to be on board.

**China’s Concerns**

Still, there could be little meaningful action without Russia and China. Both are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, where multilateral action would have to pass, and both possess a global reach that could effectively scuttle much of what the United States tried on its own.

The cables indicate that the administration undertook multilayered diplomatic moves to help ensure that neither would cast a Council veto to protect Iran.

As of early 2010, China imported nearly 12 percent of its oil from Iran and worried that supporting sanctions would imperil that supply. Obama administration officials have previously said that the year before, a senior adviser on Iran, Dennis B. Ross, traveled to Saudi Arabia to seek a guarantee that it would supply the lost oil if China were cut off.

The cables show that Mr. Ross had indeed been in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, in April 2009. While there is no direct account of those meetings, a suggestion of dazzling success turns up later, in cables describing meetings between Saudi and Chinese officials.

The offer may have come during a Jan. 13 meeting in Riyadh between Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi of China and King Abdullah and other senior Saudi officials, one of whom told Mr. Yang, “Saudi Arabia understood China was concerned about having access to energy supplies, which could be cut off by Iran,” according to one cable.

The conversation, evidently shaped by Mr. Ross’s request, developed from there, the cable indicated. A later cable noted simply, “Saudi Arabia has told the Chinese that it is willing to effectively trade a guaranteed oil supply in return for Chinese pressure on Iran not to develop nuclear weapons.”

That left Russia.

**Dealing With Russia**

Throughout 2009, the cables show, the Russians vehemently objected to American plans for a ballistic missile defense site in Poland and the Czech Republic. Conceived
under President Bush and billed as a shield against long-range Iranian missiles that American intelligence said were under development, the site was an irritant to Russia, which contended that it was really designed to shoot down Russian missiles.

In talks with the United States, the Russians insisted that there would be no cooperation on other issues until the Eastern Europe site was scrapped. Those demands crested on July 29, when a senior Russian official repeatedly disrupted a meeting with Russia’s objections, according to one cable.

Six weeks later, Mr. Obama gave the Russians what they wanted: he abruptly replaced the Eastern Europe site with a ship-borne system. That system, at least in its present form, is engineered to protect specific areas against short- and medium-range missiles, not pulverize long-range missiles soaring above the atmosphere. Mr. Obama explained the shift by saying that intelligence assessments had changed, and that the long-range missile threat appeared to be growing more slowly than previously thought.

The cables are silent on whether at some higher level, Russia hinted that Security Council action against Iran would be easier with the site gone. But another secret meeting with the Russians last December, recounted in the cables, may help explain why Mr. Obama was willing to shift focus to the short- and medium-range threat, at least in the near term.

In the meeting, American officials said nothing about a slowing of the long-range threat, as cited by Mr. Obama. In fact, they insisted that North Korea had sent Iran 19 advanced missiles, based on a Russian design, that could clear a path toward the development of long-range missiles. According to unclassified estimates of their range, though, they would also immediately allow Iran to strike Western Europe or easily reach Moscow — essentially the threat the revamped system was designed for.

Russia is deeply skeptical that Iran has obtained the advanced missiles, or that their North Korean version, called the BM-25, even exists. “For Russia, the BM-25 is a mysterious missile,” a Russian official said. (That argument was dealt a blow last month, when North Korea rolled out what some experts identified as those very missiles in a military parade.)

Whatever the dynamic, Mr. Obama had removed the burr under the Russians’ saddle, and in January 2010, one cable reported, a senior Russian official “indicated Russia’s willingness to move to the pressure track.”

The cables obtained by WikiLeaks end in February 2010, before the last-minute maneuvering that led to a fourth round of Security Council sanctions and even stiffer measures — imposed by the United States, the Europeans, Australia and Japan — that experts say are beginning to pinch Iran’s economy. But while Mr. Ahmadinejad has recently offered to resume nuclear negotiations, the cables underscore the extent to which Iran’s true intentions remain a mystery.

As Crown Prince bin Zayed of Abu Dhabi put it in one cable: “Any culture that is patient and focused enough to spend years working on a single carpet is capable of waiting years and even decades to achieve even greater goals.” His greatest worry, he
said, “is not how much we know about Iran, but how much we don’t.”

William J. Broad and Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting.

—This article was originally published on November 28, 2010

OTHER RELATED CABLES

An Arab Defense Chief on Strikes Against Iran
Wider Window Into Iran’s Missile Capabilities Offers a Murkier View

By MARK MAZZETTI and WILLIAM J. BROAD

WASHINGTON — It was one of the most provocative assertions to emerge from the WikiLeaks cache — a diplomatic cable from this past February confidently describing the sale of 19 missiles to Iran by North Korea that could give Tehran the ability to strike Western Europe and Russia.

But a review of a dozen other State Department cables made available by WikiLeaks and interviews with American government officials offer a murkier picture of Iran’s missile capabilities. Despite the tone of the February cable, it shows there are disagreements among officials about the missiles, and scant evidence that they are close to being deployed.

The conflicting portraits illustrate how the batch of diplomatic documents made available by WikiLeaks can be glimpses of the American government’s views, sometimes reflecting only part of the story, rather than concrete assertions of fact.

While there are a range of opinions about the details of the weapons sale and the readiness of the missiles, what most American officials appear to agree on is that at the very least North Korea sold a number of ballistic missile parts to Tehran in 2005.

The sale set off alarms in Washington, because the parts were for BM-25 missiles, a weapon with powerful engines that — if deployed by Iran — could bolster Tehran’s ability to strike far beyond the Middle East, State Department cables show.

But five years later, American officials in interviews said that they had no evidence that Iran had used the parts or technology to actually construct a BM-25, let alone begin the years of flight testing necessary before it could reliably add the missile to its arsenal.

It is unclear why Iran appears to have had trouble with the BM-25. According to one American official, it is possible that Iran did not get complete “missile kits” from the North Koreans in 2005, or that Iranian scientists have had difficulty mastering the technology.

Both American officials and outside experts appear to agree, however, that Iran did use some of the BM-25 technology to launch a satellite into space last year, and that Iranian scientists probably used data from that launching for its military program.

“Just because the BM-25 program hasn’t progressed as far as the Iranians hoped it would, the concern remains,” said one official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because assessments about Iran’s missile program are classified.

The dozen cables provide a glimpse of secret discussions between the United States and a number of foreign governments about the BM-25, described earlier this week in an article in The New York Times. Their views are colored by their relationships with Iran.

The Israelis, for instance, take a more alarmist stance than the United States because Israel regards Iran as its greatest threat. Russia, on the other hand, denies that the
BM-25 even exists.

In the cables, American officials argue that North Korea developed the medium-range weapon based on a Russian design, the R-27, once used on Soviet submarines to carry nuclear warheads.

The cables describe how the North Koreans, in turn, transferred “missiles” or “missile systems” to Iran. The cables do not refer to missile parts or “kits.”

But the cables, written over four years, vary in the certainty with which Americans make the claim about the technology transfer, with one cable saying Iran “has probably acquired” BM-25s and another discussing “substantial data indicating Iranian possession of a missile system.”

The public release of the cables has stirred debate among experts outside the government on the existence of the BM-25 and whether, if Iran has the weapon, it poses an immediate threat to Western Europe.

Many experts say the BM-25 has undergone no flight testing either by North Korea or Iran, and they note that traditionally it takes a dozen or so tests over several years to perfect a missile and prepare it for military deployment.

On the other hand, NATO last month agreed to establish an antimissile shield and has invited Russia to take part, suggesting growing concern in Europe of an Iranian missile threat.

One of the most knowledgeable public analysts of Tehran’s endeavors in rocketry is Michael Elleman, a missile engineer who contributed to a report on Iran’s program issued in May by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, an arms analysis group in London.

That report was skeptical of Iran’s having obtained the BM-25 from North Korea. Now, Mr. Elleman said, he is less certain.

“It is possible that the BM-25 does not exist,” he said in an e-mail message. “However, it is more likely that it does, in some fashion. We just do not know, precisely, because it has never been tested.”

The first cable in the WikiLeaks cache that refers to the BM-25 came from the American Embassy in Tel Aviv, sent to Washington on May 5, 2006. The cable discusses a meeting a month earlier between Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, the Connecticut independent, and Meir Dagan, director of Mossad, Israel’s main spy agency.

According to the cable, Mr. Dagan talked of Iran’s having a medium-range missile, the Shahab-3, that “can currently carry nuclear material, and reported that Iran is also trying to adapt the BM-25 missile, which already has a longer range, for this purpose.”

American intelligence officials do not believe that Iran has yet mastered the technology to put a nuclear warhead on top of a missile.

But the most detailed discussion about the missile is contained in a cable from Feb. 24 of this year, which describes the disagreements between American and Russian officials about the missile.

The cable shows that American officials firmly believed that Iran had obtained 19
of the missiles from North Korea, and that there was direct evidence of the weapons transfer. But it goes on to indicate that the Russians dismiss that claim as a myth driven by politics.

Mark Mazzetti reported from Washington, and William J. Broad from New York.

—This article was originally published on December 3, 2010
Meddling Neighbors Undercut Iraq Stability

Iraq’s police and security forces preparing for the planned withdrawal of American troops in 2011.

By MICHAEL R. GORDON

WASHINGTON — Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was a regional menace that sent shudders through its neighbors. Today’s Iraqi leaders are struggling to restrain the ambitions of the countries that share Iraq’s porous borders, eye the country’s rich resources and vie for influence.

“All Iraq’s neighbors were interfering, albeit in different ways, the Gulf and Saudi Arabia with money, Iran with money and political influence, and the Syrians by all means,” Jalal Talabani, Iraq’s president and the senior Kurdish official in the government, told Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates in a Dec. 10, 2009, meeting, according to a diplomatic cable. “The Turks are ‘polite’ in their interference, but continue their attempts to influence Iraq’s Turkmen community and Sunnis in Mosul.”

With American troops preparing to withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2011, the meddling threatens to aggravate the sectarian divisions in the country and undermine efforts by Iraq’s leaders to get beyond bitter rivalries and build a stable government. It
also shows how deeply Iraq’s leaders depend on the United States to manage that meddling, even as it exposes the increasing limits on America’s ability to do so.

Cables obtained by the anti-secrecy organization WikiLeaks and made available to several news organizations describe flustered Iraqi leaders complaining of interference by manipulative neighbors, some of whom — in the view of the United States — do not want it to regain its previous position of power.

“The challenge for us is to convince Iraq neighbors, particularly the Sunni Arab governments, that relations with a new Iraq are not a zero-sum game, where if Iraq wins, they lose,” noted a Sept. 24, 2009, cable from Ambassador Christopher R. Hill, which was aptly titled “The Great Game, in Mesopotamia.” American diplomatic cables disclosed by WikiLeaks show that Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki’s fears about outside interference are so great that he asked President Obama during a July 2009 visit to Washington to stop the Saudis from intervening. Saudi Arabia’s efforts to rally the Sunnis, the Iraqi leader complained, were heightening sectarian tensions and providing Iran with an excuse to intervene in Iraqi politics, according to an account of the Oval Office session Mr. Maliki shared with Ambassador Hill.

The suspicions have often been mutual. “I don’t trust this man,” King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia told John O. Brennan, Mr. Obama’s top counterterrorism adviser, according to a cable about a March 15, 2009, meeting at the king’s private palace in Saudi Arabia. “He is an Iranian agent.”

Jockeying for influence in Iraq by outside countries has been going on ever since Mr. Hussein was ousted, hardly surprising given Iraq’s strategic position in the Middle East, its vast oil reserves, its multisectarian population and the fact that it is a nascent, if unsteady, democracy largely surrounded by undemocratic neighbors.

The Iranians, who waged a bloody eight-year war with Mr. Hussein, have no desire to see a strong Iraq emerge from the ashes of his regime, especially one that has ties with the United States.

So they have sought to influence its politics by funneling cash to Iraqi political factions, ordering assassinations and shipping arms to militants, some of which an Oct. 23, 2008, cable from Dubai warned might be disguised as medical supplies. The Saudis, who see Iran as the chief threat in the region, have used their satellite television stations and deep pockets to support Sunni groups. Syria, which Iraqi leaders have repeatedly complained to American diplomats is dominated by a Baathist regime sympathetic to the ousted Baathists in Iraq, has allowed insurgent fighters to sneak into Iraq. Even Turkey, which has good relations with the Iraqi government, has secretly financed nationalist and anti-Kurdish Sunni political parties.

Some top Iraqi politicians have tried to cast themselves as the right ones to resist Iranian influence and help Iraq improve ties with its Arab neighbors.

Ayad Allawi, who leads the Iraqiya Party, has emphasized his relationship with Arab leaders while his supporters have cast Mr. Maliki’s Dawa Party supporters as fearful of interacting with the Arab world, the cables show. Mr. Maliki’s aides have
presented themselves and their boss as being more savvy about resisting Iranian pressure
than many of their rivals — if only the Americans can keep the Saudis in line.

Iran, by the United States’ reckoning, has done the most to try to shape Iraqi politics. A Nov. 13, 2009, cable sent by Ambassador Hill, which called Iran “a dominant player in Iraq’s electoral politics,” estimated that Iran’s annual support to political groups in Iraq was $100 million to $200 million. Some $70 million of that, the cable asserts, is directed to the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq, a leading Shiite party that has also worked closely with American officials, and its former militia, the Badr Corps.

Using an acronym for the Iranian government, the ambassador acknowledged Iran’s pragmatism: “The IRIG recognizes that influence in Iraq requires operational (and at times ideological) flexibility. As a result, it is not uncommon for the IRIG to finance and support competing Shia, Kurdish, and to some extent, Sunni entities, with the aim of developing the Iraqi body politic’s dependency on Tehran’s largesse.”

In a Sept. 24, 2009, cable titled “Prime Minister Accuses Iran of Trying to DeStabilize Iraq,” Ambassador Hill reported that Mr. Maliki had told him that Iran was trying to use its money and influence to try to “control” the Iraqi Parliament and was prepared to provide military support to Shiite militants if political efforts failed. Iran, Ambassador Hill quoted Mr. Maliki as saying, was trying to rally the Shiites to counter the “Saudi project to align the Sunni states.”

Some cables nonetheless reflect American concern that Dawa Party officials inserted into government posts by Mr. Maliki may have close ties to Iran. A February cable prepared by the embassy’s political officer notes that Mr. Maliki has moved to replace intelligence officers accused of having Baathists ties with Dawa Party loyalists. After pushback from Iraqi officials, and, apparently, interventions by American officials, the number of suspected Baathists who were to be fired was reduced. But a military intelligence headquarters was forced to hire 47 Dawa political officers who had been in exile in Iran, “where they may have received intelligence training,” the cable notes.

American diplomats and generals have told Arab leaders in the region that the best way to counter Iran’s ambitions is to establish a good working relationship with Mr. Maliki, which means sending ambassadors to Baghdad and refraining from financing and mobilizing opposition groups or insurgents that seek to undermine him. But as Ambassador Hill acknowledged in his cable on the “Great Game,” American diplomats “still have work to do to convince them that a strong, stable, democratic (and inevitably Shia-led) Iraq is the best guarantee that Iraq will be able to shake Iranian manipulations and see its future bound up with that of the West and its moderate Arab neighbors.”

Of all the Arab leaders in the region, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, the cables suggest, was the most sympathetic to the American approach, a policy that reflects Egypt’s deep suspicions of Iran. Omar Suleiman, Egypt’s intelligence chief, told Gen. David H. Petraeus in a June 2009 meeting that Egypt’s goal was “to bring Iraq back to the Arab World.”

Toward this end, Egypt promised to send a new ambassador to Baghdad, a
noteworthy move given that the previous Egyptian ambassador was kidnapped by insurgents and killed in 2005. In a conversation with King Abdullah, President Mubarak advised the Saudi monarch “not to search for another man,” but instead to accept Mr. Maliki, Mr. Suleiman confided.

The Saudis, on the other hand, have good ties with Mr. Maliki’s principal rival. They may have been unwilling to deal with Mr. Maliki or send an ambassador to Baghdad, but a Feb. 23, 2010, American Embassy cable from Riyadh notes that King Abdullah rolled out the red carpet for Mr. Allawi.

Like the Iranians, the Saudis have not hesitated to use their money and political influence inside Iraq, according to American diplomats. “For now the Saudis are using their money and media power (al-Arabiyya, al-Sharqiya satellite channels, and other various media they control or influence) to support Sunni political aspirations, exert influence over Sunni tribal groups, and undercut the Shia-led Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) and Iraqi National Alliance (INA),” Ambassador Hill’s “Great Game” cable noted.

And Mr. Talabani complained in a Dec. 14, 2009, meeting with a senior State Department official that the Saudis “had pressured Kuwait to backtrack on initial agreements with Iraq on issues dating to the Saddam-era,” a cable noted. (The cable quoted Mr. Talabani as saying that Qatar and Bahrain were seeking better ties with Iraq “despite Saudi opposition.”)

Syria has been another difficult neighbor. It has long been accused by the Iraqis of harboring senior Iraq Baath Party members aligned with the former regime, and allowing foreign fighters to sneak into Iraq. The Obama administration sought to improve ties with President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and even sent a team from the United States Central Command to Syria to discuss ways to better control the border. But after a series of bombings in Baghdad in August 2009, which Mr. Maliki attributed to Syria, the Iraqis refused to take part in the talks.

In a December 2009 meeting with Jeffrey D. Feltman, an assistant secretary of state, Mr. Maliki, who lived in Syria for 16 years during Mr. Hussein’s rule, described the Syrians as more difficult to deal with than the Iranians and recounted that the Syrians had boasted to him during his years in exile that they were skilled in negotiating with the Americans, a cable said.

Of all Iraq’s neighbors, Turkey has forged one of the best relationships with the Iraqi government and with Kurdish officials in northern Iraq. Turkey, the cables note, also played an important role in helping the United States and Iraq negotiate the security agreement that provides for the withdrawal of American troops by the end of 2011.

But Turkey has been unable to resist the temptation to intervene in Iraqi politics. Turkey, an April 2009 cable noted, “played an unhelpful role in recent Iraqi provincial elections through its clandestine financial support of the anti-Kurd al Hadba Gathering,” a Sunni-led political group that prevailed in provincial elections in Nineveh Province in Iraq.
According to a Jan. 31, 2010, cable from Ambassador Hill, Turkey’s ambassador to Baghdad, Murat Ozcelik, also opposed Mr. Maliki’s bid to win re-election in his talks with American diplomats. While Turkey had supported Mr. Maliki in the past, Mr. Ozcelik said it was backing his rivals now because the Turks believed that if Mr. Maliki was re-elected he “would focus on increasing his own power and would not be cooperative in resolving outstanding issues,” Ambassador Hill reported.

—This article was originally published on December 5, 2010

OTHER RELATED CABLES
“The Great Game, in Iraq,” Part 2
Yemen Sets Terms of a War on Al Qaeda

By SCOTT SHANE

WASHINGTON — One Obama administration security official after another was visiting to talk about terrorism, and Yemen’s redoubtable president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, seemed to be savoring his newfound leverage.

The Americans are “hot-blooded and hasty when you need us,” Mr. Saleh chided one visitor, Daniel Benjamin, the State Department’s counterterrorism chief, but “cold-blooded and British when we need you.”

It was Jan. 31, just a few weeks after a young Nigerian trained and equipped in Yemen had tried to blow up an airliner as it approached Detroit. The wave of attention to Al Qaeda’s Yemen branch and its American-born propagandist, Anwar al-Awlaki, might not do much for tourism, but paradoxically it did give the Yemeni leader more influence.

Mr. Saleh said coyly that while he was “satisfied” with the military equipment the
United States was supplying, he “would like to be more satisfied in the future,” according to an account of the meeting sent to Washington.

Diplomatic cables obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to several news organizations offer the most intimate view to date of the wily, irreverent and sometimes erratic Yemeni autocrat, who over the past year has become steadily more aggressive against Al Qaeda. But he appears determined to join the fight on his own terms, sometimes accommodating and other times rebuffing American requests on counterterrorism.

The cables do not substantially alter the public picture of Mr. Saleh (pronounced SAH-leh), 68, a former military officer who has led Yemen for three decades. But with direct quotations from private meetings, the cables are like crisp color photographs of what was previously in fuzzy black and white.

Yemen, long an arid, impoverished afterthought for the United States, now draws high-level American attention far out of proportion to its size. In October, militants in Yemen sent off printer cartridges packed with explosives to Chicago addresses. The bombs were intercepted, but the plot set off a furor and prompted the latest in a series of phone calls between President Obama and his Yemeni counterpart about counterterrorism and aid.

At times, the cables show, Mr. Saleh has not hesitated to use his country’s daunting problems as a kind of threat.

“Referencing the high poverty rate and illicit arms flows into both Yemen and Somalia, Saleh concluded by saying, ‘If you don’t help, this country will become worse than Somalia,’ ” said a September 2009 cable from the American ambassador, Stephen A. Seche, describing Mr. Saleh as being in “vintage form.”

The cables portray Yemen, a land of 23 million people that is nearly the size of Texas, as a beleaguered, often baffling place, bristling with arms and riven by tribal conflict, where shoulder-launched missiles go missing and the jihad-curious arrive from all over the world. The Americans are seen coaxing the Yemenis to go after Al Qaeda, working out the rules for American missile strikes, seeking a safe way to send Yemeni prisoners home from the Guantánamo Bay prison and sizing up Americans caught in Yemeni security sweeps.

Always at the center of the diplomatic traffic is Mr. Saleh, who first appears seeking a half-million tons of wheat in a 1990 meeting with James A. Baker III, then the secretary of state. These days, his most pressing requests are for heavy weapons and military training. But he also has become more cooperative with the American campaign against Al Qaeda.

In a 2009 meeting with John O. Brennan, President Obama’s top counterterrorism adviser, Mr. Saleh offered an unusual bargain. He “insisted that Yemen’s national territory is available for unilateral CT operations by the U.S.” — but with a catch. If there were to be an attack on a Western target, Mr. Saleh said, it would not be his fault.

“I have given you an open door on terrorism,” he said, “so I am not responsible.”
In fact, despite such rhetoric, Mr. Saleh has imposed strict limits over American operations in his country, even as he has helped disguise them as his own.

When the first two American missile strikes against Qaeda camps in Yemen took place in December 2009, Mr. Saleh publicly claimed that they were Yemeni strikes to avert any anti-American backlash. Gen. David H. Petraeus flew to Yemen to thank the president, who promised to keep up the ruse. “We’ll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours,” Mr. Saleh said, according to a cable.

A deputy prime minister, Rashad al-Alimi, had already assured the Americans that “U.S. munitions found at the sites” of strikes “could be explained away as equipment purchased from the U.S.”

Moreover, Mr. Alimi implied that Yemeni officials accepted as inevitable that the missiles had killed civilians along with militants. They were Bedouin families — “poor people selling food and supplies to the terrorists” and thus “acting in collusion with the terrorists and benefiting financially,” he said.

Still, Mr. Saleh told General Petraeus that “mistakes were made” in the killing of civilians. He agreed to the American commander’s proposal that to improve accuracy, future strikes would be carried out by American aircraft rather than by cruise missiles fired from distant ships.

But he firmly denied General Petraeus’s request to send American advisers along on Yemeni counterterrorism operations. For his part, General Petraeus put off Mr. Saleh’s request for 12 armed helicopters, even though the president promised to use them “only against Al Qaeda.” The United States has been wary of fueling the Yemeni government’s long-running conflicts with the so-called Houthi rebels in the north and secessionists in the south.

The two sides also sparred over Yemen’s restrictions on material the United States shipped to its embassy in the diplomatic pouch, which the Yemenis evidently suspected was being used to import eavesdropping equipment. The Americans have complained about poor security at the airport in Sana, Yemen’s capital, including X-ray screeners who do not watch their monitors, and also security officers who “harass” American diplomats.

Beyond such testy bargaining, emptying the Guantánamo Bay prison, where Yemenis are the single largest group remaining, has been a regular source of tension. When Mr. Saleh rejected an American plan to send the Yemenis to a Saudi rehabilitation program in March 2009, a cable described him as “dismissive, bored and impatient” and said he had “missed a good chance to engage the new administration on one of its key foreign policy priorities.”

At the same time, the embassy was tracking the growing number of Yemeni arrests of expatriate Americans suspected of having links to militants. By last February, such arrests were occurring about once a week, and Mr. Seche wrote to Washington that the embassy’s “sharply increased workload” urgently required more personnel.

“In the past two years, the Muslim convert community of Amcits living in Yemen,”
Mr. Seche wrote, using shorthand for American citizens, “has been increasingly linked to extremist activities.” Sorting out such cases was difficult, a February cable said, citing an American woman who had reported the midnight arrest of her husband but appeared to be “omitting or manipulating critical details.”

Yemen had become a magnet for would-be jihadists from around the globe, and a January cable listed 23 Australian citizens and residents to be added to terrorism watch lists because of activities in Yemen or connections to Mr. Awlaki, the radical cleric hiding there. Many of the Australians were women, and Qaeda operatives in Yemen were seeking “to identify a female for a future attack,” the cable said.

The cables report on **American and Yemeni attempts to track down** and destroy stocks of the shoulder-fired missiles known as “manpads,” for man-portable air-defense systems. Their lethality against aircraft make them a major counterterrorism concern.

Yemen’s Defense Ministry insisted that it had no stocks of such missiles, but Yemen’s National Security Bureau — a newer agency that works closely with the United States — told the Americans that the Defense Ministry “does indeed have MANPADS, but would never speak of them because they are considered a state secret.”

A close ally in the counterterrorism efforts, the cables make clear, is Prince Muhammad bin Nayef, the deputy interior minister in neighboring Saudi Arabia, who in October tipped off American officials about the parcel bomb plot. Shortly after the attempted bombing of the airliner bound for Detroit, Prince Nayef told Gen. James L. Jones, then President Obama’s national security adviser, that the only way to combat Al Qaeda in Yemen was to “keep them on the run” and that Yemeni and American strikes on Al Qaeda were proving effective.

Saudi authorities “have been monitoring conversations of Al Qaeda operatives in Yemen very closely, and whereas before the attack they were hearing relaxed 20-minute phone conversations over cellphones, after the attack the phones went virtually silent,” Prince Nayef said, according to a cable. That showed that Qaeda operatives “are more focused on their own security rather than on planning operations,” he said.

*Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.*
Libya Delayed Nuclear Fuel Disposal Deal

By ERIC SCHMITT

WASHINGTON — In the early morning of Nov. 25, 2009, a large Russian cargo plane left the Libyan capital, Tripoli, on a secret mission without its intended cargo.

A small stockpile of spent nuclear fuel destined for disposal in Russia remained behind in a lightly guarded research center, apparently because of a fit of pique by Libya’s mercurial leader, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi. In a frantic cable back to Washington, American officials in Tripoli warned of dire consequences unless the carefully brokered deal to remove the 5.2 kilograms (11.4 pounds) of highly enriched uranium stored in seven five-ton casks was quickly resurrected.

If the enriched uranium “is not removed from the casks within three months, its rising temperature could cause the casks to crack and to release radioactive nuclear material,” the American Embassy in Tripoli reported, according to cables made public by WikiLeaks. "Security concerns alone dictate that we must employ all of our resources to find a timely solution to this problem, and to keep any mention of it out of the press.”

The seeds of what appeared to be the demise of the secret deal were planted weeks earlier in New York, when Colonel Qaddafi expressed unhappiness that he was not permitted to set up his tent in Manhattan or to visit ground zero during a United Nations session.

But the scope of the colonel’s anger was not fully realized until Nov. 20, 2009, when the Libyan government unexpectedly ordered a team of visiting American and Russian scientists to halt preparations to ship the spent nuclear fuel to Russia, despite separate agreements Libya had reached with the United States and Russia.

The Libyans, in fact, had already agreed to pay $30,000 to have the Russians remove the material and bury it in a secure location. The episode was first reported by The Atlantic on Nov. 27, before WikiLeaks posted the cables.

Colonel Qaddafi’s son Seif al-Islam el-Qaddafi told the American ambassador on Nov. 27 that Libya balked at its promise to ship its final enriched uranium stockpile because it was “fed up” with the slow pace of improved relations with Washington. Libya had agreed in 2003 to dismantle its unconventional weapons program in exchange for greater military, security and economic cooperation.

“The Libyan Government has chosen a very dangerous issue on which to express its apparent pique about perceived problems in the bilateral relationship,” the American ambassador, Gene A. Cretz, wrote to Washington.

Diplomats warned that if the enriched uranium was not sent to Russia soon, Russian scientists would be required to develop entirely new and risky technology to remove the spent fuel from the casks in Libya itself.

In the next few weeks, the cables revealed, American and Russian officials prevailed upon the Libyans to disengage the research center’s loading crane to prevent an
intruder from moving the casks. Extra security guards were sent to the site. (Before that, diplomats noted that they had seen only one guard with a gun and they raised doubts whether that was even loaded.)

American and Russian officials successfully smoothed Colonel Qaddafi’s ruffled feathers.

By late December, the Russian aircraft was back on the tarmac in Tripoli. Visiting United States Energy Department officials reported that the loading of the casks overnight on Dec. 20-21 was carried out without a hitch. Libyan officials at the Tajoura Nuclear Center offered no insights into the reasons behind the government’s about-face.

At 5:15 a.m. on Dec. 21, the Russian-chartered plane took off. Energy Department officials confirmed several hours later that the flight — and its secret cargo — had arrived in Russia.

---This article was originally published on December 3, 2010
Cash Flow to Terrorists Evades U.S. Efforts

The Afghan opium trade is a source of money for extremist groups that is hard to stanch.

By ERIC LICHTBLAU and ERIC SCHMITT
WASHINGTON — Nine years after the United States vowed to shut down the money pipeline that finances terrorism, senior Obama administration officials say they believe that many millions of dollars are flowing largely unimpeded to extremist groups worldwide, and they have grown frustrated by frequent resistance from allies in the Middle East, according to secret diplomatic dispatches.

The government cables, sent by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and senior State Department officials, catalog a list of methods that American officials suspect terrorist financiers are using, including a brazen bank robbery in Yemen last year, kidnappings for ransom, the harvesting of drug proceeds in Afghanistan and fund-raising at religious pilgrimages to Mecca, where millions of riyals or other forms of currency change hands.

While American officials have publicly been relatively upbeat about their progress in disrupting terrorist financing, the internal State Department cables, obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to several news organizations, offer a more pessimistic
account, with blunt assessments of the threats to the United States from money flowing to militants affiliated with Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Hamas, Lashkar-e-Taiba and other groups.

A classified memo sent by Mrs. Clinton last December made it clear that residents of Saudi Arabia and its neighbors, all allies of the United States, are the chief financial supporters of many extremist activities. “It has been an ongoing challenge to persuade Saudi officials to treat terrorist financing emanating from Saudi Arabia as a strategic priority,” the cable said, concluding that “donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide.”

The dispatch and others offered similarly grim views about the United Arab Emirates (“a strategic gap” that terrorists can exploit), Qatar (“the worst in the region” on counterterrorism) and Kuwait (“a key transit point”). The cable stressed the need to “generate the political will necessary” to block money to terrorist networks — groups that she said were “threatening stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan and targeting coalition soldiers.”

While President George W. Bush frequently vowed to cut off financing for militants and pledged to make financiers as culpable as terrorists who carried out plots, President Obama has been far less vocal on the issue publicly as he has sought to adopt a more conciliatory tone with Arab nations. But his administration has used many of the same covert diplomatic, intelligence and law enforcement tools as his predecessor and set up a special task force in the summer of 2009 to deal with the growing problem.

While federal officials can point to some successes — prosecutions, seizures of money and tightened money-laundering regulations in foreign countries — the results have often been frustrating, the cables show. As the United States has pushed for more aggressive crackdowns on suspected supporters of terrorism, foreign leaders have pushed back. In private meetings, they have accused American officials of heavy-handedness and of presenting thin evidence of wrongdoing by Arab charities or individuals, according to numerous cables.

Kuwaiti officials, for example, resisted what they called “draconian” measures sought by the United States against a prominent charity and dismissed allegations against it as “unconvincing,” according to one cable.

The documents are filled with government intelligence on possible terrorist-financing plots, like the case of a Somali preacher who was reportedly touring Sweden, Finland and Norway last year to look for money and recruits for the Shabab, a militant group in Somalia, or that of a Pakistani driver caught with about $240,000 worth of Saudi riyals stuffed behind his seat. One memo even reported on a possible plot by the Iranians to launder $5 billion to $10 billion in cash through the Emirates’ banks as part of a broader effort to “stir up trouble” among the Persian Gulf states, though it was not clear how much of the money might be channeled to militants.

One episode that set off particular concern occurred in August 2009 in Yemen, when armed robbers stormed a bank truck on a busy downtown street in Aden during
daylight hours and stole 100 million Yemeni riyals, or about $500,000. American diplomats said the sophistication of the robbery and other indicators had all the markings of a Qaeda mission. “This bold, unusual operation” could provide Al Qaeda “with a substantial financing infusion at a time when it is thought to be short of cash,” a dispatch summarizing the episode said.

Al Qaeda’s branch in Yemen, known as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, is seen as a rising threat by the United States and was blamed for a parcel bomb plot in October and the failed attempt to blow up a jetliner last Dec. 25. The cables do not make clear whether the finances of the Yemen group are tied to Osama bin Laden’s network.

American officials appear to have divided views on the bin Laden group’s fund-raising abilities. A February cable to Richard C. Holbrooke, the administration’s special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, said that “sensitive reporting indicates that al-Qaida’s ability to raise funds has deteriorated substantially, and that it is now in its weakest state since 9/11.”

But many other cables draw the opposite conclusion and cite the group’s ability to generate money almost at will from wealthy individuals and sympathetic groups throughout the Middle East while often staying a step ahead of counterterrorism officials.

“Terrorists avoid money transfer controls by transferring amounts below reporting thresholds and using reliable cash couriers, hawala, and money grams,” a recent cable warned. “Emerging trends include mobile banking, pre-paid cards, and Internet banking.”

The documents suggest that there is little evidence of significant financial support in the United States or Europe for terrorist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan, despite a string of deadly but largely low-budget attacks in London and other European cities in recent years, according to the documents.

“U.K. financing is important, but the real money is in the Gulf,” a senior British counterterrorism official told a Treasury Department official, according to a cable last year from the American Embassy in London.

In hundreds of cables focusing on terrorist financing, the problem takes on an air of intractability, as American officials speak of the seeming ease with which terrorists are able to move money, the low cost of carrying out deadly attacks, and the difficulty of stopping it. Interdictions are few, and resistance is frequent.

In Kuwait, for instance, American officials have voiced repeated concerns that Islamic charities — largely unregulated by the government there — are using philanthropic donations to finance terrorism abroad. But a Kuwaiti minister, in a meeting last year with the United States ambassador, “was as frank and pessimistic as ever when it came to the subject of apprehending and detaining terror financiers and facilitators under Kuwait’s current legal and political framework,” a memo summarizing the meeting said.

Saudi Arabia, a critical military and diplomatic ally, emerges in the cables as the most vexing of problems. Intelligence officials there have stepped up their spying on militants in neighboring Yemen, and they provided the tip that helped uncover the recent
parcel bombs. But while the Saudis have made some progress, “terrorist funding emanating from Saudi Arabia remains a serious concern,” according to a cable in February. Mrs. Clinton’s memo two months earlier said Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba and other groups “probably raise millions of dollars annually from Saudi sources, often during Hajj and Ramadan.” Officials said they believed that fund-raisers for extremist groups had often descended on the pilgrims to seek money for their causes.

The American Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, reported in February that the Saudis remained “almost completely dependent on the C.I.A.” for leads and direction on terrorist financing.

So it was not surprising that a month earlier, the embassy reported in a separate cable that Treasury Department officials had provided information to the Saudi domestic intelligence service, the Mabahith, on three senior Taliban leaders — Tayyeb Agha, Mullah Jalil and Khalil Haqqani — who had made several fund-raising trips to the kingdom, the cable said. (Like a number of other suspected financiers identified in the cables, the three Taliban leaders do not appear on the Treasury Department’s list of “banned” entities suspected of terrorism financing connections.)

The Americans shared phone numbers, e-mail addresses and passport information for the three men with the Saudis to cross check against Saudi customs databases. Saudi authorities said they were not familiar with the Taliban leaders but promised to pursue the tips.

Last week, American officials said steady pressure from the Bush and Obama administrations had led to significant improvements in fighting terrorist financing. They said, for example, Saudi Arabia was now taking actions that they had long hesitated to take or had resisted, including holding financiers accountable through prosecutions and making terrorist financing a higher priority. A leading Saudi religious scholar has issued an edict against terrorist financing, and the Saudis have created new financial intelligence unit.

“The U.S. government has been relentless in pursuing sources and methods of terrorist financing, including prioritizing this issue with all countries in the gulf region,” said Stuart A. Levey, a senior Treasury official, who was speaking generally about American policy and not about anything in the leaked cables. “As a result, we have put Al Qaeda under significant financial pressure.”

Behind the scenes at diplomatic encounters, tensions have occasionally flared. In 2007, a senior Bush administration official, Frances Fragos Townsend, told her Saudi counterparts in Riyadh that Mr. Bush was “quite concerned” about the level of cooperation from the Saudis, and she brought a personal letter on the subject from the president to King Abdullah, according to a cable summarizing the exchange.

Ms. Townsend questioned whether the kingdom’s ambassador to the Philippines, Mohammed Ameen Wali, might be involved in supporting terrorism because of his involvement with two people suspected of being financiers, the summary said.

Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi foreign minister, challenged the assertion,
however, saying the ambassador might be guilty of “bad judgment rather than intentional support for terrorism,” and he countered with an assertion of his own: an unnamed American bank handling the Saudi Embassy’s money in Washington was performing unnecessary audits and asking “inappropriate and aggressive questions.”

American diplomats said that while the Saudis appeared earnest in wanting to stanch the flow of terrorist money, they often lacked the training and expertise to do it. “Their capabilities often fall short of their aspirations,” a cable last November said.

Saudi leaders appear equally resigned to the situation, according to the cables. “We are trying to do our best,” Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, who leads the Saudis’ anti-terrorism activities, was quoted as telling Mr. Holbrooke, the special representative to the region, in a May 2009 meeting.

But, he said, “if money wants to go” to terrorist causes, “it will go.”

Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.
Cables From American Diplomats Portray U.S. Ambivalence on Tunisia

Tunisians from the country’s south joined protests in Tunis on Jan. 23, 2011.

By SCOTT SHANE

Cables from American diplomats in Tunisia portray a deepening ambivalence toward the rule of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, expressing alarm about popular resentment of the blatant corruption of the country’s first family but also gratitude for Mr. Ben Ali’s cooperation against terrorism and the stability he long imposed.

Those cables, from the cache obtained by the anti-secrecy organization WikiLeaks and made public in recent weeks, helped fuel the anger on the streets that culminated Friday with Mr. Ben Ali’s flight after 23 years in power. Posted on a site created last month called TuniLeaks, the diplomats’ disgusted and lurid accounts of the kleptocratic ways of the president’s extended family helped tip the scales, according to many Tunisian commentators.

“What’s Yours Is Mine” was the wry title of a June 2008 cable reporting the brazen habits of the president’s clan.
“Corruption in Tunisia is getting worse,” the cable said. “Whether it’s cash, services, land, property, or yes, even your yacht, President Ben Ali’s family is rumored to covet it and reportedly gets what it wants,” the cable said, reporting that two nephews of Mr. Ben Ali’s had seized the yacht of a French businessman in 2006.

While the cable recounted routine demands for bribes by low-ranking government workers (the cost of a traffic stop, one Tunisian said, was up from 20 dinars to 40 or 50, or about $28 to $34), it said the flagrant thievery at the highest levels was most worrisome.

“Although the petty corruption rankles, it is the excesses of President Ben Ali’s family that inspire outrage among Tunisians,” the cable said. “With Tunisians facing rising inflation and high unemployment, the conspicuous displays of wealth and persistent rumors of corruption have added fuel to the fire.”

Another cable, from July 2009, reported a “lavish” dinner of the American ambassador, Robert F. Godec, with Mr. Ben Ali’s son-in-law, Mohamed Sakher el-Materi, in his beachfront home in Hammamet. There was “staff everywhere” and “ancient artifacts everywhere: Roman columns, frescoes and even a lion’s head from which water pours into the pool,” the cable said. The dinner included a dozen dishes, including ice cream and yogurt flown in from St. Tropez on the French Riviera.

“El Materi has a large tiger (‘Pasha’) on his compound, living in a cage,” the ambassador reported. “He acquired it when it was a few weeks old. The tiger consumes four chickens a day. (Comment: The situation reminded the ambassador of Uday Hussein’s lion cage in Baghdad.),” the cable added, referring to a son of Saddam Hussein.

The ambassador called the opulence of the evening “over the top,” saying that his hosts’ “behavior make clear why they and other members of Ben Ali’s family are disliked and even hated by some Tunisians.”

“The excesses of the Ben Ali family are growing,” he added.

Some cables report how the “quasi mafia” of the country’s ruling family muscled its way into the management of Tunisia’s most profitable bank and how Mr. Ben Ali demanded a 50 percent share of a private university.

Others, however, make it clear just how much United States officials, preoccupied with the threat of terrorism in many other Muslim countries, valued Mr. Ben Ali’s cooperation and ability to maintain order.

An upbeat August 2008 cable giving Condoleezza Rice, then the secretary of state, a survey of Tunisia before a visit reported that “Tunisia styles itself ‘a country that works.’” The writer added, “While Tunisians grumble privately about corruption by the first lady’s family, there is an abiding appreciation for Ben Ali’s success in steering his country clear of the instability and violence that have plagued Tunisia’s neighbors.”

The cable reported not only Tunisia’s successes against terrorists but also its progressive social ways, calling it “a model for the region on women’s rights.”

Tunisian activists associated with the independent blog Nawaat.org (the core, in
Arabic) created the TuniLeaks site on Nov. 28, the same day WikiLeaks, along with The
New York Times and other news organizations, began posting the first of 251,287
confidential diplomatic cables the organization had obtained.

The Tunisian government subsequently tried to block access to the site, but the
striking details of the cables circulated on Tunisian Web sites, adding to the ferment
against Mr. Ben Ali.

On its Twitter feed, WikiLeaks has highlighted reports of its reported role in
encouraging the Tunisian uprising. Foreign Policy magazine tagged the end of Mr. Ben
Ali’s rule “the first WikiLeaks revolution,” and while that may be an overstatement, the
cables’ role in what President Obama lauded Friday as “this brave and determined
struggle for the universal rights” underscores the awkward dilemma the WikiLeaks
cables have posed for the administration.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has been pressing an “Internet Freedom”
initiative, emphasizing the power of the Web to expose injustice and promote democracy.
But at the same time, the Justice Department is conducting a criminal investigation of
WikiLeaks and its founder, Julian Assange, including using subpoenas to try to obtain the
private Internet activity, credit card numbers and bank account details of Mr. Assange
and his associates.

—This article was originally published on January 15, 2011

OTHER RELATED CABLES

A ‘Sclerotic Ally’
Arafat’s Widow Spurned
Tunisia’s President Praised
WASHINGTON — From hundreds of diplomatic cables, Afghanistan emerges as a looking-glass land where bribery, extortion and embezzlement are the norm and the honest official is a distinct outlier.

Describing the likely lineup of Afghanistan’s new cabinet last January, the American Embassy noted that the agriculture minister, Asif Rahimi, “appears to be the only minister that was confirmed about whom no allegations of bribery exist.”

One Afghan official helpfully explained to diplomats the “four stages” at which his colleagues skimmed money from American development projects: “When contractors bid on a project, at application for building permits, during construction, and at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.” In a seeming victory against corruption, Abdul Ahad Sahibi, the mayor of Kabul, received a four-year prison sentence last year for “massive embezzlement.” But a cable from the embassy told a very different story: Mr. Sahibi was
a victim of “kangaroo court justice,” it said, in what appeared to be retribution for his attempt to halt a corrupt land-distribution scheme.

It is hardly news that predatory corruption, fueled by a booming illicit narcotics industry, is rampant at every level of Afghan society. Transparency International, an advocacy organization that tracks government corruption around the globe, ranks Afghanistan as the world’s third most corrupt country, behind Somalia and Myanmar.

But the collection of confidential diplomatic cables obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to a number of publications, offers a fresh sense of its pervasive nature, its overwhelming scale, and the dispiriting challenge it poses to American officials who have made shoring up support for the Afghan government a cornerstone of America’s counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan.

The cables make it clear that American officials see the problem as beginning at the top. An August 2009 report from Kabul complains that President Hamid Karzai and his attorney general “allowed dangerous individuals to go free or re-enter the battlefield without ever facing an Afghan court.” The embassy was particularly concerned that Mr. Karzai pardoned five border police officers caught with 124 kilograms (about 273 pounds) of heroin and intervened in a drug case involving the son of a wealthy supporter.

The American dilemma is perhaps best summed up in an October 2009 cable sent by Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry, written after he met with Ahmed Wali Karzai, the president’s half brother, the most powerful man in Kandahar and someone many American officials believe prospers from the drug trade. (Mr. Karzai denies any involvement with narcotics trafficking.)

“The meeting with AWK highlights one of our major challenges in Afghanistan: how to fight corruption and connect the people to their government, when the key government officials are themselves corrupt,” Ambassador Eikenberry wrote.

American officials seem to search in vain for an honest partner. A November 2009 cable described the acting governor of Khost Province, Tahir Khan Sabari, as “a refreshing change,” an effective and trustworthy leader. But Mr. Sabari told his American admirers that he did not have “the $200,000-300,000 for a bribe” necessary to secure the job permanently.

Ahmed Zia Massoud held the post of first vice president from 2004 to 2009; the brother of the Northern Alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massoud, he was discussed as a future president. Last year, a cable reported, Mr. Massoud was caught by customs officials carrying $52 million in unexplained cash into the United Arab Emirates.

A diplomatic cable is not a criminal indictment, of course, and in an interview Mr. Massoud denied taking any money out of Afghanistan. “It’s not true,” he said. “Fifty-two million dollars is a pile of money as big as this room.” Yet while his official salary was a few hundred dollars a month, he lives in a waterfront house on Palm Jumeirah, a luxury Dubai community that is also home to other Afghan officials. When a reporter visited the dwelling this year, a Rolls-Royce was parked out front.

The cables describe a country where everything is for sale. The Transportation
Ministry collects $200 million a year in trucking fees, but only $30 million is turned over to the government, according to a 2009 account to diplomats by Wahidullah Shahrani, then the commerce minister. As a result, “individuals pay up to $250,000 for the post heading the office in Herat, for example, and end up owning beautiful mansions as well as making lucrative political donations,” said Mr. Shahrani, who also identified 14 of Afghanistan’s governors as “bad performers and/or corrupt.”

Then again, another cable reports “rumors” that Mr. Shahrani himself “was involved in a corrupt oil import deal.” He denied the rumors, saying that they were inventions by two rivals who were “among the most corrupt in Afghanistan,” the cable said.

Pity the diplomat who must sort out whose version of reality to believe. One cable reported the American ambassador’s attempt to size up Mr. Shahrani, who later became the minister of mines. “Ambassador Eikenberry noted Shahrani’s extravagant home, suggesting that the Afghans knew best who is corrupt,” the cable said.

The cables lay out allegations of bribes and profit-skimming in the organization of travel to Saudi Arabia for the hajj, or pilgrimage; in a scheme to transfer money via cellphones; in the purchase of wheat seed; in the compilation of an official list of war criminals; and in the voting in Parliament.

Dr. Sayed Fatimie, the minister of health, told diplomats in January that members of Parliament wanted cash to confirm his appointment. “Expressing shock at the blatancy of these extortion attempts, Fatimie said MPs had offered their own votes and the votes of others they could purportedly deliver for $1,000 apiece,” a cable said.

The case of the Kabul mayor, Mr. Sahibi, shows how complicated it can be to sort out corruption charges. A Jan. 7 cable signed by Ambassador Eikenberry gave an account sharply at odds with media reports, which treated the prosecution as a landmark in the campaign for honest government.

The cable, referring to embassy interviews with Mr. Sahibi, said the charges against him were based on a decision to lease a piece of city property to shopkeepers. Three months after the lease was signed, another bidder offered $16,000 more. The “loss” of the potential additional revenue became the “massive embezzlement” described by prosecutors, the cable said.

Mr. Sahibi told the Americans he had been summoned to appear in court on Dec. 7 to be assigned a hearing date. Instead, he said, he was given a four-year sentence and a $16,000 fine.

As for the motive behind his prosecution, Mr. Sahibi said that in less than two years as mayor “he had found files for approximately 32,000 applicants who paid for nonexistent plots of land in Kabul.” He said he halted the program and “invalidated the illegal claims of some important people,” who took their revenge with the bogus criminal case.

The embassy cable largely supported Mr. Sahibi’s version of events, saying that the mayor’s “official decision may have antagonized powerful people who then sought the
power of the state to discredit him.” Far from being a blow against corruption, the cable suggested, the case was a travesty of justice.

The widespread corruption is made possible in part by a largely unregulated banking infrastructure and the ancient hawala money transfer network that is the method of choice for politicians, insurgents and drug traffickers to move cash around the Muslim world.

Last year, a cable signed by Ambassador Eikenberry said that the hawala favored by the Afghan elite, New Ansari, “is facilitating bribes and other wide-scale illicit cash transfers for corrupt Afghan officials” and providing financial services to narco-traffickers through front companies in Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates. He asked Washington to send more investigators and wiretap analysts to assist nascent Afghan task forces that were examining New Ansari.

The anticorruption task forces already faced significant obstacles. For instance, Afghanistan’s interior minister asked that the American government “take a low profile on the New Ansari case” to avoid the perception that investigations were being carried out “at the behest of the United States.”

Months later, when the New Ansari investigators carried out a predawn raid on the house of a top aide to President Karzai whom investigators heard soliciting a bribe on a wiretap, Mr. Karzai intervened to release the man from jail and threatened to take control of the anticorruption investigations. In November, the Afghan government dropped all charges against the aide.

The resulting standoff between Kabul and Washington forced the Obama administration to take stock of its strategy: was trying to root out corruption, at the risk of further alienating Mr. Karzai, really worth it? And with American troops set to begin leaving Afghanistan next summer, and the American public having long ago lost the appetite for nation-building, was trying to root out corruption a Sisyphean task?

In September, President Obama acknowledged the dilemma. “Are there going to be occasions where we look and see that some of our folks on the ground have made compromises with people who are known to have engaged in corruption?” he asked. “There may be occasions where that happens.”

A February cable described exactly such a compromise, reporting on a police chief at a border crossing in southern Afghanistan, Col. Abdul Razziq, who was reputed to be corrupt — and good at his job.

Western officials, it said, “walk a thin tightrope when working with this allegedly corrupt official who is also a major security stabilizing force.”

Scott Shane and Mark Mazzetti reported from Washington, and Dexter Filkins from Kabul, Afghanistan. Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.

—This article was originally published on December 2, 2010

OTHER RELATED CABLES
Ambassador Eikenberry Meets President Karzai
Karazai: Erratic Politician or Rational Leader?
Cables Offer Shifting Portrait of Karzai

Corruption is seen as the norm in the Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai, center.

By HELENE COOPER and CARLOTTA GALL
WASHINGTON — Oman’s foreign minister says that he is “losing confidence” in him. A British diplomat says Britain feels “deep frustration” with him, while an Australian official complains that he “ignores reality.” A diplomat from the United Arab Emirates says Afghanistan would be better off without him. NATO’s secretary general speculates that he has a split personality.

The portrait of President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan that emerges from a cache of confidential American diplomatic cables obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to a number of news organizations reflects his trajectory from the eager leader anointed by the West to an embattled politician who often baffles, disappoints or infuriates his official allies.

American and foreign diplomats have tried to keep their complaints about Mr. Karzai private. But now, thanks to the cables, there is a more official chronicling — brutally candid views of Mr. Karzai recorded by State Department officials after high-level meetings, detailing the steady deterioration in his reputation in the nine years since
he took office.

For the Obama administration, the disclosure of the cables — dating from 2004 to 2009 — could exacerbate an already fraught relationship, one that began as lukewarm, turned frigid and is back to lukewarm, mostly because the administration sees no alternative to working with Mr. Karzai.

Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, the retired Army officer who became the American ambassador to Afghanistan in April 2009, was blunt about his criticisms in a July 2009 cable. “It remains to be seen whether Karzai can or will refrain from this ‘blame America’ tactic he uses to deflect criticism of his administration,” he wrote. “Indeed, his inability to grasp the most rudimentary principles of state-building and his deep seated insecurity as a leader combine to make any admission of fault unlikely, in turn confounding our best efforts to find in Karzai a responsible partner.”

Mr. Karzai’s plunge in global opinion, as documented in the cables, almost directly mirrors the fortunes of the United States and its NATO allies in Afghanistan. The leader described early on is an optimistic, proactive figure, filled with helpful suggestions and gratitude for the Western alliance that liberated his country from the Taliban.

“Karzai was upbeat,” said one cable from the American Embassy in Kabul in February 2006. “Karzai repeated several times that he was much more confident about the current security situation than he was at this time last year, and characterized himself as a ‘relatively happy man.’ ” Mr. Karzai, the cable continued, emphasized that NATO needed to “complete the win” that is “ours for the taking this year.”

He also knew how to schmooze. In early cables, Mr. Karzai comes off as dashing, smooth and cosmopolitan, ready to flatter American officials with bon mots about country music and Starbucks coffee.

A Nov. 24, 2005, cable, in which Mr. Karzai is described as offering a rosy assessment of the war, also recounts how he chatted with visiting members of Congress from Washington.

“President Karzai was gracious and made frequent reference to his fondness for the U.S.,” the cable said. “Karzai recounted how much he had enjoyed partaking of turkey and celebrating Thanksgiving.” The message continued, “The Congressmen and President Karzai closed the meeting with some banter about exporting pomegranates to the U.S. and making them part of the traditional Thanksgiving feast.”

Even General Eikenberry, who in 2007 was leaving his post as the commander in Afghanistan, had glowing things to say about the early Karzai. “President Karzai is a more confident commander in chief and chief executive,” he is described as telling Pervez Musharraf, then Pakistan’s leader, who is known to have loathed Mr. Karzai, in a January 2007 cable from the American Embassy in Islamabad. General Eikenberry said Mr. Karzai had replaced “corrupt poor-performing officials.”

“Reconstruction assistance is taking root in districts throughout the country,” he added.

But a different man emerges in the later cables. To be certain, Mr. Karzai was
presiding over a country riven by tribal tensions, a growing insurgency, warring politicians and a populace increasingly suspicious of the American troops on their soil. Still, his American and NATO critics perhaps were reflecting both disappointment in the progress of the war against the Taliban and indignation that the man they put in charge was no longer toeing the line.

One British diplomat said as much, as reported in an October 2008 cable from the American Embassy in London, which gave a readout of meetings between Pentagon officials and their British counterparts. According to the cable, John Day, then the policy director of the British Defense Ministry, told Eric Edelman, a Pentagon official, that his government felt “deep frustration” with Mr. Karzai, adding that “I remind people that we — the international community — selected him.”

By 2009, General Eikenberry, the newly appointed American ambassador to Afghanistan, also had clearly soured on the Afghan leader. In a cable in July of that year, he said Mr. Karzai was “often agitated, accusing the U.S. of working against him.” The American diplomat matter-of-factly portrayed his weekly visits with Mr. Karzai as tiresome battles to keep the Afghan leader from going off on wild tangents.

“When Karzai drifted towards a reiteration of his anti-U.S. conspiracy theories on several occasions, I was able to refocus the conversation on how the U.S. and Afghanistan governments can work together in the near and medium term to achieve combined success,” General Eikenberry wrote at one point. (A few months later, he wrote his now famous leaked confidential cable complaining that Mr. Karzai was not an “adequate strategic partner” for the United States in Afghanistan.)

Meanwhile, James B. Steinberg, Mr. Obama’s deputy secretary of state, characterized Mr. Karzai as “indecisive and unprepared” during a meeting with the British ambassador to Washington, according to a February 2009 cable. And Mr. Edelman, a top Pentagon policy official in the Bush administration, told a group of NATO officials in 2008 that Mr. Karzai was “eager to divert attention to Pakistan as a source of all of Afghanistan’s problems.”

Mr. Karzai first burst onto the international stage in the style of Che Guevara, slipping over the Afghan border from Pakistan in 2001 as United States forces pounded the Taliban, before being installed by the West. President George W. Bush invited him to his first State of the Union speech after Sept. 11, 2001, where Mr. Karzai sat in the audience as a symbol of heroes who emerged from the terrorist attacks.

But just a few years later, the Bush administration and NATO countries in Afghanistan were grappling with the problems of Mr. Karzai that are now widely known — his personal insecurity and lack of trust in the United States, his falling popularity at home, his failure to combat the booming narcotics trade and corruption, and his seeming inability to run an effective government.

His relationship with the United States, the cables show, has been one of constant support and reassurance from the United States that it would remain in Afghanistan even after its troops withdrew, but also relentless pressure on President Karzai to follow an
American agenda, whether on relations with Pakistan, counternarcotics or corruption. The friction points include his half brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, whom, the cables show, Western officials suspect of benefiting from drug trafficking, charges Ahmed Wali Karzai denies.

There are no cables available from 2010, as Mr. Karzai’s relationship with the West has become even more strained: in a speech this spring, he threatened to join the Taliban.

To the diplomats who deal with him, Mr. Karzai is a querulous ally at best, the cables make clear. In one June 2008 cable, American Embassy staff members in Brussels dutifully recorded — and sent back to Washington — musings from Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, then NATO’s secretary general, about whether there were two Mr. Karzais.

“SecGen wondered aloud which Karzai would show up for the Afghan Donors Conference in Paris — the erratic Pashtun politician or the rational national leader,” the cable said.

*Helene Cooper reported from Washington, and Carlotta Gall from Kabul, Afghanistan. Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.*
ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Less than a month after President Obama testily assured reporters in 2009 that Pakistan’s nuclear materials “will remain out of militant hands,” his ambassador here sent a secret message to Washington suggesting that she remained deeply worried.

The ambassador’s concern was a stockpile of highly enriched uranium, sitting for years near an aging research nuclear reactor in Pakistan. There was enough to build several “dirty bombs” or, in skilled hands, possibly enough for an actual nuclear bomb.

In the cable, dated May 27, 2009, the ambassador, Anne W. Patterson, reported that the Pakistani government was yet again dragging its feet on an agreement reached two years earlier to have the United States remove the material.

She wrote to senior American officials that the Pakistani government had concluded
that “the ‘sensational’ international and local media coverage of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons made it impossible to proceed at this time.” A senior Pakistani official, she said, warned that if word leaked out that Americans were helping remove the fuel, the local press would certainly “portray it as the United States taking Pakistan’s nuclear weapons.” The fuel is still there.

It may be the most unnerving evidence of the complex relationship — sometimes cooperative, often confrontational, always wary — between America and Pakistan nearly 10 years into the American-led war in Afghanistan. The cables, obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to a number of news organizations, make it clear that underneath public reassurances lie deep clashes over strategic goals on issues like Pakistan’s support for the Afghan Taliban and tolerance of Al Qaeda, and Washington’s warmer relations with India, Pakistan’s archenemy.

Written from the American Embassy in Islamabad, the cables reveal American maneuvering as diplomats try to support an unpopular elected government that is more sympathetic to American aims than is the real power in Pakistan, the army and intelligence agency so crucial to the fight against militants. The cables show just how weak the civilian government is: President Asif Ali Zardari told Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. that he worried that the military might “take me out.”

Frustration at American inability to persuade the Pakistani Army and intelligence agency to stop supporting the Afghan Taliban and other militants runs through the reports of meetings between American and Pakistani officials.

That frustration preoccupied the Bush administration and became an issue for the incoming Obama administration, the cables document, during a trip in January 2009 that Mr. Biden made to Pakistan 11 days before he was sworn in. In a meeting with Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, the army chief of staff, Mr. Biden asked several times whether Pakistan and the United States “had the same enemy as we move forward.”

“The United States needs to be able to make an objective assessment of Pakistan’s part of the bargain,” Mr. Biden said, according to a Feb. 6, 2009, cable.

General Kayani tried to reassure him, saying, “We are on the same page in Afghanistan, but there might be different tactics.” Mr. Biden replied that “results” would test that.

The cables reveal at least one example of increased cooperation, previously undisclosed, under the Obama administration. Last fall, the Pakistani Army secretly allowed 12 American Special Operations soldiers to deploy with Pakistani troops in the violent tribal areas near the Afghan border.

The Americans were forbidden to conduct combat missions. Even though their numbers were small, their presence at army headquarters in Bajaur, South Waziristan and North Waziristan was a “sea change in thinking,” the embassy reported.

The embassy added its usual caution: The deployments must be kept secret or the “Pakistani military will likely stop making requests for such assistance.”

Within the past year, however, Pakistan and the United States have gingerly started
to publicly acknowledge the role of American field advisers. Lt. Col. Michael Shavers, an American military spokesman in Islamabad, said in a statement that “at the request of the Pakistanis,” small teams of Special Operations forces “move to various locations with their Pakistani military counterparts throughout Pakistan.”

Moreover, last week in a report to Congress on operations in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said that the Pakistani Army had also accepted American and coalition advisers in Quetta.

The cables do not deal with the sharp increase under Mr. Obama in drone attacks against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in the tribal areas with Pakistan’s tacit approval. That is because the cables are not classified at the highest levels.

A Deep Skepticism

Over all, though, the cables portray deep skepticism that Pakistan will ever cooperate fully in fighting the full panoply of extremist groups. This is partly because Pakistan sees some of the strongest militant groups as insurance for the inevitable day that the United States military withdraws from Afghanistan — and Pakistan wants to exert maximum influence inside Afghanistan and against Indian intervention.

Indeed, the consul general in Peshawar wrote in 2008 that she believed that some members of the Haqqani network — one of the most lethal groups attacking American and Afghan soldiers — had left North Waziristan to escape drone strikes. Some family members, she wrote, relocated south of Peshawar; others lived in Rawalpindi, where senior Pakistani military officials also live.

In one cable, Ms. Patterson, a veteran diplomat who left Islamabad in October after a three-year stint as ambassador, said more money and military assistance would not be persuasive. “There is no chance that Pakistan will view enhanced assistance levels in any field as sufficient compensation for abandoning support for these groups, which it sees as an important part of its national security apparatus against India.”

In a rare tone of dissent with Washington, she said Pakistan would only dig in deeper if America continued to improve ties with India, which she said “feeds Pakistani establishment paranoia and pushes them closer to both Afghan and Kashmir focused terrorist groups.”

The groups Ms. Patterson referred to were almost certainly the Haqqani network of the Afghan Taliban and Lashkar-e-Taiba, a group financed by Pakistan in the 1990s to fight India in Kashmir that is accused of the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India.

The highly enriched uranium that Ms. Patterson wanted removed from the research reactor came from the United States in the mid-1960s. In those days, under the Atoms for Peace program, little thought was given to proliferation, and Pakistan seemed too poor and backward to join the nuclear race.

But by May 2009, all that had changed, and her terse cable to the State and Defense Departments, among others, touched every nerve in the fraught relationship: mutual
mistrust, the safety of the world’s fastest-growing nuclear arsenal, broken promises and a pervasive fear that any talk about Pakistan’s vulnerability would end whatever cooperation existed.

The reactor had been converted to use low-enriched uranium, well below bomb grade, in 1990, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, or I.A.E.A. But the bomb-grade uranium had never been returned to the United States and remains in storage nearby. Ms. Patterson’s cable noted that Pakistan had “agreed in principle to the fuel removal in 2007.”

But time and again the Pakistanis balked, and she reported that an interagency group within the Pakistani government had decided to cancel a visit by American technical experts to get the fuel out of the country. She concluded that “it is clear that the negative media attention has begun to hamper U.S. efforts to improve Pakistan’s nuclear security and nonproliferation practices.”

Any progress, she suggested, would have to await a “more conducive” political climate.

On Monday, Pakistan’s Foreign Affairs Ministry issued a statement confirming that “the US suggestion to have the fuel transferred was plainly refused by Pakistan.” It said that the United States had provided the fuel but did not mention that, under the terms of such transfers, the United States retained the right to have the spent fuel returned.

The ambassador’s comments help explain why Mr. Obama and his aides have expressed confidence in Pakistan’s nuclear security when asked in public. But at the beginning of the administration’s review of its Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy, a highly classified intelligence report delivered to Mr. Obama said that while Pakistan’s weapons were well secured, there was deep, continuing concern about “insider access,” meaning elements in the military or intelligence services.

In fact, Ms. Patterson, in a Feb. 4, 2009, cable, wrote that “our major concern is not having an Islamic militant steal an entire weapon but rather the chance someone working in GOP [government of Pakistan] facilities could gradually smuggle enough material out to eventually make a weapon.”

Mr. Obama’s review concluded by determining that there were two “vital” American interests in the region. One was defeating Al Qaeda. The second, not previously reported, was making sure terrorists could never gain access to Pakistan’s nuclear program. That goal was classified, to keep from angering Islamabad.

Asked about the status of the fuel at the research reactor, Damien LaVera, a spokesman for the National Nuclear Security Administration of the Energy Department, said, “The United States supplied Pakistan with fuel for a research reactor decades ago for the purpose of producing medical isotopes and scientific research.” Implicitly acknowledging that the material remains there, Mr. LaVera said “the fuel is under I.A.E.A. safeguards and has not been part of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program.”

One secret cable offers another glimpse into another element of the nuclear gamesmanship between the United States and its Pakistani allies: Even while American
officials were trying to persuade Pakistani officials to give up nuclear material, they were quietly seeking to block Pakistan from trying to buy material that would help it produce tritium, the crucial ingredient needed to increase the power of nuclear weapons.

After providing specific details of the proposed sale, a Dec. 12, 2008, secret cable to the American Embassy in Singapore, seeking help to stop a transaction that was about to take place, concluded, “We would have great concern over Pakistan’s potential use of tritium to advance its nuclear weapons program.”

Reports of Army Abuses

The cables also reveal that the American Embassy had received credible reports of extrajudicial killings of prisoners by the Pakistani Army more than a year before the Obama administration publicly acknowledged the problem and before a video that is said to show such killings surfaced on the Internet.

The killings are another source of tension, complicated by American pressure on Pakistan to be more aggressive in confronting militants on its own soil.

In a Sept. 10, 2009, cable labeled “secret/noform,” meaning that it was too delicate to be shared with foreign governments, the embassy confronted allegations of human rights abuses in the Swat Valley and the tribal areas since the Pakistani Army had begun fighting the Taliban a few months earlier.

While carefully worded, the cable left little doubt about what was going on. It spoke of a “growing body of evidence” that gave credence to the allegations.

“The crux of the problem appears to center on the treatment of terrorists detained in battlefield operations and have focused on the extrajudicial killing of some detainees,” the cable said. “The detainees involved were in the custody of Frontier Corps or Pakistan army units.” The Frontier Corps is a paramilitary force partly financed by the United States to fight the insurgents.

The Pakistani Army was holding as many as 5,000 “terrorist detainees,” the cable said, about twice as many as the army had acknowledged.

Concerned that the United States should not offend the Pakistani Army, the cable stressed that any talk of the killings must be kept out of the press.

“Post advises that we avoid comment on these incidents to the extent possible and that efforts remain focused on dialogue and the assistance strategy,” the ambassador wrote. This September, however, the issue exploded into public view when a video emerged showing Pakistani soldiers executing six unarmed young men in civilian clothes. In October, the Obama administration suspended financing to half a dozen Pakistani Army units believed to have killed civilians or unarmed prisoners.

The cables verge on gossipy, as diplomats strained to understand the personalities behind the fractious Pakistani government, and particularly two men: General Kayani and President Zardari.

Often, the United States finds that Mr. Zardari, the accidental leader after the
assassination of his wife, Benazir Bhutto, is sympathetic to American goals — stiff sanctions on terrorist financing, the closing down of terrorist training camps — but lacks the power to fulfill his promises against resistance from the military and intelligence agencies.

Mr. Zardari’s chief antagonist, General Kayani, emerges as a stubborn guarantor of what he sees as Pakistan’s national interest, an army chief who meddles in civilian politics but stops short of overturning the elected order.

Early in the Obama administration, General Kayani made clear a condition for improved relations. As the director general of the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI, from 2004 to 2007, he did not want a “reckoning with the past,” said a cable in 2009 introducing him to the new administration.

“Kayani will want to hear that the United States has turned the page on past ISI operations,” it said. General Kayani was probably referring to the peace accords with the Taliban from 2004 to 2007 that resulted in the strengthening of the militants.

If the general seems confidently in charge, the cables portray Mr. Zardari as a man not fully aware of his weakness.

At one point he said he would not object if Abdul Qadeer Khan, revered in Pakistan as the father of its nuclear weapons program, were interviewed by the International Atomic Energy Agency but tacitly acknowledged that he was powerless to make that happen.

Mr. Zardari, who spent 11 years in prison on ultimately unproved corruption charges, feared for his position and possibly — the wording is ambiguous — his life: the cables reveal that Vice President Biden told Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Britain in March 2009 that Mr. Zardari had told him that the “ISI director and Kayani will take me out.”

His suspicions were not groundless. In March 2009, a period of political turmoil, General Kayani told the ambassador that he “might, however reluctantly,” pressure Mr. Zardari to resign and, the cable added, presumably leave Pakistan. He mentioned the leader of a third political party, Asfandyar Wali Khan, as a possible replacement.

“Kayani made it clear regardless how much he disliked Zardari he distrusted Nawaz even more,” the ambassador wrote, a reference to Nawaz Sharif, a former prime minister.

By 2010, after many sessions with Mr. Zardari, Ms. Patterson had revised the guarded optimism that characterized her early cables about Mr. Zardari.

“Pakistan’s civilian government remains weak, ineffectual and corrupt,” she wrote on Feb. 22, 2010, the eve of a visit by the F.B.I. director, Robert S. Mueller III. “Domestic politics is dominated by uncertainty about the fate of President Zardari.”

That assessment holds more than eight months later, even as Mr. Obama in October extended an invitation to Mr. Zardari to visit the White House next year, as the leader of a nation that holds a key to peace in Afghanistan but appears too divided and mistrustful to turn it for the Americans.

Jane Perlez reported from Islamabad, and David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt from
Washington. William J. Broad and Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.
U.S. Opposed Release of Nuclear Dealer

Abdul Qadeer Khan, center, the pioneer of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program, was involved in an illicit proliferation network.

By DAVID E. SANGER
WASHINGTON — In early 2008, when rumors floated that Pakistan was about to release from house arrest Abdul Qadeer Khan, the man who created the world’s largest black market in nuclear technology, the Bush administration stayed silent.

Struggling to get Pakistan’s help in the war against Al Qaeda, it could not risk reminding the world of a case Pakistani officials kept saying was closed.

In private, it was a different story.

Richard A. Boucher, the top State Department official for South Asia, wrote on April 10, 2008, that the embassy in Islamabad should “express Washington’s strong opposition to the release of Dr. Khan and urge the Government of Pakistan to continue holding him under house arrest.” Releasing him, he wrote, would “undermine” what Pakistan had done to fight proliferation.

“The damage done to international security by Dr. Khan and his associates is not a closed book,” he wrote, noting that the United States and others were still dealing with
the Khan network’s sale of technology to Iran and North Korea “and possible other states.”

The world, he said, was dealing “with the reality that the uranium enrichment technology and nuclear weapons designs that were sold to Libya are now available to other states and non-state actors.”

Dr. Khan was released 10 months later. Pakistan has barred him from being interviewed by international inspectors or the United States, including about his allegation that others in the Pakistani government knew of his work.

—This article was originally published on November 30, 2010
Vast Hacking by a China Fearful of the Web

By JAMES GLANZ and JOHN MARKOFF
As China ratcheted up the pressure on Google to censor its Internet searches last year, the American Embassy sent a secret cable to Washington detailing one reason top Chinese leaders had become so obsessed with the Internet search company: they were Googling themselves.

The May 18, 2009, cable, titled “Google China Paying Price for Resisting Censorship,” quoted a well-placed source as saying that Li Changchun, a member of China’s top ruling body, the Politburo Standing Committee, and the country’s senior propaganda official, was taken aback to discover that he could conduct Chinese-language searches on Google’s main international Web site. When Mr. Li typed his name into the search engine at google.com, he found “results critical of him.”

That cable from American diplomats was one of many made public by WikiLeaks that portray China’s leadership as nearly obsessed with the threat posed by the Internet to their grip on power — and, the reverse, by the opportunities it offered them, through hacking, to obtain secrets stored in computers of its rivals, especially the United States.
Extensive hacking operations suspected of originating in China, including one leveled at Google, are a central theme in the cables. The operations began earlier and were aimed at a wider array of American government and military data than generally known, including on the computers of United States diplomats involved in climate change talks with China.

One cable, dated early this year, quoted a Chinese person with family connections to the elite as saying that Mr. Li himself directed an attack on Google’s servers in the United States, though that claim has been called into question. In an interview with The New York Times, the person cited in the cable said that Mr. Li personally oversaw a campaign against Google’s operations in China but the person did not know who directed the hacking attack.

The cables catalog the heavy pressure that was placed on Google to comply with local censorship laws, as well as Google’s willingness to comply — up to a point. That coercion began building years before the company finally decided to pull its search engine out of China last spring in the wake of the successful hacking attack on its home servers, which yielded Chinese dissidents’ e-mail accounts as well as Google’s proprietary source code.

The demands on Google went well beyond removing material on subjects like the Dalai Lama or the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Chinese officials also put pressure on the United States government to censor the Google Earth satellite imaging service by lowering the resolution of images of Chinese government facilities, warning that Washington could be held responsible if terrorists used that information to attack government or military facilities, the cables show. An American diplomat replied that Google was a private company and that he would report the request to Washington but that he had no sense about how the government would act.

Yet despite the hints of paranoia that appear in some cables, there are also clear signs that Chinese leaders do not consider the Internet an unstoppable force for openness and democracy, as some Americans believe.

In fact, this spring, around the time of the Google pullout, China’s State Council Information Office delivered a triumphant report to the leadership on its work to regulate traffic online, according to a crucial Chinese contact cited by the State Department in a cable in early 2010, when contacted directly by The Times.

The message delivered by the office, the person said, was that “in the past, a lot of officials worried that the Web could not be controlled.”

“But through the Google incident and other increased controls and surveillance, like real-name registration, they reached a conclusion: the Web is fundamentally controllable,” the person said.

That confidence may also reflect what the cables show are repeated and often successful hacking attacks from China on the United States government, private enterprises and Western allies that began by 2002, several years before such intrusions were widely reported in the United States.
At least one previously unreported attack in 2008, code-named Byzantine Candor by American investigators, yielded more than 50 megabytes of e-mails and a complete list of user names and passwords from an American government agency, a Nov. 3, 2008, cable revealed for the first time.

Precisely how these hacking attacks are coordinated is not clear. Many appear to rely on Chinese freelancers and an irregular army of “patriotic hackers” who operate with the support of civilian or military authorities, but not directly under their day-to-day control, the cables and interviews suggest.

But the cables also appear to contain some suppositions by Chinese and Americans passed along by diplomats. For example, the cable dated earlier this year referring to the hacking attack on Google said: “A well-placed contact claims that the Chinese government coordinated the recent intrusions of Google systems. According to our contact, the closely held operations were directed at the Politburo Standing Committee level.”

The cable goes on to quote this person as saying that the hacking of Google “had been coordinated out of the State Council Information Office with the oversight” of Mr. Li and another Politburo member, Zhou Yongkang.” Mr. Zhou is China’s top security official.

But the person cited in the cable gave a divergent account. He detailed a campaign to press Google coordinated by the Propaganda Department’s director, Liu Yunshan. Mr. Li and Mr. Zhou issued approvals in several instances, he said, but he had no direct knowledge linking them to the hacking attack aimed at securing commercial secrets or dissidents’ e-mail accounts — considered the purview of security officials.

Still, the cables provide a patchwork of detail about cyberattacks that American officials believe originated in China with either the assistance or knowledge of the Chinese military.

For example, in 2008 Chinese intruders based in Shanghai and linked to the People’s Liberation Army used a computer document labeled “salary increase — survey and forecast” as bait as part of the sophisticated intrusion scheme that yielded more than 50 megabytes of e-mails and a complete list of user names and passwords from a United States government agency that was not identified.

The cables indicate that the American government has been fighting a pitched battle with intruders who have been clearly identified as using Chinese-language keyboards and physically located in China. In most cases the intruders took great pains to conceal their identities, but occasionally they let their guard down. In one case described in the documents, investigators tracked one of the intruders who was surfing the Web in Taiwan “for personal use.”

In June 2009 during climate change talks between the United States and China, the secretary of state’s office sent a secret cable warning about e-mail “spear phishing” attacks directed at five State Department employees in the Division of Ocean Affairs of the Office of the Special Envoy for Climate Change.
The messages, which purport to come from a National Journal columnist, had the subject line “China and Climate Change.” The e-mail contained a PDF file that was intended to install a malicious software program known as Poison Ivy, which was meant to give an intruder complete control of the victim’s computer. That attack failed.

The cables also reveal that a surveillance system dubbed Ghostnet that stole information from the computers used by the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and South Asian governments and was uncovered in 2009 was linked to a second broad series of break-ins into American government computers code-named Byzantine Hades. Government investigators were able to make a “tenuous connection” between those break-ins and the People’s Liberation Army.

The documents also reveal that in 2008 German intelligence briefed American officials on similar attacks beginning in 2006 against the German government, including military, economic, science and technology, commercial, diplomatic, and research and development targets. The Germans described the attacks as preceding events like the German government’s meetings with the Chinese government.

Even as such attacks were occurring, Google made a corporate decision in 2006, controversial even within the company, to establish a domestic Chinese version of its search engine, called google.cn. In doing so, it agreed to comply with China’s censorship laws.

But despite that concession, Chinese officials were never comfortable with Google, the cables and interviews show.

The Chinese claimed that Google Earth, the company’s satellite mapping software, offered detailed “images of China’s military, nuclear, space, energy and other sensitive government agency installations” that would be an asset to terrorists. A cable sent on Nov. 7, 2006, reported that Liu Jieyi, an assistant minister of foreign affairs, warned the American Embassy in Beijing that there would be “grave consequences” if terrorists exploited the imagery.

A year later, another cable pointed out that Google searches for politically delicate terms would sometimes be automatically redirected to Baidu, the Chinese company that was Google’s main competitor in China. Baidu is known for scrubbing its own search engine of results that might be unwelcome to government censors.

Google conducted numerous negotiations with officials in the State Council Information Office and other departments involved in censorship, propaganda and media licensing, the cables show. The May 18, 2009, cable that revealed pressure on the company by Mr. Li, the propaganda chief, said Google had taken some measures “to try and placate the government.” The cable also noted that Google had asked the American government to intervene with China on its behalf.

But Chinese officials became alarmed that Google still did less than its Chinese rivals to remove material Chinese officials considered offensive. Such material included information about Chinese dissidents and human rights issues, but also about central and provincial Chinese leaders and their children — considered an especially taboo topic,
interviews with people quoted in the cables reveal.

Mr. Li, after apparently searching for information online on himself and his children, was reported to have stepped up pressure on Google. He also took steps to punish Google commercially, according to the May 18 cable.

The propaganda chief ordered three big state-owned Chinese telecommunications companies to stop doing business with Google. Mr. Li also demanded that Google executives remove any link between its sanitized Chinese Web site and its main international one, which he deemed “an illegal site,” the cable said.

Google ultimately stopped complying with repeated censorship requests. It stopped offering a censored version of its search engine in China earlier this year, citing both the hacking attacks and its unwillingness to continue obeying censorship orders.

James Glanz reported from New York, and John Markoff from San Francisco. Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.

---This article was originally published on December 4, 2010---
China Resisted U.S. Pressure on Rights of Nobel Winner

By MICHAEL WINES
BEIJING — It was just before Christmas 2009, and Ding Xiaowen was not happy.

The United States ambassador had just written China’s foreign minister expressing concern for Liu Xiaobo, the Beijing intellectual imprisoned a year earlier for drafting a pro-democracy manifesto. Now Mr. Ding, a deputy in the ministry’s American section, was reading the riot act to an American attaché.

Mr. Ding said he would try to avoid “becoming emotional,” according to a readout on the meeting that was among thousands of leaked State Department cables released this month. Then he said that a “strongly dissatisfied” China firmly opposed the views of the American ambassador, Jon Huntsman, and that Washington must “cease using human rights as an excuse to ‘meddle’ in China’s internal affairs.”

On Friday, exactly one year after Mr. Huntsman wrote his protest, Mr. Liu, now serving an 11-year prison sentence for subversion, will receive the Nobel Peace Prize in a ceremony that he is unable to attend. And if anything is clear, it is that China no longer
resists becoming emotional.

In the two months since the Nobel committee honored Mr. Liu, China has waged an extraordinary and unprecedented campaign, domestically and internationally, to discredit the award and to dissuade other governments from endorsing it.

It sent diplomats to capitals worldwide, sometimes to two and three offices, to warn that attendance at the awards ceremony in Oslo would be a black mark on relations with China. It staged a briefing for its neighbors, the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to make clear its unhappiness with the award. It has punished Norway, the site of the ceremony, by suspending trade negotiations.

On the Chinese island of Hainan last month, State Councilor Dai Bingguo, China’s most powerful foreign policy figure, bluntly told Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton that his government regarded the Nobel award as an American conspiracy to embarrass Beijing.

Perhaps most strikingly, China’s media and spokespeople have trained a stream of vitriol on the award and its sponsors. The prize is “an anti-China farce” and its sponsors are “clowns,” a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Jiang Yu, said this week at a briefing. Honoring Mr. Liu is “a crazy act,” “a political tool” and “a trick that a few radical people use to entertain themselves,” the Communist Party tabloid Global Times reported Wednesday.

On Oct. 15, after the award was announced, the state-run news service Xinhua called the Nobel decision “a desecration of the rule of law” and Mr. Liu an opportunist who had “tried his best to maintain the Western hegemony of his Western masters and make China a vassal of the West.”

And on Tuesday, a somewhat murky Beijing group announced a counter-Nobel, the Confucius Peace Prize, apparently in response to a Global Times commentary last month that called for an Eastern alternative to prizes based on values it said were Western.

At least 19 governments, most of them staunch China allies like Myanmar, North Korea and Russia, have decided to boycott the Nobel ceremony on Friday. But the list also includes the Philippines, whose president, Benigno S. Aquino III, has been an advocate of human rights in places like Myanmar, where China holds great influence.

Philippine press reports quoted diplomats on Wednesday as saying that Manila opted out of the ceremony because it did not want to annoy China, already angered over a bungled hostage rescue in August that left eight Hong Kong residents dead.

But a senior adviser to Mr. Aquino, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the matter, said that Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo “did it without telling us.” The adviser called the move “a clumsy attempt to balance the administration’s more distant stance on China.”

“This administration will be a voice for human rights in this part of the world,” the official said, “and now, this.”

Why China’s leaders have made Mr. Liu’s award a foreign policy red line is far from clear. Political analysts and scholars variously suggested that Mr. Liu’s manifesto,
Charter 08, was too radical and represented a threat, that China’s newfound global prominence had given it an oversize impression of its influence and that party leaders were toeing a hard nationalist position as jockeying began for a new leadership in 2012.

Dozens of leaked State Department cables made it apparent that American diplomats closely followed the travails of Mr. Liu and other activists and regularly pressed Chinese officials to honor international norms for basic freedoms, even as Washington muted its public position on Chinese behavior.

Embassy officials also met frequently with Mr. Liu’s wife, Liu Xia, and friends to monitor his case and the increase in repression of political dissidents.

As early as two weeks after Mr. Liu was first detained, President George W. Bush’s ambassador, Clark T. Randt Jr., “urged the Chinese government to release him and stop harassing peaceful dissidents,” a Dec. 29, 2008, cable stated.

The next June, as the Chinese government announced Mr. Liu’s formal arrest on subversion charges, embassy officials expressed “grave concern” and again called for his release. On Dec. 9, 2009, shortly before Mr. Liu was convicted, Mr. Huntsman met with five Chinese human rights lawyers; he sent a letter to the foreign minister the next day calling on the government “to respect those rights it had itself guaranteed in the PRC constitution and to protect internationally recognized freedoms for all Chinese citizens.”

That letter led to Mr. Ding’s dressing-down of the attaché 11 days later. According to the cable, Mr. Ding said then that Mr. Huntsman’s letter contained “inappropriate comments” on Mr. Liu’s case and that “certain ‘so-called’ human rights lawyers and dissidents had sought to advance their ‘selfish interests’ ” by attacking the Beijing government.

“In a lengthy and disjointed digression,” the cable added, Mr. Ding said that regardless of rights to speak and assemble freely, the most fundamental human rights were to food and shelter. And “in this area it was ‘a basic fact’ that the PRC had made huge progress.”

The American attaché’s response, the cable stated, was that “U.S. concerns over abuses of internationally recognized human rights norms remained.”

Carlos H. Conde contributed reporting from Manila, and Seth Mydans from Bangkok. Li Bibo contributed research from Beijing.

---This article was originally printed on December 8, 2010
North Korea Keeps the World Guessing

By DAVID E. SANGER
WASHINGTON — With North Korea reeling from economic and succession crises, American and South Korean officials early this year secretly began gaming out what would happen if the North, led by one of the world’s most brutal family dynasties, collapsed.

Over an official lunch in late February, a top South Korean diplomat confidently told the American ambassador, Kathleen Stephens, that the fall would come “two to three years” after the death of Kim Jong-il, the country’s ailing leader, Ms. Stephens later cabled Washington. A new, younger generation of Chinese leaders “would be comfortable with a reunited Korea controlled by Seoul and anchored to the United States in a benign alliance,” the diplomat, Chun Yung-woo, predicted.

But if Seoul was destined to control the entire Korean Peninsula for the first time since the end of World War II, China — the powerful ally that keeps the North alive with food and fuel — would have to be placated. So South Korea was already planning to assure Chinese companies that they would have ample commercial opportunities in the mineral-rich northern part of the peninsula.

As for the United States, the cable said, “China would clearly ‘not welcome’ any U.S. military presence north of the DMZ,” the heavily mined demarcation line that now divides the two Koreas.

This trove of cables ends in February, just before North Korea began a series of military actions that has thrown some of Asia’s most prosperous countries into crisis. A month after the lunch, the North is believed to have launched a torpedo attack on the Cheonan, a South Korean warship, that killed 46 sailors.

Three weeks ago it revealed the existence of a uranium enrichment plant, potentially giving it a new pathway to make nuclear bomb material. And last week it shelled a South Korean island, killing two civilians and two marines and injuring many more.

None of that was predicted in the dozens of State Department cables about North Korea obtained by WikiLeaks, and in fact even China, the North’s closest ally, has often been startlingly wrong, the cables show. But the documents help explain why some South Korean and American officials suspect that the military outbursts may be the last snarls of a dying dictatorship.

They also show that talk of the North’s collapse may be rooted more in hope than in any real strategy: similar predictions were made in 1994 when the country’s founder, Kim Il-sung, suddenly died, leaving his son to run the most isolated country in Asia. And a Chinese expert warned, according to an American diplomat, that Washington was deceiving itself once again if it believed that “North Korea would implode after Kim Jong-il’s death.”
The cables about North Korea — some emanating from Seoul, some from Beijing, many based on interviews with government officials, and others with scholars, defectors and other experts — are long on educated guesses and short on facts, illustrating why their subject is known as the Black Hole of Asia. Because they are State Department documents, not intelligence reports, they do not include the most secret American assessments, or the American military’s plans in case North Korea disintegrates or lashes out.

They contain loose talk and confident predictions of the end of the dynasty that has ruled North Korea for 65 years. Those discussions were fueled by a rash of previously undisclosed defections of ranking North Korean diplomats, who secretly sought refuge in the South.

But they were also influenced by a remarkable period of turmoil inside North Korea, including an economic crisis set off by the government’s failed effort to revalue the currency and sketchy intelligence suggesting that the North’s military might not abide the rise of Mr. Kim’s son Kim Jong-un, who was recently made a four-star general despite having no military experience.

The cables reveal that in private, the Chinese, long seen as North Korea’s last protectors against the West, occasionally provide the Obama administration with colorful assessments of the state of play in North Korea. Chinese officials themselves sometimes even laugh about the frustrations of dealing with North Korean paranoia. In April 2009, just before a North Korean nuclear test, He Yafei, the Chinese vice foreign minister, told American officials at a lunch that the country wanted direct talks with the United States and to get them was acting like a "spoiled child" to get the attention of the "adult."

When James B. Steinberg, the deputy secretary of state, sat down in September 2009 with one of China’s most powerful officials, Dai Bingguo, state councilor for foreign affairs, Mr. Dai joked that in a recent visit to North Korea he “did not dare” to be too candid with the ailing and mercurial North Korean leader. But the Chinese official reported that although Kim Jong-il had apparently suffered a stroke and had obviously lost weight, he still had a “sharp mind” and retained his reputation among Chinese officials as “quite a good drinker.” (Mr. Kim apparently assured Mr. Dai during a two-hour conversation in Pyongyang, the capital, that his infirmities had not forced him to give up alcohol.)

But reliable intelligence about Mr. Kim’s drinking habits, it turns out, does not extend to his nuclear program, about which even the Chinese seem to be in the dark.

On May 13, 2009, as American satellites showed unusual activity at North Korea’s nuclear test site, officials in Beijing said they were “unsure” that North Korean “threats of another nuclear test were serious.” As it turns out, the North Koreans detonated a test bomb just days later.

Soon after, Chinese officials predicted that negotiations intended to pressure the North to disarm would be “shelved for a few months.” They have never resumed.

The cables also show that almost as soon as the Obama administration came to
office, it started raising alarms that the North was buying up components to enrich uranium, opening a second route for it to build nuclear weapons. (Until now, the North’s arsenal has been based on its production of plutonium, but its production capacity has been halted.)

In June 2009, at a lunch in Beijing shortly after the North Korean nuclear test, two senior Chinese Foreign Ministry officials reported that China’s experts believed “the enrichment was only in its initial phases.” In fact, based on what the North Koreans revealed this month, an industrial-scale enrichment plant was already under construction. It was apparently missed by both American and Chinese intelligence services.

The cables make it clear that the South Koreans believe that internal tensions in the North have reached a boiling point. In January of this year, South Korea’s foreign minister, who later resigned, reported to a visiting American official that the South Koreans saw an “increasingly chaotic” situation in the North.

In confidence, he told the American official, Robert R. King, the administration’s special envoy for North Korean human rights issues, that a number of “high-ranking North Korean officials working overseas” had recently defected to the South. Those defections were being kept secret, presumably to give American and South Korean intelligence agencies time to harvest the defectors’ knowledge.

But the cables also reveal that the South Koreans see their strategic interests in direct conflict with China’s, creating potentially huge diplomatic tensions over the future of the Korean Peninsula.

The South Koreans complain bitterly that China is content with the status quo of a nuclear North Korea, because they fear that a collapse would unleash a flood of North Korean refugees over the Chinese border and lead to the loss of a “buffer zone” between China and the American forces in South Korea.

At one point, Ambassador Stephens reported to Washington, a senior South Korean official told her that “unless China pushed North Korea to the ‘brink of collapse,’ ” the North would refuse to take meaningful steps to give up its nuclear program.

Mr. Chun, now the South Korean national security adviser, complained to Ambassador Stephens during their lunch that China had little commitment to the multination talks intended to force North Korea to dismantle its nuclear arsenal. The Chinese, he said, had chosen Wu Dawei to represent Beijing at the talks. According to the cable, Mr. Chun called Mr. Wu the country’s “most incompetent official,” an arrogant, Marx-spouting former Red Guard who “knows nothing about North Korea, nothing about non-proliferation.”

But the cables show that when it comes to the critical issue of succession, even the Chinese know little of the man who would be North Korea’s next ruler: Kim Jong-un.

As recently as February 2009, the American Consulate in Shanghai — a significant collection point for intelligence about North Korea — sent cables reporting that the Chinese who knew North Korea best disbelieved the rumors that Kim Jong-un was being groomed to run the country. Several Chinese scholars with good contacts in the North
said they thought it was likely that “a group of high-level military officials” would take over, and that “at least for the moment none of KJI’s three sons is likely to be tapped to succeed him.” The oldest son was dismissed as “too much of a playboy,” the middle son as “more interested in video games” than governing. Kim Jong-un, they said, was too young and inexperienced.

But within months, a senior Chinese diplomat, Wu Jianghao, was telling his American counterparts that Kim Jong-il was using nuclear tests and missile launchings as part of an effort to put his third son in place to succeed him, despite his youth.

“Wu opined that the rapid pace of provocative actions in North Korea was due to Kim Jong-il’s declining health and might be part of a gambit under which Kim Jong-il would escalate tensions with the United States so that his successor, presumably Kim Jong-un, could then step in and ease those tensions,” the embassy reported back to Washington in June 2009.

But carrying out plans for an easy ascension may be more difficult than expected, some are quoted as saying. In February of this year the American Consulate in Shenyang reported rumors that Kim Jong-un “had a hand” in the decision to revalue the North’s currency, which wiped out the scarce savings of most North Koreans and created such an outcry that one official was executed for his role in the sudden financial shift. The cables also describe secondhand reports of palace intrigue in the North, with other members of the Kim family preparing to serve as regents to Kim Jong-un — or to unseat him after Kim Jong-il’s death.

Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.

—This article was originally printed on November 29, 2010

OTHER RELATED CABLES

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Russia’s leaders: Dmitri A. Medvedev, left, and Vladimir V. Putin. Medvedev “plays Robin to Putin’s Batman,” a leaked cable said.

By C. J. CHIVERS
Early in 2009, as recession rippled around the world, the United States Embassy in Moscow sent to Washington a cable summarizing whispers within Russia’s political class. Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin, the rumors said, often did not show up at his office.

The embassy titled the cable "Questioning Putin’s Work Ethic."

“There are consistent reports that Putin resents or resists the workload he carries,” it said, citing Mr. Putin’s “fatigue,” “hands-off behavior” and “isolation” to the point that he was “working from home.”

The cable, approved by the American ambassador, John R. Beyrle, assessed the Kremlin rumors not as indicators of Mr. Putin’s weakness, but of the limits of his position in a period of falling commodity prices and tightening credit. Russia’s most powerful man sat atop Russia’s spoils. The recession left him with less to dole out,
eroding “some of his Teflon persona.”

“His disengagement reflects,” the cable concluded, “his recognition that a sharp reduction in resources limits his ability to find workable compromises among the Kremlin elite.”

Officially, the United States has sought since last year what President Obama and his Russian counterpart, Dmitri A. Medvedev, have called a “reset” in relations.

But scores of secret American cables from recent years, obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to several news organizations, show that beneath the public efforts at warmer ties, the United States harbors a dim view of the post-Soviet Kremlin and its leadership, and little hope that Russia will become more democratic or reliable.

The cables portray Mr. Putin as enjoying supremacy over all other Russian public figures, yet undermined by the very nature of the post-Soviet country he helped build.

Even a man with his formidable will and intellect is shown beholden to intractable larger forces, including an inefficient economy and an unmanageable bureaucracy that often ignores his edicts.

In language candid and bald, the cables reveal an assessment of Mr. Putin’s Russia as highly centralized, occasionally brutal and all but irretrievably cynical and corrupt. The Kremlin, by this description, lies at the center of a constellation of official and quasi-official rackets.

Throughout the internal correspondence between the American Embassy and Washington, the American diplomats in Moscow painted a Russia in which public stewardship was barely tended to and history was distorted. The Kremlin displays scant ability or inclination to reform what one cable characterized as a “modern brand of authoritarianism” accepted with resignation by the ruled.

Moreover, the cables reveal the limits of American influence within Russia and an evident dearth of diplomatic sources. The internal correspondence repeatedly reflected the analyses of an embassy whose staff was narrowly contained and had almost no access to Mr. Putin’s inner circle.

In reporting to Washington, diplomats often summarized impressions from meetings not with Russian officials, but with Western colleagues or business executives. The impressions of a largely well-known cadre of Russian journalists, opposition politicians and research institute regulars rounded out many cables, with insights resembling what was published in liberal Russian newspapers and on Web sites.

The cables sketched life almost 20 years after the Soviet Union’s disintegration, a period, as the cables noted, when Mr. Medvedev, the prime minister’s understudy, is the lesser part of a strange “tandemocracy” and “plays Robin to Putin’s Batman.” All the while, another cable noted, “Stalin’s ghost haunts the Metro.”

**Government Corruption**

In the secret American description, official malfeasance and corruption infect all
elements of Russian public life — from rigging elections, to persecuting rivals or citizens who pose a threat, to extorting businesses.

The corruption was described as a drag on the nation of sufficient significance to merit the attention of Mr. Medvedev and Mr. Putin, who, paradoxically, benefited from cronies who orchestrate graft but support the Kremlin.

A cable describing the government and style of Yuri M. Luzhkov, then the mayor of Moscow, presented the puzzle.

Since 2008, Mr. Medvedev has been the face and cheerleader for the nation’s supposed anti-corruption campaign. Yet a veritable kaleidoscope of corruption thrived in Moscow, much of it under the protection of a mayor who served at the president’s pleasure.

The embassy wrote of a “three-tiered structure” in Moscow’s criminal world, with the mayor at the top, the police and intelligence officials at the second tier and those regarded as a municipality’s predators — “ordinary criminals and corrupt inspectors” — at the bottom.

In this world the government effectively was the mafia. Extortion was so widespread, the cable noted, that it had become the business of the Interior Ministry and the federal intelligence service, known by their initials in Russian, the M.V.D. and the F.S.B.

“Moscow business owners understand that it is best to get protection from the MVD and FSB (rather than organized crime groups) since they not only have more guns, resources and power than criminal groups, but they are also protected by the law,” the cable noted, citing a Russian source. “For this reason, protection from criminal gangs is no longer so high in demand.”

The cable further described a delicate balance.

On one hand, the prime minister and the president benefited from votes Mr. Luzhkov delivered to the country’s ruling party, and perhaps from corruption that one embassy source said was so profligate that witnesses saw suitcases, presumably full of cash, being carried into the Kremlin under armed guard.

On the other, the corruption and a flagrantly rigged election in 2009 for the city’s legislature had raised the question of whether Mr. Luzhkov was worth the trouble.

The cable ended on a prescient note. “Ultimately, the tandem will put Luzhkov out to pasture,” it said. Eight months after this cable was written, Mr. Medvedev dismissed Mr. Luzhkov.

The embassy’s consistent assessments left little hope that removing one person would be enough. Russian corruption, the cables said, was structural.

One foreign citizen, whom the embassy described as having “made a fortune in Russia’s casino business,” said in 2009 “that the ‘levels of corruption in business were worse than we could imagine’ and that after working here for over 15 years and witnessing first-hand the behavior of GOR [government of Russia] officials at all levels, he could not imagine the system changing.”
The same cable noted that even if the government wanted to change it might not be able to, given that “in 2006 — at the height of Putin’s control in a booming economy — it was rumored within the Presidential Administration that as many as 60 percent of his orders were not being followed.”

**Secretive Business Deals**

In Russia, the separation between the most important businesses and government officials runs from blurry to nonexistent. The cables rendered darkly how Russian companies — often relying on what one cable called “secretive deals involving intermediary companies with unknown owners and beneficiaries” — conducted their affairs.

The cables also detailed two separate but related concerns about Russia’s oil and gas sectors: a lack of modern management and capital-improvement programs, and a tendency in Mr. Putin’s circle to see energy resources as political levers.

One prominent Western oil executive told Ambassador Beyrle that the inefficiencies “are so huge” that “a well that would take ten days to drill in Canada would take 20” in Russia.

“Multiply that by hundreds or thousands and you can start to imagine the costs to the economy,” the cable quoted the executive as saying.

The embassy’s 2009 assessment of state-owned Gazprom, Russia’s largest company, was similar. “Gazprom, it said, “must act in the interests of its political masters, even at the expense of sound economic decision-making.”

The cables also showed how bureaucratic, national and economic power often all converged in the Kremlin, and how the state’s suitors grasped that access often equaled results.

The summary of a meeting between an Italian and American diplomats in Moscow documented the Italian diplomat’s exasperation with Mr. Putin and Silvio Berlusconi, Italy’s prime minister, who had gained Russia’s ear.

The diplomat said that the pair enjoyed such a close relationship that they shared a “direct line,” and that the Italian Foreign Ministry and Embassy “only learn of conversations” between the premiers “after the fact, and with little detail or background.”

The diplomat then “explained that while the close relationship is not ideal from the bureaucracy’s perspective and more detrimental than beneficial, it can be useful at times.

“He cited,” the cable added, “the case of the sale to Gazprom by Italian energy giant ENI of its 20 percent share in Gazprom’s oil subsidiary Gazpromneft. He said Gazprom had insisted on paying far below the market price, but that it ultimately paid the market price after Berlusconi weighed in with Putin.”

Other cables described how Western businesses sometimes managed to pursue their interests by personally engaging senior Russian officials, including President Medvedev, rather than getting lost in bureaucratic channels.
The experience in late 2009 of the Intel Corporation, which hoped to import 1,000 encrypted computers for its Russia offices, offered insights into the benefits of courting the top.

“Several high-level Intel officers, including CEO Craig Barrett, and other officials, such as American Chamber of Commerce President Andrew Somers, highlighted to the GOR interlocutors, including President Medvedev, the role Intel plays in employing over 1,000 Russian engineers,” a cable said.

“This high-level lobbying secured Intel a meeting with key FSB officials to explain its needs,” it continued. “Intel was able to demonstrate the reasonableness of its request and, as a result, by-passed the current extensive licensing requirement.”

Chuck Mulloy, an Intel spokesman, said that the meetings were not about one shipment of computers; they created an expedited process for importing such equipment, not only for Intel but for their customers and distributors. “We didn’t get this as a one-time thing,” he said.

The cables further revealed how the nexus of business and state interests among Russia’s ruling elite had fueled suspicions in Washington that Mr. Putin, in spite of his vigorous denials, had quietly amassed a personal fortune.

A confidential cable pointedly mentioned the Swiss oil-trading company Gunvor, as being “of particular note.”

The company, the cable said, is “rumored to be one of Putin’s sources of undisclosed wealth” and is owned by Gennadi N. Timchenko, who is “rumored to be a former K.G.B. colleague of Putin’s.” One estimate said the company might control half of Russian oil exports, potentially bringing its owners billions of dollars in profit.

Gunvor’s profits were especially high, the cable claimed, because in one of the few deals in which details were known, a source said that the firm included a surcharge of $1 per barrel of oil. More competitive traders, the source said, might mark up a barrel by only a nickel.

The cables provide no evidence to support the allegations about Gunvor and Mr. Luzhkov, the former Moscow mayor; neither has been charged with any crimes.

Patience Unrewarded

If two words were to summarize the secret American assessment of its relations with the Kremlin, it would be these: suspicion and frustration.

A cornerstone of Washington’s approach to the relationship has been patience. Privately, American diplomats have described the hope that by moderating public criticism of Russia and encouraging market principles, Russia’s government and important companies might with time evolve.

The cables underscore how frustrating the patience has been.

A summary in November 2009 of the security dialogue between the United States and Russia coolly stated that in spite of warm words between Mr. Medvedev and Mr.
Obama and the establishment of a new military-to-military working group, there
remained “challenges in effecting real, substantive and ongoing” dialogue.

The Defense Ministry, the cable said “has not changed its modus operandi for
information exchange nor routine dialoguing since the end of the Cold War.”

Russian attendees at meetings, the cable said, “are closely monitored by their
Military Intelligence (GRU) handlers,” and are reluctant “to engage in any dialogues
outside of tightly controlled statements recited from prepared texts.”

When diplomats did meet Russian officials who chose to be candid, the message
they heard was sometimes blunt.

In June 2009 a delegation of Washington analysts who were accompanied by
diplomats met with Aleksandr Y. Skobeltsyn of Russia’s Department for Military-
Technical Cooperation to discuss American concerns about sales of anti-tank guided
missiles and shoulder-launched antiaircraft missiles.

The latter are a special worry in the West, where security officials fear terrorists
could fire them at passenger jets.

Mr. Skobeltsyn said that Russia “shared U.S. concerns about re-transfer
vulnerabilities, noting that Latin America and Middle East were especially sensitive
areas.”

“But, he argued, if Russia did not provide these weapons to certain countries, then
‘someone else’ would.”

Outright distrustful relations between the Kremlin and the Soviet Union’s former
vassals were also evident in the records. At an appearance in Washington in 2009,
Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski of Poland said that American forces would be
welcome in Poland “to protect against Russian aggression.”

The comment, unwelcomed by Russia and the United States alike, ignited a minor
flare-up. In a cable after Mr. Sikorski’s appearance, the American Embassy said that
Poland had established a Bureau of European Security, which “Polish diplomats jokingly
refer to as the ‘Office of Threats from the East.’ ”

The back-channel quip eventually provided insight into the diplomatic climate in
Moscow. A Polish official, formerly posted to Moscow, noted that Russia’s Foreign
Ministry “threw this moniker back at him during a meeting.”

He told his American colleagues that the “only way” that Russia’s Foreign Ministry
could have known of the nickname “was to have been listening in on his phone
conversations with Warsaw” — a clear suggestion that his office in Russia had been
bugged.

Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting.
Embracing Georgia, U.S. Misread Signs of Rifts

Russia bombed Gori, Georgia, on Aug. 9, 2008.

By C. J. CHIVERS
Throughout the cold war and often in the years since, Western diplomats covering the Kremlin routinely relied on indirect and secondhand or thirdhand sources. Their cables were frequently laden with skepticism, reflecting the authors’ understanding of the limits of their knowledge and suspicion of official Russian statements.

A 2008 batch of American cables from another country once in the cold war’s grip — Georgia — showed a much different sort of access. In Tbilisi, Georgia’s capital, American officials had all but constant contact and an open door to President Mikheil Saakashvili and his young and militarily inexperienced advisers, who hoped the United States would help Georgia shake off its Soviet past and stand up to Russia’s regional influence.

The Tbilisi cables, part of more than a quarter-million cables made available to news organizations by WikiLeaks, display some of the perils of a close relationship.
The cables show that for several years, as Georgia entered an escalating contest with the Kremlin for the future of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two breakaway enclaves out of Georgian control that received Russian support, Washington relied heavily on the Saakashvili government’s accounts of its own behavior. In neighboring countries, American diplomats often maintained their professional distance, and privately detailed their misgivings of their host governments. In Georgia, diplomats appeared to set aside skepticism and embrace Georgian versions of important and disputed events.

By 2008, as the region slipped toward war, sources outside the Georgian government were played down or not included in important cables. Official Georgian versions of events were passed to Washington largely unchallenged.

The last cables before the eruption of the brief Russian-Georgian war showed an embassy relaying statements that would with time be proved wrong.

“Deputy Minister of Defense Batu Kutelia told Ambassador at mid-day August 7 that Georgian military troops are on higher alert, but will not be deploying,” one cable noted, as Georgian heavy military equipment was en route to the conflict zone.

Mr. Kutelia’s assurance did not stand, even in real time. In one of the few signs of the embassy’s having staff in the field, the cable noted that “embassy observers on the highway” saw about 30 government buses “carrying uniformed men heading north.”

Still the embassy misread the signs, telling Washington that while there were “numerous reports that the Georgians are moving military equipment and forces,” the embassy’s “initial impressions” were that the Georgians “were in a heightened state of alertness to show their resolve.”

In fact, Georgia would launch a heavy artillery-and-rocket attack on Tskhinvali, the South Ossetian capital, at 11:35 p.m. on Aug. 7, ending a cease-fire it had declared less than five hours before.

The bombardment plunged Georgia into war, pitting the West against Russia in a standoff over both Russian military actions and the behavior of a small nation that the United States had helped arm and train.

A confidential cable the next morning noted that Georgia’s Foreign Ministry had briefed the diplomatic corps, claiming that “Georgia now controlled most of South Ossetia, including the capital.” The cable further relayed that “Saakashvili has said that Georgia had no intention of getting into this fight, but was provoked by the South Ossetians and had to respond to protect Georgian citizens and territory.”

Rather than emphasize the uncertainties, it added, “All the evidence available to the country team supports Saakashvili’s statement that this fight was not Georgia’s original intention.” Then it continued: “Only when the South Ossetians opened up with artillery on Georgian villages” did the offensive begin.

This exceptionally bold claim would be publicly echoed throughout the Bush administration, which strongly backed Georgia on the world’s stage. To support it, the American Embassy appeared to have no staff members in the field beyond “eyes on the ground at the Ministry of Interior command post” on Aug. 8. The cable did not provide
supporting sources outside of the Georgian government. Instead, as justification for the Georgian attack the previous night, a Georgian government source, Temuri Yakobashvili, was cited as telling the American ambassador that “South Ossetians continued to shoot at the Georgian villages despite the announcement of the cease-fire.”

The cable contained no evidence that the Ossetian attacks after the cease-fire had actually occurred and played down the only independent account, which came from military observers in Tskhinvali from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The observers, in the heart of the conflict zone, did not report hearing or seeing any Ossetian artillery attacks in the hours before Georgia bombarded Tskhinvali. Rather, they reported to an American political officer that “the Georgian attack on Tskhinvali began at 2335 on Aug. 7 despite the cease-fire.”

Nonetheless, the American cable, relying on Georgian government sources, offered as “one plausible explanation for all this” that South Ossetia’s leader, Eduard Kokoity, had “decided to roll the dice and stimulate a conflict with the Georgians in hopes of bringing in the Russians and thereby saving himself.”

It was not Mr. Kokoity who would require saving. On Aug. 9, as Russian forces flowed into Georgia, a cable noted that “President Saakashvili told the Ambassador in a late morning phone call that the Russians are out to take over Georgia and install a new regime.”

Still the reliance on one-sided information continued — including Georgian exaggerations of casualties and Mr. Saakashvili’s characterization of Russian military actions.

The Saakashvili government was publicly insisting that its bombardments of Tskhinvali were justified and precise. But an American cable noted that when Russian ordnance landed on the Georgian city of Gori, Mr. Saakashvili took a different view of the meaning of heavy weapons attacks in civilian areas. He called the Russian attacks “pure terror.”

By then the West and Russia were mostly talking past each other, and Georgia’s American-trained military had been humiliated in the field and was fleeing the fight.

A few weeks later, after a more stable cease-fire had been negotiated and at a time when the American economy was sliding into a recession, President George W. Bush announced a $1 billion aid package to help Georgia rebuild.

*Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting.*

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This article was originally published on December 1, 2010
Cables Shed Light on Ex-K.G.B. Officer’s Death

By ALAN COWELL

LONDON — Shortly after the radiation poisoning in London of a former K.G.B. officer, Alexander V. Litvinenko, a senior Russian official asserted that Moscow had been tailing his killers before he died but had been waved off by Britain’s security services, according to a cable in the trove of secret American documents released by WikiLeaks.

The Russian assertion, denied by British officials, seemed to revive a theory that the British intelligence services played a murky role in the killing — a notion voiced at the time by some in Moscow to deflect allegations of the Kremlin’s involvement in the murder.

The cable, dated Dec. 26, 2006, and marked “secret,” was one of several in the WikiLeaks trove that tried to examine the still unanswered question of who exactly ordered the use of a rare radioactive isotope, polonium 210, to poison Mr. Litvinenko, leading to his death on Nov. 23, 2006. Russia produces polonium commercially, but the process is closely guarded and British investigators have concluded that the isotope could not have been easily diverted without high-level intervention.

In a telephone interview, Marina Litvinenko, the widow of the former K.G.B. officer, called the Russian assertion “disinformation.”

“When they prepared this, they never expected polonium would be known as a murder weapon,” she said. “But after Nov. 23, they needed some kind of disinformation.”

She said that “polonium could not be used without very high level” involvement of the security services.

A separate cable from Paris suggested that at least one senior American official, Daniel Fried, seemed skeptical of statements by Vladimir V. Putin — then Russia’s president and now prime minister — that he was unaware of the events leading to the killing, which Britain has blamed on another former K.G.B. officer, Andrei K. Lugovoi.

Mr. Lugovoi, now a member of the Russian Parliament, has denied British charges that he murdered Mr. Litvinenko by slipping polonium into a teapot at a British hotel where the two men met on Nov. 1, 2006. Russia has refused a British request for Mr. Lugovoi’s extradition and the relationship between two countries has not fully recovered from deep strains after Mr. Litvinenko’s death.

Among several cables mentioning the affair, perhaps the most sensitive covers a meeting in Paris on Dec. 7, 2006, between an American ambassador at large, Henry Crumpton, and Anatoly Safonov, at the time a special representative of Mr. Putin.

That encounter had a whiff of an espionage film script. The two met over a dinner described as “amicable.” Both men were veterans of their countries’ intelligence services, and were now assigned by their governments to cooperate in counterterrorism.

Mr. Crumpton had led the C.I.A.’s operation in Afghanistan after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Mr. Safonov was a former K.G.B. colonel-general who had risen to high
office as deputy director in its successor organization, the F.S.B., in the 1990s, according to Andrei Soldatov, a Russian journalist who has just published a study of that organization called “The New Nobility.”

One of Mr. Safonov’s subsequent assignments in the 2000s was to head a joint British-Russian counterterrorism group, which was dissolved in the diplomatic freeze provoked by Mr. Litvinenko’s death, Mr. Soldatov said in a telephone interview.

According to the leaked cable, “Safonov claimed that Russian authorities in London had known about and followed individuals moving radioactive substances into the city, but were told by the British that they were under control before the poisoning took place.”

The cable did not identify the people carrying the material. Mr. Safonov’s comments reflected allegations by Mr. Lugovoi who, at the time, accused Mr. Litvinenko of being in the pay of British intelligence. But Mr. Safonov’s remarks seemed likely to be taken by British officials as an accusation of incompetence, with the poisoning happening under their eyes. If confirmed, they would also raise the question of how Britain reacted to the idea of Russian spies tailing their citizens on British soil.

The question of who ordered the killing surfaced in a separate leaked cable, also marked “secret,” about a meeting in Paris — on the same day as the former spies’ dinner — between a French presidential adviser, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne and Mr. Fried, then the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs in the Bush administration. Mr. Fried is now the Guantánamo special envoy, appointed by President Obama and charged with persuading other countries to take detainees held at the prison in Cuba.

The French official, the cable said, ascribed the killing to “rogue elements” in the Russian security services. But Mr. Fried “commented that the short-term trend inside Russia was negative, noting increasing indications that the U.K. investigation into the murder of Litvinenko could well point to some sort of Russian involvement.”

Later, it said: “Fried, noting Putin’s attention to detail, questioned whether rogue security elements could operate, in the U.K. no less, without Putin’s knowledge. Describing the current atmosphere as strange, he described the Russians as increasingly self-confident, to the point of arrogance.”

Mr. Fried’s reported remark was the first time that such a suggestion by a serving American officer was made public.

That remark reflected some suspicions about high-level Kremlin involvement in the period after Mr. Litvinenko’s death, when conspiracy theories blossomed relating to Mr. Litvinenko’s activities as a visceral public enemy of Mr. Putin and as a whistle-blower on Russian organized crime. Mr. Litvinenko fled Russia in 2000 and sought asylum in Britain, where he acquired British citizenship shortly before his death.

Mr. Fried declined to comment publicly on the content of the cable.

Another cable, from the American Embassy in Madrid, marked “confidential” and dated Aug. 31, 2009, cited an article in the newspaper El País. The article said that Mr.
Litvinenko had tipped off Spanish security officials about Russian organized crime figures in Spain and had provided information about four suspected gangsters at a previously unrecorded meeting with Spanish officials in May 2006.

That report added one more layer to the debate about the motives of his killers — could the killing have been done in revenge for his disclosures about the mob?

Perhaps the most tantalizing item in the cables was related to Dmitri Kovtun, a business associate of Mr. Lugovoi, who passed through Hamburg on his way to London on Nov. 1 and was, by his own account, present when Mr. Lugovoi met Mr. Litvinenko at the Millennium Hotel in the Mayfair district of London on Nov. 1, 2006.

According to a confidential cable from the American consulate in Hamburg, dated Dec. 19, 2006 — about a month after Mr. Litvinenko’s death — a senior German counterterrorism official, Gerhard Schindler, “said Kovtun left polonium traces on everything he touched” in Hamburg. That much had been publicly reported.

But, the cable said, “German investigators concluded Kovtun did not have polonium traces on his skin or clothes; Schindler said the polonium was coming out of his body, for example through his pores.”

That suggested that the exposure took place during an earlier visit to London by Mr. Lugovoi and Mr. Kovtun in October 2006, during which they had met Mr. Litvinenko; they claimed later that they themselves had been victims of a poisoning attempt. Mr. Litvinenko’s supporters and British investigators, however, have long described the earlier visit as a part of the conspiracy against Mr. Litvinenko.

The cable from Hamburg said no traces of polonium were found on the Germanwings plane Mr. Kovtun took to London, and German authorities had been preparing to ground the Aeroflot plane that took him to Hamburg from Moscow to test it for traces of the isotope. “Schindler said Russian authorities must have found out about German plans because ‘at the last minute’ Aeroflot swapped planes,” the cable said. “Schindler said he did not expect Aeroflot to fly the other plane to Germany any time soon.”

Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York, Clifford J. Levy from Moscow and Scott Shane from Washington.

—This article was originally published on December 20, 2010
NATO Balanced Baltic and Russian Anxieties

By SCOTT SHANE

WASHINGTON — When fighting broke out between Russia and Georgia in August 2008, a shudder passed through the former Soviet Baltic republics.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had painful memories of Soviet occupation and feared that a resurgent Russia might come after them next. They began lobbying NATO, which they had joined in 2004, for a formal defense plan.

But the request was a delicate one for NATO, an alliance obligated by treaty to respond to an attack on one member as an attack on all. NATO leaders had repeatedly declared that post-Soviet Russia was not a threat, and the incoming Obama administration wanted to pursue what it called a “reset” of relations with Russia.

Cables obtained by WikiLeaks and provided to several news organizations chronicle the secret diplomacy that followed, culminating in a NATO decision in January to expand a defense plan for Poland to cover the three Baltic states. That expanded plan, called Eagle Guardian, is now in place, American officials say.

The Russia-Georgia clash, with television images of Russian armor on the move and tough talk from Moscow, terrified the Baltic republics, which had been occupied by the Soviet Army in 1940 and achieved independence a half-century later.

“Events in Georgia have dominated the news and discussion here like few other events in recent memory,” a cable from the American Embassy in Riga, Latvia, reported as the fighting raged in Georgia. Latvians, at least ethnic Latvians, it said, “look at Georgia and think that this could easily be them.”

The cable added that “so far, the U.S. willingness to take a tough line in opposition to Russian actions and in support of Georgia has been well received here, but some key figures are asking if the west is fully prepared to deal with a resurgent Russia.”

The embassy reported that Latvians were gathering for candlelight vigils outside the Georgian Embassy, Georgian flags were on display around Riga, and sales of Georgian wine and mineral water were up.

With significant ethnic Russian minorities, all three Baltic states were alarmed by Russia’s public explanation that it had gone into Georgia to protect the rights of Russian citizens there. Some Latvian leaders said they needed to do more to integrate ethnic Russians into the local culture. Wealthy Latvian businessmen, worried about endangering lucrative deals with Russia, appealed for moderation in the criticism of their giant neighbor.

By October 2009, a cable reported that “leaders in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are pressing hard for NATO Article 5 contingency planning for the Baltic states,” referring to the mutual defense provision of the NATO treaty. The cable noted that President Obama had expressed support for such planning.

But the cable, signed by the American ambassador to NATO, Ivo H. Daalder, noted
the awkwardness of squaring Baltic worries with closer NATO-Russia ties.

“The Baltic states clearly believe that the Russian Federation represents a future security risk and desire a contingency plan to address that risk. And therein lies the problem,” the cable said. “Post-Cold War NATO has consistently said that it no longer views Russia as a threat.”

Indeed, during the Bush administration, NATO had accepted the former Soviet republics as members but had avoided including them in defense planning, which might have provoked Russia.

Now, Germany proposed expanding the Poland defense plan to the Baltic states, and NATO planners began their work. The Latvians expressed “profound happiness” at the decision, and an Estonian official called it an “early Christmas present,” according to two cables. But American officials urged Baltic officials to keep such talk secret.

“A public discussion of contingency planning would also likely lead to an unnecessary increase in NATO-Russia tensions, something we should try to avoid as we work to improve practical cooperation in areas of common NATO-Russia interest,” a December cable told NATO member states.

In January, with the plan approved, a cable signed by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton advised NATO members to stonewall press inquiries about the details of Baltic defense. (Baltic news organizations have reported on the defense plans in recent months.)

But the cable did suggest a talking point to reassure Russia. “NATO planning is an internal process designed to make the Alliance as prepared as possible for future contingencies,” the cable said. “It is not ‘aimed’ at any other country.”

—This article was originally published on December 6, 2010
Cables Praise French Friend With ‘Mercurial’ Side

A leaked cable described Nicolas Sarkozy of France, with President Obama, as “the most pro-American French president” since 1945.

By KATRIN BENNHOLD
PARIS — President Nicolas Sarkozy is an unusually solid French friend of America. He is also a “mercurial” man operating in “a zone of monarch-like impunity” surrounded by advisers often too fearful to give honest counsel, according to leaked cables from the United States Embassy in Paris.

Last December, the American ambassador shared an anecdote with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton: when the mayor of Paris had the Eiffel Tower lighted in Turkey’s national colors for a visit by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in April 2009, aides to Mr. Sarkozy, a staunch opponent of Turkey’s entry to the European Union, rerouted the presidential plane so he would not see it.
“Élysée contacts have reported to us the great lengths they will go to avoid disagreeing” with Mr. Sarkozy “or provoking his displeasure,” said the cable, signed by Ambassador Charles H. Rivkin. It was part of a trove of documents obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to several news organizations.

Five years of correspondence between Paris and Washington chronicle a spectacular post-Iraq turnabout between one of the West’s most complicated diplomatic couples. Mr. Sarkozy, who took office in May 2007, was described even last year as “the most pro-American French president since World War II” and a “force multiplier” for American foreign policy interests.

But the cables also convey a nuanced assessment of the French leader as a somewhat erratic figure with authoritarian tendencies and a penchant for deciding policy on the fly. By January 2010, American diplomats wrote of a high-maintenance ally sometimes too impatient to consult with crucial partners before carrying out initiatives, one who favors summit meetings and direct contacts over traditional diplomacy.

Writing to Mrs. Clinton on Dec. 4, 2009, Mr. Rivkin spoke of the need to channel Mr. Sarkozy’s “impulsive proposals into constructive directions.” Concessions on thorny issues like Afghanistan would be best won by President Obama himself, he suggested.

“In my opinion, it will necessitate periodic presidential intervention to reassure Sarkozy of our commitment as an ally and partner and, in many cases, to close the deal,” he wrote.

The French president’s office declined to comment, though on Tuesday Mr. Sarkozy told cabinet ministers that the release of the documents was “the height of irresponsibility.”

Paul Patin, an American Embassy spokesman, said Tuesday: “President Sarkozy has proved, time and time again, that he is a true friend of the U.S. France is one of our closest allies, and our partnership has only gotten stronger during his presidency.”

In general, few foreign policy disagreements surface between France and the United States under Mr. Sarkozy. A major difference, however, concerns Turkey, with Washington a fervent supporter of Turkey’s ambition to join the European Union and fretful that Mr. Sarkozy’s opposition threatens to “antagonize a strategic ally.”

The delight among American diplomats at the arrival of a self-professed pro-American candidate after years of difficult relations with Jacques Chirac was evident in correspondence well before Mr. Sarkozy’s election.

In 2005, Mr. Sarkozy, then the interior minister, told Craig R. Stapleton, then the American ambassador, that although he would have advised against the Iraq invasion he still felt it “personally when American soldiers die in combat.” Mr. Sarkozy said he took it as a personal responsibility that “no U.S. Embassy or Consulate was so much as touched” in anti-American protests.

“Very much unlike nearly all other French political figures, Sarkozy is viscerally pro-American,” said a cable signed by Mr. Stapleton. “For most of his peers, the U.S. is a sometimes reviled or admired, but decidedly foreign, other. Sarkozy identifies with
America; he sees his own rise in the world as reflecting an American-like saga.”

If Mr. Sarkozy’s Atlanticist outlook was never doubted — even in the most recent leaked cable from Jan. 25 this year, French-American relations are called “one of the best” — concerns about a “thin-skinned, authoritarian” streak surfaced by October 2007, as he divorced his second wife, Cécilia. Two months later, diplomats spoke of Mr. Sarkozy’s “unprecedented” concentration of power over foreign affairs and “increasing willingness to downgrade human rights considerations in his dealings with foreign leaders.”

Praised for leadership during the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and the global financial crisis, Mr. Sarkozy was criticized by European diplomats referred to in a cable for an “increasingly erratic” last half of his 2008 European Union presidency.

A year later, when two scandals sank Mr. Sarkozy’s approval ratings, American diplomats started telling Washington that the president lacked advisers willing to question him. One scandal involved a cabinet member and the other the promotion of the president’s son, Jean, then 23, to lead France’s most prestigious business district. “Combined, these stories have bolstered the impression that Sarkozy is operating in a zone of monarch-like impunity,” said an Oct. 21, 2009, cable.

In December 2009, Mr. Rivkin told Mrs. Clinton: “Sarkozy’s own advisers likewise demonstrate little independence and appear to have little effect on curbing the hyperactive president, even when he is at his most mercurial.” He added: “After two years in office, many seasoned key Élysée staff are leaving for prestigious onward assignments as a reward for their hard work, raising questions as to whether new faces will be any more willing to point out when the emperor is less than fully dressed.”

This snapshot is broadly corroborated in interviews with French officials who had dealings with Mr. Sarkozy in recent years. Describing the president’s entourage as loyal but intimidated underlings guarding access to their boss, one senior official, insisting on anonymity, said that Mr. Sarkozy’s management style heightened the risks of the centralized French presidential system.

Another official said that fear of Mr. Sarkozy’s ire was artificially inflated in his entourage and questioned whether, for example, Mr. Sarkozy would have actually thrown a tantrum on seeing the Eiffel Tower in Turkish colors.

Bernard Kouchner, who until recently was Mr. Sarkozy’s foreign minister, was more diplomatic. But he essentially agreed that under the French system, too much power was vested in one man and two dozen advisers vis-à-vis the 12,000 career diplomats. “We need a more collaborative approach and more efficient decision-making,” he said.

—This article was originally published on November 30, 2010
France, Turning to a New Partner, Dismays an Old One Over a Ship

By MICHAEL R. GORDON

WASHINGTON — Sometimes, friends disagree.

After France, one of America’s closest allies, announced in February that it hoped to sell a Mistral — a ship that carries helicopters and can conduct amphibious assaults — to Russia, with the option to sell several more, American officials soon raised objections.

The proposed transaction would be the largest sale by a Western country to Russia since the end of World War II. The commander of the Russian Navy has said that if his Black Sea fleet had had such a ship during the 2008 war with Georgia, it would have been able to carry out its operations in 40 minutes instead of 26 hours.

Some Eastern European NATO members, including Lithuania and Estonia, protested the deal, according to a cable by Ivo H. Daalder, the United States ambassador to NATO. The United States opposed it as well. In a November 2009 cable titled “Mistral Sale Could Destabilize Black Sea,” John R. Bass, the American ambassador to Georgia, recommended that the Obama administration discourage the sale or at least seek a stipulation that the Russians should not deploy the vessel in the Black Sea.

“This sale would render the already difficult task of getting Russia to comply with its ceasefire commitments nearly impossible, and it would potentially increase the militarization of, and instability in, the Black Sea region,” Ambassador Bass’s cable noted.

Hervé Morin, France’s defense minister at the time, defended the sale in a February meeting with Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, arguing that that a single ship would not change the military balance and that the sale was a “way to send a message of partnership to Russia at a critical time.”

But Mr. Gates argued that the sale would send the wrong message to Russia given France’s role in brokering a cease-fire in Georgia, “which Russia was not fully honoring.” The Russians say that they intend to decide shortly between the French proposal and several other offers. A French shipbuilder said that if France won the contract, the first ship would be built in 2013.

—This article was originally published on December 6, 2010
Officials Pressed Germans on Kidnapping by C.I.A.

By MICHAEL SLACKMAN

BERLIN — American officials exerted sustained pressure on Germany not to enforce arrest warrants against Central Intelligence Agency officers involved in the 2003 kidnapping of a German citizen mistakenly believed to be a terrorist, diplomatic cables made public by WikiLeaks show.

John M. Koenig, the American deputy chief of mission in Berlin, issued a pointed warning in February 2007 urging that Germany “weigh carefully at every step of the way the implications for relations with the U.S.” in the case of Khaled el-Masri, a German of Lebanese descent. Mr. Masri said he was held in a secret United States prison in Afghanistan and tortured before his captors acknowledged their mistake and let him go.

The United States’ concern over the Masri case was detailed in cables sent from the United States Embassies in Germany, Spain and Macedonia in 2006 and 2007.

The cables indicated what was long suspected by German opposition leaders who led a parliamentary inquiry into the case: intense political pressure from Washington was
the reason that Germany never pressed for the arrest and extradition of 13 operatives believed to be from the C.I.A. who were ultimately charged in indictments issued in Spain and in Munich.

“I am not surprised by this,” said Hans-Christian Ströbele, a member of the Green bloc in Parliament who then sat on the legislative investigative committee. “It was confirmed once again that the U.S. government kept the German government” from seeking the arrest of the agents.

In one cable, written before Mr. Koenig’s warning to Germany’s deputy national security adviser, the embassy in Berlin reported that diplomatic officials had “continued to stress with German counterparts the potential negative implications for our bilateral relationship, and in particular for our counter-terrorism cooperation, if further steps are taken to seek the arrest or extradition of U.S. citizens/officials.”

In 2006 and 2007, the Masri case was one of the most difficult issues between Washington and Berlin, exposing to public scrutiny secret tactics used in the Bush administration’s antiterrorism efforts that were sharply criticized both in the United States and in Europe. At the time, political pressure was mounting in Germany to investigate and expose the practice of extraordinary rendition, which involved capturing suspects and sending them to third-party countries for questioning in secret prisons.

Mr. Masri was seized on Dec. 31, 2003, as he entered Macedonia while on vacation; border security guards confused him with an operative of Al Qaeda with a similar name. He says he was turned over to the C.I.A., which flew him to Afghanistan, where he says he was tortured, sodomized and injected with drugs. After five months, he was dropped on a roadside in Albania. No charges were brought against him.

The case drew widespread attention in Europe. The cables show that the United States was especially concerned about cooperation between Spanish and German prosecutors. The Spanish courts became involved because they concluded that the plane that transported Mr. Masri had traveled through Spanish territory.

“This coordination among independent investigators will complicate our efforts to manage this case at a discreet government-to-government level,” read a cable sent from the embassy in Madrid in January 2007.

The cables’ release has created a stir in Germany mostly because the documents contain American diplomats’ caustic comments about German officials and because they show that the embassy had informants in one of the governing parties. The Masri case, however, has already been so thoroughly discussed in public, and the degree of Washington’s pressure on Berlin is so well known, that it has not gained much attention.

The one cable that has caught the attention of some in the German press was written on Feb. 6, 2007, by Mr. Koenig, the second-highest-ranking diplomat in the embassy, under the title “CHANCELLERY AWARE OF USG CONCERNS.”

Rolf Nikel, Germany’s deputy national security adviser, told Mr. Koenig that the two governments had differences over Washington’s antiterrorism methods, including German opposition to the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and to rendition. Mr. Nikel
said, according to the cable, “the Chancellery is well aware of the bilateral political implications of the case, but added that this case ‘will not be easy,’ because of the intense pressure from the parliament and the German media.”

Mr. Koenig said that while Washington “recognized the independence of the German judiciary,” he added that “to issue international arrest warrants or extradition requests would require the concurrence of the German Federal Government.”

His point was that the case could be stopped.

The prosecutor’s office in Munich issued warrants for the arrest of the C.I.A. operatives, but Germany’s government did not press for arrests or extraditions.

“We already dealt with this, including in the Bundestag, about why the German federal government did not take further action to carry out the arrest warrant,” said Mr. Ströbele. “How one deals with the fact that he was taken into custody and tortured — whether more will be revealed on that — what was done in order to keep it a secret: that is what interests me.”

Diana Aurisch contributed reporting.

—This article was originally published on December 8, 2010

OTHER RELATED CABLES
Islamic Extremism in Germany
Europe Wary of U.S. Bank Monitors

By ERIC LICHTBLAUL

WASHINGTON — When the European Parliament ordered a halt in February to an American government program to monitor international banking transactions for terrorist activity, the Obama administration was blindsided by the rebuke.

“Paranoia runs deep especially about US intelligence agencies,” a secret cable from the American Embassy in Berlin said. “We were astonished to learn how quickly rumors about alleged U.S. economic espionage” had taken root among German politicians who opposed the program, it said.

The memo was among dozens of State Department cables that revealed the deep distrust of some traditional European allies toward what they considered American intrusion into their citizens’ affairs without stringent oversight.

The program, created in secrecy by the Bush administration after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, has allowed American counterterrorism officials to examine banking transactions routed through a vast database run by a Brussels consortium known as Swift. When the program was disclosed in 2006 by The New York Times, just months after the newspaper reported the existence of the National Security Agency’s warrantless wiretapping program, it set off protests in Europe and forced the United States to accept new restrictions.

But by 2010, new leaders at the European Parliament had what one State Department memo called “a fixation” on privacy issues. On Feb. 10, the Europeans voted 378 to 196 to halt the Swift program.

Obama administration officials valued it because it allowed them to trace the transactions of suspected terrorist financiers while including “robust” privacy protections, according to the cables.

But many Europeans were skeptical. Some allies not only were concerned that program might be used to steal secrets from European companies, but also considered it of “dubious” value.

In Austria, for example, “the Nazi legacy and familiarity with communist regimes” have fueled “a widespread presumption against government data collection and in favor of stringent privacy protections,” officials at the embassy wrote.

Many Germans, meanwhile, remember “how the Stasi,” the former East German secret police, “abused information to destroy people’s lives,” according to a dispatch from the American Embassy in Berlin.

Opposition in Germany was particularly damaging because the country was among a handful of allies that, according to a 2006 cable, organized a “coalition of the constructive” to ensure that the Swift operation was not “ruined by privacy experts.”

After German representatives voted against the program, a German official reported to American diplomats that Chancellor Angela Merkel — a strong supporter of the
program — was “angrier than he had ever seen her.”

After mobilizing top officials, including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner and Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr., the administration was able to reverse course. The European Parliament voted 484 to 109 in July to restart the program after the United States made modest concessions that promised greater European oversight.

—This article was originally published on December 5, 2010
Blackwater Aimed to Hunt Pirates

By MARK MAZZETTI
WASHINGTON — Besieged by criminal inquiries and Congressional investigators, how could the world’s most controversial private security company drum up new business? By battling pirates on the high seas, of course.

In late 2008, Blackwater Worldwide, already under fire because of accusations of abuses by its security guards in Iraq and Afghanistan, reconfigured a 183-foot oceanographic research vessel into a pirate-hunting ship for hire and then began looking for business from shipping companies seeking protection from Somali pirates. The company’s chief executive officer, Erik Prince, was planning a trip to Djibouti for a promotional event in March 2009, and Blackwater was hoping that the American Embassy there would help out, according to a secret State Department cable.

But with the Obama administration just weeks old, American diplomats in Djibouti faced a problem. They are supposed to be advocates for American businesses, but this was Blackwater, a company that Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton had proposed
banning from war zones when she was a presidential candidate.

The embassy “would appreciate Department’s guidance on the appropriate level of engagement with Blackwater,” wrote James C. Swan, the American ambassador in Djibouti, in a cable sent on Feb. 12, 2009. Blackwater’s plans to enter the anti-piracy business have been previously reported, but not the American government’s concern about the endeavor.

According to that cable, Blackwater had outfitted its United States-flagged ship with .50-caliber machine guns and a small, unarmed drone aircraft. The ship, named the McArthur, would carry a crew of 33 to patrol the Gulf of Aden for 30 days before returning to Djibouti to resupply.

And the company had already determined its rules of engagement. “Blackwater does not intend to take any pirates into custody, but will use lethal force against pirates if necessary,” the cable said.

At the time, the company was still awaiting approvals from Blackwater lawyers for its planned operations, since Blackwater had informed the embassy there was “no precedent for a paramilitary operation in a purely commercial environment.”

Lawsuits filed later by crew members on the McArthur made life on the ship sound little improved from the days of Blackbeard.

One former crew member said, according to legal documents, that the ship’s captain, who had been drinking during a port call in Jordan, ordered him “placed in irons” (handcuffed to a towel rack) after he was accused of giving an unauthorized interview to his hometown newspaper in Minnesota. The captain, according to the lawsuit, also threatened to place the sailor in a straitjacket. Another crew member, who is black, claimed in court documents that he was repeatedly subjected to racial epithets.

In the end, Blackwater Maritime Security Services found no treasure in the pirate-chasing business, never attracting any clients. And the Obama administration chose not to sever the American government’s relationship with the North Carolina-based firm, which has collected more than $1 billion in security contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Blackwater renamed itself Xe Services, and earlier this year the company won a $100 million contract from the Central Intelligence Agency to protect the spy agency’s bases in Afghanistan.

—This article was originally published on November 30, 2010
Somali pirates released the Faina for a $3.2 million ransom in 2009. The ship’s cargo included 32 Soviet-era tanks.

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN and MICHAEL R. GORDON
KHARTOUM, Sudan — It was September 2008 and a band of Somali pirates made a startling discovery.

The Ukrainian freighter they had just commandeered in the Gulf of Aden was packed with weapons, including 32 Soviet-era battle tanks, and the entire arsenal was headed for the regional government in southern Sudan. The Ukrainian and Kenyan governments vigorously denied that, insisting that the tanks were intended for the Kenyan military.

“This is a big loss for us,” said Alfred Mutua, a spokesman for the Kenyan government, at the time.

But it turns out the pirates were telling the truth — and the Kenyans and Ukrainians were not, at least publicly. According to several secret State Department cables made public by WikiLeaks, the tanks not only were headed to southern Sudan, but they were the latest installment of several underground arms shipments. By the time the freighter was seized, 67 T-72 tanks had already been delivered to bolster southern Sudan’s armed
forces against the government in Khartoum, an international pariah for its human rights abuses in Darfur.

Bush administration officials knew of the earlier weapons transactions and chose not to shut them down, an official from southern Sudan asserted in an interview, and the cables acknowledge the Kenyan officials’ assertions that they had kept American officials informed about the deal. But once the pirates exposed the arms pipeline through Kenya, the Obama administration protested to the Ukrainian and Kenyan governments, even threatening sanctions, the cables show.

Vann H. Van Diepen, a senior State Department official, presented the Ukrainians with a sales contract that showed southern Sudan as the recipient, according to a November 2009 cable from the American Embassy in Kiev. When they dismissed it as a forgery, Mr. Van Diepen “showed the Ukrainians cleared satellite imagery of T-72 tanks unloaded in Kenya, transferred to railyards for onward shipment, and finally in South Sudan,” the cable said, referring to the early deliveries of the weapons. “This led to a commotion on the Ukrainian side.”

The United States’ shifting stance, on policy and legal grounds, on arms for southern Sudan is illuminated in the State Department cables, which were made available to The New York Times and several other news organizations.

The revelations about the tanks — the ones taken by the pirates are now sitting in Kenya, their fate unclear — come at one of the most delicate times in Sudan’s history, with the nation, Africa’s largest, on the verge of splitting into two. On Jan. 9, southern Sudanese are scheduled to vote in a referendum for their independence from northern Sudan, representing the end of a 50-year war. Huge quantities of weapons have been flowing to both sides, mainly to the north, turning the country into one of the most combustible on the continent. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton recently called it “a ticking time bomb.”

While Kenyan newspapers and other publications have written about the arms shipment since the pirate episode, confirmation that the government of southern Sudan was the recipient has raised concerns among diplomats that the news could further inflame tensions.

Ghazi Salah al-Din al-Atabani, a top adviser to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan, chuckled when told of the cables. “We knew it, yeah, we knew it,” he said in an interview. He expressed no surprise that the United States appeared to condone some of the shipments, saying: “Officially, we are enemies.” Still, he said, the shipments could become “a very hot political issue.”

Southern Sudan, mostly Christian and animist, fought even before Sudan’s independence in 1956 to split with the Arab government in Khartoum. More than two million people were killed and government-sponsored militias, similar to those that raped and pillaged in Darfur, swept across the region, razing villages and massacring civilians. In 2005, the two sides signed a peace agreement, which granted the south autonomy and the right to vote on secession next year.
The agreement also allows southern Sudan to buy arms to transform its guerrilla army into a defense force, and the United States has also publicly said that it has provided communications and other “nonlethal” equipment and training to the southern army, called the Sudan People’s Liberation Army, or S.P.L.A. The cables suggest that effort has gone further than the United States has publicized.

“Over the past two years,” says a December 2009 cable, from the embassy in Nairobi, Kenyan officials “have shared full details of their engagement with the SPLA as we have shared details of our training program for the SPLA, including combat arms soldier training.”

Several years ago, the southern Sudan government contracted to buy 100 tanks from Ukraine using its own funds. The first shipment of Ukrainian tanks took place in 2007 with little fanfare, and the second shipment was delivered a year later.

In September 2008, however, the Faina, a Ukrainian freighter, was seized by Somali pirates. It was carrying 32 T-72 Soviet-era tanks, 150 grenade launchers, 6 antiaircraft guns and ammunition. Initially, American officials were worried the pirates might offload the weapons in Somalia.

After months of haggling, a $3.2 million ransom was paid, the Somali pirates finally released the ship, and the arms were unloaded in Kenya.

When Ukrainian officials were approached by American officials about the arms shipments in July 2008, they insisted that the weapons were intended for Kenya’s military. Even so, some American diplomats understood otherwise and did not appear very concerned. In a cable from Oct. 19, 2008, Alberto M. Fernandez, who served as the chargé d’affaires in Khartoum, reports that he told officials from southern Sudan that while the United States would prefer not to see an arms buildup in the region, it understood that the government there “feels compelled to do the same” as the north. He also cautioned the officials to take care, if there were future shipments, to avoid a repeat hijacking by pirates and “the attention it has drawn.”

After the Obama administration took office, a new special envoy for Sudan was appointed and the United States offered incentives for Khartoum to cooperate with the coming referendum. Taking a stricter position than the Bush administration on the tanks, the State Department also insisted that the shipments were illegal, since Sudan was on the United States’ list of state sponsors of terrorism.

In a blunt exchange with the Ukrainians in November 2009, Mr. Van Diepen warned that the United States might impose sanctions unless the Ukrainian government acknowledged its role in the past transactions. According to the cable, he cautioned pointedly, “there was nothing for Ukraine to gain from lying and a lot to lose.”

In similar conversations with Kenyan officials, the Obama administration again raised the threat of “sweeping sanctions,” which it said might be waived if the officials cooperated in investigating the third shipment.

In a Nov. 27, 2009, cable outlining talking points for American diplomats in Nairobi to present to the Kenyans, the State Department acknowledged “the apparent
disconnect” between provisions of the peace agreement that allowed southern Sudan to develop its defensive capability and the Americans’ legal argument that arms should not be sent there because of the Khartoum government’s place on the terrorism list.

“We also recognize that some members of your government informed some members of the USG that this deal was being prepared,” the cable, which was sent by Secretary Clinton, added. But the cable argued that southern Sudan did not need the tanks, they would be difficult to maintain and they would “increase the chance of an arms race with Khartoum.”

That did not appear to mollify the Kenyans. A cable on Dec. 16, 2009, recounted that the head of Kenya’s general staff told American officials that he was “very confused” by the United States position “since the past transfers had been undertaken in consultation with the United States.” According to the cable, the Kenyans asked whether the Obama administration was reconsidering whether to move forward with a referendum under the peace accord and whether it was “shifting its support to Khartoum.”

In recent months, the Obama administration quietly exempted Ukraine and Kenya from sanctions for the 2007 and 2008 shipments, according to government officials.

It is not clear, however, whether the administration has asked Kenya to hold off sending the tanks that were aboard the seized ship to southern Sudan, at least until after the referendum. A State Department spokesman declined to respond to those questions.

The Kenyans have told southern Sudan officials that the Americans are still asking them not to ship the tanks, according to Gen. Oyay Deng Ajak, the former chief of staff of the southern Sudan military, who asserted that the Americans had been aware of the transaction from the start.

Representative Donald M. Payne, the New Jersey Democrat who heads the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa, has urged that the tanks be shipped. “Our government knew those tanks were being purchased,” he said in an interview. “The fact is the pirates’ seizure of the tanks is what made them change their policy. I don’t think the Obama administration has a clear policy on Sudan.”

Jeffrey Gettleman reported from Khartoum, and Michael R. Gordon from Washington.

---This article was originally published on December 8, 2010---
U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War, With Frustration

By ELISABETH MALKIN
MEXICO CITY — More than a year ago — before drug cartels killed a gubernatorial candidate and began murdering mayors, before shootings and kidnappings in Mexico’s industrial capital, Monterrey, surged to the point that the State Department ordered children of American diplomats there to leave the country — a Mexican official admitted that the government feared it could lose control of parts of the nation.

At a dinner held by Mexico’s acting attorney general for a visiting delegation from the Department of Justice in October 2009, the comments by Gerónimo Gutiérrez, then a deputy secretary in the ministry in charge of domestic security, suggested that even then a sense of anxiety about the drug war had begun to take hold in many parts of the Mexican government.

In the account of the meeting, which was included in the American diplomatic cables made public by WikiLeaks and posted on Mexican news Web sites, Mr. Gutiérrez was quoted as saying: “We have 18 months and if we do not produce a tangible success that is recognizable to the Mexican people, it will be difficult to sustain the confrontation
into the next administration.”

The summary of Mr. Gutiérrez’s comments, written by the United States ambassador to Mexico, Carlos Pascual, continued: “He expressed a real concern with ‘losing’ certain regions. It is damaging Mexico’s international reputation, hurting foreign investment, and leading to a sense of government impotence, Gutiérrez said.”

The documents released by WikiLeaks capture a moment at the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010 when Mexican officials were forced to acknowledge — despite their public claims of progress — that their military strategy was not producing the results they had hoped for in the drug war.

The diplomatic cables also show just how entwined the United States has become in Mexico’s drug war. The United States government provides Mexico with intelligence to pinpoint where top drug lords are hiding out, trains elite troops, and American officials discuss strategy to try to quell the violence in Ciudad Juárez, which has become ground zero in the drug war.

But the cables suggest frustration that the military, the police and prosecutors are not up to the task. In a blunt assessment, John Feeley, the deputy chief of mission at the American Embassy in Mexico City, concluded in January that military officials “share the parochial, risk-averse habits that often plague their civilian counterparts in Mexican law enforcement agencies.”

A year later, there have been some notable successes in capturing or killing cartel leaders and their violent lieutenants. Police intelligence appears to have become more effective. But the military continues to play the top role in the drug war, and the violence that so worried Mexican officials at the end of last year has spread, becoming more entrenched than ever.

The diplomatic cables present a picture of such intense rivalry among Mexico’s civilian law enforcement agencies and its military that little gets done.

In his account, Mr. Feeley said that “Mexican security institutions are often locked in a zero-sum competition in which one agency’s success is viewed as another’s failure, information is closely guarded, and joint operations are all but unheard of.”

Mr. Feely continued: “Prosecution rates for organized crime-related offenses are dismal; 2 percent of those detained are brought to trial. Only 2 percent of those arrested in Ciudad Juárez have even been charged with a crime.”

The documents also show how anxious the Mexican government was to contain the bloodshed in Juárez, which has intensified this year.

At the October 2009 meeting with the delegation from the Justice Department, Mr. Gutiérrez and Jorge Tello Peón, who was then President Felipe Calderón’s top intelligence official for the drug war, said that the government “must succeed in Juárez because Calderón has staked so much of his reputation there, with a major show of force that, to date, has not panned out,” according to Mr. Pascual’s account.

The content of the documents elicited angry responses from Mexican officials. Late Thursday, the Foreign Relations Ministry said the reports “reflect some deplorable
practices from the point of view of respect that should prevail between nations that collaborate for common objectives.”

Mr. Pascual hastened to assure Mexicans that relations were still strong. Calling the cables “impressionistic snapshots of a moment in time,” he wrote in El Universal newspaper that “like some snapshots, they can be out of focus or unflattering.”

Much of what is in the diplomatic cables are similar to what American diplomats say about the need for Mexican law enforcement agencies to do their jobs more effectively. Indeed, much of it is not all that different from the vigorous debate going on inside Mexico.

The army faces charges of human rights abuses, and efforts to reform the police have failed to generate much confidence among ordinary Mexicans.

But the unguarded criticisms in the diplomatic cables have roused prickly nationalist sensibilities in Mexico, especially candid assessments like one from the United States Embassy that stated: “Official corruption is widespread, leading to a compartmentalized siege mentality among ‘clean’ law enforcement leaders and their lieutenants.”

Another sensitive topic is criticism of the military. A cable from Ambassador Pascual last December offered an inside look at how the Mexican Army failed to move to capture one top drug lord, Arturo Beltrán Leyva, last December.

The United States Embassy initially told the army where Mr. Beltrán Leyva was hiding out, but the army did not act. The embassy then told the navy, and an elite American-trained unit moved into action. Mr. Beltrán Leyva escaped the first navy raid, but the embassy several days later located him in a apartment complex in Cuernavaca, about 50 miles south of Mexico City. The navy unit moved in and killed him when he refused to surrender.

Mr. Pascual concluded that the navy’s success put the army “in the difficult position of explaining why it has been reluctant to act on good intelligence and conduct operations against high-level targets.”

—This article was originally published on December 3, 2010
U.S. Diplomats Noted Canadian Mistrust

By CHARLIE SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — In early 2008, American diplomats stationed in Ottawa turned on their television sets and were aghast: there was an “onslaught” of Canadian shows depicting “nefarious American officials carrying out equally nefarious deeds in Canada,” from planning to bomb Quebec to stealing Canadian water supplies.

In a confidential diplomatic cable sent back to the State Department, the American Embassy warned of increasing mistrust of the United States by its northern neighbor, with which it shares some $500 billion in annual trade, the world’s longest unsecured border and a joint military mission in Afghanistan.

“The degree of comfort with which Canadian broadcast entities, including those financed by Canadian tax dollars, twist current events to feed longstanding negative images of the U.S. — and the extent to which the Canadian public seems willing to indulge in the feast — is noteworthy as an indication of the kind of insidious negative popular stereotyping we are increasingly up against in Canada,” the cable said.

A trove of diplomatic cables, obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to a number of publications, disclose a perception by American diplomats that Canadians “always carry a chip on their shoulder” in part because of a feeling that their country “is condemned to always play ‘Robin’ to the U.S. ‘Batman.’ ”

But at the same time, some Canadian officials privately tried to make it clear to their American counterparts that they did not share their society’s persistent undercurrent of anti-Americanism.

In July 2008, Canada’s intelligence service director, James Judd, discussed a video showing a crying Omar Khadr, then a teenager and a Canadian detainee at the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Mr. Judd “observed that the images would no doubt trigger ‘knee-jerk anti-Americanism’ and ‘paroxysms of moral outrage, a Canadian specialty.’ ”

A cable that briefed President George W. Bush before a visit to Ottawa in late 2004 shed further light on the asymmetrical relationship with Canada — a country, the embassy wrote, that was engaged in “soul-searching” about its “decline from ‘middle power’ status to that of an ‘active observer’ of global affairs, a trend which some Canadians believe should be reversed."

It also noted that Canadian officials worried that they were being excluded from a club of English-speaking countries as a result of their refusal to take part in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The United States had created a channel for sharing intelligence related to Iraq operations with Britain and Australia, but Canada was not invited to join.

The Canadian government “has expressed concern at multiple levels that their exclusion from a traditional ‘four-eyes’ construct is ‘punishment’ for Canada’s nonparticipation in Iraq and they fear that the Iraq-related channel may evolve into a more permanent ‘three-eyes’ only structure,” the cable said.
Four years later, after President Obama’s election, the embassy reported that Canadian officials had a different potential irritant: Mr. Obama was far more popular in Canada than they were.

The embassy also said Mr. Obama’s decision to make Ottawa his first foreign trip as president would “do much to diminish — temporarily, at least — Canada’s habitual inferiority complex vis-à-vis the U.S. and its chronic but accurate complaint that the U.S. pays far less attention to Canada than Canada does to us.”

Still, just a few months earlier, during a national election in Canada, the embassy had marveled that “despite the overwhelming importance of the U.S. to Canada for its economy and security,” parliamentary candidates were rarely mentioning anything about relations with their southern neighbor.

“Ultimately, the U.S. is like the proverbial 900-pound gorilla in the midst of the Canadian federal election: overwhelming but too potentially menacing to acknowledge,” the cable said.

Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.

—This article was originally published on December 1, 2010
Cable Shows Nations Going Easy on Cuba

By MARK LANDLER

WASHINGTON — Cuba is getting a free pass on its human rights abuses from many of the world’s leading democracies, with visitors from Canada, Australia and Switzerland failing to criticize the Castro regime or meet with dissidents while on the island, according to a confidential diplomatic cable sent to the State Department from Havana.

The cable, transmitted in November 2009 and signed by Jonathan D. Farrar, the top American diplomat in Cuba, hinted that there were economic motives behind the accommodating approach. But if so, the cable concluded, these countries were not getting much of a payoff.

The rewards for acquiescing to Cuban sensitivities, it said, were “risible: pomp-full dinners and meetings, and for the most pliant, a photo-op with one of the Castro brothers.”

The cable added, “In terms of substance or economic benefits they fare little better than those who stand up to” the government.

And yet, in a cable sent six months earlier, the United States Interests Section in Havana also lamented that the Cuban dissidents supported by Washington for decades were old, out of touch and so split by internecine squabbles that the United States should look elsewhere for future leaders.

While that cable, also signed by Mr. Farrar, said dissidents deserved continued American support, it said that some groups had been infiltrated by Cuban intelligence. “We see very little evidence that the mainline dissident organizations have much resonance among Cubans,” it said.

A trove of cables made public by WikiLeaks attests to the strained nature of the Cuban-American relationship, at a time when Cuba’s revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro, is in failing health and his ideological feud with Washington has little relevance for other countries eager to build bridges. The United States, by contrast, clings to a trade embargo and a policy of isolating Cuba.

“On the one hand, the U.S. is saying the dissidents are hopeless and aging,” said Julia Sweig, a senior fellow and expert on Cuba at the Council on Foreign Relations. “On the other hand, the same interests section is saying that the Canada and E.U. engagement is not helping progress on human rights.”

Pointing to Cuba’s release of political prisoners and the economic reforms being championed by Fidel Castro’s brother Raúl, Ms. Sweig said the engagement of the European Union and other countries appeared to be more fruitful than the implacable cold shoulder from Washington.

The United States operates an interests section, rather than an embassy, in Havana because the two countries have not had diplomatic relations for five decades. The office sends a steady stream of analysis to Washington, with vivid dispatches on Fidel Castro’s
health problems and sober speculation about how Cuba might change after he finally leaves the scene.

There is also evidence that Raúl Castro, the president, has reached out to the United States. In a cable dated December 2009, Mr. Farrar reported that Mr. Castro sought a “political channel” to the White House. The Cuban president raised the issue with the Spanish foreign minister, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, who passed it on to Mr. Farrar via Spain’s ambassador to Cuba, Manuel Cacho.

On Thursday, the State Department spokesman, Philip J. Crowley, ruled out high-level contacts without major political changes. “We have not seen anything approaching fundamental change in Cuba at this point,” he said. The administration has held only technical talks about Cuban migration.

A senior State Department official said the United States was encouraged by the release of political prisoners, but noted that most of those people were immediately exiled from the country.

In the cable about how other countries deal with Cuba on official visits, American officials classified those approaches on a scale from kowtowing to confrontational: “best-friends-forever,” “keep-it-private,” “we-respectfully-disagree” and, in rare cases, “take-your-visit-and-shove-it.”

A large majority of countries with diplomatic posts in Havana, it said, do not raise human rights issues with the Cuban government in public or private. A handful of countries — including Britain, Germany and the Czech Republic — have refused to send senior officials to Cuba, rather than accept the government’s restrictions on who they can meet while there.

Other countries fall somewhere in between, agreeing to restrictions but broaching the topic of human rights, mostly behind closed doors. A senior Canadian minister, Peter Kent, broached the issue of political prisoners with officials, but left Havana without voicing public criticism.

Another offender, the cable said, was the European Union, which takes a softer line toward Cuba than many of its member states. Officials at the European mission, it said, told American diplomats they looked forward to Spain’s assuming the rotating presidency of the union because it was more moderate than the “radical” Swedes and Czechs.

The cable singles out the Vatican for praise, noting that one of its representatives, Archbishop Claudio Celli, called for “greater information and Internet access for all Cubans.” He even praised Cuban bloggers, angering his hosts, though he later softened his comments back in Rome.

It is not exactly clear what quid pro quo countries hope to get for their friendly behavior, but analysts said Europeans were eager to forge commercial ties with Cuba, in part because they feared that if relations between Havana and Washington thawed, Americans would have an edge.

In addition to human rights issues, cables from Havana kept a close eye on Fidel
Castro’s deteriorating health. A March 2007 cable, signed by Mr. Farrar’s predecessor, Michael E. Parmly, sought to debunk official claims of a “Castro comeback” after his long absence from the public stage.

Based on a report from an opposition figure, it said Mr. Castro became critically ill with a perforated intestine while on a plane in July 2006. His condition was complicated because he refused to have a colostomy. A Cuban doctor familiar with the case said that Mr. Castro could not be cured, and that he would “progressively lose his faculties and become ever more debilitated until he dies.”

Nearly two years later, another cable reported the latest rumors of Mr. Castro’s death. It concluded that his death would have little immediate effect. “We do not believe the announcement of Fidel’s death would spark either violent demonstrations or a quick surge in migration,” it said.

Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York, and Scott Shane from Washington.

—This article was originally published on December 17, 2010
U.S. Expands Role of Diplomats in Spying

By MARK MAZZETTI

WASHINGTON — The United States has expanded the role of American diplomats in collecting intelligence overseas and at the United Nations, ordering State Department personnel to gather the credit card and frequent-flier numbers, work schedules and other personal information of foreign dignitaries.

Revealed in classified State Department cables, the directives, going back to 2008, appear to blur the traditional boundaries between statesmen and spies.

The cables give a laundry list of instructions for how State Department employees can fulfill the demands of a “National Humint Collection Directive.” (“Humint” is spy-world jargon for human intelligence collection.) One cable asks officers overseas to gather information about “office and organizational titles; names, position titles and other information on business cards; numbers of telephones, cellphones, pagers and faxes,” as well as “internet and intranet ‘handles’, internet e-mail addresses, web site identification-URLs; credit card account numbers; frequent-flier account numbers; work schedules, and other relevant biographical information.”

Philip J. Crowley, a State Department spokesman, on Sunday disputed that American diplomats had assumed a new role overseas.

“Our diplomats are just that, diplomats,” he said. “They represent our country around the world and engage openly and transparently with representatives of foreign governments and civil society. Through this process, they collect information that shapes our policies and actions. This is what diplomats, from our country and other countries, have done for hundreds of years.”

The cables, sent to embassies in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the United States mission to the United Nations, provide no evidence that American diplomats are actively trying to steal the secrets of foreign countries, work that is traditionally the preserve of spy agencies. While the State Department has long provided information about foreign officials’ duties to the Central Intelligence Agency to help build biographical profiles, the more intrusive personal information diplomats are now being asked to gather could be used by the National Security Agency for data mining and surveillance operations. A frequent-flier number, for example, could be used to track the travel plans of foreign officials.

Several of the cables also asked diplomats for details about the telecommunications networks supporting foreign militaries and intelligence agencies.

The United States regularly puts undercover intelligence officers in countries posing as diplomats, but a vast majority of diplomats are not spies. Several retired ambassadors, told about the information-gathering assignments disclosed in the cables, expressed concern that State Department employees abroad could routinely come under suspicion of spying and find it difficult to do their work or even risk expulsion.
Ronald E. Neumann, a former American ambassador to Afghanistan, Algeria and Bahrain, said that Washington was constantly sending requests for voluminous information about foreign countries. But he said he was puzzled about why Foreign Service officers — who are not trained in clandestine collection methods — would be asked to gather information like credit card numbers.

“My concerns would be, first of all, whether the person could do this responsibly without getting us into trouble,” he said. “And, secondly, how much effort a person put into this at the expense of his or her regular duties.”

The requests have come at a time when the nation’s spy agencies are struggling to meet the demands of two wars and a global hunt for militants. The Pentagon has also sharply expanded its intelligence work outside of war zones, sending Special Operations troops to embassies to gather information about militant networks.

Unlike the thousands of cables, originally obtained by WikiLeaks, that were sent from embassies to the State Department, the roughly half-dozen cables from 2008 and 2009 detailing the more aggressive intelligence collection were sent from Washington and signed by Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

One of the cables, signed by Mrs. Clinton, lists information-gathering priorities to the American staff at the United Nations in New York, including “biographic and biometric information on ranking North Korean diplomats.”

While several treaties prohibit spying at the United Nations, it is an open secret that countries try nevertheless. In one 2004 episode, a British official revealed that the United States and Britain eavesdropped on Secretary General Kofi Annan in the weeks before the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The requests for more personal data about foreign officials were included in several cables requesting all manner of information from posts overseas, information that would seem to be the typical business of diplomats.

State Department officials in Asunción, Paraguay, were asked in March 2008 about the presence of Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas in the lawless “Tri-Border” area of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina. Diplomats in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo were asked in April 2009 about crop yields, H.I.V. rates and China’s quest for copper, cobalt and oil in Africa.

In a cable sent to the American Embassy in Bulgaria in June 2009, the State Department requested information about Bulgaria’s efforts to crack down on money laundering and drug trafficking and for “details about personal relations between Bulgarian leaders and Russian officials or businessmen.”

And a cable sent on Oct. 31, 2008, to the embassies in Israel, Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere asked for information on “Palestinian issues,” including “Palestinian plans, intentions and efforts to influence US positions on the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.” To get both sides, officials also sought information on “Israeli leadership intentions and strategy toward managing the US relationship.”

Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting from New York.
At the end of 2010, the Guantánamo Bay prison still held 174 detainees.

By CHARLIE SAVAGE and ANDREW W. LEHREN
WASHINGTON — Last year, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia proposed an unorthodox way to return Guantánamo Bay prisoners to a chaotic country like Yemen without fear that they would disappear and join a terrorist group.

The king told a top White House aide, John O. Brennan, that the United States should implant an electronic chip in each detainee to track his movements, as is sometimes done with horses and falcons.

“Horses don’t have good lawyers,” Mr. Brennan replied.

That unusual discussion in March 2009 was one of hundreds recounted in a cache of secret State Department cables obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to a number of news organizations that reveal the painstaking efforts by the United States to safely reduce the population of the Guantánamo Bay prison in Cuba so that it could eventually be closed.

American diplomats went looking for countries that were not only willing to take in
former prisoners but also could be trusted to keep them under close watch. In a global bazaar of sorts, the American officials sweet-talked and haggled with their foreign counterparts in an effort to resettle the detainees who had been cleared for release but could not be repatriated for fear of mistreatment, the cables show.

Slovenia, seeking a meeting with President Obama, was encouraged to “do more” on detainee resettlement if it wanted to “attract higher-level attention from Washington”; its prime minister later “linked acceptance of detainees to ‘a 20-minute meeting’ ” with the president, but the session — and the prisoner transfer — never happened. The Maldives tied acceptance of prisoners to American help in obtaining International Monetary Fund assistance, while the Bush administration offered the Pacific nation of Kiribati “an incentive package” of $3 million to take 17 Chinese Muslim detainees, the cables show. In discussions about creating a rehabilitation program for its own citizens, the president of Yemen repeatedly asked Mr. Brennan, “How many dollars will the U.S. bring?”

Mr. Obama won praise from around the world when, shortly after taking office in 2009, he ordered the Guantánamo Bay prison closed within a year, saying it was contrary to American values and a symbol for terrorist propaganda.

By then, the Bush administration already had transferred more than 500 of the detainees it had sent to Guantánamo, and the Obama administration has since winnowed the population to 174 from 240, with help from Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Belgium and other countries. But Mr. Obama missed his deadline, and the goal has faded as a priority, with domestic opposition to moving some detainees to a prison inside the United States and with other countries that condemned the Guantánamo prison reluctant to take in detainees.

While Mr. Obama went to Norway to collect a Nobel Peace Prize, for example, the Norwegians called resettling Guantánamo detainees “purely a U.S. responsibility.” Germany and several other European countries that had criticized the prison eventually accepted a few detainees but balked at taking as many as the United States had hoped.

In the fall of 2009, Lithuania’s newly elected president backed out of her country’s previous agreement to resettle a prisoner amid an uproar over reports that the Central Intelligence Agency had run a secret jail in Lithuania. The chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament’s national security committee privately apologized and suggested using mutual allies to pressure her to reconsider, the cables show.

Other dispatches illuminated the difficulties of resettling Uighurs, Chinese Muslim prisoners who had been ordered freed by a federal judge. China was deemed likely to abuse them, but Beijing demanded their return.

At an October 2009 meeting in Beijing, a Chinese official linked the Uighurs to American hopes to secure supply routes through China for the Afghan war, saying, “More ‘prudent’ actions by the U.S. on the Guantánamo Uighurs would help remove ‘some of the obstacles’ on the Chinese side to helping with the shipments.”

And an aide to Finland’s prime minister confided in August 2009 “that Chinese
diplomats in Helsinki have repeatedly warned them about the damage to bilateral relations should Finland accept any Uighurs,” a cable said.

Still, a few allies were eager to help. After accepting five Chinese Muslims in 2006, Albania’s prime minister in 2009 offered to resettle three to six detainees not from China. American diplomats portrayed his offer as “gracious, but probably extravagant.”

“As always, the Albanians are willing to go the extra mile to assist with one of our key foreign policy priorities,” a cable said.

The United States repatriated other detainees for prosecution at home. Afghanistan, however, granted pretrial releases to 29 out of 41 such former detainees from Guantánamo, allowing “dangerous individuals to go free or re-enter the battlefield without ever facing an Afghan court,” diplomats in Kabul complained in a July 2009 cable.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to closing the prison has been figuring out what to do with detainees from Yemen, who constitute about half of the remaining prisoners at Guantánamo. In a September 2009 meeting with Mr. Brennan, Mr. Obama’s top counterterrorism adviser, Yemen’s president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, proposed transferring them all into his prisons. But, a cable later said, “Saleh would, in our judgment, be unable to hold returning detainees in jail for any more than a matter of weeks before public pressure — or the courts — forced their release.”

Mr. Saleh’s erratic approach compounded the situation. In that same conversation, for example, he “signaled that rehabilitation is not his concern, but rather ‘the U.S.’s problem’ because he is ready and willing to accept all Yemeni detainees into the Yemen prison system.” But moments later, he assured Mr. Brennan that he was committed to “freeing the innocent people after a complete and total rehabilitation.”

Neither Mr. Saleh nor the Saudis were enthusiastic about an American proposal to send Yemeni detainees to a Saudi deradicalization program, cables show. But when Mr. Saleh proposed a Yemeni version, the United States showed interest — but also caution.

In March 2009, Mr. Saleh demanded $11 million to build such a program in Aden, but Mr. Brennan replied that “such a program takes time to develop and that Saleh had his hands full dealing with al-Qaeda in Yemen.” When the two met again six months later, Mr. Saleh “repeatedly,” according to a cable, asked how much money he could expect. When Mr. Brennan “offered $500,000 as an initial investment currently available for the crafting of a rehabilitation program, Saleh dismissed the offer as insufficient,” the cable said.

Several cables shed light on the Saudis’ rehabilitation program. A March 2009 dispatch estimated that the program had processed 1,500 extremists, including 119 former detainees. That cable put the “recidivism rate” at 8 to 10 percent, arguing that “the real story of the Saudi rehabilitation program is one of success: at least 90 percent of its graduates appear to have given up jihad and reintegrated into Saudi society.”

Over time, however, the numbers apparently slipped. In March 2010, Daniel Fried, the State Department’s special envoy for closing the Guantánamo prison, told European
Union officials that the Saudi program was “serious but not perfect,” citing a failure rate of 10 to 20 percent. Another cable noted that of 85 militants on a “most wanted” list published by Saudi authorities in early 2009, 11 were former Guantánamo detainees. But the cables offer details on only a few individual cases — like a Saudi who became a leader of Al Qaeda’s Yemen branch and a Kuwaiti who committed a suicide bombing in Iraq in 2008, both of which have been previously reported.

The suicide bomber proved deeply embarrassing for the Kuwaiti government. Months later, in February 2009, Kuwait’s interior minister proposed a solution for other detainees who seemed too extremist for reintegration into society: let them die in combat.

“You know better than I that we cannot deal with these people,” the minister, Sheik Jaber al-Khaled al-Sabah, told the ambassador, a cable reported. “If they are rotten, they are rotten and the best thing to do is get rid of them. You picked them up in Afghanistan; you should drop them off in Afghanistan, in the middle of the war zone.”

Mr. Sabah’s private comments contrasted with the public stance of his government. Under domestic pressure to urge the United States to send home all Kuwaitis from Guantánamo, Kuwait has strongly suggested that it is doing so.

The United States often has required countries to impose travel bans — among other restrictions, including continuing surveillance — on freed prisoners, sometimes with mixed success.

In February 2009, for example, a diplomat in Qatar urged Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. not to meet with his Qatari counterpart, citing reports that a Qatari former detainee traveled “despite explicit assurances that he would not be permitted to do so.” The freed prisoner, Jarallah al-Marri, had traveled to Britain to join a speaking tour with another former prisoner, Moazzam Begg, a British-Pakistani citizen.

Another American diplomat later praised Mr. Begg’s activities, saying he had pressed Luxembourg’s foreign minister to take in detainees, and — displaying “minimal ill will toward his captors” — reiterated that request at an Amnesty International event.

“Mr. Begg is doing our work for us, and his articulate, reasoned presentation makes for a convincing argument,” a January 2010 cable said. “It is ironic that after four years of imprisonment and alleged torture, Moazzam Begg is delivering the same ‘message’ as we are: please consider accepting GTMO detainees for resettlement.”

Charlie Savage reported from Washington, and Andrew W. Lehren from New York.

—This article was originally published on November 29, 2010

OTHER RELATED CABLES

Canada’s Reaction to Interrogation Video
U.S. Strains to Stop Arms Flow

By MICHAEL R. GORDON and ANDREW W. LEHREN
WASHINGTON — Just a week after President Bashar al-Assad of Syria assured a top State Department official that his government was not sending sophisticated weapons to Hezbollah, the Obama administration lodged a confidential protest accusing Syria of doing precisely what it had denied doing.

“In our meetings last week it was stated that Syria is not transferring any ‘new’ missiles to Lebanese Hizballah,” noted a cable sent by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in February, using an alternative spelling for the militant group. “We are aware, however, of current Syrian efforts to supply Hizballah with ballistic missiles. I must stress that this activity is of deep concern to my government, and we strongly caution you against such a serious escalation.”

A senior Syrian Foreign Ministry official, a cable from the American Embassy in Damascus reported, flatly denied the allegation. But nine months later, administration officials assert, the flow of arms had continued to Hezbollah. According to a Pentagon official, Hezbollah’s arsenal now includes up to 50,000 rockets and missiles, including
some 40 to 50 Fateh-110 missiles capable of reaching Tel Aviv and most of Israel, and 10 Scud-D missiles. The newly fortified Hezbollah has raised fears that any future conflict with Israel could erupt into a full-scale regional war.

The Syrian episode offers a glimpse of the United States’ efforts to prevent buildups of arms — including Scud missiles, Soviet-era tanks and antiaircraft weapons — in some of the world’s tensest regions. Wielding surveillance photos and sales contracts, American diplomats have confronted foreign governments about shadowy front companies, secretive banks and shippers around the globe, according to secret State Department cables obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to several news organizations.

American officials have tried to block a Serbian black marketer from selling sniper rifles to Yemen. They have sought to disrupt the sale of Chinese missile technology to Pakistan, the cables show, and questioned Indian officials about chemical industry exports that could be used to make poison gas.

But while American officials can claim some successes — Russia appears to have deferred delivery of the S-300 air defense system to Iran — the diplomats’ dispatches underscore how often their efforts have been frustrated in trying to choke off trade by Syria and others, including Iran and North Korea.

The United States is the world’s largest arms supplier, and with Russia, dominates trade in the developing world. Its role as a purveyor of weapons to certain allies — including Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states — has drawn criticism that it has fueled an arms race. But it has also taken on a leading role as traffic cop in trying to halt deliveries of advanced weapons and other arms to militants and adversaries.

According to the cables, American diplomats have repeatedly expressed concern that huge cargo planes operated by Badr Airlines of Sudan were flying weapons from Tehran to Khartoum, Sudan, where they were shipped to Hamas, the militant group in Gaza.

Sudan insisted that the cargo was farm equipment, but the United States asked countries in the region to deny overflight rights to the airlines. Jordan and several other countries agreed, but Yemen declined, a February 2009 cable reported.

Egyptian officials, who view Iran with deep wariness, privately issued a threat. Omar Suleiman, the chief of Egypt’s intelligence service, told Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that Iran not only was providing $25 million a month to support Hamas but also was linked to a Hezbollah cell trying to smuggle arms from Gaza into Egypt, according to an April 2009 cable.

“Egypt had sent a clear message to Iran that if they interfere in Egypt, Egypt will interfere in Iran,” noted the cable, adding that the Egyptian official said his country had trained agents for that purpose.

North Korea has abetted the arms race in the Middle East by providing missile technology to Iran and Syria, which then backed Hamas and Hezbollah, according to American intelligence officials and a cable from Mrs. Clinton. The cables tell something
of an international detective story: how North Korea’s arms industry has conducted many of its transactions through the Korea Mining and Development Corporation, relied on suppliers of machinery and steel from countries including Switzerland, Japan, China and Taiwan, passed money through Chinese and Hong Kong banks and sold weapons to other countries.

To disrupt the transactions, American officials have prodded and protested. Diplomats raised questions in the spring of 2009, for example, about planned purchases from North Korea of rocket launchers by Sri Lanka and Scud missile launchers by Yemen.

In July 2009, Stuart A. Levey, a senior United States Treasury official, warned a top official of the People’s Bank of China that “Chinese banks have been targeted by North Korea as the main access point into the international financial system,” according to one cable. And in meetings in Hong Kong that month, Mr. Levey complained that a local businessman was helping procure luxury goods for the North Korean leadership. (The Hong Kong banks later suggested that they had shut down the man’s accounts.)

It is the arms transactions involving Syria and Hezbollah, however, that appear to be among the Obama administration’s gravest concerns. President Obama came into office pledging to engage with Syria, arguing that the Bush administration’s efforts to isolate Syria had done nothing to wean it from Iran or encourage Middle East peace efforts.

Even before American diplomats began talks with the Assad government, Senator John Kerry, the Massachusetts Democrat who is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, prodded Mr. Assad in a February 2009 meeting in Damascus to make a gesture that he could take back to the Obama administration as “an indicator of Assad’s good will.” Mr. Kerry told Mr. Assad that Mr. Obama intended to withdraw American troops from Iraq “as soon as possible” and also hinted to a senior Syrian official that the Obama administration intended to take a firm line against the establishment of new Israeli settlements on the West Bank.

“It is not our goal for the United States to be humiliated,” Mr. Assad said, referring to Iraq, according to a cable.

In March 2009, a delegation of State Department and National Security Council officials traveled to Damascus for the first discussions, and in the next several months, each side made some modest gestures.

The United States provided information “regarding a potential threat to a Syrian official” through Syria’s Washington ambassador and allowed a senior aide to George J. Mitchell, the American Middle East negotiator, to attend a Syrian holiday event at the Syrian Embassy, a cable reported. Syria, for its part, allowed the Americans to reopen an English-language school and hosted a team of American military officials to discuss how to better regulate the Syria-Iraq border.

Each side, however, wanted the other to take the first major initiative. Syria kept pressing for the lifting of economic sanctions, which had crippled its aviation industry,
and the Americans urged Syria to curtail its support for Hezbollah and Hamas.

“The U.S. had publicly recognized its mistakes, e.g. use of torture methods, and would continue to take steps,” Daniel B. Shapiro, a senior official on the National Security Council told the Syrians in the meeting, according to a May 2009 cable. “But others needed to reciprocate to ensure that the opportunity did not pass.”

By the fall, however, officials at the American Embassy in Damascus appeared concerned that military developments were outpacing the incremental diplomacy.

“Syria’s determined support of Hizballah’s military build-up, particularly the steady supply of longer-range rockets and the introduction of guided missiles could change the military balance and produce a scenario significantly more destructive than the July-August 2006 war,” said a November 2009 cable from the American chargé d’affaires in Damascus.

According to cables, Syrian leaders appeared to believe that the weapons shipments increased their political leverage with the Israelis. But they made Lebanon even more of a tinderbox and increased the prospect that a future conflict might include Syria.

A major worry was that Syria or Iran had provided Hezbollah with Fateh-110 missiles, with the range to strike Tel Aviv. (A United States government official said last week that the 40 to 50 missiles were viewed as especially threatening because they are highly accurate.) Israeli officials told American officials in November 2009 that if war broke out, they assumed that Hezbollah would try to launch 400 to 600 rockets at day and sustain the attacks for at least two months, the cables note.

In February, the White House announced that a new American ambassador would be sent to Syria after a five-year hiatus. The next day, William J. Burns, a State Department under secretary, met with the Syrian leader.

During the session, Mr. Burns repeated American concerns about weapons smuggling to Hezbollah, one dispatch noted. Mr. Assad replied that while he could not be Israel’s policeman, no “new” weapons were being sent to Hezbollah.

Soon after the meeting, though, a cable noted that the Americans received intelligence reports that the Syrians were about to provide Hezbollah with Scud-D missiles, which are based on North Korean technology. (Some recent intelligence reports conclude that the group has about 10 such missiles stored in a Syrian warehouse that Hezbollah uses, according to American officials. The Defense Intelligence Agency believes that two have probably been moved to Lebanon, according to the officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity.) The United States officials also worried about Hezbollah’s vow to avenge the death of Imad Mughniyah, a senior fighter killed in a 2008 car bombing the militant group said was the work of the Israelis.

In a classified cable in February, Mrs. Clinton directed the embassy to deliver a warning to Faisal al-Miqdad, the deputy foreign minister. “I know you are a strategic thinker, which is why I want to underscore for you that, from our perspective, your operational support for Hizballah is a strategic miscalculation that is damaging your long-term national interests.”
The Syrian official’s response was dismissive, according to an American cable. He
denied that any weapons had been sent, argued that Hezbollah would not take military
action if not provoked and expressed surprise at the stern American protest. The
complaint, he said, “shows the U.S. has not come to a mature position (that would enable
it) to differentiate between its own interests and Israel’s.”

*Michael R. Gordon reported from Washington, and Andrew W. Lehren from New York.*
Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency

By GINGER THOMPSON and SCOTT SHANE

WASHINGTON — The Drug Enforcement Administration has been transformed into a global intelligence organization with a reach that extends far beyond narcotics, and an eavesdropping operation so expansive it has to fend off foreign politicians who want to use it against their political enemies, according to secret diplomatic cables.

In far greater detail than previously seen, the cables, from the cache obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to some news organizations, offer glimpses of drug agents balancing diplomacy and law enforcement in places where it can be hard to tell the politicians from the traffickers, and where drug rings are themselves mini-states whose wealth and violence permit them to run roughshod over struggling governments.

Diplomats recorded unforgettable vignettes from the largely unseen war on drugs:

¶ In Panama, an urgent BlackBerry message from the president to the American ambassador demanded that the D.E.A. go after his political enemies: “I need help with tapping phones.”

¶ In Sierra Leone, a major cocaine-trafficking prosecution was almost upended by the attorney general’s attempt to solicit $2.5 million in bribes.

¶ In Guinea, the country’s biggest narcotics kingpin turned out to be the president’s son, and diplomats discovered that before the police destroyed a huge narcotics seizure, the drugs had been replaced by flour.

¶ Leaders of Mexico’s beleaguered military issued private pleas for closer collaboration with the drug agency, confessing that they had little faith in their own country’s police forces.

¶ Cables from Myanmar, the target of strict United States sanctions, describe the drug agency informants’ reporting both on how the military junta enriches itself with drug money and on the political activities of the junta’s opponents.

Officials of the D.E.A. and the State Department declined to discuss what they said was information that should never have been made public.

Like many of the cables made public in recent weeks, those describing the drug war do not offer large disclosures. Rather, it is the details that add up to a clearer picture of the corrupting influence of big traffickers, the tricky game of figuring out which foreign officials are actually controlled by drug lords, and the story of how an entrepreneurial agency operating in the shadows of the F.B.I. has become something more than a drug agency. The D.E.A. now has 87 offices in 63 countries and close partnerships with governments that keep the Central Intelligence Agency at arm’s length.

Because of the ubiquity of the drug scourge, today’s D.E.A. has access to foreign governments, including those, like Nicaragua’s and Venezuela’s, that have strained diplomatic relations with the United States. Many are eager to take advantage of the agency’s drug detection and wiretapping technologies.
In some countries, the collaboration appears to work well, with the drug agency providing intelligence that has helped bring down traffickers, and even entire cartels. But the victories can come at a high price, according to the cables, which describe scores of D.E.A. informants and a handful of agents who have been killed in Mexico and Afghanistan.

In Venezuela, the local intelligence service turned the tables on the D.E.A., infiltrating its operations, sabotaging equipment and hiring a computer hacker to intercept American Embassy e-mails, the cables report.

And as the drug agency has expanded its eavesdropping operations to keep up with cartels, it has faced repeated pressure to redirect its counternarcotics surveillance to local concerns, provoking tensions with some of Washington’s closest allies.

**Sticky Situations**

Cables written in February by American diplomats in Paraguay, for example, described the D.E.A.’s pushing back against requests from that country’s government to help spy on an insurgent group, known as the Paraguayan People’s Army, or the EPP, the initials of its name in Spanish. The leftist group, suspected of having ties to the Colombian rebel group FARC, had conducted several high-profile kidnappings and was making a small fortune in ransoms.

When American diplomats refused to give Paraguay access to the drug agency’s wiretapping system, Interior Minister Rafael Filizzola threatened to shut it down, saying: “Counternarcotics are important, but won’t topple our government. The EPP could.”

The D.E.A. faced even more intense pressure last year from Panama, whose right-leaning president, Ricardo Martinelli, demanded that the agency allow him to use its wiretapping program — known as Matador — to spy on leftist political enemies he believed were plotting to kill him.

The United States, according to the cables, worried that Mr. Martinelli, a supermarket magnate, “made no distinction between legitimate security targets and political enemies,” refused, igniting tensions that went on for months.

Mr. Martinelli, who the cables said possessed a “penchant for bullying and blackmail,” retaliated by proposing a law that would have ended the D.E.A.’s work with specially vetted police units. Then he tried to subvert the drug agency’s control over the program by assigning nonvetted officers to the counternarcotics unit.

And when the United States pushed back against those attempts — moving the Matador system into the offices of the politically independent attorney general — Mr. Martinelli threatened to expel the drug agency from the country altogether, saying other countries, like Israel, would be happy to comply with his intelligence requests.

Eventually, according to the cables, American diplomats began wondering about Mr. Martinelli’s motivations. Did he really want the D.E.A. to disrupt plots by his adversaries, or was he trying to keep the agency from learning about corruption among
his relatives and friends?

One cable asserted that Mr. Martinelli’s cousin helped smuggle tens of millions of dollars in drug proceeds through Panama’s main airport every month. Another noted, “There is no reason to believe there will be fewer acts of corruption in this government than in any past government.”

As the standoff continued, the cables indicate that the United States proposed suspending the Matador program, rather than submitting to Mr. Martinelli’s demands. (American officials say the program was suspended, but the British took over the wiretapping program and have shared the intelligence with the United States.)

In a statement on Saturday, the government of Panama said that it regretted “the bad interpretation by United States authorities of a request for help made to directly confront crime and drug trafficking.” It said that Panama would continue its efforts to stop organized crime and emphasized that Panama continued to have “excellent relations with the United States.”

Meanwhile in Paraguay, according to the cables, the United States acquiesced, agreeing to allow the authorities there to use D.E.A. wiretaps for antikidnapping investigations, as long as they were approved by Paraguay’s Supreme Court.

“We have carefully navigated this very sensitive and politically sticky situation,” one cable said. “It appears that we have no other viable choice.”

A Larger Mandate

Created in 1973, the D.E.A. has steadily built its international turf, an expansion primarily driven by the multinational nature of the drug trade, but also by forces within the agency seeking a larger mandate. Since the 2001 terrorist attacks, the agency’s leaders have cited what they describe as an expanding nexus between drugs and terrorism in further building its overseas presence.

In Afghanistan, for example, “DEA officials have become convinced that ‘no daylight’ exists between drug traffickers at the highest level and Taliban insurgents,” Karen Tandy, then the agency’s administrator, told European Union officials in a 2007 briefing, according to a cable from Brussels.

Ms. Tandy described an agency informant’s recording of a meeting in Nangarhar Province between 9 Taliban members and 11 drug traffickers to coordinate their financial support for the insurgency, and she said the agency was trying to put a “security belt” around Afghanistan to block the import of chemicals for heroin processing. The agency was embedding its officers in military units around Afghanistan, she said. In 2007 alone, the D.E.A. opened new bureaus in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Dubai, United Arab Emirates, as well as in three Mexican cities.

Cables describe lengthy negotiations over the extradition to the United States of the two notorious arms dealers wanted by the D.E.A. as it reached beyond pure counternarcotics cases: Monzer al-Kassar, a Syrian arrested in Spain, and Viktor Bout, a
Russian arrested in Thailand. Both men were charged with agreeing to illegal arms sales to informants posing as weapons buyers for Colombian rebels. Notably, neither man was charged with violating narcotics laws.

Late last year in a D.E.A. case, three men from Mali accused of plotting to transport tons of cocaine across northwest Africa were charged under a narco-terrorism statute added to the law in 2006, and they were linked to both Al Qaeda and its North African affiliate, called Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

The men themselves had claimed the terrorism link, according to the D.E.A., though officials told The New York Times that they had no independent corroboration of the Qaeda connections. Experts on the desert regions of North Africa, long a route for smuggling between Africa and Europe, are divided about whether Al Qaeda operatives play a significant role in the drug trade, and some skeptics note that adding “terrorism” to any case can draw additional investigative resources and impress a jury.

**New Routes for Graft**

Most times, however, the agency’s expansion seems driven more by external forces than internal ones, with traffickers opening new routes to accommodate new markets. As Mexican cartels take control of drug shipments from South America to the United States, Colombian cartels have begun moving cocaine through West Africa to Europe.

The cables offer a portrait of the staggering effect on Mali, whose deserts have been littered with abandoned airplanes — including at least one Boeing 727 — and Ghana, where traffickers easily smuggle drugs through an airport’s “VVIP (Very Very Important Person) lounge.”

Top-to-bottom corruption in many West African countries made it hard for diplomats to know whom to trust. In one 2008 case in Sierra Leone, President Ernest Bai Koroma moved to prosecute and extradite three South American traffickers seized with about 1,500 pounds of cocaine, while his attorney general was accused of offering to release them for $2.5 million in bribes.

In Nigeria, the D.E.A. reported a couple of years earlier that diplomats at the Liberian Embassy were using official vehicles to transport drugs across the border because they were not getting paid by their war-torn government and “had to fend for themselves.”

A May 2008 cable from Guinea described a kind of heart-to-heart conversation about the drug trade between the American ambassador, Phillip Carter III, and Guinea’s prime minister, Lansana Kouyaté. At one point, the cable said, Mr. Kouyaté “visibly slumped in his chair” and acknowledged that Guinea’s most powerful drug trafficker was Ousmane Conté, the son of Lansana Conté, then the president. (After the death of his father, Mr. Conté went to prison.)

A few days later, diplomats reported evidence that the corruption ran much deeper inside the Guinean government than the president’s son. In a colorfully written cable —
with chapters titled “Excuses, Excuses, Excuses” and “Theatrical Production” — diplomats described attending what was billed as a drug bonfire that had been staged by the Guinean government to demonstrate its commitment to combating the drug trade.

Senior Guinean officials, including the country’s drug czar, the chief of police and the justice minister, watched as officers set fire to what the government claimed was about 350 pounds of marijuana and 860 pounds of cocaine, valued at $6.5 million.

In reality, American diplomats wrote, the whole incineration was a sham. Informants had previously told the embassy that Guinean authorities replaced the cocaine with manioc flour, proving, the diplomats wrote, “that narco-corruption has contaminated” the government of Guinea “at the highest levels.”

And it did not take the D.E.A.’s sophisticated intelligence techniques to figure out the truth. The cable reported that even the ambassador’s driver sniffed out a hoax.

“I know the smell of burning marijuana,” the driver said. “And I didn’t smell anything.”

Andrew W. Lehren contributed reporting.

—This article was originally published on December 25, 2010
Private Links in Lawmaker’s Trip Abroad

By ERIC LIPTON
WASHINGTON — When Representative Dana Rohrabacher, Republican of California, visited Honduras early this year to congratulate the newly elected president, the congressman showed up with an unusual delegation.

There at his side was not just the typical collection of Washington foreign policy aides, but also a group of California real estate investors and businessmen, including a dealer in rare coins, and top executives from a fledgling San Diego biofuels company run by a friend of the congressman’s wife.

Using his status as a senior Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. Rohrabacher cheered his hosts in Honduras by openly challenging the Obama administration’s foreign policy agenda there, then arranged a series of meetings with top Honduran officials, including the president, during which the congressman “enthusiastically promoted” the biofuel company’s plans to perhaps set up operations in Honduras, says a State Department summary of the meetings included in the files obtained by WikiLeaks.

The country was eager to accommodate the congressman — who said in an interview that his actions were entirely appropriate and reflected his activist approach to foreign policy — given that the previous Honduran president had been forced out of office and into exile, and the new government was angling for United States support.

Mr. Rohrabacher’s three-day trip to Tegucigalpa and his advocacy for SG Biofuels, a small company run by a family friend, stood out from the dozens of written reports detailing summaries of official visits by members of Congress to foreign nations that were included in the vast trove of State Department documents obtained by the WikiLeaks group and reviewed by The New York Times.

These memos — written by State Department officials who often sit in on lawmakers’ meetings with foreign leaders — show that Congressional trips are often much more than simply fact-finding missions. Members of Congress at times push their own foreign policy agendas, even if they conflict with those of the administration in office.

Lawmakers also use their access to top foreign leaders to advocate for homegrown economic interests.

Senator Russ Feingold, Democrat of Wisconsin, used his 2008 trip to India as an opportunity to repeatedly push top officials there to cut import taxes imposed on Harley-Davidson motorcycles — whose maker is based in his home state — as well as discuss more traditional foreign policy matters like border disputes with Pakistan and combating terrorism, a State Department memo on the visit said.

Senator Maria Cantwell, Democrat of Washington, pressed top government officials in China last year to allow SSA Marine — a Seattle-based maritime company —
to open a port terminal in China, a State Department cable shows.

Senator Richard G. Lugar, Republican of Indiana and one of the Senate’s most influential voices on foreign affairs, has repeatedly pushed leaders in Central Asia to consider working with international oil companies, like Chevron, to expand production capacity. He and his staff have also intervened with nations including Turkey and Norway to defend Eli Lilly & Company, an Indiana-based pharmaceutical company whose employees are major contributors to Mr. Lugar’s own political campaigns, against plans to introduce generic versions of some of its most profitable drugs, the documents show.

But Mr. Rohrabacher’s trip last February was different because he pushed for small, specific companies with which he had personal and political ties. The coin dealer, John R. Saunders, is a big contributor to Mr. Rohrabacher’s campaigns, dating back at least a decade. The president of SG Biofuels, Kirk Haney, is a friend of Mr. Rohrabacher’s wife and a former intern in the congressman’s office, Mr. Rohrabacher said, as well as a contributor.

Honduras had grabbed international headlines starting in June 2009, when its president at the time, Manuel Zelaya, was detained and then sent into exile, based on a fear by other elected officials there that he was scheming to remain in office despite a one-term limit in Honduras’s Constitution.

Mr. Rohrabacher, challenging the stand taken by some Obama administration officials, ridiculed suggestions that Mr. Zelaya’s removal was a coup d’état, and used his visit to Honduras to praise government leaders there who played roles in removing Mr. Zelaya, including members of the Supreme Court and the president of the Honduran Congress, Juan Orlando Hernández.

Mr. Rohrabacher, who was a speechwriter for President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s as the United States financed “freedom fighters” in Central America to challenge a perceived communist threat, has long cast himself as a defender of democratic causes in the region. The turn of events in Honduras offered him a chance to return to that role.

“He warned at the danger of allowing ‘caudillos’ or strongmen, like Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, to assume control,” the State Department summary of his visit said, recalling his remarks to the new leaders in Honduras.

Just days before Mr. Rohrabacher’s arrival, the Obama administration had pressed Honduras’s new president, Porfirio Lobo, to name a “truth commission” to investigate Mr. Zelaya’s removal, and implied that United States financial assistance to the poor Central American nation might hinge on such a move.

By tradition, members of Congress are not supposed to freelance foreign policy that goes against the sitting administration. But Mr. Rohrabacher, in meetings with members of the Honduran Supreme Court, told them that a truth commission was unnecessary and a waste of time.

Mr. Rohrabacher, in an interview, said that he had long taken an activist approach
to foreign policy, and that he was never shy, when he met with foreign leaders, about advocating “things I think are the direction to go,” even if they are sometimes not entirely consistent with the views of the sitting administration.

According to the State Department cable, he said in Honduras that his views carried weight. He told the country’s top elected officials that “he was an emissary of Honduras’ friends in Congress, in particular member of Congress Ileana Ros-Lehtinen,” referring to a congresswoman from Florida who is the ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and is now set to become its chairwoman.

But the visit soon shifted to a pitch by Mr. Rohrabacher’s companions for possible business deals.

Mr. Saunders, a California real estate executive, antique coin dealer and frequent campaign contributor to Mr. Rohrabacher, said he used the access he had to top Honduras officials, including the head of the country’s central bank, to discuss the possibility of buying or at least helping arrange the sale of rare antique American coins from Honduras’s gold reserves — a deal he said, at least so far, had not worked out.

Separately, Mr. Rohrabacher, in a meeting with the top science adviser to President Lobo, introduced two executives from SG Biofuels, who then described their plan to set up contracts with farmers in Central America to grow a flowering plant known as jatropha, whose seeds contain oil that can be harvested as diesel fuel.

Mr. Haney, the president of the company, with Mr. Rohrabacher present, also made a presentation to the United States ambassador, who then referred them to other embassy staff members to discuss possible United States foreign aid funds available for the project, the State Department memo says.

Mr. Rohrabacher, in an interview, said he had known Mr. Haney for more than a decade and he invited Mr. Haney — who paid his own costs — not so much to help out his company as to encourage a possible economic opportunity for Honduras.

“I don’t do any special favors,” Mr. Rohrabacher said. “But if some company is doing something and produces a great new technology that is going to help people, I will help them out.”

The senior Honduran official told Mr. Rohrabacher and Mr. Haney that he was reasonably impressed, and that “the jatropha project was an excellent opportunity,” the State Department memo says. He assured them that President Lobo wanted to put a priority on building a biofuel industry in Honduras.

SG Biofuels’ vice president for marketing, Brian Brokowski, said that while the meetings arranged by Mr. Rohrabacher with the officials in Honduras were helpful, the company was still not committed to setting up a farming operation there like the one it had in neighboring Guatemala.

“We are exploring the potential,” he said. “But for now, it is very preliminary.”

Ron Nixon and Barclay Walsh contributed research.

—This article was originally published on December 19, 2010
Diplomats Help Push Sales of Jetliners on the Global Market

By ERIC LIPTON, NICOLA CLARK and ANDREW W. LEHREN
WASHINGTON — The king of Saudi Arabia wanted the United States to outfit his personal jet with the same high-tech devices as Air Force One. The president of Turkey wanted the Obama administration to let a Turkish astronaut sit in on a NASA space flight. And in Bangladesh, the prime minister pressed the State Department to re-establish landing rights at Kennedy International Airport in New York.

Each of these government leaders had one thing in common: they were trying to decide whether to buy billions of dollars’ worth of commercial jets from Boeing or its European competitor, Airbus. And United States diplomats were acting like marketing agents, offering deals to heads of state and airline executives whose decisions could be influenced by price, performance and, as with all finicky customers with plenty to spend, perks.

This is the high-stakes, international bazaar for large commercial jets, where tens of billions of dollars are on the line, along with hundreds of thousands of high-paying jobs. At its heart, it is a wrestling match fought daily by executives at two giant companies, Boeing and Airbus, in which each controls about half of the global market for such planes.

To a greater degree than previously known, diplomats are a big part of the sales force, according to hundreds of cables released by WikiLeaks, which describe politicking and cajoling at the highest levels.

It is not surprising that the United States helps American companies doing business abroad, given that each sale is worth thousands of jobs and that their foreign competitors do the same. But like the other WikiLeaks cables, these offer a remarkably detailed look at what had previously been only glimpsed — in this case, the sales war between American diplomats and their European counterparts.

The cables describe letters from presidents, state visits as bargaining chips and a number of leaders making big purchases based, at least in part, on how much the companies will dress up private planes.

The documents also suggest that demands for bribes, or at least payment to suspicious intermediaries who offer to serve as “agents,” still take place. Boeing says it is committed to avoiding any such corrupt practices.

State Department and Boeing officials, in interviews last month, acknowledged the important role the United States government plays in helping them sell commercial airplanes, despite a trade agreement signed by the United States and European leaders three decades ago intended to remove international politics from the process.

The United States economy, said Robert D. Hormats, under secretary for economic affairs at the State Department, increasingly relies upon exports to the fast-growing developing world — nations like China and India, as well as those in Latin America and
the Middle East.

So pushing sales of big-ticket items like commercial jets, earth-moving equipment or power plants (or stepping in to object if an American company is not being given a fair chance to bid) is central to the Obama administration’s strategy to help the nation recover from the recession.

Boeing earns about 70 percent of its commercial plane sales from foreign buyers, and is the single biggest exporter of manufactured goods in the United States. Every $1 billion in sales — and some of these deals carry a price tag of as high as $10 billion — translates into an estimated 11,000 American jobs, according to the State Department.

The Equalizers

“That is the reality of the 21st century; governments are playing a greater role in supporting their companies, and we need to do the same thing,” Mr. Hormats, a former top executive at Goldman Sachs, said in an interview.

Said Tim Neale, a Boeing spokesman, “The way I look at it, it levels the playing field.”

But Charles A. Hamilton, a former Defense Department official who is a consultant to Airbus, said the government’s advocacy undermined arguments by Boeing and the United States that Airbus had an unfair advantage because of its subsidies from European governments.

“The bottom line is anything goes to get the business,” said Mr. Hamilton, adding that he was speaking for himself, and not for Airbus. “If they feel like they are losing, they will do just about anything to save a deal.”

Airbus executives would not discuss details of their own sales campaigns — and the WikiLeaks documents are mostly focused on American efforts. But one Airbus official, who was not authorized to speak on the record, conceded that, international agreements aside, “commercial jet sales are not totally decoupled from political relationship building.”

One example of the horse-trading involved Saudi Arabia, which in November announced a deal with Boeing to buy 12 777-300ER airliners, with options for 10 more, a transaction worth more than $3.3 billion at list prices.

That announcement was preceded by years of intense lobbying by American officials.

One pitch came from the highest levels, the cables show. In late 2006, Israel Hernandez, a senior Commerce Department official, hand-delivered a personal letter from President George W. Bush to the Jeddah office of King Abdullah, urging the king to buy as many as 43 Boeing jets to modernize Saudi Arabian Airlines and 13 jets for the Saudi royal fleet, which serves the extended royal family.

The king read the letter from Mr. Bush, the State Department cable says, and announced that Boeing jets were his favorites. He said he had just turned down two new
Airbus jets, opting instead for a slightly used Boeing 747.
But before he would commit to a mostly Boeing fleet, the king had a request.

“I am instructing you,” he told Mr. Hernandez politely, according to the State Department cable, “to speak to the president and all concerned authorities,” as the king “wanted to have all the technology that his friend, President Bush, had on Air Force One.” Once he had his own high-tech plane, with the world’s most advanced telecommunications and defense equipment — the king told Mr. Hernandez that “‘God willing,’ he will make a decision that will ‘please you very much.’ ”

A State Department spokesman confirmed last week that the United States had authorized an “upgrade” to King Abdullah’s plane, adding “for security reasons, we won’t discuss specifics.”

Bangladesh’s prime minister, Sheik Hasina Wazed, was equally direct in making a connection for the landing rights at Kennedy Airport, as a condition of the airplane deal, which was then at risk of collapsing.

“If there is no New York route, what is the point of buying Boeing?” a November 2009 cable quotes Ms. Hasina as saying as she pressed American officials. The deal with Boeing went through. So far, flights by the country’s national carrier, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, to New York have not been restored.

The request from Turkey for a slot on a future NASA flight came early last year, as Turkish Airlines was considering buying as many as 20 Boeing jets.

The government there owns slightly less than half of the airline, but Turkey’s minister of transportation, Binali Yildirim, in a January 2010 meeting with the United States ambassador to Turkey, made clear that the country’s president wanted help with its fledgling space program and perhaps assistance from the Federal Aviation Administration to improve its aviation safety.

Requests for Favors

“Cooperation in this area will create the right environment for commercial deals,” Mr. Yildirim told the United States ambassador, the cable says.

In a cable back to Washington, James F. Jeffrey, then the United States ambassador to Turkey, called the effort by Turkish authorities to link the Boeing deal to political requests an “unwelcome, but unsurprising degree of political influence in this transaction.” But he went on to say that authorizing the F.A.A. to help Turkey improve its aviation safety and space exploration programs could benefit both nations.

“We probably cannot put a Turkish astronaut in orbit, but there are programs we could undertake to strengthen Turkey’s capacity in this area that would meet our own goals for improved aviation safety,” he wrote. “In any case, we must show some response to the minister’s vague request if we want to maximize chances for the sale.”

The deal was announced a month later, as Turkish Airlines ordered 20 Boeing planes.
Some sales come to Boeing in part because foreign political leaders want to show friendship to the United States.

King Abdullah II of Jordan, a longtime ally and recipient of billions of dollars in United States aid, told the ambassador in 2004 that “even though the latest Airbus offer was better than Boeing’s he intended to make a ‘political’ decision to have Royal Jordanian buy Boeing aircraft,” a State Department cable said, although the United States still had to help Boeing secure the deal.

The cables show that the United States is willing to pull out all the political stops if Boeing is in danger of losing a big deal to Airbus. In late 2007, the board of Gulf Air, the national airline of the oil-rich kingdom of Bahrain, picked Airbus for a huge sale.

Boeing told the American government, which responded that there was still a way to turn the deal around, even though Airbus had offered the planes for about $400 million less than Boeing.

‘Far From Over’

“The contest remained far from over,” said the cable. “Gulf Air’s selection still needed to be endorsed by the government.”

The American ambassador at the time, Adam Ereli, and his chief economic officer, went into action, “lobbying Gulf Air management, board members, government officials and representatives of parliament,” and appealing directly to the crown prince of Bahrain, in an effort to line up a deal for Boeing that could be final in time for a coming visit by President Bush, the first visit by a sitting United States president.

Within two weeks, the embassy alerted Boeing officials that the crown prince and king of Bahrain had rejected Airbus’s offer and directed Gulf Air’s chairman to make a deal with Boeing that could be signed while Mr. Bush was in the country.

Seeing that Airbus had been outmaneuvered, France’s president, Nicolas Sarkozy, made a last-minute bid to save the deal, the State Department cable says. He offered to visit Bahrain after Mr. Bush had left, but that stop-over was canceled when the Boeing agreement was signed in January 2008. None of the last-minute diplomacy was disclosed.

The cables make clear that both Boeing and the government set limits on their efforts, turning away requests in Turkey and Tanzania to hire “agents” who charge steep commissions — or as some called them, bribes — to gain access to top officials.

Mr. Neale, the company spokesman, says that for Boeing, “it is not just a matter of abiding by U.S. law and laws internationally but a general sense of business ethics.” When such requests surfaced, Boeing often reported them to the State Department.

“ ‘Agents’ and steep ‘commissions’ have been at the heart of several corruption scandals here,” says a 2007 State Department cable recounting a demand that Boeing hire a mysterious hotel executive in Tanzania to serve as a “go-between” with government officials. Payments like that, the cable said, typically were bribes that “ended up in Swiss bank accounts.”
Eric Lipton reported from Washington, Nicola Clark from Paris and Andrew W. Lehren from New York.

---This article was originally published on January 2, 2011

OTHER RELATED CABLES

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Lobbying Plan for Fighter Jet Contest in Brazil
State Dept. Daily Is Window on a Jittery Planet

By SCOTT SHANE
WASHINGTON — In Tunisia, a man was spotted sitting in a cafe, watching the road to the American ambassador’s residence, before driving away in a gray Volkswagen. In Nigeria, extremists, possibly including a “well-trained” operative just arrived from Chad, were believed to be “planning a massive terrorist attack.” And Persian-language computer hacking sites had posted dangerous “Trojan horse” programs, suggesting how Iranian agents might attack the United States.

Those were just three of dozens of threats reported in a single issue of a publication with a limited subscriber list: The Diplomatic Security Daily, a classified roundup of potential horrors facing American diplomats or citizens anywhere in the world. A look at one issue, from June 29, 2009, gives a feeling for the nerve-racking atmosphere in which State Department officers routinely operate.

The Diplomatic Security Daily is classified “secret/noforn,” a label that prohibits sharing it even with foreign allies, and it goes to American embassies and other outposts to alert them of possible threats. Some 14 issues of The Daily were included in a quarter-million diplomatic cables obtained by The New York Times.

The June 29, 2009, issue is a window on the government’s round-the-clock struggle to assess rumors, often vague, about terrorists, assassins, kidnappers, hackers and others who might single out Americans. Few of the threats materialize, but the State Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security sorts and shares the steady flow of reports.

One case involves intelligence reports that “militants attached to Pakistan’s Mumtaz Group” were scheming to kidnap Americans and Britons in Pakistan, conceivably in Peshawar’s University Town neighborhood. But was the danger real?

The Mumtaz Group, the report says, may be linked to a dead operative of Al Qaeda who used that nom de guerre. (In fact, The Daily reports in a rare touch of black humor, the alias Mumtaz is “arguably inauspicious,” since at least three Qaeda members who used it are now dead.)

The threatened kidnappings might be linked to another militant known as Imran, an Uzbek connected to a fatal attack on an American contractor in 2008. Someone named Imran had reportedly just been captured by Pakistani intelligence — but American intelligence could not be certain it was the same man, The Daily said in its frustratingly inconclusive report.

One striking aspect of the security warnings sent to embassies is how many involve cyber threats. The June 29, 2009, issue, in addition to mentioning the Persian hacker sites, discussed at length Chinese companies and government agencies specializing in computer security, implying that they might pose a hazard.

Such companies had “recruited Chinese hackers,” including Lin Yong, known as Lion, to support research projects on attacking computer networks, The Daily reported.
There is a strong possibility that China “is harvesting the talents of its private sector in order to bolster offensive and defensive” cyberoperations, the report said.

—This article was originally published on December 6, 2010
Iran Calls Leaked Documents a U.S. Plot

By WILLIAM YONG and ALAN COWELL

TEHRAN — In Iran’s first official reaction to leaked State Department cables quoting Arab leaders as urging the United States to bomb Tehran’s nuclear facilities, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad dismissed the documents as American psychological warfare that would not affect his country’s relations with other nations, news reports said.

The documents seemed to show several Arab nations, notably Saudi Arabia, Iran’s rival for influence in the Persian Gulf, displaying such hostility that King Abdullah repeatedly implored Washington to “cut off the head of the snake” while there was still time.

Nonetheless, Mr. Ahmadinejad said at a news conference on Monday that Iran’s relations with its neighbors would not be damaged by the reports.

“Regional countries are all friends with each other. Such mischief will have no impact on the relations of countries,” he said, according to Reuters.

“We don’t think this information was leaked. We think it was organized to be released on a regular basis and they are pursuing political goals.”

News reports quoted Mr. Ahmadinejad as calling the documents “worthless” and without “legal value.”

Mr. Ahmadinejad’s news conference was scheduled before the leaked cables were published on Sunday and had been expected to focus on such issues as Iran’s scheduled negotiations on Dec. 5 with world powers over its nuclear program and plans at home to drastically reduce energy and food subsidies. Mr. Ahmadinejad said on Monday that while Iran and the world powers had agreed on a date, the site of the talks was still under discussion.

Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes but many Western powers say it is designed to build nuclear weapons. That issue was one of the overarching themes of the first batch of leaked documents published Sunday in The New York Times and four European newspapers.

With steadily increasing sanctions, outside powers have been seeking to persuade Iran to curb its uranium enrichment, a process that can lead to the production of weapons-grade nuclear fuel.

Mr. Ahmadinejad reiterated that Tehran’s enrichment program was legal and “nonnegotiable,” Reuters said.

“The complete enrichment cycle and the production of fuel are basic rights” of member states of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog, and “are nonnegotiable,” Mr. Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying.

William Yong reported from Tehran, and Alan Cowell from Paris.
Caustic U.S. Views of Berlusconi Churn Italy’s Politics

Some American officials regard Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy as “feckless, vain and ineffective.”

By RACHEL DONADIO and CELESTINE BOHLEN
ROME — In his dealings with American diplomats, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy has often said that he wants his country to be “the best friend of the United States.” In cables to Washington, American diplomats added a few caveats.

Preparing President Obama for a meeting with Mr. Berlusconi in June 2009, Elizabeth Dibble, the deputy chief of mission at the United States Embassy in Rome, warned that some in the American government regarded the Italian leader as “feckless, vain and ineffective as a modern European leader.” Dealing with him, she said, “requires a careful balance of close consideration.”

Such caustic characterizations — revealed in a cache of leaked diplomatic cables obtained by WikiLeaks and released to various news organizations — caused a firestorm in Italy this week. They could further weaken the prime minister ahead of a Dec. 14 parliamentary showdown that could decide the fate of his government. Critics of Mr. Berlusconi are using the revelations to support their calls for his resignation. Experts say
that he may yet win the vote but that his infighting government is not expected to last long, certainly not through its full term, which ends in 2013.

While experts said the revelations seemed unlikely to damage the close relations between Italy and the United States, they nevertheless could have a profound impact on Mr. Berlusconi’s image and reputation — long the core of his political strength.

“Now he can no longer claim that he is well respected and supported by the U.S. and that he vouches for the trans-Atlantic alliance,” said Sergio Fabbrini, director of the Luiss School of Government in Rome. “Now he can no longer use that in domestic politics.”

Yet in a country with a wide divergence between what people say in public and in private and where saving face is a national art, some Italian commentators argued — privately — that the leaks reflected far worse on the United States for allowing a security breach that essentially hung their confidential sources out to dry.

Some American diplomats in Italy acknowledged that their sources were already more reluctant to speak candidly with them.

In an effort at damage control, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton had a one-on-one meeting with Mr. Berlusconi on Wednesday on the margins of a summit meeting in Kazakhstan, telling him Italy was the “best friend” of the United States.

In the cables, American diplomats describe Mr. Berlusconi, 74, as both a canny survivor of Italian politics, his own gaffes and steamy scandals, and a sometimes erratic partner on the international scene, ready to commit Italian soldiers to Afghanistan, but wobbly on critical issues like trade with Iran and relations with Russia.

“Our relationship with Berlusconi is complex,” Ms. Dibble wrote. “He is vocally pro-American and has helped address our interest on many levels in a manner and to a degree that the previous government was unwilling or unable to do.” Yet, the diplomat noted, there are other areas where Mr. Berlusconi “seems determined to be best friends with Russia, sometimes in direct opposition to American, and even European Union, policy.”

It was noted that Mr. Berlusconi had criticized the American missile defense project, eastward expansion of NATO and support for Kosovo’s independence as “provocations of Russia.” Virtually alone among European leaders, he defended Russia’s military push into Georgia during the August 2008 war and has backed joint energy projects between Gazprom in Russia and the Italian energy company ENI, at a time when the European Union is pushing for less dependence on Russian gas.

Mr. Berlusconi’s ties with Russia and Vladimir V. Putin, its former president and current prime minister, are clearly a subject of American concern. Mrs. Clinton’s office sent off questions to the American Embassies in Rome and Moscow, asking for anything that might cast light on the relationship. “What personal investments, if any, do they have that might drive their foreign and economic policies?” the cable asked.

Italy’s cooperation on American-led sanctions against Iran has also fallen short of public promises, diplomats reported. “The Italians want to have it both ways: they want
to be seen as playing a leadership role in the international effort to ratchet up sanctions on Iran, while also wanting to leave the door open to future business deals for Italian companies,” said a cable sent by the embassy on Feb. 10 this year.

Diplomats in recent encounters have found the Italian leader tired and weakened by a spate of scandals and a souring political atmosphere: in one meeting with the ambassador, he fell asleep. Writing about a lunch with Mr. Berlusconi in Milan last Dec. 30, soon after the Italian leader had been hit in the face with a model of the Milan cathedral, the ambassador said Gianni Letta, Mr. Berlusconi’s top adviser and a longstanding confidant of American diplomats, was clearly assuming the “position as co-regent.”

Mr. Letta offers a frank assessment of the Berlusconi government. In a cable from October 2009, he is said to describe Mr. Berlusconi as “physically and politically weak,” a statement that in the current unstable political climate comes across as particularly damning to Mr. Berlusconi, who places a profound value on personal loyalty.

*Rachel Donadio reported from Rome, and Celestine Bohlen from Paris. Gaia Pianigiani contributed reporting from Rome.*

—This article was originally published on December 2, 2010
Blunt and Blustery, Putin Responds to State Department Cables on Russia

By ELLEN BARRY

MOSCOW — Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin responded Wednesday to criticism of Russia revealed in United States diplomatic cables published by the Web site WikiLeaks, warning Washington not to interfere in Russian domestic affairs.

His comments, made in an interview broadcast Wednesday night on CNN’s “Larry King Live,” referred to a cable that said “Russian democracy has disappeared” and that described the government as “an oligarchy run by the security services,” a statement attributed to the American defense secretary, Robert M. Gates.

Mr. Putin said in the interview that Mr. Gates had been “deeply misled.” Asked about a cable that described President Dmitri A. Medvedev as “playing Robin to Putin’s Batman,” he said the author had “aimed to slander one of us.”

Mr. King, whose program is carried on CNN’s channels around the world, has long had a reputation for softball questions. So Mr. Putin’s decision to appear on the program allowed his voice to be heard both in the United States and abroad while avoiding being challenged on contentious topics like his own grip on power and the limits on human rights and free speech in Russia.

In the interview, Mr. Putin also warned that Russia would develop and deploy new nuclear weapons if the United States did not accept its proposals on integrating Russian and European missile defense forces — amplifying a comment made by Mr. Medvedev in his annual state of the nation address on Tuesday.

“We’ve just put forward a proposal showing how jointly working, tackling the shared problem of security, could share responsibility between ourselves,” he said. “But if our proposals will be met with only negative answers, and if on top of that additional threats are built near our borders as this, Russia will have to ensure her own security through different means,” including “new nuclear missile technologies.”

Mr. Putin said Moscow would like to avoid this situation.

“This is no threat on our part,” he said. “We are simply saying this is what we expect to happen if we don’t agree on a joint effort there.” Last month, during a NATO-Russia summit meeting in Lisbon, the delegations discussed President Obama’s invitation for Russia to take some role in the future missile shield, perhaps through linkage between Russian facilities and the European shield.

At that meeting, Mr. Medvedev proposed “sectoral missile defense,” which would divide the missile defense shield into “zones of responsibility,” and involve deep coordination between the European and Russian sectors, said Dmitri V. Trenin, a military analyst and director of the Carnegie Moscow Center. According to this plan, Russia would shoot down missiles flying over its territory toward Europe, and NATO would shoot down missiles flying over European territory toward Russia, he said.
NATO’s proposals for cooperation are less ambitious, and some members remain deeply mistrustful of Russian involvement, he said.

Mr. Putin appeared relaxed in the hourlong interview with Mr. King, who first interviewed him in 2000. He said he was “thankful” for President Obama’s softening of rhetoric toward Russia and for his revision of a planned missile defense shield in Europe.

Asked about the arrest this summer of 11 people accused of spying for Russia, Mr. Putin said the agents were not active, but would have “become pertinent in crisis periods, like when diplomatic relations were suspended or cut.”

His comment seemed to address one of the central mysteries of the summer spy scandal: why the agents were passing on information that was readily accessible without spying.

In the interview, Mr. Putin broke from the restrained response Russian leaders have so far given to the WikiLeaks cables, which have so far offered few real revelations about sensitive topics like corruption. The comments attributed to Mr. Gates, in a cable dated Feb. 8, 2010, used the harshest language made public so far.

Mr. Putin said that several American presidents had been elected through the electoral college system even though they did not win a majority of the popular vote, but that Russia did not press the point.

“When we are talking with our American friends and tell them there are systemic problems” with the electoral college system, “we hear from them: ‘Don’t interfere with our affairs. This is our tradition, and it’s going to continue like that.’ We are not interfering.

“But to our colleagues, I would also like to advise you not to interfere with the sovereign choice of the Russian people,” he said.

He played down the impact of the cables’ release, and went on to suggest that they might be fakes being circulated for obscure political purposes.

“Some experts believe that somebody is deceiving WikiLeaks, that their reputation is being undermined to use them for their own political purposes later on,” he said. “That is one of the possibilities there. That is the opinion of the experts.”

Brian Stelter contributed reporting from New York.
Leaked Cables Stir Resentment and Shrugs

By ALAN COWELL

PARIS — In the world of diplomacy, known for its ambiguity and opacity, the WikiLeaks organization says its function is to “keep government open.” But with the release of some 250,000 American diplomatic cables, the outcome may be more ambiguous, closing doors to United States diplomats, turning candor to reticence and leaving many people leery of baring their souls and secrets to American officials.

There is, so far, no evidence of any deep damage to American diplomacy — with many nations, in public anyway, brushing off the sometimes embarrassing revelations. Their own interest in a relationship with the United States, some suggested, trumps momentary awkwardness.

“Relationships between countries don’t get affected on the basis of what one ambassador has allegedly written,” said Qamar Zaman Kaira, the information minister in Pakistan, a nation whose contacts with the United States are at once important, fraught and complex.

But there is no shortage of anger either — in Turkey, Russia, Mexico and elsewhere. “I am worried about the Americans spying; they have always been very interfering,” said President Felipe Calderón of Mexico.

And in an age when years of diplomatic cables can be stored on a single flash drive, it appeared that WikiLeaks might not be alone: Al Akhbar, a Lebanese newspaper that supports the Shiite militant and political group Hezbollah, has been posting documents from eight Arab countries, including Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Libya.

On Friday, evidence mounted of at least the beginning of damage to American allies, with officials from Canada and Germany either leaving their jobs or offering to do so as a result of the revelations.

The first casualty of the leaks was Helmut Metzner, the chief of staff to Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle of Germany. Mr. Metzner resigned late Thursday after being identified in one document as a “young, up-and-coming party loyalist” who provided American Embassy officials in Berlin with an account of what were supposed to be confidential negotiations last year to form a new German coalition.

In Canada, there was still no official response on Friday to a reported offer by William Crosbie, the Canadian ambassador in Afghanistan, to resign in advance of publication of a leaked cable recording his views on President Hamid Karzai and his family.

In Germany, leaked cables told a different story, describing events in Berlin that might once have inspired a cold war spy thriller if not for the fact that both players involved — the United States and Germany — are allies in NATO and in many other ways.

According to the cables, negotiations were under way last year to form a coalition
between the Christian Democrats, led by Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Mr. Westerwelle’s Free Democrats.

One cable, quoted in the British newspaper The Guardian, reported how American diplomats relied on “a fly on the wall, a young, up-and-coming party loyalist who was taking notes during the marathon talks” to provide documents and information about the negotiations.

When word of the mole’s existence emerged this week, Mr. Westerwelle reacted dismissively. On Friday, Wulf Oehme, a spokesman for the Free Democrats, said Mr. Metzner had been suspended from his job, though not expelled from the party.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, on a trip to Central Asia and the Middle East, continued to smooth over any tensions with foreign leaders. She traveled on Friday to Bahrain, whose king was quoted in the leaked cables as urging Washington to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons by any means necessary.

Bahrain’s foreign minister, while declining to confirm the remarks attributed to King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, said the Persian Gulf kingdom had repeatedly told Iran that it should not pursue a military nuclear program. None of the comments attributed to the king, he said, contradicted Bahrain’s position.

“Every country in the Middle East has the right for nuclear power for peaceful use,” the foreign minister, Sheik Khalid bin Ahmed al-Khalifa, said after meeting with Mrs. Clinton.

But, he added: “When it comes to taking that power and developing it into a cycle for weapons grade, this is something that we can never accept and we can never live with in this region. We’ve said it to Iran.”

Samples of opinion, from Asia to Europe to Latin America, showed the global reaction to the WikiLeaks cables.

Bernard Kouchner, who until recently was the foreign minister in France, predicted: “We will all terribly mistrust each other. That is the risk.”

A Chinese intellectual, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he feared exposure, said the disclosures had left some Chinese who had had contact with United States diplomats “nervous” about the possibility of persecution by the authorities, who had blocked access in China to the WikiLeaks Web site.

Turkey, the subject of many of the cables, has become increasingly critical of Washington’s handling of the secret material, calling the disclosures the latest blow in the deterioration of the United States’ image as the world’s leading power and questioning how the documents could have been so easily leaked.

Analysts in Britain, which once prided itself on its so-called special relationship with Washington, seemed to acknowledge that the cables reflected the nation’s eroded status in their criticism of British leaders and the British military. Over the past decade, said Prof. Malcolm Chalmers of the Royal United Services Institute, “We all have fewer illusions about just how important the U.K. is anyway.”

The diplomatic revelations also reached into delicate relationships that Washington
is seeking to nurture, like in Moscow, where the leaked cables made disparaging references to President Dmitri A. Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin.

“We are not paranoiacs, and we do not link Russian-American relations to any leaks,” Mr. Medvedev said on Friday. “However, these leaks are revealing. They show the full measure of cynicism behind the assessments and judgments which prevail in the foreign policy of various nations, in this case the United States.”

Oddly, though, in two places where the leaked cables seemed to have raised some of the most unsettling questions, the response has been muted.

In the Arab world, much of the press is owned by members of the Saudi royal family and tends to avoid topics that could embarrass the kingdom. The cables quoted King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf leaders as urging the United States to bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities, but the response, in the words of Osama Nogali, a spokesman for the Saudi Foreign Ministry, has been to say that the cables “do not concern” the kingdom since they reflect American analysis.

In Kabul, Afghanistan, some business leaders worried that the disclosures could have a more roundabout effect, further undermining American commitment to support the government.

“Afghan corruption is not just an Afghan domestic issue, it is also a U.S. domestic issue because it’s your money,” said Saad Mohseni, the chairman of Moby Group, the largest media company in Afghanistan. “Your tolerance of corruption in our country will raise questions back home in the United States public, the media and even Congress.”

Conversely, some places, notably Israel, saw the WikiLeaks disclosures as helpful, since they seemed to show Arab leaders quietly saying what had long been publicly argued by Israeli leaders — that the region’s main threat was Iran.

“At least on the Iranian issue — and apparently on more than a few other matters — the leaders of the world, including the Arab world, think as we do, but are ashamed to admit it,” said Sever Plocker, a columnist for the newspaper Yediot Aharonot.

Reporting was contributed by Ellen Barry from Moscow; Katrin Bennhold and Scott Sayare from Paris; Michael Slackman and Stefan Pauly from Berlin; Mark Landler from Manama, Bahrain; Edward Wong and Jonathan Ansfield from Beijing; Elisabeth Malkin from Mexico City; Salman Masood from Islamabad, Pakistan; Alissa J. Rubin from Kabul, Afghanistan; Jack Healy from Baghdad; Celia W. Dugger from Johannesburg; Jeffrey Gettleman from Nairobi, Kenya; Robert F. Worth from Sana, Yemen; Sebnem Arsu from Istanbul; Ravi Somaiya from London; and Ethan Bronner from Jerusalem.

—This article was originally published on December 3, 2010
From WikiLemons, Clinton Tries to Make Lemonade

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton condemned the disclosure of diplomatic cables but managed to find a silver lining.

By MARK LANDLER
MANAMA, Bahrain — When American diplomats get together these days, there is lots of dark talk about the fallout from the sensational disclosure of secret diplomatic cables. Will angry foreign governments kick out ambassadors? Will spooked locals stop talking to their embassy contacts?

Behind all the public hand-wringing, however, there is another, more muted reaction: pride.

The WikiLeaks affair has turned an unaccustomed spotlight on the diplomatic corps — pinstriped authors who pour their hearts and minds into cables, which are filed to the State Department and, until now, were often barely read by desk officers, let alone senior diplomats.

Whatever damage the leaks may do, and nobody doubts it could be substantial, they have showcased the many roles of the Foreign Service officer in the field: part intelligence analyst, part schmoozer, part spy — and to judge by these often artful cables,
part foreign correspondent.

The pride of authorship is shared by their boss, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who found a silver lining in the disclosures, even after she spent last week trying to smooth the feathers of foreign leaders described in the cables as feckless, profligate, vain, corrupt or worse.

“What you see are diplomats doing the work of diplomacy: reporting and analyzing and providing information, solving problems, worrying about big, complex challenges,” Mrs. Clinton said to reporters at the end of a four-country trip to Central Asia and the Persian Gulf that wound up being a contrition tour.

“In a way,” she said, “it should be reassuring, despite the occasional tidbit that is pulled out and unfortunately blown up.”

Not all the tidbits reflect well on the diplomats, of course. Memos from the United States Embassy in Georgia, for example, showed that it relied so heavily on the Georgian government for intelligence that it badly misjudged the country’s actions in its war with Russia in 2008.

But the overall quality of the cables — their detail, analysis, and in some cases, laugh-out-loud humor — has won fans in unlikely places. “It’s very entertaining reading,” said Aigul Solovyeva, a member of Parliament in Kazakhstan who met Mrs. Clinton there this week.

Richard E. Hoagland, the ambassador to Kazakhstan, thinks good cable-writing is so essential that he has written a guide for junior diplomats, “Ambassador’s Cable Drafting Tips.” Many of the tips would be familiar to any cub reporter trying to get an editor to bite on a story.

“The trick is to catch readers’ attention,” he advises. “The first three to five words are all they will see in their electronic queue.”

His specific recommendations? Avoid flabby writing, citing as a typically egregious example any memo that starts: “‘The ambassador used the opportunity of the meeting to raise the issue of’…”

And work on storytelling: “Despite what some in Washington will tell you, there is nothing at all wrong with colorful writing, as long as it communicates something.” But he adds a caveat: “Cute writing is never acceptable — cute is for toddlers, not for professional diplomats.”

Mr. Hoagland, who accompanied Mrs. Clinton to meetings this week, declined to discuss the substance of the leaked cables. But he was happy to discuss style. As a general rule, he said he instructs staff members to think like journalists. “Not everything we churn out is great writing,” he said, “but we try to keep up the standards.”

The embassy in Kazakhstan met many of Mr. Hoagland’s standards for cable-writing, even before he became ambassador there. Cables about Kazakhstan’s high-living leaders are written in a satirical tone worthy of Borat, the fictional (and wild) Kazakh played in the movie by Sacha Baron Cohen.

One described Kazakhstan’s defense minister turning up drunk for a meeting with
an American official, “slouching back in his chair and slurring all kinds of Russian participles.” He explained that he had just been at a cadet graduation reception, “toasting Kazakhstan’s newly-commissioned officers.”

The memo concluded: “Who was toasted more — the defense minister or the cadets — is a matter of pure speculation.”

A 2006 cable from the embassy in Moscow showed that the staff there was also alert to the literary quality of the events on which they reported, and the value of telling details. The memo offered an account of a society wedding in Dagestan in Russia’s Caucasus, where guests threw $100 bills at child dancers and took alcohol-sodden waterscooter jaunts on the Caspian Sea. But it also showed how the wedding was a “microcosm of the social and political relations of the North Caucasus.”

For Mrs. Clinton, the pride in the diplomats’ work is a small compensation for a difficult week in which she has discussed the WikiLeaks case with more than two dozen foreign leaders, working to soothe bruised egos and explain how the security breach happened.

The job of damage control has fallen mainly to her. President Obama has not called any foreign leaders about the disclosures. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, meanwhile, has been reserved even though the cables were believed to be purloined from a Department of Defense computer system by an army private, Bradley Manning, who is now in a military jail.

Mrs. Clinton’s reaction to shouldering the burden has been every bit as artful as the cables that have landed her in so much trouble.

“It was a DoD system, and a DoD obviously military intel guy,” she said. “But we’re part of one government, and we’re part of one country, and we have to work together, and that’s what we’re doing.”

—This article was originally published on December 4, 2010
WikiLeaks and the Perils of Oversharing

By NOAM COHEN

THE recent release of internal State Department cables by WikiLeaks, assisted by a coalition of news outlets in the United States and Europe, has been viewed as a national security matter — have confidential sources been compromised? Could relations between the United States and Russia (or Italy or France or Pakistan) be permanently damaged?

But one can take an even longer view of the meaning of the WikiLeaks campaign: by exposing the candid workings of government, the project and its leader, Julian Assange, have transformed the debate over Internet privacy from one about the individual to one about the government.

In the aftermath, many of the sharpest critics of WikiLeaks have belittled what has been learned, saying the material appears meant to humiliate the United States with embarrassing assessments of world leaders rather than inform the public of gross misbehavior. The damage to the government instead relates to the loss of the confidentiality needed to conduct foreign affairs.

The conservative commentator Tunku Varadarajan, writing in The Daily Beast, was among the most direct in making the point: “Diplomacy, to work at all effectively, must draw a line between the ‘consultative process’ and the ‘work product.’ This is but part of the human condition: Human beings need to consult, speculate, brainstorm, argue with each other — yes, even to gossip and say dopey things — in order to find their way through the difficult task of coming to an official, or publicly stated position which would then be open (legitimately) to criticism.”

So, without a zone of privacy it becomes impossible for a government to sustain complicated, even contradictory, ideas about relationships and about the world — in other words, it becomes impossible to think. And, imagine that: apparently governments need to think.

Were he not talking about geopolitics and accusing Mr. Assange of being a Marxist (skipping right past the Socialist label), Mr. Varadarajan would sound a lot like the commentators who worry about the generation growing up engulfed by modern Internet technologies.

These young people, too, lack the ability to say and do dopey things without it seemingly haunting them forever. They may never have bought a book without being profiled. Or queried a search engine without being sized up for an advertisement. Or proffered, and maybe then withdrawn, friendship, without it being logged.

The author and critic Zadie Smith made these points in an essay titled “Generation Why?” in The New York Review of Books. It included a scathing assessment of what Facebook and other Web technologies have wrought among her college students. She fears that by sharing so much — and having so much shared about themselves — these young people have lost any hope for an inner life.
Whether the formats or the people are to blame is almost beside the point. “I am dreaming of a Web that caters to a kind of person who no longer exists,” she writes. “A private person, a person who is a mystery, to the world and — which is more important — to herself.”

In the essay’s climax, she describes teaching an experimental novel “about a man who decides to pass most of his time in his bathroom,” who lacks “interiority.” She concludes: “To my students this novel feels perfectly realistic; an accurate portrait of their own denuded selfhood, or, to put it neutrally, a close analogue of the undeniable boredom of urban twenty-first-century existence.”

Of course, there are reasons privacy is allocated the way it is — that is, why governments should get it, and individuals less so. The Internet economy thrives on data collection about users — to deliver better advertisements or to allow “friends” to share what they consume. And, naturally, diplomats need to be able to be candid back home, and be sociable at official functions.

In fact, the catty nature of many of the cables — comparing Vladimir V. Putin and Dmitri A. Medvedev to Batman and Robin, for example — reminds one of high school, and the perils of oversharing. You feel for the United States these days: I have home room with Dmitri, how can I look him in the face now?

To an outsider looking in, another teenage expression comes to mind: T.M.I., or too much information.

“The whole thing seems a little Facebooky,” said Lisa Lynch, a journalism professor at Concordia University in Montreal, who has written about WikiLeaks. She said she was surprised no one had displayed the information in the cables as Facebook status updates: “You know, Sarkozy is no longer in a relationship with the United States.”

Still, there was a larger purpose in the cable releases, she said. And it was not to teach the world the importance of privacy by showing the powerful how it feels to be transparent to the world. WikiLeaks has swept up the obscure and the weak (albeit obnoxious) in its past, as when it named members of the racist British National Party who certainly did not seek to be exposed.

Taking advantage of new technologies, Ms. Lynch said, the project has leveled the playing field, “reversing hierarchies of who gets censored and who gets surveilled.”

In the process, WikiLeaks is perhaps trying to render governments as brain-addled as Ms. Smith sees her students.

In an essay attributed to Mr. Assange — posted to his Web site in 2006 shortly before the start of WikiLeaks and given the name “State and Terrorist Conspiracies” — he describes his views on authoritarian governments, the governments that he is trying to bedevil.

He speaks explicitly about trying to prevent oppressive governments from communicating internally: a government “that cannot think is powerless to preserve itself,” he writes in the essay.

One scholar, Aaron Bady, last week wrote an analysis of “State and Terrorist
Conspiracies” on his blog, saying that Mr. Assange’s strategy for combating an authoritarian government was “to degrade its ability to conspire, to hinder its ability to ‘think’ as a conspiratorial mind. The metaphor of a computing network is mostly implicit, but utterly crucial: he seeks to oppose the power of the state by treating it like a computer and tossing sand in its diodes.”

Put differently, governments, like teenagers, need to know when to keep their mouths shut: WikiLeaks is trying hard to make that task impossible.

—This article was originally published on December 5, 2010
Karzai’s Response to Cables Relieves U.S.

By ELISABETH BUMILLER

KABUL, Afghanistan — Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates called it “extraordinarily embarrassing,” which might also describe the sentiments beneath the decorous tableau on Wednesday night in the palace of President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

A little more than a week after the disclosure of a cache of secret American diplomatic cables that quoted Karl W. Eikenberry, the United States ambassador to Afghanistan, describing Mr. Karzai’s “inability to grasp the most rudimentary principles of state-building,” among other criticisms, Mr. Karzai, Mr. Eikenberry and Mr. Gates shared their first public forum together since the cables were leaked.

Not that anyone would have known that something was amiss. Mr. Eikenberry sat genially in the front row of American spectators, busily taking notes, as Mr. Gates stood alongside Mr. Karzai, smiling broadly. Asked about the cables obtained by WikiLeaks and made available to a number of news organizations, Mr. Gates first acknowledged that they were “extraordinarily embarrassing for the United States.” Then he tried to limit the damage.

“At the end of the day, nations and leaders make decisions based on their interests,” Mr. Gates said. “And I would say that America’s best partners and friends, and I include among them President Karzai, have responded to this in my view in an extraordinarily statesmanlike way.”

Mr. Gates shifted to a higher gear: “And I’m deeply grateful, and frankly I think the American government will not forget this statesmanlike response. I think I also could say with great confidence, President Karzai and I have been meeting together privately now for four years. I don’t think either of us would be embarrassed to have a single thing we said to each other made public.” Mr. Gates was praising Mr. Karzai for his response four days earlier to the disclosures, when in a news conference with the Pakistani prime minister, Yousaf Raza Gilani, he dismissed the cables as beneath his interest.

Mr. Karzai also said, referring to criticism from his own ministers as reported in the cables, that people might say things casually in private that did not reflect their more considered views. His response was a relief to American officials, who embraced him in 2001 as a promising leader but had been alternately exasperated and infuriated over the ensuing years by what they considered his erratic behavior.

As Mr. Eikenberry wrote in a July 2009 cable, Mr. Karzai had a “deep-seated insecurity as a leader.” That cable was a forerunner to his assessment in a November 2009 cable that called Mr. Karzai “not a reliable partner” for the United States. The November cable was leaked months before the current trove, souring relations between Mr. Eikenberry and Mr. Karzai before the WikiLeaks disclosures.

Mr. Gates was in Afghanistan to make an assessment of the war for a White House review, to be completed this month. The conclusion of the report — that there has been
progress since President Obama sent 30,000 additional American forces but more work needs to be done — has already been described by administration officials.

“As I return to Washington, the United States government will be finishing work on an evaluation of the situation here, and I will go back convinced that our strategy is working,” Mr. Gates said at the news conference. There remains deep skepticism about the strategy in parts of official Washington and Afghanistan, even among military officers.

Earlier on Wednesday, Mr. Gates heard largely optimistic reviews in a trip to Helmand and Kandahar Provinces in the south. Maj. Gen. Richard Mills, the commander of 20,000 United States Marines in Helmand Province, said that “the conditions are set in certain parts of the province right now for us to be able to turn over significant responsibility in the realm of security to the Afghans themselves” — a goal of Mr. Obama, who wants to begin the withdrawal of some United States forces next July.

At Forward Operating Base Howz-e-Madad in Kandahar Province, where fighting was fierce this summer and fall, Col. Art Kandarian told reporters traveling with Mr. Gates that “four months ago you would not be able to fly in here without taking some fire at this location.” He said his troops were now working to clear insurgents and homemade bombs from Afghanistan’s Highway 1.

—This article was originally published on December 8, 2010
Pakistani Newspapers Apologize for Fake Cables Stories (from The Lede blog)

By ROBERT MACKEY

As the Guardian’s Islamabad correspondent Declan Walsh reported, several Pakistani newspapers appeared to fall for a hoax on Thursday, by publishing articles supposedly based on leaked American cables obtained by WikiLeaks that turned out not to exist.

The fake cables described by articles, including one on the front page of The News, were said to contain damning information about India and generally supported the worldview of hawks in Pakistan’s military and intelligence services.

The Lede explained on Thursday that both the Guardian and The New York Times, which have copies of all of the leaked cables, performed searches of the full archive and were unable to find any cables even remotely like those described in the Pakistani press.

On Friday, two Pakistani newspapers that published articles based on the fake cables, The News and The Express Tribune, published retractions.

The Express Tribune apologized to readers for its article, “WikiLeaks: What U.S. Officials Think About the Indian Army,” explaining: “It now transpires that the story, which was run by a news agency, Online, was not authentic.”

The News blamed a local news agency, reporting:

A story filed by a news agency about purported WikiLeaks cables disclosing India’s involvement in Balochistan and Waziristan, carried by The News, Daily Jang and many other Pakistani newspapers, has been widely criticised as not being accurate. The prestigious British newspaper The Guardian described the report as “the first case of WikiLeaks being exploited for propaganda purposes.”

The report said that US diplomats described senior Indian generals as vain, egotistical and genocidal, and that India’s government was secretly allied with Hindu fundamentalists. It also claimed that Indian spies were covertly supporting Islamist militants in the tribal belt and Balochistan.

The story was released by the Islamabad-based Online news agency and was run by The News and Daily Jang with the confidence that it was a genuine report and must have been vetted before release. However, several inquiries suggest that this was not the case.

The News added, “A check on the Internet as well as The Guardian report showed that the story was not based on WikiLeaks cables, and had in fact originated from some local websites such as The Daily Mail and Rupee News known for their close connections with certain intelligence agencies.”

Pakistan’s Daily Mail, which is an Islamabad news site unrelated to the British...
newspaper of the same name, has a reputation for reporting unreliable conspiracy theories that serve to deflect blame from Pakistani officials. In September, The Lede pointed to a post headlined, “How To Plant Idiotic Stories,” on Cafe Pyala, a blog that looks at the Pakistani media. In that case, Cafe Pyala traced a fake news story suggesting that a Pakistani cricket scandal was actually a nefarious Indian plot back to the local Daily Mail, which it called, called Pakistan’s Daily Mail, “the purveyor of all conspiracy theories headquartered in Islamabad which pretends to be a global paper.” Cafe Pyala added, “its focus seems plainly to be crude propaganda about India. No points for guessing who’s probably behind it.”

In a post about the articles based on the fake cables on Thursday, Cafe Pyala noted that the newspapers reported their source as simply, “agencies,” before asking, “How stupid do the “agencies” really think Pakistanis are?”

On Friday though, one Pakistani blogger stuck by the idea that Islamabad’s Daily Mail, alone among the world’s news organizations, had somehow come into possession of cables obtained by WikiLeaks that no one else has seen. Ahmed Quraishi, a Pakistani journalist, blogger and conspiracy theorist, refused to admit that the Daily Mail story he had made so much of a day earlier was based on cables that do not exist.

In a post headlined, “Ignore Guardian’s Claim Of ‘Fake’ India WikiLeaks,” Mr. Quraishi, citing no evidence, insisted that the Guardian and The Times must be lying, writing:

Substantial parts of the story in Pakistani media is correct. It’s only that The Guardian and the other newspapers are misleading the world public opinion by a selective focus on the things they want from WikiLeaks cables.

WikiLeaks did a good job of exposing US bully diplomacy, and here comes NYT, Guardian and 2 or 3 other ‘partner’ newspapers of WikiLeaks to selectively release the material to suit US policy objectives.

—This article was originally published on December 10, 2010
Ron Paul’s Defense of WikiLeaks (from The Lede blog)

By ROBERT MACKEY

Thanks to the reader who drew our attention to this video, of Ron Paul, the libertarian Texas Congressman, defending WikiLeaks on the House floor on Thursday in Washington.

As The Lede noted last week, Mr. Paul has also defended the publication of the leaked cables on his Twitter feed, writing: “Re: WikiLeaks — In a free society, we are supposed to know the truth. In a society where truth becomes treason, we are in big trouble.”

In his speech to the House on Thursday, Mr. Paul compared the publication of the leaked cables by WikiLeaks to the publication of the Pentagon Papers in 1971, which the Supreme Court ruled to be legal at the time. He concluded by asking nine questions he said were raised by the leaks and the outcry against Mr. Assange.

Do the America people deserve know the truth regarding the ongoing war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen?

Could a larger question be, How can an Army private gain access to so much secret information?

Why is the hostility mostly directed at Assange, the publisher, and not our government’s failure to protect classified information?

Are we getting our money’s worth from the $80 billion dollars per year we spend on intelligence gathering?

Which has resulted in the greatest number of deaths: lying us into war or WikiLeaks revelations or the release of the Pentagon Papers?

If Assange can be convicted of a crime for publishing information that he did not steal, what does this say about the future of the First Amendment and the independence of the Internet?

Could it be that the real reason for the near-universal attacks on WikiLeaks is more about secretly maintaining a seriously flawed foreign policy of empire than it is about national security?

Is there not a huge difference between releasing secret information to help the enemy in a time of declared war, which is treason, and the releasing of information to expose our government lies that promote secret wars, death and corruption?

Was it not once considered patriotic to stand up to our government when it’s wrong?
Obama Calls Turkish and Mexican Leaders on Diplomatic Leaks

By JACKIE CALMES
WASHINGTON — President Obama for the first time joined in his administration’s diplomatic repair work in the wake of the disclosure of numerous American cables by WikiLeaks, calling the leaders of Turkey and Mexico on Saturday in an effort to smooth things over.

Separate White House statements about the phone calls did not characterize Mr. Obama’s messages as apologies, nor would administration officials. The statement about Mr. Obama’s call to President Felipe Calderón of Mexico began by describing it as congratulatory, to praise Mexico for its work in acting as host to the just-completed Cancún conference on climate change.

But the two presidents also talked about “the deplorable actions by WikiLeaks,” the statement said, “and agreed its irresponsible acts should not distract our two countries from our important cooperation.”

Mr. Obama also called the Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He “expressed his regrets for the deplorable action by WikiLeaks and the two leaders agreed that it will not influence or disrupt the close cooperation between the United States and Turkey.”

Overall the WikiLeaks disclosures of diplomatic reports between Americans in Washington and foreign capitals have been more embarrassing than revelatory or harmful to national security, officials and analysts say. Nonetheless, those dealing with Turkey, an ally straddling the West and the volatile Middle East, and Mexico, a troubled neighbor battling a corrosive drug war, illustrate the diplomatic problems created by exposing even routine communications to international light.

Publicized cables about Turkey, a member of NATO, depicted doubts about how reliable an ally the country was, given its mildly Islamist and anti-Israel government. But Mr. Obama and Mr. Erdogan “discussed the enduring importance of the U.S.-Turkish partnership and affirmed their commitment to work together on a broad range of issues,” the White House said.

As for Mexico, American diplomats in the leaked cables quoted officials there admitting pessimism about the nation’s war on drug lords even as the government publicly had boasted of progress, while other cables conveyed Americans’ criticisms of the Mexican military, police and judiciary and of public corruption in the country generally.

But, according to the White House, Mr. Obama and Mr. Calderon “reaffirmed their shared commitment to work together against transnational criminal organizations, to enhance border cooperation, and to improve the economic well-being of people in both countries.”

—This article was originally published on December 11, 2010
WikiLeaks Taps Power of the Press

By DAVID CARR

Has WikiLeaks changed journalism forever?

Perhaps. Or maybe it was the other way around.

Think back to 2008, when WikiLeaks simply released documents that suggested the government of Kenya had looted its country. The follow-up in the mainstream media was decidedly muted.

Then last spring, WikiLeaks adopted a more journalistic approach — editing and annotating a 2007 video from Baghdad in which an Apache helicopter fired on men who appeared to be unarmed, including two employees of Reuters. The reviews were mixed, with some suggesting that the video had been edited to political ends, but the disclosure received much more attention in the press.

In July, WikiLeaks began what amounted to a partnership with mainstream media organizations, including The New York Times, by giving them an early look at the so-called Afghan War Diary, a strategy that resulted in extensive reporting on the implications of the secret documents.

Then in November, the heretofore classified mother lode of 250,000 United States diplomatic cables that describe tensions across the globe was shared by WikiLeaks with Le Monde, El Pais, The Guardian and Der Spiegel. (The Guardian shared documents with The New York Times.) The result was huge: many articles have come out since, many of them deep dives into the implications of the trove of documents.

Notice that with each successive release, WikiLeaks has become more strategic and has been rewarded with deeper, more extensive coverage of its revelations. It’s a long walk from WikiLeaks’s origins as a user-edited site held in common to something more akin to a traditional model of publishing, but seems to be in keeping with its manifesto to deliver documents with “maximum possible impact.”

Julian Assange, WikiLeaks’s founder and guiding spirit, apparently began to understand that scarcity, not ubiquity, drives coverage of events. Instead of just pulling back the blankets for all to see, he began to limit the disclosures to those who would add value through presentation, editing and additional reporting. In a sense, Mr. Assange, a former programmer, leveraged the processing power of the news media to build a story and present it in comprehensible ways. (Of course, as someone who draws a paycheck from a mainstream journalism outfit, it may be no surprise that I continue to see durable value in what we do even amid the journalistic jujitsu WikiLeaks introduces.)

And by publishing only a portion of the documents, rather than spilling information willy-nilly and recklessly endangering lives, WikiLeaks could also strike a posture of responsibility, an approach that seems to run counter to Mr. Assange’s own core anarchism.

Although Mr. Assange is now arguing that the site is engaged in what he called a
new kind of “scientific journalism,” his earlier writings suggest he believes the mission of WikiLeaks is to throw sand in the works of what he considers corrupt, secretive and inherently evil states. He initiated a conspiracy in order to take down what he saw as an even greater conspiracy.

“WikiLeaks is not a news organization, it is a cell of activists that is releasing information designed to embarrass people in power,” said George Packer, a writer on international affairs at The New Yorker. “They simply believe that the State Department is an illegitimate organization that needs to be exposed, which is not really journalism.”

By shading his radicalism and collaborating with mainstream outlets, Mr. Assange created a comfort zone for his partners in journalism. They could do their jobs and he could do his.

“The notion that this experience has somehow profoundly changed journalism, the way that information gets out or changed the way that diplomacy happens, seems rather exaggerated,” said Bill Keller, the executive editor of The New York Times, which used information from the leaks to report a series of large articles.

“It was a big deal, but not an unfamiliar one. Consumers of information became privy to a lot of stuff that had been secret before,” Mr. Keller said. “The scale of it was unusual, but was it different in kind from the Pentagon Papers or revelation of Abu Ghraib or government eavesdropping? I think probably not.”

In this case, the media companies could also take some comfort in knowing that the current trove did not contain, with a few notable exceptions, any earth-shaking revelations. No thinking citizen was surprised to learn that diplomats don’t trust each other and say so behind closed doors. But as it has become increasingly apparent that WikiLeaks was changing the way information is released and consumed, questions were raised about the value of traditional journalistic approaches.

“People from the digital world are always saying we don’t need journalists at all because information is everywhere and there in no barrier to entry,” said Nicholas Lemann, dean of the Columbia Journalism School. “But these documents provide a good answer to that question. Even though journalists didn’t dig them out, there is a great deal of value in their efforts to explain and examine them. Who else would have had the energy or resources to do what these news organization have done?”

WikiLeaks certainly isn’t being afforded the same protections we give other media outlets in free countries. It has come under significant attack as PayPal, Amazon and Visa have all tried to bar WikiLeaks from their services, a move that would seem unthinkable had it been made against mainstream newspapers. (Can you imagine the outcry if a credit card company decided to cut off The Washington Post because it didn’t like what was on the front page?)

Sen. Joseph Lieberman has said that Mr. Assange should be charged with treason while Sarah Palin has called him “an anti-American operative with blood on his hands.” (Indeed, Senator Lieberman has suggested that the Justice Department should examine the role of The New York Times in the leaks.)
Mr. Packer is very much against the prosecution of WikiLeaks on grounds of treason because, he said, “discerning the legal difference between what WikiLeaks did and what news organizations do is difficult and would set a terrible precedent.”

But Mr. Assange, who is in jail in Britain in connection with a Swedish extradition request, is a complicated partner. So far, WikiLeaks has been involved in a fruitful collaboration, a new form of hybrid journalism emerging in the space between so-called hacktivists and mainstream media outlets, but the relationship is an unstable one.

WikiLeaks may be willing to play ball with newspapers for now, but the organization does not share the same values or objectives. Mr. Assange and the site’s supporters see transparency as the ultimate objective, believing that sunshine and openness will deprive bad actors of the secrecy they require to be successful. Mainstream media may spend a lot of time trying to ferret information out of official hands, but they largely operate in the belief that the state is legitimate and entitled to at least some of its secrets.

And Mr. Assange has placed a doomsday card on the table: he has said that if WikiLeaks’s existence is threatened, the organization would be willing to spill all the documents in its possession out into the public domain, ignoring the potentially mortal consequences. (His lawyers told ABC News that they expect he will be indicted on espionage charges in the United States.) Mr. Packer said such an act “is something no journalistic organization would ever do, or threaten to do.”

And what if WikiLeaks was unhappy with how one of its ad hoc media partners had handled the information it provided or became displeased with the coverage of WikiLeaks? The same guns in the info-war that have been aimed at its political and Web opponents could be trained on media outlets.

Steve Coll, president of the New America Foundation and an author and a contributor to The New Yorker who has written extensively about Afghanistan, said that the durability of the WikiLeaks model remained an open question.

“I’m skeptical about whether a release of this size is ever going to take place again,” he said, “in part because established interests and the rule of law tend to come down pretty hard on incipient movements. Think of the initial impact of Napster and what subsequently happened to them.”

Of course, Napster is no longer around but the insurgency it represented all but tipped the music industry.

“Right now, media outlets are treating this as a transaction with a legitimate journalistic organization,” he said. “But at some point, they are going to have to evolve into an organization that has an address and identity or the clock will run out on that level of collaboration.”

Emily Bell, the director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia Journalism School, said that WikiLeaks had already changed the rules by creating a situation where competitive news organizations were now cooperating to share a scoop.

“WikiLeaks represents a new kind of advocacy, one that brings to mind the
activism of the ’60s, one in which people want to get their own hands on information and do their own digging,” she said. “What you are seeing is just a crack in the door right now. No one can tell where this is really going.”

—This article was originally published on December 12, 2010
Air Force Blocks Sites That Posted Secret Cables

By ERIC SCHMITT

WASHINGTON — The Air Force is barring its personnel from using work computers to view the Web sites of The New York Times and more than 25 other news organizations and blogs that have posted secret cables obtained by WikiLeaks, Air Force officials said Tuesday.

When Air Force personnel on the service’s computer network try to view the Web sites of The Times, the British newspaper The Guardian, the German magazine Der Spiegel, the Spanish newspaper El País and the French newspaper Le Monde, as well as other sites that posted full confidential cables, the screen says “Access Denied: Internet usage is logged and monitored,” according to an Air Force official whose access was blocked and who shared the screen warning with The Times. Violators are warned that they face punishment if they try to view classified material from unauthorized Web sites.

Some Air Force officials acknowledged that the steps taken might be in vain since many military personnel could gain access to the documents from home computers, despite admonishments from superiors not to read the cables without proper clearances.

Cyber network specialists within the Air Force Space Command last week followed longstanding procedures to keep classified information off unclassified computer systems. “News media Web sites will be blocked if they post classified documents from the WikiLeaks Web site,” said Lt. Col. Brenda Campbell, a spokeswoman for the Air Force Space Command, a unit of which oversees Air Force cyber systems. “This is similar to how we’d block any other Web site that posted classified information.”

Colonel Campbell said that only sites posting full classified documents, not just excerpts, would be blocked. “When classified documents appear on a Web site, a judgment will be made whether it will be blocked,” she said. “It’s an issue we’re working through right now.”

Spokesmen for the Army, Navy and Marines said they were not blocking the Web sites of news organizations, largely because guidance has already been issued by the Obama administration and the Defense Department directing hundreds of thousands of federal employees and contractors not to read the secret cables and other classified documents published by WikiLeaks unless the workers have the required security clearance or authorization.

“Classified information, whether or not already posted on public websites or disclosed to the media, remains classified, and must be treated as such by federal employees and contractors, until it is declassified by an appropriate U.S. Government authority,” said a notice sent on Dec. 3 by the Office of Management and Budget, which is part of the White House, to agency and department heads.

A Defense Department spokesman, Col. David Lapan, in an e-mail on Tuesday night sought to distance the department from the Air Force’s action to block access to the
media Web sites: “This is not DoD-directed or DoD-wide.”

The Air Force’s action was first reported on The Wall Street Journal’s Web site late Tuesday and underscores the wide-ranging impact of the recent release of secret State Department documents by WikiLeaks, and five news organizations, including The Times. It also illustrates the contortions the military and other government agencies appear to be going through to limit the spread of classified information that has become widely available in the public domain.

“It is unfortunate that the U.S. Air Force has chosen not to allow its personnel access to information that virtually everyone else in the world can access,” said a spokeswoman for The Times, Danielle Rhoades Ha. A senior administration official said Tuesday that the administration’s policy contained some leeway, for instance, to allow certain employees to download information in order for them to be able to verify that classified information was leaking into the public domain, and to assess damage to national security and potential danger to sources.

Steven Aftergood of the Federation of American Scientists, a secrecy specialist, said dozens of agencies, as well as branches of the military and government contractors, had issued their own policy instructions based on the Office of Management and Budget memo.

“It’s a self-defeating policy that will leave government employees less informed than they ought to be,” Mr. Aftergood said.

*William J. Broad contributed reporting from New York.*

—This article was originally published on December 14, 2010
Zimbabwe: First Lady Sues Over Cable

By CELIA W. DUGGER

President Robert Mugabe’s wife, Grace, has sued The Standard, an independent weekly, for reporting on a State Department cable obtained by WikiLeaks. The cable quoted a mining executive implicating her and the head of the Reserve Bank, Gideon Gono, in illegally profiting from the sale of diamonds mined in eastern Zimbabwe. Through her lawyer, she called the report false and demanded damages of $15 million, The Herald, a newspaper controlled by Mr. Mugabe, reported Thursday.

—This article was originally published on December 16, 2010
U.S. Sends Warning to People Named in Cable Leaks

By MARK LANDLER and SCOTT SHANE
WASHINGTON — The State Department is warning hundreds of human rights activists, foreign government officials and businesspeople identified in leaked diplomatic cables of potential threats to their safety and has moved a handful of them to safer locations, administration officials said Thursday.

The operation, which involves a team of 30 in Washington and embassies from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, reflects the administration’s fear that the disclosure of cables obtained by the organization WikiLeaks has damaged American interests by exposing foreigners who supply valuable information to the United States.

Administration officials said they were not aware of anyone who has been attacked or imprisoned as a direct result of information in the 2,700 cables that have been made public to date by WikiLeaks, The New York Times and several other publications, many with some names removed. But they caution that many dissidents are under constant harassment from their governments, so it is difficult to be certain of the cause of actions against them.

The officials declined to discuss details about people contacted by the State Department in recent weeks, saying only that a few were relocated within their home countries and that a few others were moved abroad.

The State Department is mainly concerned about the cables that have yet to be published or posted on Web sites — nearly 99 percent of the archive of 251,287 cables obtained by WikiLeaks. With cables continuing to trickle out, they said, protecting those identified will be a complex, delicate and long-term undertaking. The State Department said it had combed through a majority of the quarter-million cables and distributed many to embassies for review by diplomats there.

“We feel responsible for doing everything possible to protect these people,” said Michael H. Posner, the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, who is overseeing the effort. “We’re taking it extremely seriously.”

Contrary to the administration’s initial fears, the fallout from the cables on the diplomatic corps itself has been manageable. The most visible casualty so far could be Gene A. Cretz, the ambassador to Libya, who was recalled from his post last month after his name appeared on a cable describing peculiar personal habits of the Libyan leader, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi. While no decision has been made on Mr. Cretz’s future, officials said he was unlikely to return to Tripoli. In addition, one midlevel diplomat has been moved from his post in an undisclosed country.

But other senior diplomats initially considered at risk — for example, the ambassador to Russia, John R. Beyrle, whose name was on cables critical of Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin — appeared to have weathered the disclosures.

There is anecdotal evidence that the disclosure of the cables has chilled daily
contacts between human rights activists and diplomats. An American diplomat in Central Asia said recently that one Iranian contact, who met him on periodic trips outside Iran, told him he would no longer speak to him. Sarah Holewinski, executive director of the Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict, said people in Afghanistan and Pakistan had become more reluctant to speak to human rights investigators for fear that what they said might be made public.

WikiLeaks came under fire from human rights organizations last July, after it released a large number of documents about the war in Afghanistan without removing the names of Afghan citizens who had assisted the American military. When it later released documents about the Iraq war, the group stripped names from the documents.

A Pentagon spokesman, Maj. Chris Perrine, said Thursday that the military was not aware of any confirmed case of harm to anyone as a result of being named in the Afghan war documents. But he noted that the Taliban had said it would study the WikiLeaks documents to punish collaborators with the Americans.

State Department officials believe that a wide range of foreigners who have spoken candidly to American diplomats could be at risk if publicly identified. For example, a businessman who spoke about official corruption, a gay person in a society intolerant of homosexuality or a high-ranking government official who criticized his bosses could face severe reprisals, the officials said.

Human rights advocates share the State Department’s concern that many people could be at risk if cables become public without careful redaction. “There are definitely people named in the cables who would be very much endangered,” said Tom Malinowski, Washington director for Human Rights Watch.

In one case, Mr. Malinowski said, the State Department asked Human Rights Watch to inform a person in a Middle Eastern country that his exchanges with American diplomats had been reported in a cable.

In addition to The Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, El País and Der Spiegel have had the entire cable database for several months. The Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten said last month that it had obtained the entire collection, and newspapers in several other countries have obtained a selection of cables relating to their regions.

WikiLeaks’s founder, Julian Assange, has said the group will continue to release additional cables on its own Web site as well, though to date it has moved cautiously and has reproduced the redactions made by newspapers publishing the cables.

Government officials are also worried that foreign intelligence services may be trying to acquire the cable collection, a development that would heighten concerns about the safety of those named in the documents.

For human rights activists in this country, disclosures by WikiLeaks, which was founded in 2006, have been a decidedly mixed development. Amnesty International gave WikiLeaks an award in 2009 for its role in revealing human rights violations in Kenya. Human Rights Watch wrote to President Obama last month to urge the administration not to pursue a prosecution of WikiLeaks or Mr. Assange.
But they are concerned that the cables could inflict their own kind of collateral damage, either by endangering diplomats’ sources or discouraging witnesses and victims of abuses from speaking to foreign supporters.

Sam Zarifi, director of Amnesty International’s operations in Asia, said the cables had provided valuable “empirical information” on abuses in several countries. “This is a new way to distribute information,” Mr. Zarifi said. “We just want to make sure it has the same safeguards as traditional journalism.”

—This article was originally published on January 6, 2011
IV. The War Logs

An archive of classified military documents offers an unvarnished view of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
Marines fired from a hill in July 2010 during a battle to clear militants from Helmand Province in Afghanistan.
OVERVIEWS
View Is Bleaker Than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan
The Iraq Archive: The Strands of a War
WHAT THE WAR LOGS TOLD US
Pakistan Aids Insurgency in Afghanistan, Reports Assert
Inside the Fog of War: Reports From the Ground in Afghanistan
Strategic Plans Spawned Bitter End for a Lonely Outpost
Mix of Trust and Despair Helped Turn Tide in Iraq
A Grim Portrait of Civilian Deaths in Iraq
Detainees Fared Worse in Iraqi Hands, Logs Say
Leaked Reports Detail Iran’s Aid for Iraqi Militias
Use of Contractors Added to War’s Chaos in Iraq
Tensions High Along Kurdish-Arab Line
REACTION
Leaks Add to Pressure on White House Over Strategy
U.S. Military Scrutinizes Leaks for Risks to Afghans
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View Is Bleaker Than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan

A six-year archive of classified military documents made public on Sunday offers an unvarnished, ground-level picture of the war in Afghanistan that is in many respects more grim than the official portrayal.

The secret documents, released on the Internet by an organization called WikiLeaks, are a daily diary of an American-led force often starved for resources and attention as it struggled against an insurgency that grew larger, better coordinated and more deadly each year.

The New York Times, the British newspaper The Guardian and the German magazine Der Spiegel were given access to the voluminous records several weeks ago on the condition that they not report on the material before Sunday.

The documents — some 92,000 reports spanning parts of two administrations from January 2004 through December 2009 — illustrate in mosaic detail why, after the United States has spent almost $300 billion on the war in Afghanistan, the Taliban are stronger than at any time since 2001.

As the new American commander in Afghanistan, Gen. David H. Petraeus, tries to reverse the lagging war effort, the documents sketch a war hamstrung by an Afghan government, police force and army of questionable loyalty and competence, and by a Pakistani military that appears at best uncooperative and at worst to work from the shadows as an unspoken ally of the very insurgent forces the American-led coalition is trying to defeat.

The material comes to light as Congress and the public grow increasingly skeptical of the deepening involvement in Afghanistan and its chances for success as next year’s deadline to begin withdrawing troops looms.

The archive is a vivid reminder that the Afghan conflict until recently was a second-class war, with money, troops and attention lavished on Iraq while soldiers and Marines lamented that the Afghans they were training were not being paid.

The reports — usually spare summaries but sometimes detailed narratives — shed light on some elements of the war that have been largely hidden from the public eye:

¶ The Taliban have used portable heat-seeking missiles against allied aircraft, a fact that has not been publicly disclosed by the military. This type of weapon helped the Afghan mujahedeen defeat the Soviet occupation in the 1980s.

¶ Secret commando units like Task Force 373 — a classified group of Army and Navy special operatives — work from a “capture/kill list” of about 70 top insurgent commanders. These missions, which have been stepped up under the Obama administration, claim notable successes, but have sometimes gone wrong, killing civilians and stoking Afghan resentment.

¶ The military employs more and more drone aircraft to survey the battlefield and strike targets in Afghanistan, although their performance is less impressive than officially
portrayed. Some crash or collide, forcing American troops to undertake risky retrieval missions before the Taliban can claim the drone’s weaponry.

The Central Intelligence Agency has expanded paramilitary operations inside Afghanistan. The units launch ambushes, order airstrikes and conduct night raids. From 2001 to 2008, the C.I.A. paid the budget of Afghanistan’s spy agency and ran it as a virtual subsidiary.

Over all, the documents do not contradict official accounts of the war. But in some cases the documents show that the American military made misleading public statements — attributing the downing of a helicopter to conventional weapons instead of heat-seeking missiles or giving Afghans credit for missions carried out by Special Operations commandos.

White House officials vigorously denied that the Obama administration had presented a misleading portrait of the war in Afghanistan.

“On Dec. 1, 2009, President Obama announced a new strategy with a substantial increase in resources for Afghanistan, and increased focus on Al Qaeda and Taliban safe-havens in Pakistan, precisely because of the grave situation that had developed over several years,” said Gen. James L. Jones, White House national security adviser, in a statement released Sunday.

“We know that serious challenges lie ahead, but if Afghanistan is permitted to slide backwards, we will again face a threat from violent extremist groups like Al Qaeda who will have more space to plot and train,” the statement said.

General Jones also decried the decision by WikiLeaks to make the documents public, saying that the United States “strongly condemns the disclosure of classified information by individuals and organizations which could put the lives of Americans and our partners at risk, and threaten our national security.”

“WikiLeaks made no effort to contact us about these documents – the United States government learned from news organizations that these documents would be posted,” General Jones said.

The archive is clearly an incomplete record of the war. It is missing many references to seminal events and does not include more highly classified information. The documents also do not cover events in 2010, when the influx of more troops into Afghanistan began and a new counterinsurgency strategy took hold.

They suggest that the military’s internal assessments of the prospects for winning over the Afghan public, especially in the early days, were often optimistic, even naïve.

There are fleeting — even taunting — reminders of how the war began in the occasional references to the elusive Osama bin Laden. In some reports he is said to be attending meetings in Quetta, Pakistan. His money man is said to be flying from Iran to North Korea to buy weapons. Mr. bin Laden has supposedly ordered a suicide attack against the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai. These reports all seem secondhand at best.

—This article was originally published on July 25, 2010

OTHER RELATED WAR LOGS
“Taliban Tactics”
The Iraq Archive: The Strands of a War

A huge trove of secret field reports from the battlegrounds of Iraq sheds new light on the war, including such fraught subjects as civilian deaths, detainee abuse and the involvement of Iran.

The secret archive is the second such cache obtained by the independent organization WikiLeaks and made available to several news organizations. Like the first release, some 77,000 reports covering six years of the war in Afghanistan, the Iraq documents provide no earthshaking revelations, but they offer insight, texture and context from the people actually fighting the war.

A close analysis of the 391,832 documents helps illuminate several important aspects of this war:

¶The war in Iraq spawned a reliance on private contractors on a scale not well recognized at the time and previously unknown in American wars. The documents describe an outsourcing of combat and other duties once performed by soldiers that grew and spread to Afghanistan to the point that there are more contractors there than soldiers.

¶The documents suggest that the so-called surge worked not only because the American military committed to more troops and a new strategy but because Iraqis themselves, exhausted by years of bloody war, were ready for it. The conditions, the documents suggest, may not be repeatable in the still intensifying war in Afghanistan.

¶The deaths of Iraqi civilians — at the hands mainly of other Iraqis, but also of the American military — appear to be greater than the numbers made public by the United States during the Bush administration.

¶While the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by Americans, particularly at the Abu Ghraib prison, shocked the American public and much of the world, the documents paint an even more lurid picture of abuse by America’s Iraqi allies — a brutality from which the Americans at times averted their eyes.

¶Iran’s military, more than has been generally understood, intervened aggressively in support of Shiite combatants, offering weapons, training and sanctuary and in a few instances directly engaging American troops.

The Iraqi documents were made available to The Times, the British newspaper The Guardian, the French newspaper Le Monde and the German magazine Der Spiegel on the condition that they be embargoed until now. WikiLeaks has never stated where it obtained the information, although an American Army intelligence analyst, Pfc. Bradley Manning, has been arrested and accused of being a source of classified material.

As it did with the Afghan war logs, The Times has redacted or withheld any documents that would put lives in danger or jeopardize continuing military operations. Names of Iraqi informants, for example, have not been disclosed. WikiLeaks said that it has also employed teams of editors to scrub the material for posting on its Web site.

WikiLeaks has been under strong pressure from the United States and the
governments of other countries but is also fraying internally, in part because of a decision to post many of the Afghan documents without removing the names of informants, putting their lives in danger. A profile of WikiLeaks’s contentious founder, Julian Assange, appears here.

The New York Times told the Pentagon which specific documents it planned to post and showed how they had been redacted. The Pentagon said it would have preferred that The Times not publish any classified materials but did not propose any cuts. Geoff Morrell, the Defense Department press secretary, strongly condemned both WikiLeaks and the release of the Iraq documents.

“We deplore WikiLeaks for inducing individuals to break the law, leak classified documents and then cavalierly share that secret information with the world, including our enemies,” he said.

“We know terrorist organizations have been mining the leaked Afghan documents for information to use against us and this Iraq leak is more than four times as large. By disclosing such sensitive information, WikiLeaks continues to put at risk the lives of our troops, their coalition partners and those Iraqis and Afghans working with us.”

—This article was originally published on October 22, 2010
Pakistan Aids Insurgency in Afghanistan, Reports Assert

Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul, center, the former head of Pakistan’s Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence.

By MARK MAZZETTI, JANE PERLEZ, ERIC SCHMITT and ANDREW W. LEHREN

Americans fighting the war in Afghanistan have long harbored strong suspicions that Pakistan’s military spy service has guided the Afghan insurgency with a hidden hand, even as Pakistan receives more than $1 billion a year from Washington for its help combating the militants, according to a trove of secret military field reports made public Sunday.

The documents, made available by an organization called WikiLeaks, suggest that Pakistan, an ostensible ally of the United States, allows representatives of its spy service to meet directly with the Taliban in secret strategy sessions to organize networks of militant groups that fight against American soldiers in Afghanistan, and even hatch plots to assassinate Afghan leaders.

Taken together, the reports indicate that American soldiers on the ground are inundated with accounts of a network of Pakistani assets and collaborators that runs from the Pakistani tribal belt along the Afghan border, through southern Afghanistan, and all the way to the capital, Kabul.
Much of the information — raw intelligence and threat assessments gathered from the field in Afghanistan — cannot be verified and likely comes from sources aligned with Afghan intelligence, which considers Pakistan an enemy, and paid informants. Some describe plots for attacks that do not appear to have taken place.

But many of the reports rely on sources that the military rated as reliable.

While current and former American officials interviewed could not corroborate individual reports, they said that the portrait of the spy agency’s collaboration with the Afghan insurgency was broadly consistent with other classified intelligence.

Some of the reports describe Pakistani intelligence working alongside Al Qaeda to plan attacks. Experts cautioned that although Pakistan’s militant groups and Al Qaeda work together, directly linking the Pakistani spy agency, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI, with Al Qaeda is difficult.

The records also contain firsthand accounts of American anger at Pakistan’s unwillingness to confront insurgents who launched attacks near Pakistani border posts, moved openly by the truckload across the frontier, and retreated to Pakistani territory for safety.

The behind-the-scenes frustrations of soldiers on the ground and glimpses of what appear to be Pakistani skullduggery contrast sharply with the frequently rosy public pronouncements of Pakistan as an ally by American officials, looking to sustain a drone campaign over parts of Pakistani territory to strike at Qaeda havens. Administration officials also want to keep nuclear-armed Pakistan on their side to safeguard NATO supplies flowing on routes that cross Pakistan to Afghanistan.

This month, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in one of the frequent visits by American officials to Islamabad, announced $500 million in assistance and called the United States and Pakistan “partners joined in common cause.”

The reports suggest, however, that the Pakistani military has acted as both ally and enemy, as its spy agency runs what American officials have long suspected is a double game — appeasing certain American demands for cooperation while angling to exert influence in Afghanistan through many of the same insurgent networks that the Americans are fighting to eliminate.

Behind the scenes, both Bush and Obama administration officials as well as top American commanders have confronted top Pakistani military officers with accusations of ISI complicity in attacks in Afghanistan, and even presented top Pakistani officials with lists of ISI and military operatives believed to be working with militants.

Benjamin Rhodes, deputy national security adviser for strategic communications, said that Pakistan had been an important ally in the battle against militant groups, and that Pakistani soldiers and intelligence officials had worked alongside the United States to capture or kill Qaeda and Taliban leaders.

Still, he said that the “status quo is not acceptable,” and that the havens for militants in Pakistan “pose an intolerable threat” that Pakistan must do more to address.

“The Pakistani government — and Pakistan’s military and intelligence services —
must continue their strategic shift against violent extremist groups within their borders,” he said. American military support to Pakistan would continue, he said.

Several Congressional officials said that despite repeated requests over the years for information about Pakistani support for militant groups, they usually receive vague and inconclusive briefings from the Pentagon and C.I.A.

Nonetheless, senior lawmakers say they have no doubt that Pakistan is aiding insurgent groups. “The burden of proof is on the government of Pakistan and the ISI to show they don’t have ongoing contacts,” said Senator Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat on the Armed Services Committee who visited Pakistan this month and said he and Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, the committee chairman, confronted Pakistan’s prime minister, Yousaf Raza Gilani, yet again over the allegations.

Such accusations are usually met with angry denials, particularly by the Pakistani military, which insists that the ISI severed its remaining ties to the groups years ago. An ISI spokesman in Islamabad said Sunday that the agency would have no comment until it saw the documents. Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States, Husain Haqqani, said, “The documents circulated by WikiLeaks do not reflect the current on-ground realities.”

The man the United States has depended on for cooperation in fighting the militants and who holds most power in Pakistan, the head of the army, Gen. Parvez Ashfaq Kayani, ran the ISI from 2004 to 2007, a period from which many of the reports are drawn. American officials have frequently praised General Kayani for what they say are his efforts to purge the military of officers with ties to militants.

American officials have described Pakistan’s spy service as a rigidly hierarchical organization that has little tolerance for “rogue” activity. But Pakistani military officials give the spy service’s “S Wing” — which runs external operations against the Afghan government and India — broad autonomy, a buffer that allows top military officials deniability.

American officials have rarely uncovered definitive evidence of direct ISI involvement in a major attack. But in July 2008, the C.I.A.’s deputy director, Stephen R. Kappes, confronted Pakistani officials with evidence that the ISI helped plan the deadly suicide bombing of India’s Embassy in Kabul.

From the current trove, one report shows that Polish intelligence warned of a complex attack against the Indian Embassy a week before that bombing, though the attackers and their methods differed. The ISI was not named in the report warning of the attack.

Another, dated August 2008, identifies a colonel in the ISI plotting with a Taliban official to assassinate President Hamid Karzai. The report says there was no information about how or when this would be carried out. The account could not be verified.

**General Linked to Militants**

Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul ran the ISI from 1987 to 1989, a time when Pakistani spies and
the C.I.A. joined forces to run guns and money to Afghan militias who were battling Soviet troops in Afghanistan. After the fighting stopped, he maintained his contacts with the former mujahedeen, who would eventually transform themselves into the Taliban.

And more than two decades later, it appears that General Gul is still at work. The documents indicate that he has worked tirelessly to reactivate his old networks, employing familiar allies like Jaluluddin Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whose networks of thousands of fighters are responsible for waves of violence in Afghanistan.

General Gul is mentioned so many times in the reports, if they are to be believed, that it seems unlikely that Pakistan’s current military and intelligence officials could not know of at least some of his wide-ranging activities.

For example, one intelligence report describes him meeting with a group of militants in Wana, the capital of South Waziristan, in January 2009. There, he met with three senior Afghan insurgent commanders and three “older” Arab men, presumably representatives of Al Qaeda, who the report suggests were important “because they had a large security contingent with them.”

The gathering was designed to hatch a plan to avenge the death of “Zamarai,” the nom de guerre of Osama al-Kini, who had been killed days earlier by a C.I.A. drone attack. Mr. Kini had directed Qaeda operations in Pakistan and had spearheaded some of the group’s most devastating attacks.

The plot hatched in Wana that day, according to the report, involved driving a dark blue Mazda truck rigged with explosives from South Waziristan to Afghanistan’s Paktika Province, a route well known to be used by the insurgents to move weapons, suicide bombers and fighters from Pakistan.

In a show of strength, the Taliban leaders approved a plan to send 50 Arab and 50 Waziri fighters to Ghazni Province in Afghanistan, the report said.

General Gul urged the Taliban commanders to focus their operations inside Afghanistan in exchange for Pakistan turning “a blind eye” to their presence in Pakistan’s tribal areas. It was unclear whether the attack was ever executed.

The United States has pushed the United Nations to put General Gul on a list of international terrorists, and top American officials said they believed he was an important link between active-duty Pakistani officers and militant groups.

General Gul, who says he is retired and lives on his pension, dismissed the allegations as “absolute nonsense,” speaking by telephone from his home in Rawalpindi, where the Pakistani Army keeps its headquarters. “I have had no hand in it.” He added, “American intelligence is pulling cotton wool over your eyes.”

Senior Pakistani officials consistently deny that General Gul still works at the ISI’s behest, though several years ago, after mounting American complaints, Pakistan’s president at the time, Pervez Musharraf, was forced publicly to acknowledge the possibility that former ISI officials were assisting the Afghan insurgency. Despite his denials, General Gul keeps close ties to his former employers. When a reporter visited General Gul this spring for an interview at his home, the former spy master canceled the
appointment. According to his son, he had to attend meetings at army headquarters.

**Suicide Bomber Network**

The reports also chronicle efforts by ISI officers to run the networks of suicide bombers that emerged as a sudden, terrible force in Afghanistan in 2006.

The detailed reports indicate that American officials had a relatively clear understanding of how the suicide networks presumably functioned, even if some of the threats did not materialize. It is impossible to know why the attacks never came off — either they were thwarted, the attackers shifted targets, or the reports were deliberately planted as Taliban disinformation.

One report, from Dec. 18, 2006, describes a cyclical process to develop the suicide bombers. First, the suicide attacker is recruited and trained in Pakistan. Then, reconnaissance and operational planning gets under way, including scouting to find a place for “hosting” the suicide bomber near the target before carrying out the attack. The network, it says, receives help from the Afghan police and the Ministry of Interior.

In many cases, the reports are complete with names and ages of bombers, as well as license plate numbers, but the Americans gathering the intelligence struggle to accurately portray many other details, introducing sometimes comical renderings of places and Taliban commanders.

In one case, a report rated by the American military as credible states that a gray Toyota Corolla had been loaded with explosives between the Afghan border and Landik Hotel, in Pakistan, apparently a mangled reference to Landi Kotal, in Pakistan’s tribal areas. The target of the plot, however, is a real hotel in downtown Kabul, the Ariana.

“It is likely that ISI may be involved as supporter of this attack,” reads a comment in the report.

Several of the reports describe current and former ISI operatives, including General Gul, visiting madrasas near the city of Peshawar, a gateway to the tribal areas, to recruit new fodder for suicide bombings.

One report, labeled a “real threat warning” because of its detail and the reliability of its source, described how commanders of Mr. Hekmatyar’s insurgent group, Hezb-i-Islami, ordered the delivery of a suicide bomber from the Hashimiye madrasa, run by Afghans.

The boy was to be used in an attack on American or NATO vehicles in Kabul during the Muslim Festival of Sacrifices that opened Dec. 31, 2006. According to the report, the boy was taken to the Afghan city of Jalalabad to buy a car for the bombing, and was later brought to Kabul. It was unclear whether the attack took place.

The documents indicate that these types of activities continued throughout last year. From July to October 2009, nine threat reports detailed movements by suicide bombers from Pakistan into populated areas of Afghanistan, including Kandahar, Kunduz and Kabul.
Some of the bombers were sent to disrupt Afghanistan’s presidential elections, held last August. In other instances, American intelligence learned that the Haqqani network sent bombers at the ISI’s behest to strike Indian officials, development workers and engineers in Afghanistan. Other plots were aimed at the Afghan government.

Sometimes the intelligence documents twin seemingly credible detail with plots that seem fantastical or utterly implausible assertions. For instance, one report describes an ISI plan to use a remote-controlled bomb disguised as a golden Koran to assassinate Afghan government officials. Another report documents an alleged plot by the ISI and Taliban to ship poisoned alcoholic beverages to Afghanistan to kill American troops.

But the reports also charge that the ISI directly helped organize Taliban offensives at key junctures of the war. On June 19, 2006, ISI operatives allegedly met with the Taliban leaders in Quetta, the city in southern Pakistan where American and other Western officials have long believed top Taliban leaders have been given refuge by the Pakistani authorities. At the meeting, according to the report, they pressed the Taliban to mount attacks on Maruf, a district of Kandahar that lies along the Pakistani border.

The planned offensive would be carried out primarily by Arabs and Pakistanis, the report said, and a Taliban commander, “Akhtar Mansoor,” warned that the men should be prepared for heavy losses. “The foreigners agreed to this operation and have assembled 20 4x4 trucks to carry the fighters into areas in question,” it said.

While the specifics about the foreign fighters and the ISI are difficult to verify, the Taliban did indeed mount an offensive to seize control in Maruf in 2006.

Afghan government officials and Taliban fighters have widely acknowledged that the offensive was led by the Taliban commander Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour, who was then the Taliban shadow governor of Kandahar.

Mullah Mansour tried to claw out a base for himself inside Afghanistan, but just as the report quotes him predicting, the Taliban suffered heavy losses and eventually pulled back.

Another report goes on to describe detailed plans for a large-scale assault, timed for September 2007, aimed at the American forward operating base in Managi, in Kunar Province.

“It will be a five-pronged attack consisting of 83-millimeter artillery, rockets, foot soldiers, and multiple suicide bombers,” it says.

It is not clear that the attack ever came off, but its planning foreshadowed another, seminal attack that came months later, in July 2008. At that time, about 200 Taliban insurgents nearly overran an American base in Wanat, in Nuristan, killing nine American soldiers. For the Americans, it was one of the highest single-day tolls of the war.

**Tensions With Pakistan**

The flood of reports of Pakistani complicity in the insurgency has at times led to barely disguised tensions between American and Pakistani officers on the ground.
Meetings at border outposts set up to develop common strategies to seal the frontier and disrupt Taliban movements reveal deep distrust among the Americans of their Pakistani counterparts.

On Feb. 7, 2007, American officers met with Pakistani troops on a dry riverbed to discuss the borderlands surrounding Afghanistan’s Khost Province.

According to notes from the meeting, the Pakistanis portrayed their soldiers as conducting around-the-clock patrols. Asked if he expected a violent spring, a man identified in the report as Lt. Col. Bilal, the Pakistani officer in charge, said no. His troops were in firm control.

The Americans were incredulous. Their record noted that there had been a 300 percent increase in militant activity in Khost before the meeting.

“This comment alone shows how disconnected this particular group of leadership is from what is going on in reality,” the notes said.

The Pakistanis told the Americans to contact them if they spotted insurgent activity along the border. “I doubt this would do any good,” the American author of the report wrote, “because PAKMIL/ISI is likely involved with the border crossings.” “PAKMIL” refers to the Pakistani military.

A year earlier, the Americans became so frustrated at the increase in roadside bombs in Afghanistan that they hand-delivered folders with names, locations, aerial photographs and map coordinates to help the Pakistani military hunt down the militants the Americans believed were responsible.

Nothing happened, wrote Col. Barry Shapiro, an American military liaison officer with experience in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, after an Oct. 13, 2006, meeting. “Despite the number of reports and information detailing the concerns,” Colonel Shapiro wrote, “we continue to see no change in the cross-border activity and continue to see little to no initiative along the PAK border” by Pakistan troops. The Pakistani Army “will only react when asked to do so by U.S. forces,” he concluded.

*Carlotta Gall contributed reporting.*

---This article was originally published on July 25, 2010
Inside the Fog of War: Reports From the Ground in Afghanistan

The reports portray a resilient, canny insurgency that has bled American forces through a war of small cuts. The insurgents set the war’s pace, usually fighting on ground of their own choosing and then slipping away.

Sabotage and trickery have been weapons every bit as potent as small arms, mortars or suicide bombers. So has Taliban intimidation of Afghan officials and civilians — applied with pinpoint pressure through threats, charm, violence, money, religious fervor and populist appeals.

FEB. 19, 2008 | ZABUL PROVINCE
Intelligence Summary: Officer Threatened

An Afghan National Army brigade commander working in southern Afghanistan received a phone call from a Taliban mullah named Ezat, one brief report said. “Mullah Ezat told the ANA CDR to surrender and offered him $100,000(US) to quit working for the Afghan Army,” the report said. “Ezat also stated that he knows where the ANA CDR is from and knows his family.”

MAY 9, 2009 | KUNAR PROVINCE
Intelligence Summary: Taliban Recruiter

A Taliban commander, Mullah Juma Khan, delivered a eulogy at the funeral of a slain insurgent. He played on the crowd’s emotions, according to the report: “Juma cried while telling the people an unnamed woman and her baby were killed while the woman was nursing the baby.” Finally he made his pitch: “Juma then told the people they needed to be angry at CF [Coalition Force] and ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] for causing this tragedy” and “invited everyone who wants to fight to join the fighters who traveled with him.”

The insurgents use a network of spies, double agents, collaborators and informers — anything to undercut coalition forces and the effort to build a credible and effective Afghan government capable of delivering security and services.

The reports repeatedly describe instances when the insurgents have been seen wearing government uniforms, and other times when they have roamed the country or appeared for battle in the very Ford Ranger pickup trucks that the United States had provided the Afghan Army and police force.

NOV. 20, 2006 | KABUL
Incident Report: Insurgent Subterfuge

After capturing four pickup trucks from the Afghan National Army, the Taliban took them to Kabul to be used in suicide bombings. “They intend to use the pick-up trucks to target ANA compounds, ISAF and GOA convoys, as well as ranking GOA and ISAF
officials,” said a report, referring to coalition forces and the government of Afghanistan. “The four trucks were also accompanied by an unknown quantity of ANA uniforms to facilitate carrying out the attacks.”

The Taliban’s use of heat-seeking missiles has not been publicly disclosed — indeed, the military has issued statements that these internal records contradict.

In the form known as a Stinger, such weapons were provided to a previous generation of Afghan insurgents by the United States, and helped drive out the Soviets. The reports suggest that the Taliban’s use of these missiles has been neither common nor especially effective; usually the missiles missed.

MAY 30, 2007 | HELMAND PROVINCE
Incident Report: Downed Helicopter

An American CH-47 transport helicopter was struck by what witnesses described as a portable heat-seeking surface-to-air missile after taking off from a landing zone.

The helicopter, the initial report said, “was engaged and struck with a Missile ... shortly after crossing over the Helmand River. The missile struck the aircraft in the left engine. The impact of the missile projected the aft end of the aircraft up as it burst into flames followed immediately by a nose dive into the crash site with no survivors.”

The crash killed seven soldiers: five Americans, a Briton and a Canadian.

Multiple witnesses saw a smoke trail behind the missile as it rushed toward the helicopter. The smoke trail was an important indicator. Rocket-propelled grenades do not leave them. Heat-seeking missiles do. The crew of other helicopters reported the downing as a surface-to-air missile strike. But that was not what a NATO spokesman told Reuters.

“Clearly, there were enemy fighters in the area,” said the spokesman, Maj. John Thomas. “It’s not impossible for small-arms fire to bring down a helicopter.”

The reports paint a disheartening picture of the Afghan police and soldiers at the center of the American exit strategy.

The Pentagon is spending billions to train the Afghan forces to secure the country. But the police have proved to be an especially risky investment and are often described as distrusted, even loathed, by Afghan civilians. The reports recount episodes of police brutality, corruption petty and large, extortion and kidnapping. Some police officers defect to the Taliban. Others are accused of collaborating with insurgents, arms smugglers and highway bandits. Afghan police officers defect with trucks or weapons, items captured during successful ambushes or raids.

MARCH 10, 2008 | PAKTIA PROVINCE
Investigation Report: Extortion by the Police

This report captured the circular and frustrating effort by an American investigator to stop Afghan police officers at a checkpoint from extorting payments from motorists. After a line of drivers described how they were pressed to pay bribes, the American investigator and the local police detained the accused checkpoint police officers.

“While waiting,” the investigator wrote, “I asked the seven patrolmen we detained to sit and relax while we sorted through a problem without ever mentioning why they were being detained. Three of the patrolmen responded by saying that they had only taken money from the truck drivers to buy fuel for their generator.”

Two days later when the American followed up, he was told by police officers that the case had been dropped because the witness reports had all been lost.

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One report documented the detention of a military base worker trying to leave the base with GPS units hidden under his clothes and taped to his leg. Another described the case of a police chief in Zurmat, in Paktia Province, who was accused of falsely reporting that his officers had been in a firefight so he could receive thousands of rounds of new ammunition, which he sold in a bazaar.

Coalition trainers report that episodes of cruelty by the Afghan police undermine the effort to build a credible security force to take over when the allies leave.

OCT. 11, 2009 | BALKH PROVINCE

Incident Report: Brutal Police Chief

This report began with an account of Afghan soldiers and police officers harassing and beating local civilians for refusing to cooperate in a search. It then related the story of a district police commander who forced himself on a 16-year-old girl. When a civilian complained, the report continued, “The district commander ordered his bodyguard to open fire on the AC [Afghan civilian]. The bodyguard refused, at which time the district commander shot [the bodyguard] in front of the AC.”

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Rivalries and friction between the largest Afghan security services — the police and the army — are evident in a number of reports. Sometimes the tensions erupted in outright clashes, as was recorded in the following report from last December that was described as an “enemy action.” The “enemy” in this case was the Afghan National Security Force.

DEC. 4, 2009 | ORUZGAN PROVINCE

Incident Report: Police and Army Rivalry

A car accident turned deadly when an argument broke out between the police and the Afghan National Army. “The argument escalated and ANA & ANP started to shoot at
“each other,” a report said.

An Afghan soldier and three Afghan police officers were wounded in the shootout. One civilian was killed and six others were wounded by gunfire.

One sign of the weakness of the police is that in places they have been replaced by tribal warlords who are charged — informally but surely — with providing the security the government cannot. Often the warlords operate above the law.

NOV. 22, 2009 | KANDAHAR PROVINCE
Incident Report: Illegal Checkpoint

A private security convoy, ferrying fuel from Kandahar to Oruzgan, was stopped by what was thought to be 100 insurgents armed with assault rifles and PK machine guns, a report said.

It turned out the convoy had been halted by “the local Chief of Police,” who was “demanding $2000-$3000 per truck” as a kind of toll. The chief, said the report, from NATO headquarters in Southern Afghanistan, “states he needs the money to run his operation.”

The chief was not actually a police chief. He was Matiullah Khan, a warlord and an American-backed ally of President Karzai who was arguably Oruzgan’s most powerful man. He had a contract, the Ministry of Interior said, to protect the road so NATO’s supply convoys could drive on it, but he had apparently decided to extort money from the convoys himself.

Late in the day, Mr. Matiullah, after many interventions, changed his mind. The report said that friendly forces “report that the COMPASS convoy is moving again and did not pay the fee required.”

The documents show how the best intentions of Americans to help rebuild Afghanistan through provincial reconstruction teams ran up against a bewildering array of problems — from corruption to cultural misunderstandings — as they tried to win over the public by helping repair dams and bridges, build schools and train local authorities.

A series of reports from 2005 to 2008 chart the frustrations of one of the first such teams, assigned to Gardez, in Paktia Province.

NOV. 28, 2006 | PAKTIA PROVINCE
Civil Affairs Report: Orphanage Opens

An American civil affairs officer could barely contain her enthusiasm as she spoke at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new orphanage, built with money from the American military.

The officer said a friend had given her a leather jacket to present to “someone
special,” the report noted. She chose the orphanage’s director. “The commander stated that she could think of no one more deserving then someone who cared for orphans,” it said.

The civil affairs team handed out blankets, coats, scarves and toys. The governor even gave money from his own pocket. “All speeches were very positive,” the report concluded.

DECEMBER 20, 2006 | PAKTIA PROVINCE
Civil Affairs Report: Not Many Orphans

The team dropped by to check on the orphanage. “We found very few orphans living there and could not find most of the HA [humanitarian assistance] we had given them,” the report noted.

The team raised the issue with the governor of Paktia, who said he was also concerned and suspected that the money he had donated had not reached the children. He visited the orphanage himself. Only 30 children were there; the director had claimed to have 102.

OCTOBER 16, 2007 | PAKTIA PROVINCE
Civil Affairs Report: An Empty Orphanage

Nearly a year after the opening of the orphanage, the Americans returned for a visit. “There are currently no orphans at the facility due to the Holiday. (Note: orphans are defined as having no father, but may still have mother and a family structure that will have them home for holidays.)”

FEBRUARY 25, 2007 | PAKTIA PROVINCE
District Report: Lack of Resources

As the Taliban insurgency strengthened, the lack of a government presence in the more remote districts — and the government’s inability to provide security or resources even to its own officials — is evident in the reports.

An official from Dand Wa Patan, a small sliver of a district along the border with Pakistan, so urgently wanted to talk to the members of the American team that he traveled three and a half hours by taxi — he had no car — to meet them.

“He explained that the enemy had changed their tactics in the area and were no longer fighting from the mountains, no longer sending rockets toward his compound and other areas,” the report noted. “He stated that the enemy focus was on direct action and that his family was a primary target.”

Ten days earlier the Taliban crept up to the wall of his family compound and blew up one of the security towers, the report said. His son lost his legs in the explosion.

He pleaded for more police officers, weapons and ammunition. He also wanted a car so he could drive around the district he was supposed to oversee.

But the Americans’ situation was not much better. For months the reports show
how a third — or even a half — of the team’s vehicles were out of service, awaiting spare parts.

**NOV. 15, 2006 | PAKTIA PROVINCE**

Civil Affairs Report: Local Corruption

For a while the civil affairs team worked closely with the provincial governor, described as “very charismatic.” Yet both he and the team are hampered by corrupt, negligent and antagonistic officials.

The provincial chief of police is described in one report as “the axel of corruption.”

“He makes every effort to openly and blatantly take money from the ANP troopers and the officers,” one sympathetic officer told the Americans.

Other officers are more clever. One forged rosters, to collect pay for imaginary police officers. A second set up illegal checkpoints to collects tolls around Gardez. Still another stole food and uniforms, leaving his soldiers underfed and ill equipped for the winter.

The governor, meanwhile, was all but trapped. Such animosity developed between him and a senior security official that the governor could not leave his office for weeks at a time, fearing for his life. Finally, the corrupt officials were replaced. But it took months.

**SEPT. 24, 2007 | PAKTIA PROVINCE**

Civil Affairs Report: The Cost of Corruption

Their meetings with Afghan district officials gave the American civil affairs officers unique insights into local opinions. Sometimes, the Afghan officials were brutally honest in their assessments.

In one case, provincial council officials visited the Americans at their base in Gardez to report threats — the Taliban had tossed a grenade into their office compound and were prowling the hills. Then the officials began a tirade.

“The people of Afghanistan keep loosing their trust in the government because of the high amount of corrupted government officials,” the report quoted them as saying. “The general view of the Afghans is that the current government is worst than the Taliban.”

“The corrupted government officials are a new concept brought to Afghanistan by the AMERICANS,” the oldest member of the group told the civil affairs team.

In conclusion, the civil affairs officer who wrote the report warned, “The people will support the Anti-Coalition forces and the security condition will degenerate.” He recommended a public information program to educate Afghans about democracy.

The reports also evoke the rivalries and tensions that swirl within the presidential palace between President Karzai’s circle and the warlords.
Intelligence Summary: Political Intrigue

In a short but heated meeting at the presidential palace, the Kabul police chief, Brig. Gen. Mir Amanullah Gozar, angrily refuted accusations made publicly by Jamil Karzai that he was corrupt and lacked professional experience. The report of the meeting identified Jamil Karzai as the president’s brother; he is in fact a cousin.

General Gozar “said that if Jamil were not the president’s Brother he would kidnap, torture, and kill him,” the report said. He added that he was aware of plans by the American-led coalition to remove him from his post.

He threatened the president, saying that if he were replaced he would reveal “allegations about Karzai having been a drug trader and supporter of the Pakistan-led insurgency in Afghanistan,” presumably a reference to Mr. Karzai’s former links with the Taliban.

Incident by incident, the reports resemble a police blotter of the myriad ways Afghan civilians were killed — not just in airstrikes but in ones and twos — in shootings on the roads or in the villages, in misunderstandings or in a cross-fire, or in chaotic moments when Afghan drivers ventured too close to convoys and checkpoints.

The dead, the reports repeatedly indicate, were not suicide bombers or insurgents, and many of the cases were not reported to the public at the time. The toll of the war — reflected in mounting civilian casualties — left the Americans seeking cooperation and support from an Afghan population that grew steadily more exhausted, resentful, fearful and alienated.

From the war’s outset, airstrikes that killed civilians in large numbers seized international attention, including the aerial bombardment of a convoy on its way to attend President Karzai’s inauguration in 2001. An airstrike in Azizabad, in western Afghanistan, killed as many as 92 people in August 2008. In May 2009, another strike killed 147 Afghan civilians.

Incident Report: Mistaken Airstrike

This report, filed about the activities of a Joint Terminal Attack Controller team, which is responsible for communication from the ground and guiding pilots during surveillance missions and airstrikes, offers a glimpse into one of the bloodiest mistakes in 2009.

It began with a report from the police command saying that “2X FUEL TRUCKS WERE STOLEN BY UNK NUMBER OF INS” and that the insurgents planned to cross the Kunduz River with their prizes. It was nighttime, and the river crossing was not illuminated. Soon, the report noted, the “JTAC OBSERVED KDZ RIVER AND REPORTED THAT IT DISCOVERED THE TRUCKS AS WELL AS UP TO 70 INS” at “THE FORD ON THE RIVER. THE TRUCKS WERE STUCK IN THE MUD.” How the
JTAC team was observing the trucks was not clear, but many aircraft have infrared video cameras that can send a live feed to a computer monitor on the ground.

According to the report, a German commander of the provincial reconstruction team “LINKED UP WITH JTAC AND, AFTER ENSURING THAT NO CIVILIANS WERE IN THE VICINITY,” he “AUTHORIZED AN AIRSTRIKE.” An F-15 then dropped two 500-pound guided bombs. The initial report said that “56X INS KIA [insurgents killed in action] (CONFIRMED) AND 14X INS FLEEING IN NE DIRECTION. THE 2X FUEL TRUCKS WERE ALSO DESTROYED.”

The initial report was wrong. The trucks had been abandoned, and a crowd of civilians milled around them, removing fuel. How the commander and the JTAC had ensured “that no civilians were in the area,” as the report said, was not explained.

The first sign of the mistake documented in the initial report appeared the next day, when another report said that at “0900 hrs International Media reported that US airstrike had killed 60 civilians in Kunduz. The media are reporting that Taliban did steal the trucks and had invited civilians in the area to take fuel.”

The reports show that the smaller incidents were just as insidious and alienating, turning Afghans who had once welcomed Americans as liberators against the war.

MARCH 5, 2007 | GHAZNI PROVINCE
Incident Report: Checkpoint Danger

Afghan police officers shot a local driver who tried to speed through their checkpoint on a country road in Ghazni Province south of Kabul. The police had set up a temporary checkpoint on the highway just outside the main town in the district of Ab Band.

“A car approached the checkpoint at a high rate of speed,” the report said. All the police officers fled the checkpoint except one. As the car passed the checkpoint it knocked down the lone policeman. He fired at the vehicle, apparently thinking that it was a suicide car bomber.

“The driver of the vehicle was killed,” the report said. “No IED [improvised explosive device] was found and vehicle was destroyed.”

The police officer was detained in the provincial capital, Ghazni, and questioned. He was then released. The American mentoring the police concluded in his assessment that the policeman’s use of force was appropriate. Rather than acknowledging the public hostility such episodes often engender, the report found a benefit: it suggested that the shooting would make Afghans take greater care at checkpoints in the future.

“Effects on the populace clearly identify the importance of stopping at checkpoints,” the report concluded.

MARCH 21, 2007 | PAKTIKA PROVINCE
Incident Report: A Deaf Man Is Shot
Members of a C.I.A. paramilitary unit moved into the village of Malekshay in Paktika Province close to the border with Pakistan when they saw an Afghan running away at the sight of their convoy, one report recounted. Members of the unit shot him in the ankle, and medics treated him at the scene. The unit had followed military procedure — first shouting at the man, then firing warning shots and only after that shooting to wound, the report said.

Yet elders in the village told the unit that the man, Shum Khan, was deaf and mute and that he had fled from the convoy out of nervousness. Mr. Khan was “unable to hear the warnings or warning shots. Ran out of fear and confusion,” the report concludes. The unit handed over supplies in compensation.

The reports reveal several instances of allied forces accidentally firing on one another or on Afghan forces in the fog of war, often with tragic consequences.

APRIL 6, 2006 | HELMAND PROVINCE

Incident Report: Friendly Fire

A British Army convoy driving at night in southern Afghanistan suddenly came under small-arms fire. One of the British trucks rolled over. The British troops split into two groups, pulled back from the clash and called in airstrikes from American A-10 attack planes. After several confusing minutes, commanders realized that the Afghan police had attacked the British troops, mistaking them for Taliban fighters. One Afghan police officer was killed and 12 others were wounded.

The shifting tactics of the Americans can be seen as well in the reports, as the war strategy veered from freely using force to trying to minimize civilian casualties. But as the documents make clear, each approach has its frustrations for the American effort.

Strict new rules of engagement, imposed in 2009, minimized the use of airstrikes after some had killed civilians and turned Afghans against the war. But the rules also prompted anger from American troops and their families. The troops felt that their lives were not sufficiently valued because they had to justify every request for air or artillery support, making it easier for the Taliban to fight.

OCT. 1, 2008 | KUNAR PROVINCE

Incident Report: Barrage

In the days when field commanders had a freer hand, an infantry company commander observed an Afghan with a two-way radio who was monitoring the company’s activities. Warning of “IMMINENT THREAT,” the commander said he would “destroy” the man and his equipment — in other words, kill him. A short while later, a 155-millimeter artillery piece at a forward operating base in the nearby Pech Valley...
began firing high-explosive rounds — 24 in all.

NOV. 13, 2009 | HELMAND PROVINCE
Incident Report: Escalation of Force

As the rules tightened, the reports picked up a tone that at times seemed lawyerly. Many make reference, even in pitched fights, to troops using weapons in accordance with “ROE Card A” — which guides actions of self-defense rather than attacks or offensive acts. This report described an Apache helicopter firing warning shots after coming under fire. Its reaction was described as “an escalation of force.”

The helicopter pilots reported that insurgents “engaged with SAF [surface-to-air fire]” and that “INTEL suggested they were going to be fired upon again during their extraction.”

The helicopters “fired 40x 30mm warning shots to deter any further engagement.”

The report included the information that now is common to incident reports in which Western forces fire. “The terrain was considered rurally open and there were no CIV PID IVO [civilians positively identified in the vicinity of] the target within reasonable certainty. There was no damage to infrastructure. BDA [battle damage assessment] recording conducted by AH-64 Gun Tape. No follow up required. The next higher command was consulted. The enemy engaged presented, in the opinion of the ground forces, an imminent threat. Engagement is under ROE Card A. Higher HQ have been informed.”

The reports show in previously unknown detail the omnipresence of drones in Afghanistan, the Air Force’s missile-toting Predators and Reapers that hunt militants. The military’s use of drones in Afghanistan has rapidly expanded in the past few years; the United States Air Force now flies about 20 Predator and Reaper aircraft a day — nearly twice as many as a year ago — over vast stretches of hostile Afghan territory. Allies like Britain and Germany fly their own fleets.

The incident reports chronicle the wide variety of missions these aircraft carry out: taking photographs, scooping up electronic transmissions, relaying images of running battles to field headquarters, attacking militants with bombs and missiles. And they also reveal the extent that armed drones are being used to support American Special Operations missions.

Documents in the Afghan archive capture the strange nature of the drone war in Afghanistan: missile-firing robots killing shovel-wielding insurgents, a remote-controlled war against a low-tech but resilient insurgency.

DEC. 9, 2008 | KANDAHAR PROVINCE
Incident Report: Predator Attack

Early one winter evening in southern Afghanistan, an Air Force Predator drone spotted a group of insurgents suspected of planting roadside bombs along a roadway less
than two miles from Forward Operating Base Hutal, an American outpost.

Unlike the drones the C.I.A. operated covertly across the border in Pakistan, this aircraft was one of nearly a dozen military drones patrolling vast stretches of hostile Afghan territory on any given day.

Within minutes after identifying the militants, the Predator unleashed a Hellfire missile, all but evaporating one of the figures digging in the dark.

When ground troops reached the crater caused by the missile, costing $60,000, all that was left was a shovel and a crowbar.

SEPT. 13, 2009 | BADAKHSHAN PROVINCE
Incident Report: A Lost Drone

Flying over southern Afghanistan on a combat mission, one of the Air Force’s premier armed drones, a Reaper, went rogue.

Equipped with advanced radar and sophisticated cameras, as well as Hellfire missiles and 500-pound bombs, the Reaper had lost its satellite link to a pilot who was remotely steering the drone from a base in the United States.

Again and again, the pilot struggled to regain control of the drone. Again and again, no response. The reports reveal that the military in Afghanistan lost many of the tiny five-pound surveillance drones with names like Raven and Desert Hawk that troops tossed out like model airplanes to peer around the next hill. But they had never before lost one of the Reapers, with its 66-foot wingspan.

As a last resort, commanders ordered an Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jet to shoot down the $13 million aircraft before it soared unguided into neighboring Tajikistan.

Ground controllers picked an unpopulated area over northern Afghanistan and the jet fired a Sidewinder missile, destroying the Reaper’s turbo-prop engine. Suddenly, the satellite link was restored, but it was too late to salvage the flight. At 5:30 a.m., controllers steered it into a remote mountainside for a final fiery landing.

As the Afghanistan war took priority under the Obama administration, more Special Operations forces were shifted from Iraq to conduct secret missions. The C.I.A.’s own paramilitary operations inside Afghanistan grew in tandem — as did the agency’s close collaboration with Afghanistan’s own spy agency.

Usually, such teams conducted night operations aimed at top Taliban commanders and militants on the “capture/kill” list. While individual commandos have displayed great courage, the missions can end in calamity as well as success. The expanding special operations have stoked particular resentment among Afghans — for their lack of coordination with local forces, the civilian casualties they frequently inflicted and the lack of accountability.

JUNE 17, 2007 | PAKTIKA PROVINCE
INCIDENT REPORT: Botched Night Raid

Shortly after five American rockets destroyed a compound in Paktika Province, helicopter-borne commandos from Task Force 373 — a classified Special Operations unit of Army Delta Force operatives and members of the Navy Seals — arrived to finish the job.

The mission was to capture or kill Abu Laith al-Libi, a top commander for Al Qaeda, who was believed to be hiding at the scene of the strike.

But Mr. Libi was not there. Instead, the Special Operations troops found a group of men suspected of being militants and their children. Seven of the children had been killed by the rocket attack.

Some of the men tried to flee the Americans, and six were quickly killed by encircling helicopters. After the rest were taken as detainees, the commandos found one child still alive in the rubble, and performed CPR for 20 minutes.

Word of the attack spread a wave of anger across the region, forcing the local governor to meet with village elders to defuse the situation.

American military officials drew up a list of “talking points” for the governor, pointing out that the target had been a senior Qaeda commander, that there had been no indications that women and children would be present and that a nearby mosque had not been damaged.

After the meeting, the governor reported that local residents were in shock, but that he had “pressed the Talking Points.” He even “added a few of his own that followed in line with our current story.”

The attack was caused by the “presence of hoodlums,” the governor told the people. It was a tragedy that children had been killed, he said, but “it could have been prevented had the people exposed the presence of insurgents in the area.”

He promised that the families would be compensated for their loss.

Mr. Libi was killed the following year by a C.I.A. drone strike.

APRIL 6, 2008 | NURISTAN PROVINCE

Incident Report: A Raging Firefight

As they scrambled up the rocks toward a cluster of mud compounds perched high over the remote Shok Valley, a small group of American Green Berets and Afghan troops, known as Task Force Bushmaster, were confronted with a hail of gunfire from inside the insurgent stronghold.

They were there to capture senior members of the Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin militant group, part of a mission that the military had dubbed Operation Commando Wrath.

But what they soon discovered on that remote, snowy hilltop was that they were vastly outnumbered by a militant force of hundreds of fighters. Reinforcements were hours away.

A firefight raged for nearly seven hours, with sniper fire pinning down the Green Berets on a 60-foot rock ledge for much of that time.

Casualties mounted. By midmorning, nearly half of the Americans were wounded,
but the militants directed their gunfire on the arriving medevac helicopters, preventing them from landing.

“TF Bushmaster reports they are combat ineffective and request reinforcement at this time.”

For a time, radio contact was lost.

Air Force jets arrived at the scene and began pummeling the compounds with 2,000-pound bombs, but the militants continued to advance down the mountain toward the pinned-down group.

The task force reported that there were “50-100 insurgents moving to reinforce against Bushmaster elements from the SW.”

Carrying wounded Americans shot in the pelvis, arm and legs — as well as two dead Afghans — the group made its way down toward the valley floor. Eventually, the helicopters were able to arrive to evacuate the dead and wounded.

Ten members of the Green Berets would receive Silver Stars for their actions during the battle, the highest number given to Special Forces soldiers for a single battle since the Vietnam War. By Army estimates, 150 to 200 militants were killed in the battle.

MARCH 8, 2008 | BAGRAM AIR BASE

Meeting Report: A Plea for Help

Toward the end of a long meeting with top American military commanders, during which he delivered a briefing about the security situation in eastern Afghanistan, corruption in the government and Pakistan’s fecklessness in hunting down militants, Afghanistan’s top spy laid out his problem.

Amrullah Saleh, then director of the National Directorate of Security, told the Americans that the C.I.A. would no longer be handling his spy service’s budget. For years, the C.I.A. had essentially run the N.D.S. as a subsidiary, but by 2009 the Afghan government was preparing to take charge of the agency’s budget.

Mr. Saleh estimated that with the C.I.A. no longer bankrolling the Afghan spies, he could be facing a budget cut of 30 percent.

So he made a request. With the budget squeeze coming, Mr. Saleh asked the Americans for any AK-47s and ammunition they could spare.

If they had any spare boots, he would also take those, he said.

This article was written and reported by C. J. CHIVERS, CARLOTTA GALL, ANDREW W. LEHREN, MARK MAZZETTI, JANE PERLEZ, and ERIC SCHMITT, with contributions from JACOB HARRIS and ALAN McLEAN.

---This article was originally published on July 25, 2010
By C. J. CHIVERS
Nothing in the documents made public on Sunday offers as vivid a miniature of the Afghan war so far — from hope to heartbreak — as the field reports from one lonely base: Combat Outpost Keating.

The outpost was opened in 2006 in the Kamdesh district of Nuristan Province, an area of mountain escarpments, thick forests and deep canyons with a population suspicious of outsiders. The outpost’s troops were charged with finding allies among local residents and connecting them to the central government in Kabul, stopping illegal cross-border movement and deterring the insurgency.

But the outpost’s fate, chronicled in unusually detailed glimpses of a base over nearly three years, illustrates many of the frustrations of the allied effort: low troop levels, unreliable Afghan partners and an insurgency that has grown in skill, determination and its ability to menace.

The outpost was small, isolated and exposed to high ground, one compound in a network of tiny firebases the American and Afghan governments built far from
Afghanistan’s cities. The area, near the border with Pakistan, was suspected of being an insurgent corridor.

Some early reports from the area were upbeat. Although it was obvious from the outset that there were so few troops that the outpost, like others of its kind, could barely defend its bunkers and patrol at the same time, much less disrupt a growing insurgency, the dispatches carried notes of cheerful confidence when they described the campaign for local hearts and minds.

“It was clear our meeting had produced tangible results,” the outpost reported in December 2006, after the Americans distributed pencils, notebooks, erasers and pencil sharpeners in a nearby village, along with prayer rugs and winter gloves for children.

Later, after a larger handout of clothing, first-aid kits and school supplies to villagers, the report summarized the pitch to local residents: “Our friendship grows every day.” It also noted that the “positive nonlethal effects” of the donations “stimulated a frank discussion on security issues.”

The security situation was, in a word, bad. The road to the base was overlooked by high ground; all traffic was vulnerable to ambushes. Most of the movement of supplies and troops was done by helicopters, which were exposed to ground fire.

Transport helicopters were scarce. Attack helicopters, which might provide fire support if the outpost was attacked, were based at Jalalabad — more than a 30-minute flight away.

Before long the optimistic reports about handouts of milk and soccer balls and the good will of the local residents gave way to a realization that insurgents controlled almost everything up to the outpost’s gates.

The Afghan forces held little promise: the Americans training them noted that local police chiefs complained that their officers were not being paid and that most of them “will not work, they will walk off the job.” The reports describe how the insurgents gradually moved to cut off the outpost, physically and socially.

Feb. 17, 2007: Armed men in Afghan Army uniforms ambushed three Afghan trucks as they left a nearby base after delivering supplies. The drivers were allowed to live. But one had been wounded by shrapnel. The insurgents sliced off the others’ ears.

April 29, 2007: Men who identified themselves as “We the Mujahedeen” posted so-called night letters on a mosque. The handwritten letters complained about American infidels and the “sold-out mullahs,” contractors, police officers, soldiers and officials who worked with them. It listed the names of Afghans who worked as the outpost’s security guards.

“These people are hated by God,” the letter said, according to a translation in the intelligence summary. “Soon we will start our operations.”

**Insurgents Send a Message**

The local villagers tore up the letters. The next day, six insurgents stopped a car
owned by Fazal Ahad, the leader of a local council, or shura, that cooperated with the Americans on security issues, as he drove with other council members down a canyon road. The insurgents sent a brutal but measured message to the villagers.

“The fighters secured Fazal Ahad and told the others they could leave now and live, or follow them and die,” said the military’s report of the incident. After the released men fled, villagers reported hearing a gunshot. Fazal Ahad was dead.

The outposts in outer Nuristan Province had become defensive positions kept alive by helicopters that would typically fly only at night. Local residents were caught between sides. Development was idled. The reports compose a portrait in futility: the enemy was strong, the post’s ranks were small and counterinsurgency efforts had no traction. The area was more treacherous, and less safe, than when the push into the canyons had begun.

In the summer of 2009, as President Obama explored options for continuing the war, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, then his new commander in Kabul, revisited the idea of dividing the limited available forces and distributing them in remote outposts. New thinking took hold: forces were to be concentrated where they could have the greatest effect.

Combat Outpost Keating, along with several other tiny firebases in eastern Afghanistan, was ordered to shut down. By fall, the United States was quietly withdrawing from part of its archipelago of little posts.

But before Combat Outpost Keating could be closed, the insurgents struck.

Early on Oct. 3, they massed for a coordinated attack, pounding the little outpost with mortar shells and rocket-propelled grenades and raking it from above with heavy machine-gun fire.

Groups of gunmen rushed the post’s defensive wire. They simultaneously hit a smaller observation post nearby. At least 175 enemy gunmen were involved in the offensive; some accounts described a force twice that size.

The first classified summaries of the attack are a frightening record of a small unit caught at the juncture between old and new ways to fight the war. They depict American troops isolated and overwhelmed on enemy turf. The reports include excerpts of real-time computer messages to headquarters typed by soldiers in the outpost and accounts of pilots who attacked the insurgents from the air.

At first, the outpost reported that Keating and the observation post were “IN HEAVY CONTACT.”

Typing in the casual familiarity of Internet chat, on a secure server, a soldier immediately asked that an “Air Tic Be Opened.”

That was military jargon for shifting available close-air support to troops taking fire. The sense of urgency was clear; the reason chilling.

“We need it now,” another soldier typed. “We have mortars pinned down and fire coming from everywhere.”

The battle escalated from there. The outpost relayed details. “We are taking casiltys,” the first soldier typed within minutes — the first reports of wounded troops. He
added: “GET SOMETHING UP!”

The consequences of decisions made in distant headquarters were now taking shape for young enlisted men. The enemy had the high ground. The outpost had the low ground. The troops were outnumbered, and starting to drop. Fire support was far away.

The arrival of attack helicopters, the outpost was told, would take time. “IT’S A 40 MINUTE FLIGHT.”

The outpost asked about jets.

“We are taking fire from inside urmul village,” it reported. “Our mortars are still pinned down unable to fire.”

Jets were on the way. Soon a soldier was describing where aircraft should drop their ordnance. “Multiple enemies running through” the Afghan National Police station “and fire coming from the mosque,” he typed.

He added, “The police station is shooting at us.”

A Frantic Call for Help

Forty minutes into the fighting, he reported that the observation post was about to detonate its Claymore mines — a sign that the attackers were almost at its walls. “They are that close to the wire,” the soldier typed.

Eight minutes later he reported that the attackers were breaching Keating’s last defensive ring. The post was at risk of falling, and having the fighting go hand-to-hand.

“Enemy in the wire at keating,” he typed. “ENEMY IN THE WIRE ENEMY IN THE WIRE!!!”

An entry soon after was a model of understatement: “We need support.”

Insurgents entered the outpost. The American attack helicopters began to arrive, joining F-15s and an aircraft with jamming equipment to block the insurgents’ two-way radios. One of the pilots’ initial reports described, in laconic terms, flying through gantlets of fire, and occasionally finding a shooting gallery of insurgent targets.

Hellfire missiles were fired on the local mosque, from where soldiers on the ground said the insurgents were firing. The mosque was destroyed.

As bombs exploded above and around the base and helicopters made strafing runs, the soldiers consolidated in a building that was not burning and began to counterattack.

As the four-hour mark of the battle approached, a higher command noted that soldiers at the outpost reported that they “have retaken another bldg, can’t push any further due to lack of manpower.”

Outside the perimeter, the insurgents still fired.

At the nine-hour mark, the higher command summarized word from the ground: “Only one building left that is not on fire. Have consolidated all casualties at that location.”

Late in the day, American reinforcements were shuttled by helicopter to nearby terrain. They bounded downhill toward the outpost. The fighting by then had stopped.
The outpost had held on, but barely. Eight soldiers were dead. Almost two dozen others had been wounded. Several Afghan soldiers and guards were killed or wounded, too.

The Americans evacuated their casualties. Over the next days they declared the outpost closed and departed — so quickly that they did not carry out all of their stored ammunition.

The outpost’s depot was promptly looted by the insurgents and bombed by American planes in an effort to destroy the lethal munitions left behind.

—This article was originally published on July 25, 2010
Mix of Trust and Despair Helped Turn Tide in Iraq

By SABRINA TAVERNISE

The Iraq war archive, taken as a whole with its details of incidents small and large, offers a cautionary postscript for the current military strategy in Afghanistan.

That same strategy, based on an infusion of additional troops, is often credited with rescuing Iraq. The American military applied it and turned around an increasingly hopeless war, according to one narrative. And while it is true that the additional troops offered better security, the reports in the archive suggest that the approach was also successful because many Iraqis were ready for it.

A unique set of conditions had coalesced on the ground. The warring communities were exhausted from the frenzy of killing. Mixed neighborhoods and cities were largely cleansed. The militias, both Sunni and Shiite, long seen as defenders of their communities, had begun to cannibalize them, making local residents newly receptive to American overtures.

The war that emerges from the documents is a rapidly changing set of circumstances with its own logic and arc, whose fluidity was underestimated by the
military, the media and Washington policy makers. The troop increase, devised and led by Gen. David H. Petraeus, who is now the commander in Afghanistan, came around the time that many Iraqis were so fed up with their local militias that they were ready to risk cooperating with the Americans by giving them information. Two years earlier, they were not.

That is not to say that the troop increase, commonly known as the surge, and the accompanying strategic changes, were unimportant. On the contrary, that risky gamble was central in initiating the reduction in violence. Without it, Iraqis would have been stuck.

Taken together, the archives from Iraq and Afghanistan suggest that each war has had its own alchemy. Now General Petraeus is confronting a far different society. It remains to be seen whether Pashtun society is ready to resist the Taliban, as Sunnis were in Iraq, whether tribal leaders in Afghanistan are strong enough to lead that resistance or whether the Taliban and a deeply discredited central government are ready to reconcile. Afghanistan is a poorer, far less literate and centralized country than Iraq; each valley is its own nation, a patchwork that makes it tricky to apply any policy nationwide.

In Iraq, Americans expected to be hailed as liberators, but they were resented as occupiers, and Iraqis eventually turned to the Americans largely out of exhaustion and despair. In Afghanistan, Americans were welcomed at first, but as the war dragged on, Afghans lost faith in the Americans’ ability to protect them — and it is unclear whether that faith can be restored. The lesson of Iraq is that without it, no strategy, however well conceived, can be successful.

If Afghanistan is a war of small cuts, Iraq was a gash. In the war’s bloodiest months, according to the archive’s reports, more than 3,000 Iraqi civilians were dying, more than 10 times the current civilian casualty rate in Afghanistan, a country with a larger population.

The reports read like nightmares. In January 2005, a human head was thrown from an Opel Omega into the Mufrek traffic circle in the city of Baquba. The next month, 47 workers from a brick factory were found murdered north of Baghdad. One report noted that a discovery of six bodies at a sewage treatment plant in Baghdad was the third such episode at the same plant in recent weeks. Later during that month, there were also two more similar discoveries there. All the bodies had gunshot wounds to the head.

The Pentagon was slow to acknowledge what had become abundantly clear on the ground — that Iraq had sunk into sectarian war. The military began to release partial civilian casualty figures in 2005 under pressure from Congress. The word “sect” appears only 12 times in the archive in 2005, the year that systematic cleansing began. Corpses that were surfacing in garbage dumps, rivers and empty lots were blandly categorized as a “criminal event” and seem to have been given about as much importance as traffic accidents.

In a briefing for reporters several days after the bombing of a shrine in Samarra in 2006, the event that unleashed an all-out civil war, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, the military
spokesman at the time, said: “Over the last three days what we’ve seen is not widespread sectarian violence. And we believe that there has not been widespread sectarian violence because of a capable Iraqi government.”

But the Iraqi government, or at least part of it, was one of the perpetrators. The documents in the archive cite hundreds of cases of prisoner abuse by the Iraqi Army and the police. A jail in the western province of Anbar in June 2006 had “large amounts of blood on the cell floor,” an unhinged metal cell door positioned against a back wall and electrical wires with blood at the ends. (The Americans reprimanded the police.)

There were killings. A report from February 2006 described how Iraqis carrying official Ministry of Interior identification cards used false documents to remove 12 prisoners from a police jail in Basra. Their fate? “Prisoners are now dead,” the report stated. “All prisoners are of Sunni religion.”

Sectarian turf wars burned hotly until mixed neighborhoods were largely cleansed. But exactly when the tide turned remains foggy. According to the existing reports, the single worst month for civilian deaths was December 2006, two months before the buildup’s first brigade arrived. Casualties dropped slightly in January. In February, when the first new brigade arrived, the recorded casualties dropped by a quarter, though it is the shortest month.

Around that time, Moktada al-Sadr, the anti-American cleric, decamped to Iran, perhaps fearing American troops.

What the documents suggest strongly is that Iraqis themselves were looking for an escape from the orgy of sectarian killing made worse by the growth of ordinary, but still violent, crime. Uses of the word “kidnap” in the reports increase sharply in 2007, as do “theft,” “loot,” and “carjacking.” Torments varied according to location. In Sunni areas, the fundamentalist militants of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia had brutalized and alienated people. As early as September 2006, tribes in Anbar came together to oppose Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia.

General Petraeus was quick to seize that opportunity, turning the tribes’ cooperation into a program that he aggressively expanded throughout the country, working with American diplomats to push a reluctant Iraqi prime minister to accept it.

His predecessor, Gen. George W. Casey Jr. — who had been pursuing a policy of drawing down American troops — had seen it more as a local program.

That effort became perhaps the turning point in the war. The appearance in the documents of the initials S.O.I., a reference to the Sons of Iraq, the Sunni groups that banded together against insurgents, spiked in 2008. In Shiite areas, militias like the Mahdi Army, known as JAM (for Jaish al-Mahdi) by the military, once seen as protectors, had turned into parasites, extorting, kidnapping for ransom and demanding protection money, Mafia-style. A February 2007 report noted that the young son of a businessman was kidnapped by Mahdi Army members. The family paid $15,000 for his release, but he was killed anyway.

Iraqis of all stripes began to use the Americans as a bridge, coming forward with
information about everything from Al Qaeda hide-outs to gas station extortions. Uses of the word “source” peak in 2007, with five times as many references as in 2004. “Tip” follows the same pattern. A report from May 2007 noted the arrest of a bus driver who was extorting a gas station on behalf of the Mahdi Army. The owner of the gas station provided the tip.

Meanwhile, Americans’ understanding of Iraq had become more sophisticated. If at first the sectarian war was played down or ignored, by 2007 the word sect had become part of the military’s template for daily violence reports. The often fruitless search operations that were the hallmark of the early years of the war suddenly became effective as Iraqis gave Americans information. The holdouts were many, and the Americans waged hard-fought campaigns, with heavy casualties, to eliminate them.

By 2007, the detainee population had exploded. Among the prisoners was a much feared Shiite militia leader, Abu Dura, captured by the Americans in a raid based on a local tip.

The Iraqi partners were not ideal. The documents in the archive contain references to shady politicians, like the head of security for Fadilah, a Shiite political party, who, according to one report, was believed to have received money from Iran and to “control a secret arm of the Fadilah Party that conducts kidnappings and assassination operations to influence local politics.”

Even the Sunni tribal forces that eventually helped turn the tide of the war were prone to raucous shooting episodes, including one in 2008, in which sheiks had to be airlifted to an American hospital after being wounded in a shootout over sheep food.

By 2009, civilian deaths had dropped to the lowest levels recorded in the archive. In interviews in the summer of 2008, Iraqis said they were so deeply frightened by the killings in 2006 that they would do anything to avoid being dragged into that kind of violence again.

But war is always clearest in retrospect, and it remains to be seen whether Afghanistan has reached that point.

*Jacob M. Harris contributed reporting from New York.*

---This article was originally published on October 23, 2010

**SEE ADDITIONAL IMAGES**
A Grim Portrait of Civilian Deaths in Iraq

By SABRINA TAVERNISE and ANDREW W. LEHREN
The reports in the archive disclosed by WikiLeaks offer an incomplete, yet startlingly graphic portrait of one of the most contentious issues in the Iraq war — how many Iraqi civilians have been killed and by whom.

The reports make it clear that most civilians, by far, were killed by other Iraqis. Two of the worst days of the war came on Aug. 31, 2005, when a stampede on a bridge in Baghdad killed more than 950 people after several earlier attacks panicked a huge crowd, and on Aug. 14, 2007, when truck bombs killed more than 500 people in a rural area near the border with Syria.

But it was systematic sectarian cleansing that drove the killing to its most frenzied point, making December 2006 the worst month of the war, according to the reports, with about 3,800 civilians killed, roughly equal to the past seven years of murders in New York City. A total of about 1,300 police officers, insurgents and coalition soldiers were also killed in that month.
The documents also reveal many previously unreported instances in which American soldiers killed civilians — at checkpoints, from helicopters, in operations. Such killings are a central reason Iraqis turned against the American presence in their country, a situation that is now being repeated in Afghanistan.

The archive contains reports on at least four cases of lethal shootings from helicopters. In the bloodiest, on July 16, 2007, as many as 26 Iraqis were killed, about half of them civilians. However, the tally was called in by two different people, and it is possible that the deaths were counted twice.

In another case, in February 2007, an Apache helicopter shot and killed two Iraqi men believed to have been firing mortars, even though they made surrendering motions, because, according to a military lawyer cited in the report, “they cannot surrender to aircraft, and are still valid targets.”

The shooting was unusual. In at least three other instances reported in the archive, Iraqis surrendered to helicopter crews without being shot. The Pentagon did not respond to questions from The Times about the rules of engagement for the helicopter strike.

The pace of civilian deaths served as a kind of pulse, whose steady beat told of the success, or failure, of America’s war effort. Americans on both sides of the war debate argued bitterly over facts that grew hazier as the war deepened.

The archive does not put that argument to rest by giving a precise count. As a 2008 report to Congress on the topic makes clear, the figures serve as “guideposts,” not hard totals. But it does seem to suggest numbers that are roughly in line with those compiled by several sources, including Iraq Body Count, an organization that tracked civilian deaths using press reports, a method the Bush administration repeatedly derided as unreliable and producing inflated numbers. In all, the five-year archive lists more than 100,000 dead from 2004 to 2009, though some deaths are reported more than once, and some reports have inconsistent casualty figures. A 2008 Congressional report warned that record keeping in the war had been so problematic that such statistics should be looked at only as “guideposts.”

In a statement on Friday, Iraq Body Count, which did a preliminary analysis of the archive, estimated that it listed 15,000 deaths that had not been previously disclosed anywhere.

The archive tells thousands of individual stories of loss whose consequences are still being felt in Iraqi families today.

Misunderstandings at checkpoints were often lethal. At one Marine checkpoint, sunlight glinting off a windshield of a car that did not slow down led to the shooting death of a mother and the wounding of three of her daughters and her husband. Hand signals flashed to stop vehicles were often not understood, and soldiers and Marines, who without interpreters were unable to speak to the survivors, were left to wonder why.

According to one particularly painful entry from 2006, an Iraqi wearing a tracksuit was killed by an American sniper who later discovered that the victim was the platoon’s interpreter.
The archive’s data is incomplete. The documents were compiled with an emphasis on speed rather than accuracy; the goal was to spread information as quickly as possible among units. American soldiers did not respond to every incident.

And even when Americans were at the center of the action, as in the western city of Falluja in 2004, none of the Iraqis they killed were categorized as civilians. In the early years of the war, the Pentagon maintained that it did not track Iraqi civilian deaths, but it began releasing rough counts in 2005, after members of Congress demanded a more detailed accounting on the state of the war. In one instance in 2008, the Pentagon used reports similar to the newly released documents to tabulate the war dead.

This month, The Associated Press reported that the Pentagon in July had quietly posted its fullest tally of the death toll of Iraqi civilians and security forces ever, numbers that were first requested in 2005 through the Freedom of Information Act. It was not clear why the total — 76,939 Iraqi civilians and members of the security forces killed between January 2004 and August 2008 — was significantly less than the sum of the archive’s death count.

The archive does not have a category for the main causes of Iraqi deaths inflicted by Americans. Compared with the situation in Afghanistan, in Iraq aerial bombings seemed to be less frequently a cause of civilian deaths, after the initial invasion. The reports were only as good as the soldiers calling them in. One of the most infamous episodes of killings by American soldiers, the shootings of at least 15 Iraqi civilians, including women and children in the western city of Haditha, is misrepresented in the archives. The report stated that the civilians were killed by militants in a bomb attack, the same false version of the episode that was given to the news media.

Civilians have borne the brunt of modern warfare, with 10 civilians dying for every soldier in wars fought since the mid-20th century, compared with 9 soldiers killed for every civilian in World War I, according to a 2001 study by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

SEE ADDITIONAL IMAGES
Detainees Fared Worse in Iraqi Hands, Logs Say

Former Sunni militants, who joined American and Iraqi troops to fight insurgents in 2007. One ex-militant briefly threatened to kill a detainee.

By SABRINA TAVERNISE and ANDREW W. LEHREN

The public image of detainees in Iraq was defined by the photographs, now infamous, of American abuse at Abu Ghraib, like the hooded prisoner and the snarling attack dog. While the documents disclosed by WikiLeaks offer few glimpses of what was happening inside American detention facilities, they do contain indelible details of abuse carried out by Iraq’s army and police.

The six years of reports include references to the deaths of at least six prisoners in Iraqi custody, most of them in recent years. Beatings, burnings and lashings surfaced in hundreds of reports, giving the impression that such treatment was not an exception. In one case, Americans suspected Iraqi Army officers of cutting off a detainee’s fingers and burning him with acid. Two other cases produced accounts of the executions of bound detainees.

And while some abuse cases were investigated by the Americans, most noted in the archive seemed to have been ignored, with the equivalent of an institutional shrug:
soldiers told their officers and asked the Iraqis to investigate.

A Pentagon spokesman said American policy on detainee abuse “is and has always been consistent with law and customary international practice.” Current rules, he said, require forces to immediately report abuse; if it was perpetrated by Iraqis, then Iraqi authorities are responsible for investigating.

That policy was made official in a report dated May 16, 2005, saying that if “if US forces were not involved in the detainee abuse, no further investigation will be conducted until directed by HHQ.” In many cases, the order appeared to allow American soldiers to turn a blind eye to abuse of Iraqis on Iraqis.

Even when Americans found abuse and reported it, Iraqis often did not act. One report said a police chief refused to file charges “as long as the abuse produced no marks.” Another police chief told military inspectors that his officers engaged in abuse “and supported it as a method of conducting investigations.”

It is a frightening portrait of violence by any standards, but particularly disturbing because Iraq’s army and police are central to President Obama’s plan to draw down American troops in Iraq. Iraqi forces are already the backbone of security in Iraq, now that American combat troops are officially gone, and are also in charge of running its prisons.

The archive contains extensive, often rambling accounts of American abuse from Iraqi prisoners, but few were substantiated. The most serious came during arrests, which were often violent when people resisted. In those cases, investigations were opened. In a case reminiscent of Abu Ghraib, in which guards photographed themselves with Iraqis whom they had posed in humiliating positions, a soldier was censured for writing a mocking slur with a marker on the forehead of a crying detainee.

The United States took steps to improve its detention system after the scandal at the Abu Ghraib prison erupted in 2004, tightening rules governing the treatment of prisoners and separating the hardened radicals of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia from other prisoners.

But the documents show that Americans did sometimes use the threat of abuse by Iraqi authorities to get information out of prisoners. One report said an American threatened to send a detainee to the notorious Wolf Brigade, a particularly violent Iraqi police unit, if he did not supply information.

Some of the worst examples of Iraqi abuse came later in the war. In August 2009, an Iraqi police commando unit reported that a detainee committed suicide in its custody, but an autopsy conducted in the presence of an American “found bruises and burns on the detainee’s body as well as visible injuries to the head, arm, torso, legs, and neck.” The report stated that the police “have reportedly begun an investigation.”

Then in December, 12 Iraqi soldiers, including an intelligence officer, were caught on video in Tal Afar shooting to death a prisoner whose hands were tied. The document on the episode says that the reporting is preliminary; it is unclear whether there was a follow-up.

Years of abuse under Saddam Hussein produced an exceptionally violent society.
Iraqis used cables, metal rods, wooden poles and live electrical wires to hurt prisoners. One report on a detainee cited “bruises in a roughly boot shape from upper to lower back.” In another, a detainee is said to have bruises from beatings with a board. Another detainee suffered blurred vision, bleeding in his ears and nose, bruises on his back, arms and legs and hemorrhaging in his eyes. Americans told the local Iraqi Army commander but did not open an inquiry because no American was involved.

American soldiers, however, often intervened. During a visit to a police unit in Ramadi, an American soldier entered a cell after hearing screams and found two badly dehydrated detainees with bruises on their bodies. He had them transferred out of Iraqi custody.

In August 2006, an American sergeant in Ramadi heard whipping noises in a military police station and walked in on an Iraqi lieutenant using an electrical cable to slash the bottom of a detainee’s feet. The American stopped him, but later he found the same Iraqi officer whipping a detainee’s back.

One beaten detainee said in 2005 that “when the Marines finally took him, he was treated very well, and he was thankful and happy to see them.”

Early on, space for detainees was limited, and Iraqis would stuff them into makeshift jails, increasing the chances for abuse. In November 2005, American soldiers found 95 blindfolded detainees with sores and broken bones crammed into a police internment center.

---This article was originally published on October 22, 2010

SEE ADDITIONAL IMAGES
Leaked Reports Detail Iran’s Aid for Iraqi Militias

By MICHAEL R. GORDON and ANDREW W. LEHREN

On Dec. 22, 2006, American military officials in Baghdad issued a secret warning: The Shiite militia commander who had orchestrated the kidnapping of officials from Iraq’s Ministry of Higher Education was now hatching plans to take American soldiers hostage.

What made the warning especially worrying were intelligence reports saying that the Iraqi militant, Azhar al-Dulaimi, had been trained by the Middle East’s masters of the dark arts of paramilitary operations: the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps in Iran and Hezbollah, its Lebanese ally.

“Dulaymi reportedly obtained his training from Hizballah operatives near Qum, Iran, who were under the supervision of Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF) officers in July 2006,” the report noted, using alternative spellings of the principals involved.

Five months later, Mr. Dulaimi was tracked down and killed in an American raid in the sprawling Shiite enclave of Sadr City in Baghdad — but not before four American soldiers had been abducted from an Iraqi headquarters in Karbala and executed in an operation that American military officials say literally bore Mr. Dulaimi’s fingerprints.

Scores of documents made public by WikiLeaks, which has disclosed classified information about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, provide a ground-level look — at least as seen by American units in the field and the United States’ military intelligence — at the shadow war between the United States and Iraqi militias backed by Iran’s Revolutionary Guards.

During the administration of President George W. Bush, critics charged that the White House had exaggerated Iran’s role to deflect criticism of its handling of the war and build support for a tough policy toward Iran, including the possibility of military action.

But the field reports disclosed by WikiLeaks, which were never intended to be made public, underscore the seriousness with which Iran’s role has been seen by the American military. The political struggle between the United States and Iran to influence events in Iraq still continues as Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki has sought to assemble a coalition — that would include the anti-American cleric Moktada al-Sadr — that will allow him to remain in power. But much of the American’s military concern has revolved around Iran’s role in arming and assisting Shiite militias.

Citing the testimony of detainees, a captured militant’s diary and numerous uncovered weapons caches, among other intelligence, the field reports recount Iran’s role in providing Iraqi militia fighters with rockets, magnetic bombs that can be attached to the underside of cars, “explosively formed penetrators,” or E.F.P.’s, which are the most lethal type of roadside bomb in Iraq, and other weapons. Those include powerful .50-caliber rifles and the Misagh-1, an Iranian replica of a portable Chinese surface-to-air
missile, which, according to the reports, was fired at American helicopters and downed one in east Baghdad in July 2007.

Iraqi militants went to Iran to be trained as snipers and in the use of explosives, the field reports assert, and Iran’s Quds Force collaborated with Iraqi extremists to encourage the assassination of Iraqi officials.

The reports make it clear that the lethal contest between Iranian-backed militias and American forces continued after President Obama sought to open a diplomatic dialogue with Iran’s leaders and reaffirmed the agreement between the United States and Iraq to withdraw American troops from Iraq by the end of 2011.

A Revolutionary Force

Established by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini after the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps has expanded its influence at home under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a former member of the corps, and it plays an important role in Iran’s economy, politics and internal security. The corps’s Quds Force, under the command of Brig. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, has responsibility for foreign operations and has often sought to work through surrogates, like Hezbollah.

While the American government has long believed that the Quds Force has been providing lethal assistance and training to Shiite militants in Iraq, the field reports provide new details about Iran’s support for Iraqi militias and the American military’s operations to counter them.

The reports are written entirely from the perspective of the American-led coalition. No similar Iraqi or Iranian reports have been made available. Nor do the American reports include the more comprehensive assessments that are typically prepared by American intelligence agencies after incidents in the field.

While some of the raw information cannot be verified, it is nonetheless broadly consistent with other classified American intelligence and public accounts by American military officials. As seen by current and former American officials, the Quds Force has two main objectives: to weaken and shape Iraq’s nascent government and to diminish the United States’ role and influence in Iraq.

For people like General Soleimani, “who went through all eight years of the Iran-Iraq war, this is certainly about poking a stick at us, but it is also about achieving strategic advantage in Iraq,” Ryan C. Crocker, the American ambassador in Iraq from 2007 until early 2009, said in an interview.

“I think the Iranians understand that they are not going to dominate Iraq,” Mr. Crocker added, “but I think they are going to do their level best to weaken it — to have a weak central government that is constantly off balance, that is going to have to be beseeching Iran to stop doing bad things without having the capability to compel them to stop doing bad things. And that is an Iraq that will never again threaten Iran.”

Politics and Militias
According to the reports, Iran’s role has been political as well as military. A Nov. 27, 2005, report, issued before Iraq’s December 2005 parliamentary elections, cautioned that Iranian-backed militia members in the Iraqi government were gaining power and giving Iran influence over Iraqi politics.

“Iran is gaining control of Iraq at many levels of the Iraqi government,” the report warned.

The reports also recount an array of border incidents, including a Sept. 7, 2006, episode in which an Iranian soldier who aimed a rocket-propelled grenade launcher at an American platoon trying to leave the border area was shot and killed by an American soldier with a .50-caliber machine gun. The members of the American platoon, who had gone to the border area with Iraqi troops to look for “infiltration routes” used to smuggle bombs and other weapons into Iraq, were concerned that Iranian border forces were trying to surround and detain them. After this incident, the platoon returned to its base in Iraq under fire from the Iranians even when the American soldiers were “well inside Iraqi territory,” a report noted.

But the reports assert that Iran’s Quds Force and intelligence service has turned to many violent and shadowy tactics as well.

The reports contain numerous references to Iranian agents, but the documents generally describe a pattern in which the Quds Force has sought to maintain a low profile in Iraq by arranging for fighters from Hezbollah in Lebanon to train Iraqi militants in Iran or by giving guidance to Iraqi militias who do the fighting with Iranian financing and weapons.

The reports suggest that Iranian-sponsored assassinations of Iraqi officials became a serious worry.

A case in point is a report that was issued on March 27, 2007. Iranian intelligence agents within the Badr Corps and Jaish al-Mahdi, two Shiite militias, “have recently been influencing attacks on ministry officials in Iraq,” the report said.

According to the March report, officials at the Ministry of Industry were high on the target list. “The desired effect of these attacks is not to simply kill the Ministry of Industry Officials,” the report noted, but also “to show the world, and especially the Arab world, that the Baghdad Security Plan has failed to bring stability,” referring to the troop increase that Gen. David H. Petraeus was overseeing to reduce violence in Iraq.

News reports in early 2007 indicated that a consultant to the ministry and his daughter were shot and killed on the way to his office. The March report does not mention the attack, but it asserts that one gunman was carrying out a systematic assassination campaign, which included killing three bodyguards and plotting to attack ministry officials while wearing a stolen Iraqi Army uniform.

The provision of Iranian rockets, mortars and bombs to Shiite militants has also been a major concern. A Nov. 22, 2005, report recounted an effort by the Iraqi border police to stop the smuggling of weapons from Iran, which “recovered a quantity of bomb-making equipment, including explosively formed projectiles,” which are capable of
A Shiite militant from the Jaish al-Mahdi militia, also known as the Mahdi Army, was planning to carry out a mortar attack on the Green Zone in Baghdad, using rockets and mortar shells shipped by the Quds Force, according to a report on Dec. 1, 2006. On Nov. 28, the report noted, the Mahdi Army commander, Ali al-Sa’idi, “met Iranian officials reported to be IRGC officers at the border to pick up three shipments of rockets.”

A Dec. 27, 2008, report noted one instance when American soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division captured several suspected members of the Jaish al-Mahdi militia and seized a weapons cache, which also included several diaries, including one that explained “why detainee joined JAM and how they traffic materials from Iran.”

The attacks continued during Mr. Obama’s first year in office, with no indication in the reports that the new administration’s policies led the Quds Force to end its support for Iraqi militants. The pending American troop withdrawals, the reports asserted, may even have encouraged some militant attacks.

A June 25, 2009, report about an especially bloody E.F.P. attack that wounded 10 American soldiers noted that the militants used tactics “being employed by trained violent extremist members that have returned from Iran.” The purpose of the attack, the report speculated, was to increase American casualties so militants could claim that they had “fought the occupiers and forced them to withdraw.”

An intelligence analysis of a Dec. 31, 2009, attack on the Green Zone using 107-millimeter rockets concluded that it was carried out by the Baghdad branch of Kataib Hezbollah, a militant Shiite group that American intelligence has long believed is supported by Iran. According to the December report, a technical expert from Kataib Hezbollah met before the attack with a “weapons facilitator” who “reportedly traveled to Iran, possibility to facilitate the attacks on 31 Dec.”

That same month, American Special Operations forces and a specially trained Iraqi police unit mounted a raid that snared an Iraqi militant near Basra who had been trained in Iran. A Dec. 19, 2009, report stated that the detainee was involved in smuggling “sticky bombs”— explosives that are attached magnetically to the underside of vehicles — into Iraq and was “suspected of collecting information on CF [coalition forces] and passing them to Iranian intelligence agents.”

A Bold Operation

One of the most striking episodes detailed in the trove of documents made public by WikiLeaks describes a plot to kidnap American soldiers from their Humvees. According to the Dec. 22, 2006, report, a militia commander, Hasan Salim, devised a plan to capture American soldiers in Baghdad and hold them hostage in Sadr City to deter American raids there.

To carry out the plan, Mr. Salim turned to Mr. Dulaimi, a Sunni who converted to
the Shiite branch of the faith while studying in the holy Shiite city of Najaf in 1995. Mr. Dulaimi, the report noted, was picked for the operation because he “allegedly trained in Iran on how to conduct precision, military style kidnappings.”

Those kidnappings were never carried out. But the next month, militants conducted a raid to kidnap American soldiers working at the Iraqi security headquarters in Karbala, known as the Provincial Joint Coordination Center.

The documents made public by WikiLeaks do not include an intelligence assessment as to who carried out the Karbala operation. But American military officials said after the attack that Mr. Dulaimi was the tactical commander of the operation and that his fingerprints were found on the getaway car. American officials have said he collaborated with Qais and Laith Khazali, two Shiite militant leaders who were captured after the raid along with a Hezbollah operative. The Khazali brothers were released after the raid as part of an effort at political reconciliation and are now believed to be in Iran.

The documents, however, do provide a vivid account of the Karbala attack as it unfolded.

At 7:10 p.m., several sport utility vehicles of the type typically used by the American-led coalition blocked the entrance to the headquarters compound. Twenty minutes later, an “unknown number of personnel, wearing American uniforms and carrying American weapons attacked the PJCC,” the report said.

The attackers managed to kidnap four American soldiers, dragging them into an S.U.V., which was pursued by police officers from an Iraqi SWAT unit. Calculating that they were trapped, the militants shot the handcuffed hostages and fled. Three of the American soldiers who had been abducted died at the scene. The fourth later died of his wounds, the report said, and a fifth American soldier was killed in the initial attack on the compound.

Summing up the episode, the American commander of a police training team noted in the report that that the adversary appeared to be particularly well trained. “PTT leader on ground stated insurgents were professionals and appeared to have a well planned operation,” the report said.

—This article was originally published on October 22, 2010
In April 2004, contractors for Blackwater USA took part in a firefight in Najaf, Iraq.

By JAMES GLANZ and ANDREW W. LEHREN

The first shots sailed past Iraqi police officers at a checkpoint. They took off in three squad cars, their lights flashing.

It was early in the Iraq war, Dec. 22, 2004, and it turned out that the shots came not from insurgents or criminals. They were fired by an American private security company named Custer Battles, according to an incident report in an archive of more than 300,000 classified military documents made public by WikiLeaks.

The company’s convoy sped south in Umm Qasr, a grubby port city near the Persian Gulf. It shot out the tire of a civilian car that came close. It fired five shots into a crowded minibus. The shooting stopped only after the Iraqi police, port security and a British military unit finally caught up with the convoy.

Somehow no one had been hurt, and the contractors found a quick way to prevent messy disciplinary action. They handed out cash to Iraqi civilians, and left.

The documents sketch, in vivid detail, a critical change in the way America wages war: the early days of the Iraq war, with all its Wild West chaos, ushered in the era of the
private contractor, wearing no uniform but fighting and dying in battle, gathering and disseminating intelligence and killing presumed insurgents.

There have been many abuses, including civilian deaths, to the point that the Afghan government is working to ban many outside contractors entirely.

The use of security contractors is expected to grow as American forces shrink. A July report by the Commission on Wartime Contracting, a panel established by Congress, estimated that the State Department alone would need more than double the number of contractors it had protecting the American Embassy and consulates in Iraq.

Contractors were necessary at the start of the Iraq war because there simply were not enough soldiers to do the job. In 2004, their presence became the symbol for Iraq’s descent into chaos, when four contractors were killed in Falluja, their bodies left mangled and charred.

Even now — with many contractors discredited for unjustified shootings and a lack of accountability amply described in the documents — the military cannot do without them. There are more contractors over all than actual members of the military serving in the worsening war in Afghanistan.

The archive, which describes many episodes never made public in such detail, shows the multitude of shortcomings with this new system: how a failure to coordinate among contractors, coalition forces and Iraqi troops, as well as a failure to enforce rules of engagement that bind the military, endangered civilians as well as the contractors themselves. The military was often outright hostile to contractors, for being amateurish, overpaid and, often, trigger-happy.

Contractors often shot with little discrimination — and few if any consequences — at unarmed Iraqi civilians, Iraqi security forces, American troops and even other contractors, stirring public outrage and undermining much of what the coalition forces were sent to accomplish.

The mayhem cropped up around Iraq, notably in one episode reported in March 2005 in which a small battle erupted involving three separate security companies.

At a notoriously dangerous checkpoint on the main road to the Baghdad airport, a cement truck entered a lane reserved for Department of Defense vehicles. A guard from Global, a British company, fired a warning shot, and when a man initially identified as an Iraqi opened the door and tried to flee, guards from a tower started firing, too. The man dropped to the ground. Then members of an Iraqi private security team parked nearby also opened fire, shooting through the chest not the driver but a worker from DynCorp International, an American security company.

When the truck driver was finally questioned, he turned out to be a Filipino named José who worked with yet a third company, KBR, the American logistics and security giant.

The conclusion drawn from this chaos was, “IT IS BELIEVED THE DRIVER ENTERED THE DOD LANE BY ACCIDENT.”

For all the contractors’ bravado — Iraq was packed with beefy men with beards and
flak jackets — and for all the debates about their necessity, it is clear from the documents that the contractors appeared notably ineffective at keeping themselves and the people they were paid to protect from being killed.

In fact, the documents seem to confirm a common observation on the ground during those years in Iraq: far from providing insurance against sudden death, the easily identifiable, surprisingly vulnerable pickup trucks and S.U.V.’s driven by the security companies were magnets for insurgents, militias, disgruntled Iraqis and anyone else in search of a target.

Most of the documents are incident reports and match what is known of the few cases that have been made public, although even this cache is unlikely to be a complete record of incidents involving contractors. During the six years covered by the reports, at least 175 private security contractors were killed. The peak appeared to come in 2006, when 53 died. Insurgents and other malefactors kidnapped at least 70 security contractors, many of whom were later killed.

Aegis, a British security company, had the most workers reported killed, more than 30. Most of those were Iraqi drivers, guards and other employees. Not only the military, but journalists and aid workers as well relied on contractors to help protect them.

The security contractors seemed overmatched, often incinerated or torn apart by explosions their vehicles had no chance of warding off. In August 2004, the corpses of two men who had worked with Custer Battles were found charred and abandoned in a truck that was still burning on the road between Tikrit and Mosul, after it was struck by an improvised explosive device and fired upon from a Volkswagen, one report said.

In July 2007, another report said, two were killed when a gun truck operated by ArmorGroup, a British company, flew like a wobbling discus 54 yards through the air, flipping approximately six times, after a huge I.E.D. exploded beneath it in northern Iraq.

And in May 2009, three Americans, including a senior Navy officer, were killed outside Falluja when an I.E.D. overturned a vehicle escorted by Aegis contractors during a visit to a water treatment plant financed by the United States, according to another report and American government statements at the time.

Death came suddenly, from all sides, in all forms.

In late 2004 in Tikrit, seven men emerged from two Daewoo vehicles and mowed down Iraqi workers for Buckmaster, a company hired to destroy old munitions, as the workers got out of a bus, a report said. The gunmen did not flee until they ran out of ammunition, killing 17 and wounding 20 as two Iraqis saved themselves by hiding under seats in the bus.

There were suicide bombings, desert ambushes, aviation disasters and self-inflicted wounds, as when a Ugandan guard working for EOD Technology, an American company, shot and killed his South African supervisor and then himself in 2008 after being terminated, a report said.

A spokesman for EOD confirmed the incident and said that the investigation had been unable to determine “why this particular guard decided to take the actions that he
did.”

“I think the only elaboration on this incident is to note that it was a very sad and unfortunate event,” said the spokesman, Erik S. Quist.

In another case, in Baghdad in the summer of 2009, a British contractor with ArmorGroup was reported to have shot and killed two co-workers, a Briton and an Australian, then run wild through the heavily fortified Green Zone in an attempt to escape. Finally, a coalition soldier tackled him, a report said, and another soldier “shot a directed-aimed warning shot into sand bags which immediately stopped resistance from suspect so that he could be brought under control.”

The alleged killer, Daniel Fitzsimons, is still being held in Baghdad while awaiting trial under Iraqi law.

The contractors also suffered horrific traffic accidents with multiple fatalities all over Iraq, seemingly as a side effect of driving at high speeds on bad roads where a threat can appear at any moment.

The threats were not limited to insurgents, the documents show: private security contractors repeatedly came under fire from Iraqi and coalition security forces, who often seemed unnerved by unmarked vehicles approaching at high speeds and fired warning shots, or worse. Even as the war dragged on, there seemed no universal method for the military to identify these quasi soldiers on the battlefield.

To cope, the contractors were reduced to waving reproductions of coalition flags from inside their vehicles, the documents show — but even that did not always work. After being shot at by an American military guard tower near Baiji in July 2005, contractors with Aegis first waved a British flag. When the shooting continued, the contractors, who said they were transporting a member of the American military at the time, held up an American flag instead. “THE TOWER KEPT SHOOTING,” a report said, although no one was injured in the episode.

But whatever the constellation of reasons — from war-zone jumpiness to outright disregard for civilian lives — the security companies are cited time after time for shootings that the documents plainly label as unjustified. This has blackened their reputation, even if it has not lessened the military’s dependence on them. “AFTER THE IED STRIKE A WITNESS REPORTS THE BLACKWATER EMPLOYEES FIRED INDISCRIMINATELY AT THE SCENE,” read one report from Aug. 22, 2006, referring to the company, now known as Xe Services, that the following year would become notorious for an apparently unprovoked killing of 17 Iraqis at Nisour Square in Baghdad.

In a written statement last week, Xe said, “While it would be inappropriate to comment on specific cases, we work closely with our government customers and cooperate fully in all investigations.”

In December 2004, just a few days after the confrontation with Iraqi security forces, another Custer Battles convoy fired into the windshield of a Humvee driven by American military police soldiers in a patrol that was approaching the convoy from behind on another road near Baghdad. The report noted laconically that the security contractors did
not stop their convoy until they reached an American checkpoint, “WHERE THEY ADMITTED TO FIRING ON THE MP PTL,” the military police patrol.

Many of the companies apparently felt no sense of accountability. Contractors with a Romanian company called Danubia Global killed three Iraqis in Falluja in 2006, another report said, then refused to answer questions on the episode, citing a company policy not to provide information to investigators.

In 2007, a convoy operated by Unity Resources Group, based in Dubai, shot at an approaching vehicle near the Green Zone in Baghdad, wounded a bodyguard for President Jalal Talabani of Iraq and did not report the shooting until Mr. Talabani’s staff contacted the American authorities, one report said.

When asked about the incident last week, a Unity official, Jim LeBlanc, said that “in a time of numerous suicide vehicle attacks, a vehicle had presented itself in a profile that was consistent with the behavior of a suicide attacker.” Unity guards fired “carefully aimed warning shots” when the vehicle refused to stop, Mr. LeBlanc said, and the company did not initially believe that anyone had been hurt.

Only when contacted by American investigators did Unity realize that “an Iraqi security force member” had been struck by a ricochet, and from that point on, the company fully cooperated, Mr. LeBlanc said. After the investigation, he said, “all Unity members were cleared to immediately return to work.”

And still more recently, in July 2009, local contractors with the 77th Security Company drove into a neighborhood in the northern city of Erbil and began shooting at random, setting off a firefight with an off-duty police officer and wounding three women, another report said.

“It is assessed that this drunken group of individuals were out having a good time and firing their weapons,” the incident report concluded.

In many other cases, contractors cited what they considered a justifiable “escalation of force” as an Iraqi vehicle moved toward them and did not respond to “hand signals” and other signs that the driver should stop. At that point, the contractors would fire into the vehicle’s engine block or through the windshield.

The Iraqis who were shot at, and who the documents show were nearly always civilians, not surprisingly saw things differently. To judge by the disgust that seeps through even the dry, police-blotter language of some of the incident reports, American military units often had a similar perspective. That appears to be especially true of reports on “escalations of force” by Blackwater in the years leading up to the Nisour Square shooting, the documents show.

On May 14, 2005, an American unit “OBSERVED A BLACKWATER PSD SHOOT UP A CIV VEHICLE,” killing a father and wounding his wife and daughter, a report said, referring to a Blackwater protective security detail.

On May 2, 2006, witnesses said that an Iraqi ambulance driver approaching an area struck by a roadside bomb was killed by “uncontrolled small arms firing” by Blackwater guards, another report noted.
On Aug. 16, 2006, after being struck by an I.E.D. in the southbound lane of a highway, Blackwater contractors shot and killed an Iraqi in the back seat of a vehicle traveling in the northbound lane, a report said. At least twice — in Kirkuk and Hilla — civilian killings by Blackwater set off civilian demonstrations, the documents say.

And so it went, up to the Sept. 16, 2007, Nisour Square shooting by Blackwater guards that is again noted as an “escalation of force” in the documents. Little new light is shed on the episode by the documents, although in a twist, the report indicated that the street from which the Blackwater convoy charged into the square went by the military code name Skid Row.

The last reference to Custer Battles, which eventually lost a $10 million whistle-blower case in which it was claimed that the company defrauded the United States on billing invoices for the company’s work in Iraq, appears in a report dated March 15, 2005, describing an I.E.D. strike on an exit ramp in western Baghdad. An Iraqi driver for the company received shrapnel wounds in the face from the bomb and was wounded in the chest by gunfire that broke out after the explosion. The driver was taken to a local hospital, ultimate fate unknown.

—This article was originally published on October 23, 2010

SEE ADDITIONAL IMAGES
Tensions High Along Kurdish-Arab Line

A bomb killed at least 48 people in a restaurant near Kirkuk, as Sunni Arabs and Kurds held talks in 2008.

By MICHAEL R. GORDON and ANDREW W. LEHREN

The new trove of documents released by WikiLeaks portrays the long history of tensions between Kurds and Arabs in the north of Iraq and reveals the fears of some American units about what might happen after American troops leave the country by the end of 2011.

"Without strong and fair influence, likely from a third party, these tensions may quickly turn to violence after the U.S. forces withdrawal," warned a Sept. 28, 2009, field report.

Experts have long watched the tensions in the region with worry. Their main fear is not that senior Kurdish officials will seek a confrontation with the Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad. The main interest of the political leadership, many experts say, is making sure the oil-rich region continues to grow economically.

Rather, it is that local Kurdish and Arab politicians and security officials may take
matters into their own hands if crucial disputes remain unsettled, particularly after the departure of American forces, which have regularly worked behind the scenes to head off confrontations.

Kurds and Arabs are at odds over power-sharing arrangements in the Kirkuk region, the degree of federalism that should be allowed in the Iraqi state, the terms of a new oil law and territorial disputes. Those disputes have been complicated by the fact that American forces initially welcomed the presence of Kurdish troops, the pesh merga, in some parts of northern Iraq to help fend off insurgents.

Relations have been so fraught that Gen. Ray Odierno, who recently left his post as the senior American commander in Iraq, established a series of checkpoints, maintained by American, Iraqi and Kurdish soldiers, to head off confrontations, either accidental or planned.

Obama administration officials have voiced hopes that the Kurds’ participation in a new governing coalition will foster long-deferred compromises and lead to the gradual integration of pesh merga fighters into Iraq’s army. But little headway has been made on Kurdish-Arab issues in recent years. The administration is also planning to open embassy branch offices in the cities of Mosul and Kirkuk, which would enable American diplomats to focus on Arab and Kurdish issues even after American forces depart.

The reports disclosed by WikiLeaks document a long history of tensions, which insurgents from Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, a Sunni Arab extremist group, have sought to exploit.

A Sept. 27, 2008, report showed how violence could erupt even when officials on both sides were trying to keep tensions in check. After Iraqi police officers near Khanaqin, in Diyala Province, arrested and roughed up a member of a Kurdish intelligence organization, a local Kurdish leader went to a police station to obtain his release.

The prisoner was let go, but an “ensuing verbal altercation” led to shots being fired and the death of a pesh merga fighter.

A report two months later described a more calculated assault: The planting of a roadside bomb in another northern area.

“The Arabs of that district hate the IP’s there because their police chief is a Kurd,” who had links to Kurdish intelligence, noted a Nov. 22, 2008, report, using the military’s abbreviation for the Iraqi police.

Insurgents have repeatedly sought to stir up trouble between the two sides. On Dec. 11, 2008, a suicide bomber, wearing a vest filled with explosives, blew himself up in a restaurant near Kirkuk that was patronized by Kurdish and Arab officials.

“This attack was likely intended to intimidate the leaders and to dissuade future meetings of political and religious leaders attempting to unite the province,” the field report noted.

The report on a particularly tense episode in May 2009 provides an unusual glimpse at the role American military personnel and civilians have played in trying to avert
sectarian violence.

Atheel al-Nujaifi, a Sunni Arab and the newly elected governor of Nineveh Province, was already a polarizing figure for the Kurds, and tensions grew when he proclaimed on May 7 that he planned to visit a hang-gliding festival at Bashiqa. This is a small town northeast of Mosul, in Nineveh Province, but which the Kurds have long claimed.

Two days later, a liaison officer from the Kurdish regional government told Brig. Gen. Robert B. Brown, the deputy American military commander for northern Iraq, that if Mr. Nujaifi “traveled into Kurdish controlled area, there would be a potential incident,” the May report noted.

In an effort to head off a confrontation, Alexander M. Laskaris, the head of the State Department’s provincial reconstruction team in Mosul, called the governor and warned him against making the trip, which did not appear to sway Mr. Nujaifi.

As the festival approached, American soldiers from the Third Brigade Combat Team, First Cavalry Division went to inspect the road to the event. Officially, the pesh merga fighters and Iraqi soldiers shared the common goal of thwarting attacks by insurgents and terrorists, but now they appeared to have squared off like two opposing armies.

Pesh merga fighters at a checkpoint on the road to Bashiqa said that they had been ordered to shoot the governor if he tried to pass. Iraqi soldiers, who had their own checkpoint nearby, reported that they had been ordered to fire on the pesh merga if they shot at the governor, the report noted.

By this time, the issue had been brought to the attention of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, who also sought to head off trouble. Mr. Maliki ordered the Iraqi military command in the province not to provide security for the trip, apparently calculating that this would prompt the governor to cancel the visit.

None of that seemed to stop Mr. Nujaifi, who arranged for the local police to protect him.

Finally, a face-saving solution was found: the minister of youth and sports in Baghdad canceled the festival. While that solved the immediate problem, the underlying issues remained. As the May 8 report cautioned: “Recent reporting illustrates increased potential for ethnic tensions.”

—This article was originally published on October 23, 2010
Leaks Add to Pressure on White House Over Strategy

By ERIC SCHMITT and HELENE COOPER

WASHINGTON — The White House sought to reassert control over the public debate on the Afghanistan war on Monday as political reaction to the disclosure of a six-year archive of classified military documents increased pressure on President Obama to defend his war strategy.

On Capitol Hill, a leading Senate Democrat said the documents, with their detailed account of a war faring even more poorly than two administrations had portrayed, would intensify Congressional scrutiny of Mr. Obama’s policy.

“Those policies are at a critical stage, and these documents may very well underscore the stakes and make the calibrations needed to get the policy right more urgent,” said Senator John Kerry, a Massachusetts Democrat who is the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and has been an influential supporter of the war.

The disclosures landed at a crucial moment. Because of difficulties on the ground and mounting casualties in the war, the debate over the American presence in Afghanistan has begun earlier than expected. Inside the administration, more officials are privately questioning the policy.

In Congress, House leaders were rushing to hold a vote on a critical war-financing bill as early as Tuesday, fearing that the disclosures could stoke Democratic opposition to the measure. A Senate panel is also set to hold a hearing on Tuesday on Mr. Obama’s choice to head the military’s Central Command, Gen. James N. Mattis, who would oversee operations in Afghanistan.

Administration officials acknowledged that the documents, released on the Internet by an organization called WikiLeaks, will make it harder for Mr. Obama as he tries to hang on to public and Congressional support until the end of the year, when he has scheduled a review of the war effort. “We don’t know how to react,” one frustrated administration official said on Monday. “This obviously puts Congress and the public in a bad mood.”

Mr. Obama is facing a tough choice: he must either figure out a way to convince Congress and the American people that his war strategy remains on track and is seeing fruit, or move more quickly to a far more limited American presence.

As the debate over the war begins anew, administration officials have been striking tones similar to the Bush administration’s to argue for continuing the current Afghanistan strategy, which calls for a significant troop buildup. Richard C. Holbrooke, Mr. Obama’s special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, said the Afghan war effort came down to a matter of American national security, in testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee two weeks ago.

The White House press secretary, Robert Gibbs, struck a similar note on Monday in responding to the documents, which WikiLeaks made accessible to The New York
Times, the British newspaper The Guardian and the German magazine Der Spiegel.

“We are in this region of the world because of what happened on 9/11,” Mr. Gibbs said. “Ensuring that there is not a safe haven in Afghanistan by which attacks against this country and countries around the world can be planned. That’s why we’re there, and that’s why we’re going to continue to make progress on this relationship.”

Several administration officials privately expressed hope that they might be able to use the leaks, and their description of a sometimes duplicitous Pakistani ally, to pressure the government of Pakistan to cooperate more fully with the United States on counterterrorism. The documents seem to lay out rich new details of connections between the Taliban and other militant groups and Pakistan’s main spy agency, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI.

Three administration officials separately expressed hope that they might be able to use the documents to gain leverage in efforts to get more help from Pakistan. Two of them raised the possibility of warning the Pakistanis that Congressional anger might threaten American aid.

“This is now out in the open,” a senior administration official said. “It’s reality now. In some ways, it makes it easier for us to tell the Pakistanis that they have to help us.”

But much of the pushback from the White House over the past two days has been to stress that the connection between the ISI and the Taliban was well known.

“I don’t think that what is being reported hasn’t in many ways been publicly discussed, either by you all or by representatives of the U.S. government, for quite some time,” Mr. Gibbs said during a briefing on Monday.

While agreeing that the disclosures were not altogether new, some leading Democrats said that the new details underscored deep suspicions they have harbored toward the ISI. “Some of these documents reinforce a longstanding concern of mine about the supporting role of some Pakistani officials in the Afghan insurgency,” said Senator Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat who heads the Armed Services Committee. During a visit to Pakistan this month, Mr. Levin, who has largely supported the war, said he confronted senior Pakistani leaders about the ISI’s continuing ties to the militant groups.

The White House appeared to be focusing some of its ire toward Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks.org, the Web site that provided access to about 92,000 secret military reports.

White House officials e-mailed reporters select transcripts of an interview Mr. Assange conducted with Der Spiegel, underlining the quotations the White House apparently found most offensive. Among them was Mr. Assange’s assertion, “I enjoy crushing bastards.”

At a news conference in London on Monday, Mr. Assange defended the release of the documents. “I’d like to see this material taken seriously and investigated, and new policies, if not prosecutions, result from it.”
The Times and the two other news organizations agreed not to disclose anything that was likely to put lives at risk or jeopardize military or antiterrorist operations, and The Times redacted the names of Afghan informants and other delicate information from the documents it published. WikiLeaks said it withheld posting about 15,000 documents for the same reason.

Pakistan strongly denied suggestions that its military spy service has guided the Afghan insurgency.

A senior ISI official, speaking anonymously under standard practice, sharply condemned the reports as “part of the malicious campaign to malign the spy organization” and said the ISI would “continue to eradicate the menace of terrorism with or without the help of the West.”

Farhatullah Babar, the spokesman for President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan, dismissed the reports and said that Pakistan remained “a part of a strategic alliance of the United States in the fight against terrorism.”

While Pakistani officials protested, a spokesman for the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, said that Mr. Karzai was not upset by the documents and did not believe the picture they painted was unfair.

Speaking after a news conference in Kabul, Mr. Karzai’s spokesman, Waheed Omar, was asked whether there was anything in the leaked documents that angered Mr. Karzai or that he thought unfair. “No, I don’t think so,” Mr. Omar said.

Reporting was contributed by Adam B. Ellick and Salman Masood from Islamabad, Pakistan; Richard A. Oppel Jr. from Kabul, Afghanistan; and Caroline Crampton from London.

—This article was originally published on July 26, 2010
U.S. Military ScrutinizesLeaks for Risks to Afghans

By ERIC SCHMITT and CHARLIE SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is reviewing tens of thousands of classified battlefield reports made public this week about the war in Afghanistan to determine whether Afghan informants were identified and could be at risk of reprisals, American officials said Wednesday.

A Pentagon spokesman, Col. David Lapan, said that a Pentagon assessment team had not yet drawn any conclusions, but that “in general, the naming of individuals could cause potential problems, both to their physical safety or willingness to continue support to coalition forces or the Afghan government.”

Speaking in Kabul on Thursday, the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, called the disclosure of the names of Afghans who had cooperated with NATO and American forces “extremely irresponsible and shocking.”

"Whether those individuals acted legitimately or illegitimately in providing information to the NATO forces, their lives will be in danger now," said Mr. Karzai, who spoke at a press conference just after he said he discussed the issue with his advisors. "Therefore we consider that extremely irresponsible and an act that one cannot overlook."

A search by The New York Times through a sampling of the documents released by the organization WikiLeaks found reports that gave the names or other identifying features of dozens of Afghan informants, potential defectors and others who were cooperating with American and NATO troops.

The Times and two other publications given access to the documents — the British newspaper The Guardian and the German magazine Der Spiegel — posted online only selected examples from documents that had been redacted to eliminate names and other information that could be used to identify people at risk. The news organizations did this to avoid jeopardizing the lives of informants.

The founder of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, has said that the organization withheld 15,000 of the approximately 92,000 documents in the archive that was released on Sunday to remove the names of informants in what he called a “harm minimization” process. But the 75,000 documents WikiLeaks put online provide information about possible informants, like their villages and in some cases their fathers’ names.

Asked on NBC’s “Today” show on Wednesday if the killing of an Afghan as a result of the WikiLeaks disclosure would be considered “collateral damage” in his efforts to make details of the war public, Mr. Assange said, “If we had, in fact, made that mistake, then, of course, that would be something that we would take very seriously.”

National security officials, meanwhile, are worried that the attention WikiLeaks has received in the past week has elevated its profile and could be used to entice disgruntled officials to send classified information to its Web site, which solicits “classified, censored or otherwise restricted material of political, diplomatic or ethical significance” and asserts
that “submitting confidential material to WikiLeaks is safe, easy and protected by law.”

One United States official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the continuing investigation, said government lawyers were exploring whether WikiLeaks and Mr. Assange could be charged with a crime. One question, some lawyers say, is whether they could be charged with inducing or serving as co-conspirators in violations of the Espionage Act, a 1917 law that prohibits the unauthorized disclosure of national security information.

Indeed, at a press club in London on Tuesday, Mr. Assange told reporters that before the most recent disclosure of documents, WikiLeaks had been warned by officials in the United States government that there had been “thoughts of whether I could be charged as a co-conspirator to espionage, which is serious.”

“That doesn’t seem to be the thinking within the United States anymore, however,” he added. He did not elaborate.

But on Wednesday, Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina, said on Fox News that WikiLeaks itself should be prosecuted for its role, saying, “As far as I know, there’s no immunity for a Web site to be able to pass on documents” that were illegally leaked.

At a Senate Judiciary Committee oversight hearing on Wednesday, Senator Jon Kyl, Republican of Arizona, pressed the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Robert S. Mueller III, to say whether he expected that prosecutors would charge “both the individuals who provided the information and those who might have been involved in the dissemination of the information.”

Mr. Mueller demurred, saying that “at this juncture, I can’t say as to where that particular investigation will lead.”

Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. was similarly vague about prosecutorial plans, telling reporters in Egypt, where he is on a trip, that what the leak inquiry “will lead to, whether there will be criminal charges brought, will depend on how the investigation goes.”

Still, several legal specialists in matters related to leaks of classified information say that prosecuting Mr. Assange or WikiLeaks on charges that they had violated the Espionage Act would face many hurdles, from the diplomatic difficulty in persuading a country to arrest and extradite Mr. Assange to an array of legal defenses he could mount if the United States managed to detain him. Mr. Assange is an Australian activist who has operated in various European cities.

Susan Buckley, a partner at the law firm Cahill Gordon & Reindel who specializes in communications law, said the Espionage Act had rarely been used and so there were few guides for how such a novel case would play out. For example, it is not clear whether the law applies to foreigners for actions overseas, although she noted that in a 1985 case, a judge ruled that the law did apply abroad.

It would also be highly unusual to use the law to go after the recipient and disseminator of a leak, rather than just the person who provided the information. Several
scholars said they were aware of only one previous attempt to bring such a prosecution — the 2005 indictment of two former staff members of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee who were accused of passing on information about American policy toward Iran from a military analyst to Israel.

In 2009, prosecutors dropped the case after several court rulings that they said had sharply diminished the likelihood that they would win a conviction. But the Aipac case was controversial from the start, in part because it was seen as a step toward prosecuting journalists who write about classified matters, and a prosecution of Mr. Assange and WikiLeaks could also raise First Amendment issues.

A military spokesman noted that the Army had legal jurisdiction only over service members, and so any decision to prosecute WikiLeaks would be up to the Justice Department. A spokesman said the Justice Department would “not speculate on where the investigation may or may not lead or various other hypothetical scenarios.”

Mr. Assange has not said where he obtained the documents. But a military intelligence analyst, Pfc. Bradley Manning, has been charged with leaking other classified documents and videos that have appeared on the WikiLeaks Web site.

The disclosure of documents containing the names of Afghan informants, which was reported Tuesday in The Times of London, could further complicate the Obama administration’s efforts to manage the course of the war in Afghanistan.

A search by The New York Times on Wednesday also turned up several examples.

In one 2007 report, for instance, a military officer discussed meeting with a person who was named in the report, who claimed to have worked with allied forces and wanted to continue doing so. The Times withheld details that could identify the man.

In another 2007 report, American troops met privately with an Afghan official, who was named in the report, who told the Americans about the recent movements of a local militant leader and his heavily armed force. The report also identified several other informants who were part of the official’s network.

Richard A. Oppel Jr. contributed reporting from Kabul, and Andrew W. Lehren contributed research from New York.
Leaked Afghan War Reports Heighten European Doubts

By JUDY DEMPSEY

BERLIN — The revelations contained in newly released U.S. military documents on the war in Afghanistan have led to parliamentary demands in Berlin and London for expanded inquiries into the war that some analysts say could increase pressure in Europe for accelerated troop withdrawals.

But there were signs on Wednesday that the secret military documents might not have any immediate impact on a war that the major parties appear resigned to pursue, at least in the short term: Lawmakers in Washington vigorously debated the documents on Tuesday but then voted to continue financing the Afghan and Iraq wars.

Still, with European publics largely opposed to the Afghan war, the documents — with their grim and granular picture of the war’s ground-level challenges — appear certain to exacerbate deeply held doubts, the analysts said.

“The documents show a disconnect between what is happening between the government debate, the people in the field and the public narrative,” said Lisa Aronsson, a trans-Atlantic specialist with the Royal United Services Institute in London. “The leaks could accelerate the process of withdrawal.”

“This is not welcome news for the allies,” she added.

The documents, provided by the WikiLeaks Web site and reported Monday by The New York Times, The Guardian of London and Der Spiegel of Germany, contain suggestions of at least semiofficial Pakistani support for the Taliban and describe the covert and highly targeted efforts of U.S special forces to eliminate enemy figures.

Stephen Flanagan, senior vice president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said some details of special forces operations would add to European doubts on NATO strategy.

“The Europeans, for example, are queasy about these special operations, as if the troops are involved in a kind of dirty war,” he said.

In one early tangible sign that the leaks will heighten scrutiny of the Afghan conflict, a parliamentary panel in London, the House of Commons’ defense select committee, decided this week to widen its inquiry of the war.

Britain, with 9,500 soldiers in Afghanistan, has said it will end its combat mission by 2015.

The Guardian quoted Whitehall sources as saying that the widened inquiry was likely to examine whether that timetable was realistic and whether it should begin next year.

In Germany, the opposition Left Party on Wednesday renewed its call for the government to withdraw all its 4,665 troops from Afghanistan. “The documents make clear why we should not have any part in this war,” said Wolfgang Gehrcke, the party’s foreign affairs spokesman.
Other lawmakers, citing the WikiLeaks disclosures, have demanded a review of the parliamentary mandate for the German troop presence.

“What the documents show is that the German government has never been prepared to tell the truth about Afghanistan, particularly the civilian deaths and the use of special forces to target insurgents,” said Hans-Christian Ströbele, a Green Party member who serves on the Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee. “That was not the mandate for our troops.”

The leaked documents suggested that there has been close collaboration between Task Force 373, an elite U.S. combat unit trained to kill Taliban and insurgents who attack allied forces, and Task Force 47, an elite unit of the German Army.

When lawmakers asked the government recently about the two elite forces, it played down the sensitivity of the American unit’s role, saying that the “core mission” of Task Force 373 was to “conduct reconnaissance and identify individuals who are part of Al Qaeda or the Taliban leadership.”

The role of Task Force 47 is highly sensitive, potentially conflicting with the parliamentary mandate for German troops that speaks vaguely only of providing stability in Afghanistan.

“No one in the government has shown any leadership in explaining the real nature of this war,” Mr. Ströbele said. “I hope the leaked documents will change that.”

Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, the German defense minister, was criticized this week for his reluctance to explain the role of Task Force 47.

German press accounts said the documents disclosed that the Americans’ Task Force 373 was stationed in the German-controlled Mazar-i-Sharif camp, which could provoke attacks on the camp and might violate the German mandate.

Some documents’ depictions of fierce fighting in areas of German deployment go far beyond the scant detail on the war the German public normally hears.

But reaction in France, another key member of the NATO coalition, has been much more muted, said Justin Vaïsse, director of research for the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

“It’s nothing in magnitude compared with what happened two years ago, in August ’08, when 10 French soldiers were killed in a firefight with the Taliban,” Mr. Vaïsse said. That, he said, had “really prompted soul-searching about the French presence in Afghanistan and also prompted debate in the National Assembly. Here we have nothing of the sort.”

James Carafano, a foreign policy specialist at the conservative Heritage Foundation in Washington, said the WikiLeaks story had fed into existing views.

“I don’t think it’s going to be a game-changer in European opinion,” he said.

NATO spokesmen declined to comment on Wednesday on the leak of the secret military reports, which were compiled between January 2004 and December 2009.

In Washington, the leak was mentioned repeatedly in a vigorous debate in the House of Representatives on a bill to provide $37 billion for the Afghan and Iraq wars.
Democrats revealed deepening anxiety over the course of the Afghan conflict. Still, the measure passed, by 308 votes to 114, with strong Republican support. Administration officials said the bill’s passage showed that the document leak had not jeopardized congressional support for the war.

_Brian Knowlton and Carl Hulse contributed reporting from Washington._

---This article was originally published on July 28, 2010
Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the release of classified military documents endangered Afghans who had aided American forces.

By ERIC SCHMITT and DAVID E. SANGER
WASHINGTON — Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates said Sunday that an announcement by the Taliban that they were going through classified military dispatches from Afghanistan posted by the Web site WikiLeaks “basically proves the point” that the disclosures put at risk the lives of Afghans who had aided American forces.

“Growing up in the intelligence business, protecting your sources is sacrosanct,” said Mr. Gates, a former director of the C.I.A. He said that while it was up to the Justice Department to investigate who supplied the documents to the Web site, run by Julian Assange, an Australian activist who is an outspoken opponent of American and NATO involvement in Afghanistan, he had been “mortified, appalled” at Mr. Assange’s willingness to make public documents that listed the names of individual Afghans.

“There’s also a moral culpability,” he told Christiane Amanpour, in her debut as the host of ABC’s “This Week.” “And that’s where I think the verdict is guilty on WikiLeaks. They have put this out without any regard whatsoever for the consequences.”
Senator Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat who heads the Armed Services Committee, said on CNN’s “State of the Union” that the Pentagon was assessing the disclosure’s impact on operational security in Afghanistan. “There quite clearly was damage,” Mr. Levin said.

The New York Times, The Guardian in London and Der Spiegel in Germany published excerpts of the leaked documents, but excluded those that identified individuals or compromised operations. The Times also agreed to forward a request by the administration urging WikiLeaks not to post any documents that would put informants in jeopardy.

As the authorities continued their investigation into the source of the leaks, a Seattle-based software developer who has volunteered for WikiLeaks said he was detained at Newark Liberty International Airport on Thursday and questioned for three hours. The developer, Jacob Appelbaum, 27, said in an interview that as he was returning from an overseas trip, agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and from the Army’s criminal investigation division asked him about Mr. Assange.

Mr. Appelbaum, an American citizen, said the agents also seized his laptop computer and three cellphones. The laptop was later returned, but the phones were not, he said. Officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, part of the Department of Homeland Security, would not comment.

Two American civilians interviewed in recent weeks by the Army’s criminal division said that investigators were focusing in part on a group of friends who know Pfc. Bradley Manning, a leading suspect in the leak. Investigators, the civilians said, apparently believe that the friends, who include students from M.I.T. and Boston University, might have connections to WikiLeaks.

Mr. Appelbaum said Sunday that he was not involved with that group. He also said he never met or communicated with Private Manning, who has been charged in a separate case with disclosing to WikiLeaks a classified video of an American helicopter attack in Iraq.

Mr. Appelbaum said the agents at Newark Airport refused him access to a lawyer and threatened to detain him for similar questioning whenever he re-entered the country after traveling abroad, which he said he did twice a month for a day job as an online software developer.

“They questioned my ability to re-enter the U.S. even though I’m a U.S. citizen,” he said in a telephone interview from Las Vegas. “It’s very troubling to think that every time I cross the border, I’d get this treatment.”

Mr. Appelbaum, who develops software for the Tor Project, a software system that allows people to talk anonymously to each other online, filled in for Mr. Assange at a conference last month, apparently because Mr. Assange did not want to enter the United States. “It seems the only reason they’re bothering me is that Julian is beyond their reach,” Mr. Appelbaum said.

Mr. Appelbaum said he had been a volunteer for WikiLeaks for several months, but
was not involved in reviewing information submitted to it. Investigators, however, appear to be examining whether Mr. Assange was assisted by others in obtaining the documents.

—This article was originally published on August 1, 2010
The Defense Department’s Response

Following is the response to the WikiLeaks documents from Geoff Morrell, the Defense Department press secretary:

“We deplore WikiLeaks for inducing individuals to break the law, leak classified documents and then cavalierly share that secret information with the world, including our enemies. We know terrorist organizations have been mining the leaked Afghan documents for information to use against us, and this Iraq leak is more than four times as large. By disclosing such sensitive information, WikiLeaks continues to put at risk the lives of our troops, their coalition partners and those Iraqis and Afghans working with us. The only responsible course of action for WikiLeaks at this point is to return the stolen material and expunge it from their Web sites as soon as possible.

“We strongly condemn the unauthorized disclosure of classified information and will not comment on these leaked documents other than to note that ‘significant activities’ reports are initial, raw observations by tactical units. They are essentially snapshots of events, both tragic and mundane, and do not tell the whole story. That said, the period covered by these reports has been well chronicled in news stories, books and films, and the release of these field reports does not bring new understanding to Iraq’s past.

“However, it does expose secret information that could make our troops even more vulnerable to attack in the future. Just as with the leaked Afghan documents, we know our enemies will mine this information, looking for insights into how we operate, cultivate sources and react in combat situations, even the capability of our equipment. This security breach could very well get our troops and those they are fighting with killed.”

—This article was originally published on October 22, 2010
WikiLeaks Founder Gets Support in Rebuking U.S. on Whistle-Blowers

By JOHN F. BURNS and RAVI SOMAIYA
LONDON — Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks founder, and Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers, lashed out together on Saturday at the Obama administration's aggressive pursuit of whistle-blowers, including those responsible for the release of secret documents on the Iraq war.

Mr. Assange also said that WikiLeaks, which released the trove of almost 400,000 Iraq war documents on Friday, would shortly be posting an additional 15,000 remaining secret documents on the Afghan war.

Mr. Assange, speaking at a news conference in a London hotel a stone’s throw from the headquarters of Britain’s foreign intelligence agency, MI6, was joined by Mr. Ellsberg, 79, the former military analyst who leaked a 1,000-page secret history of the Vietnam War in 1971 that became known as the Pentagon Papers.

Mr. Ellsberg, who said he had flown overnight from California to attend, described Mr. Assange admiringly as “the most dangerous man in the world” for challenging governments, particularly the United States. He said the WikiLeaks founder had been “pursued across three continents” by Western intelligence services and compared the Obama administration’s threat to prosecute Mr. Assange to his own treatment under President Richard M. Nixon.

Both men hit out at what they described as the Obama administration’s aggressive pursuit of whistle-blowers, which Mr. Ellsberg said put the United States on a path to the kind of repressive legal framework that Britain has under its broad Official Secrets Act. He said the criminal investigations under President Obama of three Americans accused of leaking government secrets represented a new low.

The three men he was referring to were Pfc. Bradley Manning, a former military intelligence analyst suspected of providing the documents on Afghanistan and Iraq to WikiLeaks; Thomas Drake, an official with the National Security Agency who was indicted this year; and Shamai Kedem Leibowitz, an F.B.I. linguist who pleaded guilty to leaking five classified documents in late 2009.

Mr. Ellsberg said the Pentagon’s demand that Mr. Assange “return” any classified materials in his possession was carefully couched in language similar to that used in the aftermath of the Pentagon Papers release, when he was threatened with criminal prosecution for espionage. “Secrecy,” Mr. Ellsberg said, “is essential to empire.”

Mr. Assange also dismissed what he described as the Pentagon’s deliberately “nonchalant” reaction to his release of the Iraq documents on Friday. He said they “constituted the most comprehensive and detailed account of any war ever to have entered the public record.”

The Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell condemned the Iraq leak on Friday, saying
that these documents, and a previous WikiLeaks release of classified material on the war in Afghanistan, were a gift to “terrorist organizations” and “put at risk the lives of our troops.” But he also played down the historical significance of the latest leak, characterizing the reports as “mundane” and saying that much of the material had been well chronicled in past accounts of the war.

Mr. Assange said the response was “not credible,” since the comment was issued before the Pentagon could feasibly have read the vast archive posted on the organization’s Web site on Friday night. He said the statement had been “an attempt to act in a nonchalant manner” to convey the sense that the documents were “of no consequence.”

He said that the documents showed “Iraq was a bloodbath on every corner,” and that they chronicled 15,000 previously unknown civilian deaths there. Adding those deaths to 107,000 others that had been recorded by the group Iraq Body Count, WikiLeaks has estimated the civilian toll since 2003 at more than 120,000. That, he said, put the human cost of the Iraq conflict five times higher than that of Afghanistan.

Mr. Ellsberg, who described Iraq as a “hopeless, deadly, stalemated war,” said many of the civilian deaths there could be counted as murder.

—This article was originally published on October 23, 2010
Leaked Reports Stir Political Disputes in Iraq

By JACK HEALY and JOHN LELAND

BAGHDAD — The release of thousands of classified Iraq war records quickly became part of Iraq’s fraught political terrain on Saturday, with Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki denouncing the leak as a move to derail his bid for a second term.

Mr. Maliki, who has been mired in a stalemate with his political rivals since parliamentary elections last March, defended his administration against allegations it had permitted the abuse of prisoners and other misuses of power. In a statement, he dismissed the records as a politically timed smear and a series of “media games and bubbles.”

“The Iraqi people know who their leaders are,” he said.

His opponents called the records an indictment of his administration, and some compared the accounts of whippings and beatings of prisoners by Iraqi guards, often under the gaze of Americans, to the grisly tactics of Saddam Hussein.

Much of the attention focused on a report from October 2006, shortly after Mr. Maliki took office, that describes the arrest of 17 men wearing Iraqi Army uniforms in Baghdad’s Mansour neighborhood on suspicion of committing robberies. According to the report published by WikiLeaks, the men said they were Iraqi Special Forces “working for the prime minister’s office.”

Mr. Maliki’s political opponents said the report supported their claims that the prime minister had used state forces for nefarious ends.

“For years we have been talking about the armed groups that are working under the name of the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense that have direct connections with some leaders in the government,” said Maysoon al-Damluji, a spokeswoman for Iraqiya, the secular political bloc that finished first in Iraq’s March 7 elections, slightly ahead of Mr. Maliki’s State of Law bloc.

She also said that the reports of abuses of Iraqi prisoners by Iraqi soldiers and police officers were a powerful indictment of Mr. Maliki’s government.

“I do not think that Maliki has any chance for the prime minister’s position, now he only has Iran and the Sadrists,” she said, referring to the party of the anti-American Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr, who endorsed Mr. Maliki’s list of candidates this month, giving him an edge.

The reports threatened to further divide Iraq along sectarian lines. For many Sunnis, they confirmed longstanding allegations of abuse at the hands of Mr. Maliki’s Shiite-led government.

“We have said, and say again, that Maliki should be sentenced to justice and be held accountable for what he has done to the Iraqi people,” said Waleed Aboud al-Mohamadi, a member of Parliament from Anbar Province.

Mr. Maliki and his partisans rejected the allegations, insisting that they had followed the law and denying any abuse of prisoners. They also tried to discredit the
leaked documents. “These are all just fakes from the Internet and Photoshop,” said Hassan al-Sneid, a leader of Mr. Maliki’s governing State of Law coalition. “This is just to be seen in the context of a war against Maliki.”

The Pentagon, while deploring the release of the documents, has not challenged their authenticity.

*Duraid Adnan contributed reporting from Baghdad, and an Iraqi employee of The New York Times from Anbar Province.*
V. Aftermath

“Watchdog journalists have always eagerly accepted leaks of classified information, but it has usually arrived in dribs and drabs. Now they have been joined by a new counterculture of information vigilantes who promise disclosures by the terabyte. Today, a bureaucrat can hide a library’s worth of documents on a key fob and scatter them over the Internet to a dozen countries during a cigarette break.”

—from “Can the Government Keep A Secret?”
by Scott Shane
How Our Diplomats Think

By DAVID SANGER
Can the Government Keep a Secret?

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How Our Diplomats Think

By DAVID E. SANGER

When Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, celebrated the initial disclosure of selections from his vast trove of 251,287 State Department cables he left little doubt as to his motive. “This document release reveals the contradictions between the U.S.’s public persona and what it says behind closed doors,” Assange wrote on the group’s Web site. The cables, he asserted, showed duplicity and mendacity in action, including “the extent of U.S. spying on its allies and the U.N.; turning a blind eye to corruption and human rights abuse in ‘client states’; backroom deals with supposed neutral countries; lobbying for U.S. corporations.”

Examples of each of those emerge, of course, in the flood of cable traffic between Washington and its far-flung embassies and consulates. Like hospital operating rooms and hotel kitchens, the engine room of global diplomacy can be stomach-churning at times. Yet when historians mine this trove for a glimpse of America’s dealings with the world in the early days of Barack Obama’s presidency, the surprise may be that in their everyday work American diplomats largely do what they say they are doing. They seem less cynical than one might expect for people who deal daily with petty dictators, maddening bureaucracies and reluctant allies. They are often eloquent and occasionally entertaining. Consider the riotous account of an over-the-top wedding in Dagestan where the president of Chechnya was a guest or the description of how Libya’s leader, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, steers clear of elevators and won’t go anywhere without his Ukrainian nurse.

“Broadly, America’s diplomats come across as insightful and less gray than in the popular imagining,” concluded David Gordon, a senior American intelligence official who ran the State Department’s office of policy planning during the period of time covered by many of the WikiLeaks cables. “But mostly,” he added, “they appear as problem-solvers” — neither the cunning imperialists portrayed by America’s many critics around the world nor the staunch advocates for American values that some would like them to be.

More important, the picture of American foreign policy circa 2010 drawn from these quarter-million cables is one of utter pragmatism — with an almost instinctive disdain for ideology. There are few echoes of George W. Bush’s second inaugural address, only five years earlier, which promised to make “the expansion of freedom in all the world” America’s next great mission. There is little talk of American exceptionalism. The cables make it easy to understand why even some insiders in the Obama administration, when speaking with the protective cloak of anonymity, concede that two years after the president’s inauguration, his administration’s world view is still under construction.

Perhaps that sensibility reflects the moment: nine years after the invasion of
Afghanistan and seven after the toppling of Saddam Hussein, the diplomats whose prose leaked from the electronic ether seem tired of defending grand American goals. The WikiLeaks cache does not include top secret documents, or cover the doings of officials outside the State Department, but even if it doesn’t give a full picture of American foreign policy it gives a clear one. The policy makers readers meet are no longer trying to make the world safe for democracy or plotting regime change, much less the expansion of Pax Americana. More often than not, America’s diplomats seem to be writing from a defensive crouch. Meeting by meeting, cable by cable, they are trying to extract the United States from two wars that have sapped American influence; attempting to cajole Pakistani or Afghan politicians without stoking more anti-Americanism on the streets of Islamabad or Kabul; trying to deflect Chinese claims of “exclusive territory” in the Yellow Sea without worsening the inevitable frictions between an established power and a rising one. They are forever trying to put a little spine in the Europeans to help out with more troops or money, cajole the Israelis to become more flexible or convince the Japanese that giving in to domestic pressure to throw American forces off their archipelago might not be in the long-term interest of a country surrounded by hostile powers.

In most of those cases, the analysis of what is going wrong seems sensible, and the diplomacy to set it right ranges from the competent to the highly impressive. “When dysfunctional does not begin to describe our political system and institutions,” Prof. Stephen Kotkin of Princeton concluded after reading a sampling of the cables, “something in the government is really working — the State Department — far better than anyone thought.”

Still, Assange’s accusation was not all wrong. Certainly the cables reveal some element of deception, or at least daily shadings of the truth in the name of protecting American interests. In the Bush years, the cables strongly suggest that American officials tacitly accepted a secret arms pipeline that ran from Ukraine to southern Sudan; America’s subsequent demand for a crackdown when the arms trafficking became public now looks rather hypocritical. And long after Obama took office, promising a new era of “transparency,” Washington refused to make public its belief that some Pakistani military units were responsible for gross human rights abuses, or its suspicions that high-ranking Chinese officials knew about cyberattacks launched on the United States from Chinese soil. Nor did Obama’s State Department countermand the C.I.A.’s insistence that American diplomats at the United Nations provide the intelligence agencies with the credit card data or frequent-flyer numbers of some of their foreign counterparts. “It was a boneheaded request,” one American diplomat said, adding that when he got it, “I threw it in the trash.”

In Europe, many reporters, editors and readers dug into the cables for further
examples of official doublespeak, and it was not hard to find. According to Javier Moreno, the editor of El País, the Spanish newspaper, which published its own excerpts from the cables, the documents revealed that “none of the Western powers believes that Afghanistan can become a credible nation in the medium term, and much less become a viable democracy, despite the stated aims of those whose soldiers are fighting and dying there.” American officials, he wrote, knew that their allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan were “awash with corruption,” but rarely admitted as much in public.

All true. But it didn’t exactly take WikiLeaks to expose the fact that official optimism about the West’s experiment in Afghanistan has run headlong into the realities of a dysfunctional, corrupt state. Nor is it news that Obama has moved the goal posts for success. Since 2007, there has been a flood of articles and books, and even a few movies, documenting the failures and the frustrations. The cables confirm what was long suspected: government officials largely shared the gloomy assessment. What we didn’t know were the details of such assessments, and it is the details that paint such a fascinating picture of the day-to-day grind of American diplomacy at work.

If there’s one recurrent theme to the cables, it’s the sobering one that American power is limited, and growing more so in an age of austerity. Whether the subject is global warming or containing Iran, isolating North Korea or aiding Darfur, the reality is that no single nation, or even bloc of nations, has the leverage anymore to drive the international agenda. “There’s a recognition in these cables that you won’t be able to create perfect organizations or perfect outcomes,” said William Burns, the undersecretary of state for policy. “But that’s what diplomacy is about — defining American interests, but knowing that if you are willing to sing in a chorus, you get more done than when you are singing solo.”

That reality drives some politicians to distraction, especially those who preach American exceptionalism. But the themes of limited American influence that spill out of many of the most recent cables clearly reflect the world view of a young new president who is trying to adjust his country to the new realities. He said as much in an address to the nation about Afghanistan at West Point at the end of his first year in office. “I refuse to set goals that go beyond our responsibility, our means, or our interests,” Obama told the country then, making the case that the American commitment to Afghanistan could not be “open-ended.” The United States, he warned, had forgotten Dwight D. Eisenhower’s warning about the need to maintain a “balance” between commitments at home and commitments abroad. “The nation I’m most interested in building is our own,” Obama said at the time.

In campaigning for office, Obama also vowed to restore “engagement” to American foreign policy. Too often, he argued, America made demands of others but didn’t listen to them. Of course, engagement can take many forms, from friendly to wary, naïve to
cunning, and it was never quite clear how the idea could translate from a campaign critique of the Bush style to a practical approach to the world.

The cables drawn from the first 13 months of the Obama presidency provide an answer. Obama’s style seems to be: Engage, yes, but wield a club as well — and try to counter the global skepticism that a young, inexperienced president is willing to use force. Diplomatic engagement, Obama-style, is a complicated mixture of openness to negotiation and constantly escalating pressure, combined with a series of deadlines. Some are explicit, and some are vague. But hundreds of cables provide a close look at an administration trying to use all these tools.

In Russia, for example, the policy of engagement yielded early results. The president began immediate negotiations on arms reductions, hoping that the resulting treaty would pave the way for a series of other agreements that could inch the world toward vastly reducing, and eventually eliminating, stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The cables tell a fascinating tale of intelligence-sharing with the Russians on missile threats from Tehran and Pyongyang. And there are hints of horse-trading as the Obama administration sank the Bush-era plans for a missile defense site in Poland, seemingly to win Moscow’s support for sanctions on Iran.

But the cables also show that engagement has its limits — especially when dealing with a recalcitrant regional power like Iran. Obama reached out to Iran early, with little response. So, as the cables show, he started upping the pressure on the mullahs. Even as the shadow-dancing about face-to-face negotiations played out, the cables show that Obama’s aides were drawing Arab states into an informal regional alliance intended to gradually close off Iran’s access to banks and ports.

Yet the cables leave open the critical question: What if persuasion and containment fail? Is Barack Obama, the man who came to office promising to extract America from Iraq, willing to risk a confrontation to keep Iran from getting a nuclear weapon? The cables never answer that question. It may be unanswerable until the day that one of Obama’s aides walks into the Oval Office and declares that time has run out, and Iran is finally ready to fabricate a weapon. “If you haven’t accomplished your goal, you are left with the unpalatable choice of extending the timeline, diminishing your objective or being forced to take the kind of military action you were attempting to avoid,” said David Rothkopf, who wrote a history of the National Security Council.

One could ask a similar question about Afghanistan and Pakistan. Yes, the president promised that America’s involvement would be limited in time and scope. He set a July 2011 deadline to begin withdrawing American troops, partly to mollify critics in his own party who argued that he was pursuing an unwinnable conflict, and partly as a whip to get President Hamid Karzai to train Afghan troops, so the United States can leave.

But the warning he gets in the cables is clear: Deadlines might make a president sound tough. They may play to the president’s base. But they rarely work. “We should be under no illusion,” the American ambassador in Pakistan, Anne Patterson, wrote in a
brutally clear-eyed secret analysis, “that this effort will not require a multi-year, multi-agency effort.” She went on to say that “in the final analysis, there is no short-cut to deal with the al-Qaeda problem in Pakistan and Afghanistan.” Even the escalating use of Predator drones to attack militants drew her skepticism. “The notion that precision or long-range counter-terrorism efforts can suffice are equally illusory,” she said. And no amount of money, she added, “will sever that link” between the Pakistani establishment and Afghanistan’s Taliban, as long as the Pakistanis believe that sooner or later, the Americans are going to leave the region. Her message was not that the task was hopeless, but that it might be endless. In short, it was the kind of cable that no new American president — especially one who inherited two wars and desperately wanted to disentangle the United States from both — ever wants to read.

Yet that is the sound of a diplomat describing the world as it is. It has rarely been heard so clearly, or broadcast so widely, as it was in November and December 2010. Yes, the cables were embarrassing. No doubt they will do some damage to American relationships, at least for a while. But they were also a reminder that sometimes, buried under all those layers of secrecy, all those piles of e-mail, one can find some ground truths.
Can the Government Keep a Secret?

By SCOTT SHANE

Last January, seven months before WikiLeaks became a staple of the news and a nemesis of the United States government, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton hailed the Internet as “a new nervous system for our planet.” “In many respects, information has never been so free,” she said in an address at the Newseum in Washington, criticizing Iran, China and other countries for trying to censor the Internet. “Even in authoritarian countries, information networks are helping people discover new facts and making governments more accountable.”

At about the same time, unbeknownst to Clinton, a young American soldier named Bradley Manning was embarking on his own experiment in government accountability. A troubled 22-year-old working as a low-level intelligence analyst, Manning almost echoed Clinton’s language in a later online chat, explaining why he had downloaded hundreds of thousands of military and State Department documents to share with the anti-secrecy activists of WikiLeaks. “Information should be free,” Manning told the former computer hacker who later turned him in to the authorities, Adrian Lamo, according to chat logs published by Wired magazine. “It belongs in the public domain.”

There is surely a moral distinction between using the Internet to speak out against a repressive government and using the same tool to bare the confidential documents of a democratic government. Yet the WikiLeaks affair has demonstrated that even the most open society has secrets whose disclosure can detonate powerfully, dominating the news and rattling international relations. The ground reports from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the approximately 2,500 confidential diplomatic cables made public by the year’s end — fewer than 1 percent of the 251,287 cables obtained by WikiLeaks — have already become a landmark in the permanent contest between openness and secrecy. And WikiLeaks’s clamorous appearance on the media landscape has posed a fundamental question: Has technology decisively now tipped the balance of power away from governments and toward individuals, undermining the very possibility of official secrecy?

Watchdog journalists have always eagerly accepted leaks of classified information, but it has usually arrived in dribs and drabs. Now they have been joined by a new counterculture of information vigilantes who promise disclosures by the terabyte. Today, a bureaucrat can hide a library’s worth of documents on a key fob and scatter them over the Internet to a dozen countries during a cigarette break. An activist can capture a political protest or an act of police brutality and post it to the world with no publishing infrastructure beyond a video-equipped smart phone.

“What is unique about this case, relative to other leaks in the past, is its size and breadth,” said Philip J. Crowley, the State Department spokesman, referring to the cable leaks. “In the past, somebody might have smuggled out a folder with a couple of pieces
of classified material and passed them to a single reporter. There was one story, some residual fallout, and then it was over. This is fundamentally different in that it touches every part of the world and every national interest. The marriage of the data, the technology and the media yields impact that is global, not local.”

Steven Aftergood, who runs the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists, said: “I do think it’s true that the large contours of national and international policy are much harder to keep secret today. It would not be possible to conduct a secret war in Cambodia, as took place in the Nixon administration.” Indeed, within hours of American missile strikes in Yemen against sites suspected of containing Al Qaeda camps last December, amateur video of the destruction was on YouTube. The videos labeled the strikes “American.” (The strikes have never been publicly acknowledged by the Defense Department.) Or consider the speed at which news travels. During the Iran-contra affair, American arms sales to Iran were first reported by a Lebanese weekly, Al Shiraa, in November 1986; it was a few days before the American press picked it up. “Now it would take a few minutes,” Aftergood said.

Yet there are compelling reasons to believe that the large-scale disclosures by WikiLeaks are not the harbinger of a new era of rampant and highly consequential leaking. WikiLeaks was founded in 2006 and had published thousands of documents before those Manning is accused of providing the organization. Only the unprecedented scale and classified content of the material first brought WikiLeaks to broad public notice. And if technology enabled those disclosures, technology can also make computers more leakproof. Chastened bureaucrats already have made fixes to prevent the hemorrhage of more documents.

In a sense, the WikiLeaks affair is an unintended consequence of the 2001 terrorist attacks. Several official reviews of the 9/11 attacks concluded that the hoarding of intelligence about Al Qaeda by various federal agencies prevented them from piecing together the plot. It was because of the subsequent push to share information more widely that a low-level Iraq war analyst — one of a half-million people with access to the Defense Department’s classified Siprnet system — could read State Department cables discussing topics that had nothing to do with his duties: Afghan government corruption, Chinese computer hacking, covert missile strikes in Yemen.

“This was a badly engineered answer to a problem we all knew we needed to fix,” said John J. Hamre, president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former deputy secretary of defense. The goal, he said, should be to redesign security measures to give individuals access only to the intelligence they need for their work. But that is a daunting technical challenge, and it may be difficult to achieve without crippling the information-sharing that many experts believe has made the government far more capable of detecting terrorist plots.
In addition to allowing haphazard access to the cables, the military did little to safeguard its computers against the kind of extensive downloading of data of which Manning is accused. “In terms of information security, I’d have to give them a failing grade,” said Chris Knotts, vice president for technology at the information-technology consulting firm Force 3 and a security expert. Both in private companies and in government agencies where data is protected, it is common to block USB ports and disable the recording capacity of CD and DVD drives to prevent the large-scale diversion of data. Such alterations, which might well have kept the cables secure, are now being belatedly made on many more computers across the Defense Department. The United States Central Command, for instance, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, has installed software to disable read-write drives on all classified computers; any exception requires the approval of a senior commander, said Pentagon officials.

In addition, the Pentagon is installing software to detect unusual downloads of data and requiring that two people sign on to move information from a classified to an unclassified computer system. “I don’t think you can get to 100 percent,” Knotts said, because a determined insider with a high-level clearance will probably find ways to defeat even sophisticated security measures. But such steps will make large-scale leaks far less likely, he concluded.

There are reasons beyond such technical fixes to believe that disclosures on the scale of the recent WikiLeaks case may not be repeated soon. One is Manning’s fate. He is among five government employees to be charged by the Obama administration with illegally revealing classified information to the media. That’s a record: no previous president has overseen more than a single such prosecution.

WikiLeaks set out with “a ‘Field of Dreams’ philosophy for inviting leaks — ‘If we build it, they will come,’” said Thomas S. Blanton, director of the National Security Archive at George Washington University, which obtains and publishes declassified government documents. “They tried to create a safe place for disclosures. But with Bradley Manning behind bars, who’s going to rush to follow his example?”

Members of Congress have pressed the Obama administration to find a way to prosecute WikiLeaks’s outspoken founder, Julian Assange, as well. The ferocious criticism of the group and of Assange, its cocky provocateur in chief, has been bipartisan. Representative Peter King, a New York Republican, asked the State Department to consider designating WikiLeaks a terrorist group; Senator Dianne Feinstein, the California Democrat who leads the Select Committee on Intelligence, called for espionage charges against Assange. Senator Joseph Lieberman, a Connecticut independent, called for an investigation of The New York Times because it published some of the material obtained by WikiLeaks.

But no recipient of leaked classified information — as opposed to the government leaker himself — has ever been successfully prosecuted, and such a case would face major legal and constitutional obstacles. Jack L. Goldsmith, a Harvard law professor who was a Justice Department official under President George W. Bush, has warned that
prosecuting Assange would endanger press freedom. Writing on the Lawfare blog about calls for a WikiLeaks prosecution, Goldsmith said that such an effort would be likely to fail. But a successful prosecution might be worse, he wrote: “Succeeding will harm First Amendment press protections, make a martyr of Assange, and invite further chaotic Internet attacks. The best thing to do — I realize that this is politically impossible — would be to ignore Assange and fix the secrecy system so this does not happen again.”

Yet even as the government seeks to rein in WikiLeaks and to plug security holes, WikiLeaks has quietly reined in itself. Its disclosures have been far more restrained than the group’s proclaimed dedication to total transparency might suggest. Sharply criticized in July by both government officials and human rights activists for endangering some informants of the American military in Afghanistan, WikiLeaks appears to have taken the lesson to heart. It used a computer program to strip out names from Iraq war documents it posted on the Web, greatly limiting both their value to researchers and the chance that they might put Iraqis at risk.

On the cables, too, contrary to the public statements of many critics, the group has proceeded cautiously. Had it chosen to do so, of course, WikiLeaks could have posted on the Web all of the quarter-million diplomatic cables some six months ago, when it obtained them. Instead, it shared the cables with traditional news organizations and has coordinated the cables’ release with them. By the end of 2010, it had published on its Web site fewer than 2,000 of the total cables in its possession, coordinating the initial releases with four European publications and The New York Times. “They’ve actually embraced the MSM,” or mainstream media, “which they used to treat as a cussword,” Blanton, the director of the security archive at George Washington University, said in mid-December. “I’m watching WikiLeaks grow up. What they’re doing with these diplomatic documents so far is very responsible.”

When the newspapers have redacted cables to protect diplomats’ sources, WikiLeaks has generally been careful to follow suit. The group’s volunteers appear to accept that not all government secrets are illegitimate; they have no interest in revealing the identities of Chinese dissidents, Russian journalists or Iranian activists who talked to American diplomats and whose exposure might subject them to prison or worse. Still, as more and more cables are published, the accidental exposure of vulnerable sources becomes steadily more likely. Moreover, given the varying political allegiances of WikiLeaks volunteers and foreign journalists, some publishers of the cables may not be inclined to redact the names of political adversaries, say, or American contractors, even if they could be put at risk.

In a December essay for the newspaper The Australian, Assange, a 39-year-old Australian citizen, portrayed himself as a journalist and declared his devotion to some core Western press values. “Democratic societies need a strong media and WikiLeaks is
part of that media,” he wrote. “The media helps keep government honest.”

But WikiLeaks has not quite joined the ranks of traditional publishing, and it may yet cast all restraint aside. Reaching back to his hacker roots, Assange created what he calls an “insurance” plan for his own future and that of WikiLeaks. The group has put on the Web, for downloading, encrypted files containing a huge trove of documents that have not yet been released. Thousands of people have downloaded the files. If the United States moves to prosecute, Assange has said, the group will release the encryption key, in effect making public tens of thousands of unredacted cables — and who knows what other dangerous secrets.

It is a 21st-century threat, and a serious one, according to Knotts, the security expert, who said he knows of no way the government could prevent such a release. It is one more challenge for the Obama administration as it negotiates the legal and political minefield that WikiLeaks has created.
VI. Opinions

“I can confirm that the situation in Afghanistan is complex, and defies any attempt to graft it onto easy-to-discern lessons or policy conclusions. Yet the release of the documents has led to a stampede of commentators and politicians doing exactly that.”

— from “Getting Lost in the Fog of War”
by Andrew Exum
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Introduction

By ANDREW ROSENTHAL

Andrew Rosenthal is the editorial page editor of The New York Times.

In the world of opinion journalism, the WikiLeaks documents landed like a brick in still water. Iraq, Afghanistan and other national security issues had dimmed as public issues, but the leaked documents brought them right back to center stage. Some of the reactions were predictable: There were those on the left for whom the documents proved that George W. Bush and Dick Cheney had committed war crimes, and revived hopes that they would some day be called to account. On the right, there were the expected calls for Julian Assange’s head, and the heads of the editors who printed articles about the documents. There was talk of treason and espionage prosecutions.

In fact, both positions were extreme and unjustified. The papers were remarkable, on the one hand, for their lack of shocking revelations. No bribery, no assassination plots, no skullduggery, at least in these documents. And it’s relatively obvious to anyone who takes a calm look at the papers that there was no treason or espionage involved in their publication and analysis by American news organizations. In the political mainstream, the arguments were more subtle and textured — focusing on what was actually learned in these documents and not just on their release.

For the New York Times Editorial Page, the release of the documents provided a chance to look at Iraq and Afghanistan directly through the eyes of the American government officials who are engaged in those two wars — and to assess what we found. What alarmed us most was the mountain of evidence showing that Pakistan was not just an unreliable and unsteady ally of the United States in Afghanistan, but something even more troubling. The documents confirmed what had often been reported anecdotally by journalists: Pakistan was actually and actively working to undermine United States interests in Afghanistan, harboring elements of Al Qaeda and the Taliban and working with those groups to maintain their political power and oppose the multi-national force in Afghanistan. The documents also supported a claim that officials had made privately to journalists, but was routinely denied by its subjects — some of America’s supposed stalwart allies in the Islamic world, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar, had become money laundering hubs for Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.

But it was not all bad news. While many people fretted about the effect of the package of leaked diplomatic cables on American interests, we found that they showed an administration that had generally been doing a good job in pursuing its interests in the Middle East and the broader world. Its efforts to contain Iran’s nuclear ambitions, for instance, stood out.

On the Times Op-Ed page, there was a steady stream of commentary on the WikiLeaks documents. Maureen Dowd wrote on July 27 about how the leaks on
Afghanistan confirmed “the awful truth: We’re not in control.” The more this country does “for our foreign protectorates,” she wrote, “the more angry they get about what we try to do.” Frank Rich wrote on July 31 that the public reaction to the Afghan papers “has largely been a shrug,” and suggested that was because Americans had already given up on that war. David Brooks wrote a penetrating column on Nov. 29 about the Julian Assange phenomenon, concluding that it may have been easy for Assange to reveal all of these documents because he is an “old-fashioned anarchist,” but in fact, the question is far more complicated than that. “For him, it’s easy, but for everyone else, it’s hard,” Brooks wrote.

Our outside Op-Ed contributions on WikiLeaks represented the broad range of opinion on the subject. Mitchell LaFortune, a former Army intelligence analyst, found that “there may be a benefit from the scrutiny the military is likely to face post-WikiLeaks.” But Paul Schroeder, a historian, was alarmed by the document dumps and compared the leaking of the diplomatic cables to “the work of irresponsible amateurs using dynamite to expand a tunnel that also contains, say, a city’s electrical lines.”

The argument over Assange’s motives and the value of the individual documents will go on. What is clear is that Assange’s use of the internet to accomplish these leaks changed the landscape of investigative journalism, perhaps permanently. They reinforced what government officials should have already known (despite their expressions of shock at the leaks), which is that what can be known will be known. The internet makes the knowing faster and broader and at least a bit more stunning.
Pakistan’s Double Game

There is a lot to be disturbed by in the battlefield reports from Afghanistan released Sunday by WikiLeaks. The close-up details of war are always unsettling, even more so with this war, which was so badly neglected and bungled by President George W. Bush.

But the most alarming of the reports were the ones that described the cynical collusion between Pakistan’s military intelligence service and the Taliban. Despite the billions of dollars the United States has sent in aid to Pakistan since Sept. 11, they offer powerful new evidence that crucial elements of Islamabad’s power structure have been actively helping to direct and support the forces attacking the American-led military coalition.

The time line of the documents from WikiLeaks, an organization devoted to exposing secrets, stops before President Obama put his own military and political strategy into effect last December. Administration officials say they have made progress with Pakistan since, but it is hard to see much evidence of that so far.

Most of the WikiLeaks documents, which were the subject of in-depth coverage in The Times on Monday, cannot be verified. However, they confirm a picture of Pakistani double-dealing that has been building for years.

On a trip to Pakistan last October, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton suggested that officials in the Pakistani government knew where Al Qaeda leaders were hiding. Gen. David Petraeus, the new top military commander in Afghanistan, recently acknowledged longstanding ties between Pakistan’s Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, known as the ISI, and the “bad guys.”

The Times’s report of the new documents suggests the collusion goes even deeper, that representatives of the ISI have worked with the Taliban to organize networks of militants to fight American soldiers in Afghanistan and hatch plots to assassinate Afghan leaders.

The article painted a chilling picture of the activities of Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul of Pakistan, who ran the ISI from 1987 to 1989, when the agency and the C.I.A. were together arming the Afghan militias fighting Soviet troops. General Gul kept working with those forces, which eventually formed the Taliban.

Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States said the reports were unsubstantiated and “do not reflect the current on-ground realities.” But at this point, denials about links with the militants are simply not credible.

Why would Pakistan play this dangerous game? The ISI has long seen the Afghan Taliban as a proxy force, a way to ensure its influence on the other side of the border and keep India’s influence at bay.

Pakistani officials also privately insist that they have little choice but to hedge their bets given their suspicions that Washington will once again lose interest as it did after the Soviets were ousted from Afghanistan in 1989. And until last year, when the Pakistani
Taliban came within 60 miles of Islamabad, the country’s military and intelligence establishment continued to believe it could control the extremists when it needed to.

In recent months, the Obama administration has said and done many of the right things toward building a long-term relationship with Pakistan. It has committed to long-term economic aid. It is encouraging better relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is constantly reminding Pakistani leaders that the extremists, on both sides of the border, pose a mortal threat to Pakistan’s fragile democracy — and their own survival. We don’t know if they’re getting through. We know they have to.

It has been only seven months since Mr. Obama announced his new strategy for Afghanistan, and a few weeks since General Petraeus took command. But Americans are increasingly weary of this costly war. If Mr. Obama cannot persuade Islamabad to cut its ties to, and then aggressively fight, the extremists in Pakistan, there is no hope of defeating the Taliban in Afghanistan.

—This editorial was originally published on July 26, 2010
*WikiLeacks and the Diplomats*

The business of diplomacy is often messy and when private communications become public, it can also be highly embarrassing.

But what struck us, and reassured us, about the latest trove of classified documents released by WikiLeaks was the absence of any real skullduggery. After years of revelations about the Bush administration’s abuses — including the use of torture and kidnappings — much of the Obama administration’s diplomatic wheeling and dealing is appropriate and, at times, downright skillful.

The best example of that is its handling of Iran. As the cables show, the administration has been under pressure from both Israel and Arab states to attack Tehran’s nuclear program pre-emptively. It has wisely resisted, while pressing for increasingly tough sanctions on Iran.

The Times and other news media have already reported much of this. What the cables add is sizzle: Defense Minister Ehud Barak of Israel warning that the world has just 6 to 18 months to stop Iran from building a nuclear weapon; King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia imploring Washington to “cut off the head of the snake”; Bahrain’s king warning that letting Iran’s program proceed was “greater than the danger of stopping it.”

The Israelis publicly raise the alarm all the time. Most Arab leaders never do. If they believe Iran poses a major threat, they need to tell their own people and work a lot harder to pressure Iran to abandon its program.

The cables also add insight into how the Obama administration has built the case for sanctions against Iran. To win China’s support, it got Saudi Arabia to promise Beijing a steady supply of oil. To win over Russia, it replaced a Bush-era missile defense plan with one that is just as effective that Moscow finds less threatening.

The administration may well be uncomfortable about disclosures of its wheeling and dealing to try to get governments to accept prisoners from Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Slovenia was told that taking a prisoner was the price for a meeting with President Obama. We wish that the White House had been as energetic and inventive in its attempts to get Congress to shut down the prison.

We were reassured to learn that Washington has been trying to persuade Pakistan to remove nuclear fuel from a reactor so it cannot be diverted for use in a terrorist’s weapon. And that the United States and South Korea are prudently discussing how to handle the potential collapse of North Korea. Disconcertingly, there is no sign that Washington or Seoul knew about the North’s recently disclosed uranium enrichment plant.

The Obama administration should definitely be embarrassed by its decision to continue a Bush administration policy directing American diplomats to collect the personal data — including credit card numbers and frequent flier numbers — of foreign officials. That dangerously blurs the distinction between diplomats and spies and is best left to the spies.
There are legitimate reasons for keeping many diplomatic conversations secret. The latest WikiLeaks revelations will cause awkward moments not least because they contain blunt assessments of world leaders. The claim by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton that the leaks threaten national security seems exaggerated. The documents are valuable because they illuminate American policy in a way that Americans and others deserve to see.

—This editorial was originally published on November 29, 2010
Follow the Money

Nine years after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, there is still a seemingly limitless stream of cash flowing to terrorist groups from private charities and contributors in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar. According to classified State Department cables recently released by WikiLeaks, governments in all three countries — all close American allies — are not doing enough to shut down that flow of money.

In a December 2009 cable to American diplomats in the region, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton warns that “donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide” and says that persuading Saudi leaders to treat this as a priority is “an ongoing challenge.”

The cable also said that while the Saudi government has taken important steps to criminalize terror financing and restrict the movement of money overseas, it still looks the other way when it comes to certain favored organizations. Fund-raising at pilgrimages to Mecca is believed to produce millions of dollars annually for extremists. The cable suggests an even more serious problem in Kuwait, where Islamic charities are largely unregulated. The three gulf states are also not doing enough to disrupt crimes, including drug trafficking and kidnappings for ransom, that produce revenue for terrorists.

After Sept. 11, Saudi Arabia turned a blind eye to the terrorist threat even though Osama bin Laden and 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi-born. Al Qaeda’s attempts in recent years to assassinate members of the Saudi royal family has had an impact. The Saudis increasingly share intelligence with Washington and in October provided the information that helped the United States find bombs being shipped to the United States on planes. Still, the kingdom needs to do more, including reforming an educational and political system where extremism is too often encouraged in mosques and schools.

Working with Qatar and Kuwait has apparently been even harder. In the same cable, Mrs. Clinton described Qatar as the “worst in the region” on counterterrorism and Kuwait as a “key transit point” for terrorist money. Kuwait is the only member of the Gulf Cooperation Council without a terrorist financing law. The cable also warns that weak regulatory oversight of the United Arab Emirates’ growing financial center makes it vulnerable to abuse by terror financiers.

For years, Arab governments thought they could buy off the extremists to keep them from attacking their countries — and experts say that may still be happening in some cases. As the attacks in Saudi Arabia make clear, there is no immunity. Al Qaeda and its allies are as determined to bring down moderate Muslim governments as they are to destroy the West.

None of these governments are known for political courage. Washington needs to keep reminding them that this is an issue of their own survival, while pressing them and others to share information, adopt tougher controls on money flows, and improve law enforcement.
Another problem is that terrorism can be done on the cheap. Al Qaeda’s branch in the Arabian Peninsula recently claimed on a Web site that the October parcel bomb operation cost just $4,200.

—This editorial was originally published on December 8, 2010
Banks and WikiLeaks

The whistle-blowing Web site WikiLeaks has not been convicted of a crime. The Justice Department has not even pressed charges over its disclosure of confidential State Department communications. Nonetheless, the financial industry is trying to shut it down.

Visa, MasterCard and PayPal announced in the past few weeks that they would not process any transaction intended for WikiLeaks. Earlier this month, Bank of America decided to join the group, arguing that WikiLeaks may be doing things that are “inconsistent with our internal policies for processing payments.”

The Federal Reserve, the banking regulator, allows this. Like other companies, banks can choose whom they do business with. Refusing to open an account for some undesirable entity is seen as reasonable risk management. The government even requires banks to keep an eye out for some shady businesses — like drug dealing and money laundering — and refuse to do business with those who engage in them.

But a bank’s ability to block payments to a legal entity raises a troubling prospect. A handful of big banks could potentially bar any organization they disliked from the payments system, essentially cutting them off from the world economy.

The fact of the matter is that banks are not like any other business. They run the payments system. That is one of the main reasons that governments protect them from failure with explicit and implicit guarantees. This makes them look not too unlike other public utilities. A telecommunications company, for example, may not refuse phone or broadband service to an organization it dislikes, arguing that it amounts to risky business.

Our concern is not specifically about payments to WikiLeaks. This isn’t the first time a bank shunned a business on similar risk-management grounds. Banks in Colorado, for instance, have refused to open bank accounts for legal dispensaries of medical marijuana.

Still, there are troubling questions. The decisions to bar the organization came after its founder, Julian Assange, said that next year it will release data revealing corruption in the financial industry. In 2009, Mr. Assange said that WikiLeaks had the hard drive of a Bank of America executive.

What would happen if a clutch of big banks decided that a particularly irksome blogger or other organization was “too risky”? What if they decided — one by one — to shut down financial access to a newspaper that was about to reveal irksome truths about their operations? This decision should not be left solely up to business-as-usual among the banks.

—This editorial was originally published on December 25, 2010
Getting Lost in the Fog of War

By ANDREW EXUM

Andrew Exum is a fellow at the Center for a New American Security.

Washington

ANYONE who has spent the past two days reading through the 92,000 military field reports and other documents made public by the whistle-blower site WikiLeaks may be forgiven for wondering what all the fuss is about. I’m a researcher who studies Afghanistan and have no regular access to classified information, yet I have seen nothing in the documents that has either surprised me or told me anything of significance. I suspect that’s the case even for someone who reads only a third of the articles on Afghanistan in his local newspaper.

Let us review, though, what have been viewed as the major revelations in the documents (which were published in part by The Times, The Guardian of London and the German magazine Der Spiegel):

First, there are allegations made by American intelligence officers that elements within Pakistan’s spy agency, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, have been conspiring with Taliban factions and other insurgents. Those charges are nothing new. This newspaper and others have been reporting on those accusations — often supported by anonymous sources within the American military and intelligence services — for years.

Second, the site provides documentation of Afghan civilian casualties caused by United States and allied military operations. It is true that civilians inevitably suffer in war. But researchers in Kabul with the Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict have been compiling evidence of these casualties, and their effect in Afghanistan, for some time now. Their reports, to which they add background on the context of the events, contributed to the decision by the former top commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, to put in place controversially stringent new measures intended to reduce such casualties last year.

Third, the site asserts that the Pentagon employs a secret task force of highly trained commandos charged with capturing or killing insurgent leaders. I suspect that in the eyes of most Americans, using special operations teams to kill terrorists is one of the least controversial ways in which the government spends their tax dollars.

The documents do reveal some specific information about United States and NATO tactics, techniques, procedures and equipment that is sensitive, and will cause much consternation within the military. It may even result in some people dying. Thus the White House is right to voice its displeasure with WikiLeaks.

Yet most of the major revelations that have been trumpeted by WikiLeaks’s founder, Julian Assange, are not revelations at all — they are merely additional examples
of what we already knew.

Mr. Assange has said that the publication of these documents is analogous to the publication of the Pentagon Papers, only more significant. This is ridiculous. The Pentagon Papers offered the public a coherent internal narrative of the conflict in Vietnam that was at odds with the one that had been given by the elected and uniformed leadership.

The publication of these documents, by contrast, dumps 92,000 new primary source documents into the laps of the world’s public with no context, no explanation as to why some accounts may contradict others, no sense of what is important or unusual as opposed to the normal march of war.

Many experts on the war, both in the military and the press, have long been struggling to come to grips with the conflict’s complexity and nuances. What is the public going to make of this haphazard cache of documents, many written during combat by officers with little sense of how their observations fit into the fuller scope of the war?

I myself first went to Afghanistan as a young Army officer in 2002 and returned two years later after having led a small special operations unit — what Mr. Assange calls an “assassination squad.” (I also worked briefly as a civilian adviser to General McChrystal last year.) I can confirm that the situation in Afghanistan is complex, and defies any attempt to graft it onto easy-to-discern lessons or policy conclusions. Yet the release of the documents has led to a stampede of commentators and politicians doing exactly that. It’s all too easy for them to find field reports to reaffirm their preconceived opinions about the war.

The Guardian editorialized on Sunday that the documents released reveal “a very different landscape ... from the one with which we have become familiar.” But whoever wrote that has not been reading the reports of his own newspaper’s reporters in Afghanistan.

The news media have done a good job of showing the public that the Afghan war is a highly complex environment stretching beyond the borders of the fractured country. Often what appears to be a two-way conflict between the government and an insurgency is better described as intertribal rivalry. And often that intertribal rivalry is worsened or overshadowed by the violent trade in drugs.

The Times, The Guardian and Der Spiegel did nothing wrong in looking over the WikiLeaks documents and excerpting them. Despite the occasional protest from the right wing, most of the press in the United States and in allied nations takes care not to publish information that might result in soldiers’ deaths.

But WikiLeaks itself is another matter. Mr. Assange says he is a journalist, but he is not. He is an activist, and to what end it is not clear. This week — as when he released a video in April showing American helicopter gunships killing Iraqi civilians in 2007 — he has been throwing around the term “war crimes,” but offers no context for the events he is judging. It seems that the death of any civilian in war, an unavoidable occurrence, is a “crime.”
If his desire is to promote peace, Mr. Assange and his brand of activism are not as helpful as he imagines. By muddying the waters between journalism and activism, and by throwing his organization into the debate on Afghanistan with little apparent regard for the hard moral choices and dearth of good policy options facing decision-makers, he is being as reckless and destructive as the contemptible soldier or soldiers who leaked the documents in the first place.

—This article was originally published on July 26, 2010
Lost in a Maze

By MAUREEN DOWD

Washington

THE waterfall of leaks on Afghanistan underlines the awful truth: We’re not in control. Not since Theseus fought the Minotaur in his maze has a fight been so confounding. The more we try to do for our foreign protectorates, the more angry they get about what we try to do. As Congress passed $59 billion in additional war funding on Tuesday, not only are our wards not grateful, they’re disdainful.

Washington gave the Wall Street banks billions, and, in return, they stabbed us in the back, handing out a fortune in bonuses to the grifters who almost wrecked our economy.

Washington gave the Pakistanis billions, and, in return, they stabbed us in the back, pledging to fight the militants even as they secretly help the militants.

We keep getting played by people who are playing both sides.

Robert Gibbs recalled that President Obama said last year that “we will not and cannot provide a blank check” to Pakistan.

But only last week, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton arrived in Pakistan to hand over a juicy check: $500 million in aid to the country that’s been getting a billion a year for most of this decade and in 2009 was pledged another $7.5 billion for the next five. She vowed to banish the “legacy of suspicion” and show that “there is so much we can accomplish together as partners joined in common cause.”

Gibbs argued that the deluge of depressing war documents from the whistle-blower Web site WikiLeaks, reported by The New York Times and others, was old. But it reflected one chilling fact: the Taliban has been getting better and better every year of the insurgency. So why will 30,000 more troops help?

We invaded two countries, and allied with a third — all renowned as masters at double-dealing. And, now lured into their mazes, we still don’t have the foggiest idea, shrouded in the fog of wars, how these cultures work. Before we went into Iraq and Afghanistan, both places were famous for warrior cultures. And, indeed, their insurgents are world class.

But whenever America tries to train security forces in Iraq and Afghanistan so that we can leave behind a somewhat stable country, it’s positively Sisyphean. It takes eons longer than our officials predict. The forces we train turn against us or go over to the other side or cut and run. If we give them a maximum security prison, as we recently did in Iraq, making a big show of handing over the key, the imprisoned Al Qaeda militants are suddenly allowed to escape.

The British Empire prided itself on discovering warrior races in places it conquered — Gurkhas, Sikhs, Pathans, as the Brits called Pashtuns. But why are they warrior cultures only until we need them to be warriors on our side? Then they’re untrainably
lame, even when we spend $25 billion on building up the Afghan military and the National Police Force, dubbed “the gang that couldn’t shoot straight” by Newsweek.

Maybe we just can’t train them to fight against each other. But why can’t countries that produce fierce insurgencies produce good standing armies in a reasonable amount of time? Is it just that insurgencies can be more indiscriminate?

Things are so bad that Robert Blackwill, who was on W.’s national security team, wrote in Politico that the Obama administration should just admit failure and turn over the Pashtun South to the Taliban since it will inevitably control it anyway. He said that the administration doesn’t appreciate the extent to which this is a Pashtun nationalist uprising.

We keep hearing that the last decade of war, where we pour in gazillions to build up Iraq and Afghanistan even as our own economy sputters, has weakened Al Qaeda.

But at his confirmation hearing on Tuesday before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Gen. James Mattis, who is slated to replace Gen. David Petraus, warned that Al Qaeda and its demon spawn represent a stark danger all over the Middle East and Central Asia.

While we’re anchored in Afghanistan, the Al Qaeda network could roil Yemen “to the breaking point,” as Mattis put it in written testimony.

Pakistan’s tribal areas “remain the greatest danger as these are strategic footholds for Al Qaeda and its senior leaders, including Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri,” the blunt four-star general wrote, adding that they “remain key to extremists’ efforts to rally Muslim resistance worldwide.”

Questioned by John McCain, General Mattis said that we’re not leaving Afghanistan; we’re starting “a process of transition to the Afghan forces.” But that process never seems to get past the starting point.

During the debate over war funds on Tuesday, Representative Jim McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat, warned that we are in a monstrous maze without the ball of string to find our way out.

“All of the puzzle has been put together, and it is not a pretty picture,” he told The Times’s Carl Hulse. “Things are really ugly over there.”

—This article was originally published on July 27, 2010
Kiss This War Goodbye

By FRANK RICH

IT was on a Sunday morning, June 13, 1971, that The Times published its first installment of the Pentagon Papers. Few readers may have been more excited than a circle of aspiring undergraduate journalists who’d worked at The Harvard Crimson. Though the identity of The Times’s source wouldn’t eke out for several days, we knew the whistle-blower had to be Daniel Ellsberg, an intense research fellow at M.I.T. and former Robert McNamara acolyte who’d become an antiwar activist around Boston. We recognized the papers’ contents, as reported in The Times, because we’d heard the war stories from the loquacious Ellsberg himself.

But if we were titillated that Sunday, it wasn’t immediately clear that this internal government history of the war had mass appeal. Tricia Nixon’s wedding in the White House Rose Garden on Saturday received equal play with the Pentagon Papers on The Times’s front page. On “Face the Nation” the guest was the secretary of defense, Melvin Laird, yet the subject of the papers didn’t even come up.

That false calm vanished overnight once Richard Nixon, erupting in characteristic rage and paranoia, directed his attorney general, John Mitchell, to enjoin The Times from publishing any sequels. The high-stakes legal drama riveted the nation for two weeks, culminating in a landmark 6-to-3 Supreme Court decision in favor of The Times and the First Amendment. Ellsberg and The Times were canonized. I sold my first magazine article, an Ellsberg profile, to Esquire, and, for better or worse, cast my lot with journalism. That my various phone conversations with Ellsberg prompted ham-fisted F.B.I. agents to visit me and my parents only added to the allure.

I mention my personal history to try to inject a little reality into the garbling of Vietnam-era history that has accompanied the WikiLeaks release of the Afghanistan war logs. Last week the left and right reached a rare consensus. The war logs are no Pentagon Papers. They are historic documents describing events largely predating the current administration. They contain no news. They will not change the course of the war.

About the only prominent figures who found serious parallels between then and now were Ellsberg and the WikiLeaks impresario, Julian Assange. They are hardly disinterested observers, but they’re on the mark — in large part because the impact of the Pentagon Papers on the Vietnam War (as opposed to their impact on the press) was far less momentous than last week’s chatter would suggest. No, the logs won’t change the course of our very long war in Afghanistan, but neither did the Pentagon Papers alter the course of Vietnam. What Ellsberg’s leak did do was ratify the downward trend-line of the war’s narrative. The WikiLeaks legacy may echo that. We may look back at the war logs as a herald of the end of America’s engagement in Afghanistan just as the Pentagon Papers are now a milestone in our slo-mo exit from Vietnam.

What was often forgotten last week is that the Pentagon Papers had no game-
changing news about that war either and also described events predating the then-current president. By June 1971, the Tet offensive and Walter Cronkite’s famous on-air editorial were more than three years in the past. The David Halberstam article that inspired “The Best and the Brightest” had already appeared in Harper’s. Lt. William Calley had been found guilty in the My Lai massacre exposed by Seymour Hersh in 1969. Just weeks before the Pentagon Papers surfaced, the Vietnam veteran John Kerry electrified the country by asking a Senate committee, “How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?” Most Americans had long been telling pollsters the war was a mistake. By the time the Pentagon Papers surfaced, a plurality also disapproved of how Vietnam was handled by Nixon, who had arrived in office promising to end the war.

The papers’ punch was in the many inside details they added to the war’s chronicle over four previous administrations and, especially, in their shocking and irrefutable evidence that Nixon’s immediate predecessor, Lyndon Johnson, had systematically lied to the country about his intentions and the war’s progress. Though Nixon was another liar, none of this incriminated him. His anger about the leak would nonetheless drive him to create a clandestine “plumbers” unit whose criminality (including a break-in at the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist) would lead to Watergate. Had Nixon not so violently overreacted that June — egged on by Henry Kissinger and fueled by his loathing of The Times and the antiwar movement — the story might have ebbed. Yes, the Pentagon Papers were labeled “top secret” — as opposed to the Afghanistan war logs’ “secret” status — but, as Richard Reeves writes in his book “President Nixon,” some 700,000 people in and out of government had clearance to read “top secret” documents. Compelling as the papers were, they were hardly nuclear code.

The public’s reaction to the Afghanistan war logs has largely been a shrug — and not just because they shared their Times front page with an article about Chelsea Clinton’s wedding. President Obama is, to put it mildly, no Nixon, and his no-drama reaction to the leaks robbed their publication of the constitutional cliffhanger of their historical antecedent. Another factor in the logs’ shortfall as public spectacle is the fractionalization of the news media, to the point where even a stunt packaged as “news” can trump journalistic enterprise. (Witness how the bogus Shirley Sherrod video upstaged The Washington Post’s blockbuster investigation of the American intelligence bureaucracy two weeks ago.) The logs also suffer stylistically: they’re often impenetrable dispatches from the ground, in contrast to the Pentagon Papers’ anonymously and lucidly team-written epic of policy-making on high.

Yet the national yawn that largely greeted the war logs is most of all an indicator of the country’s verdict on the Afghan war itself, now that it’s nine years on and has reached its highest monthly casualty rate for American troops. Many Americans at home have lost faith and checked out. The war places way down the list of pressing issues in every poll. Nearly two-thirds of those asked recently by CBS News think it’s going badly; the latest Post-ABC News survey finds support of Obama’s handling of Afghanistan at a low (45 percent), with only 43 percent deeming the war worth fighting.
Perhaps more telling than either these polls or the defection of liberal House Democrats from last week’s war appropriations bill are the signs of wobbling conservative support. The gung-ho neocon axis was predictably belligerent in denouncing WikiLeaks. But the G.O.P. chairman Michael Steele’s recent “gaffe” — his since-retracted observation that “a land war in Afghanistan” is doomed — is no anomaly in a fractured party where the antiwar Ron Paul may have as much currency as the knee-jerk hawk John McCain. On the night of the logs’ release, Fox News even refrained from its patented shtick of shouting “Treason!” at the “mainstream media.” Instead, the go-to Times-basher Bernie Goldberg could be found on “The O’Reilly Factor” telling Laura Ingraham, a guest host, that the war “has not been going well” and is a dubious exercise in “nation-building.”

Obama was right to say that the leaked documents “don’t reveal any issues that haven’t already informed our public debate in Afghanistan,” but that doesn’t mean the debate was resolved in favor of his policy. Americans know that our counterinsurgency partner, Hamid Karzai, is untrustworthy. They know that the terrorists out to attack us are more likely to be found in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia than Afghanistan. And they are starting to focus on the morbid reality, highlighted in the logs, of the de facto money-laundering scheme that siphons American taxpayers’ money through the Pakistan government to the Taliban, who then disperse it to kill Americans.

Most Americans knew or guessed the crux of the Pentagon Papers, too. A full year earlier the Senate had repealed the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution; no one needed a “top secret” smoking gun by 1971 to know that L.B.J. had lied about the Tonkin incident. The papers didn’t change administration war policy because we were already pulling out of Vietnam, however truculently and lethally (the Christmas 1972 bombing campaign, most notoriously). In 1971, the American troop level was some 213,000, down from a peak of 537,000 in 1968. By 1973 we were essentially done.

Unlike Nixon, Obama is still adding troops to his unpopular war. But history is not on his side either in Afghanistan or at home. The latest Gallup poll found that 58 percent of the country favors his announced timeline, with its promise to start withdrawing troops in mid-2011. It’s hard to imagine what could change that equation now.

Certainly not Pakistan. As the president conducts his scheduled reappraisal of his war policy this December, a re-examination of 1971 might lead him to question his own certitude of what he is fond of calling “the long view.” The Times won a Pulitzer Prize for its 1971 Pentagon Papers coup. But another of the Pulitzer that year went to the columnist Jack Anderson, who also earned Nixon’s ire by mining other leaks to expose the White House’s tilt to Pakistan in the Indo-Pakistani War. The one thing no one imagined back then was that four decades later it would be South Asia, not Southeast Asia, that would still be beckoning America into a quagmire.

—This article was originally published on July 31, 2010
In Pakistan, Echoes of American Betrayal

By MOHAMMED HANIF

Mohammed Hanif, a correspondent for the BBC Urdu Service, is the author of the novel “A Case of Exploding Mangoes.”

Karachi, Pakistan

PAKISTAN’S premier intelligence agency, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, has been accused of many bad things in its own country. It has been held responsible for rigging elections, sponsoring violent sectarian groups and running torture chambers for political dissidents. More recently, it has been accused of abducting Pakistanis and handing them over to the United States for cash.

But last week — after thousands of classified United States Army documents were released by WikiLeaks, and American and British officials and pundits accused the ISI of double-dealing in Afghanistan — the Pakistani news media were very vocal in their defense of their spies. On talk show after talk show, the ISI’s accusers in the West were criticized for short-sightedness and shifting the blame to Pakistan for their doomed campaign in Afghanistan.

Suddenly, the distinction between the state and the state within the state was blurred. It is our ISI that is being accused, we felt. How, we wondered, can the Americans have fallen for raw intelligence provided by paid informants and, in many cases, Afghan intelligence? And why shouldn’t Pakistan, asked the pundits, keep its options open for a post-American Afghanistan?

More generally, the WikiLeaks fallout brought back ugly memories, reminding Pakistanis what happens whenever we get involved with the Americans. In fact, one person at the center of the document dump is our primary object lesson for staying away from America’s foreign adventures.

Hamid Gul, now a retired general, led the ISI during the end years of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and together with his C.I.A. friends unwittingly in the 1990s spurred the mujahedeen to turn Kabul — the city they had set out to liberate — into rubble. According to the newly released documents, Mr. Gul met with Qaeda operatives in Pakistan in 2006 and told them to “make the snow warm in Kabul ... set Kabul aflame.”

This would seem highly sinister except that, today, Hamid Gul is nothing more than a glorified television evangelist and, as the columnist Nadir Hassan noted, “known only for being on half a dozen talk shows simultaneously.” He is also, for Pakistanis, a throwback to the lost years of our American-backed military dictatorships, a stark reminder of why we distrust the United States.

The ISI and the C.I.A. have colluded twice in the destruction of Afghanistan. Their complicity has brought war to Pakistan’s cities. After every round of cloak-and-dagger
games, they behave like a squabbling couple who keep getting back together and telling the world that they are doing it for the children’s sake. But whenever these two reunite, a lot of children’s lives are wrecked.

In the West, the ISI is often described as ideologically allied to the Taliban. But Pakistan’s military-security establishment has only one ideology, and it’s not Islamism. It’s spelled I-N-D-I-A. It will do anybody’s bidding if it’s occasionally allowed to show India a bit of muscle.

Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, the Pakistani Army chief, has just been given an unexpected three-year extension in his office, due in large part, it is said, to American pressure on Islamabad. Yet General Kayani headed the ISI during the period that the WikiLeaks documents cover. Since he became the head of the Pakistan Army — and a frequent host to Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — the number of drone attacks on Pakistani territory have increased substantially. It seems he has found a way to overcome his ISI past.

While he generally keeps a low profile, General Kayani in February gave an off-the-record presentation to Pakistani journalists. His point was clear: Pakistan’s military remains India-centric. His explanation was simple: we go by the enemy’s capacity, not its immediate intentions. This came in a year when Pakistan lost more civilians and soldiers than it has in any war with India.

Yet it has become very clear that an overwhelming majority of Pakistani people do not share the army’s India obsession or its yearning for “strategic depth” — that is, a continuing deadly muddle — in Afghanistan. They want a peaceful settlement with India over the disputed territory of Kashmir and a safer neighborhood. None of the leading parties in Parliament made a big deal about India, Afghanistan or jihad in their election campaigns. They were elected on promises of justice, transparency and reasonably priced electricity.

Lately, Americans seem to have woken up to the fact that there is something called a Parliament and a civil society in Pakistan. But even so, it seems that Americans are courting the same ruling class — the military elite’s civilian cousins — that has thrived on American aid and obviously wants an even closer relationship with Washington. A popular TV presenter who interviewed Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit later jibed, “What kind of close relationship is this? I don’t even get invited to Chelsea’s wedding?”

Pakistan’s military and civil elite should take a good look around before they pitch another marquee and invite their American friends over for tea and war talk. There are a lot of hungry people looking in, and the strung lights are sucking up electricity that could run a small factory, or illuminate a village. Besides, they’re not likely to know what WikiLeaks is — they’ve been too busy cleaning up after their masters’ guests.

---This article was originally published on July 31, 2010
Learning From WikiLeaks

By MITCHELL LaFORTUNE

Mitchell LaFortune, a former Army sergeant, was an intelligence analyst with the 82nd Airborne Division from 2006 to 2010.

Saco, Me.

LAST summer, as the nation’s war effort and attention turned from Iraq to Afghanistan, the new United States commander there, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, insisted that the struggle was not about killing the enemy or capturing ground, but instead a “war of perception.” Given the general’s recent firing, increasing deaths on the battlefield and the release last week of thousands of classified documents by WikiLeaks painting a dismal picture of the war effort, it is clear that we are losing badly in the war of perception.

I spent two deployments in Afghanistan writing strategic intelligence reports and briefings similar to what WikiLeaks just made public. True, what was leaked is not pleasant reading. Yet there is no question in my mind that the majority of analysts and officers who have served there, despite their political differences, believe not only that we should continue the fight but that we very much need to win it.

Why, then, have so many Americans come to a different conclusion recently — including the 114 House members who voted against President Obama’s war-financing bill on Tuesday? I think they fail to understand the complexity and scale of the war effort, which leads to a flawed analysis.

For example, many have bemoaned the rash of sophisticated attacks in eastern Afghanistan. But allied attention has been focused on the easier fight of evicting the Taliban from the agrarian provinces of the south, not combating the more complex enemy in the east, where insurgent networks capitalize on political and cultural differences that will require an entirely different counterinsurgency strategy.

Many people also operate from a faulty assumption about the war’s purpose. No matter what we’ve told the Afghans, the true goal of the American-led effort should not be to create a stable, honest government in Kabul. While that would be a great benefit, what’s vital is that we keep in place the robust intelligence and quick-strike military structure we have developed in the country and across the Pakistan border.

Without these human intelligence collectors, communications experts and small-scale military operations, we would free the Taliban in Pakistan to focus on overthrowing the government in Islamabad. If they were to accomplish that feat, Al Qaeda would be given all the time it needs to reconstitute its network and undertake more attacks against the United States and its allies.

That said, there may be a benefit from the scrutiny the military is likely to face post-WikiLeaks. There are many problems with the way we are managing this war. Far too often during my deployments — the first in 2007, the second last year — I watched
as operations were conducted out of logistical convenience rather than necessity. We often had troops avoid Taliban-controlled districts to limit civilian and military casualties. Because of the threat of homemade bombs, soldiers had to dress like Robocop while trying to interact with, and win the trust of, local leaders. And the rules of engagement are now so restrictive that I’m amazed that any insurgents were killed in the last year.

For years, the Western military’s main focus has been to disrupt the supply lines that provide the insurgents with improvised explosives. This emphasis protects our troops but does little for the Afghan population, specifically creating a secure environment that would allow for economic growth in key cities like Khost, Gardez and Kandahar. This is crucial: if we can’t revive the cities we will never make progress in the countryside, which is the ultimate battleground against the insurgents.

If we need a model, we should think about what Afghanistan was like in the 1970s. The country functioned relatively well with a weak central government, strong local leadership and a marginalized religious class. The resistance to the Soviet occupation, steeped in radical Islam, overturned that traditional power structure. By the time the Soviets left, the village mullah had a higher social standing than the tribal leader or local political representative. It was not hard to foresee the rise of the Taliban.

American and Afghan forces dislodged the Taliban government from Kabul in a matter of months, but they have done little to alter the power dynamic across the country. It is the religious figure, not the elected official or tribal elder, who is invariably asked to settle land disputes and other arguments. As I waded through reports from the field in Paktika Province last year, it became apparent that the people turned to Taliban-backed clerics and the Haqqani network, a ruthless terrorist movement allied with the Taliban, as the ultimate arbiters.

The key to turning around the war will be to change that dynamic. In fact, we must clamp down on the three things the Taliban do particularly well: manipulating the news media, intimidating the rural population and providing shadow governance.

The Taliban’s media machine runs circles around our public information operations in Afghanistan. Using newspapers, radio broadcasts, the Internet and word of mouth, it puts out messages far faster than we can, exaggerating the effectiveness of its attacks, creating the illusion of a unified insurgency and criticizing the (real and imagined) failings of the Kabul government. To undermine support for United States troops, the Taliban insistently remind the people that America has committed to a withdrawal beginning next summer, they jump on any announcement of our Western allies pulling out troops and they publicize polls that show declining domestic American support for the war.

To counter the spin, we need to add the Taliban’s top propagandists to the high-value-target list and direct military operations at the insurgents’ media nerve centers. A major reason that people in rural areas are so reluctant to help us is that Taliban propaganda and intimidation have created an atmosphere of fear.

A second initiative is to bring back the traditional rural power structure. We have to
restore the power of the tribal leader, the khan. Afghans are fond of saying that the thing they do best is politics; we must let them do it. This means moving toward a far weaker concept of central government and encouraging local solutions to local problems. American aid should go directly to rural communities rather than to the Karzai government. And we must identify key tribal leaders and local politicians and give them around-the-clock protection with American troops. It’s astonishing how much credibility a village leader can gain simply by not being assassinated.

Last, we must destroy the credibility of the Taliban’s religious authority. The insurgents’ concept of Islam is objectionable to most Afghans, but there is little alternative, as most clerics who rejected the Taliban have been killed or have fled. While creating a network of more enlightened religious figures to compete with the hard-liners will take time, we could jump-start progress by creating a group of “mobile mullahs” — well-protected clerics who can travel through rural areas and settle land disputes and other issues. These men should come from the general areas in which they will be performing their duties and be approved by community leaders.

We may not win General McChrystal’s war of perception, but we cannot afford a military defeat in Afghanistan. A Taliban victory would not only threaten Pakistan’s government, it would provide a dangerous precedent for other looming disaster zones like Yemen. The boot must be kept on the throat of extremism. Yet we do not need to maintain 100,000 troops in Afghanistan or create a sparkling democracy. We simply need to maintain the intelligence structure and military capacity that already exists, and put the power to defeat the insurgents in the hands of the locals.

—This article was originally published on July 31, 2010
The Fragile Community

By DAVID BROOKS

JULIAN Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, had moved 37 times by the time he reached his 14th birthday. His mother didn’t enroll him in the local schools because, as Raffi Khatchadourian wrote in a New Yorker profile, she feared “that formal education would inculcate an unhealthy respect for authority.”

She needn’t have worried. As a young computer hacker, he formed a group called International Subversives. As an adult, he wrote “Conspiracy as Governance,” a pseudo-intellectual online diatribe. He talks of vast “patronage networks” that constrain the human spirit.

Far from respecting authority, Assange seems to be an old-fashioned anarchist who believes that all ruling institutions are corrupt and public pronouncements are lies.

For someone with his mind-set, the decision to expose secrets is easy. If the hidden world is suspect, then everything should be revealed. As The New Yorker reported, WikiLeaks has published technical details about an Army device designed to prevent roadside bombs from detonating. It posted soldiers’ Social Security numbers. This week, the group celebrated the release of internal State Department documents with a triumphalist statement claiming that the documents expose the corruption, hypocrisy and venality of U.S. diplomats.

For him, it’s easy. But for everyone else, it’s hard. My colleagues on the news side of this newspaper do not share Assange’s mentality. As the various statements from the editors have made abundantly clear, they face a much thornier set of issues.

As journalists, they have a professional obligation to share information that might help people make informed decisions. That means asking questions like: How does the U.S. government lobby allies? What is the real nature of our relationship with Pakistani intelligence? At the same time, as humans and citizens, my colleagues know they have a moral obligation not to endanger lives or national security.

The Times has thus erected a series of filters between the 250,000 raw documents that WikiLeaks obtained and complete public exposure. The paper has released only a tiny percentage of the cables. Information that might endanger informants has been redacted. Specific cables have been put into context with broader reporting.

Yet it might be useful to consider one more filter. Consider it the World Order filter. The fact that we live our lives amid order and not chaos is the great achievement of civilization. This order should not be taken for granted.

This order is tenuously maintained by brave soldiers but also by talkative leaders and diplomats. Every second of every day, leaders and diplomats are engaged in a never-ending conversation. The leaked cables reveal this conversation. They show diplomats seeking information, cajoling each other and engaging in faux-friendships and petty hypocrisies as they seek to avoid global disasters.
Despite the imaginings of people like Assange, the conversation revealed in the cables is not devious and nefarious. The private conversation is similar to the public conversation, except maybe more admirable. Israeli and Arab diplomats can be seen reacting sympathetically and realistically toward one another. The Americans in the cables are generally savvy and honest. Iran’s neighbors are properly alarmed and reaching out.

Some people argue that this diplomatic conversation is based on mechanical calculations about national self-interest, and it won’t be affected by public exposure. But this conversation, like all conversations, is built on relationships. The quality of the conversation is determined by the level of trust. Its direction is influenced by persuasion and by feelings about friends and enemies.

The quality of the conversation is damaged by exposure, just as our relationships with our neighbors would be damaged if every private assessment were brought to the light of day. We’ve seen what happens when conversations deteriorate (look at the U.S. Congress), and it’s ugly.

The WikiLeaks dump will probably damage the global conversation. Nations will be less likely to share with the United States. Agencies will be tempted to return to the pre-9/11 silos. World leaders will get their back up when they read what is said about them. Cooperation against Iran may be harder to maintain because Arab leaders feel exposed and boxed in. This fragile international conversation is under threat. It’s under threat from WikiLeaks. It’s under threat from a Gresham’s Law effect, in which the level of public exposure is determined by the biggest leaker and the biggest traitor.

It should be possible to erect a filter that protects not only lives and operations but also international relationships. It should be possible to do articles on specific revelations — Is the U.S. using diplomats to spy on the U.N.? What missile technology did North Korea give to Iran? — without unveiling in a wholesale manner the nuts and bolts of the diplomatic enterprise. We depend on those human conversations for the limited order we enjoy every day.

—This article was originally published on November 29, 2010
Have We Learned Anything From the Leaked Cables?

By DAVID BROOKS and GAIL COLLINS

David Brooks: Gail, I’ve begun to worry about what you might call the Caligula Gap. When you look around the world, or at least around the leaked State Department cables, you see world leaders living full, decadent lives. Muammar el-Qaddafi has his voluptuous Ukrainian nurse. Vladimir Putin has his power and his muscles. Silvio Berlusconi has everything. Even aging Saudi princes go around talking about cutting the heads off snakes, like Clint Eastwood movie characters.

Gail Collins: As much as I appreciate how total dysfunction is good for our business, I am not prepared to wish that we had a president like Silvio Berlusconi.

David Brooks: I’m trying to imagine what other foreign ministries have been cabling about our leaders: George W. Bush liked to go to bed at 9 p.m. President Obama has a perfect family, plays golf and his most raucous activity ends with him getting 12 stitches in the lip — from a guy. I’m afraid we have not been providing foreign diplomats with enough good cable material — at least since Bill Clinton left town.

Gail Collins: Yeah, they’d have to dig pretty deep. I don’t know if foreign diplomats would care all that much about the obscure congressman who liked to play “tickle me” with his male aides, or the governor who pretended to be hiking so he could visit his mistress in Argentina. Although someone did tell me about being on a train in Peru, and telling the Peruvians in the adjoining seat that he was from South Carolina. They all nodded and said, “Ah — Appalachian Trail!”

David Brooks: Do you think it is because we are Puritans or because we keep electing people with insufficient imaginations? They say that power corrupts and that may be true, but in the U.S. it doesn’t corrupt in very colorful ways. Even Richard Nixon was corrupt in a dour and bitter manner.

Gail Collins: The worst president we ever had was maybe Warren Harding, who had sex with his mistress in the Oval Office coat closet. You’re right, it doesn’t really make the grade.

David Brooks: I guess I’m wondering if you learned anything about the psychology of global leadership from the State Department cables. I wrote a column this week saying that I don’t think we should have access to the cables. I fervently believe that and find myself repulsed by the folks at WikiLeaks. They are bad for the world because they destroy trust, which isn’t in great supply to start with, and I wish the establishment still had enough self-confidence to marginalize this sort of behavior and protect the social ecology.

Gail Collins: I’m sort of in the camp where if it’s out there and it doesn’t endanger national security, the public should get to see it. But I’m guessing that’s not the crux of the thought you’re pursuing.

David Brooks: I’m trolling for useful insights from all those cables. Mostly I see a
lot of frustrated world leaders who don’t possess the means to solve intractable problems.

**Gail Collins:** I actually see a lot of leaders who have a pretty rational and pragmatic view of the world around them. I agree that reading their private confidences doesn’t give me any new hope that they’ll be able to solve the great problems of the day. But it does give me more faith that they are all united in a desire not to see the planet get blown up on their watch. Which is something.

**David Brooks:** Some people say the documents show that the U.S. is in decline. We can’t just run the world the way we used to. Frankly, I don’t remember this golden age. Did Jimmy Carter snap his fingers and watch the world get in line? Did Ronald Reagan get international support when it was time to place missiles in Europe to confront the Soviets, or when he tried to launch the Strategic Defense Initiative? I covered a lot of summits during the Clinton administration and I certainly don’t remember the U.S. running the show. It was a mad scramble, just as it is now.

**Gail Collins:** I’ll wait until the last cable is out there before making a judgment but so far I’ve been impressed by how the rest of the world still seems to hope that the United States will figure out a way to solve their problems. Not gonna happen, but I appreciate the sentiment.

**David Brooks:** Maybe the good news is that there is no news. I’ve asked a few world leaders if the secret information they have access to gives them a different picture of the world than the one the rest of us get just reading the paper. They generally say no. What we see on the outside is what they see on the inside. They just have more granularity.

**Gail Collins:** Yes, so far I’ve been amazed by how few surprises we’ve gotten. Unless you were under the impression that the other Arab countries didn’t hate Iran. Or that China wasn’t fully aware that the leadership of North Korea is entirely composed of nutballs.

**David Brooks:** These cables — which don’t include “top secret” stuff, admittedly — show no hidden conspiracies, at least of any consequence. Maybe the normal work of journalism covers the world as it really is.

**Gail Collins:** And that’s a thought that will make the folks at WikiLeaks very depressed.

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---This article was originally published on December 1, 2010---
Do You Want to Know a (Top) Secret?

By ERIC ALTERMAN

Eric Alterman is professor of English and journalism at the City University of New York. His books include “When Presidents Lie: A History of Official Deception and its Consequences.”

FROM the standpoint of traditional post-Pentagon Papers, post-Watergate journalism, the decision by The New York Times, along with the Guardian, Le Monde, El Pais and Der Spiegel, to publish news stories based on the purloined State Department documents made available by WikiLeaks was really no decision at all.

News organizations are in the business of publishing news. They can exercise their judgment with regard to whether, in exceptional circumstances — usually those regarding potential loss of life — news might be redacted, delayed or, on extremely rare occasions, permanently withheld. But the likely embarrassment to individuals, or inconvenience to U.S. diplomats, does not even begin to approach this bar.

The manner in which the newspapers received the information is really not that special, either. The press is always attacked for publishing leaks, but the attackers almost always pick the leaks of which they happen to disapprove.

The conservatives who criticize the publication of the WikiLeaks material were not heard complaining when President George W. Bush and his national security team provided Bob Woodward and his coauthor, Dan Balz, with notes and minutes of still-secret National Security Council proceedings regarding the most sensitive matters of U.S. war planning and intelligence collection.

Similarly it was liberals, not conservatives, who took the Bush administration officials to task for leaking the identity of C.I.A. agent Valerie Plame in order to discredit the information provided by her husband, Joseph Wilson.

What is different about the WikiLeaks data is the scale of the leak, the motive of the leaker, and the manner in which it was ultimately made available.

The traditional motive for a high official to orchestrate a leak is to attempt to control the media narrative. That’s what President Bush and Karl Rove were doing, and what Daniel Ellsberg did decades earlier when he gave the Pentagon Papers to The New York Times.

But in the case of the WikiLeaks material, the trove of information is so enormous and contains so many stories of real import and/or prurient interest that there is no single narrative to control — nor any means to do so. The target is not any U.S. policy or even the U.S. government. It is secrecy itself.

In this respect, the mainstream media institutions are actually playing a far more useful role than they have in many past cases — including, in particular, the run-up to the war in Iraq. The sheer size of the data drop, coupled with the lack of deadline pressure,
allowed editors to present what would have been an unmanageable mountain of material in a careful, considered and (partially) contextualized manner.

It also gave the State Department plenty of time to identify which cables were genuinely deserving of continued secrecy. On the basis of State’s suggestions, according to Times Executive Editor Bill Keller, the paper “edited out any information that could identify confidential sources — including informants, dissidents, academics and human rights activists — or otherwise compromise national security.”

At the same time, the technological advances that make possible the publication of the documents demonstrate the loss of power and influence of these institutions.

One reason that nobody has ever leaked on this scale before is that nobody could have transported, much less published, 250,000 documents containing who knows how many (millions of?) pages.

When Ellsberg provided his copies of the Pentagon Papers — a fraction of the size of this document dump — first to The Times and then the Washington Post, one of his biggest concerns was how to store and copy the documents without being discovered and arrested.

Today, the digitization of information has empowered “citizen journalists” like the folks at WikiLeaks to actually determine the agenda of the mainstream media — and of world governments — to a degree most of us are only beginning to understand.

The fact is that if The Times and the other papers had, for whatever reason, declined to play along with WikiLeaks, the material would still have been published. But then we would all be talking about the growing irrelevance of the mainstream media in an age when guerrilla “journalists” can easily execute an end run around them. This has already happened many times, and it hardly serves the interests of the press once it is revealed.

So while it is understandable for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and others to fulminate about the potential loss of confidence in U.S. diplomacy and the difficulties the leaked documents will undoubtedly cause, she — and everybody else attempting to keep secrets from the rest of us — need to understand that the game has new rules.

When 250,000 documents can be placed on a zip drive smaller than a popsicle stick, and thousands of citizen journalists are working to make it available to the public, then the guarantee of secrecy for any powerful institution is only a comforting fiction.

So far, in the case of WikiLeaks, those involved in the publication of the papers appear to have operated responsibly, given their respective motives for playing the game. But mainstream editors and reporters may be forgiven for wondering just how long they can remain central in dramas like this one. When the gate’s been toppled, how long does the keeper keep a job?

—This article was originally published on December 2, 2010
Great Neck, N.Y.

A British ambassador to Venice in the 17th century observed that “a diplomat is an honest man sent abroad to lie for his country.” But for centuries, diplomats did more than lie. They bribed, they stole, they intercepted dispatches. Perhaps this will come as some consolation to the many American diplomats whose faces have been reddened by the trove of diplomatic cables released this week by WikiLeaks: whatever they’ve done cannot compare in underhandedness with what ambassadors did in the past.

In 16th-century London, for instance, a French ambassador paid another diplomat’s secretary 60 crowns a month to read the dispatches to which the secretary had access. By the 1700s, a large part of the British Foreign Office’s annual expenses of £67,000 was allocated for bribery.

But as a scene of diplomatic misbehavior, London could hardly measure up to Vienna. Prince Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, an 18th-century Austrian foreign minister, took no monetary bribes, but he accepted expensive presents like horses, paintings and fine wines from people who wanted to influence him. Viennese prostitutes also enjoyed unusual access to the diplomatic corps; one such woman, during the Congress of Vienna in 1815, received a salary from an adjutant of Czar Alexander I, and provided him with information she learned during her visits with other envoys.

These practices had begun in the Middle Ages, when negotiators of treaties would gather information about the host nation. They continued in the Renaissance with the advent of permanent embassies. And the belief that the ambassador was a legalized spy never left the hosts’ minds.

Accordingly, governments intercepted the correspondence of diplomats accredited to them. Specialists in curtained, candle-lighted “black chambers” slid hot wires under wax seals to open letters. Those in foreign languages were translated; those in code, decrypted. Their contents were then passed along to kings and ministers.

The black chamber of Vienna was the most efficient. It received the bags of mail going to and from the embassies at 7 a.m.; letters were opened, copied and returned to the post office by 9:30. When the British ambassador complained that he had gotten British letters sealed not with his seal but with that of another country — clear evidence that they had been opened — Kaunitz calmly replied, “How clumsy these people are.”

When the French ambassador to Russia, the Marquis de La Chétardie, in 1744 protested an order for him to leave, an official began reading him his intercepted letters, showing his meddling in Russian affairs. “That’s enough!” the marquis said — and began
The mores of diplomacy began to change in the 19th century, pushed first by the spread of democracy and republican government. Public opinion came to regard it as wrong and unbecoming to a democracy to do anything illegal — in particular when representing itself abroad. Other factors in that change, according to the British diplomat and writer Harold Nicolson, lay in the emerging sense of the community of nations and of the importance of public opinion. As Lord Palmerston, the mid-19th-century British prime minister, maintained, opinions are stronger than armies.

This shift was exemplified by a growing belief that mail shouldn’t be tampered with. In Britain in the 1840s, there was a huge public outcry over the post office’s opening of the mail of the Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini; at the time, the English historian and politician Thomas Babington Macaulay declared that it was as wrong to take his letter from the mail as to take it from his desk. And when the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations was passed in 1961, among its prescriptions was that “the official correspondence of the mission shall be inviolable.”

Ambassadors now regard themselves as ladies and gentlemen. They do not lie. They do not steal. But in some ways, diplomacy has not advanced beyond the old ways. And diplomatic cables can always be intercepted or revealed — as WikiLeaks has demonstrated.

—This article was originally published on December 2, 2010
The Secret Lives of Nations

By PAUL W. SCHROEDER

Paul W. Schroeder, a professor emeritus of history at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, is the author of “The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848.”

Champaign, Ill.

WHILE it is too soon to offer any meaningful perspective about the impact of the WikiLeaks disclosures on American foreign policy, it is not too early to reflect on what the leaked diplomatic cables say about the public’s understanding of how diplomacy works.

WikiLeaks’s justification for releasing confidential State Department materials is that the more the public knows about how our government conducts its foreign relations, the better the outcome will be. This is an old idea: Woodrow Wilson advocated “open covenants of peace, openly arrived at.” But history also shows that open diplomacy is often fatally flawed.

Secrecy is an essential part of any negotiation: no corporate merger, complicated legal settlement, amicable divorce or serious political compromise could ever be reached without a reliable level of confidentiality.

But secrecy is nowhere more essential than in foreign relations. For example, had the various diplomats negotiating the end of the cold war and the unification of Germany had to deal with public revelations of the disagreements, half-baked proposals and reckless language in their internal communications — like Margaret Thatcher’s opposition to German unification versus Helmut Kohl’s determination to achieve it — substantive talks would have been impossible.

Secrecy was likewise vital after World War I. After a series of debilitating leaks, the leaders of the four primary victors — Britain, France, Italy and the United States — abandoned their policy of open diplomacy and went into closed sessions. Only then were they able to navigate the difficult details of the Treaty of Versailles and reach a final, if relatively short-lived, peace.

The WikiLeaks disclosures have been praised by many who believe that they will allow the public to hold the government more accountable and thus improve American foreign policy. On the contrary, leaks like this simply make those in power retreat further into the shadows to defend themselves and their positions. Consider how Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger cut off all but their inner circle of advisers after the Pentagon Papers were published.

To be fair, there can be value in strategically timed leaks. For example, in 1870 Otto von Bismarck, Prussia’s minister-president, leaked a confidential dispatch by King Wilhelm I about his meeting with the French ambassador. Bismarck had edited the document to give the impression that France had made unacceptable demands of the king.
(which was true) and that Wilhelm had rudely shown the ambassador the door (which was not).

Bismarck’s move put both countries’ honor on the line and aroused nationalist passions on both sides, escalating an existing crisis into a war that ended in a total Prussian victory, one that fulfilled Bismarck’s goal of increasing Prussian power in Central Europe.

Whatever one thinks of Bismarck’s aims, his calculated, targeted leak served his purposes well. But releasing confidential diplomatic correspondence to influence foreign relations, whether it’s done by governments or by unauthorized individuals, is like using dynamite in a construction zone. Carried out by experts after a careful analysis of the risks involved, it may be effective, like blowing off part of a hillside to build a road.

But the WikiLeaks disclosure, on a scale that, to my knowledge, is historically unprecedented, is totally different — more like the work of irresponsible amateurs using dynamite to expand a tunnel that also contains, say, a city’s electrical lines. The leaks will probably not cause war or even a serious crisis, but they will badly damage America’s diplomatic machinery, processes and reputation.

None of this means that diplomatic correspondence and negotiations should remain secret forever. But except in special instances, confidential communications ought to be released only after passions have settled and scholars can examine the records in fuller context.

Especially in a democracy, the goal of negotiations should be to quietly reach an agreement, followed by ratification or rejection by elected legislators. In other words, open covenants of peace, secretly arrived at.

—This article was originally published on December 2, 2010
Why Iran Loves WikiLeaks

By CHAS FREEMAN

Chas Freeman was an assistant secretary of defense from 1993 to 1994 and the United States ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf war.

THE editor of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, has much in common with the anarchists of the early 20th century: he aims to disrupt the established order by impairing its alliances and violating its proprieties. With the release of a quarter-million documents written by American diplomats at home and abroad, many of them shockingly candid, he has gone some distance toward accomplishing this. Take the Middle East, for example.

Most striking were the leaks regarding Arab concerns about Iran’s aspirations for regional hegemony and its nuclear programs. According to the documents, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia exhorted the United States to cripple Iran’s nuclear programs with air strikes, urging us to “cut off the head of the snake.” While some hard-line analysts and pundits are relieved to find the Arabs “on our side” and feel that this disclosure will help us form a stronger alliance against Tehran, it’s more likely that the leaks will simply raise Iran’s prestige by adding to the persistent overestimation of its influence and abilities.

More troubling, the leaks will reduce the candor of American dialogue in the region and elsewhere. Arab leaders in particular will now think twice before either speaking honestly or telling American visitors or diplomats what Washington wants to hear.

In addition, Arab rulers, despite all the weapons their states have bought from America and elsewhere, again find themselves exposed to their own people as impotent to handle a serious regional problem. They appear totally dependent on the United States, a country that is deeply unpopular among Arabs for its policies in the region, to take care of it for them.

What comes through loud and clear in these cables is a familiar Gulf Arab refrain: “We have a problem we don’t know how to deal with. You Americans must solve it for us. Do what you think best. We’ll look the other way if necessary.”

Israel, for its part, has been quick to assert that the leaks show that it and the Gulf Arab states have a common outlook regarding Iran. “More and more states, governments and leaders in the Middle East and the wider region and the world believe this is the fundamental threat,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said when asked about the cables.

“No one will now be able to allege that Israel is acting irresponsibly,” wrote Aluf Benn, a columnist for the Israeli daily Haaretz. “When the King of Saudi Arabia and the King of Jordan call for lopping off the head of the Iranian snake, no one will believe them when they denounce an Israeli operation.” But there is little to back up such claims. Israel has long wanted the United States to attack Iran’s nuclear facilities. It has also strongly
implied that if Washington refuses to do so, it will go ahead on its own — in a manner
calculated to leave the United States no choice but to join it in war with Iran.

The Gulf Arabs want to forestall Iranian nuclear ambitions, but they are willing to
derfer to American judgment about how best to achieve that, and they certainly don’t want
it to result in a war in their own neighborhood. Clearly, this is a very different position
from the one held by Mr. Netanyahu.

There are other ways in which the Arabs and Israelis are at odds on Iran policy. The
leaks show that Gulf Arab rulers are concerned above all that a nuclear-armed Iran would
have greater prestige in the region and ever-greater influence in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the
West Bank and Gaza. The nuclear weapons themselves, they feel, are primarily a threat to
Israel and American forces in the region.

Yes, Israelis fear that Iran might gratuitously attempt another Holocaust by
attacking them. But the leaked documents also show that one of the main worries Israel
has about Iran’s nuclear ambitions is that it could lose its regional monopoly on nuclear
weapons, limiting their leverage on a whole range of issues. One doubts the Gulf Arabs
share that concern.

In the end, contrary to the hopes and fears of some, the leaks do not make war with
Iran more likely or demonstrate a basis for Arab-Israeli solidarity against Tehran. Mr.
Assange’s grand accomplishment will be nothing more than to make it far harder for
American diplomats to get candid answers from their Gulf Arab and Israeli counterparts.

The Middle East is a place where yes means maybe, maybe means no, no is never
heard (except in Israel), and a plea for a foreign solution to regional problems is a cop-
out, not a serious request for action. It is where hypocrisy first gained a bad name.
WikiLeaks has hurt America without changing that.

—This article was originally published on December 4, 2010
The Big American Leak

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

O.K. I admit it. I enjoy reading other people’s mail as much as the next guy, so going through the WikiLeaks cables has made for some fascinating reading. What’s between the lines in those cables, though, is another matter. It is a rather sobering message. America is leaking power.

Let’s start, though, with what’s in the cables. I think I’ve figured it out: Saudi Arabia and its Arab neighbors want the U.S. to decapitate the Iranian regime and destroy its nuclear facilities so they can celebrate in private this triumph over the hated Persians, while publicly joining with their people in the streets in burning Uncle Sam in effigy, after we carry out such an attack on Iran — which will make the Arab people furious at us. The reason the Arab people will be furious at us, even though many of them don’t like the Persians either, is because they dislike their own unelected leaders even more and protesting against the Americans, who help to keep their leaders in power, is a way of sticking it to both of us.

Are you with me?

While the Saudis are urging us to take out Iran’s nuclear capability, we learn from the cables that private Saudi donors today still constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide — not to mention the fundamentalist mosques, charities and schools that spawn the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan. So basically our oil payments are cycled through Saudi Arabia and end up funding the very militants whom our soldiers are fighting. But don’t think we don’t have allies. ... The cables tell us about Ahmed Zia Massoud, an Afghan vice president from 2004 to 2009, who now owns a palatial home in Dubai, where, according to one cable, he was caught by customs officials carrying $52 million in unexplained cash. It seems from these cables that the U.S. often has to pay leaders in Pakistan and Afghanistan to be two-faced — otherwise they would just be one-faced and against the U.S. in both public and private.

Are you still with me?

Yes, these are our allies — people whose values we do not and never will share. “O.K.,” our Saudi, Gulf, Afghan and Pakistani allies tell us, “we may not be perfect, but the guys who would replace us would be much worse. The Taliban and Al Qaeda are one-faced. They say what they mean in public and private: They hate America.”

That’s true, but if we are stuck supporting bad regimes because only worse would follow, why can’t we do anything to make them reform? That brings us to the sobering message in so many of these cables: America lacks leverage. America lacks leverage in the Middle East because we are addicted to oil. We are the addicts and they are the pushers, and addicts never tell the truth to their pushers.

When we import $28 billion a month in oil, we can’t say to the Saudis: “We know the guys who would come after you would be much worse, but why do we have to choose
between your misrule and corruption and their brutality and intolerance?” We’re just stuck supporting a regime that, sure, fights Al Qaeda at home, but uses our money to fund a religious ideology, schools, mosques and books that ensure that Al Qaeda will always have a rich pool of recruits in Saudi Arabia and abroad. We also lack leverage with the Chinese on North Korea, or with regard to the value of China’s currency, because we’re addicted to their credit.

Geopolitics is all about leverage. We cannot make ourselves safer abroad unless we change our behavior at home. But our politics never connects the two.

Think how different our conversations with Saudi Arabia would be if we were in the process of converting to electric cars powered by nuclear, wind, domestic natural gas and solar power? We could tell them that if we detect one more dollar of Saudi money going to the Taliban then they can protect themselves from Iran.

Think how different our conversations with China would be if we had had a different savings rate the past 30 years and China was not holding $900 billion in U.S. Treasury securities — but was still dependent on the U.S. economy and technology. We would not be begging them to revalue their currency, and maybe our request that China prevent North Korea from shipping ballistic missile parts to Iran via Beijing airport (also in the cables) wouldn’t be rebuffed so brusquely.

And think how much more leverage our sanctions would have on Iran if oil were $20 a barrel and not $80 — and Iran’s mullah-dictators were bankrupt?

Fifty years ago, the world was shaped in a certain way, to promote certain values, because America had the leverage to shape it that way. We have been steadily losing that leverage because of our twin addictions to Middle East oil and Chinese credit — and the WikiLeaks show just what crow we have to eat because of that. I know, some problems — like how we deal with a failing state like Pakistan that also has nukes — are innately hard, and ending our oil and credit addictions alone will not solve them. But it sure would give us more leverage to do so — and more insulation from the sheer madness of the Middle East if we can’t.

—This article was originally published on December 4, 2010
Is Julian Assange Helping the Neocons?

By ROBERT WRIGHT

IT turns out our government has been lying to us about whether we have troops in Pakistan engaging in combat operations. The Pentagon has said the mission of American soldiers is confined to “training Pakistani forces so that they can in turn train other Pakistani military,” but in fact our forces have been embedded in Pakistani fighting units, giving them electronic data and other support as they kill the enemy.

We know this because of WikiLeaks. It’s also thanks to WikiLeaks that we know about America’s arrangement with the President of Yemen: we kill Yemen-based terrorists and he claims that Yemen is doing the killing.

In these respects, I think, WikiLeaks is doing God’s work. I realize there are tactical rationales for both of these deceptions, but I don’t see them trumping the bedrock right of citizens in a democracy to know when their tax dollars are being used to kill people—especially when those people live in countries we’re not at war with. So, if we’re going to calculate Julian Assange’s net karma, I’d put this stuff on the positive side of the ledger.

And calculate we must. Assange will presumably get Time magazine’s Person of the Year nod, and Time will no doubt remind us that the award recognizes impact, not virtue; Hitler and Stalin are past winners. It will be left for us to decide whether to file Assange under good or evil. Let’s get started.

Assange has an elaborate rationale for his actions. He laid it out in a grandiose online manifesto that ranges from the undeniably plausible (“If total conspiratorial power is zero, there is no conspiracy”) to the eccentrically metaphorical (“What does a conspiracy compute? It computes the next action of the conspiracy”) to the flat-out opaque. But the gist of his argument is clear. He thinks a basic problem with the world is “authoritarian regimes,” a term that he uses—in stark contrast with its American usage—to include America.

An authoritarian regime, he says, oppresses people and keeps its plans secret from the oppressed. Transparency rips the veil off, exposing these plots. And radical transparency—like the WikiLeaks data dump—makes authoritarian regimes guarded in their future internal communications. This in turn impairs the regime’s functioning. As “more leaks induce fear and paranoia,” we see “system-wide cognitive decline resulting in decreased ability to hold onto power.” (In this respect, as the journalist Glenn Greenwald has noted, Assange is like Osama bin Laden: he wants his enemy to react to his provocations self-destructively.)

Assange wrote these things in 2006, and it’s hard to imagine that he didn’t have the Bush administration in mind. Certainly Bush was big on centralizing power, and wasn’t big on civil liberties, and sometimes he kept his infringements on our liberties secret. Assange is in this sense the anti-Bush, challenging secretive, centralized authority with a transparency that is highly decentralized. (His backers have created mirror Web sites to
ensure access to the WikiLeaks documents, and Assange says that more than 100,000 people possess the whole archive in encrypted form.)

Yet in one sense Assange is the anti-anti-Bush.

Bush was criticized for unilateralist tendencies, for failing to nurture good relations with other nations—and, in particular, for writing off suspect nations (see “axis of evil”) as barely worth talking to at all. Obama came into office vowing “engagement.” He would reach out to other nations, emphatically including those with whom relations were most fraught, like Russia and Muslim nations, even including Iran.

Engagement is the search for win-win outcomes to non-zero-sum games. As any game theorist can tell you, a key to reaching those outcomes is communication, and the communication is most fruitful when there is mutual trust. Well, thanks to Assange, many nations will now hesitate to speak candidly with us, fearing that their private utterances might go public.

Communication, and trust, may also be cooled by our recently revealed appraisals of foreign leaders. I’m guessing the Turks won’t warm to the cable from Ankara that looked forward to a day when “we will no longer have to deal with the current cast of [Turkish] political leaders, with their special yen for destructive drama and rhetoric.” And Vladimir Putin can’t be liking our depiction of him as a slacker thug.

Many of our foreign relations will prove resilient. Longstanding European allies will get over the insults, and will eventually accept assurances that we’re tightening the security of our missives. But such ready rapprochement is less likely with the Russias and Turkeys of the world—nations that are more culturally remote from us and were less secure in our friendship to begin with. In other words, the relationships that will suffer the deepest damage are the most fragile ones, the ones that Obama entered office hoping to mend with engagement.

These include many of the relationships that the neoconservatives who shaped Bush’s foreign policy were most willing to risk. Neocons have often encouraged policies and utterances that threatened relations with Russia and Turkey, as well as China, Iran and so on. Indeed, neoconservatism sometimes seems devoted to exacerbating the world’s major geopolitical fault lines. And now WikiLeaks has advanced the exacerbation. Maybe Assange, when he has time for some fresh conspiracy theorizing, can look into the possibility that neocons have implanted electrodes in his brain.

From where I stand—a position of emphatic anti-Bushism—this is a pretty serious charge: aiding and abetting anti-anti-Bushism. But, from this same standpoint, there’s a defense of Assange to be made.

The biggest lesson from all of this is a fact that’s already dawned on Tiger Woods, Michael Phelps and Mel Gibson: privacy ain’t what it used to be. Technology has made secrets hard to keep.

Sure, we can better insulate our channels of communication—for starters by not giving Army privates access to the family jewels. But we don’t want to fall into Assange’s trap of constricting our internal communications to a dysfunctional extent—
and, besides, we can’t control what foreign bureaucracies are doing with shared secrets. We have to face the fact that secrets are less keepable in the age of the Internet, when a single malcontent in any organization can share newsworthy information with the whole world.

So incendiary secrets should be avoided. It’s best not to lie about what our troops in Pakistan are doing, and not to conspire with Yemen’s government to deceive Yemenis. For one thing, such deceptions, when exposed, embitter foreigners toward America. And these days grassroots hatred of America, especially in Muslim countries, is perhaps our biggest enemy—being, as it is, the wellspring of terrorism.

If our government took this guidance, and quit keeping explosive secrets about what it’s doing abroad, then what it’s doing abroad would change. If our troops’ presence in Pakistan was going to be visible, Pakistan might not let them into the country. And the Yemeni government might veto transparently American drone strikes.

This would mean killing fewer terrorists in the short run, but it would probably mean creating way fewer of them in the long run. Certainly (as the journalist John Judis has suggested) it would mean doing less of what fueled bin Laden’s anti-American wrath in the first place: having a military presence in Muslim countries, a presence that sometimes entails collaborating with repressive regimes and thus absorbing some of the hatred they inspire.

I don’t know if this change of course would make up for the considerable short-term damage wrought by WikiLeaks—the harm done to fragile and crucial relations with other states, the blowback that even now is starting to well up in Yemen, Pakistan and elsewhere. But if it does, then Assange’s initially pro-neocon impact could be dwarfed by his longer-term, more benign influence. And his karma, as I calculate it, would move into positive territory.

For that to happen—for the United States to respond wisely to the WikiLeaks fiasco—American policymakers will first have to realize that Assange himself isn’t all that important. If he had never been born, they would still eventually have to adapt to the age of transparency, to a world in which expedient lies to cover expedient collaborations with dubious regimes are a long-term threat to our national security. Sooner or later, America was bound to wake up to the implications of modern technology. Julian Assange just made it a particularly rude awakening.

Postscript

First, for the record, I think that for the United States to prosecute Assange would be idiotic, un-American and a threat to the future health of investigative journalism. Second, the New Republic piece by John Judis that I linked to above is well worth reading. Judis emphasizes, as I do, the possible virtues of WikiLeaks exposing secret deals with other countries, but he situates his analysis in a different context: the history of imperialism, and the periodic disruption of imperialist schemes by revelation of the secret deals they involve. In this view, America’s alliances with dubious regimes—whether to secure oil, cooperation against terrorism, whatever—are a form of neo-imperialism, and WikiLeaks
is anti-imperialist. Judis himself doesn’t necessarily embrace the characterization of American foreign policy as neo-imperialist, but I’m pretty sure Assange would, and that leads to one other point:

Offputtingly grandiose as Assange’s online manifesto is, it arguably envisions exactly the effect that Judis and I are talking about. Assange’s definition of “authoritarian regime” seems fluid enough to simultaneously refer to America and the “neo-imperialist” network America has assembled. And if that’s the case, then the fraying of that network would be an example of what his paper gleefully envisions: an “authoritarian regime”—i.e. the network of America and certain allies—finds that transparency has rendered the internal information-processing that sustains it no longer viable, and so collapses. (Assange, by the way, seems to see all authoritarian regimes as consisting of conspiracies among their constituents—and since conspiracies always require secrets, transparency is anti-conspiracy and hence, in Assange’s paradigm, anti-authoritarian.) Final note: the WikiLeaks cable revealing America’s secret deal with Pakistan is here.

—This article was originally published on December 7, 2010
Our Envoys, Ourselves

By DEREK LEEBAERT

Derek Leebaert, a management consultant, is the author of “Magic and Mayhem: The Delusions of American Foreign Policy From Korea to Afghanistan.”

Washington

A GLOBAL power’s diplomatic archives are inevitably full of caustic dispatches. In Britain, a new batch of Foreign Office records is declassified each January under the “30-year rule” (a “50-year rule” before 1968). Historians can peruse elegantly handwritten mockeries of President Eisenhower’s name as exotically Eastern European, or files deriding Americans as the planet’s “most excitable” people — other than Bangladeshis.

For the most part, such documents provide little more than a snapshot of a moment in history or a window into the mind of a particular diplomat. Over the last two weeks, however, WikiLeaks has opened another perspective. Its quarter-million cables provide a sample broad enough to reflect the culture in which American foreign policy takes shape.

We encounter the mind-set of a freewheeling, democratic superpower, a pattern of thought that shows great excitement over celebrities and moments hailed as irreversibly world-changing. In this, the State Department truly represents our national disposition.

A century ago, a foreign journalist asked the theatrical impresario Charles Frohman why one saw only actors’ names on Broadway marquees, whereas in Paris the names in lights were those of playwrights. Frohman explained that in America, the emphasis is always on the doer, not the thing done: “There are stars in every walk of American life. It has always been so in democracies.” It remains true today: as the most individualistic of all democracies, America creates, rewards, obsesses over stars of every kind and intensely extols personal success.

WikiLeaks has shown how these enthusiasms play out overseas. The pages of the leaked cables hum with high-level gossip and trenchant cameos. Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany “avoids risk and is seldom creative”; a “penchant for partying hard” has left Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy “a complete mess”; President Nicolas Sarkozy of France is thin-skinned and has “monarchial tendencies”; Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia is like a Mafia godfather but also “resents or resists the workload he carries.”

The danger is that personalization, however accurate, can get in the way of sharper assessments of resources, national aims and public attitudes. Knowing delicious details of le tout Paris, for instance, still left Washington unprepared for France’s refusal to join in the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Similarly, as America sets out to build nations in the undeveloped world, it keeps discovering new heroes who, eventually, turn out to be less than the supermen they were once considered. There is Hamid Karzai, previously the savior of Afghanistan, now
revealed by WikiLeaks as (at best) unaware that his brother may be a major figure in the opium trade.

This is an old story. In the 1950s there was Syngman Rhee in South Korea; in Vietnam, there was Ngo Dinh Diem, the “Churchill of Asia”; then the shadowy Ahmed Chalabi was supposed by the Bush administration to be “the George Washington of Iraq.” The problem is that Washington too often finds itself with few choices but to keep working with such figures even after they no longer appear indispensable (or, like Diem, have to be dispensed with).

America’s thirst to single out great figures is matched by the desire to be on hand at history’s great events. Repeatedly, however, we fail to put such moments in context, and thus inflate their significance in the grand sweep of history.

Emerson was right to call us “the country of tomorrow.” We live in the future, are first to adopt the Next New Thing. From this outlook springs a casual approach to how the world moves and changes: the sense that destiny shifts easily, suddenly, for obvious reasons. Remember how “everything” was deemed to have been transformed by the 9/11 attacks, or the fall of the Berlin Wall, or the 1972 summit meeting in Beijing that President Richard Nixon described as “the week that changed the world.”

So in WikiLeaks we see expectations that one death in North Korea — that of the dictator Kim Jong-il — will transform a system in which thousands of people are brutally invested. (Never mind that it rode right on when Mr. Kim’s father, Kim Il-sung, died in 1994.) As for Iran, WikiLeaks shows Washington anticipating yet another “different world,” which is what Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told Italy’s foreign minister would occur should Tehran get nuclear weapons.

The leaking of secret documents is hardly to be encouraged. WikiLeaks may imperil the lives of agents or compromise negotiations, and is certainly arming our enemies with awkward knowledge. But that doesn’t mean we can’t learn from the cables. Let’s hope that the exposure of our diplomatic fixations on personalities and allegedly world-changing events will lead us, in fact, to a less excitable, more informed foreign policy.

—This article was originally published on December 11, 2010
We’ve Only Got America A

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

FORMER President José María Figueres of Costa Rica has a saying I like: “There is no Planet B” — so we’d better make Plan A work to preserve a stable environment. I feel the same way about America these days. There is no America B, so we’d better make this one work a lot better than we’ve been doing, and not only for our sake. When Britain went into decline as the globe’s stabilizing power, America was right there, ready to pick up the role. Even with all our imperfections and mistakes, the world has been a better place for it. If America goes weak, though, and cannot project power the way it has, your kids won’t just grow up in a different America. They will grow up in a different world. You will not like who picks up the pieces. Just glance at a few recent headlines.

The world system is currently being challenged by two new forces: a rising superpower, called China, and a rising collection of superempowered individuals, as represented by the WikiLeakers, among others. What globalization, technological integration and the general flattening of the world have done is to superempower individuals to such a degree that they can actually challenge any hierarchy — from a global bank to a nation state — as individuals.

China has put on a sound and light show these past few weeks that underscored just how much its rising economic clout can be used to warp the U.S.-led international order when it so chooses. I am talking specifically about the lengths to which China went to not only reject the Nobel Peace Prize given to one of its citizens — Liu Xiaobo, a democracy advocate who is serving an 11-year sentence in China for “subversion of state power” — but to intimidate China’s trading partners from even sending representatives to attend the Nobel award ceremony at Oslo’s City Hall.

Mr. Liu was represented at Friday’s Nobel ceremony by an empty chair because China would not release him from prison — only the fifth time in the 109-year history of the prize that the winner was not in attendance. Under pressure from Beijing, the following countries joined China’s boycott of the ceremony: Serbia, Morocco, Pakistan, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Colombia, Ukraine, Algeria, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Vietnam and the Philippines. What a pathetic bunch.

“The empty chair in Oslo’s Town Hall last Friday was not only that of Liu, but of China itself,” observed Rowan Callick, a columnist for The Australian. “The world is still waiting for China to play its proper, full role in international affairs. The perversity of such a successful, civilized nation playing a dominant role as a backer — if sometimes merely by default — of cruel, failed or failing states is intensely frustrating.”

It gets worse. The Financial Times reported that “outside Mr. Liu’s apartment in Beijing, where his wife Liu Xia has been held under house arrest since the award was announced, large blue screens were erected, preventing television cameras from having a
view of the building.”

Honestly, I thought China’s leaders had more self-confidence than that. Clearly, they are feeling very insecure. Think if China had said instead: “We disagree with this award and we will not be attending. But anytime one of our citizens is honored with a Nobel, it is an honor for all of China — and so we will pass this on to his family.” It would have been a one-day story, and China’s leaders would have looked so strong.

As for the superempowered individuals — some are constructive, some are destructive. I read many WikiLeaks and learned some useful things. But their release also raises some troubling questions. I don’t want to live in a country where they throw whistle-blowers in jail. That’s China. But I also don’t want to live in a country where any individual feels entitled to just dump out all the internal communications of a government or a bank in a way that undermines the ability to have private, confidential communications that are vital to the functioning of any society. That’s anarchy.

But here’s the fact: A China that can choke off conversations far beyond its borders, and superempowered individuals who can expose conversations far beyond their borders — or create posses of “cyber-hacktivists” who can melt down the computers of people they don’t like — are now a reality. They are rising powers. A stable world requires that we learn how to get the best from both and limit the worst; it will require smart legal and technological responses.

For that job, there is no alternative to a strong America. Critics said of the British Labour Party of the 1960s that the Britain they were trying to build was half-Sweden and half-heaven. The alternative today to a world ordered by American power is not some cuddly multipolar system — half-Sweden and half-heaven. It is half-China and half-superempowered individuals.

Managing that will never be easy. But it will be a lot easier with a healthy America, committed to its core values, powerful enough to project them and successful enough that others want to follow our lead — voluntarily.

―This article was originally published on December 14, 2010
The WikiLeaks Debate

By TOBIN HARSHAW

Tobin Harshaw, a staff editor with the Op-Ed page of The Times, writes the Thread column for nytimes.com.

WikiLeaks is a pure product of the Internet, so it’s hardly surprising that so much of the debate over its document drops in 2010 involved dueling bloggers and other online pundits. Across the Web, commentators of every stripe assessed the political, ethical, legal and technological ramifications of the case. For some, the WikiLeaks affair was glorious confirmation of the old saying among technology advocates and futurists that “information wants to be free.” After WikiLeaks released U.S. military war logs from Afghanistan in July, the blogger Mistermix wrote at the liberal site Balloon Juice, “What really scares a lot of establishment types is not WikiLeaks itself, but that a group of soldiers or civilians with access to information have started to work against the war from the inside, and that they have a secure conduit to get that information to the outside world.”

Others, however, found that such freedoms were not worth having. “Assange is giving us a wonderful lesson in why things are classified during war,” wrote Joshua Foust, who runs Registan.net, a blog about Central Asia. “His cavalier attitude toward the safety of the people he exposes to mortal danger, as if a really terrible context like a war provides justification for adding further risk to their lives (and his repeated, and thus far unsupported, accusations that Afghans who help us are criminals), is beyond immaturity and callousness, though — it is monstrous. Julian Assange is the worst sort of moralist, one whose sense of justice is so selective (secrecy is of utmost concern for WikiLeaks’ sources and employees, but not the government), and his comprehension of consequences so shortsighted and defined by ideology rather than fact, that he doesn’t care who he has to offer up to murderous bastards to satisfy his sense of moral outrage.”

And there were a few bloggers who found the whole thing overblown. “Is there anything Julian Assange ever gets right?” asked Rusty Shackleford at the right-wing site Jawa Report. “Seriously, on top of being a pathological liar and a paranoid conspiracy theorist, the WikiLeaks founder also doesn’t get that we’ve all known pretty much all of this for years. The ISI helps the Taliban? Check. Drones are prone to crashing? Check. The drones often miss their intended targets? Check. Yawn.”

There was no such sleepiness after the release of the Iraq war logs in October, which contained reports of torture, rape and murder by Iraqi security forces and noted the repeated failure of American officials to do anything about it. Chris Bertram, a British philosophy professor who blogs with other academics at Crooked Timber, thinks that the revelation of human-rights abuses cracked the ice beneath the feet of liberal supporters of the war. “It has become commonplace for self-styled leftist erstwhile advocates of the
Iraq War to whine that their critics have been unkind to them,” he wrote. “Can’t those critics accept, they wheedle, that there were reasons on both sides and that the crimes against humanity of the Saddam regime supported at least a prima facie case for intervention? During an earlier phase of discussion, when those advocates were still unapologetic, but whilst the slaughter was well under way, we were treated to numerous disquisitions on moral responsibility: yes there is slaughter, but we are not responsible, it is Al Qaida/the Sunni ‘insurgents’/Al-Sadr/Iran.”

“Well,” he continued, “the latest WikiLeaks disclosures ought to shut them up for good (it won’t, of course). ‘Our’ side has both committed war crimes directly and has acquiesced, enabled, and covered up for the commission of such crimes by others. The incidents are not isolated episodes: rather we have systematic policy. The U.S. government has a duty to investigate and to bring those of its own officials and military responsible to justice. Of course, this won’t happen and the Pentagon will pursue the whistle-blowers instead. So it goes.”

The assumption that the logs put American forces in a poor light was not universal. On the site Hot Air, the blogger calling himself Allahpundit wrote that “The Times’s write-up of the torture documents notes that coalition troops ‘often intervened’ to stop abuse when they saw it” and that under American policy, “if Iraqi troops or cops were doing the abusing, it was the Iraqi government’s problem to deal with them. Al Jazeera notes that, since Iraq officially became sovereign again on June 30, 2004, there was no legal obligation for occupying forces to police Iraqi security.” He also thought the revelations could have a major effect on the ground: “It makes it much harder for Obama to argue that Iraq doesn’t need us because it’s ready to police itself. According to The Guardian, incidents of abuse are recorded in the documents as recently as last December, so the problem can’t be dismissed as some long-solved remnant of Iraq’s darkest days in 2006. Two, and more importantly: If this news breaks big in Iraq, god only knows what it’s going to do to the political situation there.”

Doug Mataconis, a lawyer who writes at Outside the Beltway, a centrist site out of suburban Virginia, said: “Certainly, by regional standards, the American abuses were rather tame. The problem is that Americans are — and should be — held to much higher standards than the thug regimes of the Middle East. We started the war and set in motion the chain of events that put the new thugs in power. That means we bear at least some share of responsibility for their actions, especially when we’re still there working with them as partners.”

While left and right may not have seen eye to eye on the significance of the war logs, there was universal agreement that the State Department’s diplomatic cables that began to be released in November 2010 shined a spotlight on the dusky world of global diplomacy. “There have been many comparisons of Barack Obama to Jimmy Carter, focused on the economy,” wrote William A. Jacobson, a conservative Cornell law professor who blogs at Legal Insurrection. “But the continuing leak of documents by WikiLeaks has become for Obama what the Iranian hostage crisis was to Carter.”
Jacobson’s complaint was with the State Department’s decision to send WikiLeaks a letter asking it to stop releasing documents. “This is not about open government policy,” he wrote, “as if WikiLeaks went a bit too far on its class project. Julian Assange should have been indicted by now, and if the law did not allow more punitive measures in this circumstance, then the law should have been changed after the first document dump. Assange is an enemy of our country and should be treated as such. Instead, we’re writing letters and lecturing on accountable and open government. Stick a fork in Obama, he’s Jimmy Carter.”

As for the documents themselves, Richard Fernandez, an Australian who founded the foreign-policy blog Belmont Club, found in them alarming evidence that Obama’s high-minded foreign policy was faring no better than Carter’s. “The magisterial rhetoric, the grand phrases from the jut-jawed deliveries” at the teleprompter, Fernandez wrote, “translate to only one idea: kick the can down the road and please don’t hit me, mister. The leaked documents, if accurate, suggest a North Korea and Iran openly testing the administration; China engaging in cyberwar against the West; American Islamic allies supporting terrorism while demanding protection and even aid. It shows a potential Iranian threat so regionally worrisome that Saudi Arabia exhorted him to ‘cut off the head of the snake.’”

In the days following the initial release of the cables, as bloggers had time to digest the contents, a consensus formed that the most illuminating dispatches were those pertaining to the Middle East. Alastair Campbell, a spokesman for Tony Blair when Blair was prime minister of Britain, wrote at his eponymous blog that “in policy terms perhaps the most significant part of the leak, relates to the venom and anger with which most countries in the Middle East view Iran.” He continued: “Though on one level that is not a surprise, the scale, tone and near uniformity of it did surprise me. Reading that part of the first chapter of this particular industrial dump, I was left with the impression that anyone in the U.S. system pushing for a hardening of the policy position vis-à-vis Iran would be able to build a lot of support for such a move.”

Omri Ceren, a doctoral candidate in communications at the University of Southern California who blogs at Mere Rhetoric, felt the dispatches explained the disastrous June 2009 meeting between President Obama and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. “King Abdullah,” he concluded, “expected to talk about militarily confronting Iran, and he couldn’t believe it when Obama kept reciting bromides about the earth-shattering importance of the Israeli/Arab conflict and his enthusiasm for solving it.” He went on: “It’s not that Arab leaders don’t care about the Israeli/Arab conflict,” he wrote, “or that they wouldn’t want to see a Palestinian state, or that they won’t pay lip service to linkage. It’s just that they really, really care about stopping Iran by any means necessary — something that foreign policy experts who obsess over Israel’s ostensibly central regional role can’t have be true, lest their insistence that a Palestinian state is a necessary prerequisite to action on Iran seem more like personal fantasy than objective analysis.”

The blogger and liberal radio host Taylor Marsh, however, felt that the concerns
over a rising Iran were best understood in terms of George W. Bush’s foreign policy and its unintended consequences. “The Right is making a lot of ruckus about the Saudi comments while pointing fingers at Arabists utilizing the See Even Saudi Arabia Wants To Strike Iran’ argument, she wrote. “However, the Shia v. Sunni dynamic has been an amplified up challenge ever since Pres. Bush let the neoconservatives run things, which began with the disastrous pre-emptive attack on Iraq that altered the balance of power in the region. With shifts in Lebanon, the Shia state rising has as its most important godfathers George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, intended or not, something that has been forgotten.”

What, then, of the long-term effect the leaks might have on American foreign policy? Not everyone felt they gave the diplomatic corps a black eye. “The latest dump provided some embarrassing moments for the State Department in particular,” wrote James Joyner at the New Atlanticist. “But they also showed that those handling America’s day-to-day foreign policy are quite capable.” Joyner added: “That diplomats occasionally use undiplomatic language or that functionaries sometimes say things in private about heads of state that they wouldn’t dare say in public should shock no one who’s spent any time in the work force. So, yes, our representatives abroad in the main look good in these releases.”

Michael Cohen at the conservative site Democracy Arsenal made a strong case that the leaks would only make it harder for diplomats to achieve the sorts of aims WikiLeaks’s liberal supporters would be likely to approve of. “Anyone who has worked in international affairs would understand (and this goes for Americans and non-Americans) secrecy is an essential element of diplomatic relations,” he wrote. “Diplomacy actually relies on a healthy level of hypocrisy. The simple reality is that effective diplomacy and effective counterterrorism often must work in the dark. To suggest otherwise demonstrates a shocking lack of understanding about how diplomats actually operate.”

“All that’s happened here,” he added, “is that it will now be more difficult for U.S. diplomats to do their job; it will fray relations with a key Middle East ally and ironically it will probably lead to more not less secrecy, because diplomats will be more fearful of putting their thoughts down in cables that can then be leaked to The New York Times.”

The anonymous Midwestern blogger at Prairie Weather said: “Diplomacy can and does require deep secrecy. Up to a point.” But, he went on, “illegal wars sustained through ten years and counting — and through two administrations — are corrosive to a democracy. Understanding and dismantling the secretive structure that make illegal wars possible is a responsible, not irresponsible, move. That’s not to say they won’t create huge problems for U.S. diplomacy for years to come.”

Mustang Bobby, the pseudonymous liberal who blogs at Bark Bark Woof Woof, tartly observed that “in what we’ve seen so far from WikiLeaks, there doesn’t seem to be much of a plan other than to throw everything they’ve got against the wall and see what sticks. From what I understand in the shadowy world of leakage journalism, the objective
is to release selected information to inform the public rather than overwhelm it. In that respect, the people behind the WikiLeaks have yet to show any reason as to why they’re doing it other than that they can. If that’s meant to serve a purpose other than just show history in the raw and get a lot of pundits their ten minutes on Hardball and Fox, it’s not very apparent.”

But many liberals felt WikiLeaks did a job the establishment press had given up on. “Our elite media has been sloppy, lazy and corrupt for so long they have apparently forgotten what the purpose of a fourth estate actually is,” said Jane Hamsher, the founder of Firedoglake.

Nicole Belle at the left-wing site Crooks and Liars, apparently comparing WikiLeaks’s actions to warrantless wiretapping and the Patriot Act, said: “I’m of the belief that if this is the price we must pay to show the government that acting as if no one has a right to privacy is a double-edged sword that can hurt them as well, we might as well pay it now. If the government thinks it will damage their interests to have their corrupt actions known, perhaps they might not want to participate in them.”

Paul Rosenberg of Open Left felt the government was crying wolf when it warned that the document release would have dire consequences. “Of course,” he wrote, “the U.S. government is freaking out, warning of blood on the streets. News flash: There’s already blood on the streets. As Daniel Ellsberg has explained countless times, this is what they always say. And it’s virtually always a false alarm. Besides, blood in the streets, that’s pretty much what wars, espionage and such are all about, in’it? We’re supposed to worry that this massive leak will impede the ability of the U.S. government to connive in secret behind everyone’s back? Well, after the past 10 years in particular, who in the world honestly thinks that would be a bad thing?”

For some on the right, however, it just means other (more capable) people will be doing the conniving. “They have effectively destroyed the credibility of the State Department, the favorite foreign policy agency of the doves,” wrote the blogger TigerHawk. “What foreign diplomat would dare speak candidly with our Foreign Service now? That will make the State Department even less effective. To get anything done, the American president, whoever he or she may be, will be more likely to turn to our intelligence agencies and military, the relative influence of which on American policy is bound to increase.”

The obvious summation of all this is that WikiLeaks is in the eye of the beholder. To some, it valuably exposes the machinations of American realpolitik; to others, it’s a dangerous security breach that paradoxically may aid those devoted to a hawkish foreign policy. But what is it to Julian Assange himself? Aaron Bady, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, who blogs as Zunguzungu, did a close reading of Assange’s statements and came up with this answer:

“We all basically know that the U.S. state — like all states — is basically doing a lot of basically shady things basically all the time, simply revealing the specific ways they are doing these shady things will not be, in and of itself, a necessarily good thing. In
some cases, it may be a bad thing, and in many cases, the provisional good it may do will be limited in scope. The question for an ethical human being — and Assange always emphasizes his ethics — has to be the question of what exposing secrets will actually accomplish, what good it will do, what better state of affairs it will bring about. And whether you buy his argument or not, Assange has a clearly articulated vision for how WikiLeaks’ activities will ‘carry us through the mire of politically distorted language, and into a position of clarity,’ a strategy for how exposing secrets will ultimately impede the production of future secrets. The point of WikiLeaks — as Assange argues — is simply to make WikiLeaks unnecessary.”
Sharing Secrets at Arm’s Length

By ARTHUR S. BRISBANE

Arthur S. Brisbane is the public editor of The New York Times.

THE two stories stood side by side: one said that Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, was on the run, in fear of Western intelligence agencies and seen by some colleagues as “delusional,” “erratic” and “imperious.” The other story? A chilling account of war in Iraq, for which Mr. Assange and his organization were the primary source.

In publishing its latest installment of “The War Logs,” which appeared in print last Saturday and Sunday, The Times confronted a stark duality. The case for reporting on nearly 400,000 classified documents was compelling, while the character of its primary source appeared increasingly sketchy.

Managing its relationship with Mr. Assange and WikiLeaks was only one of The Times’s challenges in this exceptional chapter in journalism history.

As in its coverage of the Pentagon Papers, the Cuban missile crisis, surveillance by the National Security Agency and other stories involving secrecy, The Times had to choose whether to cover, how much to cover and when to publish.

The stakes were high. Just as it did in the Pentagon Papers case, when Justice Department lawyers invoked the Espionage Act to try to quash publication, The Times had to consider the possibility that the government would strike back.

More fundamentally, the newspaper had to conduct a fateful cost-benefit analysis that asked: Does the public interest in having this information outweigh the risks to coalition forces and intelligence-gathering in the war zones?

The choices were set in motion early this summer when Bill Keller, The Times’s executive editor, got a call from the editor in chief of The Guardian, a British newspaper. WikiLeaks had offered The Guardian a cache of military field reports and had asked it to invite The Times, and later the German magazine Der Spiegel, to have access as well. Mr. Keller sent Eric Schmitt, an experienced war correspondent, to London to take a look at the giant trove, which included 92,000 individual military field reports from Afghanistan and more than 391,000 reports from Iraq.

Mr. Keller said no conditions were placed on the news organizations’ use of the material, except that they were obligated to synchronize publication with WikiLeaks’s publication online. The Times mapped out its own coverage.

“We chose the documents that struck us as most interesting,” Mr. Keller said in an e-mail message. “We did our own analysis of the material. We decided what to write. We did not discuss any of those matters with WikiLeaks, or give them an advance look at our stories.”

He emphasized, in other words, The Times’s independence from WikiLeaks. The issue emerged as a definitive one in my conversations with veteran journalists, a legal
expert and a retired general.

Some say that what’s important is the material itself. Whether or not Julian Assange is a rogue with a political agenda, what matters most is that The Times authenticates the information.

“They did exactly the right thing to establish an arms-length distance,” said Paul Steiger, editor-in-chief of the news organization ProPublica. “WikiLeaks is not the A.P.”

David Rudenstine, a Cardozo Law School professor and author of “The Day the Presses Stopped: A History of the Pentagon Papers Case,” said, “If The Times makes the judgment that this is the real thing, I don’t think it matters much” who it is dealing with.

Another view holds that it is impossible to separate the legitimacy of the material from its source. In this situation, the challenge is compounded because The Times’s source, WikiLeaks, obtained the material from its own source — a leaker whose identity remains uncertain.

“Did the source select which documents to turn over?” asked Bill Kovach, of the Project for Excellence in Journalism, in an e-mail message to me. “What was the nature of the transaction between WikiLeaks and the source(s)? Did WikiLeaks turn over only some documents and not others?”

Mr. Keller said the documents deserved attention, “whatever you think of WikiLeaks as an organization.” He added that Times staffers scrutinized the material to satisfy themselves that it had not been manipulated.

More fundamental than the relationship between The Times and WikiLeaks is the basic question of whether it was right to publish the material at all. Most of those I spoke to echoed the comments of Leonard Downie Jr., former executive editor of The Washington Post, who called WikiLeaks’s archive “newsworthy and of public interest.” But there is an argument to the contrary.

Thomas E. Ricks, author of “Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq” and now contributing editor to Foreign Policy magazine, believes The Times put those in the field at great risk, with little public gain.

“What you have here is thousands of, basically, the equivalent of telephone logs, situation reports,” he said. “These are not policy statements. These are not Rumsfeld ordered ‘X.’ It is one officer said this or heard this. It is the lowest form of information. It is crappy information being given a status it doesn’t deserve, and it carries great risk.”

To address the risk to troops and informants, The Times took pains to remove names and other information from the documents it published. Nevertheless, a retired Army general, who asked for anonymity to avoid bringing controversy to the civilian organization he now serves, said the field reports enable Al Qaeda and the Taliban to learn much about the operational practices and mind-set of the coalition’s fighting forces.

“Analysis is not nearly as damaging as reports,” he said, drawing a distinction between the Pentagon Papers and the WikiLeaks material. Field reports like these make it possible “to get into the mind of the enemy. Anytime you do that you gain a tremendous advantage.”
These are powerful arguments. Ultimately, the case presented circumstances that stubbornly defied decision-making templates of the past. Daniel Ellsberg, who exposed the Pentagon Papers, needed a major news organization to publish his material. WikiLeaks, with or without The Times, could publish its material on the Internet. So The Times’s choice was whether to use its resources to organize and filter material that was going public, one way or another.

The Times, in my opinion, did take a reputational risk in doing business with WikiLeaks, though it has inoculated itself somewhat by reporting independently on the organization.

The ultimate risk, of course, is to the fighting forces in the field. And I’m sure that wasn’t an easy call for The Times’s editors. Perhaps the decision wasn’t unlike the one that A.M. Rosenthal, then managing editor of The Times, made in the Pentagon Papers case. As Professor Rudenstine related it: “He didn’t think he should play God and decide what was best for the nation. So he decided the question on its news value.”

The Times faced some very tough decisions in this situation and took some risks. I think it did what it had to do.

---This article was originally published on October 30, 2010
What if the Secrets Stayed Secret?

By ARTHUR S. BRISBANE

Arthur S. Brisbane is the public editor of The New York Times.

I READ the Monday New York Times with what can only be described as a sinking feeling.

Here on display, based on yet another WikiLeaks release, was the breathtaking disclosure of American diplomats’ highly sensitive internal communications about friends and enemies. The discreet world of confidential embassy cables had seemingly been blown apart.

The Times articles, beginning then and continuing even as I write, lasered in on United States diplomats’ reporting about the most explosive situations in the world: Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons, an out-of-control and increasingly weaponized North Korea, deep instability and unreliability in Pakistan. And much more, most of it unsettling, some of it gossipy (Sarkozy is a spoiled Frenchman?) and some of it lurid enough to belong on the E! channel (cue the Chechen-strongman-gone-wild in Dagestan).

Even as The Times has unveiled these stories through the week, snapping into focus one disturbing crisis after another, it has been impossible to ignore the hand of Julian Assange, the curator of purloined secrets and founder of WikiLeaks. For this go-round, Mr. Assange had adroitly orchestrated a media rollout headed by The Guardian of Britain and joined by a handful of European news organizations, with The Times picking up the material from The Guardian.

The image of Mr. Assange as ringmaster is deeply disturbing, especially since he seems to so relish his worldwide notoriety. The image of great news organizations as performers in the ring, though, is even more alarming to me.

These are what some would view as the journalistic “problems” of this latest chapter in the WikiLeaks story: The exposed secret cables seem to threaten what little stability there is in the world. Extreme damage control by the United States is now urgently needed across a broad diplomatic front. And, to cap it off, many view the episode as an exercise in master manipulation of the news media by someone whose aims are obscure.

As unsettling as these issues are, it is appropriate to take a deep breath and consider the alternative. What if, instead of publishing what it knew, The Times had chosen to pass on WikiLeaks’s 250,000-plus secret documents?

What if The Times had mulled it all over and determined that the release of such sensitive information would endanger the government’s efforts to advance American interests in the world, and so concluded reluctantly that the newspaper would have to suppress the story?

Journalistic “problems” notwithstanding, it’s simply inconceivable that The Times
would choose this path. The Times, like other serious news organizations in democracies, exists to ferret out and publish information — most especially information that government, business and other power centers prefer to conceal. Arming readers with knowledge is what it’s about, and journalists are motivated to pursue that end.

The impulse to obtain and publish inaccessible information is greatly strengthened in an age in which, if anything, government secrecy is growing. As The Washington Post reported earlier this year in its illuminating series “Top Secret America,” the government has expanded secrecy so much that 854,000 people now hold top-secret security clearances.

For editors, the opportunity to arm readers with hard-to-get information takes on great urgency. Once an editor assesses the merits of a subject like this one, the reporting goes forward and the story is published, albeit sometimes with redactions to avoid putting individuals in peril. The process, and the logic, are evident in the answer that Bill Keller, executive editor of The Times, gave me when I asked whether he had misgivings about publishing this material.

“No question this exercise has had its challenges,” he said. “But from the time we got a good look at the material, there was no doubt that we wanted to publish. Of course, we considered potential legal risks and anticipated criticism, whatever we decided to do. The business of sorting and selecting from such a vast archive was daunting. We spent a great deal of effort on the labor of redacting potentially damaging material. Coordinating a publication schedule with other news organizations was complicated. But none of that ever overcame the excitement of a great story.”

So were the secret cables in fact newsworthy? Some have said they broke little ground, but I would assess it differently.

The authority of American diplomats’ analyses, often quoted verbatim from the cables, strengthened my understanding of the challenges the United States faces abroad. Perhaps for elite foreign policy experts, the material was less revealing. But I don’t think that’s the point. The real question should be: Are Times readers and Americans at large better informed on these issues because of the stories?

The answer is unquestionably yes. To cite just a few specifics:

North Korea: The Chinese don’t know what’s going on with Kim Jong-il’s nuclear program, a surprising revelation for anyone who thought the Chinese could, as a last resort, put a lid on little brother.

Pakistan: American diplomats seriously doubt that Pakistan’s military, which effectively controls the state, will ever suppress extremist groups that conduct operations against our forces in Afghanistan and threaten India. That knowledge implies continuing futility for further American efforts to combat such groups in Afghanistan.

Iran: United States officials believe that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s government obtained so-called BM-25 missiles from North Korea, enabling Iran to extend its range enough to strike Western Europe or Moscow. This development largely explains the Obama administration’s willingness to shift its missile defense strategy in Europe.
But wait, other news organizations have now weighed in to say The Times’s coverage of the BM-25 missiles was misleading, that other authorities have cast strong doubt on whether such missiles even exist. That leads me to the further point: Publication isn’t necessarily a short hop to the full truth. It is sometimes only a first step. But it is the essential first step in a process that has to start before the marketplace of news and information can establish the facts.

No question, the journalistic “problems” of this latest WikiLeaks episode put a lot of pressure on the news organizations that got the material. The Times was perhaps blessed this time that it didn’t have to deal directly with Mr. Assange. But the path ahead was clear to Times journalists, justifiably, from the moment they saw the documents.

Consider:

What if The New York Times in 1964 had possessed a document showing that L.B.J.’s intent to strike against North Vietnam after the Gulf of Tonkin incident was based on false information? Should it have published the material?

What if The Times had possessed documentary evidence showing that the Bush administration’s claims about Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction were unfounded? Should it have published the material?

These questions, which need only be posed rhetorically, supply an answer to the larger question: Would you as a reader rather have the information yourself or trust someone else to hang on to it for you?

---This article was originally published on December 4, 2010
Appendix A: Diplomatic Cables

A selection of the documents from a cache of a quarter-million confidential American diplomatic cables acquired by WikiLeaks. A small number of names and passages in some of the cables have been removed (XXXXXXXXXXXXX) by The New York Times to protect diplomats’ confidential sources, to keep from compromising American intelligence efforts or to protect the privacy of ordinary citizens.

Afghanistan and Pakistan
Africa
Americas
Asia
Middle East
Russia and Europe
U.S. Initiatives
Diplomatic Cables
Afghanistan and Pakistan

2009 Meeting With Ahmed Wali Karzai

A cable from Kabul reports on an American meeting in October 2009 with Ahmed Wali Karzai, the half brother of the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai. The author discusses affairs in Kandahar, Ahmed Wali Karzai’s power base, and wonders about how to deal with officials like him who are believed to be corrupt.

DATE 2009-10-03 04:46:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 083068

SENSITIVE SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM STATE PASS USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA USFOR-A FOR POLAD


Classified By: Interagency Provincial Affairs Deputy Coordinator Hoyt Y ee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: in a lengthy and cordial introductory meeting with Kandahar Provincial Council Chief Ahmed Wali Karzai (AWK) and Governor Tooryalai Weesa, Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) for the South Frank Ruggiero underscored the need for improved governance in Kandahar, and highlighted the importance of naming credible provincial governors and district officials before the inauguration to send a positive signal on good governance to the Afghan people and the international community. Both AWK and Weesa acknowledged the weakness of the government in Kandahar, and outlined their proposals for local solutions, including the empowerment of shuras of district elders for local dispute resolution rather than the courts. AWK also emphasized large-scale infrastructure projects rather than smaller cash-for-work program, and his desire to see private security companies in the province under one licensee. AWK discounted the role of elections and their importance to Afghans. End Summary.

AWK Nervous but Eager to Share Views

2. (C) SCR Ruggiero met with AWK and Governor Weesa on September 28 in the Governor’s Palace in Kandahar City. The Representative of Canada in Kandahar (RoCK) Ben Rowswell also attended the meeting, which was held in a wood-paneled room, beneath a large photo of President Hamid Karzai. (Note: While we must deal with AWK as the head of the Provincial Council, he is widely understood to be corrupt and a narcotics trafficker. End Note) AWK, dressed in a crisp white shalwar kameez and pinstriped vest, appeared nervous, though eager to express his views on the international presence in Kandahar.

The Importance of Good Governance

3. (C) SCR emphasized the criticality of good governance in the province, and said the United States would like to see improvement in the post-election period. He said the United States is
ready to work with the GIRoA to strengthen key provincial and district level governance, but we are only willing to expend our resources in people and programs if we have confidence those resources will pay off and make a real difference.

4. (C) Both AWK and Weesa acknowledged there was a credibility gap between the public and the government. Weesa said it was a problem that in the 10 months he had been in office, the government had not been able to deliver 24-hour electricity to the people, and that 150 factories had closed because of it. He said people looked to NGOs more than to the government to deliver services, and he complained that NGOs poach workers from the government by offering higher wages. SCR emphasized the importance of naming credible provincial governors and district officials before the inauguration to send a positive signal on good governance to the Afghan people and the international community.

5. (C) AWK suggested one way of fighting corruption in the province would be to re-establish and empower district shuras, instead of judges or police, to settle local disputes. Currently there is only one judge for the five districts around Kandahar City, he said, and a council of local elders would be more effective at resolving land, water and other disputes. (Note: there are a total of seven judges for all 17 districts in the province.) “You can easily bribe the chief of police or a judge, he said, but you can’t bribe 50 elders.” He said the provincial council, with the support of the governor, could initiate the formation of these district shuras, which would consist of 10-15 elders elected by the people.

Infrastructure Priorities, Private Security Contractors and Conflicts of Interest

6. (C) AWK said he had been in Kandahar almost continuously since 1992, and that the U.S. reputation in the province was built on the back of two key infrastructure projects done in the 1950s and 60s. He said what would make a difference to the population today would be similar large-scale, labor-intensive projects that would provide jobs to the people and keep them from being recruited by the Taliban. AWK cautioned against the use of small scale projects and additional cash-for-work programs; he stated that the use of implementing partners does not allow expenditure of development resources to reach villagers and other local Afghans. Both he and Weesa added that it should be the local elders who are empowered to distribute these jobs, not officials or companies from outside.

Putting Private Security Under the Direction of the Provincial Council

7. (C) In the same vein of providing “local solutions to local problems,” as he put it, AWK recommended a “local solution” to the problem of providing security in the area. He said that currently, there are many jihadi commanders with militias who independently provide protection to convoys and projects, but that a proposal before the Ministry of Interior would bring all these commanders under one umbrella in Kandahar, with one person given the license for the private security sector. He said there would be a meeting Wednesday (September 30) of all the security companies, under the auspices of the Provincial Council, to appoint this representative to send to Kabul. (Note: AWK is understood to have a stake in private security contracting, and has aggressively lobbied the Canadians to have his security services retained for the Dahla Dam refurbishment. Both he and the governor have tried to exert control over how contracts are awarded in the province ) all of which could be a significant conflict of interest in the province. End Note.)

Elections: What’s the Point?

8. (C) In answer to a question from the RoCK and the SCR about the credibility of the elections, AWK said democracy was new for Afghanistan, and that people in the region did not understand the point of having one election, let alone two. “The people do not like change,” he said. “They think, the President is alive, and everything is fine. Why have an election?”
The meeting with AWK highlights one of our major challenges in Afghanistan: how to fight corruption and connect the people to their government, when the key government officials are themselves corrupt. Given AWK’s reputation for shady dealings, his recommendations for large, costly infrastructure projects should be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism. Still, his observations about the unintended consequences of how NGOs and other international partners do their work, e.g. “poaching” of government staff, track with some of our own concerns, including about how to promote Afghan-led solutions. We will continue to urge AWK to improve his own credibility gap as well as that of the GIRoA.

EIKENBERRY

“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”
“Cables Depict Afghan Graft, Starting at Top”
American officials meet Ahmed Wali Karzai, the Afghan president’s half brother, who denies allegations of drug trafficking and recalls the days when he ran a Chicago restaurant.

DATE 2010-02-25 04:05:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 000693

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM, INR/B STATE PASS USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA USFOR-A FOR POLAD


REF: A. (A) KABUL 673 B. (B) 09 KABUL 3068

Classified By: Interagency Provincial Affairs Deputy Director Hoyt Yee for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) Begin Summary. Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) Frank Ruggiero met one-on-one with Ahmed Wali Karzai (AWK) on February 23. SCR informed AWK that coalition attention will turn to Kandahar in the next phase of Operation Moshtarak (Together) and the United States will play a far greater role in Kandahar on the military and civilian sides. SCR outlined the coalition governance strategy for Kandahar and cautioned ISAF will seek non-interference by powerbrokers in police matters. AWK discussed the recent capture of Taliban leader Mullah Baradar in Kandahar, district and provincial-level politics, Kandahar economics and security, the role of Abdul Rahman Jan (ARJ) in Helmand, narcotics, a southern Pashtoon political party, competition with Nangarhar Governor Gulaga Sherzai, and AWK’s life in Chicago from 1983-1992. AWK appeared nervous, but eager to engage with a U.S. official. End Summary.

Focus on Kandahar
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2. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) SCR told AWK the attention of the Afghan government, with ISAF support, would turn to Kandahar in the months ahead and it was likely this would be predominantly a political contest that would require the leadership from the highest level of the Afghan government. SCR discussed the governance strategy for Kandahar City and surrounding districts. AWK understood the next phase of operation Moshtarak would be on Kandahar and offered his support. SCR responded this would be an Afghan Government-led effort and the coalition would be focusing its resources on building up that capacity. SCR was clear the coalition would not tolerate individuals working at odds to ISAF campaign aims. AWK stated “nobody is that stupid.”

Better Security and Economy in Kandahar
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3. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) AWK told the SCR that security has improved in Kandahar over the past year. Freedom of movement had increased across the province, he said, citing his driving to the meeting at Kandahar Airfield with minimum security. AWK said insurgents no longer have the capability to launch large scale attacks; for example, AWK does not fear an insurgent attack on his home. AWK expressed concern about a series of assassinations aimed at Afghan officials and
Afghan citizens who work for the coalition in the city, noting this could only be solved by intelligence assets. AWK said economic activity had increased in the Kandahar City area, but noted his belief that President Karzai is largely unaware of these gains. AWK told the President about increased economic activity in Arghandab related to AVIPA Plus and the President was very surprised, he said. AWK said the President did not understand the changing circumstances in the province.

Kandahar Politics Are Local

4. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) AWK said that it was important to get district-level tribal dynamics right to bring stability to Kandahar City and its environs. AWK specifically stated the need to rely on local, village elders to choose representatives to district shuras. This would ensure a representative shura for district level officials, said AWK and pointed to the succession of Arghandab-based Alikozai leader Mullah Naqib. AWK said the Alikozais chose Mullah Naqib's son, Karimullah, to lead the Alikozai. SCR pointed out coalition conventional wisdom that President Karzai had interfered in that process to appoint Karimullah, which led to certain Alikozai elements to support the Taliban in Arghandab. AWK said, unconvincingly, this was not the case. AWK then contradicted himself and said Karimullah, in fact, did not lead the Alikozai, but AWK's deputy at the provincial council Dastegeeri, was the most influential Alikozai in Kandahar.

Police in the South and Abdul Rahman Jan

5. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) SCR told AWK the coalition would not accept powerbroker interference with the police and used the example of citizens in Marjah telling Marines they would not support GIRoA due to past Abdul Rahman Jan (ARJ) abuses when he was the Helmand police chief between 2003 and 2006. AWK concurred ARJ was problematic. SCR reiterated coalition would seek to make certain ARJ did not re-establish links to police officials in Marjah (Note: SCR brought this discussion up so that AWK would report it to Kabul. End Note.). AWK said the Noorzais in Marjah would support ARJ, but other tribes would resist. Kandahar does not have similar issues of interference with the police, he said, but SCR pressed saying we are aware of a recent incident when the Kandahar governor sought to remove the Panjwa'i chief of police, but someone had intervened to halt that removal. AWK, who is believed to have prevented Governor Weesa from firing the police chief, said the governor had the power to remove police officials and should exercise that authority in Panjwa'i. AWK characterized Governor Weesa as honest and a powerful figure in Kandahar, but he needed to be more aggressive. In the same breath, AWK said he was the most powerful official in Kandahar and could deliver whatever is needed.

Capture of Mullah Baradar

6. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) SCR asked AWK his views on the recent capture in Pakistan of Taliban leader Mullah Baradar. AWK said Pakistan detained Baradar and other Taliban leaders because they were prepared to discuss reintegration with the Karzai government. Senior Taliban fighters in Pakistan may be prepared to reintegrate, he said, but are forced by the Pakistan Government to continue to fight. AWK said some Afghan Taliban commanders cannot return to Afghanistan because they are on the Joint Priority Effects List (JPEL) and are told by the Pakistanis they must continue to fight or will be turned over to the coalition. It is important to remove such fighters from the JPEL for reintegration to work, he argued, adding that he has been working on the reconciliation issue with the Saudis for two-three years. AWK offered a meeting with SCR and his older brother and former Member of Parliament for Kandahar Kayyum Karzai in the next few weeks to discuss ongoing reintegration discussions with the Saudis.

Drug Trafficker: Where is the Polygraph?

7. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) Unprompted, AWK raised allegations of his involvement in narcotics, telling the SCR that he is willing to take a polygraph anytime, anywhere to prove his innocence and that he has hired an attorney in New York to clear his name. He suggested that the coalition pay mullahs to preach against heroin, which would reduce demand for poppy cultivation. AWK
dismissed the narcotics allegations as part of a campaign to discredit him, particularly by the media, saying the allegations are “like a spice added to a dish to make it more enticing to eat.”

A Political Party for Southern Pashtuns?
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8. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) SCR asked AWK if there are discussions to create a Pashtun-oriented political party in the South. AWK said such a party would be announced shortly and it would encompass southern Pashtuns from Herat to Kandahar; Tajiks also would be represented. AWK said Afghans are reluctant to join political parties because they are associated with the communist party and Islamic fundamentalist movements, like the Taliban. He added that he could not be part of another election because he had to personally manage promises to hundreds of thousands of voters in the last election.

Gulaga Sherzai: Competitor
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9. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) SCR raised the recent 1,500 person shura co-hosted by AWK and Sherzai in Kandahar City (Reftel B). AWK said Sherzai was not to be trusted, but he was willing to work with him on a peace jirga to deliver peace to the south. AWK passionately presented his history of working with the United States since 2001 and told the SCR that he could deliver anything needed.

Missing Wrigley
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10. (SBU//Rel NATO, ISAF) Further emphasizing his links to the United States, AWK fondly recalled his days in Chicago as a restaurant owner close to Chicago’s Wrigley Field. His restaurant was a hub for American in the Midwest who had worked or lived in Afghanistan prior to the Soviet invasion, he said.

Comment
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11. (S//Rel NATO, ISAF) AWK was eager to engage and rarely stopped talking in the two hour meeting. While he presented himself as a partner to the United States and is eager to be seen as helping the coalition, he also demonstrated that he will dissemble when it suits his needs. He appears not to understand the level of our knowledge of his activities, and that the coalition views many of his activities as malign, particularly relating to his influence over the police. We will need to monitor his activity closely, and deliver a recurring, transparent message to him of where are redlines are and what we expect of him in the months ahead. RICCIARDONE

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”
Cash Flows From Afghanistan

An October 2009 cable signed by Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry sums up the flow of capital out of Afghanistan’s “cash-based economy,” noting that Afghanistan’s vice president at the time carried $52 million in cash into the United Arab Emirates.

DATE 2009-10-19 13:58:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 003364

SIPIDIS

DEPT PASS TO S/SRAP, S/CT, EEB, and SCA/A

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2019 TAGS: EINV,EFIN, KTFN, PGOV, AF SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: CAPITAL FLIGHT AND ITS IMPACT ON FUTURE STABILITY

REF: A. KABUL 2791 B. KABUL 3326

Classified By: CDDEA Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(S) SUMMARY: Afghanistan’s is a cash-based economy, relying on historic trade linkages with neighboring and regional partners. Given Afghanistan’s strategic location, ongoing conflict, and deep involvement in illicit trade (e.g., narcotics), as well as some neighboring country currency exchange policies, vast amounts of cash come and go from the country on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis. Before the August 20 election, $600 million in banking system withdrawals were reported; however, in recent months, some $200 million has flowed back into the country. In terms of total money leaving the country, analysts are uncertain whether it is generated within Afghanistan or is moving through Afghanistan from other countries such as Pakistan (Pakistan’s strict currency controls makes smuggling through Kabul International Airport (KIA) an attractive option). Experts also do not know the ratio of licit and illicit monies leaving the country. Given Afghanistan’s general political uncertainty, lack of credible and safe investment opportunities, and unsettled election, it appears that individuals moved more money than normal out of the Afghan banking sector and country as a hedge before the elections. While some of the money appears to be returning, Mission -- with support from Washington agencies and other posts in the region -- will work to closely monitor the cash movements, both as a sign of public confidence in GIRoA and for possible illicit financial activities. End summary.

Recent Trends
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2. (S) While reports vary widely, records obtained from Kabul International Airport (KIA) support suspicions large amounts of physical cash transit from Kabul to Dubai on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis. According to confidential reports, more than $190 million left Kabul for Dubai through KIA during July, August, and September. Actual amounts, however, could be much larger. An official claiming first-hand knowledge recently told the Treasury Attaché some $75 million transited through KIA bound for Dubai in one day during the month of July. The primary currencies identified at the airport for these three months include (in declining order): Saudi riyals, Euros, U.S. dollars, and UAE dirhams. Some Pakistani rupees and British pounds were also declared, but in much smaller amounts. Comparatively, in 2008, approximately $600 million was declared at KIA and another 100 million Euros and 80 million British pounds were declared bound for Dubai, according to available reports compiled by the Central Bank’s Financial Intelligence Unit. According to our sources, established couriers primarily use Pamir Airlines, which is owned by Kabul Bank and influential Afghans such as Mahmood Karzai and Mohammad Fahim who is President
Hamid Karzai’s current vice-presidential running mate.

One Factor: Election Unease
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3. (S) In an October 7 meeting, Afghan Central Bank Governor Abdul Qadeer Fitrat stressed there are no indications of significant capital flight. He pointed to a stable exchange rate and increasing assets in the formal financial system as supporting his perspective. Fitrat also mentioned that the formal banking system is well capitalized and the regulatory capital ratio of all banking institutions is above the minimum threshold (12 percent of risk-weighted assets.) Nevertheless, Fitrat did note the Central Bank was aware roughly $600 million had left Afghanistan’s banking system before the elections, due, he said, tainty as to the outcome of the election and the prospects for the new government. Fitrat could not say what percentage of this money actually left the country. (Note: Nor are there statistics showing how much was withdrawn or transferred through the more informal hawala network. End note.) As of October 7, more than $200 million has returned to the banking sector according to Fitrat. The Central Bank Governor restated this figure in an October 13 meeting between Fitrat and the Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs (ref B).

4. (C) Separately, and in the same timeframe as the meeting with Fitrat, CEOs from several leading banks approached the Treasury Attache with concerns over significant cash withdrawals and wire transfers to other accounts in Dubai and Europe. In separate meetings October 12, several bankers reported deposits are growing and appeared positive about future prospects. However, the various bankers noted widespread uncertainty about the ongoing election process and overall security situation will likely continue to spook Afghanistan’s existing and potential investors, and as a result, undermine growth. One experienced banker flatly said no legitimate business person would keep significant sums of money in Afghanistan right now given the overwhelming risks of doing so.

KABUL 00003364 002 OF 002

Illicit Versus Licit
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5. (C) Taking capital out of Afghanistan (physically through cash or value or by using wire transfer) is not illegal, as long as it is declared. For example, formal financial flows (e.g., wire transfers) over $10,000 are recorded by banks and submitted to the Central Bank’s Financial Intelligence Unit for analysis. All 17 licensed banks submit these reports on a monthly basis. Similarly, cash couriers transiting KIA or crossing the land border must declare carried cash if it exceeds $20,000. This regulation is better enforced at KIA than along Afghanistan’s porous borders, which further complicates full-understanding of this already complex problem-set.

6. (S) While it is impossible to know for sure at this point, our sense is the money leaving Afghanistan is likely a combination of illicit and licit proceeds. Drug traffickers, corrupt officials, and to a large extent licit business owners do not benefit from keeping millions of dollars in Afghanistan and instead are motivated (due to risk and return-on-investment) to move value into accounts and investments outside of Afghanistan. For example, the United Arab Emirates government revealed, as part of an ongoing Drug Enforcement Administration/Afghan Threat Finance Cell investigation, that it had stopped Afghan Vice-President Ahmad Zia Masood entering the country with $52 million earlier this year -- a significant amount he was ultimately allowed to keep without revealing the money’s origin or destination. Moreover, Sher Khan Farnood, the Chairman of Kabul Bank, reportedly owns 39 properties on the Palm Jumeirah in Dubai and has other financial interests spread widely beyond Afghanistan. (Note: Many other notable private individuals and public officials maintain assets (primarily property) outside Afghanistan, suggesting these individuals are extracting as much wealth as possible while conditions permit. End note.)

Comment
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7. (S) The sense among Mission elements is that significant volumes of cash leave Afghanistan through wire transfers, the hawala network and physically through the airport. We do not know, however, whether this money is generated within Afghanistan or brought in from other countries such as Pakistan for transfer (Pakistan strictly enforces currency controls, making smuggling through KIA an attractive option.) We also do not know the ratio of licit and illicit monies
leaving the country (with the former more likely to return at some point.) Given Afghanistan’s
general political uncertainty, lack of credible and safe investment opportunities, and unsettled
election, we are inclined to believe several individuals moved more money than normal out of the
Afghan banking sector and country as a measure of protection before the elections. We will
continue to monitor and engage on the issue here. However, input from Washington agencies as well
as from other missions in the region will be key in developing a clearer understanding of the
composition, size, and directions of these cash flows. End comment.

EIKENBERRY

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Depict Afghan Graft, Starting at Top”
An Effective, but Allegedly Corrupt, Police Chief

A February cable gives an account of Col. Abdul Razziq, a border police chief who the Americans believe is both highly competent and corrupt.

DATE 2010-02-07 12:34:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

SIPDIS DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM, INR/B STATE PASS USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA USFOR-A FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2020 TAGS: PGOV, KDEM, KCOR, KCRM, PREL, AF SUBJECT: POWERBROKER AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES IN SPIN BOLDAK

REF: A. (A) KABUL 463 B. (B) KABUL 408 C. (C) 09 KABUL 4039 D. (D) 09 KABUL 4024

KABUL 00000467 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Interagency Provincial Affairs Deputy Director Hoyt Yee for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (SBU) Summary: Spin Boldak District in Kandahar Province and its major border crossing point to Pakistan at Weech-Chaman have become the focus of a number of high profile coalition efforts given the upcoming military operations in Regional Command-South (RC-S). Although there is a high potential for large scale revenue collections through customs collected at the border, the lack of a strong, capable district government has allowed powerbrokers, especially Afghan Border Police (ABP) Chief Colonel Abdul Razzik, to fill the void. Accused constantly of illegal trafficking and taxing activities through Weech-Chaman (most recently by a January 19 Washington Post article), Razzik has been careful to maintain a cooperative relationship with the ISAF leadership to guard his position. ISAF and USG interlocutors walk a thin tightrope when working with this allegedly corrupt official who is also a major security stabilizing force. Despite Razzik’s power and influence in Spin Boldak, we will press the GIRoA to establish and empower competent district governance to counterbalance the powerbrokers and make Spin Boldak a profitable customs hub within southern Afghanistan. As one of the 80 terrain districts, we expect it to ultimately become a focus of enhanced capacity building through the District Delivery Program (DDP). End summary.

High Level Attention

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2. (C) Reflecting the importance of Spin Boldak District to the coalition effort, particularly in light of the military surge in the South, COMISAF and the RC-South Commander visited the Weech border crossing point on January 18, arriving in Afghanistan from the Pakistan side of the border along with the head of the Pakistani Frontier Corps. The goal of their visit was to engage Afghan authorities on issues related to border security, including cooperation between the neighboring countries and ISAF convoy traffic. Unlike the Pakistani and ISAF delegations, which were comprised of high-level commanding officers, the Afghan contingent was led by Colonel Abdul Razzik, Fourth Zone Chief of the Afghan Border Police (ABP) responsible for Spin Boldak and local powerbroker, accompanied by the weak District Governor, Haji Abdul Ghani. No higher level Afghan officials, political or military, were in attendance, a sign of Razzik’s apparent unquestioned -- but also unaccountable -- authority over issues pertaining to Spin Boldak and its environs.
Cost Benefit Analysis
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3. (C) Razzik’s apparent autonomy and connections to many influential officials, including President Karzai (through former Helmand governor Assadullah Wafa, an Achekzai kinsmen and the president’s adviser on tribal affairs) and former Kandahar governor and mentor Gul Agha Sherzai leave him well positioned to maintain power and influence in the district. Additionally, he has been amenable to many of the requests made of him by ISAF, including allowing his troops to partner with coalition forces. Requests to which he has acquiesced include support for interim improvements planned at the border crossing point intended to both expedite the increase in ISAF convoys and lay the groundwork for more efficient customs generation. The January 18 COMISAF visit underscored Razzik’s key enabling role in this regard, and his calculated approach to working with ISAF.

4. (C) To this end, Razzik is not obstructing coalition requirements at the border (or throughout the district) though his longstanding disapproval of a visible ISAF presence in and around the crossing point during daylight hours is well known. (Note: Razzik tells ISAF that the reason for this is that the troops would become targets and result in civilian casualties. However, daylight is also the time of day when commercial traffic and money-making opportunities are at their peak. End note.) He knows that to reject coalition requests would be to engender unwanted ill will by ISAF and, in the near term, there is money to be made in labor and materials at the border and further up Highway 4 where ISAF plans to build a staging area for convoys on land near Razzik’s compound and owned by his associate. A January 18 meeting with MG Riley of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides an insight into his personal calculations: Razzik’s main talking point was concern that trucks providing materials to ISAF in Spin Boldak were not locally-owned. It is probably not a coincidence that he himself owns a locally-based trucking fleet.

Abetting the Status Quo
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5. (C) Contrary to the prevailing narrative of Razzik’s unchallenged authority in Spin Boldak, anecdotal evidence paints a picture of less than harmonious dynamics within Razzik’s own Achekzai tribe with regard to the Colonel’s prominence. Razzik’s immediate predecessor in the ABP, Haji Fida Mohammad (a member of the Tribal Shura and District Development Assembly) does not hide his contempt in public for his nephew. One local account suggests that Razzik did not achieve his position through a tribal consensus but that he was thrust upon Spin Boldak by GIRoA, a view bolstered by the Colonel’s reported links to former Governor Sherzai.

District Governance
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6. (C) At present, the District Government of Spin Boldak is presided over by Haji Abdul Ghani, a Popalzai tribesman and Karzai kinsman. The third District Governor (DG) in two years, Abdul Ghani’s predecessor reportedly was removed for offending local sensibilities by pledging to tackle corruption. Abdul Ghani functions in an “acting” capacity, and recently requested coalition assistance to press Kabul to make his appointment permanent. The DG asserts that resolving his status will give him the necessary clout to properly address development needs and tackle corruption. However, the DST’s experience to date with the DG does not instill confidence that this is all that is required to improve governance. A broader effort to empower local authority and fill civil service vacancies will be essential to strengthening local governance and reducing the unfettered role of local power brokers in the area. (Note: Reported to have little more than a fourth grade education, DG Abdul Ghani has demonstrated to the DST that what he may lack in managerial capacity he may make up for in other useful character traits. In a November shura in the village of Luy Karez, the DG challenged village elders, support of the Taliban. As reported in ref tel A, the local ABP commander similarly confronted elders in the same shura only to be assassinated soon afterwards. End note.)

7. (C) The other pillar of district governance is a two-headed Tribal Shura-District Development Assembly (Shura/DDA), dominated in equal measures by the Noorzai and Achekzai tribes and their
most assertive local leaders. Functioning as private clubs, the bodies primarily ensure that donor funds are monopolized by a select group of Spin Boldak notables. The cooperation of the district’s two main tribes within this context belies the argument that Razzik’s mediation has averted inter-tribal conflict. As Haji Fida Mohammad told the DST in the company of fellow Achekzai and Noorzai Shura/DDA members, “there are some who don’t want the tribes to get along,” referring to his relative, the ABP chief. Without an empowered District Government, however, there is little check on the self-serving actions of these institutions, which ultimately undermines equitable distribution of development resources in Spin Boldak.

District Development
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8. (SBU) One consequence of the interests and arrangements underpinning district security is the limited reach of development outside of Spin Boldak center (ref tel A). While security, or lack thereof, contributes to the precarious state of many communities in the areas north and south of Highway 4, district government staffing deficiencies and the absence of permanent representatives from ministries critical to district development -- specifically within the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) -- equally hamper progress. Not receiving the services they need or the attention they deserve from the government, citizens outside the Highway 4 corridor, particularly in Noorzai tribal areas, do not see themselves as stakeholders in the district’s development and thus are more susceptible to intimidation and insurgent propaganda. Razzik regularly spins this potential for the spread of this instability to his advantage in his dealings with the coalition.

KABUL 00098467 003 OF 003

9. (SBU) A number of initiatives are underway to remedy the developmental needs of the District and the alienation of its residents. USAID’s Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production of Agriculture Plus (AVIPA Plus) program, for example, has the potential to play an important role in revitalizing the current state of agriculture in Spin Boldak and, thereby transform perceptions of GIRoA. A key component in realizing these end states will be the involvement of empowered local government officials beyond Razziq and the Shura/DDA to enable equitable distribution of resources -- a dynamic that does not currently exist in the district.

Comment
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10. (C) Colonel Razzik’s alleged involvement in the District’s illicit trafficking and illegal taxation on transit trade has been widely reported (most recently in a January 19 Washington Post article). His presence, however, need not forestall Spin Boldak’s progress nor should it be an accepted excuse for continued neglect and underdevelopment in the district. By accepting the view that Razzik is both the guarantor of district security and the lynchpin in tribal power relations, we potentially are overlooking steps which could be taken in the near term to improve the overall state of governance and development in the district, short of removing Razzik. Additionally, by ascribing unaccountable authority to Razzik, the coalition unintentionally reinforces his position through its direct and near-exclusive dealings with him on all major issues in Spin Boldak.

11. (C) As a first step in remedying the current imbalance of power between Razzik and other GIRoA authorities, a public and visible commitment by GIRoA to the district’s citizens is required. Attracting competent civil servants from key ministries should be a first step. Spin Boldak is among the 80 key terrain districts and likely will be targeted for the District Delivery Program (DDP) by the end of 2010. We will need to carefully manage eventual implementation of the DDP to emplace empowered, competent government personnel and the full complement of line ministry representatives and their respective resources. A carefully managed approach to support the growth of a functioning district government can lay an important foundation for improved governance with or without Razzik.

12. (U) This message was drafted at the DST in Spin Boldak and in Kabul. Eikenberry

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Depict Afghan Graft, Starting at Top”
An Injustice in Kabul

A January cable attempts to sort out the conviction of the mayor of Kabul on corruption allegations - and concludes that he was wrongly convicted because he had halted a corrupt land-distribution scheme.

DATE 2010-01-07 13:20:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000062

CORRECTED COPY (HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS)

NOFORN SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2020 TAGS: FBI, JUS, PGOV, PINR, PREL SUBJECT: A TALE OF TWO KABUL MAYORS

REF: 09 KABUL 4066

KABUL 0000062 001.4 OF 002

Classified By: Polcouns Annie Pforzheimer, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. Summary: (C) President Karzai has appointed a new mayor of Kabul, Engineer Mohammad Yunus Novandish. This follows the December 7, 2009 ‘mismanagement of authority’ conviction and the December 8, 2009 release pending appeal of former Kabul Mayor Abdul Ahad Sahebi (Reftel.) The Novandish appointment portends controversy because he is not from Kabul; the Sahebi case suggests kangaroo court justice. Bio information on Novandish is in paras 3 and 4. End Summary.

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New Mayor - Old Ties
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2. (C) President Karzai issued a January 3 decree appointing Engineer Mohammad Yunus Novandish the new mayor of Kabul. Controversy over the appointment may arise for two reasons: First, according to Article 141 of the Constitution, mayors shall be elected, not appointed. Some Afghan MPs went on TOLO TV January 5 to challenge the appointment on constitutional grounds. Second, according to embassy contacts among the National Democratic Front (NDF), Mayor Novandish is not a native Kabuli and the NDF is planning to try and organize protests within the month. (Note: The NDF is a loosely organized coalition of urban civil society groups and members of parliament.)

3. (U) According to media reports and embassy contacts, Novandish, an Uzbek from Saripol, graduated from the engineering faculty of Kabul Polytechnic University in civil engineering and did post-graduate studies in the Ukraine. He served as a lecturer at Balkh University from 1994 to 1996, lived primarily in Central Asia during the Taliban years, and was Deputy Minister of Water and Energy from 2004-2006. Novandish resigned his post when Ismail Khan was appointed Minister of Water and Energy. After 2006 he worked as a consultant for USAID-funded programs such as International Development Relief and Development, Inc. (IRD) and Advanced Engineering Institute Associates (AEIA). In 2009 he opened his own engineering firm, Energy and Power Construction Company, which has allegedly done extensive subcontracting work in the energy sector. (Note: alternate transliterations of his name include Noandesh, Novandesh, and Nawandaish.)
4. (S/NF) Sensitive reporting indicates that warlord and leader of the Junbesh Party General Dostum pushed Novandish for the Kabul Mayor appointment. Although Novandish claims publicly that he is politically independent, this reported Dostum support has credibility given that Novandish was Deputy Minister of Water and Energy when current MP and Junbesh Party member Shakar Kargar (Uzbek, Jowzjan) was Minister. Kargar reportedly owed his own ministerial appointment at that time to Dostum. Although Kargar is an intra-party rival of Dostum, they often unite to further party interests. Dostum has been publicly vocal in his criticism of the January 2 ministerial confirmation process in which all three Junbesh nominees were rejected. The appointment of an apparent Dostum supporter to the mayor’s office may well be President Karzai’s attempt to placate Dostum and Junbesh.

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Old Mayor - Yesterday’s News
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5. (C) Media coverage of the new mayor’s appointment has included condemnation of his predecessor, Abdul Ahad Sahebi, for “massive embezzlement of funds and brazen misuse of authority.” The ex-mayor’s December 7 conviction and almost immediate release from jail on bail pending appeal generated a media frenzy and intense speculation over President Karzai’s role in Sahebi’s release. (Reftel.) USG officials met with Sahebi on December 25, 2009 and January 2 and 3, 2010. Sahebi produced the December 6 summons he received to appear at primary court and obtain a date for his preliminary hearing. Sahebi contended that normal procedure requires a minimum of 5 days between summons and hearing date, but when he presented himself to the court on December 7, his lawyer was handed not a hearing date, but his sentence - four years in jail and a USD 16,000 fine.

6. (C) Concerning the actual charge of poor oversight of contracting authority, Sahebi laid out his version of the case: In 2007 Sahebi’s predecessor signed a one-year contract leasing some city property to two individuals who had shops on the site. When the contract came up for renewal, the City Hall financial department assigned three people to study the continued use of the land. The financial department recommended the contract be renewed, with mention of the city’s future plans for the site. Sahebi’s deputy signed the renewal. Three months later, a higher bid for the site came in. Had that bid been accepted, the city would have gained about USD 16,000 more for the lease and this “loss” was the basis of the case against him. Embassy officials have not been privy to the prosecution’s case against Sahebi. 7. (C) Regarding his job performance, Sahebi also mentioned to USG officials that in his less than two years as mayor he had found files for approximately 32,000 applicants who paid for non-existent plots of land in Kabul city. He said he ordered a halt to the distribution of residential and commercial land until claims could be sorted out and invalidated the illegal claims of some important people like Engineer Ahmed Shah, who is close to the fundamentalist former warlord MP, Rasoul Sayyaf (Pashtun, Kabul). This claim supports information reported reftel that some of Sahebi’s official decisions may have antagonized powerful people who then sought to use the power of the state to discredit him.

Karzai’s Motives Still Unclear

8. (C) Comment: Metaphorically speaking (there is no jury trial in Afghanistan) the jury is still out on Sahebi, the first high-profile case of official corruption following Karzai’s re-election. Sahebi’s case is on appeal, but no hearing date has been set. Unfortunately for the former mayor, he has already been tried in the press and condemned as an embezzler, a charge that apparently was not even brought and for which we have seen no evidence. As for the formal process itself, it appears that Sahebi may have been convicted without having been accorded what little due process there is under Afghan law.

9. (C) The Novandish appointment may indicate that Karzai concluded, despite his initial forceful defense of Sahebi, that it was more politically expedient to sacrifice him. Karzai may hope both to satisfy international expectations that he will act to clean up his government and at the same time to placate powerful Afghan players who wanted the ex-mayor gone for their own mercenary reasons. End Comment.
RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables Depict Afghan Graft, Starting at Top”
Afghan Insider Explains Corruption

Afghanistan’s commerce minister gives a frank account of corruption in the Transportation Ministry and recommends the firing of 14 governors.

DATE 2009-11-18 15:18:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN

CONFIDENTIAL KABUL 003714

CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

NOFORN SIPDIS

DEPT FOR S/SRAP AND SCA/A

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2019 TAGS: ECON, PGOV, PREL, EAID, AF SUBJECT: (C) AFGHAN COMMERCE MINISTER DISCUSSES REFORM AGENDA

Classified by Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C//NF) SUMMARY: Reform-minded Afghan Commerce Minister Shahrani, who hopes for U.S. support to keep a ministerial job, argued on November 15 that President Karzai is under heavy pressure from Afghan politicians to accept less than ideal ministers and urged that the US and other donors talk not only to Karzai but also to those politicians to stress the importance of approving a good slate. Sharani also shared his view of reforms needed in the new government, insights into fighting corruption, views on the importance of getting sub-national governance right, and the need for the government and donors to agree on specific performance benchmarks tied to aid delivery. End Summary.

2. (C//NF) Afghan Commerce Minister Shahrani told Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs Wayne on November 15 that President Karzai is under great pressure from political leaders to accept a number of ministerial candidates whose technical skills are lacking. He specifically cited pressure from ex-warlord General Dostum, from ex-jihadist Professor Sayyaf and Hazara leader Mohaqeq. Shahrani, who wants U.S. support to stay on in the cabinet, expressed concern that Karzai would not resist the pressure for political payback on his own, and urged the U.S. and other donors to communicate directly with these political groupings to indicate that if a weak or corrupt set of ministers was put in place then the U.S. and others would be forced to withdraw their support. He argued that these political leaders are only thinking of dividing up the spoils rather than the quality of government needed to tackle Afghanistan’s problems. Sharani repeatedly argued that the next five years are essential for Afghanistan and the first months of the new Karzai administration are key to getting the right reforms in place to really bring about positive change in the years ahead. Afghanistan needs the U.S. and other donors to have a chance for real progress, he said. He urged that the U.S. speak frankly in private to Karzai as well as key Afghan political leaders.

3. (SBU) Shahrani argued that it is essential that the U.S. and other international donors get as many specific commitments as possible from Karzai, in the inaugural speech if possible and subsequently then in some sort of joint document between donors and Afghanistan. A key step is to press for the President to be clear on basic commitments in his inaugural speech, especially about good governance and fighting corruption. Shahrani said he hoped the President would approve up to ten key areas for reform in the first year of his administration. He and Finance Minister Zakhilwal agree, according to Sharani, that the reform areas should be in areas where the population will see a difference in delivery of services.
4. (C//NF) Shahrami underscored the need for very good ministerial and gubernatorial appointments and the concomitant reform of government organizations. He said that he and other reform-minded ministers still believe they have Karzai’s support to name lead ministers for five key clusters: 1) finance, economy and commerce; 2) agriculture and rural Development; 3) human development (education and health); 4) security; and 5) justice/rule of law. Cleaning up the last sector will be essential, he argued, especially given the degree of corruption currently in the Attorney General’s ministry and the judicial system. If this does not happen, it will be very hard to address corruption in the rest of the government. Similarly, the executive office of the President needs serious reorganization so the President gets a good and balanced flow of information and advice and so that ministerial coordination and cabinet decision-making can be significantly enhanced, Shahrami said. (Note: This is a complaint we have heard from a wide variety of sources, from donor nations to Palace insiders. End note.)

5. (C//NF) Turning to corruption more broadly, Shahrami argued that State-owned enterprises need to be turned into independent commercial entities rapidly (on the way to privatization), as they are great sources of corruption. Shahrami also singled out the Transportation Ministry as a hot bed of corruption, especially its airport operations and its “private enterprise group.” Finance Minister Zakhilwal had recently broken up a corruption ring at Kabul Airport, but the private sector group is an even bigger problem. This unit includes people who collect fees on trucks traveling in Afghanistan. Estimates are that about $200 million are collected yearly but only $30 million are turned over to the government, he said. Individuals pay up to $250,000 for the post heading this office in Herat, for example, and end up owning beautiful mansions as well as making lucrative political donations. This ministry should be a top target for cleaning up in the new regime.

6. (SBU) In his November 15 conversation with Ambassador Wayne, Shahrami said, 14 of Afghanistan’s governors have been identified by Local Governance minister Popal as bad performers and/or corrupt. These 14 should be fired, and the new government should implement procedures for selecting governors based on merit and for reviewing performance on a yearly basis. Such a performance review process should be put in place for all top officials. There must also be a greater focus on improving service delivery at the provincial level, he argued. Governors should be given more substantial operational budgets as well as placed under more rigorous auditing controls. The big municipalities also need careful attention, first in good mayoral appointments and then in greatly improved management, tax collection and service delivery.

7. (C//NF) Turning to international assistance, Shahrami argued that donors should tie additional aid to clear benchmarks and timelines. This should be publically announced as part of a broader agreement, and donors should be tough in demanding agreed performance benchmarks before distributing additional assistance. Such an agreement should call for some overarching commitments, with each ministry receiving aid committed to achieving its own set of benchmarks in consultations with donors. There should be focus on improving delivery of services to the population and mechanisms should be put in place to measure success. Shahrami suggested that the action plans for ministries should have three to four year time horizons.

8. (C//NF) Comment: Minister Shahrami is working closely with the Ministers of Finance, Agriculture, Education and local government to encourage bold reform moves by the new Karzai administration. While some of the specific ideas he shared may be his own, they are consistent with what other reform-minded ministers have been saying and urging. Shahrami clearly hopes for U.S. support in keeping a cabinet position. He has been a good partner on a range of commercial and economic issues and an energetic proponent of reaching a trade agreement with Pakistan. He has also gone out of his way to help on bilateral issues such as finalizing arrangements for U.S. Consulate leases.
Investigating an Afghan Money Exchange Network

Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry asks for more staff members to investigate corruption, especially the central role played by New Ansari, a hawala, or traditional money exchange network.

DATE 2009-10-18 07:21:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET KABUL 003324

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SRAP, S/SCT, EEB, SCA/RA, and SCA/A DEPT PASS AID/ASIA BUREAU TREASURY FOR A/S DAVID COHEN and TFFC - BRIAN GRANT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/18/2019 TAGS: EFIN, EINV, KTFN, PREL, AF SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP REQUEST -- RESOURCING EFFORTS TO DISMANTLE THE NEW ANSARI HAWALA NETWORK AND OTHER ILLICIT FINANCING THREATS

REF: KABUL 2791

Classified By: CDDEA Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S) As discussed in reftel, information strongly suggests Afghanistan’s New Ansari hawala network is facilitating bribes and other wide-scale illicit cash transfers for corrupt Afghan officials and is providing illicit financial services for narco-traffickers, insurgents, and criminals through an array of front companies in Afghanistan and the UAE.

2. (S) Headquartered in Kabul, the New Ansari hawala network has connections to Dubai and other global financial markets. Law enforcement and other components in Mission Afghanistan and ISAF have been investigating New Ansari and briefed Washington agencies in a September 8 SVTC. As noted in ref, moving forward against New Ansari requires an interagency approach here in country as well as in Washington. Such efforts will need to include better organizing and resourcing USG efforts to identify and disrupt financial linkages in Afghanistan and in key regional financial hubs.

3. (S) Embassy would appreciate a response to the requests for additional resources/support contained in reftel. These include the need to fully staff the Afghan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC) -- the total number of positions required is 49, but only 22 of those positions are filled. Moreover, a higher percentage of those slots should be filled with more senior and experienced interagency analysts and at least one public corruption prosecutor. The ATFC also urgently requires access to translators who can accurately and quickly process an increasing amount of wire intercept information, including complex technical and financial records. In addition, the current split in the ATFC between Bagram Airfield and Kabul should be minimized. To integrate the ATFC better into broader intelligence analysis efforts, it would be advisable to establish a lead base of operations in Kabul. The ATFC would continue to forward deploy liaison staff at each regional command to ensure country-wide coverage.

4. (C) Mission appreciates Washington agencies’ consideration and support of these requests. We look forward to a rapid response.

EIKENBERRY
Karzai Intervenes in Drug Cases

President Karzai and his attorney general have repeatedly intervened in major narcotics cases by ordering the release of suspects, including some with political ties to the president.

DATE 2009-08-06 05:28:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET KABUL 002246

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/A, INL, EUR/PRM, INR, OSD FOR FLOURNOY, CENTCOM FOR CG CJTF-82, POLAD, JICENT KABUL FOR COS USFOR-A

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/01/2019 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, MARR, AF SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS TO GIROA ON PRE-TRIAL RELEASES AND PARDONS OF NARCO-TRAFFICKERS

REF: KABUL 02245

Classified By: DEPUTY AMBASSADOR FRANCIS J. RICCIARDONE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (S) SUMMARY: On numerous occasions we have emphasized with Attorney General Aloko the need to end interventions by him and President Karzai, who both authorize the release of detainees pre-trial and allow dangerous individuals to go free or re-enter the battlefield without ever facing an Afghan court. On July 29th, Legal Adviser Harold Hongju Koh and Deputy Ambassador Frances Ricciardone demarched Attorney General Muhammad Ishaq Aloko about our concern over pre-trial releases and presidential pardons of narco-traffickers (Reftel Kabul 02245) In Spring 2008, Post had previous demarched National Security Advisor Rassoul about our concern over pre-trial releases. Despite our complaints and expressions of concern to the GIRoA, pre-trial releases continue. END SUMMARY

2. (S) Transfers from Bagram Theatre Internment Facility (BTIF) to the Afghan National Detention Facility (ANDF) began in Spring 2007. During that year, there was only one pre-trial release. In 2008, there were 104 pre-trial releases, almost all of which took place after President Karzai formed the Aloko Detainee Commission in April 2008. From January to March of 2009, there were 12 pre-trial releases; and 23 pre-trial releases between April and June 2009. So far in July 2009, there have been 10 pre-trial releases.

3. (S) An August 2005 exchange of diplomatic notes between the USG and the GIROA provides the legal basis for the GIROA's detention and prosecution of detainees transferred into Afghan custody. Even though a multi-agency GIROA delegation under the Aloko Detainee Commission screens all BTIF detainees who are transferred to the ANDF and assures the USG that these detainees will be prosecuted in an Afghan court, there have been 150 detainees released from the ANDF without trial since 2007, including 29 former Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) detainees. The total number of transfers to date from BTIF to ANDF is 629 detainees, plus 41 from GTMO.

------------------------------- PROTECTION OF NARCOTRAFFICKERS -------------------------------

4. (SBU) In April, President Karzai pardoned five border policemen who were caught with 124 kilograms of heroin in their border police vehicle. The policemen, who have come to be known as
the Zahir Five, were tried, convicted and sentenced to terms of 16 to 18 years each at the Central Narcotics Tribunal. But President Karzai pardoned all five of them on the grounds that they were distantly related to two individuals who had been martyred during the civil war.

5. (S) Separately, President Karzai tampered with the narcotics case of Haji Amanullah, whose father is a wealthy businessman and one of his supporters. Without any constitutional authority, Karzai ordered the police to conduct a second investigation which resulted in the conclusion that the defendant had been framed. XXXXXXXXXXX told XXXXXXXXXXX he was ashamed, of the president for his interference in this case and the case of the Zahir Five.

6. (S) In another case, a CJTF investigation concluded that 26 kilograms of heroin seized from a vehicle search belonged to Col. Jaweed, Chief of the Highway Police for Badakshan Province. Jaweed is the nephew of a powerful member of Parliament. Eventually, he was arrested and is currently serving in Pol-i-Charkhi prison. But, there is credible, but unconfirmed, intelligence indicating that President Karzai has signed a letter pardoning Jaweed that has not yet been delivered to the Supreme Court. Daudzai denied any significant pressure in this case.

7. (S) Unconfirmed intelligence also indicates that President Karzai is planning to release drug trafficker Ismal Safed, who is serving a 19-year sentence in Pol-i-Charkhi. Safed is a priority DEA target who was arrested in 2005 in possession of large quantities of heroin and a cache of weapons. In 2008, DEA conducted an operation in which an undercover officer purchased approximately three kilograms of heroin directly from Safed. Daudzai told the Deputy Ambassador that President Karzai will not pardon Safed, and that Post,s concerns about this case will reaffirm President Karzai,s decision not to interfere. EIKENBERRY
Guantánamo Afghans Not Prosecuted at Home

This cable discusses complaints by the United States that high-level Afghan officials are granting pretrial releases to detainees who had been transferred to Afghan custody with the expectation that they would be prosecuted.

DATE 2009-08-06 05:28:00

SOURCE Embassy Kabul

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T KABUL 002246

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/A, INL, EUR/PRM, INR, OSD FOR FLOURNOY, CENTCOM FOR CG CJTF-82, POLAD, JICENT KABUL FOR COS USFOR-A

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PROTECTION OF NARCOTRAFFICKERS
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5. (S) Separately, President Karzai tampered with the narcotics case of Haji Amanullah, whose father is a wealthy businessman and one of his supporters. Without any constitutional authority, Karzai ordered the police to conduct a second investigation which resulted in the conclusion that the defendant had been framed. XXXXXXXXXX told XXXXXXXXXX he was ashamed,, of the president for his interference in this case and the case of the Zahir Five.

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RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables Depict U.S. Haggling to Clear Guantánamo”
Ambassador Eikenberry Meets President Karzai

This July 2009 cable from Karl W. Eikenberry, the American ambassador to Afghanistan, reports on his meeting with President Hamid Karzai and his request that the Afghan president stop telling people that the United States has “failed” in Afghanistan.

**DATE:** 2009-07-16 03:45:00

**SOURCE:** Embassy Kabul

**CLASSIFICATION:** SECRET//NOFORN

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1. **(S/NF) SUMMARY.** President Karzai and I continued our dialogue on the future of U.S.-Afghan relations (ref tel) in our weekly meeting, July 7. We were joined by National Security Advisor Rassoul. Karzai discussed his priorities for the next five years as outlined in his draft election manifesto. The President’s manner was significantly more relaxed and warm than in meetings the previous week when he was often agitated, accusing the U.S. of working against him (ref tel). As a result, our discussion was more constructive and forward-looking. When Karzai drifted towards a reiteration of his anti-U.S. conspiracy theories on several occasions, I was able to refocus the conversation on how the U.S. and Afghanistan governments can work together in the near and medium term to achieve combined success.

**REVIEWING KARZAI’S ELECTION MANIFESTO FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS**

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2. **(S/NF) As we discussed the long-term goals outlined in Karzai’s draft election manifesto, I reiterated the U.S. commitment to continuing our close partnership with Afghanistan, regardless of whom the Afghan people elect in August. I then outlined what the U.S. was seeking from the relationship over the next five years and commented on some points in Karzai’s proposed agenda. Under President Obama’s strategy for Afghanistan, I noted, we would continue to pursue a more coherent regional approach, while assisting the Afghan government build a more secure and economically sustainable country that would never again permit sanctuary for international terrorism. I emphasized the importance of achieving meaningful progress in the near term to prove to the U.S. and the international community that our ongoing investment of lives and resources in Afghanistan was producing tangible, lasting results for the Afghan people.

3. **(S/NF) I took issue with the foreign policy section of Karzai’s draft manifesto which stressed Afghanistan’s relations with the Islamic world and with Palestine, followed by a rather weak comment on relations with the U.S. I pointed out this did not accurately reflect our robust partnership and raises questions regarding Karzai’s perspective on the bilateral relationship.

4. **(S/NF) I also noted the document’s lack of a strong emphasis on strengthening Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and judicial system. Five years down the road, I said, success would be defined by whether the ANSF’s increased capacity allowed it to take the lead in planning and conducting effective military operations, as well as apprehending and detaining insurgents under Afghan legal authority. (NOTE: We are seeking a translation of the draft of Karzai’s manifesto...)**
5. (S/NF) Karzai then mentioned that after the election he planned to call a national jirga to make a recommitment to the Afghanistan-U.S. relationship and our partnership in the war against terror. This would, he claimed, clarify the military assistance aspect of the relationship and counter what many Afghan’s perceive to be the “unfocused presence” of international forces, reducing public concerns about those forces. (Note: We have since learned that a later draft of Karzai’s manifesto may include this call for a traditional loya jirga to address the presence of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. If true that Karzai intends to convene a traditional loya jirga instead of a constitutional loya jirga, it would reflect a disappointing continuation of Karzai’s tendency to govern through reliance on personalities of the past, rather than on democratic institutions.)

AMBASSADOR: FOCUS SHOULD BE ON AFGHAN GOVT WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS
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6. (S/NF) Karzai then returned to a familiar theme, his wish for Afghan-U.S. relations to recover the spirit of 2002-04 - a period Karzai sees as a “golden age” in the relationship. He would like for U.S. forces to again be able to drive their humvees through villages, greeted warmly by villagers who would shout, “Good morning, Sergeant Thompson.” Karzai claimed, as he has many times, that his concern over the erosion of public trust in the U.S. was a driving factor in his increasingly strident criticism regarding civilian casualties, night raids and detentions.

7. (S/NF) I reminded Karzai that we had agreed our discussion would be forward-looking, rather than dwell on past grievances. I also reminded him the U.S. and ISAF had made a tremendous effort over the past year to avoid civilian casualties, noting that in a recent engagement in Helmand where one U.S. marine had been killed and 25 wounded, we had not employed close air support or artillery. Karzai agreed there had been a dramatic reduction in civilian casualty incidents, saying he intended to make a public statement noting his gratitude for U.S. efforts. I welcomed such a statement, observing that the U.S. continues to bear a heavy cost for our assistance to Afghanistan in the American lives lost as we work to ensure a more secure future here.

8. (S/NF) I also took issue with Karzai’s “golden age” perspective, reminding him that I had been in Afghanistan during this period. It was clear, even at that time, that trouble was brewing as the focus on security and reconstruction drifted and declined due to lack of resources and a comprehensive strategy. I urged Karzai to recognize that President Obama is providing the U.S.-Afghan partnership with the tools necessary to build a lasting foundation for Afghanistan’s success, based on sustainable security, accountable government, and a working economy. I stressed to Karzai that our primary goal in Afghanistan is not to win public support for the U.S., but rather to help the Afghan government win its own people’s hearts and minds by enabling it to provide basic security and effective governance to the people. In five years, we expect to still have forces in Afghanistan, but with the majority as advisors and trainers in support of ANSF in areas such as logistics, air support, intelligence, etc. Returning to Karzai’s hopes for the future, I told him Americans do not long for a day in which their soldiers are hailed throughout Afghanistan; they are instead growing impatient for the day a respected Afghan Army and national police force are fully capable of providing security to the Afghan populace. Time is not unlimited.

KARZAI’S ANTI-U.S. RHETORIC UNDERMINES ADVOCACY FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT
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9. (N/SF) I then raised with Karzai his regular claim to senior U.S. visitors that the U.S. has “failed in Afghanistan.” I noted that such rhetoric could potentially undermine continued bipartisan support for our current strategy of expanding U.S. assistance to Afghanistan. I said some criticism was fair, but in these meetings with senior U.S. officials, Karzai regularly failed to acknowledge any meaningful progress resulting from U.S. contributions. By condemning U.S. efforts while failing to take any responsibility for Afghanistan’s problems, Karzai was not presenting the Afghan government (or himself) as a responsible partner in this relationship, a partner cognizant of and sensitive to mutual obligations. Leaving meetings with Karzai, officials could easily conclude that the U.S. has accomplished little or nothing here and question why we continue to devote American lives and resources to the effort. Karzai indicated that he
understood the need to present a more balanced perspective. (Note. It remains to be seen whether Karzai can or will refrain from this “blame America” tactic he uses to deflect criticism of his administration. Indeed, his inability to grasp the most rudimentary principles of state-building and his deep seated insecurity as a leader combine to make any admission of fault unlikely, in turn confounding our best efforts to find in Karzai a responsible partner.)

ELECTIONS: KARZAI (STILL) SUSPICIOUS OF U.S. INTENTIONS

10. (S/NF) Revisiting a favorite grievance, Karzai asserted that early in the year some officials in the Obama Administration had encouraged potential opposition candidates to run. Karzai indicated he felt Secretary Clinton had been very supportive and noted relations with VP Biden were much improved. He still felt some senior officials were actively working to undermine him. Those officials, he said, were openly discussing election runoff scenarios that would give the opposition an opening to unite against him. Karzai claimed that in a fair and free election he would win on the first round. If there were “irregularities” and the election went to a second round, Karzai believed opposition candidates would play the “ethnic card” to marshal support, undermining national unity.

11. (S/NF) I challenged his assertion that Administration officials had promoted opposition candidates. I emphasized that, in fact, our Mission has gone to great pains to remain balanced in engagement with presidential candidates and to promote a level-playing field, I reminded Karzai that I had decided not to visit Mazar-e-Sharif because of Governor Atta’s overt campaigning for Abdullah and his reported refusal to comply with MOI Atmar’s dismissal of two policemen in the province for corruption. Karzai replied, with humor,

KABUL 00081802 003 OF 003

that he conceded in this instance that the U.S. had been even-handed in demonstrating its commitment to fair elections.

COMMENT

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12. (S/NF) Although more relaxed than in recent meetings, Karzai remains deeply suspicious of U.S. intentions and actions regarding key opposition candidates, frequently citing U.S.-based support groups for Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani. Karzai is currently most concerned about a potential Abdullah coalition. (He dismissed Ghani, saying that he will know Ghani has admitted defeat when he asks for a position in Karzai’s new government.) Karzai clearly expected (or hoped) to receive the same U.S. support for his candidacy that he received in the 2004 election, and interprets our neutral stance in this election as evidence that the U.S. is “against” him. I will continue to use my weekly dialogues with Karzai to clarify our position on this and other issues, while focusing him on the way forward in U.S.-Afghan relations with an emphasis on our shared desire that progress needs to continue, regardless of who wins the election. In future discussions, I will continue to stress the importance of Afghanistan assuming a more meaningful partnership role, and focus on key issue areas such as ANSF growth and assumption of lead responsibility for security, reconciliation, government accountability, and sustainable development. Through this engagement, we will also seek to avoid the gap between the U.S. and Karzai widening to the point that we will lose precious time closing the distance should he be re-elected.

EIKENBERRY
Karzai: Erratic Politician or Rational Leader?

This June 2008 cable from the American Mission to NATO describes discussions with NATO officials on Afghanistan and President Hamid Karzai. NATO’s secretary general, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, is said to have “wondered aloud which Karzai would show up” for a coming donors meeting - “the erratic Pashtun politician or the rational national leader.”

DATE 2008-06-18 13:26:00

SOURCE Mission USNATO

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 USNATO 000208

NOFORN SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2018 TAGS: NATO, PREL, MOPS, MARR, AF, PK SUBJECT: USD(P) EDELMAN BRIEFS ON AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN AT NATO

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland, for reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman used his June 5 meeting with NATO PermReps and a separate session with NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer to brief on his May 27-June 5 visit to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Lebanon and to urge Allies to contribute more to Afghan police training and use their political influence with Islamabad. USDP Edelman said he found President Karzai concerned about political turmoil in Pakistan and recent border developments. Meanwhile, Pakistan’s new political leadership underestimates the threat from its domestic insurgency, and its military is in need of retraining to confront it. Regarding Lebanon, USDP Edelman was “more optimistic” than he had expected to be. END SUMMARY.

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AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN
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2. (C) Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman told NATO PermReps on June 5 that, after his recent visit to Kabul and Islamabad, he believes Afghanistan will require a long-term approach that focuses efforts on improving local governance and security. Among his findings:

- (C) Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are far along in their plans to assume leadership for security in Kabul city this summer. ANSF are already providing “95 percent” of Kabul’s security.

- (C) In the next few months, the U.S.-led Combined Security Transition Command- Afghanistan (CSTC-A) will be short more than 180 district-level 12-person Police Mentoring Teams (PMTs). European countries are well-suited for the high-end training of police, and Germany and Italy have already expressed interest. Focused District Development (FDD), CSTC-A’s police training program, gets the Afghan National Police (ANP) to about “the 80 percent level” but PMTs are needed to mentor them and finish their training. Edelman reported that on his visit to Kapisa province (in RC-East, where French forces will soon deploy) the difference was clear between towns where the ANP was trained and operating effectively versus areas where they were not and as a result the Taliban was active.

- (C) Local governance is key to success. USDP Edelman encouraged Allies to support the GoA’s Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG). The estimated cost to implement the overall
IDLG strategy over a five-year period is USD 296 million, of which USD 26 million is for IDLG’s recently unveiled Afghan Social Outreach Program (ASOP) that focuses on developing local governance in eleven troubled provinces.

- (C) UN SRSG Kai Eide needs support, especially in New York where Allies should help ensure he gets the financial and staffing resources he requests.

- (C) The enemy is adaptive. Officials in Regional Command East and Regional Command Capital have seen an uptick in insurgent attacks in Khost, Nangarhar, Kabul, and other areas where ISAF has been successful with its development projects. The enemy realizes it must destroy what has been built or risk losing the support of the people.

The Pakistani leadership, including the President, Prime Minister, Defense Minister and new National Security Advisor all say they are committed to fighting terrorism. Edelman raised with them U.S. concerns about the peace agreements in the tribal areas, noting that ISAF already sees an increase in incidents in eastern Afghanistan attributable to reduced pressure on militants in Pakistan.

- (C) Pakistan has two fundamental problems: the insurgency in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which the political class underestimates because it remains focused on political machinations in Islamabad; and the grave economic crisis, characterized by low growth and balance of payments problems, which are exacerbated by political instability. Edelman urged Allies to weigh in with Islamabad on the need for a strong counterinsurgency effort, to visit Pakistan at the senior level, and to consider economic development programs in the tribal areas.

PermRep Questions

3. (C) In response to the Greek ambassador, USDP Edelman commented that he is not overly concerned about the possibility that Karzai might seek to manipulate local governance and development programs for his electoral ends, because his political base and the root of the insurgency overlap in the Pashtun areas.

4. (C) In response to the UK ambassador, Edelman noted that Pakistani CHOD Kayani has told senior U.S. officials that he wants the Pakistani military out of politics, but he noted that the army needs retraining and reequipping to confront domestic extremists with a counterinsurgency strategy, since it is currently oriented towards the Indian threat. In Kabul, Edelman added, he found Karzai eager to divert attention to Pakistan as a source of all of Afghanistan’s problems.

5. (C) In response to the Czech ambassador, USDP Edelman commented that the U.S. wants to reinvigorate the Tripartite Commission and has a very active mil-to-mil relationship with Pakistan. Admiral Mullen and other senior U.S. officials make frequent visits to Islamabad.

6. (C) In response to the French ambassador, Edelman said that neither ISAF nor the Afghan government has been successful on counternarcotics, and that eradication programs focus mostly on small farmers, making some Allies uneasy. Edelman urged greater focus on drug labs and high-value targets, such as drug traffickers who are also insurgents. He pointed out that U.S. Marines in Garmisir District of Helmand Province discovered a Taliban poppy “agro-business” had sprung up in the absence of a GoA/ISAF presence. The UK ambassador added that going after traffickers and high-value targets has not had a negative effect on local opinion, in the UK’s experience. Ambassador Nuland commented that doing nothing about narcotics also damages ISAF’s image with Afghans and noted “neutrality is not an option” when dealing with traffickers.

7. (C) In response to the Italian ambassador, Edelman commented that our efforts to strengthen local governance do not undermine the Afghan central government because there has never been a tradition of strong central government. The
best approach is to improve local governance and then link it to the central government in Kabul.

8. (C) In response to the Norwegian ambassador, Edelman expressed optimism regarding the transition to the ANSF of security in Kabul, noting that the ANSF have shown improvement. Regarding Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), Edelman similarly urged a phased transition to allow the Afghans to assume more and more responsibilities. Transition will occur at different paces in different places and should not be viewed as ISAF’s exit strategy.

9. (C) In response to the Polish ambassador, Edelman said that Karzai sees two fronts (Iran and Pakistan) to his dilemmas. Edelman noted that when the U.S. Marines went into Garmsir District recently, they learned a lot of new information about insurgent and narcotics activities, and he is concerned that a similar “blind spot” may exist in Nimruz along the border with Iran.

10. (C) In response to the Canadian representative, Edelman said that the notion of a unified approach to the Pashtun problems in both Afghanistan and Pakistan was something U.S. policy makers had considered, but it would be difficult to implement on both sides of the border.

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LEBANON
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11. (C) In response to the Greek ambassador, USDP Edelman said this was his third visit to Beirut in six months and he said he was “more optimistic than expected.” President Suleiman is now more self-assured than he had been as CHOD and gave an impressive inaugural speech. Still to play out is the question of whether Hezbollah over-reached and damaged itself by taking up arms against Lebanese in the recent crisis. He added that he is skeptical that the recent Syrian/Israeli dialogue will be successful given the nature of the Damascus regime. Edelman noted that the U.S. is developing a good mil-to-mil bilateral relationship with Lebanon.

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SecGen de Hoop Scheffer
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12. (S//NF) In his conversation with NATO SYG Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, USDP Edelman said that he had raised with Karzai the latter’s unhelpful comments in Der Spiegel (“I wish I Had the Taliban as My Soldiers”), and that Karzai apologized and claimed he was misquoted. SecGen commented on a similar interview with the Indian press saying that such coverage could lead parliaments in troop contributing nations to question the value of sending their troops to Afghanistan. SecGen wondered aloud which Karzai would show up for the Afghan Donors Conference in Paris-- the erratic Pashtun politician or the rational national leader. Edelman observed that Karzai seemed preoccupied with blaming Pakistan for Afghanistan’s problems. SecGen responded that this does not bode well for efforts to reinvigorate the Tripartite Commission.

13. (S//NF) SecGen reported that attempts to update the Kosovo Operations Plan had run aground due to Turkish “paranoia”. The Turks have prevented PermReps from discussing the updated plan because of concerns about their relationship with the European Union. SecGen asked for U.S. assistance in convincing the Turks to be more flexible.

14. (S//NF) SecGen indicated that he disagreed with the U.S. response to Turkish complaints about the possible involvement of Greek aircraft from a disputed island in the Aegean in NATO exercises. He is concerned that this could lead toward a situation in which NATO could never exercise in the Aegean.

15. (U) USDP Edelman has cleared this cable. NULAND

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables Depict Afghan Graft, Starting at Top”
“Cables Offer Shifting Portrait of Karzai”
Biden Doubts Pakistan’s Support for U.S. Goals

Eleven days before he was sworn in as vice president, Joseph R. Biden Jr. asked the Pakistani Army chief, Gen. Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, whether the United States and Pakistan had “the same enemy as we moved forward.” Mr. Biden, according to the cable, showed considerable skepticism about Pakistan’s support of American goals in Afghanistan, and he pressed the general for “results.”
government dominated by the Taliban had had a negative effect on Pakistan.

6. (S) Kayani recalled he told Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mullen that the U.S. needed realistic expectations of what the Pakistani military could achieve and that these expectations had to be clearly articulated. Kayani described his campaign in Bajaur and his plans to confront the insurgents in other tribal agencies, but he repeatedly said he had capacity problems, particularly regarding equipment. Kayani said he needed urgent support for the 150,000 people displaced from the fighting. He said the military had undertaken hundreds of sorties in Bajaur, and the population of Bajaur was so far supportive of the military efforts. Senator Graham mentioned the success of the CERP program in Iraq and Afghanistan which had put money in the hands of commanders for urgent community needs.

7. (S) Kayani recounted the situation in Swat in which the provincial government had made accommodations with the militants, requiring the army to retake the area repeatedly. Kayani also said the population, once it saw the army pull out, was far less likely to support it the second time around. The military had to be followed by civilian agencies or the local support would diminish.

8. (S) Kayani said military efforts needed the political support of the civilian government. He recalled that when

the Federal Investigative Agency headquarters in Lahore had been hit by suicide bombers, the citizens of Lahore had demonstrated against the government rather than against the suicide bombers. While the army had sent the message in Bajaur that it meant business, there had to be follow-up support from the civilian agencies. Kayani said as his campaign moved through the tribal agencies, the army should ideally need to use diminishing force. When they have to fight for the same ground repeatedly, it becomes increasingly difficult and demoralizing to the troops.

9. (S) Senator Biden asked Kayani if he had the capacity and could obtain sufficient resources, would he then move against Taliban leaders like Baitullah Mehsud, Commander Nazir, and the Haqqanis? Senator Biden asked Kayani if he were prepared to move into the Waziristans. 10. (S) Kayani replied that Bajaur had been the “hardest nut to crack” militarily: the Pakistani military had undertaken an operation in South Waziristan last October, but the army had moved out because of the elections. The Pakistani military had also had a fort in the middle of Waziristan which had been cut off by militants. Kayani said he was painfully aware that the army had to retake South Waziristan since ninety percent of the suicide bombers came from Baitullah Mehsud. “He has to be cut down to size,” said Kayani.

11. (S) But, Kayani said, the Pakistani military could not fight everyone at once. They would have to go after Mehsud and Nazir sequentially (a point Pasha confirmed). Biden said it was important to be in agreement on this issue. Pasha said the United States and Pakistan needed to have confidence in each other. Pasha said he was hurt about the inference that he did not have a relationship of trust with CIA. He had gone to Washington for a frank talk with CIA Director Hayden and he often briefed, and sought the advice of, the RAO Chief in Islamabad. Senator Biden repeated he was not going to revisit the past. Pasha replied that there was no reason for ISI to be protecting “these people” and he had no interest in saving them.

12. (S) Senator Biden said he needed to know that the situation had changed. Senator Biden said he understood that the Pakistani military lacked capacity, but would the situation change if they had additional resources? It was important to know if we had the same enemy: the U.S. needed to be able to make an objective assessment of Pakistan’s part of the bargain. Graham added that “General Musharraf had cut deals, but those deals didn’t work out.”

13. (S) Kayani repeated there had been considerable cooperation on the technical level with U.S. forces. But this did not mean that there would not be differences of opinion on tactics. On Afghanistan, Kayani stressed ) “past, present, and future” -- we are on the same page.

14. (S) Regarding LeT, Kayani said Pakistan would not allow small groups to dictate state policy. Pakistan had not waited for evidence and they had moved immediately. The information they had now was based on confessions. Pakistan needed Indian cooperation to move the investigation forward. Kayani also insisted that any information available about upcoming attacks be shared with Pakistan. He understood that information about the attack had been provided to India but not to
Pakistan. He said repeated discussion about "the next attack and all bets were off" only provided an incentive for another attack. Biden said that what was important was Pakistan’s action against LeT and similar organizations. Senator Biden said he would share what he had heard with Admiral Mullen and emphasized the need for results.

15. (S) General Kayani said he appreciated the Senators’ frank response. He repeated his need for help with IDPs. Senator Biden said the system of reimbursement through Coalition Support Funds would be reexamined. Kayani said that the military had only received about $300 million of the $1 billion ostensibly reimbursed for military expenses. He was not implying that the money had been stolen, but had been used for general budget support.

ISLAMABAD 0000270 003 OF 003

16. CODEL Biden has cleared this message. PATTERSON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Nuclear Fuel Memos Expose Wary Dance With Pakistan”
Pakistan’s Leader Worries About Threat From Own Army

Vice President Biden tells Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Britain that President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan worries that the Pakistani Army will “take me out.”

DATE 2009-04-03 22:17:00

SOURCE Embassy Santiago

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 SANTIAGO 000324

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2019 TAGS: OVIP (BIDEN, JOSEPH), PREL, ECON, PGOV, SOCI, UK, PK, AF
SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN’S MARCH 27 MEETING WITH BRITISH PRIME MINISTER GORDON BROWN

SANTIAGO 00000324 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Paul Simons for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

1. (U) March 28, 2009; 8:30 am; Vina del Mar, Chile.

2. (U) Participants:

U.S. Joseph Biden, Vice President Antony Blinken, National Security Advisor to the Vice President Brian McKeon, Deputy National Security Advisor to the Vice President Brian Harris (notetaker), Political/Economic Officer, U.S. Embassy Guatemala City

United Kingdom Gordon Brown, Prime Minister Thomas Fletcher, Private Secretary to the Prime Minister Stuart Wood, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Douglas Alexander, Secretary of State for International Development

3. (C) Summary: During a bilateral meeting on the margins of the Progressive Governance Leaders Summit in Chile, Vice President Joseph Biden and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown discussed the economic crisis in terms of the upcoming G-20 Summit and Afghanistan and Pakistan. On economic issues, Brown pressed Vice President Biden to push the Germans to move forward with $250 billion in special drawing rights (SDRs) for the IMF, to use IMF gold sales to support poorest countries and to take the initiative to restart sectoral negotiations related to Doha. On Pakistan and Afghanistan, Vice President Biden noted our increased troop commitment to Afghanistan and the need to lower expectations as to what is achievable in Afghanistan given enormous governance issues. End Summary.

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TRADE AND ECONOMIC ISSUES
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4. (C) PM Brown opened the meeting by thanking Vice President Biden for recent statement on revising the supervisory structure for the G-20.

5. (C) Vice President Biden asked whether capital flight from developing countries would be high on the G-20 agenda and noted that Argentinean President Fernandez has requested additional assistance without the usual IMF conditionality. Brown responded that he was worried about capital flight, particularly in Eastern Europe. The current financial crisis will test whether Eastern European nations have developed sufficiently strong institutions since the fall of
comunism to withstand the downturn politically and socially as well as economically. It is a test of whether freedom can be successfully combined with economic stability. IMF conditionality has long been an area of contention for Latin America and it is not surprising that Argentina would ask for preventative funds without conditions.

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BROWN PRESSES ON IMF AND TRADE
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6. (C) Prime Minister Brown delivered several requests on economic issues to Vice President Biden. The first was the need to secure financing for an additional $250 billion in Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) for the IMF to help vulnerable economies withstand the economic downturn. Brown commented that his understanding was this was an amount that the administration could support without the need to consult Congress. U.S. support on the issue would be particularly helpful with the Germans who, as yet, do not support additional SDRs. Parallel discussions were going on with China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and several other Gulf nations to secure $400 billion in additional financing. Rapid approval of the IMF portion would help catalyze these parallel negotiations.

7. (C) PM Brown also noted that the IMF was being forced to sell gold to raise funds to pay its administrative staff. There had been far fewer loan programs this decade than in the 1990s. The result was reduced revenue from countries repaying loans and a consequent budget shortfall. There is a pending sale of $11 billion in IMF gold that should be used to help the poorest countries rather than pay IMF staff. The U.S. position had been that interest from gold reserves could be devoted to IMF programs, but that capital sales should not. PM Brown asked Vice President Biden to reconsider this position.

8. (C) PM Brown said successfully concluding the Doha round would be difficult but the Obama administration should agree to deal with environmental and labor commitments outside the formal trading framework in relevant institutions such as the ILO. Brown suggested that if the United States allowed resumption of the next round of sectoral discussions, it would create momentum for the rest of the world, including India, to re-engage in the discussions. Opening new sectoral discussions on Doha would garner the Administration international support without needing to make difficult political compromises or commitments for the time being.

9. (C) UK Secretary of State for International Development Douglas Alexander said it was important to find a way to move forward on the Doha Agreement. Trade discussions are like riding a bike, i.e., you have to keep moving forward or you fall down. If we do not proactively move forward and eventually come to a successful conclusion to the Doha round, the United States could be blamed in some quarters. The Doha round was meant to be the development round of negotiations with significant aid from donor nations contingent upon the agreement’s successful conclusion. If it did not pass, some governments that stand to lose aid, such as Brazil, would likely blame the United States.

10. (C) Vice President Biden did not commit on any of these issues but noted that labor interests in the United States were not satisfied and were looking to the Administration to establish its labor bona fides. In a year, he said, movement on economic and trade issues would either be easier or impossible depending on the direction of the world economy.

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AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN
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11. (C) Turning to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Vice President Biden described the importance of combating terrorism and noted the different elements of the Obama administration’s policy. First, the focus in Afghanistan is on Al Qaida. The Obama administration will not make an open-ended commitment to building freedom and democracy in Afghanistan because it is not realistic. Second, there is no real possibility of defeating Al Qaida without also dealing with Pakistan. Third, he recognized that the United States cannot solve the problem on its own. The whole world needed to engage.
12. (C) Vice President Biden said he worried that NATO countries in Europe underestimated the threat from the region and viewed the problem as an economic development issue rather than a security issue, despite the fact that Afghan opium is primarily exported to Europe and Europe has been the victim of several terrorist attacks originating from the region. Vice President Biden described the complex nature of the security problem in Afghanistan, commenting that besides the demography, geography and history of the region, we have a lot going for us.

13. (C) Vice President Biden noted that the current U.S. commitment of 63,000 troops to Afghanistan is the result of a vigorous internal policy debate and would not be sustainable politically for more than two years without visible signs of progress. After two years, the extraordinary cost of maintaining a robust military presence in Afghanistan would make additional commitment increasingly difficult. After Afghan elections the Administration intends to review the situation again. Currently there is little capacity for the Afghan government to execute many of the functions of government. In many areas of the country, local officials have close to no knowledge of how to govern or even basic knowledge of payroll or budget. Part of the reason the Taliban is strengthening is since the Taliban has the local capacity to settle basic disputes quickly while central government courts can take six to eight months to process a case.

14. (C) The idea of a strong rule of law under a centralized Karzai government was not realistic. New policy towards the Taliban should reflect the reality of the Afghan government’s lack of capacity. Our policy should first aim to stabilize the urban areas and surrounding rural communities and then seek to exploit divisions within the Taliban, co-opting moderate elements rather than simply defeating militarily all elements of the Taliban.

15. (C) On Pakistan, Vice President Biden commented that it was difficult to convince Pakistan to commit to developing its counter-insurgency potential. The threat from India leads Pakistan to devote the bulk of its defense spending to conventional warfare capabilities. However, something must be done in the meantime. We need to develop our relationship with Pakistan beyond its current transactional nature to a long-term strategic partnership. We should begin with $1.5 billion per year in economic assistance that is unconditional and supplement that with military assistance that is conditioned on the modernization of its command structure and active action in the field to combat insurgents. It would be difficult to convince Congress to support such a plan, particularly the unconditional civilian component.

16. (C) Vice President Biden noted that the United States wants to empower the UN and wants active European participation in resolving the threats in Pakistan and Afghanistan. With the exception of the UK and a few others, very few Europeans are taking action. Germany completely dropped the ball on police training but NATO countries should continue to provide assistance that is within their capacity to deliver.

17. (C) Brown agreed that there was a significant terrorist threat emanating from the region. More than 30,000 Pakistanis travel back and forth to the UK each year and two-thirds of the terrorist threats that UK security forces investigate originate in Pakistan -- including one ongoing investigation. The roots of terrorism in Pakistan are complicated and go beyond the madrasas to, in some areas, a complete societal incitement to militancy. Zedari’s commitment to combating terrorism is unclear, although he always says the right things.

18. (C) Brown agreed on the need for a shared commitment and noted that the only way to reduce the threat and eventually draw down NATO’s commitment to the region was by increasing the capacity of Afghanistani and Pakistani security services. Dividing the Taliban would greatly reduce its effectiveness, though doing this made the Iraq problem look easy by comparison.

19. (S) Vice President Biden commented that Zedari had told him two months ago that ISI director Kiyani will take me out. Brown thought this unlikely and said that Kiyani did not want to be another Musharraf, rather he would give civilian leadership scope to function. However, he was wary of the Sharif brothers and Zedari.

20. (U) The Office of the Vice President cleared this message. SIMONS
RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Nuclear Fuel Memos Expose Wary Dance With Pakistan”
Ambassador’s Concerns About Nuclear Material

The American ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, expresses her concern that Pakistan is delaying an agreement to have the United States to remove bomb-ready material from a research nuclear reactor.

DATE 2009-05-27 16:32:00

SOURCE Embassy Islamabad

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET ISLAMABAD 001152

SIPDIS


Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

1. (S) Kamran Akhtar, Disarmament Director in Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Poloff on May 26 that the recent spate of media attention on Pakistan’s nuclear security has led the GOP to delay an important nonproliferation effort, the removal of U.S.-origin highly-enriched uranium spent fuel from a Pakistani nuclear research reactor. The GOP agreed in principle to the fuel removal in 2007, but has been slow in scheduling a visit by U.S. technical experts to discuss logistical and other issues. In recent months, the Strategic Plans Division and Ministry of Foreign Affairs both indicated progress on the matter and a proposed visit for late May was under review. However, according to Akhtar, a recent GOP interagency review of the program concluded that the “sensational” international and local media coverage of the security of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons made it impossible to proceed at this time. If the local media got word of the fuel removal, “they certainly would portray it as the United States taking Pakistan’s nuclear weapons,” he argued. The visit will have to be delayed for 3-4 months or until the political climate makes it more conducive to hosting a U.S. visit, he stated.

2. (S) Comment: As noted in previous post reporting, the GOP is extremely sensitive to media focus on Pakistan’s nuclear program. In a sign of their growing defensiveness, the Foreign Office Spokesman took significant time out of his May 21 press conference to address nuclear security, stating categorically, “there is simply no question of our strategic assets falling into the wrong hands.” To a question about reported offers of U.S. help with nuclear security, he responded, “we do not need this assistance.” With the postponement of the nuclear fuel removal, it is clear that the negative media attention has begun to hamper U.S. efforts to improve Pakistan’s nuclear security and nonproliferation practices. End Comment. PATTERSON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”

“Nuclear Fuel Memos Expose Wary Dance With Pakistan”
Human Rights Abuses by Pakistani Army

The American Embassy in Pakistan tells Washington that the Pakistani Army was committing extrajudicial killings as it battled the Taliban in the Swat region and in the tribal areas. The embassy says the abuses must be kept quiet so as not to antagonize the Pakistani Army.

DATE 2009-09-10 14:40:00

SOURCE Embassy Islamabad

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET ISLAMABAD 002185

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2034 TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PTER, MOPS, MASS, KJUS, PK SUBJECT: ADDRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT PAKISTAN SECURITY FORCES’ HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

REF: ISLAMABAD 2074

Classified By: Derived from DSCG 05-01, b and d

1. (S/NF) A growing body of evidence is lending credence to allegations of human rights abuses by Pakistan security forces during domestic operations against terrorists in Malakand Division and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. While it is oftentimes difficult to attribute with accuracy any responsibility for such abuses, reporting from a variety of sources suggests that Frontier Corps and regular Pakistan Army units involved in direct combat with terrorists may have been involved. The crux of the problem appears to center on the treatment of terrorists detained in battlefield operations and have focused on the extra-judicial killing of some detainees. The detainees involved were in the custody of Frontier Corps or Pakistan Army units. The allegations of extra-judicial killings generally do not extend to what are locally referred to as “the disappeared” -- high-value terrorist suspects and domestic insurgents who are being held incommunicado by Pakistani intelligence agencies including the Inter-Services Intelligence Division (ISI) and Military Intelligence (MI) in their facilities.

2. (S/NF) Revenge for terrorist attacks on Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps personnel is believed to be one of the primary motivating factors for the extra-judicial killings. Cultural traditions place a strong importance on such revenge killings, which are seen as key to maintaining a unit’s honor. Senior military commanders have equally and repeatedly stressed their concerns that the courts are incapable of dealing with many of those detained on the battlefield and their fears that if detainees are handed over to the courts and formally charged, they will be released, placing Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps troops at risk. This fear is well-founded as both Anti-Terrorism Courts and the appellate judiciary have a poor track record of dealing with suspects detained in combat operations such as the Red Mosque operation in Islamabad and have repeatedly ordered their unconditional release. Post assesses that the lack of viable prosecution and punishment options available to the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps is a contributing factor in allowing extra-judicial killings and other human rights abuses of detained terrorist combatants to proceed. There may be as many as 5000 such terrorist detainees currently in the custody of the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps from operations in Malakand, Bajaur, and Mohmand. As operations in these areas and other parts of the FATA proceed, this number will increase.

3. (S/NF) NWFP Police have also been implicated in the abuse and extra-judicial killing of terrorist suspects that they believe responsible for attacks on police stations and individuals in the run-up to the conflict. This is a separate problem set from those detained in combat by Frontier Corps and Pakistan Army units. The NWFP Inspector General of Police has publicly announced the establishment of a Human Rights Unit within his office to prevent, investigate, and
punish human rights violations committed by his forces. As a component of the police training program that we are now standing up for the NWFP, post intends to offer assistance to the Inspector General of Police and his new unit on education and prevention of human rights abuses and investigations and prosecutions where abuses are suspected.

4. (S/NF) In an effort to stem extra-judicial killings and other human rights abuses of these detained in combat by Pakistan security forces, post is proposing a multi-pronged approach as follows:

Short Term:

-- Diplomatic Engagement: Continue to privately raise this issue repeatedly and at the highest levels of the Pakistan government and military. Ensure that expressions of concern over the alleged extra-judicial killings coupled with calls for transparent investigations and, as appropriate, prosecution are included in the talking points of all senior USG civilian and military visitors in meetings with Pakistani civilian and military counterparts. Timeline: Ongoing. Funding: None required.

-- Offer Assistance: Coordinate with the British High Commission on an offer of assistance to the Defense Minister and the Chief of Army Staff (COAS). To the Defense Minister propose assistance in drafting a new Presidential Order that would create a parallel administrative track for charging and sentencing terrorists detained by the military in combat operations. Amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act are already well underway. To the COAS, propose bringing over a team of American and British experts to evaluate the detainee issue and to determine jointly what assistance is required from coalition partners. If COAS agreement is forthcoming, bring over a team of American military lawyers to meet with Pakistan military officials with a view to obtaining concurrence on training in battlefield evidence collection, investigation and prosecution of human rights abuses by military personnel, and assistance on drafting the new Presidential Order proposed to the Defense Minister: Timeline: Meeting with COAS and Defense Minister by end of September 09. Team deployed by October 09. Funding: Reallocation of existing Foreign Assistance funding.

-- Evaluate Detainee Situation: Local Pakistan military commanders and FATA/NWFP officials have approached various offices with request for assistance on dealing with detained combatants under the guise of reintegration. Post proposes bringing over a senior representative from INL’s prison reform office to lay the groundwork for a visiting team that would conduct a formal assessment of conditions and infrastructure/personnel/systems needs of the local prison system for potentially housing these detainees. This report would form the baseline for development of an assistance strategy to help the GOP address the issue. Timeline: INL initial visit in September 2009. Followed by assessment mission in October 2009 with report to be completed by November 2009. Funding: INCLE funds will need to be reallocated.

Medium Term

-- Draft Ordinance: Get UK agreement to lead a team of British, and possibly American, experts to work with the Pakistan Defense Ministry and Army to draft a new Presidential Ordinance for the administrative prosecution and punishment of terrorists detained in combat operations (this process is already underway in Pakistan). Representatives of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will need to agree to participate in the drafting process. Post will approach the HRCP at an appropriate time but will require Washington/Geneva assistance in obtaining ICRC agreement. Adoption of the Presidential Ordinance would offer a credible way for the Pakistan military/government to prosecute and punish terrorists detained in combat operations. Timeline: Deploy team by December 09 with a view to completing ordinance by April 2010. Funding: Reallocation of existing Foreign Assistance funds.

-- Pakistani JAG and Intelligence Officer Training: Offer Detainee Operations training for Pakistan’s JAG and intelligence officers. This five-day course would cover evidence collection on the battlefield, proper detainee handling, interrogations, international humanitarian law, laws governing internal armed conflicts, and war crime prosecutions. Timeline: Training courses to begin by January 2010. Funding: IMET funds have been allocated for this training.

Long Term

-- Assist in Implementation of Ordinance: Provide training to Pakistan military and Frontier
Corps personnel on collection of battlefield evidence and its use in prosecution. Coordinate with British on providing appropriate training for personnel of administrative structure to be established through Presidential ordinance. Timeline: Training courses to begin by May 2010. Funding: Reallocation of existing IMET and other Foreign Assistance funding.

-- Prison Reform: Design and fund a prison reform program to construct/rehabilitate existing federal/provincial prisons to accommodate terrorists detained in combat operations both pre-trial and post-conviction. Convince other donors to assist GOP in developing post-release programs to reintegrate into their communities detainees deemed not fit for trial or those who have served their sentences. Timeline: Launch prison reform program by October 2010. Approach donors on reintegration by September 2010 through SRAP. Funding: New INCLE funds will be needed.

4. (S/NF) Comment: Post fully recognizes that there is little that the USG can do to change the culture of revenge that underlies many of the extra-judicial killings taking place in the Malakand Division and FATA. However, it is our view that if senior commanders are offered a viable alternate to deal with detained combatants and a credible detention facility under control of the Prisons Department is established, the prevalence of human rights abuses will diminish. Post recognizes that much of this is dependent on goodwill within the Pakistan military and civilian establishment that can easily erode if too much public criticism from USG officials over these incidents is forthcoming. For this reason, post advises that we avoid comment on these incidents to the extent possible and that efforts remain focused on dialogue and the assistance strategy outlined above. End Comment.

PATTERSON
Will Extra Aid Persuade Pakistan to Cut Ties to Extremists?

Ambassador Patterson assesses United States policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan, noting that offers of additional aid will not persuade Pakistan from cutting ties to extremist anti-India groups.

DATE 2009-09-23 15:09:00

SOURCE Embassy Islamabad

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET ISLAMABAD 002295

NOFORN


Classified By: Ambassador Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 b and d

1. (S/NF) Summary: In response to queries posed by the National Security Council, Embassy Islamabad believes that it is not/not possible to counter al-Qaeda in Pakistan absent a comprehensive strategy that 1) addresses the interlinked Taliban threat in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 2) brings about stable, civilian government in Afghanistan, and 3) reexamines the broader role of India in the region. As the queries presuppose, the ending of Pakistani establishment support to terrorist and extremist groups, some Afghan-focused and some India-focused, is a key element for success. There is no chance that Pakistan will view enhanced assistance levels in any field as sufficient compensation for abandoning support to these groups, which it sees as an important part of its national security apparatus against India. The only way to achieve a cessation of such support is to change the Pakistan government’s own perception of its security requirements. End Summary.

2. (S/NF) Al-Qaeda can operate in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) largely because the Taliban-related groups in these areas continue to challenge the writ of the Pakistani government. Unilateral targeting of al-Qaeda operatives and assets in these regions is an important component of dealing with the overall threat. It is not/not, however, sufficient in and of itself to force al-Qaeda out of the FATA, so long as the territory remains largely ungoverned space. Increased unilateral operations in these areas risk destabilizing the Pakistani state, alienating both the civilian government and military leadership, and provoking a broader governance crisis in Pakistan without finally achieving the goal. To be effective, we must extend the writ of the Pakistani state into the FATA in such a way that Taliban groups can no longer offer effective protection to al-Qaeda from Pakistan’s own security and law enforcement agencies in these areas. We should be under no illusion, however, that this effort will not require a multi-year, multi-agency effort.

3. (S/NF) Taliban groups in Pakistan and the regional threat posed by al-Qaeda, however, cannot be effectively dealt with absent a broader regional strategy that leads to stability in Afghanistan. Fear that the ISAF mission in Afghanistan will end without the establishment of a non-Taliban, Pakhtoon-led government friendly to Pakistan adds to the Pakistani establishment’s determination not to cut its ties irrevocably to the Afghan Taliban. They fear that withdrawals of NATO countries on a date certain from Afghanistan is only the thin edge of a wedge that will be followed by other coalition partners, including the United States. Discussions of deadlines, downsizing of the American military presence, or even a denial of the additional troops reportedly to be requested by Gen. McChrystal are taken as evidence that reinforces this perception. General Kayani has been utterly frank about Pakistan’s position on this. In such a scenario, the Pakistan establishment will dramatically increase support for Taliban groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which they see either as ultimately likely to take over the Afghan government or at least an important counter-weight to an Indian-controlled Northern Alliance.
4. (S/NF) Most importantly, it is the perception of India as the primary threat to the Pakistani state that colors its perceptions of the conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s security needs. The Pakistani establishment fears a pro-India government in Afghanistan would allow India to operate a proxy war against Pakistan from its territory. Justified or not, increased Indian investment in, trade with, and development support to the Afghan government, which the USG has encouraged, causes Pakistan to embrace Taliban groups all the more closely as anti-India allies. We need to reassess Indian involvement in Afghanistan and our own policies towards India, including the growing military relationship through sizable conventional arms sales, as all of this feeds Pakistani establishment paranoia and pushes them closer to both Afghan and Kashmir-focused terrorist groups while reinforcing doubts about U.S. intentions. Resolving the Kashmir dispute, which lies at the core of Pakistan’s support for terrorist groups, would dramatically improve the situation. Enhanced USG efforts in this regard should be considered.

5. (S/NF) Money alone will not/not solve the problem of al-Qaeda or the Taliban operating in Pakistan. A grand bargain that promises development or military assistance in exchange for severing ties will be insufficient to wean Pakistan from policies that reflect accurately its most deep-seated fears. The Pakistani establishment, as we saw in 1998 with the nuclear test, does not view assistance -- even sizable assistance to their own entities -- as a trade-off for national security vis-a-vis India. The lack of faith in USG intentions in Pakistan and in relation to India makes such a bargain untenable in the eyes of the Pakistani establishment. Development assistance in the context of the Pakistani counter-insurgency strategy must be accelerated and refined in order to extend the government writ to the FATA, to stabilize regions at-risk for insurgent activity and recruitment, and to offer incentives for those that desire to leave terrorist groups. It can and should not/not be viewed as a pay-off for behavior change by the Pakistani establishment.

6. (S/NF) In the final analysis there is no short-cut to dealing with the al-Qaeda problem in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is inextricably linked to and cannot be divorced from the Taliban problem in both countries. Nor can we hope to develop a strategy for minimizing Taliban influence and thereby al-Qaeda operational space in Pakistan’s FATA absent a strategy that brings about stability in Afghanistan; the notion that precision or long-range counter-terrorism efforts can suffice are equally illusory. Afghan instability by definition leads the Pakistani establishment to increase support for the Taliban and thereby, unintentionally, create space for al-Qaeda. No amount of money will sever that link. Rather, we must reassess our regional approach and find ways to reassure the Pakistanis that they can address their long-standing national security objectives most effectively -- both to the east and to the west -- by working closely with the U.S.
Closer Military Ties With Pakistan

Pakistan’s army agrees to increase the number of American Special Operations advisers, reflecting growing trust between the American and Pakistani militaries.
consent of Chief of Army Staff General Kayani -- for SOC(FWD)-PAK deployments to Bajaur and the
Waziristans appears to represent a sea change in Pakistani thinking. Patient relationship-
building with the military is the key factor that has brought us to this point. The Pakistanis are increasingly confident that we do not have ulterior motives in assisting their operations. In addition, the direct recipients of SOC(FWD)-PAK training appear to have recognized the potential benefits of bringing U.S. SOF personnel into the field with them for operational advice and other support. In addition, the success of the initial deployment to XXXXXXXXXXXX likely helped catalyze the follow-up requests for new and repeat support.

7. (S) Comment Continued: These deployments are highly politically sensitive because of widely-held concerns among the public about Pakistani sovereignty and opposition to allowing foreign military forces to operate in any fashion on Pakistani soil. Should these developments and/or related matters receive any coverage in the Pakistani or U.S. media, the Pakistani military will likely stop making requests for such assistance. End Comment.

ISLAMABAD 00002449 002 OF 002

PATTERSON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Nuclear Fuel Memos Expose Wary Dance With Pakistan”
U.S. Opposed A.Q. Khan’s Release

As the Bush administration came to a close, it would say little in public about A.Q. Khan, the rogue Pakistani engineer who built the world’s largest black-market operation to sell nuclear technology -- to Iran, North Korea and Libya, and perhaps others. But in private, the State Department was urging Pakistan not to release Dr. Khan from house arrest. He was released, but Pakistan says his activities are monitored.

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1. (C) Washington is concerned that the government of Pakistan may release A.Q. Khan. Washington requests Post to please draw from points in para 4, as appropriate, with senior government officials including the Director General of Strategic Plans Division Lt. Gen (retd) Kidwai.

End summary and action request.

OBJECTIVES

2. (S/NF) Post should achieve the following objectives:

-- Inquire about the accuracy of press reports indicating that Dr. Khan will soon be released from house arrest.

-- Express Washington,s strong opposition to the release of Dr. Khan and urge the Government of Pakistan to continue holding him under house arrest.

-- Explain the possible negative consequences that the release of Dr. Khan will have on Pakistan,s image in the international community. Note that it would undermine the positive steps Pakistan has taken on nonproliferation.

-- Urge Pakistan to consider the long-term gains it could garner from the international community by continuing Dr. Khan,s current status rather than the short-term domestic political gains that
could result from his release.

End objectives.

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BACKGROUND
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3. (S/NF) Recent press reports indicate a plan for Dr. Khan’s release was approved for delivery to Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani. We should determine the accuracy of the reports and clearly indicate to the new government, as well as Director General Kidwai, our strong opposition to Khan’s release. Dr. Khan was the central figure in the most egregious violation of nonproliferation norms to date and his release would likely indicate to the international community a disregard by Pakistan for the dire threat still posed to international security by Dr. Khan’s activities. It could also undermine ongoing prosecution efforts underway in other countries to punish Khan associates and would be a setback to our ongoing bilateral nonproliferation efforts with Pakistan.

End background.

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Talking Points
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4. (S/Rel Pakistan) Begin Talking Points for Pakistan:

-- Pakistan has taken positive steps over the past few years to demonstrate its commitment to nonproliferation, including enacting its 2004 export control law, establishing the Strategic Export Control Division (SECDIV), and joining the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

-- We are deeply troubled by press reports that Pakistan may consider releasing Dr. Khan. We hope that these press reports are not accurate.

-- We urge you not to change Dr. Khan’s current status. While the release of Dr. Khan would be viewed positively by some in Pakistan, it would undermine Pakistan’s broader nonproliferation efforts and signal to the international community that Pakistan is no longer concerned about the harm caused by Dr. Khan and his network.

-- When Dr. Khan was pardoned by President Musharraf, Pakistan was widely criticized in the international community for not having prosecuted him or anyone else associated with his proliferation activities.

-- The damage done to international security by Dr. Khan and his associates is not a closed book. Other countries continue efforts to prosecute those involved. The U.S., and other countries, as well as the IAEA, are expending enormous amounts of time and resources to address the threats that resulted from Dr. Khan’s engagement with Iran, North Korea, and possibly other states.

-- Because of Khan’s actions, the international community must contend with the reality that the uranium enrichment technology and nuclear weapons designs that were sold to Libya are now available to other states and non-state actors. This will make it much harder to combat nuclear proliferation in the future.

-- The U.S. and Pakistan have worked together to address the problems caused by Dr. Khan’s proliferation to other countries and we look forward to our continued close cooperation on this and other related issues.

End talking points for Pakistan.

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REPORTING DEADLINE
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5. (U) Please report response if possible by April 17, 2008.

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POINT OF CONTACT
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6. (U) Department point of contact is Chris Herrington ISN/CPI, 647-5035. Please slug all responses for ISN, T, and SCA. Washington appreciates Post,s assistance. RICE

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“U.S. Opposed Release of Nuclear Dealer”
Africa

Blackwater Launches an Anti-Pirate Ship

Diplomats in Djibouti, in East Africa, reported in early 2009 that the government had given permission to the private security company Blackwater Worldwide to operate an armed vessel to protect commercial shipping from pirates off the coast of Somalia. The diplomats wanted guidance from the State Department on what involvement they should have with the controversial company.

DATE 2009-02-12 16:01:00

SOURCE Embassy Djibouti

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000113

SIPDIS SIPDIS SENSITIVE SBU DELIBERATIVE PROCESS DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND AF/E CJTF-HOA AND AFRICOM FOR POLAD LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA-WATCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019-02-12 TAGS: PREL, PHSA, MOPS, BEXP, DJ, SO, XA SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI APPROVES BLACKWATER FOR COMMERCIAL COUNTER-PIRACY OPERATIONS

REF: a) LONDON 62 (NOTAL)

CLASSIFIED BY: Eric Wong, DCM, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassy, Djibouti; REASON: 1.4(D)

1. (C) SUMMARY. U.S. security firm, Blackwater Worldwide (BW), has received permission from the Government of Djibouti to operate an armed ship from the port of Djibouti, to protect commercial shipping from pirates off the coast of Somalia. Blackwater’s U.S.-flagged ship is expected to arrive in early March, and will have a crew of 33 AmCits, including three 6-man armed teams who will operate in continuous shifts. The Djiboutian Navy will secure Blackwater’s weapons (i.e., .50-caliber machine guns) while ashore in Djibouti. Blackwater does not intend to take any pirates into custody, but will use lethal force against pirates if necessary; it is developing an SOP that is currently under legal review and will be shared with the USG. Blackwater’s counter-piracy operation does not have any clients yet, but Blackwater expects business to develop following a public launch in Djibouti in March with GODJ officials. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On Feb. 8, ex-FSO Robert Emmett Downey, Blackwater Worldwide’s Development Manager for Africa, provided the following update to Amb. Swan, DCM, and Bob Patterson (TDY from Embassy Nairobi):

a) Hassan Said Khaireh--triple-hatted as Djibouti’s national security advisor, head of the security/intelligence service, and director of President Guelleh’s Military Office--has given BW permission to operate its armed ship in Djibouti. BW met with Hassan Said on Feb. 7, following an earlier meeting in WashDC between BW’s CEO Erik Prince and Cofer Black with Djiboutian Amb. to the U.S. Robleh Olhaye. This is the only such arrangement so far that BW has made with a host government in the region, but BW will likely engage Oman and Kenya in the future (e.g., in the event of a mechanical malfunction, the only facilities capable of repairing BW’s ship are located in Mombasa.) Within the USG, BW has briefed AFRICOM, CENTCOM, and Embassy Nairobi officials.

b) BW’s ship is the ‘McArthur,” a U.S.-flagged 183-foot ex-NOAA vessel. While it has landing space for two helicopters, it will have an unarmed UAV, but no helicopters (which BW considers too expensive). The ship will be armed with .50-caliber machine guns, and is able to protect a 3-
ship convoy. The Djiboutian Navy will secure BW’s weapons, once ashore, and will inspect BW’s weapons lockers. According to Downey, BW’s business concept--having its armed ship escort other ships requiring protection--is consistent with recent IMO/industry recommendations discouraging the carriage of firearms, or the presence of embarked armed security teams, aboard commercial ships themselves (e.g., see ref tel, on the 85th session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee). The ‘McArthur’ will dock in Djibouti for 36-72 hours every 30 days, to replenish its stores. According to Downey, BW is the only such firm with its own ship.

c) All personnel on BW’s ship will be U.S. citizens: comprising 15 crew and 18 armed security personnel (three 6-man teams who will operate in continuous 8-hour shifts). These 33 “operators” will rotate every 60 days. For medical contingencies, BW has arranged--through its local agent in Djibouti, Inchcape (London-based international shipper with numerous business activities in Djibouti)--access to Bouffard, the French military hospital in Djibouti. The “McArthur” will arrive in Djibouti in early March, after transitting Gilbraltar and Acaba, Jordan. BW CEO Erik Prince plans to travel to DJ for its public launch.

d) Downey underscored BW’s emphasis on compliance with U.S. laws, including defense trade controls: BW has a VP for export compliance, and depends on the USG (DOD) for contracts. BW’s ship, the “McArthur”, will have video cameras to record BW counter-piracy activities.

e) BW has no intention of taking any pirates into custody. While the French have previously put pirates ashore in Puntland, Downey said BW had no plans to do so, either in Somalia or Kenya (noting that Kenya’s bilateral PUC agreements with the USG and HMG were government-to-government). BW will share its SOP with Embassies Djibouti and Nairobi once approved; SOP is currently under legal review, as there is “no precedent for a paramilitary operation in a purely commercial environment.” While asserting that international maritime law allows the use of lethal force against pirates, BW also recognizes the need to respect international humanitarian obligations. Of concern, for example, is whether BW would be responsible for assisting injured pirates, if doing so endangered BW’s ability to protect its client(s).

f) BW’s local agent in Djibouti is Inchcape. Bruno Pardigon, general manager of the newly formed “Djibouti Maritime Security Services” (DMSS), will provide BW with a license, following completion of an MOU with DMSS. Downey was unsure whether DMSS was a parastatal or a quasi-government agency of the GODJ. [COMMENT: Pardigon is favorably known to the Embassy as a French-Djiboutian businessman and marine conservationist who runs a diving operation in Djibouti.] While Downey will remain in Djibouti until March 2009, BW has no plans now to establish an office in Djibouti.

g) While protection is estimated to cost less than $200,000 per trip, BW’s Djibouti operation has no contracts yet for clients. Downey commented that the shipping industry may assess that piracy is declining: only 3 ships were pirated in January 2009; there are at least 4 foreign naval vessels currently docked in Djibouti conducting counter-piracy operations; and the EU’s Operation Atalanta is providing military escort of ships.

3. (U) COMMENT. Djibouti’s decision to permit Blackwater to begin counter-piracy operations follows ongoing GODJ efforts aimed at addressing the piracy threat. Djibouti recently hosted an IMO conference on Somali piracy that, inter alia, recommended Djibouti serve as a center for maritime training. Numerous foreign military counter-piracy operations are based in Djibouti--involving units from Spain, France, the UK, the Netherlands, and other EU members. Japan (septel) and Korea are also considering military deployments to Djibouti to support counter-piracy efforts. Djibouti is a founding member of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and has offered to host the group’s planned Counter-Piracy Coordination Cell.

4. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED. Blackwater’s presence in Djibouti would make it one of the largest U.S. businesses operating in the country. As the host of the only U.S. military base in Africa, as well as a country with extensive commercial port facilities, Djibouti has a commercial interest in supporting foreign investors, including U.S. contractors. Blackwater executives seek to involve both Djiboutian and USG principals in a high-profile March 2009 launch; Post would appreciate Department’s guidance on the appropriate level of engagement with Blackwater, while also fulfilling the USG’s commercial advocacy responsibilities to support U.S. firms. END COMMENT. SWAN
To view the entire SMART message, go to URL http://repository.state.sgov.gov/_layouts/OSSSearchResults.aspx?k=messageid:c49664b3-c16f-4077-ab99-fc948ab8b75f

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Blackwater Aimed to Hunt Pirates”
Ambassador Reports on Zimbabwe’s Leader

As Christopher W. Dell leaves Zimbabwe after three years as American ambassador, he sends a frank account of its aging, erratic leader, Robert Mugabe.

DATE 2007-07-13 10:04:00

SOURCE Embassy Harare

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CON F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 HARARE 000638

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DEPARTMENT FOR P, AF, AND AF/S FOR MOZENA AND HILL, NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN AND B. LEO; USAID FOR M. COPSON AND E. LOKEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/12/2017 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, ZI SUBJECT: The End is Nigh

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.4b/d

1. (C) Having said my piece repeatedly over the last three years, I won’t offer a lengthy prescription for our Zimbabwe policy. My views can be stated very simply as stay the course and prepare for change. Our policy is working and it’s helping to drive change here. What is required is simply the grit, determination and focus to see this through. Then, when the changes finally come we must be ready to move quickly to help consolidate the new dispensation.

THE SITUATION

2. (C) Robert Mugabe has survived for so long because he is more clever and more ruthless than any other politician in Zimbabwe. To give the devil his due, he is a brilliant tactitian and has long thrived on his ability to abruptly change the rules of the game, radicalize the political dynamic and force everyone else to react to his agenda. However, he is fundamentally hampered by several factors: his ego and belief in his own infallibility; his obsessive focus on the past as a justification for everything in the present and future; his deep ignorance on economic issues (coupled with the belief that his 18 doctorates give him the authority to suspend the laws of economics, including supply and demand); and his essentially short-term, tactical style.

3. (C) While his tactical skills have kept him in power for 27 years, over the last seven this has only been achieved by a series of populist, but destructive and ultimately self-defeating moves. In reaction to losing the 2000 referendum on the constitution, a vengeful Mugabe unleashed his QGreen BombersQ to commit land reform and in the process he destroyed Zimbabwe’s agricultural sector, once the bedrock of the economy. While thousands of white farmers saw their properties seized, hundreds of thousands of black Zimbabweans lost their livelihoods and were reduced to utter poverty. In 2005, having been forced to steal victory by manipulating the results of an election he lost, Mugabe lashed out again, punishing the urban populace by launching Operation Murambatsvina. The result was wholesale destruction of the informal sector, on which as much as 70-80 percent of urban dwellers had depended, and the uprooting of 700,000 Zimbabweans. The current inflationary cycle really began with Murambatsvina, as rents and prices grew in response to a decrease in supply.

4. (C) And now, faced with the hyperinflationary consequences of his ruinous fiscal policies and growing reliance on the printing press to keep his government running, Mugabe has launched Operation Slash Prices. This has once again given him a very temporary boost in popularity.
(especially among the police, who have led the looting of retail outlets and now seem well positioned to take a leading role in the black market economy) at the cost of terrible damage to the country and people. Many small grocery and shop owners, traders, etc., will be wiped out; the shelves are increasingly bare; hunger, fear, and tension are growing; fuel has disappeared. When the shelves are still empty this time next week, the popular appeal of the price roll back will evaporate and the government simply doesn’t have the resources to replace the entire private commercial sector and keep Zimbabweans fed. It may attempt to do so by printing more money, adding even more inflationary pressure on a system already reeling from the GOZQs quasi-fiscal lunacy combined with the price impact of pervasive shortages. The increasingly worthless Zim dollar is likely to collapse as a unit of trade in the near future, depriving the GOZ of its last economic tool other than sheer thuggery and theft of others’ assets.

5. (C) With all this in view, I’m convinced the end is not far off for the Mugabe regime. Of course, my predecessors and many other observers have all said the same thing, and yet Mugabe is still with us. I think this time could prove different, however, because for the first time the president is under intensifying pressure simultaneously on the economic, political and international fronts. In the past, he could always play one of these off against the other, using economic moves to counter political pressure or playing the old colonial/race/imperialist themes to buy himself breathing room regionally and internationally. But he is running out of options and in the swirling gases of the new Zimbabwean constellation that is starting to form, the economic, political and international pressures are concentrating on Mugabe himself. Our ZANU-PF contacts are virtually unanimous in saying reform is desperately needed, but won’t happen while the Old Man is there, and therefore he must go (finding the courage to make that happen is another matter, however, but even that may be coming closer). This is not some sudden awakening on the road to Damascus, but a reflection of the pain even party insiders increasingly feel over the economic meltdown. We also get regular, albeit anecdotal, reports of angry and increasingly open mutterings against Mugabe even in ZANU-PF’s traditional rural bastions. Beginning in March, the other SADC leaders finally recognized (in the wake of the terrible beatings of March 11 and the international outcry that followed another self-inflicted wound for Mugabe) that Zimbabwe is a problem they need to address. Thabo Mbeki appears committed to a successful mediation and is reportedly increasingly irritated with Mugabe’s efforts to manipulate him or blow him off altogether. If Mugabe judges that he still commands all he surveys by virtue of being the elder statesman on the scene, he may be committing yet another serious blunder. Finally, one does well to recall that the only serious civil disturbances here in a decade came in 1998 over bread shortages, showing that even the famously passive Shona people have their limits. The terror and oppression of the intervening years have cowed people, but it’s anyone’s guess whether their fear or their anger will win out in the end.

WHAT WILL THE END LOOK LIKE?

6. (C) This is the big, unanswerable question. One thing at least is certain, Mugabe will not wake up one morning a changed man, resolved to set right all he has wrought. He will not go quietly nor without a fight. He will cling to power at all costs and the costs be damned, he deserves to rule by virtue of the liberation struggle and land reform and the people of Zimbabwe have let him down by failing to appreciate this, thus he needn’t worry about their well-being. The only scenario in which he might agree to go with a modicum of good grace is one in which he concludes that the only way to end his days a free man is by leaving State House. I judge that he is still a long way from this conclusion and will fight on for now.

7. (C) The optimal outcome, of course, and the only one that doesn’t bring with it a huge risk of violence and conflict, is a genuinely free and fair election, under international supervision. The Mbeki mediation offers the best, albeit very slim, hope of getting there. However, as Pretoria grows more and more worried about the chaos to its north and President Mbeki’s patience with Mugabe’s antics wears thin, the prospects for serious South African engagement may be growing. Thus, this effort deserves all the support and backing we can muster. Less attractive is the idea of a South African-brokered transitional arrangement or government of national unity. Mbeki has always favored stability and in his mind this means a ZANU-PF-led GNU, with perhaps a few MDC additions. This solution is more likely to prolong than resolve the crisis and we must guard against letting Pretoria dictate an outcome which perpetuates the status quo at the expense of real change and reform.
8. (C) The other scenarios are all less attractive: a popular uprising would inevitably entail a bloodbath, even if it were ultimately successful; Mugabe's sudden, unexpected death would set off a stampede for power among ZANU-PF heavy weights; a palace coup, whether initiated within ZANU-PF or from the military - in which Mugabe is removed, killed, exiled or otherwise disposed of, could well devolve into open conflict among the contending successors. Similarly, some form of "constitutional coup" i.e., a change at the top engineered within the framework of ZANU-PF's "legitimate" structures could well prove to be merely the opening bell in a prolonged power struggle. None of the players is likely to go quietly into the night without giving everything they have, including calling on their supporters in the security services. Moreover, experience elsewhere would suggest that whoever comes out on top initially will struggle, and more than likely fail, to halt the economic collapse. Thus, there is a good prospect of not one but a series of rapid-fire transitions, until some new, stable dispensation is reached.

9. (C) The final, and probably worst, possibility is that Mugabe concludes he can settle for ruling over a rump Zimbabwe, maintaining control over Harare and the Mashona heartland, the critical forces of the National Reserve Force and CIO and a few key assets - gold, diamonds, platinum and Air Zimbabwe to fund the good times. Under this scenario the rest of the country, in one of the comrade's favorite phrases, could go hang, leaving it to the international community to stave off the worst humanitarian consequences.

WHAT OF THE OPPOSITION?

10. (C) Zimbabwe's opposition is far from ideal and I leave convinced that had we had different partners we could have achieved more already. But you have to play the hand you're dealt. With that in mind, the current leadership has little executive experience and will require massive hand holding and assistance should they ever come to power.

11. (C) Morgan Tsvangarai is a brave, committed man and, by and large, a democrat. He is also the only player on the scene right now with real star quality and the ability to rally the masses. But Tsvangarai is also a flawed figure, not readily open to advice, indecisive and with questionable judgment in selecting those around him. He is the indispensable element for opposition success, but possibly an albatross around their necks once in power. In short, he is a kind of Lech Walesa character: Zimbabwe needs him, but should not rely on his executive abilities to lead the country's recovery. Arthur Mutambara is young and ambitious, attracted to radical, anti-western rhetoric and smart as a whip. But, in many respects he's a light-weight who has spent too much time reading U.S. campaign messaging manuals and too little thinking about the real issues. Welshman Ncube has proven to be a deeply divisive and destructive player in the opposition ranks and the sooner he is pushed off the stage, the better. But he is useful to many, including the regime and South Africa, so is probably a cross to be borne for some time yet. The prospects for healing the rift within the MDC seem dim, which is a totally unnecessary self-inflicted wound on their part this time. With few exceptions Q Tendayi Biti, Nelson Chamisa Q the talent is thin below the top ranks. The great saving grace of the opposition is likely to be found in the diaspora. Most of Zimbabwe's best professionals, entrepreneurs, businessmen and women, etc., have fled the country. They are the opposition's natural allies and it is encouraging to see signs, particularly in South Africa and the UK, that these people are talking, sharing ideas, developing plans and thinking together about future recovery.

STAYING THE COURSE, PREPARING FOR CHANGE

12. (C) Unfortunately, among the MDC's flaws is its inability to work more effectively with the rest of civil society. The blame for this can be shared on both sides (many civil society groups, like the NCA, are single-issue focused and take the overall dynamic in unhelpful directions; others, like WOZA, insist on going it alone as a matter of principle), but ultimately it falls to the MDC as the largest and the only true political party, to show the way. Once again, however, these are natural allies and they have more reason to work together than fight against each other.

13. (C) If I am right and change is in the offing, we need to step up our preparations. The work done over the last year on transition planning has been extremely useful, both for stimulating a fresh look at our own assumptions and plans and for forging a common approach among the
traditional donor community. But the process has lagged since the meetings in March in London and should be re-energized. It is encouraging in this respect that USAID Washington has engaged the Mission here in discussing how we would use additional resources in response to a genuinely reform-minded government. I hope this will continue and the good work done so far will survive the usual bloodletting of the budget process.

14. (C) The official media has had a field day recently whooping that “Dell leaves Zimbabwe a failed man”. That’s not quite how it looks from here. I believe that the firm U.S. stance, the willingness to speak out and stand up, have contributed to the accelerating pace of change. Mugabe and his henchman are like bullies everywhere: if they can intimidate you they will. But they’re not used to someone standing up to them and fighting back. It catches them off guard and that’s when they make mistakes. The howls of protest over critical statements from Washington or negative coverage on CNN are the clearest proof of how this hurts them. Ditto the squeals over illegal sanctions. In addition, the regime has become so used to calling the shots and dictating the pace that the merest stumble panics them. Many local observers have noted that Mugabe is panicked and desperate about hyperinflation at the moment, and hence he’s making mistakes. Possibly fatal mistakes. We need to keep the pressure on in order to keep Mugabe off his game and on his back foot, relying on his own shortcomings to do him in. Equally important is an active U.S. leadership role in the international community. The UK is ham-strung by its colonial past and domestic politics, thus, letting them set the pace alone merely limits our effectiveness. The EU is divided between the hard north and its soft southern underbelly. The Africans are only now beginning to find their voice. Rock solid partners like Australia don’t pack enough punch to step out front and the UN is a non-player. Thus it falls to the U.S., once again, to take the lead, to say and do the hard things and to set the agenda. Hundreds, maybe thousands, of ordinary Zimbabweans of all kinds have told me that our clear, forthright stance has given them hope and the courage to hang on. By this regime’s standards, acting in the interests of the people may indeed be considered a failure. But I believe that the opposite is true, and that we can be justifiably proud that in Zimbabwe we have helped advance the President’s Freedom Agenda. The people of this country know it and recognize it and that is the true touchstone of our success here.

DELL

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”
On the Eve of Nelson Mandela’s Release

On the eve of momentous change in South Africa, the American consul in Cape Town, Charles R. Baquet III, reports that Nelson Mandela is about to be released after 27 years in prison.

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SUMMARY


RELEASE OF SEVERAL POLITICAL PRISONERS INCLUDING MANDELA HIMSELF. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANNOUNCEMENTS WOULD COME SWIFTLY AFTER DE KLERK’S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

3. THE SAG IS CONCERNED OVER ANC RELATIONS WITH THE SACP AND OVER THE WORKING DEFINITION OF “ONE MAN ONE VOTE,” AMONG OTHER “WHITE FEARS” ISSUES. MANDELA HAS PASSED DE KLERK’S “PROPOSALS” ON THESE TOPICS TO THE ANC. THE ORGANIZATION’S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE EVEN WHILE Apartheid LAWS REMAIN IN PLACE MAY BE PART OF THE ANC’S REPLY TO THE SAG.

4. TENSIONS IN THE COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED BY THE SAG’S TACTIC OF OPENING DIALOGUE AND A COMMITMENT SHARED BY THE MDM TO REDUCE CONFRONTATIONS. WHILE MAINLY OF BENEFIT TO THE SAG, THIS PERIOD OF CALM COULD ALSO FAVOR THE ANC’S NEW STRATEGY OF PRAGMATISM.

5. RAISING THE PENDING VISIT OF JESSE JACKSON, MOOSA EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IT WOULD BE BAD FOR THE STRUGGLE IF JACKSON ADVOCATED LIFTING SANCTIONS UPON HIS RETURN TO THE US. END SUMMARY.

6. IN A HALF HOUR CONVERSATION WITH POLECOFF, ESSA MOOSA. THE WESTERN CAPE UDF’S LAWYER AND ONE OF THE ATTORNEYS WHO MET WITH MANDELA LAST WEEK, MADE THE FOLLOW-ING REMARKS:

MANDERA RELEASE WILL BE ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 2 IN PARLIAMENT

7. MANDELA MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT HE FULLY EXPECTS CONFIDENTIAL
PRESIDENT FW DE KLERK TO MAKE SEVERAL MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENTS IN HIS FEBRUARY 2 SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. DE KLERK WILL ANNOUNCE:

-- THE UNBANNING OF THE ANC, PAC AND OTHER POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS;

-- THE END OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY;

-- THE RETURN OF POLITICAL EXILES TO SOUTH AFRICA;

-- THE RELEASE OF A NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, INCLUDING NELSON MANDELA.

8. THESE ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT ALL THE ITEMS LISTED WILL TAKE EFFECT AS OF THE TIME OF THE SPEECH. BUT FIRM PLANS AND A COMMITMENT TO CARRY THEM OUT SWIFTLY WILL BE PART OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

WHERE WILL MANDELA BE RELEASED?

9. MOOSA SIDESTEPPED A QUESTION ABOUT WHERE MANDELA'S HOME BASE WOULD BE UPON HIS RELEASE. HE ONLY REMARKED THAT MANDELA CAN TELL THE SAG WHERE HE WANTS TO BE RELEASED AND WHERE HIS FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE WOULD thus TAKE PLACE. SENTIMENTALLY, SAID MOOSA, PAARL (WHERE MANDELA IS NOW IN PRISON) SEEMED TO APPEAL TO MANDELA. (COMMENT: BUT POLITICALLY AND PRACTICALLY THIS MAKES LITTLE SENSE. JOHANNESBURG SEEMS BY FAR THE MOST SUITABLE VENUE. END COMMENT.)

CONFIDENTIAL

R 171512Z JAN 90 FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN TO SECCSTATE WASHDC 5366 INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG AMCONSUL DURBAN AMEMBASSY LUSAKA AMEMBASSY HARARE AMEMBASSY LONDON AMEMBASSY PARIS

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 02 OF 03 CAPE TOWN 00097

LONDON FOR KOLKER, PARIS FOR FENDRICK


DE KLERK-ANC COMMUNICATION THROUGH MANDELA

10. WHEN HE MET SEVERAL WEEKS AGO WITH MANDELA, DE KLERK PROVIDED A SET OF PROPOSALS AND ASKED FOR THE ANC’S RESPONSE. MANDELA HAS NOT DISCUSSED THOSE PROPOSALS IN ANY DETAIL WITH PEOPLE HERE (AT LEAST HE DID NOT DISCUSS THEM WITH THE LAWYERS’ GROUP OF WHICH MOOSA WAS A MEMBER) BUT HE DID TRANSMIT THEM TO ALFRED NZO AND THABO MBeki. MOOSA BELIEVES (PIECING TOGETHER STRAY REMARKS WHERE AND THERE) THAT THE PROPOSALS RELATED PRINCIPALLY TO THE NEED TO ALLAY WHITE FEARS. SPECIFICALLY, HE THINKS ONE ISSUE WAS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE ANC TO THE SACP (SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY) AND ANOTHER WAS THE DEFINITION OF ONE MAN ONE VOTE.

11. ASIDE FROM BEING AN EFFORT TO SEIZE THE MORAL HIGH GROUND BY PUBLICLY DEMONSTRATING FLEXIBILITY, THE ANC’S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT IS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE EVEN WHILE APARTHEID LAWS LIKE THE GROUP AREAS ACT REMAIN IN PLACE MAY BE PART OF THE ORGANIZATION’S REPLY TO DE KLERK.

12. MOOSA UNDERSTANDS MANDELA TO HAVE WORKED OUT A GAME PLAN FOR “NEXT STEPS” IN A NEGOTIATION WITH DE KLERK SO AS TO ENSURE THAT HE IS NOT RELEASED FROM PRISON INTO A VACUUM.
13. MANDELA HAS TOLD VARIOUS VISITORS THAT HE HAS A GOOD OPINION OF DE KLERK AS A SINCERE INDIVIDUAL EVEN THOUGH HE REGARDS HIM AS STILL THE LEADER OF THE NATIONAL PARTY AND NOT MORE THAN THAT.

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COMMITMENT ON SAG AND MDM SIDE TO REDUCE CONFRONTATION

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14. MOOSA AGREED THAT THE ATMOSPHERE IS MUCH LESS TENSE THAN EVEN SIX MONTHS AGO. FOR EXAMPLE, LAST YEAR THE RETURN TO SCHOOL RESULTED IN THE USUAL ACCUSATIONS AND PHYSICAL CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (DET), AIDED BY THE POLICE, AND STUDENTS SUPPORTED BY PARENTS, TEACHERS AND THE MDM. THIS YEAR THERE IS AN EVEN WORSE CRISIS DUE TO LACK OF SPACE IN BLACK SCHOOLS AND THE FAILURE OF OVER 100,000 STUDENTS TO PASS THEIR “MATRIC EXAMS.” YET THERE IS A NEW SPIRIT OF DIALOGUE AT THE DET AND ACTIVISTS ARE THEREFORE ABLE TO CHANNEL STUDENT FRUSTRATIONS IN A CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER.

15. THE SAG’S NEW “TACTIC” OF ALLOWING DISSENT AND ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE INSTEAD OF STONEWALLING “IS WORKING FOR THEM,” MOOSA SAID. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT IT COULD ALSO, IF DEALT WITH POSITIVELY, WORK FOR THE MDM AND ANC. THOUGH AN ABSENCE OF DIRECT CONFRONTATION IS “DEMOBILIZING FOR THE MASSES,” FEWER RAW NERVES AMONG ACTIVISTS COULD MAKE THEM MORE AMENABLE TO THE ANC’S INCREASINGLY PRAGMATIC STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH THE SAG. THAT STRATEGY, MOOSA SAID, IS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY MANY ACTIVISTS, ESPECIALLY YOUTH, WHO FEAR A SELL-OUT OF THEIR CAUSE. THERE REMAINS A LOT TO DO TO EXPLAIN THE VIRTUES OF FLEXIBILITY TO THEM.

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PAC AND BC -- A THORN IN THE SIDE

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16. MOOSA-described the conference on a democratic future as “NOT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE IN COOPERATION.” HE OPINED THAT THE PAC AND BC COULD TURN OUT TO BE A REAL PROBLEM. HE EXPECTS THEM TO REMAIN ALOOF, SNIPING AT THE ANC’S POSITIONS FROM THE SIDELINES AND STIRRING UP YOUNG PEOPLE IN PARTICULAR.

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JESSE JACKSON VISIT

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17. MOOSA INQUIRED ABOUT THE DATES FOR JESSE JACKSON’S VISIT AND EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT JACKSON HAD MET WITH THE PRESS AT SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR KOORNHOF’S RESIDENCE. MOOSA FEARED THAT THE SAG WAS GOING TOO GOOD A JOB OF CULTIVATING JACKSON AND THAT HE MIGHT RETURN TO THE US AND ANNOUNCE THAT SANCTIONS SHOULD BE LIFTED. MOOSA APPEARED TO HAVE GREATER CONFIDENCE IN KOORNHOF’S PERSUASIVE ABILITY THAN IN THAT OF THE SACC LEADERSHIP WHICH IS HOSTING THE JACKSON VISIT.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”
A Well-Connected Drug Trafficker in Guinea

This 2008 cable reports on a meeting between the American ambassador, Phillip Carter III, and the prime minister of Guinea, Lansana Kouyate, who tells him that the country’s biggest drug trafficker is Ousmane Conte, the son of the president of Guinea, Lansana Conte.

DATE 2008-05-05 14:50:00

SOURCE Embassy Conakry

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 04 CONAKRY 000163

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W PARIS FOR DEA (S. HOUSTON)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2013 TAGS: EAGR, ECON, GV, PGOV, PHUM, SNAR SUBJECT: A PRIVATE CHAT WITH GUINEAN PRIME MINISTER LANSANA KOUYATE

REF: A. CONAKRY 0162 B. CONAKRY 0148 C. CONAKRY 0155

Classified By: Ambassador Phillip Carter III for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: On May 3, Ambassador Carter met with Prime Minister Lansana Kouyate at the EMR for 90 minutes. Kouyate, who was traveling to Kuwait that evening, had just come from a meeting with President Conte at his farm in Dubreka where the PM discussed plans for a possible cabinet reshuffle, and the creation of a government committee to address Guinea’s growing food crisis. The Ambassador’s meeting covered a number of topics, from the Ambassador’s latest travels into Guinea’s interior to Kouyate’s most recent meeting with President Conte, to the current political and economic challenges facing the country. The issue of Guinea’s growing narcotics trafficking problem was also raised with some surprising insights regarding the apparently strained relationship between President Conte and his eldest son Ousmane, a leading figure in the country’s drug trade. END SUMMARY

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Elections

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2. (U) Kouyate was clearly pleased to be meeting with the Ambassador, stating that it had been a while since he had an opportunity to exchange ideas. Noting the Ambassador’s recent travels throughout the country, Kouyate asked about the Ambassador’s impressions. The Ambassador told the PM that it is clear that the elections are a topic of much interest among the various groups he had met with, including local political, youth and civil society leaders. However, he shared his impression that people seem frustrated, with many feeling that the government is not doing enough to ensure that the elections will be well organized, free and fair. The Ambassador stressed the need for better communication among these different groups in the countryside, emphasizing that the regional CENI representatives and local officials (Governors and Prefects) need to define their respective roles and responsibilities in order to avoid confusion as election day approaches. According to the Ambassador, everyone seemed to be waiting for instructions from Conakry rather than initiating the necessary dialogue amongst themselves. On this score, the PM stated that he will be convening a meeting of all political parties, the CENI, the Ministry of Interior and donors to discuss what needs to be done to get the process rolling in a more determined fashion. The Ambassador told the PM that he hoped that the CENI would also receive additional funding from the government, beyond the paltry 500 million GnP (about $110,000) it has
already received. Kouyate said that he is looking to address the CENI’s budget shortfall through a supplemental allocation to the “initial” allotment.

3. (SBU) The Ambassador also noted that many interlocutors were concerned about the growing ethnic character of each of the parties as well as the parties’ apparent lack of action with respect to the elections. The PM responded by saying that the issue of ethnicity is not new or unique to Guinea, but that if any party wants to build the political standing necessary to control the National Assembly or win the Presidency, it will need to garner support from all of the country’s ethnic groups. He shared the Ambassador’s view that even within the Malinke, Sousou, or Fulani ethnic groups, there are divisions that will likely prevent any one political party from claiming the complete support of any one ethnicity. He pushed back on the Ambassador’s assertion that the parties were not preparing themselves. The PM said that while the official campaign period is legally limited to a certain number of weeks before the election, the parties are actively seeking candidates and marshaling resources. He described one recent instance where a party had imported a container of promotional materials, such as Tee-shirts and caps with logos, and sought an exemption for the $500,000 duty imposed by customs, which he could not waive. The PM mentioned the law passed in May 2007 that obligates the Guinean Government to provide registered political parties with some public funds, and said that he had directed the Finance Minister to fulfill this obligation.

CONAKRY 00000163 002 OF 004

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Food Crisis
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4. (C) Turning to economics, the Ambassador said that the government’s recent ban on agricultural exports would likely cause more harm that good over the medium term, and would do nothing to solve the problem of rising food prices globally. The Ambassador noted that during his recent visit to the Forest Region, several producers complained about the ban. He stressed that banning exports creates a disincentive to farmers to increase production since their market is effectively cut off. Kouyate acknowledged the Ambassador’s concerns, and emphasized that he is deeply committed to a liberal and open economic policy. However, he noted that, globally, there is a growing protectionist trend among countries that export agricultural commodities such as rice. He said he understood donor objections, but that the ban is an expedient necessity to support Guinean consumers who are increasingly squeezed by rising food prices. He added that local exporters deposit their profits into foreign accounts, meaning that Guinea gains little financially, if anything, from agricultural exports. The Ambassador responded that an export ban does not resolve the problem of repatriated revenues/profits, and urged the PM to focus on resolving problems that continue to inhibit local production. Kouyate stated that his government would clarify its policy to focus on certain essential staples.

5. (SBU) On the issue of food assistance, the Ambassador urged the PM to improve his government’s coordination on this matter. The PM revealed that he had just left President Conte with a draft decree to establish a government steering committee on this subject, that Conte had agreed, and that the Agriculture Minister would receive the signed decree from Conte the following day.

Ministers, Governors, and Prefects

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6. (SBU) The Ambassador commended the PM on his selection of Governors and Prefects, many of whom are viewed as dynamic individuals truly concerned about their communities, but pointed out that despite these appointments, people are increasingly frustrated, viewing the government as largely ineffective. Kouyate recalled that, during a trip to Morocco shortly after he had appointed these new administrators, he was complemented by the then Moroccan PM because the majority of his prefects had received their administrative training from one of Morocco’s best schools. Kouyate was unaware of this connection but later found out that the Minister of Interior had selected the prefects because of this specific training. While he said he was pleased with his governors and prefects, (with the notable exception of the Kindia Prefect who had been recently appointed by Conte and was considered a corrupt political hack - ref tel A), he added that they lacked resources and basic equipment. He said that he would be providing 50 vehicles and uniforms to these local officials to help them in their activities before the elections.

7. (C) At the national level, Kouyate said he is looking to shake up his cabinet, an idea he proposed when he had met earlier that day with Conte. Kouyate told the Ambassador that he is
looking to get rid of a handful of ministers he described as “not productive” and “not loyal.” He also said that he plans to restructure certain ministries that are “too heavy.” He specifically mentioned the Ministries of Education; Youth, Sports, and Culture; and Industry and Commerce as those that will be split. He stated that Conte supported this idea and that upon Kouyate’s return from Kuwait; the two would look at the PM’s restructuring plan more closely and select new ministers. Just as important, Kouyate added that he hoped he would be able to also restructure the civil service, which is seen as a major obstacle to reform.

The Bete Noir - Ousmane Conte

8. (C) The Ambassador expressed his concerns about the growing drug trade in Guinea. Noting that until recently,

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much international attention was focused on Guinea Bissau as the first narco-state emerging in West Africa, the Ambassador said that it appears that the center of this illicit activity had now shifted to Guinea. As the Ambassador spoke, Kouyate visibly slumped in his chair, and then leaned toward the Ambassador, and said that he is aware of this problem and that the major Guinean trafficker is President Conte’s son, Ousmane. He revealed that about eight months ago, an aircraft from Colombia or Venezuela was interdicted by local police at the airport in Faranah, a small city in the Middle Guinea region. When informed about the interdiction by the Minister of Interior, Kouyate instructed him to conduct a full investigation, seize the contraband and prosecute those responsible.

9. (C) A couple of days later, the Minister returned to inform the PM that the plane and its cargo had been released by the head of the National Gendarmerie, General Jacques Toure. Kouyate said he was furious and convoked Toure to his office. When initially confronted, Toure reportedly denied releasing the aircraft, but later told the PM that the illicit operation was lead by Ousmane Conte. (Bio note: Kouyate stated that he knows Toure well as they are related to each other through Kouyate’s mother’s family). Kouyate challenged Toure, asking him if he had informed anyone about this matter or if he had raised it with President Conte directly. Toure reportedly said he had not. Kouyate said he chastised Toure for his actions. He told the Ambassador that he then went to the First Lady, Henriette Conte, about Ousmane’s complicity. Henriette reportedly described Ousmane as totally out of control, and directed the PM to take the matter up directly with the president. When Kouyate raised the incident, President Conte reportedly asked why his son would do such a thing. Kouyate told the president that it was a way for his son to get rich quickly and that it reflected poor character. Kouyate said that he reminded Conte that he had raised concerns about Ousmane years ago with the President but that nothing had been done. Kouyate then revealed a confidence from Conte to the Ambassador, mentioning that the President has had no contact or any communication with his son in over two years. According to Kouyate, Conte stated clearly that if evidence develops that ties Ousmane to narcotics trafficking, then he should be arrested and prosecuted.

10. (C) Kouyate asked if the Ambassador could express his concerns about the growing drug trafficking problem in Guinea in an open and public manner, such as a letter. The PM said that such a communication would help his office to engage the President and the government about this growing problem. He also asked for whatever assistance the USG could provide to help his government interdict smugglers. The Ambassador said that he had serious concerns about corruption within Guinea’s security services on this score, noting the discrepancy between a recent press article highlighting a seizure of one ton of cocaine and police stating that only 350 kilos had been found (reflets B and C). Kouyate stated that some of the police are likely involved. He added that since his arrival, over 30 police and security personnel have been arrested for crimes and corruption, and are now languishing in prison. According to Kouyate, this is unprecedented in Guinea’s history. He stressed that he would work with the Ministry of Interior to ensure that “the forthright and correct police officers” would be tasked to stop any flight or ship trying to smuggle narcotics into Guinea. The Ambassador said that he would look into what he could do and that he would coordinate his efforts with his European counterparts. Kouyate repeated his request for a letter that outlined U.S. concerns about narcotics trafficking in Guinea. The Ambassador stated that he would meet the PM’s request and have something for him upon his return from Kuwait.

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Bilats Timing
11. (U) Kouyate raised the much delayed bilateral consultations, stating that he was keen to have them. When the Ambassador noted that the dated that the Foreign Ministry had offered May 21-22, would not likely work for principals in the African Bureau, the PM stated that if possible it would be better to hold them in June or July, given his own travel schedule. The Ambassador stated that he would convey this timeframe to Washington.

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12. (C) As the PM was leaving, the Ambassador asked him about Conte’s health. Kouyate, slowly shaking his head said that “the president’s health is up and down but he is not doing well.” He admitted that “it is difficult to deal with that man”, revealing that he is never sure what he is thinking. The Ambassador stated that he has been hearing much criticism of the president and that he is not well regarded in the countryside. Kouyate said that one does not need to leave Conakry to hear the same thing. He said that at a opening ceremony for a new stadium at the small university in Sonfonfonia, the crowds jeered every time Conte’s name was mentioned. According to Kouyate, he had to admonish the crowds to be respectful, particularly given that the stadium is named after President Conte. “It was incredible” he said, shaking his head again with forlorn look on his face.

Comment

13. (C) This was not the ebullient and positive PM of previous encounters. It is clear that political pressures and burdens of office have tempered Kouyate. His political ambition, though constrained, remains evident. For many pundits, the PM’s tenure is almost over but he is fighting to hold on to his job. His feeble attempt to excuse the export ban reveals a man willing to use populist measures for political gain even while recognizing its negative economic impact. His plans to restructure his cabinet have been long in the making and he is undoubtedly under pressure to bring some of the old guard back. He will likely use the restructuring as an opportunity to engender new alliances and support. However, given his weak standing with civil society, the unions, and the presidential entourage, a cabinet shuffle could prove his undoing, if mishandled. CARTER

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency”
Faked Incineration of Seized Drugs Alleged in Guinea

After a large cocaine seizure in Guinea, this 2008 cable reports, drug control officials under pressure from the United States staged an incineration of the cocaine, along with marijuana and other drugs. But a tipster told American diplomats that the cocaine had been replaced with flour and the destruction was a “farce.”

DATE 2008-03-06 14:33:00

SOURCE Embassy Conakry

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T CONAKRY 000184

SIPDIS

DEA / PARIS FOR R. HOUSTON / B. HALEY / T. HEDRICK DEA / LAGOS FOR S. GAYE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/12/2018 TAGS: ASEC, GV, PGOV, DEA, PREL, SNAR SUBJECT: SEIZED DRUGS FINALLY INCINERATED...OR WERE THEY?

REF: A. CONAKRY 00148 B. CONAKRY 00155 C. PARIS 00838 D. CONAKRY 00166

Classified By: ARSO Elizabeth Esparza for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (S) SUMMARY: On April 11, 2008, Guinean police seized a shipment of cocaine, exact quantity unknown, and detained six suspects believed to be of Latin American origin (Reftel A, B). All USG requests for additional information regarding the details of the seizure or the suspects have gone unanswered (Reftel C). The mission focused its efforts to ensure the destruction of the drugs and the result of these efforts proves that corrupt elements of the government are in full control. Exactly one month after the seizure, Ambassador and ARSO attended the alleged incineration of 390 kilos of cocaine. The incineration was a farce that fooled no one and highlighted the possible complicity of the Guinean Minister of Interior and Security and high-level police officials. END SUMMARY.

A LONG-ANTICIPATED EVENT

2. (S) Over a ten-day period, the Mission in collaboration with the British Ambassador made several unsuccessful attempts to discuss the transparent destruction of the drugs. Finally, on May 2, 2008, the US and UK Ambassadors met with the Minister of Interior and Security and were given well-rehearsed assurances of the GOG’s commitment to combating drug trafficking and an invitation to view the drugs, destruction (Reftel D). The incineration initially planned for May 7 and rescheduled for May 9, finally took place on May 10, 2008.

3. (U) GOG officials in attendance included Director of OCAD Thermite Mara, Deputy Director of OCAD Zakaria Cisse, Police Director General Sekou Bangoura, Police Controller General Madifing Diane, President of the National Committee Against Drug Trafficking (CNLD) Gare, Deputy General Secretary of CNLD Aquibou Tall, and approximately three dozen OCAD agents. The Minister of Justice and the Minister of Interior and Security were also present.

EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES
4. (S) After consultations with DEA Paris, Ambassador requested permission to take a random sample of the cocaine for testing purposes. Controller General Diane automatically agreed, causing an immediate backlash from Director General Bangoura and OCAD Director Mara. Director General Bangoura found several excuses, to include concern over Ambassador and ARSO’s health and safety. He also explained that the cocaine had been treated with chemicals, rendering it useless. Director General Bangoura, in his usual arrogant and condescending fashion, refused to address the Ambassador, claiming that this was not a matter of diplomacy, but police business. OCAD Director Mara’s enraged response included direct accusations of infringement upon Guinean sovereignty. This heated exchange took place in a very public setting and was documented by the private press.

5. (S) Controller General Diane reports directly to Minister of Interior and Security Keita. OCAD Director Mara reports to Director General Bangoura, who reports to Controller General Diane. The interaction between these officials demonstrates an obvious disregard for rank and seniority, which is especially concerning given that respect for hierarchy is usually the norm in Guinean culture. This begs the questions, “who’s in charge?”.

THEATRICAL PRODUCTION

6. (U) Upon the arrival of Minister of Interior and Security Keita and Minister of Justice Paulette Kourouma, the Ambassador’s request for a random sample of the cocaine was quickly denied. The pile was immediately doused with gasoline and ceremoniously lit on fire by the Minister of Justice. The President of the National Committee Against Drug Trafficking was very dramatic in announcing the destruction of 160 kilos of marijuana, 390 kilos of cocaine and 43 boxes of pharmaceutical products (later explained to be expired ibuprofen). The destroyed narcotics were reportedly valued at 6.5 million dollars.

7. (S) After the incineration, ARSO was permitted to take a sample from a pre-designated package of cocaine. The OCAD Deputy Director, the only individual that was allowed to get near the pile of narcotics, handpicked the package. On May 6, 2008, RSO FSN Investigator received a call from XXXXXXXXXX, who in the past weeks has provided RSO with sensitive information on the drug seizure (Reftel B). XXXXXXXXXX stated that the GoG planned to burn packages of flour. ARSO is unable to prove that the cocaine was in fact substituted with flour; however, the GoG’s lack of cooperation and vehement rejection to a request for random sampling raises troubling questions about the GoG’s interest in transparency. And as the Ambassador’s driver very keenly observed, “I know the smell of burning marijuana, and I didn’t smell anything.” The entire event was a theatrical production.

COMMENT

8. (S) The event was a real eye-opener and a facade. The incineration was a ridiculous attempt by the GoG to prove that a law enforcement campaign against narcotics exists. If anything was proven, it was that the traffickers’ influence has reached the highest levels of the government. There is an obvious fracture within the security forces, and only a handful of officials appear to be fighting to carry out legitimate duties. The clear reluctance and open animosity displayed by all the senior Ministry of Interior and Security (MIS) officials and the diffident response of the Ministers to the Ambassador’s request suggest complicity at the highest levels of the Ministry. The silver-lining of the event is that the heated debate and ridiculous protestation by MIS to the Ambassador’s request for a random sampling were witnessed and recorded by elements of the Guinean media (state-owned and independent).

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency”
In Sierra Leone, a Successful Narcotics Case

This April 2009 cable recounts the triumphant conclusion of what it calls a “somewhat ramshackle investigation” by the authorities in Sierra Leone after a drug bust that netted 700 kilograms (more than 1,500 pounds) of cocaine. Despite brushes with disaster, American diplomats consider the case a major victory for a poor country plagued by corruption over a drug organization.

DATE 2009-04-22 15:44:00

SOURCE Embassy Freetown

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 FREETOWN 000152

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W (JHUNTER/ESPRUILL) AND INL/AAE (KGOLDSTEIN) BRUSSELS FOR DOJ/DEA (TSCARANTINO) DOJ FOR DEA/OS/OSE (MOMANAMON/LENARTOWICZ), DEA/OS/OSE/CNTOC (BROWN)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/19/2019 TAGS: SNAR, PGOV, PREL, SL SUBJECT: LANDMARK NARCOTICS CASE ENDS: DEFENDANTS NOT GOING TO DISNEYWORLD

REF: A. 08 FREETOWN 336 B. 08 FREETOWN 461 C. 08 FREETOWN 552

Classified By: Ambassador June Carter Perry for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

1. (C) Summary: The Government of Sierra Leone's judicial system completed its landmark narcotics case (reftel A) on April 20, finding all defendants guilty. The first case tried using the national Narcotics Control Act of 2008, this creates valuable legal precedent, while also sending a message to narcotraffickers that Sierra Leone will not allow itself to become another West African country overrun by the global drugs trade. Of particular note were the convictions for the foreign defendants, three of whom were expelled into U.S. custody following the conclusion of the trial. Despite Sierra Leone’s general lack of capacity and infrastructure, the collaborative efforts between the President and the judicial and security sectors to bring this case to a strong and dramatic conclusion demonstrates that political will exists here to effectively combat the issue. The USG should stand firmly behind President Koroma and the Government of Sierra Leone to encourage further counternarcotics efforts, and enable them to not only interdict drugs within their borders, but set a positive example for other nations in the sub-region that the war on drugs is one worth fighting. End Summary.

CASE BACKGROUND

2. (C) The July 13, 2008, bust of an aircraft carrying over 700kg of cocaine (reftel A) created shockwaves in Sierra Leone, where many citizens and government representatives believed that their country had escaped the narcotics transiting trend growing in West Africa. In the reactive and somewhat ramshackle investigation that followed, scores of people were arrested or questioned in connection with the case, with 18 people ultimately being charged with narcotics-related offenses under the Narcotics Control Act.

3. (C) The arrest of Ahmed Sesay, a close relative of the then Minister of Transportation Ibrahim Kemoh Sesay, left the government open to criticism that it was complicit in the trafficking, highlighting the importance of strong government action to retain its credibility and commitment
to law and order. A group of foreigners were also arrested, including the pilot and crew of the aircraft that brought in the cocaine, and others in Sierra Leone who were here to facilitate the onward movement of the drugs.

4. (C) Harvey Steven Perez, an American-Colombian dual national, was considered the key trafficker in the ring. On September 15th (reftel B), President Koroma requested the USG to assist in the removal of all of the suspected narcotraffickers, as well as Sierra Leoneans who could be indicted in the U.S. The President noted that he wanted rule of law to prevail, and was concerned that the narcotraffickers would undermine the judicial system. The President said he had encountered difficulties with the process but was determined to see the case to the end. On September 26, 2008, accompanied by U.S Ambassador, GoSL Foreign Minister and Sierra Leone’s Ambassador to Washington, President Koroma met in Virginia with senior DEA officials and USG intelligence agency representatives.

5. (C) Subsequently, federal attorneys from the southern district of New York, assisted by DEA agents who had been asked by the government of Sierra Leone to help with the investigation, succeeded in securing indictments against two of the traffickers, Harvey Steven Perez and Gerardo Quistana Perez. On November 24th, (reftel C), the US Embassy presented a diplomatic note to the government of Sierra Leone concerning the indictments. In line with Koroma’s request of September 15th, the Embassy informed the GoSL that we were prepared to accept the transfer of both indictees. In February, the Embassy presented a second diplomatic note asking for the transfer of XXXXXXXXXX as a material witness (note: XXXXXXXXXX was acting as a DEA informant when swept up in the arrests). In subsequent meetings, the president was informed that if he provided a 5-day notification, the U.S. was willing and able to remove the three individuals as per his earlier request. On 15 April, the president met with the Ambassador, informing her that the cocaine trial would end on 20 April, and the three individuals would be placed in our custody for removal. A presidential aide, who was concerned that the Attorney General would not follow through with the President’s intent, arranged for a face-to-face meeting between the President, the Ambassador, and the Attorney General on April 18. The Attorney General assured the assembled group that the prisoners would be released to the United States on April 20. Subsequently, the DEA chartered an aircraft and employed agents to effect the transfer.

6. (C) Late in the afternoon of April 20, with the trial lasting well past the projected timeline, the Attorney General approached PolOff and informed her that Sierra Leone would have to collect fines from the individuals before they could be released to the USG. A presidential aide hinted that if the U.S. would pay the fines it would expedite the transfer of the prisoners, but the U.S. Embassy noted that it could not do so. The court case was adjourned later that evening, without a final judgment. The DCM and Ambassador were in 24 hour contact with the Foreign Minister, Presidential Aides, and the UN Representative (who arranged helicopter transport to the DEA plane).

7. (C) Determined to see the process through, the DEA and the Embassy held meetings with the Attorney General and discussions with other senior officials to impress upon them the importance of backing their president’s promises. The DEA noted that assets may in fact be seized through the investigation of these individuals, and that there may be ways to share some of these assets with the government of Sierra Leone. This cleared the way for more progress the next day.

8. (C) Court reconvened at 11am April 22, with judgments being read but not an expulsion order. Negotiations between the Embassy and the government of Sierra Leone continued throughout the afternoon, with the judge announcing the sentences around 4pm. The accused were then returned to the prison, rather than being turned over to the United States government as initially promised. It was alleged by one of the defense attorneys that the foreigners had paid a 75,000 Euro bribe to the judge for a more lenient sentencing.

9. (C) As negotiations continued through the night, the government of Sierra Leone provided a diplomatic note to the U.S. Embassy, stating that the three accused would be turned over to the U.S. At 10:30pm the accused were in fact remanded to the DEA agents, who flew with them to the United States (the expulsion is technically not a judicial action, but a presidential decision, but it does require the judge to recommend expulsion as part of the sentence).

10. (C) The following penalties were imposed:

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imprisonment

The fines for foreigners were in U.S. dollars, and for Sierra Leoneans in Leones (at about 3000 Leones to the dollar).

11. (C) COMMENT: The expulsion is not only a significant diplomatic victory for the United States, but an internal victory for President Koroma, who demonstrated that he has the leadership capacity to overcome resistance within his own government (including, perhaps, his own attorney general) to assert the supremacy of the rule of law in Sierra Leone. While the corruption accusations were troubling, with a steady stream of rumors insinuating that drug money has been a factor in the legal case from the start, any underhanded activity proved inadequate in saving the traffickers from their ride to New York. Narcotics trafficking clearly poses an increasing threat to the sub-region, and it is a great relief that Sierra Leone possesses the capacity to arrest, try, convict, and imprison narco-traffickers, as well as overcome internal issues in order to cooperate at a very high level with the United States. Sierra Leone has the potential to be a significant partner in the regional war on drugs and to serve as a platform for other counternarcotics activities in West Africa. END COMMENT

PERRY

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency”
A Bribe to Sabotage a Drug Prosecution

Sources tell the American Embassy in Sierra Leone that the country’s attorney general has agreed to quash a major drug case in return for a $2.5 million bribe, which he would possibly explain as a plea bargain arrangement. But the president, Ernest Bai Koroma, manages to scuttle the deal.

DATE 2009-03-06 15:31:00
SOURCE Embassy Freetown
CLASSIFICATION SECRET
S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 FREETOWN 000085
SIPDIS
DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W (JHUNTER/ESPRUILL) BRUSSELS FOR DEA (TSCARANTINO) DOJ FOR DEA/OS/OSE (MCMANAMON/LENARTOWICZ)
E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/06/2019 TAGS: SNAR, PGOV, PREL, SL SUBJECT: COCAINE CASE NEARLY IMPLODES: PRESIDENT INTERVenes
REF: A. FREETOWN 78 B. FREETOWN 23

1. (S/NF) Summary: On March 5, emboffs learned from a well-placed source within the government that the Attorney General (AG) had secretly secured a deal with the foreign defendants in the cocaine case to grant their release in exchange for USD 2.5 million. According to our knowledge of the deal, the defendants were to change their pleas to “guilty” on March 6, be sentenced to a fine, and then be released/deported. Ambassador spoke with Foreign Minister Zainab Bangura on the evening of March 5, who immediately contacted President Koroma in India. Bangura later relayed a message from Koroma to the Ambassador -- no decisions will be made in this case until the President returns next week. His message appears to have also reached the ears of the judiciary; on March 6, Justice Browne-Marke adjourned proceedings in the case until March 13. While this is a positive result in terms of USG interests, we will need to tread softly with the government until the expulsion requests have been honored. The President is clearly cognizant of the importance of the case and plans to honor the promise he made to Ambassador on February 27 (reftel A), but the AG could create new obstacles. End Summary.

THE DEAL: LINING POCKETS AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT COFFERS

2. (S/NF) Source revealed to emboffs on March 5 that the AG had been engaged in negotiations with the defense teams for several weeks. His initial overtures requesting USD 2 million per foreigner were deemed outrageously high, and they eventually settled on USD 2.5 million for the entire group of international accused (Note: The deal does not include the Sierra Leonean defendants, though Ahmed Sesay could likely afford to broker a similar deal. End Note). Source informed emboffs that once the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP) rested their case as planned on March 6, the defendants, who initially refused to plea, would change their pleas to “guilty,” pay their fine, and be free to go. Source was unclear on the mechanics of the deal, how and if money had already changed hands, how much of the money would go to the AG personally, and if the release would include deportation.

3. (S/NF) Source said that the deal was agreed to on February 28, but was reticent to share this
information with either USG or UK representatives. Source later determined that this type of corrupt practice could not be tolerated and came forward, but remains fearful that the information leak will be linked to him/her, and that there will be reprisals. The UK received the information early in the day on March 5, and SOCA-London shared the information with DEA officials. The Freetown-based SOCA representative, however, did not/not share the information with emboffs directly.

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PRESIDENTIAL ACTION
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4. (S/NF) Ambassador spoke to Foreign Minister Bangura on March 5, who contacted the President on his trip to India. Earlier in the day at a meeting of diplomatic corps COMs, Bangura stated that the President had traveled to India the night before, and that “they had even taken his cell phone from him” to guarantee he relaxed on his trip (Note: The first post heard of the trip was in a State House press release on March 5. This press release was corrected on March 6 to say that Koroma is visiting the Indian Prime Minister, and not merely vacationing, which the first release implied. End note). Bangura later informed the Ambassador that Koroma had stated that no action would be taken in the case while he was away. While the subsequent lines of communication are unknown, his edict must have reached the AG or the Chief Justice, resulting in Browne-Marke granting an unexpected one-week adjournment.

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REACTIONS IN COURT
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5. (S/NF) The defendants seemed surprised by the adjournment, though it is difficult to fully observe their reactions from the vantage point of the courtroom’s public gallery. Browne-Marke adjourned the session to give the DPP “time to assess if they want to call an additional witness before they close their case,” and was on the bench for less than ten minutes - the shortest court session in the case’s history. Several of the foreign defendants, including Quintana-Perez and Perez, spoke with their lawyer following the adjournment, and also appeared to speak at-length with the courtroom interpreter. Other defendants appeared unconcerned. Emboffs noted that the defense teams were primarily represented by junior barristers, with one senior attorney arriving to court just as Browne-Marke departed. Given that the source said that the defense teams are all owed significant amounts of money, upwards of USD 200,000, as well as information post received about the limited funds available to support the defense (ref tel B), their lack of engagement is unsurprising. Post expects additional information from sources within the defense on March 6.

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POTENTIAL RAMIFICATIONS
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6. (S/NF) Though the AG’s actions appear corrupt, he can protest his innocence by refuting the source’s claims, or stating that he is brokering a legal plea agreement. Post is confident that the only government officials aware of the USG expulsion requests to date are the President, Assistant to the President, Foreign Minister, and Deputy Foreign Minister. The AG is thus unaware of the promises made, and the impact this deal would have on those promises. He can, and likely will, state that he was operating with imperfect information and was acting lawfully in the best interests of the case and country.

7. (S/NF) Koroma’s quick actions to ensure the proceedings stay on-course will likely necessitate bringing the AG into the fold on the expulsions. While this may not have any deleterious impact, particularly if the AG and others are informed that we plan to remove the three accused after the judgment (making them still responsible for paying any fines), he could deliberately erect legal roadblocks to serve his own interests or simply inform the defense teams of the plans. Though post has no information to suggest that the expulsions are counter to Sierra Leonean law, the AG may find or create issues depending on how well the defendants are willing to compensate him for his services. Impossible to read or predict, the AG could create problems where there previously were none. If this occurs, however, Koroma would likely override him to meet his own objectives.
8. (S/NF) Post believes that Koroma was unaware of the deal until informed by the Foreign Minister. This trial is an important political and diplomatic tool for the President; to demonstrate to Sierra Leoneans that he is tough on criminal issues, and to the international community that he will not abide or accept narco-trafficking in his country. A release, even with a sizable fine attached, would weaken his image domestically and abroad, giving the impression that money will sway him from his principles. The media would skewer him for releasing the foreigners, given that the court of public opinion has already found them guilty and deserving of jail-time, as well as question the purpose and validity of the National Narcotics Control Act, which was rushed into law specifically for the purpose of trying these defendants. The President will lose political capital if the defendants are allowed to buy their way out of a jail sentence. Post is also confident that Koroma would not make an empty promise to honor the expulsion requests, and risk the ire of the USG. His ability to quickly assert discipline, even from India, is a good sign that he will be able to keep the corrupt elements of his Cabinet and government at bay, at least until the expulsions have taken place.

9. (S/NF) Post has and continues to believe that the AG will stop at nothing to end the career of the President, his long-time rival, and will gladly take whatever money the defendants are offering for his assistance. However, recognizing the President’s need to save face in this situation, the best course of action is to discuss the deal as a legal plea bargain with all government interlocutors, allow the President to reassert his authority upon his return from India, and prepare for expulsions to take place earlier than initially targeted. End Comment.

PERRY

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency”
Berlusconi and Bono on African Aid

In 2008, diplomats in Rome advised that Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime minister, might maintain aid to Africa in order to avoid a “tongue-lashing” by the rock star and aid advocate Bono.

DATE 2008-07-23 13:14:00

SOURCE Embassy Rome

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL ROME 000905

SIPDIS

AF/EPS CAMILLE JACKSON

EO 12958 DECL: 07/23/2018

TAGS ECON, IT

SUBJECT: ITALY: GOI PROGRESS ON AID TO AFRICA FOR G8 PRESIDENCY

Classified By: Econ Counselor William R. Meara for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (U) Summary: The Director of Italy’s Sub-Saharan African Assistance Office said assistance levels are not expected to change with the newly installed Berlusconi government. Italy will continue to focus its funding on Ethiopia and Mozambique, with an emphasis on health and education. Development officials hope assistance issues will continue to be a priority for Italy during its 2009 G-8 presidency. End Summary.

2. (U) On June 19 Econoff met with Fabrizio Nava, Director of the Office of Sub-Saharan Africa Assistance, to discuss GOI assistance to Africa. The 2008 GOI budget allocates 4.1 billion Euros for foreign assistance, or .27 percent of GDP, slightly above the percentage of GDP in 2007. The MFA disperses roughly 750 million of the 4.1 billion Euros through the foreign aid office; Africa receives around 140 to 200 million for bilateral and multilateral humanitarian assistance. The Ministry of Finance controls the remaining foreign assistance account which covers Italy’s contributions to the United Nations, EU, World Bank and Italy’s debt-forgiveness program. Despite the recent arrival of the center-right government and budget cuts, Nava believed African assistance levels would be maintained.

3. (U) Italy supplies aid to 36 of the countries in Africa. Of these 36, the GOI gives three countries priority: Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Eritrea. Eritrea is now, however, only given emergency aid due to EU restrictions. Nava said that the GOI recently initiated a pilot program focused on budget support to Mozambique. Should GOI deem the program a success, Nava said similar budget support will be given to other African countries starting with Cape Verde.

4. (U) According to Nava, Sudan, Egypt, and Mauritania are lower priorities, but also receive assistance from the GOI. Nava pointed to a recent memorandum of understanding pledging 12 million Euros over the next three years to Mauritania. The funds have been earmarked for poverty alleviation, the improvement of living conditions, cultural programs and training for judges. (Note: Mauritania is a personal concern of Alain Economides, Head of Minister Frattini’s Private Office and former Ambassador to the region. End Note.) In Mauritania and Egypt, Nava noted that
most GOI aid focuses on agricultural, medical, and educational development. Nava expects work on
gender issues, an initiative started by the previous Foreign Minister, to continue to be a
priority as well, although he did not provide specifics.

5. (U) Econoff brought up criticism voiced by NGOs such as Bono’s “Debt AIDS Trade Africa”
(D.A.T.A.) and Action Aid Italy that Italy’s aid apparatus is out-of-date and overly focused on
infrastructure projects. Nava explained that donating to NGOs is rather difficult due to the
small number of them; there are roughly 300 “recognized” NGOs in Italy. In order to be recognized
by the GOI, NGOs must go through a three-year vetting process. Nava observed that over the past
two years, the Foreign Ministry has made improvements in disbursing assistance through NGOs and
said he believed the trend would continue. In closing, Nava said he expected African assistance
be a focus during Italy’s 2009 G-8 presidency.

6. (C) Comment: With its 2009 G8 presidency looming, the GOI may decide to maintain funding
levels simply to avoid an embarrassing tongue-lashing from Bono et al. End comment. SPOGLI
Threats to Uganda’s Future

The American Embassy in Uganda reported in a 2009 cable on the threat that autocracy, corruption and ethnic tensions posed to ”an African success story.”

DATE 2009-10-19 11:29:00

SOURCE Embassy Kampala

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

Monday, 19 October 2009, 11:29

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KAMPALA 001197

SIPDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON FROM AMBASSADOR LANIER

EO 12958 DECL: 10/18/2019

TAGS PREL, PGOV, PINS, PHUM, EAID, KDEM, UG

SUBJECT: UGANDA: SCENESETTER FOR VISIT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON

Classified By: Ambassador Jerry Lanier for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(C) Summary: Under President Museveni’s leadership, Uganda has become a confident and outspoken regional leader through its military role in Somalia (which up to now has preserved the TFG as a moderate alternative to Islamic extremism), its effective campaign against the LRA and its related commitment to rebuild northern Uganda. Yet the President’s autocratic tendencies, as well as Uganda’s pervasive corruption, sharpening ethnic divisions, and explosive population growth have eroding Uganda’s status as an African success story. Holding a credible and peaceful presidential election in February 2011 could restore Uganda’s image, while failing in that task could lead to domestic political violence and regional instability. It is too early to tell whether the deadly September 10-12 riots in Kampala are the beginning of a massive and open-ended effort for political change in Uganda, or will lead to a more productive internal dialogue and a stronger democracy. The path of Ugandan politics over the next eighteen months depends largely on the President’s vision and leadership. Your visit will be crucial in conveying US views and policy on Uganda and East Africa, and in raising the President’s awareness about how seriously Western governments will be following the course of democracy in Uganda in the coming months. End Summary.

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Elections and Uganda’s Fading Democracy

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2. (C) Uganda under President Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) has made remarkable progress over the past 23 years. The country has gone from total economic collapse in the aftermath of Idi Amin’s despotism to being an African success story, building unprecedented domestic peace, economic growth, and making substantial progress towards democracy. Yet Museveni
and the NRM have not fully embraced multiparty politics or allowed meaningful political alternatives. They are now more entrenched in government and state institutions than during the days of his “no-party” system. The NRM’s near total accumulation of power has led to poor governance, corruption, and rising ethnic tensions, a combination that threatens Ugandan “democracy” and stability.

3. (C) Opposition political parties, however, are fractured, politically immature, and greatly outnumbered in Parliament. They control no government ministries, and are not skillful using either press or protest, their primary political tools. Nor can the opposition provide a coherent and attractive platform of proposals to counter the NRM. And it is by no means clear the opposition would improve governance in Uganda in any way. Currently, a coalition of all but one of Uganda’s main opposition parties looks likely to nominate a joint opposition candidate for 2011, probably the leader of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) Kizza Besigye, who lost to Museveni in 2001 and 2006. This coalition is demanding the dissolution of the partisan Electoral Commission constituted by Museveni, and the acceptance of specific electoral reforms. Since Museveni now appears unlikely to yield on either count, opposition parties and the government seem destined for another turbulent showdown as elections approach in early 2011.

4. (C) Although the press and civil society have enjoyed relative freedom under the NRM, harassment and intimidation of those critical of the Museveni regime has risen in recent years. Up to a dozen journalists and media outlets were charged with sedition and/or shut down by authorities for allegedly inciting recent riots that left up to 27 dead and more than 100 injured.

5. (C) Ethnic tensions, always present in Uganda in varying degrees, have also sharpened as Museveni and politicians on all sides have cultivated ethnic-based support. Tensions among groups residing along the oil-rich shores of Lake Albert flared in August after Museveni suggested restricting elective offices there to one specific ethnic group. The September riots were sparked in part by Museveni’s decision to support a small ethnic group’s bid for autonomy within the Buganda Kingdom. The underlying conflict derives from Buganda’s persistent attempt for a greater political role, with the ultimate goal of establishing a Bugandan monarchy within the Ugandan state, which Museveni has repeatedly stated he will not allow. The President’s view is that “Kings” are unelected and would lack political accountability. Indeed a semi-autonomous internal state would not only be a political threat to him but could also ultimately threaten Uganda as a unified nation-state. The stalemate over this issue continues, with no resolution in sight.

6. (C) Museveni’s heavy-handedness and the corruption of senior leaders have sparked dissent within the NRM. A group of NRM “rebels” consisting of about 15 younger, mostly back-bencher MPs supports opposition demands for an impartial Electoral Commission and is critical of Museveni’s unwillingness to hold senior NRM leaders - such as Security Minister Mbabazi, Foreign Minister Kutesa, and Trade Minister Otafiire among others - accountable for corruption allegations. Museveni also faces a challenge from some older party stalwarts - generally the same senior NRM leaders accused of corruption - who fought with him in the “bush war” and want to succeed him as President. Press reports and anecdotal evidence suggest the President is increasingly isolated and unaware of the depth of resentment both within the NRM and among society as a whole.

7. (SBU) Our message: Conducting free, fair and peaceful elections in February 2011 would reinforce Uganda’s image as an African success story. Failure in this area could relegate Uganda to the list of unstable African nations, seriously jeopardize its future stability, and make it more difficult for the U.S. to continue as a strong security partner. To hold credible elections, Museveni must address the perceived partisanship of the Electoral Commission and make meaningful electoral reform within the next four months.

8. (C) Even if the President begins now to make good faith efforts to hold free and fair elections, he still may be unable to prevent serious, even stability threatening violence around the 2011 elections. The opposition is privately threatening violence and it is difficult to discern what the President could do now that would satisfy the political desires of so many who have been excluded from politics for so long.
Other Challenges: Human Rights and Corruption

9. (SBU) Uganda has made great strides in protecting human rights since the disasters of the 1970s and 1980s, yet the government’s recent record is poor, particularly with respect to arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, and lengthy pre-trial detention. One encouraging sign is the eagerness of the Ugandan Human Rights Commission and senior leaders of the Ugandan People’s Defense Forces (UPDF) and police to divulge, investigate, and prosecute human rights abuses. The UPDF and police have clearly improved their efforts to hold personnel accountable for abuses. However, there remains numerous, credible allegations of unlawful detention and torture by the Joint Ant-Terrorism Taskforce (JATT), the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI), the police’s Rapid Response Unit (RRU), and other para-military outfits. These allegations severely undermine progress in other areas. Overall it is clear that neither the law enforcement institutions nor the judiciary are capable of restraining government excesses in either corruption or abuse of human rights.

10. (SBU) Uganda’s anti-corruption record is not impressive. In 2007, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) initiated a threshold program to combat corruption. Implemented by USAID, the program worked with the Auditor General, the Inspectorate General of Government, the Public Procurement and Disposal Authority, the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Department of Criminal Investigations, and the newly created Anti-Corruption Court to improve oversight and increase the number of corruption related prosecutions. Although the program dramatically increased the capacity of Uganda’s corruption fighting agencies, MCC canceled it for 2010 due to lack of political will at the highest levels of the government. Impunity at high levels of government continues, diminishing trust in the regime and the public’s faith in democracy.

11. (SBU) Our message: While the UPDF and the Police have made progress in professionalizing their forces and in establishing systems to prevent, investigate, and prosecute human rights abuses, the GOU needs to extend this effort to paramilitary organizations that are accused of abuses.

KAMPALA 00001197 003 OF 004

Continued abuses by these agencies severely damage the credibility and reputation of Uganda’s political leadership. On corruption: The President must lead from the top and hold senior leaders accountable when there is credible evidence of corruption. Despite Uganda’s economic success, GDP growth could be much higher by reducing corruption.

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Peace and Security Part I: Somalia

12. (SBU) President Museveni believes a stable Somalia is necessary for peace and stability in East Africa. As head of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in 2005-2006, Museveni oversaw the birth of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its institutions, and lived up to his commitment to support it with the initial deployment to Mogadishu of a 1,700-man UPDF Battle Group in March 2007. As the vanguard of an African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Battle Group deployed alone, albeit with USG assistance. The UPDF deployed an additional “augmentation” battalion in early 2009 to bring its total peacekeepers on the ground to 2,750, with plans to add a fourth battalion in late 2009.

13. (SBU) According to the UPDF, 45 Ugandan soldiers have died due to roadside bombs, suicide attacks, and non-combat related illness while serving in Somalia. The most recent deaths occurred on September 17 when Al Qaeda-affiliated Al Shabaab extremists successfully attacked the AMISOM HQ building, killing five Ugandans among others. However, the UPDF’s and Government of Uganda’s commitment to the mission remains unshaken.

14. (SBU) Our message: Uganda’s commitment to AMISOM and the professionalism of the UPDF has made Uganda one of our primary partners in the fight against terrorism. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with AMISOM and will continue to support the UPDF’s deployment in Mogadishu. We encourage the GOU
to deploy its augmentation battalion shortly and wish to discuss specifically how we can support and equip this and future deployments.

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Peace and Security Part II: LRA and Karamoja

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15. (SBU) Uganda's long-term stability is linked to the resolution of the 22-year-old LRA insurgency, finding viable solutions to other regional conflicts, and preventing the spread of extremism. In December 2008, a joint military operation code named Operation Lightning Thunder destroyed the LRA base camp in Garamba Park in the DRC and scattered the LRA across the DRC, Sudan, and CAR. It failed in capturing or killing LRA leaders, including Joseph Kony, although UPDF follow-up has eliminated most of the LRA's fighting capacity. While LRA elements still attack civilian populations and raid supplies in the tri-border area between DRC, CAR, and Sudan, the LRA and Kony are under severe pressure and greatly weakened.

16. (SBU) Northern Uganda has been at peace for three years and continues to recover and rebuild from the LRA's abduction of over 40,000 children and displacement of an estimated 1.8 million people in the Acholi, Lango, Teso, and West-Nile sub-regions. Improved security in the north, the GOU's pursuit of a formal peace agreement, and government's national Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) have led to an estimated 80 percent of internally-displaced persons (IDPs) to return or move closer to their homes. The return of IDPs highlights the need to support programs that provide for reconciliation, social and economic development, and security.

17. (SBU) Karamoja is Uganda's most insecure region due to conflicts between local nomadic groups with a history of cattle-rustling. Conflict is also fueled by an influx of small arms, largely from southern Sudan and Kenya. At its peak, conflict in the region displaced an estimated 125,000 Karamojong people. The Government increased its military presence in Karamoja, engaged local leaders, and in 2008 launched the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan (KIDDP) to promote security and recovery. These actions have improved security. Nonetheless, large areas of Karamoja are under-policed and violence resulting for cattle raids persists.

KAMPALA 00001197 004 OF 004

18. (SBU) Our message: We commend the GOU's efforts to bring about a resolution to the 22-year-old conflict with the LRA, and will continue to support GOU efforts to defeat the LRA and rebuild northern Uganda. The U.S. supports the PRDP and in 2008 provided $163 million in assistance to the north. We are providing a similar amount this year. We strongly encourage the GOU to make good on its pledge to fund the PRDP and to take the lead in developing northern Uganda. We encourage Uganda to continue talking with its neighbors, particularly the DRC and southern Sudan, to resolve regional security problems.

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HIV/AIDS and Population Growth

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19. (U) The long war against the HIV/AIDS epidemic is at a crossroads. Under Museveni's leadership, Uganda was a pioneer in recognizing and taking action against HIV/AIDS in the 1990s. Prevalence rates plunged from nearly 20 percent then to under seven percent today. But incidence is rising again in the context of a rapidly expanding population and complacency from both the GOU and the population at large. Much of Uganda’s success since 2004 is the success of PEPFAR, which began to ramp up that year. But Ugandan complacency is also partly a legacy of PEPFAR, which, by scaling up so rapidly and often bypassing GOU entities, created donor dependence and diminished incentives for GOU leadership, which had existed pre-PEPFAR.

20. (SBU) Population trends in Uganda are a demographic time bomb that will destroy the country’s economic and social gains. Few countries in the world are growing as fast as Uganda. At current trends, Uganda’s population will double (from 30 to 60 million) in 20 years and reach 130 million
by 2050. If unabated, this surge in population will stress the natural environment and exceed the government’s ability to provide basic health and education services, resulting in chronic and extreme political instability and social unrest. As PEPFAR policy transitions from care and use of anti-retrovirals to focusing on prevention, government leadership will be even more important.

21. (SBU) Our message: We recognize and commend President Museveni’s previous commitment to combating the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, infection rates are once again rising. Uganda urgently needs to renew its effort to fight HIV/AIDS and simultaneously address the nation’s runaway population growth.

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Economic Opportunities and Oil

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22. (SBU) President Museveni is dedicated to an enlarged East African Community, to liberalizing the Ugandan economy, to containing inflation, and to promoting economic growth and foreign investment. Foreign debt has dropped from over $6 billion in 2004 to less than $1 billion through debt relief programs and prudent borrowing habits. The pace of economic growth has remained consistent over the last 21 years with annual GDP growth rates between five and eight percent. Museveni’s commitment to the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) is unwavering. Unreliable power, inadequate transport infrastructure, and corruption, however, need immediate attention, as they seriously limit economic development and investor confidence in Uganda.

23. (SBU) In October 2006, Canadian firm Heritage Oil announced the first oil discovery on the shores of Lake Albert. The British firm Tullow Oil, has made major discoveries both around and under Lake Albert, and has plans to begin producing and exporting crude oil by mid-2010. Libya’s TamOil is the primary investor in a proposed pipeline from Uganda to Kenya to import fuel, and possibly export crude. Chinese firms are also interested in expanding investments in Uganda’s oil. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) is funding a feasibility study for a refinery in Uganda. Exxon/Mobile is considering a visit to Uganda later this year.

24. (SBU) Our message: Uganda’s oil resources could and should be a boon for economic development and make the country less dependent on foreign assistance. We wish to support transparent management and prudent investment of oil wealth in the years ahead. LANIER
Zimbabwe’s Leader Urged to Step Down

This 2000 cable from Zimbabwe reports that Kofi Annan, then the secretary general of the United Nations, had offered that country’s longtime leader, Robert Mugabe, a deal to step down.

DATE 2000-09-27 14:59:00

SOURCE Embassy Harare

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 005461

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

EO 12958 DECL: 09/21/10

TAGS PGOV, PINS, ZI, MDC, ZANU-PF

SUBJECT: ZANU-PF REPORTEDLY INTERESTED IN DEAL WITH MDC THAT INVOLVES MUGABE’S DEPARTURE

REF: HARARE 5346 CONFIDENTIAL

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CLASSIFIED BY DCM EARL IRVING. REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

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1. (C) ACCORDING TO A SENIOR MDC ADVISOR, THE OPPOSITION PARTY HAS RECEIVED ADDITIONAL FEELERS FROM ZANU-PF ABOUT MAKING A DEAL THAT INVOLVES PRESIDENT MUGABE’S DEPARTURE FROM OFFICE. MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSANGIRAI IS REPORTEDLY WILLING TO AGREE TO A GRACEFUL EXIT FOR MUGABE BECAUSE IT IS IN ZIMBABWE’S NATIONAL INTEREST. THE MDC ADVISOR SAID KOFI ANNAN RECENTLY OFFERED MUGABE A PACKAGE TO STEP DOWN, WHICH HE DECLINED, AND THAT A SHADY ZIMBABWEAN BUSINESSMAN HAS TOLD ZANU-PF HE IS WILLING TO FINANCE A “RETIRED PACKAGE” FOR THE PRESIDENT. MEANWHILE, XXXXXXXXXXXX HAS BEEN ASKED BY THE MDC TO ORGANIZE A PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE FOCUSED ON FORGING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN ZANU-PF AND THE MDC ON A WAY OUT OF ZIMBABWE’S CURRENT MESS. END SUMMARY.

ZANU-PF SEES WRITING ON WALL, WANTS A DEAL
2. (C) IN A SEPTEMBER 26 CALL ON DCM AND POLOFF, XXXXXXXXXX SAID THE BUSINESS INTERESTS OF SENIOR ZANU-PF MEMBERS ARE BEING BADLY DAMAGED BY THE CURRENT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION. THEY BLAME PRESIDENT MUGABE AND ARE DETERMINED TO FIND A WAY TO EASE HIM OUT IN A DIGNIFIED WAY. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY REALIZE CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HARARE 05461 01 OF 02 271458Z THAT THE MDC IS GAINING STRENGTH IN THE RURAL AREAS -- TWO RECENT RALLIES BY MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSANGIRAI ATTRACTED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AND RAISED FUNDS FOR THE PARTY -- AND SEE THEIR LOSS OF POWER AS INEVITABLE. THEY HAVE BEGUN TO TALK SERIOUSLY TO THE MDC ABOUT MAKING A DEAL. ALTHOUGH HE IS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT IT, MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSANGIRAI HAS AGREED THAT IT IS IN ZIMBABWE’S BEST

SIPDIS INTERESTS FOR THE MDC TO DO ALL IT CAN TO SECURE A GRACEFUL EXIT STRATEGY THAT PRESERVES SOMewhat OF A POSITIVE LEGACY FOR MUGABE. OTHERWISE, THE PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE LITTLE INCENTIVE TO GO.

ENCOURAGING MUGABE TO STEP DOWN

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3. (C) THE BOARD OF LEVER BROTHERS INFORMED THE MDC, XXXXXXXXXX REPORTED, THAT KOFI ANNAN, IN THE RECENT MEETING IN NEW YORK DURING THE MILLENIUM SUMMIT, OFFERED MUGABE A DEAL TO STEP DOWN. ALTHOUGH XXXXXXXXXX SAID THE MDC WAS NOT PRIVY TO THE DETAILS, HE SURMISED THAT ANNAN’S SUPPOSED DEAL PROBABLY INCLUDED PROVISION OF SAFEHAVEN AND A FINANCIAL PACKAGE FROM LIBYAN PRESIDENT QADHAFI. THE OPPOSITION PARTY HEARD THAT MUGABE TURNED DOWN THE OFFER THE FOLLOWING DAY, AFTER DISCUSSING IT WITH THE FIRST LADY. ANNAN, XXXXXXXXXX CONTINUED, IS NOT THE ONLY ONE TRYING TO FACILITATE MUGABE’S DEPARTURE. XXXXXXXXXX INFORMED XXXXXXXXXX THAT XXXXXXXXXX A SHADY WHITE ZIMBABWEAN BUSINESSMAN, HAD TOLD ZANU-PF HE WOULD PROVIDE A FINANCIAL “RETIREMENT” PACKAGE FOR MUGABE. XXXXXXXXXX DID NOT KNOW WHETHER XXXXXXXXXX HAD SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MAKE SUCH A PACKAGE ATTRACTIVE CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 HARARE 05461 01 OF 02 271458Z ENOUGH, BUT HE CLAIMED THAT XXXXXXXXXX WORKED FOR MI6 AND COULD BE A CHANNEL FOR THE BRITISH TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO SWEETEN THE DEAL. (COMMENT: THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION HERE SCOFFED AT THE VERY IDEA. END COMMENT.)

4. (C) THE MDC, ACCORDING TO XXXXXXXXXX, BELIEVED THAT THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED WAS FOR AN INDEPENDENT BODY -- PREFERABLY MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY NOT AFFILIATED WITH A PARTICULAR POLITICAL PARTY -- TO WORK WITH ZANU-PF AND THE MDC TO FORGE A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE WAY OUT OF ZIMBABWE’S CURRENT MESS. THE MDC HAS APPROACHED XXXXXXXXXX ABOUT LEADING SUCH AN EFFORT.

PRIVATE SECTOR AS MIDDLEMAN

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5. (C) SHORTLY AFTER OUR DISCUSSION WITH XXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXX CALLED ON THE DCM AND POLOFF. XXXXXXXXXX NOTED THAT THE ZIMBABWEAN ECONOMY WAS HEADED FOR DISASTER, AND HE WAS EXPLORING HOW KEY MEMBERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR HERE COULD PREVENT A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TRAINWRECK. HE INSISTED THAT HE HAD NO POLITICAL AFFILIATION, AND THEREFORE HAS A CERTAIN CREDIBILITY WITH BOTH MAJOR

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PAGE 01 HARARE 05461 02 OF 02 271459Z ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 DINT-00 DODE-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EUR-00 FIBE-00 VC-00 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00 L-00 VCE-00 AC-01 NSAE-00 OMB-01 OPIC-01 PA-00 PM-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SP-00 IRM-00 SSO-
6. (C) XXXXXXXXX SAID HE HAS HEARD HINTS THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE IS WILLING TO STEP DOWN UNDER THE RIGHT CONDITIONS. THAT WOULD BE REMARKABLE, THE DCM POINTED OUT, AS A DECISION NOT TO STAND FOR PRESIDENT IN 2002 WOULD MAKE MUGABE A LAME DUCK AND LIKELY WOULD FURTHER UNDERMINE HIS ABILITY TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY. THAT SCENARIO, XXXXXXXXX REPLIED, ASSUMES THAT MUGABE WOULD SERVE OUT THE REMAINDER OF HIS TERM. THE PRESIDENT, HE HAS BEEN TOLD, WOULD BE WILLING TO STAND DOWN NOW IF HE IS CONVINCED THAT HIS LAND REDISTRIBUTION PLAN IS ON TRACK. AMNESTY WOULD LIKELY BE ANOTHER CONDITION, XXXXXXXXX ADDED.

7. (C) THERE IS A GROWING REALIZATION IN ZANU-PF, XXXXXXXXX INSISTED, THAT THE CONTINUED DETERIORATION OF THE ECONOMY WILL INEVITABLY HAND THE COUNTRY ON A SILVER PLATTER TO THE MDC. IN ORDER TO GAIN POWER, THE MDC MERELY HAS TO WAIT. ZANU-PF, THEREFORE, IS PRIMED TO MAKE A DEAL. ASKED WHAT THE CATALYST WAS FOR SUCH A DEAL, XXXXXXXXX SAID ONE POSSIBILITY IS A CONFERENCE, ORGANIZED BY KEY MEMBERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, IN WHICH AN INTERNATIONALLY RESPECTED FIGURE SEEN AS IMPARTIAL BY BOTH SIDES WOULD ATTEMPT TO FORGE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN ZANU-PF AND THE MDC, PRIMARILY ON LAND BUT ALSO ON OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES. SUCH A CONFERENCE WOULD ALSO ADDRESS HOW COUNTRIES SUCH AS CHILE AND ARGENTINA MADE THE TRANSITION TO MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY AND DEALT WITH THE QUESTION OF AMNESTY. ASKED HOW THE UNITED STATES COULD HELP, XXXXXXXXX REPLIED THAT AN HONEST BROKER WAS NEEDED TO CONVINCE ZANU-PF TO PARTICIPATE AND TO UNDERWRITE THE COSTS OF WHATSOEVER AGREEMENT EMERGED. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, HE CLAIMED, HAS 36 MILLION POUNDS AVAILABLE FOR LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE, BUT THEY ARE PROBABLY TOO ANTAGONISTIC TO PLAY AN HONEST BROKER ROLE. THE AMERICANS, THOUGH, PROBABLY WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE.

8. (C) WOULDN’T PRESIDENT MUGABE HAVE TO BE IN THE LOOP ON SUCH AN INITIATIVE, THE DCM ASKED? ABSOLUTELY, XXXXXXXXX REPLIED. THEIR EFFORT WOULD BE DESCRIBED TO THE PRESIDENT AS A NON-PARTISAN PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE INTENDED TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A LAND REFORM PROGRAM ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS, THEREBY RESTORING ZIMBABWE’S CREDIBILITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A CARROT FOR MUGABE TO ENDORSE OR PARTICIPATE IN SUCH AN EFFORT. ASKED WHETHER HE MEANT A FINANCIAL PAYOFF, XXXXXXXXX DEMURRED, ONLY INTIMATING THAT THAT ISSUE WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED.

COMMENT -------

9. (C) MANY MEMBERS OF ZANU-PF ARE INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE IS A SERIOUS LIABILITY. A MEMBER OF ZANU-PF’S POLITBUREU RECENTLY TOLD THE INDEPENDENT “FINANCIAL GAZETTE” THAT THE PARTY HAD AGREED THAT MUGABE SHOULD NOT RUN FOR REELECTION, BUT IT HAD NOT YET SETTLED ON A CONSENSUS CANDIDATE. AS THE ECONOMY CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE, ZANU-PF OFFICIALS REALIZE THAT MUGABE’S CONTINUATION IN POWER WILL LEAD INEVITABLY TO THE ELECTION OF AN MDC PRESIDENT IN 2002. IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME. CONFIDENTIAL
THEMSELVES FROM PROSECUTION AND THEIR ECONOMIC ASSETS FROM SEIZURE OR CONTINUED DETERIORATION. WE ARE NOT SURPRISED, THEREFORE, BY THE RULING PARTY’S BACK-CHANNEL APPROACHES TO THE MDC ABOUT REACHING A DEAL, WHICH WE BELIEVE ARE PROBABLY GENUINE. THE CRITICAL QUESTION IS HOW MUGABE WILL REACT IF HE CATCHES WIND OF IT.

10. (C) WE ARE INTRIGUED BY XXXXXXXXXX’S EFFORT. HIS THINKING ABOUT HOW TO BROKER SOME SORT OF AGREEMENT IS CLEARLY IN THE INCIPIENT STAGES AND, TO BE SUCCESSFUL, HE MUST FIRST OVERCOME SERIOUS MISTRUST ON BOTH SIDES. ALTHOUGH THE CONFERENCE HE ENVISIONS WOULD, ON THE SURFACE, FOCUS ON REACHING AN AGREEMENT ON LAND, ITS REAL OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS OF MUGABE’S DEPARTURE FROM OFFICE. XXXXXXXXXX CLEARLY HAS MUCH GROUNDWORK TO DO. THE CLOCK IS TICKING, AS ZANU-PF MAY DISCUSS THE SUCCESSION ISSUE AT ITS EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS LATER THIS YEAR.

MCDONALD

CONFIDENTIAL
American Concerns on Ukrainian Weapons

The United States raises a variety of arms issues with Ukraine, including weapons sales to Myanmar, formerly Burma, and the export of heavy weapons to rebels in southern Sudan. The Ukrainians deny sending arms to Sudan until they are confronted with satellite photos.

DATE 2009-11-09 12:05:00

SOURCE Embassy Kyiv

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET KYIV 001942

SIPDIS

NSC FOR JOYCE CONNERY DOE FOR ANDREW BIENIAWSKI


Classified By: Political Counselor Colin Cleary, Reason 1.4 (b, d)

1. (S) Summary: Highlights of this semi-annual U.S.-Ukraine nonproliferation dialogue include:

- Ukraine gave an inconsistent answer on the question of transferring HEU spent fuel to Russia. - Ukraine asked for additional security assurances beyond those provided in Budapest in 1994, and was interested in continued missile defense cooperation with the U.S. -- Ukraine noted that the SCUD missile elimination Memorandum of Understanding had been approved by all the Ministries, was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for final approval, and will soon be ready. -- Ukraine requested U.S. support for additional elimination of melange liquid rocket propellant, but the U.S. said it would concentrate first on eliminating the SCUDs and associated melange before discussing any further elimination of melange. -- Ukraine requested additional U.S. funding for SS-24 elimination, which the U.S. undertook to consider and respond to. -- The U.S. made a formal request for more information on Ukraine's planned transfer of MTCR Category I items to Saudi Arabia to allow for robust bilateral consultations on the margins of the MTCR Rio de Janeiro Plenary in November on the Saudi issue as well as the broader issue of Category I transfers. -- Ukraine said it is no longer exporting weapons to Burma, and claimed not to have exported T-72 tanks to South Sudan despite U.S. satellite photos to the contrary. The U.S. noted it would have to consider whether to impose sanctions for the tank transfer, and that a factor in U.S. deliberations would be whether the GOU was being truthful. -- Ukraine again undertook to look into specialty steel exports to Iran's missile program, while the U.S. warned that if Ukraine could not solve this problem on its own, the U.S. may take action of its own against the entities involved. -- After two years of negotiations, the U.S. and Ukraine signed a contract September 24 on the removal and storage of radioactive sources. -- The U.S. also pressed Ukraine to agree to destroy more small arms under the NATO Partnership for Peace Small Arms/Light Weapons destruction project. End Summary

2. (S) In a one-on-one meeting prior to the formal meeting, Nykonenko welcomed Van Diepen to Kyiv. Nykonenko said that Ukraine was very familiar with Van Diepen's strong nonproliferation bona fides and took this as more proof that the United States had confidence Ukraine could be a strong nonproliferation partner. The sides previewed the agenda and discussed security assurances, HEU spent fuel repatriation and downblending, NATO Partnership for Peace issues related to small arms and light weapons elimination, SCUD missile elimination, missile defense, Ukrainian specialty steel exports to Iran, and Ukrainian T-72 tank exports to South Sudan. Relevant portions of the one-on-one discussion are included in the following readout of the regular meeting agenda.
3. (C) During the one-on-one meeting, Van Diepen said that it was particularly urgent for Ukraine to approve the shipment of the HEU spent fuel from the Kyiv Institute to Russia by the end of September. He explained that if the shipment is not approved by then, it could not take place until 2011 at the earliest, and Ukraine would continue to bear the costs and security risks of storing the material until then; that the spent fuel had no commercial value, but would be valuable to terrorists; and that, since Ukraine had been invited to the Nuclear Security Summit next year, it would be important for Ukraine to report progress in securing its nuclear materials. Nykonenko replied that Ukraine’s position of February 2008 had not changed, and thus we had to wait for the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences report in early 2010.

4. (C) In meetings the next day, Vladimir Ryabtsev from Ukraine’s National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) explained that all of the technical issues had been resolved, and Ukraine had made the decision to ship the spent fuel. They had not shipped it because it had not been worked out who would pay Russia $800,000 for addressing the waste associated with reprocessing the spent fuel. There was not enough money in Ukraine’s budget to pay this expense. Wayne Leach, the DOE officer assigned to Embassy Kyiv, said that the U.S. would send this new information back to Washington and provide an answer to Ukraine soon. (Comment: Other sources have indicated to DOE separately that the decision to repatriate this spent fuel still rests with the President and the NSDC and is still being addressed as a package along with the other Russian-origin HEU in Ukraine; in effect, that Ryabtsev may have been characterizing the debate somewhat inaccurately. The GOU has long been aware that DOE’s Global Threat Reduction Initiative program does not have authority to pay for waste issues associated with such repatriation.)

5. (U) In the one-on-one meeting before the plenary, Nykonenko told Van Diepen that Ukraine had read with interest the new U.S. plan for missile defense in Europe. Nykonenko pointed out that Ukraine had missile defense expertise and was interested in continued missile defense cooperation, which could help reconfirm Ukraine’s role in the new European security architecture. It was ‘very important’ for Ukraine to receive positive signals from the U.S., he said. Van Diepen replied that the U.S. would be looking forward to discussing missile defense with Ukraine the following week during the meetings in Kyiv led by Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Vershbow.

6. (S) The first item Nykonenko raised during the one-on-one meeting was an appeal for additional security assurances for Ukraine, beyond those the U.S. had provided in the 1994 Budapest Declaration. He explained that Ukraine felt threatened, particularly after the Russian invasion of Georgia. Ukraine needed a security anchor to fill the vacuum until it could join NATO. Ukraine had received the August 2009 note from the U.S. reaffirming Budapest, but it wanted to discuss the issue in more detail. Ukraine was hoping that, with U.S. leadership, a new multilateral security assurance could be worked out. The GOU would be grateful to begin expert-level talks on this; the fact of such talks would send a good signal to Ukraine’s public and neighbors. He passed a non-paper that proposed a new security assurance. Legally binding assurances were best, he concluded, but he said he understood this was very difficult.

7. (U) Van Diepen explained that the United States’ Budapest commitment endured and was not tied to the expiration of the START Treaty in December. See paragraphs 53-54 below for additional discussions on this topic and issues related to the START Follow-on Treaty.

8. (S) Nykonenko introduced the SCUD agenda item by noting that this project is a priority for Ukraine. Ukraine’s Ministry of Defense Economic Department Deputy Director Sergiy Novosyolov reiterated that point and stated that we successfully completed the first stage -- the U.S. team inventory of the SCUDs and associated equipment in June-July 2009, the various documents and annexes from each of the sites, and U.S. agreement to eliminate a portion of the melange (liquid propellant for SCUD and other missiles). Novosyolov further explained that the SCUD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had been approved by all the Ministries and was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for final approval and will soon be ready. He also noted that a list of possible
Ukrainian contractors had been sent to the U.S. Embassy and stated GOU readiness to discuss costs, timetables, volume of work, transporting the missiles to elimination sites, and other technical and logistical factors associated with implementation of the project.

9. (S) Alexander Dotsenko, from the National Security and Defense Council, added that there are several legal issues for the Cabinet of Ministers to consider before authorizing the MOD to sign the MOU. He stated that we should schedule an experts meeting to discuss the details of the elimination work, including the specific process for selecting the contractor, tax exemption issues, and a system to monitor the work of the contractor to ensure that all of the work is completed on time and in accordance with the other terms of the contract.

10. (S) Van Diepen expressed appreciation for the excellent cooperation received from the Ukraine Ministry of Defense in the conduct of the June-July 2009 site inventories. He noted U.S. interest in moving forward to the elimination phase of the project and hoped that the MOU would be approved soon. Paul Van-Son, from ISN’s Nonproliferation and Disarmament Fund (NDF) office, expressed agreement in principle to the Ukraine-proposed technical discussions, but emphasized that the MOU must be signed first. He also explained that the U.S. understood the importance of additional melange elimination to Ukraine, but noted that we would concentrate first on eliminating the SCUDs and associated equipment and melange in accordance with the MOU before discussing any further U.S. role in the elimination of additional stocks of melange.

Melange Elimination
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11. (S) Nykonenko noted that Ukraine had a dramatic melange problem, with over 16,000 tons of the rocket fuel and the steady deterioration of the storage containers. While the U.S. had committed to eliminating 1440 tons as part of the SCUD elimination project and the OSCE agreed on September 16 to eliminate 3000 tons, Ukraine was interested in additional bilateral U.S. assistance to dispose of the remaining fuel. Alexander Nilov, a rocket fuel expert from the MOD, explained that the 3000 tons would be transported by rail to Russia, where a Russian contractor hired by the OSCE would eliminate the fuel. The first shipment of melange would leave Ukraine on November 1, and the work would be completed in a year. This export of a military product to Russia was in compliance with Ukraine’s export control laws, he added.

12. (S) Van-Son explained that NDF contractors are evaluating the technical capability/costs of using the Polish mobile plant that is on site at Radekhiv to eliminate the 1440 tons of SCUD oxidizer. He again emphasized that the MOU on SCUD elimination must be concluded before further discussions can take place on elimination of SCUD-associated melange. He concluded that the U.S. would like to evaluate the progress on the OSCE melange elimination project once it commences, as well as progress on the NDF SCUD project, before considering any further funding for any separate melange project in Ukraine.

13. (S) Dotsenko reminded the U.S. of his request to consider eliminating additional melange as part of the SCUD project and stated that Ukraine had met its obligation to eliminate half of its missiles and associated equipment by 2005 as it agreed to do in 1998. (NOTE: While Ukraine currently has 54 SCUD TELs, Dotsenko maintains that Ukraine possessed 117 SCUD TELs when the 1998 U.S.-Ukraine Memorandum of Understanding was signed. According to Dotsenko, Ukraine eliminated half of its SCUD force prior to 2005 using its own funds, and the U.S. should therefore consider eliminating more melange based on the 1998 numbers.) Dotsenko asked the U.S. to consider additional melange elimination projects, pointing out that Ukraine would have 13,000 tons remaining even after the OSCE project is completed. He also requested that melange elimination be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Removal of SS-24 Solid Rocket Fuel and Elimination of Motor Cases
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14. (S) Nykonenko explained that, because of Ukraine’s budget crisis, the water wash-out removal of SS-24 rocket fuel from the motor cases had been significantly delayed. Ukraine was continueing to adhere to the “black box” elimination method, under which the USG paid Ukraine a given amount of money for each eliminated motor case, regardless of how Ukraine removed the propellant. As in previous meetings, Ukraine requested additional U.S. funding for SS-24 elimination ($250,000 per rocket motor to remove the fuel in an environmentally safe manner and an additional $15,000 per empty rocket case). Nykonenko highlighted a letter sent to the U.S. Congress from the Ukrainian Rada requesting additional U.S. assistance under the Cooperative Threat Reduction program to perform this work.
15. (S) Neil Couch, from the VCI Bureau's START Treaty office, said that the U.S. remains committed to economically feasible, technologically sound propellant removal and motor case elimination as part of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program. He continued that the Department of Defense is committed to the SS-24 elimination program regardless of the end of START in December 2009, but will not pay Ukraine more than it pays Russia for the elimination of the exact same missile system.

16. (S) Sergei Birin, from the National Space Agency of Ukraine, explained that Ukraine had begun this work with 10 rocket motors. It needed $250,000 to remove the fuel from each case plus an additional $15,000 per empty rocket case for expenses related to the operation of the facility where the motors were located. Birin said that Ukraine needed an additional $6 million to complete this work, and Ukraine was waiting for the U.S. answer to its request. Ukraine had allocated $50 million to speed up the implementation of rocket fuel wash-out, but this sum was not sufficient to continue the work operations at the Pavlohrad missile facility had been suspended. Nykonenko noted that Russia’s costs were lower because it used a method that Ukraine did not regard as environmentally safe*burning the fuel out of the motors. Ukraine cannot use this method because it is located in the center of Europe and the rocket facilities where this work is done are near large population centers. He added the U.S.-Ukraine 1993 CTR Agreement stated that elimination would be completed in an environmentally safe manner.

17. (S) Couch recalled that Ukraine had agreed after four years of intensive negotiations in the START Treaty Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission (JCIC) to cut four 80-millimeter holes in the motor cases so they could not be used again as rockets, but could be used for other commercial purposes after the fuel was eliminated. Ukraine also could have crushed the motor cases or cut them in two. Birin said that Ukraine had already eliminated the fuel from four of the ten rocket motor cases in the test batch it was using to refine its wash-out technique. In the first motor case there was some residual fuel remaining that Ukraine burned out. This burn-out left big holes in the motor case such that there was no need to cut the smaller holes as agreed in the JCIC. With each successive wash-out, the amount of residual fuel remaining had been less, so Ukraine was confident it would come up with an effective technique to wash out the fuel.

18. (S) Van Diepen noted that Ukraine was having detailed technical discussions on these SS-24 elimination issues with DTRA this week. He said he would get a detailed debriefing from DTRA and forward Ukraine’s remarks to the political level, which would consider Ukraine’s new requests for assistance. He promised to provide Ukraine a response.

19. (C) Couch said that for several weeks the NRRC link between the U.S. and Ukraine had been out of service. The U.S. had determined that the link between Washington and Kyiv was ok, and that the problem was between the MOD and the Ukraine ground station. Nykonenko replied that Ukraine appreciated U.S. assistance to upgrade the link, and that Ukraine had completed this work. He said that Ukrainian engineers were working on the current problem and hoped to have the link back in service soon.

20. (S) Nykonenko said that Ukraine had amended its list of military items subject to export control restrictions. In addition, it had revised the list of dual use items; that list is awaiting interagency approval. Finally, Ukraine is working to enhance the control of lathes and other items, including training, that are not on the Wassenaar or MTCR lists, but are on the EU list. Ukraine is using best practices guides for approval of exports. Van Diepen emphasized it is very important to pass national legislation to implement the export control regimes effectively.

21. (S) Tetyana Vizigovska, State Service of Export Control of Ukraine, stated that Ukraine had implemented the changes to the MTCR Annex agreed to at the 2008 Canberra Plenary, noting that the GOU approved these changes on September 19, 2009. She also explained that the GOU is paying close attention to items not controlled by the MTCR and is considering enhancing controls over training and intangible technologies, and adopting additional controls on items going to Iran in accordance with the European Union list. Van Diepen thanked Ukraine for the update and noted that the U.S. undergoes a similar interagency process in implementing changes to the MTCR Annex.
22. (S) Boris Atamanenko, National Space Agency of Ukraine, stated that Ukraine had transferred MTCR Category I items to the U.S., Russia, Germany, and Saudi Arabia, and Category II items to the U.S., Russia, Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea, China, and India during the past year. In accordance with its MTCR commitments, he noted that Ukraine had informed MTCR Partners in April 2009 (POC Document 86) of the intended Category I transfer to Saudi Arabia, and none of the Partners had objected or made an official request for further information. Van Diepen attempted to confirm that Ukraine had actually transferred Category I items to Saudi Arabia, not just notified its intention to transfer, but Atamanenko’s response created confusion on this point.

23. (S) Van Diepen then said that the United States was extremely disappointed by this unwelcome news of an MTCR Category I transfer to Saudi Arabia. By definition, MTCR Category I systems are inherently capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, and the MTCR Guidelines clearly state that such transfers should only be made on rare occasions. A principal purpose of the MTCR is to prevent the transfer of MTCR Category I items to non-MTCR countries. Van Diepen further noted that he understood that Ukraine had previously notified MTCR Partners of an MTCR Category I transfer to India, to which the U.S. objected but Ukraine transferred the items anyway. He stated that the India case was the first time that an MTCR Partner had gone ahead with a transfer when objections were made by another Partner. If Ukraine were to transfer Category I items to Saudi Arabia, that would be yet another unfortunate precedent. Van Diepen added that the U.S. would object to such a transfer, as it is our right to do as an MTCR Partner, but he said he would reserve further commentary until we get more information on what is actually being contemplated for transfer or has been transferred to Saudi Arabia.

24. (S) Van Diepen said that Ukraine should consider this discussion a formal request for more information on the Category I transfer to Saudi Arabia. He also asked that this information be provided to the U.S. well in advance of the MTCR Rio de Janeiro Plenary in November. This would allow for bilateral consultations on the margins of the MTCR Plenary on the Saudi issue as well as the broader philosophy on MTCR Category I transfers. Given the confusion over whether or not a transfer had already taken place, Van Diepen requested further clarification from Ukraine on Day 2 of the talks.

25. (C) On Day 2, Atamanenko clarified that no MTCR Category I items had yet been transferred to Saudi Arabia, but a project had been started that will result in a Category I transfer. Ukraine will not transfer any technology that would create any missile systems. Atamanenko also noted that the U.S. (ISN Director Durham) and UK had approached the GOU at the MTCR RPOC meeting in Paris in April, that they had requested further information about the sale, and had not raised concerns about the potential transfer. However, Ukraine had not received a formal written request from the U.S. or the UK for this information. Van Diepen then reiterated his ‘formal’ request for further information on the equipment/technology to be transferred in preparation for a robust discussion of this issue on the margins of the upcoming MTCR Plenary. (Embassy Kyiv subsequently followed up with a written request and raised the request in further meetings with MFA.)

Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)
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26. (S) Nykonenko said that Ukraine had participated in the ATT’s Open-Ended Working Group meetings in 2009 and was looking forward to the February 2010 meetings. Ukraine supported the development of the ATT as long as it did not restrict self-defense and the legitimate production of military items. Ukraine was optimistic that an ATT could capture countries outside of the export control regimes. He said that Russia did not agree with Ukraine’s position, so we needed a common strategy to deal with Russia. Nykonenko added that any Treaty negotiated without the participation of the U.S., Russia, and China would be of limited utility.

27. (S) Van Diepen said that the United States supports greater responsibility in arms transfers, reducing the destabilizing trade in illicit arms, and ensuring that all states have national systems and internal controls that meet the highest standards. In working towards these goals, we will continue to oppose lowering of international standards on the transfer of conventional arms and ensure that there is no infringement on domestic ownership of firearms. He continued that work on the ATT must be done on a consensus basis in order to ensure these objectives are met. The UK needs to get back to consensus decision-making; the UK planned to introduce a resolution during the UN First Committee*the U.S. needed Ukraine’s help to ensure that consensus decision-making is part of any resolution passed. Nykonenko supported the U.S. position on the feasibility of an ATT and that the two countries (along with Russia and China) needed to develop a common strategy.
Transfer Cases

28. (S) Van Diepen said that there are two types of cases the U.S. wanted to discuss on the second day of the consultations: 1) transfers to Burma and South Sudan in which there were deliberate Ukrainian government actions that are contrary to U.S. philosophy on exports; and 2) other transfers by Ukrainian entities, presumably not authorized by the Ukrainian government. The U.S. wants to work cooperatively with Ukraine to stop this second category of illicit transfers.

Burma

29. (S) Nykonenko said that Ukraine had received the U.S. demarche and was no longer exporting weapons to Burma. Ukraine was just wrapping up existing contracts, and had been reducing its exports to Burma since 2005. In 2008 Ukrainian exports to Burma were 'as good as zero' in part due to previous U.S. warnings, and Ukraine had not signed any new contracts with Burma in the last two and one half years. Current exports were just spare parts. The remaining business was so small that the company involved had recalled all of its workers from Burma.

30. (S) ISN/CATR Deputy Director Brian Bachman thanked Nykonenko for the information. He said that the U.S. was still concerned about the exports to Burma, but was pleased to hear that Ukraine was now only exporting a small number of spare parts and was no longer exported completed weapons, as reports had indicated.

South Sudan

31. (S) Van Diepen recalled that when the U.S. had raised with Ukraine in July 2008 that an additional shipment of T-72 tanks, BM-1 GRAD armored vehicles, small arms, and other military equipment planned for a late June or early July shipment to Kenya was being purchased by the Kenyan Ministry of State Defense for South Sudan, Ukraine had assured us the arms were for the Government of Kenya. Ukraine had informed the U.S. that it had received an end-user certificate from the Kenyan government and receipts acknowledging the arrival of the earlier tank shipment in Kenya. Subsequent to our discussions, the M/V Faina, which was carrying another weapons shipment from Ukraine, was hijacked, and it became clear that cargo was also intended for South Sudan. Van Diepen asked if the GOU had investigated.

32. (S) Valeriy Lysenko, from Ukraine’s Export Control Service, said that the T-72 tank shipment was intended for Kenya. He said Ukraine had not transferred any military equipment to South Sudan. All of Ukraine’s contracts were checked.

33. (S) Van Diepen gave the Ukrainian side a copy of the contract that clearly lists the GOSS, and asked if the GOU side maintained that the export was for Kenya. Lysenko held to this line, questioned the authenticity of the contract, and asked if the U.S. had any better evidence. Van Diepen, regretting that the GOU had forced him to do so, showed the Ukrainians cleared satellite imagery of T-72 tanks unloaded in Kenya, transferred to railyards for onward shipment, and finally in South Sudan. This led to a commotion on the Ukrainian side.

34. (S) Van Diepen continued that he appreciated the sides could have different export control policies, as was their sovereign right. But not being told the truth was something the United States did not expect from a strategic partner. There was nothing for Ukraine to gain from lying and a lot to lose, he cautioned. Since South Sudan is on the U.S. terrorism list, the U.S. would have to consider whether to impose sanctions over the transfer; a factor in U.S. deliberations would be whether the GOU the truth.

35. (S) Lysenko said that Ukraine would study the U.S. information and he asserted that Ukraine only had a relationship with Kenya, and did not have a relationship with South Sudan. Ukraine could not be held responsible for the actions of a third country. This matter was a common problem for the U.S. and Ukraine to resolve. He said Ukraine’s special agencies might need to get involved to find out what had happened. Nykonenko said that Ukraine would study this situation in the light of a partner relationship so that the U.S. would know that Ukraine is a reliable partner.

Ukraine’s Exports of Specialty Metals for Iran’s Ballistic Missiles

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36. (S) Van Diepen said that, contrary to Ukraine's export control policy, Ukrainian entities, including Zaporizhzhya Regional Economic Association (RFA), were engaged in providing the Iranian ballistic missile program with specialty metals and other sensitive items such as ball bearings used in liquid propellant missile systems. It is possible that these activities were taking place without the knowledge of the Ukrainian government. The U.S. remains deeply concerned that, given the high quality of steel that can be purchased from Ukrainian manufacturers, Iran’s ballistic missile program continues to seek items from Ukrainian entities, including RFA. Van Diepen continued that such steels have long been difficult for Iran to produce indigenously. Van Diepen provided the following points/non-paper:

-- The United States and Ukraine have discussed in the past the supply by Ukrainian firms of sensitive materials to Iran’s ballistic missile program.

-- Specifically, between 2002 and 2007, we repeatedly raised concerns that Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhya Regional Economic Association (RFA) was engaged in providing the Iranian ballistic missile program with specialty metals and other sensitive items such as ball bearings used in liquid propellant missile systems.

-- In September 2004, the United States imposed sanctions against RFA for transferring items controlled under the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to Iran.

-- Subsequently, in May 2006, we advised you of RFA’s continued efforts to supply Iran’s ballistic missile program with additional materials, including MTCR-controlled 08X22HGT titanium stabilized duplex stainless steel, which is used in the production of Scud and NoDong propellant tanks, as well as CR18NI10TI, a type of stainless steel that is not MTCR-controlled, but is used in the production of a variety of Scud engine parts.

-- We remain deeply concerned that, given the high-quality of steel that can be purchased from Ukrainian manufacturers, Iran’s ballistic missile program continues to seek items from Ukrainian entities, including RFA.

-- Such steels have long been difficult for Iran to produce indigenously. As you will recall, in late 2006 we shared with all MTCR Partners information indicating that a key choke point for Iran’s missile programs is the ability to acquire advanced materials such as AISI 4340 and AISI 4130 steels.

-- Both of these steels are used by Iran’s solid-fueled ballistic missile program in the production of motor cases.

-- We therefore urge you to exercise vigilance in your export control processes, and to take all appropriate measures to ensure that Ukrainian firms are not acting as sources of specialty metals to Iranian ballistic missile entities.

37. (S) Nykonenko said that Ukraine would look into the matter and provide detailed information to the U.S. Van Diepen said that if Ukraine could not solve this problem on its own, the U.S. would consider taking action by sanctioning the entities involved, including the steel companies, and by taking other measures. Iran’s missiles threatened U.S. and allied troops stationed in the Middle East, so for self-defense reasons, the U.S. had to act to stop these exports. Ukraine’s steel companies have benefited from trade with the West, but they could not have it both ways— it was not in their interest to risk large profits from the West for small illicit profits from rogue states like Iran.

Ukrainian Training to Iran’s Malek-Ashtar University of Technology

38. (S) Van Diepen said that we recently shared with the GOU information indicating that as of early 2009, Iran’s Malek-Ashtar University of Technology (MUT), as in years past, was continuing to sponsor international scientists, including from Ukraine, to provide training in Iran. Malek-Ashtar University of Technology is subordinate to Iran’s Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL), and provides instruction to representatives of Iran’s Defense Industries Organization (DID) as well as the Aerospace Industries Organization (AIO). The U.S. urged Ukraine to ensure that Ukrainian individuals and institutions are not providing sensitive technology, training, and/or other support to Malek-Ashtar University of Technology or other Iranian entities affiliated with Iran’s missile program, and asked for the status of Ukraine’s actions. Nykonenko
said that Ukraine had recently received the U.S. information and was reviewing it.

Prohres-Pakistan
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39. (S) Van Diepen noted that we recently provided information to Ukraine noting the interest in Pakistan’s National Engineering and Scientific Commission (NESCOM) in procuring gyrotheodolites from Ukraine’s Prohres. He urged Ukraine to investigate this activity and take actions to prevent any transfer of this missile-related equipment. Nykonenko said that Ukraine had recently received the U.S. information and was reviewing it.

Arsenal China
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40. (S) Van Diepen said that there is a long history to this case and requested an update from Ukraine. He also provided additional information on this case:

-- We now have new information indicating that in August 2009, Arsenal was working with representatives of China’s Changda Corporation to establish a partnership related to the production of gyrotheodolites with China’s Shaanxi Cangsong Machinery Plant.

-- The Shannxi Cangsong Machinery Plant is subordinate to the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation Tenth Academy and manufactures inertial guidance systems for Chinese ballistic missiles.

-- Given the possible missile-related end-use of these items, as well as the identity of Arsenal’s potential Chinese partner, we are concerned that this cooperation could be used to support China’s MTCR Category I missile programs.

-- We therefore strongly urge you to conduct further inquiries into Arsenal’s dealings with Chinese missile-related entities, and take all appropriate measures to ensure that Arsenal is not serving as a source of goods or technologies for China’s MTCR Category I programs.

41. Nykonenko said that Ukraine is still reviewing the U.S. information on these matters. (NOTE: Ukraine provide a written update on this case at the end of the talks: “Arsenal did negotiate with China Great Wall and received licensing approval to repair a previously provided UGT-S gyrotheodolite. However, Arsenal did not negotiate with the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology to transfer MTCR-controlled DOZ stellar sensors.” END NOTE.)

G8 Global Partnership/Combating Nuclear Smuggling
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42. (U) Viktor Ryazantsev of the State Committee for Nuclear Regulation, Mykola Proskura of the Ministry for Emergency Situations, and Oleksandr Panchenko of the State Border Guard Service provided detailed reports on the progress made on the range of anti-nuclear smuggling assistance projects developed with the GOU by the U.S. Nuclear Smuggling Outreach Initiative (NSOI) in January 2006. Each reported extensive progress on these projects and expressed deep appreciation for U.S. assistance in facilitating both project implementation and participation by other donors.

43. (U) NSOI Coordinator Mike Stafford agreed with them that the two sides had made remarkable progress on these projects and added that their degree of cooperation provided a model for NSOI’s engagement with other governments. Stafford also noted that, in addition to progress on the assistance projects, it was important to monitor progress in implementing the agreed steps in the joint action plan that the sides had also agreed upon in January 2006 and whose implementation the assistance projects were designed to facilitate. Stafford noted that the USG had just received from the Ukrainian Embassy earlier in the week an updated matrix indicating that 27 of the 30 steps in the joint action plan were either complete or in progress. He congratulated the GOU on this progress and secured Nykonenko’s agreement to keep the U.S. side updated as implementation proceeds. Stafford also announced that NSOI had allocated $935,000 from its FY09 budget to assist monitoring on Ukraine’s green border with Russia, proposed on behalf of the Preventing Nuclear Smuggling Program a workshop to strengthen Ukraine’s ability to respond to nuclear smuggling incidents, and agreed to a Ukrainian request to query the Government of Finland on when a proposed mobile radiation monitoring van might be provided. (The Finnish regulatory authority subsequently reported that they hoped to provide it in December.)
44. (U) On behalf of ISN/CTR, Stafford expressed U.S. appreciation for the provision of a temporary location for the Science and Technology Center Ukraine (STCU) and requested periodic updates on construction of the permanent headquarters. Nykonenko emphasized three additional assistance projects that had been suggested by Ukraine at the most recent Global Partnership (GP) Working Group meeting, and reiterated a request that contributions by GP members to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund not be credited against their commitments to the GP. Stafford said he had investigated the latter matter after the original Ukrainian request and had learned the USG and several other GP members were counting these contributions within their GP commitments. The USG was not inclined to change this practice and thus would not ask others to change, either, especially since how to account for assistance was a sovereign decision.

Electron
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45. (U) Proskura said that, after two years of negotiations, the U.S. and Ukraine had signed a contract September 24 on the removal and storage of radioactive sources from the Electron Gaz Plant and the Kavetskiy Institute. Ukraine had selected the contractor, and he saw no reason why Ukraine's nuclear regulatory body would intervene to stop the work.

46. (C) Leach said that this contract demonstrated Ukraine's strong commitment to nonproliferation. The sides would begin by securing the sources at the two facilities and then would work on removing the material beginning with one-of-a-kind sources at the Institute of Physics in Kyiv. The sides would work out a way to deal with the different sources and more difficult conditions at Electron Gaz. The sides would need to work closely and cooperatively to resolve all of the problems as the project moved forward, he concluded.

NATO Partnership for Peace Destruction Project
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47. (U) PM/WRA Deputy Director Steven Costner noted that the sides would have detailed technical discussions the next day on this topic, but he wanted to summarize the state of play in front of the larger group. While the original Phase I of the project planned for the destruction of 15,000 tons of munitions and 400,000 small arms/light weapons (SA/LW), revised plans by NATO and the USG (as Lead Nation) was for the project to terminate when current funding ran out (around the end of March 2010), due to the GOU deciding not to destroy all of the SA/LW. This revised plan would cover 6000 tons of munitions. The good news was that munitions destruction finally had commenced, with approximately 600 tons destroyed to date, and that the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency had determined that an extra 2000 tons of munitions could be destroyed (i.e., 8000 tons total) due to interest accrued in the account. The other donors would need to approve the use of the interest for this purpose, but that was expected to be a formality. Additionally, construction on the explosive waste incinerator would begin in October. As for SA/LW destruction, over 134,000 had been destroyed to date, with the GOU recently committing to destroy another 54,000 after over a year and a half suspension of such destruction. This would bring the total destroyed to approximately 190,000 SA/LW, but would leave the project approximately 210,000 weapons short of the original goal.

48. (U) Costner emphasized that the USG had committed to engage the GOU on its proposal to convert the balance of the SA/LW into replicas for sale to see if this could be done in a way that would satisfy USG requirements that the weapons no longer function as such. If agreement was reached, the USG and NATO would commit to continuing the destruction project and destroying the balance of the 15,000 tons of munitions as originally envisioned. However, he emphasized that U.S. laws were stringent in this regard and that experts may not reach agreement the next day. In this case, the sides would be faced with two options: 1) Ukraine would need to destroy the weapons as originally agreed; or 2) the project would be shut down, as noted above.

49. (U) Nykonenko expressed appreciation for the good news that the munitions total would be increased to 8000 tons, and expressed confidence that the experts would find a solution the following day that would allow destruction assistance to continue. (Note: The following day Ukrainian experts stated that they have recommended to the Cabinet of Ministers that the GOU agree to destroy the balance of weapons consistent with their original commitment, instead of converting them to replicas. If Cabinet of Ministers approval is attained, this will allow the project to continue. See septel for details. End Note.)

Biological Threat Reduction Initiative
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50. (U) Ludmilla Muherska from the Ministry of Health gave a detailed presentation on Ukraine’s efforts to upgrade 18 regional medical laboratories. The Ministry of Health is also working with
the MOD and the other security services to upgrade security at the laboratories. Ukraine would require additional assistance to reduce the biological threat and to complete all of this work

51. (U) Van Diepen urged Ukraine to identify expeditiously a new location for a Central Reference Laboratory (CRL) that meets DoD/CTR’s conditions and he emphasized that Ukraine needs to consolidate all especially dangerous pathogens in the CRL, once completed.

52. (U) Muherska said that Ukraine is working on this complex issue and was considering several sites for the CRL. Some of the sites were located on MOD-owned property, so if selected, the site would need to be transferred to the Ministry of Health. Ukraine is hoping that it would be able to select a site soon.

Side Conversation -- Security Assurances and START Follow-On

53. (S) On the margins of the Nonproliferation talks, Nykonenko had three conversations with VCI/SI Deputy Director Neil Couch to clarify Ukraine’s desire to participate in the START Follow-on Treaty and Kiev’s security concerns. Nykonenko stated that he has been appointed as the Ukrainian Representative to the START Follow-on negotiations and, in that capacity, he wants to consult with the U.S. negotiator. He added that, despite a rocky relationship with Russia, he has met with Ambassador Antonov on four occasions and he doesn’t understand why the United States has not offered similar consultations. He is willing to meet with A/S Gottemoeller at any time or place. Nykonenko reiterated his offer for Ukraine to play a mediating role between the United States and Russia in START Follow-on, citing past examples in which Ukraine had played such a role in START. Finally, Nykonenko asked that the START Follow-on Treaty contain a preambular statement that singled-out Ukraine’s contribution to START implementation specifically and to nuclear non-proliferation in general. He added that it was unfair to include Ukraine in the same category as Belarus and Kazakhstan since they are members of the CIS and only do what Russia tells them to do.

54. (S) Couch asked Nykonenko to explain why Ukraine needed additional, legally binding security assurances, recalling that the 1994 Budapest security assurances provided by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation did not expire with the START Treaty in December of 2009; that the 2008 United States-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership was still in force; and that Vice President Biden’s recent speech in Kyiv had confirmed the United States’ commitment to Ukrainian security. With all of these assurances, what else did Ukraine need? Nykonenko responded that Ukraine had no doubts about the commitment of the United States; however, Ukraine had serious concerns about Russia’s commitment. Citing the Russian-Georgian conflict and the large ethnic Russian population in Ukraine, Nykonenko explained that if the United States would agree to new security assurances with Ukraine, then Russia would likely agree to join in the document. That is Ukraine’s real desire; it views an agreement with the United States as a vehicle to bring Russia along. Nykonenko added that such an agreement would also satisfy the two halves of Ukraine society, the westward-leaning half and the Russian-leaning half, and help quell internal tension. He also raised the issue of the Russian Black Sea Navy Base at Sevastopol, stating that Ukraine has no way of knowing how many soldiers Russia had on the base and that he believed Russia has exceeded its number of personnel allowed under the Navy Base lease. This was especially urgent for Ukraine given Russia’s suspension of its CFE commitments. Nykonenko was clearly concerned that the Russians could use the Black Sea Base as jumping-off point for military action in Ukraine. (Note: A subsequent initial check with analysts at the Defense Intelligence Agency indicates no visible build-up of Russian forces at the Black Sea Navy Base. DIA is currently conducting a more thorough review of available information. End note.)

55. (U) Participants:

United States:

ISN Acting Assistant Secretary Vann Van Diepen
Terry Godby ISN/RA
Mike Stafford ISN/WMDT
NSOI Coordinator Brian Bachman
ISN/CATR Ralph Palmiero
ISN/MTR
Paul Van San
ISN/NDF
Neil Couch VCI/SI
Matt Hardiman EUR/PRA
Steve Costner
PM/WRA
Lauren Catipon
Embassy Kyiv
Wayne Leach
Embassy Kyiv
DOE Attache
Matilda Kuklish (interpreter)

Ukraine:
56. ISN Acting Assistant Secretary Van Diepen cleared this cable. PETTIT

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Pirates’ Catch Exposed Route of Arms in Sudan”
American Protest to Kenya on Ukrainian Arms

The United States lodges a protest with the Kenya government over the shipment of Ukrainian arms through Kenya.

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1. On December 15, Ambassador Ranneberger discussed the tank transfer issue with Prime Minister Odinga, who said that the GOK was committed to assisting the GOSS and that there was “intense pressure” from the GOSS to deliver the tanks. He hinted that the GOK might instead transfer the tanks to Uganda (and, he implied, from there to South Sudan). On December 16, following AF guidance, Ambassador Ranneberger reiterated to the PM that any further transfer of the tanks, via Uganda or otherwise, would violate U.S. law and could trigger sweeping sanctions against Kenya. He also noted that the likelihood of receiving a waiver for past transfers of LME to the SPLA since 2007 would be remote if the GOK proceeded with moving the tanks to Sudan. Ambassador Ranneberger also briefed Minister of Finance Uhuru Kenyatta on the issue on December 16, and Kenyatta responded that he understood the U.S. position.

2. On December 16, COL McNevin and DAO notetaker met with CGS Kianga and DMI Kameru at the Ambassador’s direction. The Vice Chief of General Staff General Karanjii also attended. McNevin reiterated the points made by Ambassador Ranneberger to the PM (see para 2) and noted that we are open to discussing possible future options for disposition of the tanks so that the GOK is not stuck with assets it does not need. Before the meeting, Kameru mentioned that in the GOK’s view, the tanks belong to the GOSS and that his government is receiving “increasing pressure” to deliver them. He added that President Kibaki was personally very angry about this issue. During the meeting, Kianga commented that the GOK was “very confused” by our position and did not understand why they needed a waiver, since the past transfers had been undertaken in consultation with the United States and they thought we were in agreement on the way forward towards implementation of the CPA. He added that this was causing a “major problem” between the GOK and the GOSS. Kianga asked about the significance of what appeared to him to be a major policy reversal, and questioned whether the United States is rethinking the CPA, increasingly shifting its support to Khartoum, and/or now seeking a unitary state in Sudan. Kianga asked that the United States explain directly to the GOSS/SPLA why we are blocking the tank transfer. Following that discussion, Kianga indicated the GOK would like to participate in a high-level trilateral meeting (GOK, GOSS, and USG) to reach a collective understanding of U.S. and regional partner countries’ objectives with respect to implementation of the CPA.

3. As McNevin was departing the meeting, Kameru called him back and asked, on Kianga’s behalf, for a list of all DOD programs and funding for Kenya, due to Kameru later today (December 16) in preparation for an upcoming Defense Council meeting scheduled for December 21. The Defense Council is chaired by President Kibaki, and it appears likely that Kianga will use the list to underscore the importance of the U.S.-Kenya mil-mil relationship and to convince Kibaki not to transfer the tanks. In addition to Kibaki and Kianga, other Defense Council members are NSIS Director Gichangi, Minister for Defense Haji, Minister for Internal Security Saitoti, Commandant of the Administration Police Mbugua, and Police Commissioner Iteere. (Note: The Defense Council
is composed entirely of advisors who are close to the President and come from his Kikuyu ethnic
group or closely related groups. End note.)

4. As directed in ref A, the demarche regarding transfer of Ukrainian-origin LME by the
Government of Kenya (GOK) to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was originally delivered
by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense Vicki Huddleston and Kenya-US Liaison Office Chief COL
McNevin to Kenya Assistant Minister for Defense David Musila and Kenya Chief of Defense Forces
General Kianga on 8 December 2009. COL McNevin also discussed the issue further with the Director
of Military Intelligence Philip Kameru on December 9, 12, and 16. In addition, the Political RA
Chief met with Director of National Security and Intelligence Service (NSIS) General Gichangi on
the issue on December 16. The GOK representatives assured DASD Huddleston and COL McNevin that no
tanks would be delivered to the SPLA for the foreseeable future. (Note: There are 32 T-72 tanks
remaining in Kenya from the shipment that arrived in Mombasa aboard the M/V Faina. End note.)

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5. On December 9, DMI Kameru also noted that all other transfers have been done with full
disclosure to the United States, and the GOK has shared all information regarding these transfers
without hesitation. He further noted that stopping this shipment will incur “big costs” and that
“Salva Kir will not be happy.” He went on to state that the GOK may seek waiver support from the
Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) and that the basis for the waiver would be the implementing
instructions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which allow other nations to support the
modernization and conversion of the SPLA from a guerilla force to a small conventional civilian
military that would be capable of future integration with the Sudanese national military. As
noted in ref A talking points, McNevin and Kameru also briefly discussed that U.S. legislation
does contain a waiver provision. On December 12, McNevin held a subsequent meeting with Kameru at
the Ambassador’s request and noted that the likelihood of a waiver being granted by the United
States would be remote if the GOK went ahead with the tank transfer.

6. Comment: As of 16 December, the 32 T-72 tanks remain on flatcars at Kahawa Army Barracks in
Nairobi. If indeed the tanks are not going to be transported in the “foreseeable future,” we
would expect to see them off-loaded soon and the flatcars returned to Rift Valley Railroad
service. The GOK is understandably confused, as transfer of these tanks, in their view, dove-
tailed with the goals of the United States to implement the CPA by converting the SPLA from a
guerilla force to a small conventional force capable of defending Juba (but not take Khartoum),
able to integrate with a national force, and able to counterbalance the significant military
capacity of Khartoum. Despite the GOK assurances, there are a number of factors that may lead to
the eventual transfer of the tanks, including: the need to maintain good relations with South
Sudan and keep a friendly ally on Kenya’s unstable northwestern border; the substantial financial
losses Kenya will incur if it does not complete the transfer; the fact that Kenya has no need to
add additional tank assets to its military; and Kenya’s financial and, to a lesser extent,
cultural/ideological links with South Sudan.

7. Over the past two years, KMOD officials have shared full details of their engagement with the
SPLA as we have shared details of our training program for the SPLA, including combat arms
soldier training, under a May 2007 Presidential Directive. The GOK views this as a reversal of
U.S. policy that has significant security, financial, and political implications for them. It is
difficult to persuade the Kenyans that transferring this equipment to the SPLA violates the terms
of the CPA and therefore will merit sanctions if completed when they are well aware that the
United States is continuing military to military security sector reform assistance to the SPLA.

8. We have been pushing the GOK very hard on the civilian side to bring about reform and good
governance, and have sparked mounting resistance as a result. Despite that pressure and tension,
our military to military relations have been excellent and our unimpeded access has been of
significant benefit to the USG in terms of counterterrorism and anti-piracy. Given the competing
policy issues on the table, we welcome ideas to defuse this situation, discuss options for
alternative dispositions of the tanks, and to harmonize the “apparent disconnect” between the CPA
and U.S. legislation mentioned in ref A. We urge Washington to consider the GOK’s request to
convene a high-level dialogue with the GOK, GOSS, and other relevant stakeholders as soon as
possible to foster a clear understanding of U.S. policy and develop a way forward towards CPA
implementation. RANNEBERGER

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Pirates’ Catch Exposed Route of Arms in Sudan”
A Shipload of Tanks Captured by Pirates

The capture of a shipload of tanks by pirates off the Horn of Africa shines a light on Ukraine’s arms deals and Kenya’s role in them.

DATE 2008-10-02 15:46:00

SOURCE Embassy Nairobi

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002290

NOFORN SIPDIS


REF: A. USDLO KHARTOUM IIR 6 890 0139 08 201536Z FEB 08 B. USDAO NAIROBI IIR 6 854 0108 08 291553Z JAN 08 C. USDAO NAIROBI IIR 6 854 0026 08 091427Z NOV 07

Classification By: PolOff Rachael Doherty, reasons 1.4 (b,d).

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Summary
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1. (S-NF) A shipment of 33 Ukrainian T-72 tanks and other ammunition and equipment aboard the M/V Faina, currently under the control of pirates off the coast of Somalia, has raised questions and controversy in Kenya about their final destination. It is a poorly kept secret that the tanks are bound for the Government of South Sudan -- and that the Government of Kenya has been facilitating shipments from Ukraine to the Government of South Sudan since 2007. Since the world’s eyes are now on the M/V Faina, it is unlikely that the tanks, if released, would go immediately to their intended destination. Instead, they are likely to sit in a Kenyan military depot until the world’s attention shifts elsewhere. In the meantime, the Kenyan military is in an uncomfortable spot. End Summary.

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Kenya Claims T-72s...
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2. (C) The hijacking of the Ukrainian-owned, Belize-flagged merchant vessel (M/V) Faina -- and subsequent confirmation by the government of Ukraine that there are 33 T-72 tanks and other ammunition and equipment onboard -- has raised questions about the cargo’s ultimate destination. In a move likely aimed at stemming controversy, the Government of Kenya has claimed that the ultimate destination for the shipment is the Kenyan Armed Forces. It is a poorly-kept secret, however, that the shipment was originally bound for South Sudan.

3. (S-NF) The contradictions have already been highlighted in the press. Kenyan Government spokesman Alfred Mutua and Kenyan Defense spokesman Bogita Ongeri have both insisted that the tanks belong to Kenya. East Africa Seafarers’ Assistance Program spokesman Andrew Mwangura told a different story: that the shipment ultimately was bound for the Government of South Sudan. (Note: Intelligence reporting (refs A-C) confirms Mwangura’s story -- not the official GOK stance. After reporting that he was warned by Kenyan government officials to stop talking about the shipment, Mwangura was arrested on October 1. End Note.)

4. (C) MFA Director of Political Affairs Ambassador Ben Ogutu maintained the party line to PolOff
on September 30, but expressed relief that the Ministry of Defense has the lead on the issue. “We are just repeating the information that the Ministry has provided to us,” Ogutu said. (Note: Ogutu also expressed great interest in what U.S. officials in Washington would say about the arms’ ultimate destination. End Note.)

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Although They Were Juba-Bound
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5. (S-NF) Since last year, Kenya’s Ministry of Defense has indeed played a major role in assisting the Government of South Sudan receive arms shipments from the Government of Ukraine. When the shipments are off-loaded at the port of Mombasa, they are transported via rail to Uganda and then onward to Southern Sudan (ref C). Military officials have expressed discomfort with this arrangement, however, and have made it clear to us that the orders come “from the top.” (i.e., President Kibaki)

6. (S-NF) Given the extensive local and international media attention, it is unlikely that the shipment will go directly to Sudan should the cargo be offloaded in Mombasa as originally planned. A high-level military official has indicated to us that if received, the cargo will be offloaded and delivered to a military depot in Kenya, where it will likely sit for a few months before risking the overland shipment to Sudan.

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NAIROBI 00002290 002 OF 002

Not the First Time
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7. (S-NF) This is not the first time a T-72 shipment to South Sudan has been publicly diverted. In mid-February, the Government of Kenya was reported as “seizing” a shipment of tanks bound for the Sudan People’s Liberation Army as it violated the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement to end Sudan’s civil war. The “seizure” occurred when Kenya’s own security situation was still precarious given the post-election crisis. The tanks were ultimately released and proceeded to Sudan, and the cargo currently aboard the M/V Faina was meant to complete the tank sale. (Note: Although there is no arms embargo against Southern Sudan, the CPA does say that the parties “agree in principle to proportional downsizing of the forces on both sides” following the cease fire. The CPA permits the resupply of lethal military items on approval by the Joint Defense Board and UN mission. End Note.)

8. (C) Comment: While Kenya does see itself as a guarantor of the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which was signed in Nairobi, the highest levels of government have nevertheless allowed previous arms shipments to proceed. Kenya’s political leadership has thereby put the Kenyan military in a an uncomfortable spot. Some Kenyan military officials have been questioning whether Kenya should be facilitating arms deliveries since well before the M/V Faina made headlines.

9. (C) Comment, cont: While no one is talking about why Kenya is in this position, we can think of a few reasons. First, it is possible that Kenya’s political leadership wants to support the Government of South Sudan but not in a way that will openly provoke Khartoum or potentially threaten South Sudan’s eventual independence. Vice President Musyoka’s public opposition to the International Criminal Court’s indictment of President Bashir (because it could threaten the CPA) illustrates this point. Second, the government appears genuinely sensitive to charges that major arms shipments would be in violation of the spirit of the CPA. Third, given Kenya’s track record on corruption, it is always possible that there is a financial benefit for a senior Kenyan official (or two, or more) in return for facilitating the arms shipments. As such, the question of “Who owns the tanks?” will remain a touchy side issue for Kenya in the piracy of the M/V Faina. RANNEBERGER
Americas

Analyzing a Coup in Honduras

The American Embassy in Honduras sends to Washington its legal analysis of the forced removal of the Honduran president, Manuel Zelaya, addressing the much debated question of whether it was an illegal coup.

DATE 2009-07-24 00:23:00

SOURCE Embassy Tegucigalpa

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL TEGUCIGALPA 000645

SIPDIS

WHA FOR A/S TOM SHANNON L FOR HAROLD KOK AND JOAN DONOGHUE NSC FOR DAN RESTREPO


REF: TEGUCIGALPA 578

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

1. (C) Summary: Post has attempted to clarify some of the legal and constitutional issues surrounding the June 28 forced removal of President Manuel “Mel” Zelaya. The Embassy perspective is that there is no doubt that the military, Supreme Court and National Congress conspired on June 28 in what constituted an illegal and unconstitutional coup against the Executive Branch, while accepting that there may be a prima facie case that Zelaya may have committed illegalities and may have even violated the constitution. There is equally no doubt from our perspective that Roberto Micheletti’s assumption of power was illegitimate. Nevertheless, it is also evident that the constitution itself may be deficient in terms of providing clear procedures for dealing with alleged illegal acts by the President and resolving conflicts between the branches of government.

End summary.

2. (U) Since the June 28 removal and expulsion of President Zelaya by the Honduran armed forces, the Embassy has consulted Honduran legal experts (one cannot find a fully unbiased professional legal opinion in Honduras in the current politically charged atmosphere) and reviewed the text of the Honduran Constitution and its laws to develop a better understanding of the arguments being parlayed by the coup’s supporters and opponents.

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Arguments of the Coup Defenders
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3. (SBU) Defenders of the June 28 coup have offered some combination of the following, often ambiguous, arguments to assert it’s legality:

-- Zelaya had broken the law (alleged but not proven);

-- Zelaya resigned (a clear fabrication);
-- Zelaya intended to extend his term in office (supposition);

-- Had he been allowed to proceed with his June 28 constitutional reform opinion poll, Zelaya would have dissolved Congress the following day and convened a constituent assembly (supposition);

-- Zelaya had to be removed from the country to prevent a bloodbath;

-- Congress “unanimously” (or in some versions by a 123-5 vote) deposed Zelaya; (after the fact and under the cloak of secrecy); and

-- Zelaya “automatically” ceased to be president the moment he suggested modifying the constitutional prohibition on presidential reelection.

4. (C) In our view, none of the above arguments has any substantive validity under the Honduran constitution. Some are outright false. Others are mere supposition or ex-post rationalizations of a patently illegal act. Essentially:

-- the military had no authority to remove Zelaya from the country;

-- Congress has no constitutional authority to remove a Honduran president;

-- Congress and the judiciary removed Zelaya on the basis of a hasty, ad-hoc, extralegal, secret, 48-hour process;

-- the purported “resignation” letter was a fabrication and was not even the basis for Congress’s action of June 28; and

-- Zelaya’s arrest and forced removal from the country violated multiple constitutional guarantees, including the prohibition on expatriation, presumption of innocence and right to due process.

----------- Impeachment under the Honduran Constitution ---------------

5. (U) Under the Honduran Constitution as currently written, the President may be removed only on the basis of death, resignation or incapacitation. Only the Supreme Court may determine that a President has been “incapacitated” on the basis of committing a crime.

6. (U) There is no explicit impeachment procedure in the 1982 Honduran Constitution. Originally, Article 285-15 stated that Congress had the competence to determine whether “cause” existed against the President, but it did not stipulate on what grounds or under what procedure. Article 319-2 stated that the Supreme Court would “hear” cases of official or common crimes committed by high-level officials, upon a finding of cause by the Congress. This implied a vague two-step executive impeachment process involving the other two branches of government, although without specific criteria or procedures. However, Article 285 was abrogated in 2003, and the corresponding provision of Article 319 (renumbered 313) was revised to state only that the Supreme Court would hear “processes initiated” against high officials. Thus, it appears that under the Constitution as currently written, removal of a president or a government official is an entirely judicial matter.

7. (U) Respected legal opinion confirms that the removal of a president is a judicial matter. According to a 2006 book by respected legal scholar Enrique Flores Valeriano -- late father of Zelaya’s Minister of the Presidency, Enrique Flores Lanza -- Article 312 of the Law of Constitutional Justice indicates that if any government official is found to be in violation of the Constitution, that person should be removed from office immediately with the ultimate authority on matters of Constitutionality being the Supreme Court.
8. (U) Many legal experts have also confirmed to us that the Honduran process for impeaching a President or other senior-level officials is a judicial procedure. They assert that under Honduran law the process consists of formal criminal charges being filed by the Attorney General against the accused with the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court could accept or reject the charges. If the Court moved to indict, it would assign a Supreme Court magistrate, or a panel of magistrates to investigate the matter, and oversee the trial. The trial process is open and transparent and the defendant would be given a full right of self-defense. If convicted in the impeachment trial, the magistrates have authority to remove the President or senior official. Once the President is removed, then the constitutional succession would follow. In this case, if a President is legally charged, convicted, and removed, his successor is the Vice President or what is termed the Presidential Designate. In the current situation in Honduras, since the Vice President, Elvin Santos, resigned last December in order to be able to run as the Liberal Party Presidential candidate, President Zelaya’s successor would be Congress President Roberto Micheletti. Unfortunately, the President was never tried, or convicted, or was legally removed from office to allow a legal succession.

The Legal Case Against Zelaya

9. (C) Zelaya’s opponents allege that he violated the Constitution on numerous grounds, some of which appear on their face to be valid, others not:

-- Refusing to submit a budget to the Congress: The Constitution is unambiguous that the Executive shall submit a proposed budget to Congress by September 15 each year (Art. 367), that Congress shall approve the budget (Art. 366) and that no obligations or payments may be effectuated except on the basis of an approved budget (Art. 384);

-- Refusing to fund the Congress: Article 212 states that the Treasury shall apportion quarterly the funds needed for the operation of the Congress;

-- Proposing an illegal constitutional referendum: The Constitution may be amended only through two-thirds vote of the Congress in two consecutive sessions (Art. 373 and 375); a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution, as Zelaya promoted, is therefore unconstitutional; however, it is not clear that proposing a constituent assembly in itself violates the constitution, only that any changes ensuing from that assembly would be invalid;

-- Defying the judgment of a competent court: Zelaya insisted on pushing ahead with his constitutional reform opinion poll after both a first-instance court and an appeals court ordered him to suspend those efforts; however, while he clearly intended to follow through with the poll, he never actually did it;

-- Proposing to reform un改革able articles: Since Zelaya’s proposed constituent assembly would have unlimited powers to rewrite the constitution, it violated Article 374, which makes certain articles unamendable; once again, though, Zelaya never actually attempted to change the so-called “carved in stone” articles; it was only assumed he intended to;

-- Dismissing the armed forces chief: The Supreme Court’s Constitutional Hall ruled June 25 that Zelaya was in violation of the Constitution for dismissing Defense Chief Vasquez Velasquez; the Constitution (Art. 280) states that the President may freely name or remove the chief of the armed forces; but the court ruled that since Zelaya fired him for refusing to carry out a poll the court had ruled illegal, the firing was illegal.

10. (C) Although a case could well have been made against Zelaya for a number of the above alleged constitutional violations, there was never any formal, public weighing of the evidence nor any semblance of due process.

The Article 239 Cannard

11. (U) Article 239, which coup supporters began citing after the fact to justify Zelaya’s removal (it is nowhere mentioned in the voluminous judicial dossier against Zelaya), states that any official proposing to reform the constitutional prohibition against reelection of the
president shall immediately cease to carry out their functions and be ineligible to hold public office for 10 years. Coup defenders have asserted that Zelaya therefore automatically ceased to be President when he proposed a constituent assembly to rewrite the Constitution.

12. (C) Post’s analysis indicates the Article 239 argument is flawed on multiple grounds:

-- Although it was widely assumed that Zelaya’s reason for seeking to convocate a constituent assembly was to amend the constitution to allow for reelection, we are not aware that he ever actually stated so publicly;

-- Article 239 does not stipulate who determines whether it has been violated or how, but it is reasonable to assume that it does not abrogate other guarantees of due process and the presumption of innocence;

-- Article 94 states that no penalty shall be imposed without the accused having been heard and found guilty in a competent court;

-- Many other Honduran officials, including presidents, going back to the first elected government under the 1982 Constitution, have proposed allowing presidential reelection, and they were never deemed to have been automatically removed from their positions as a result.

13. (C) It further warrants mention that Micheletti himself should be forced to resign following the logic of the 239 argument, since as President of Congress he considered legislation to have a fourth ballot box (“cuarta urna”) at the November elections to seek voter approval for a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution. Any member of Congress who discussed the proposal should also be required to resign, and National Party presidential candidate Pepe Lobo, who endorsed the idea, should be ineligible to hold public office for 10 years.

14. (C) Regardless of the merits of Zelaya’s alleged constitutional violations, it is clear from even a cursory reading that his removal by military means was illegal, and even the most zealous of coup defenders have been unable to make convincing arguments to bridge the intellectual gulf between “Zelaya broke the law” to “therefore, he was packed off to Costa Rica by the military without a trial.”

-- Although coup supporters allege the court issued an arrest warrant for Zelaya for disobeying its order to desist from the opinion poll, the warrant, made public days later, was for him to be arrested and brought before the competent authority, not removed from the country;

-- Even if the court had ordered Zelaya to be removed from the country, that order would have been unconstitutional; Article 81 states that all Hondurans have the right to remain in the national territory, subject to certain narrow exceptions spelled out in Article 187, which may be invoked only by the President of the Republic with the agreement of the Council of Ministers; Article 182 states that no Honduran may be expatriated;

-- The armed forces have no/no competency to execute judicial orders; originally, Article 272 said the armed forces had the responsibility to “maintain peace, public order and the ‘dominion’ of the constitution,” but that language was excised in 1998; under the current text, only the police are authorized to uphold the law and execute court orders (Art. 293);

-- Accounts of Zelaya’s abduction by the military indicate he was never legally “served” with a warrant; the soldiers forced their way in by shooting out the locks and essentially kidnapped the President.

15. (U) The Armed Forces’ ranking legal advisor, Col. Herberth Bayardo Inestroza, acknowledged in an interview published in the Honduran press July 5 that the Honduran Armed Forces had broken the law in removing Zelaya from the country. That same day it was reported that the Public Ministry was investigating the actions of the Armed Forces in arresting and deporting Zelaya June 28 and that the Supreme Court had asked the Armed Forces to explain the circumstances that motivated his
forcible exile.

16. (C) As reported reftel, the legal adviser to the Supreme Court told Poloff that at least some justices on the Court consider Zelaya’s arrest and deportation by the military to have been illegal.

Congress Had no Authority to Remove Zelaya

17. (C) As explained above, the Constitution as amended in 2003 apparently gives sole authority for removing a president to the judiciary. The Congressional action of June 28 has been reported in some media as acceptance of Zelaya’s resignation, based on a bogus resignation letter dated June 25 that surfaced after the coup. However, the June 28 Congressional resolution makes no mention of the letter, nor does it state that Congress was accepting Zelaya’s resignation. It says Congress “disapproves” of Zelaya’s conduct and therefore “separates” him from the office of President -- a constitutional authority Congress does not have. Furthermore, a source in the Congressional leadership told us that a quorum was not present when the resolution was adopted, rendering it invalid. There was no recorded vote, nor a request for the “yeas” and “nays.”

18. (C) In sum, for a constitutional succession from Zelaya to Micheletti to occur would require one of several conditions:

Zelaya’s resignation, his death, or permanent medical incapacitation (as determined by judicial and medical authorities), or as discussed previously, his formal criminal conviction and removal from office. In the absence of any of these conditions and since Congress lacked the legal authority to remove Zelaya, the actions of June 28 can only be considered a coup d’etat by the legislative branch, with the support of the judicial branch and the military, against the executive branch. It bears mentioning that, whereas the resolution adopted June 28 refers only to Zelaya, its effect was to remove the entire executive branch. Both of these actions clearly exceeded Congress’s authority.

Comment

19. (C) The analysis of the Constitution sheds some interesting light on the events of June 28. The Honduran establishment confronted a dilemma: near unanimity among the institutions of the state and the political class that Zelaya had abused his powers in violation of the Constitution, but with some ambiguity what to do about it. Faced with that lack of clarity, the military and/or whoever ordered the coup fell back on what they knew -- the way Honduran presidents were removed in the past: a bogus resignation letter and a one-way ticket to a neighboring country. No matter what the merits of the case against Zelaya, his forced removal by the military was clearly illegal, and Micheletti’s ascendance as “interim president” was totally illegitimate.

20. (C) Nonetheless, the very Constitutional uncertainty that presented the political class with this dilemma may provide the seeds for a solution. The coup’s most ardent legal defenders have been unable to make the intellectual leap from their arguments regarding Zelaya’s alleged crimes to how those allegations justified dragging him out of his bed in the night and flying him to Costa Rica. That the Attorney General’s office and the Supreme Court now reportedly question the legality of that final step is encouraging and may provide a face-saving “out” for the two opposing sides in the current standoff. End Comment. LLORENS
From Panama Before the U.S. Invasion

An American diplomat in Panama, John A. Bushnell, speculates about the future of the Panamanian leader, Gen. Manuel Noriega, just a week before the American military invaded and arrested General Noriega on drug charges.

DATE 1989-12-13 19:14:00

SOURCE Embassy Panama

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 05 PANAMA 08545

E.O.12356: DECL:OADR TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PM, US SUBJECT: PANAMANIANS HOPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL COUP -- NORIEGA PLANS FOR A NEW YEAR IN POWER

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

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SUMMARY
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3. PRESSURES ON NORIEGA HAVE INCREASED ACROSS THE BOARD, BUT HE SEEMS TO HAVE DETERMINED THAT HE CAN MANAGE THEM. DESPITE NEW U.S. ECONOMIC SANCTIONS, THE MOST PRECIPITOUS ECONOMIC DROP IS OVER FOR NOW, FOLLOWING A TWO-YEAR, 25 PERCENT DROP IN GDP. INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION REMAINS AN IRRITANT TO THE REGIME, BUT IT IS NOT A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR NORIEGA’S STABILITY. U.S. ACTIONS, FROM THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ACTING CANAL ADMINISTRATOR TO RUMORED COVERT PLANS AGAINST NORIEGA AS WELL AS NEW ECONOMIC SANCTIONS, ALLOW NORIEGA TO BEAT THE NATIONALISTIC DRUM AND MAKE IT APPEAR AS IF DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR HIM IS GROWING.

4. NORIEGA’S WEAKEST POINT REMAINS HIS OWN INSTITUTION. WHISPERS THAT “THE OCTOBER 3 COUP IS NOT OVER” CONTINUE AND NORIEGA CONTINUES TO HOLD ON MAINLY BY BRUTAL REPRESSION OF ANY POTENTIAL NEW INSIDE OPPONENTS. WHEN ANOTHER ACTION TO REMOVE NORIEGA WILL TAKE PLACE IS UNCERTAIN, BUT WAITING FOR THAT POSSIBILITY IS THE MAIN PROSPECT FOR PANAMA IN 1990. END SUMMARY.

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THE CRISIS GRINDS ON
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5. THE PANAMA CRISIS CONTINUES TO GRIND ON WITH NO CLEAR END IN SIGHT. NORIEGA TENACIously Holds ON TO POWER, INTIMIDATING HIS OPPONENTS AND FIRING UP HIS SUPPORTERS WITH SLOGANS CALLING FOR RETRIBUTION AGAINST “PANAMANIAN TRAITORS AND THEIR U.S. MASTERS,” SHOULD ANYTHING HAPPEN TO HIM. NORIEGA IS WEAKER THAN HE WAS AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR, BUT THE IMPACT OF THE CURRENT SET OF PRESSURES HAVE SO FAR FAILED TO EJECT HIM FROM OFFICE.

6. NEVERTHELESS, RECENT PRESS REPORTS OF AN ALLEGED U.S. COVERT ACTION PLAN AGAINST NORIEGA HAVE ONCE AGAIN RAISED HOPES OF SOME PANAMANIANS THAT THIS MAY BE THE BEGINNING OF HIS END. NORIEGA HIMSELF IS APPARENTLY ATTACHING SOME CREDIBILITY TO THE PRESS REPORTS. HE HAS REACTED NERVOUSLY BY STEPPING UP HARASSMENT OF THE OPPOSITION AND INCREASING THE SIZE, TRAINING, ACTIVITY, AND ARMAMENT OF HIS “DIGNITY BATTALIONS.” THE OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP IS CONCERNED OVER THE NEW “EYE FOR AN EYE” PARA-MILITARY CAMPAIGN, WHICH NORIEGA HAS USED TO REMIND THE OPPOSITION OF ITS VULNERABILITY.
7. The Rodriguez administration, unsurprisingly, remains ineffectual, but continues to limp along. Regime sources indicate with some degree of certitude that Noriega is unhappy with his civilian puppets, that he may even fire Rodriguez, and plans to take over the formal reigns of government soon. The assembly of 519 local district representatives (ANRC) confirmed him as "National Coordinator" on November 22. This brings him one step closer to being named "head of government", which he and others around him have hinted at for some time.

8. Many view this Noriega move as the final step toward a totalitarian regime and further severe repression. Some see this as a pending Noriega mistake. As "head of government", he would have to bear full official responsibility for regime actions. At the same time, by introducing a new element -- his governmental role -- into the stale political situation, Noriega may be able to use his usual mixture of obfuscation and intimidation to buy himself more time and political breathing space.

The Opposition

9. Noriega’s most recent para-military show of force further convinced the opposition that political action will result only in greater regime brutality against them, not Noriega’s departure. The opposition leadership quietly hopes that clandestine (and other) U.S. action, possibly coupled with another coup will remove Noriega. The leaders see themselves playing a role in the next coup attempt and their current preparations are focused on being able to move in to fill the government vacuum if the next effort should succeed. The civilian opposition recognizes the political reality that the military is the main political force in Panama.

10. As the memory -- and to some extent the legitimacy -- of the May election recedes, the pressure on the leadership from within the opposition ranks "to do something" to maintain political legitimacy is growing, however. Opposition ability to cultivate political support and trust in the ADOC leadership are hampered by effective Noriega intimidation at the grass roots level. Meanwhile, U.S. economic sanctions are continuing to hurt and new measures are unpopular. The opposition leadership fears that many Panamanians -- including their followers -- will increasingly demand that the Americans get off their backs, if Noriega won’t.

11. Panama’s opposition and Panamanians in general ran up many short term hills in 1989 - with the end always just over the horizon. May elections, the OAS negotiations, September 1, October 3, and now January 1, 1990 have all too easily been accepted as targets for when the Panama crisis would “have to” be solved. Already ADOC leader Guillermo “Billy” Ford is talking of February 25 (Nicaraguan election day) as a date before which Noriega must fall if the U.S. does not wish to have the precedent of an annulled election repeated in Nicaragua. Overall, however, the opposition has little energy left to charge up another hill unless convinced it is the last one. Only another coup holds out such a promise, but the opposition is not able to influence that to any significant degree.

The Next-Coup Attempt

12. The most (and maybe only) hopeful sign for Noriega’s opponents in 1990 is that troubles inside the FDP are worse than they have ever been. Reassignments and promotions flowing from the post-coup purge are just now being made -- more than two months after the event. Many of the more "professional" FDP officers and NCO’s were killed, tortured, or dismissed after October 3. The successor crop of true believers has neither the experience, training or intelligence to fill the shoes of their predecessors. Noriega has had to rely mainly on himself or the support of this small clique of loyalists since the coup attempt. His increased use of dignity battalions is also wearing on the career soldiers. What little military pride they have left has been injured by the activities of this para-military rabble which they fear will get out of control and ultimately hurt the institution.

13. Discontent and feelings of revenge continue to fester inside the FDP and there are numerous reports that there are “individuals” who are prepared to act on these emotions. One regime insider recently claimed that Noriega’s nominal number 2, Colonel Marco Justines, is himself looking for ways to inch out his boss. Meanwhile, notorious civilian supporters of Noriega, such
AS XXXXXXXXXXX (STRICTLY PROTECT), ARE ALREADY LOOKING BEYOND NORIEGA’S DEPARTURE IN ADVOCATING WITH EMBOFFS AN OPPOSITION DECLARATION OF AMNESTY FOR REGIME SUPPORTERS. SOURCES NOW INDICATE THAT NORIEGA SUSPECTS ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO UNSEAT HIM AS EARLY AS DECEMBER 15.

THE STATUS OF “UNRELENTING PRESSURES”

INTERNATIONAL

14. THE RECENT RESOLUTION OF THE OASGA CONFIRMED NORIEGA’S ISOLATION IN THE HEMISPHERE, BUT WAS MET WITH ONLY FLEETING INTEREST IN PANAMA. THE FDP’S DISINVITATION TO THE RECENT CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ARMIES IN GUATEMALA WAS POTENTIALLY A MORE SERIOUS BLOW TO FDP MORALE, BUT THIS COLD SHOULDER FROM THEIR LATIN COLLEAGUES PASSED LARGELY UNNOTICED BECAUSE OF NORIEGA’S ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF INFORMATION INSIDE AND OUTSIDE HIS INSTITUTION.

15. AMBASSADORS OF MOST NATIONS REMAIN OUTSIDE PANAMA, EITHER ON VACATION OR CONSULTATIONS, BUT LOCAL DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION MAY BE IN DANGER. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR RECENTLY RETURNED FROM HIS “VACATION” TO REJOIN HIS ITALIAN AND SPANISH COLLEAGUES WHO NEVER LEFT. SEVERAL AMBASSADORS AND MILITARY ATTACHES (E.G. MEXICO) MAY VISIT THEIR FAMILIES WHICH ARE RESIDING HERE AT CHRISTMAS. NORIEGA IS MAKING ALL HE CAN OUT OF CONTACTS WITH THE USSR, THE PRC, LIBYA, CUBA, NICARAGUA, AND EVEN U.S. ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT GROUPS. HE WILL ALSO SEEK TO CONJURE UP SOME LIMITED LEGITIMACY IN HIS PLEA FOR LATIN SOLIDARITY OVER THE CANAL ADMINISTRATOR ISSUE.

ECONOMIC

16. THE REGIME CONTINUES TO HAVE CASH FLOW PROBLEMS, BUT THE ECONOMIC DOWNWARD SPIRAL HAS LEVELLED OFF FOR NOW. NORIEGA IS ABLE TO COMBAT THE WORST DISRUPTIONS BY SALARY ADJUSTMENTS AND CONTINUED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT OF LOYALISTS. UNEMPLOYMENT OVERALL IS ON THE RISE, BUT ONE OF THE “PILLARS” OF THE PANAMANIAN SERVICE ECONOMY -- THE COLON FREE ZONE -- IS HAVING RECORD SALES AND PROVIDES SOMEWHAT INCREASING EMPLOYMENT IN THE POLITICALLY VOLATILE COLON AREA.

17. MEANWHILE, PARA-MILITARY DIGNITY BATTALIONS ARE ENLISTING OR SCARING THE UNEMPLOYED. BUSINESSMEN, HURT BY NORIEGA AND U.S. SANCTIONS, ARE INCREASINGLY MORE LIKELY TO MOVE TOWARD ACCOMMODATION WITH NORIEGA. MANY FEEL THEY HAVE TO GIVE PRIORITY TO BEING ABLE TO STAY IN BUSINESS.

U.S. PRESSURES


19. THE CANAL ADMINISTRATOR APPOINTMENT OFFERS NORIEGA SOME ADDITIONAL NATIONALISTIC PEGS TO SUPPORT HIS SEARCH FOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. BLOWING THE TREATY VIOLATION AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY WHISTLE MAY WELL GAIN HIM SOME SUPPORT. PLAYED WELL, HE MAY AGAIN BE ABLE TO DO WHAT HE DOES BEST: BUY TIME.

THE FUTURE OF THE PANAMA CRISIS

20. DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN OPPOSITION TO NORIEGA IS SHOWING SIGNS OF FATIGUE. FOREIGN ATTENTION IN PARTICULAR IS DISTRACTED BY MUCH HIGHER PROFILE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS, FROM EL SALVADOR TO BERLIN. OF COURSE, NORIEGA TOO IS TIRING, EXEMPLIFIED IN HIS SLOWNESS IN SETTLING THE TURMOIL INSIDE HIS OWN INSTITUTION. BUT HE IS A MASTER OF SURVIVAL AND ABLE TO BUILD ON THE FATIGUE OF OTHERS. RENEWED NOISES IN RECENT REGIME PRONOUNCEMENTS OF A WILLINGNESS TO “TALK” ARE A CLASSIC MANIFESTATION OF TRIED AND TRUE NORIEGA TIME-BUYING TACTICS.

21. THE POLITICAL TENSION IN PANAMA, INCREASED BY RECENT PRESS REVELATIONS AND U.S. SANCTIONS ANNOUNCEMENTS, WILL LIKELY EBB IN EARLY 1990, ABSENT SOME MAJOR EVENT. NORIEGA IS SHOWING NO SIGNS THAT HE HAS ANY INTENTION OF LEAVING VOLUNTARILY. GIVEN BROAD POLITICAL REALITIES IN THIS
COUNTRY, THE ONLY HOPE FOR A FIRST STEP IN CRISIS RESOLUTION IS ANOTHER COUP. WAITING FOR THAT TO HAPPEN IS THE MAIN POLITICAL PROSPECT FOR PANAMA IN 1990.

BUSHNELL

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”
A Briefing on Canada for Bush

As President George W. Bush prepared to visit Canada in 2004, the American Embassy in Ottawa advised him to “send the message that we value Canada with no strings attached” despite trade disputes and other friction.

DATE 2004-11-18 19:32:00

SOURCE Embassy Ottawa

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 04 OTTAWA 003115

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Summary and Key Themes

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1. (C/NF) The Canadian Government and the Embassy strongly welcome your visit and the opportunities it will afford to advance our broad bilateral relationship. The two key themes I would stress for your visit are partnership and reassurance. The Canadians need to be reassured that at the end of the day, whatever tactical disagreements we may have over Iraq and individual trade cases, we are firmly united across the world,s longest undefended border by common values, shared political heritage, and the largest bilateral trading relationship in the planet,s history. We need to send the message that we value Canada with no strings attached. The early timing of this visit will help make this point.

2. (C/NF) Specifically, it would be very helpful if you came to Ottawa with three key public messages. First, a positive signal demonstrating movement on BSE, short of resolution but beyond we,re working on it. A firm date for completion of the regulation would give PM Martin a huge political boost and help beleaguered Canadian ranchers get through the winter. Second, appreciation for the positive role Canadians play in the world as peacekeepers and in transmitting our shared political and cultural values to failed and failing states. And third, personal thanks for our close cooperation in defending the continent against terrorism, both in border security, and in the larger fight to roll back the availability of weapons of mass destruction, contain the activities of terrorist groups, and support development that will provide alternatives to terrorism.

3. (C/NF) Several themes about the future would also be helpful for your private meetings. You should note the substantial Canadian support to date for Iraq reconstruction and encourage Canada to play a larger role in the development of political and security institutions there. You should promise continued close cooperation in places such as Sudan, Afghanistan, and Haiti, and solicit PM Martin,s views on how to best synergize our efforts. And finally, you should commit to focus on settling our trade and environmental disputes. End Summary

Martin,s Minority Government Stable, but Weak
4. (C) After governing in majority for ten years, the Liberal Party called elections June 28 to gain a mandate for PM Martin, who succeeded Jean Chretien in December 2003. The Liberals were hurt by a scandal involving the disbursement of public monies in Quebec, and the Martin government was reduced to minority status, the first in Canada since 1979. In the first week of Parliament, Martin was able to loosely win over the New Democratic Party, putting him neck-and-neck with the Conservatives and the separatist Bloc Quebecois. Both the Liberal-NDP and the Conservative-Bloc alignments are very tentative, however, and different issue-driven coalitions are likely to emerge on an ad hoc basis.

5. (SBU) Predictions on how long the government will last range from six months to two years. Canadians do not want to go to the polls soon and the Government and Opposition know it. But given the nature of Canada's political system, the Government's fall is never more than one bad decision away.

6. (C/NF) The Liberal's thin margin leads Martin to exercise extreme caution, which some observers are now touting as weak leadership. The PM has made it clear that he will not try to carry out an aggressive agenda, and on issues such as missile defense, would just as soon wait rather than try to tackle it now and risk a negative vote.

Seeking Canada's Place in the World
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7. (SBU) All of this is taking place in the context of a certain amount of soul-searching here on Canada's decline from middle power status to that of an active observer of global affairs, a trend which some Canadians believe should be reversed. In the short term the country's priorities are improving the quality of life for Canadian citizens and there is little support for increasing defense spending (currently among the lowest per capita in NATO) or the foreign affairs budget. PM Martin has promised to focus his government on policies to perpetuate the Canadian economic miracle, help cities, improve health care, and provide easier access to child-care. However, he has also made modest increases in the defense budget and has announced plans to add 5,000 troops to the armed forces.

Engagement on Homeland Security
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8. (SBU) Within the constraints of weak public support and low funding, PM Martin has made his foreign affairs and homeland security bureaucracies more capable and has kept Canada selectively active in global issues. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, Canada has implemented a range of practical measures that improve Canada's homeland security while facilitating the flow of people and commerce across our common border. Starting with the December 2001 Smart Border Action Plan with the U.S., changes include enhancements to aviation security, full compliance with UN and other multilateral conventions, and strengthening of financial controls. In the fall of 2003 Canada undertook an aggressive reorganization of its security and border agencies, consolidating them into a structure similar to that of DHS, and in April 2004 rolled out its first-ever national security strategy. Bilateral efforts have resulted in better information sharing, joint targeting, and smoother flow of low-risk traffic.

9. (S/NF) A potential irritant on the Canadian side that may be raised has to do with sharing of intelligence regarding Iraq operations. The government is aware that we are creating a separate US-UK-Australia channel for sharing sensitive intelligence, including information that traditionally has been U.S. eyes only. The GOC has expressed concern at multiple levels that their exclusion from a traditional “four-eyes” construct is “punishment” for Canada's non-participation in Iraq and they fear that the Iraq-related channel may evolve into a more permanent “three-eyes” only structure. PM Martin may raise this with you privately.

A Modest but Effective Agenda on Global Affairs
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10. (C) PM Martin has also kept Canada in the game internationally. In 2002 Ottawa sent 750 soldiers to Afghanistan where they served with distinction in Kandahar, and Canada led the maritime task force monitoring movement in the Persian Gulf, a service that began with an eye on Afghanistan but later was useful in the lead-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Ottawa continued to support democratization in Afghanistan, leading the ISAF mission from February to August 2004,
and contributing 2,300 of 7,100 troops. Canada has been active in development and elections support for Afghanistan, committing USD 500 million to a wide-variety of programs through 2009. Finally, Canada has pledged to deploy a Provincial Reconstruction Team, possibly to Kandahar, in the fall of 2005.

11. (C) In Haiti, Canada has provided civilian police officers, a sizable aid budget, and positive involvement in diplomatic efforts on the ground. Canada has been largely in synch with our efforts to seek a durable solution to Sudan’s current and chronic crisis. PM Martin, who met with President al-Bashir in Sudan last week, supports the responsibility to protect as an obligation of each government and a core function of the international community through the United Nations. Canada has allocated USD 16 million to support the African Union in Sudan. 12. (SBU) Despite opposition to our invasion of Iraq, Canada has offered strong support for Iraqi reconstruction, saying “we can’t afford to fail.” The GoC quickly committed funds, pledging about USD 240 million in Madrid, and made active efforts to leverage contributions from countries that were initially hesitant. Over two-thirds of Canada’s aid has been allocated and over half has been disbursed on projects such as police trainers in Jordan. Canada also supports Paris Club efforts on debt reduction.

Trade and the Border: Vital Links for Canada
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13. (SBU) The U.S. and Canada have the largest bilateral trade relationship in the history of the world and over 95% of that trade is trouble-free. The billion dollars a day in trade with the U.S. generates about a third of Canada’s GDP, with energy exports and the integrated North American auto industry dominating the picture. 14. (SBU) Since implementation of NAFTA ten years ago, US-Canada trade has doubled. Most Canadians see NAFTA as a success but are frustrated by its limits, thrown into relief by U.S. trade remedy actions on softwood lumber and pork. Expectations that NAFTA would give Canadians greater control over US actions have largely been disappointed. The softwood case remains a long-running and intractable irritant; even so, Canadian lumber exports boomed last year in response to US housing demand.

15. (SBU) There are trade disputes and then there is beef. Reopening the border to trade in live cattle is Canada’s most pressing bilateral concern and our top priority for this visit. Cut out of our highly integrated North American market since 2003, Canadian ranchers have lost over $2 billion to date. Canada has spent $400 million on relief for the cattle industry, but many farmers and their suppliers may not survive another winter. Indefinite delays and the perceived unpredictability of the U.S. regulatory process have soured views of the U.S. in some of the most traditionally pro-American regions of Canada. Issuance of the new rule, or at least a firm commitment to a date for completion, would help restore public confidence and give the GoC some political room to respond to other U.S. priorities. In the long term, failure to resolve the problem will result in two North American beef industries, reducing efficiencies and stiffening competition in traditional US export markets. Significantly, movement on beef will give Martin political space to cooperate more on security.

16. (U) Canada enjoys an enviable economic situation, with steady budget surpluses and the most sharply-reduced debt burden in the G-7. Although the economic outlook is rosy, the currency’s rapid appreciation against the US dollar, driven partly by rising commodity prices, could put a damper on exports, and there are concerns here about global imbalances and the sustainability of the U.S. economic recovery. Even with strong economic fundamentals, Canadian GDP growth is projected to lag that of the U.S. in 2004.

17. (U) In addition to worries about exchange rate risk and perennial trade disputes, Canadians feel increasingly vulnerable to border risk. Exporters worry about lengthening border delays due to infrastructure overload and to tighter security measures such as prior notice requirements. Application of USVISIT fingerprint and photo requirements to Canadian non-citizen residents, and the possibility that eventually Canadians will require passports to enter the U.S., have sparked public anxiety among Canadians. Businesses fear that future terrorist incidents could lead to catastrophic border closings and strongly support the GoC’s efforts to strengthen bilateral security cooperation. Continued DHS engagement with Canada via the Smart Border Action Plan, the Ridge-McCallan dialogue, and regular working-level meetings, is a key element in managing this anxiety and addressing underlying problems. The GoC is pushing to accelerate progress and add to the Smart Border agenda in its version of the North American Initiative, Beyond Smart Borders.

Energy Inter-Dependency
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18. (U) Canada is by far the United States’ largest foreign source of energy. It is our largest supplier of petroleum, as well as our leading external source of natural gas, uranium, and electric power. With Alberta’s oil sands now classified as proven reserves, Canada’s petroleum resources of 180 billion barrels are second only to Saudi Arabia’s.

19. (U) Canada’s northern territories contain large energy resources, notably natural gas deposits in the delta of the Mackenzie River, several hundred miles east of Alaska’s Prudhoe Bay. The energy industry expects that two gas pipelines will be built, one from the Mackenzie Delta and the other from Alaska’s North Slope. As the regulatory framework for the Alaska line develops, industry will have to determine the pipeline’s exact route both in Alaska and as it passes through Canada.

20. (U) Canada’s electric power sector is interconnected at numerous points with the U.S. grid and has for decades been a large supplier of power to the U.S. market. The U.S./Canada Joint Task Force that investigated the August 2003 power outage recommended the creation of a North American Electric Reliability Organization, which would implement mandatory standards for electricity transmission in both countries. Canadian players in this industry are intensely interested in the shape of proposed U.S. energy legislation, as it affects their future strategies.

Environmental Issues
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21. (U) The U.S. and Canada cooperate closely on a broad range of environmental issues. Together we have made significant progress on key issues, including trans-boundary air and water pollution, regulation of pesticides and chemicals and protection of the Great Lakes.

22. (C) There are, however, a number of thorny cross-border water issues still unresolved, including Canadian demands that the U.S. move a derelict fishing vessel (Victoria M) mistakenly scuttled in Canadian waters, controversy over the proposed clean-up of pollution of the Columbia River from a Canadian smelter in British Columbia and North Dakota’s plans to mitigate flooding at Devils Lake by pumping water through a canal system to the Red River.

23. (C) The Canadians have raised these issues before at senior levels and are likely to do so again. The most pressing of these problems is Devils Lake, where Canada believes that the state outlet from the lake to the Red River would violate the Boundary Waters Treaty. North Dakota has almost completed its canal system and plans to start pumping water in the spring of 2005. Canada has asked for U.S. agreement to refer this issue to the International Joint Commission for study and recommendations, but we have not yet responded to that request. The Embassy believes it would be in our interest to agree to a reference, tightly limited in scope and time-frame.

24. (U) Canada formally ratified the Kyoto Accord at the end of 2002, despite vocal opposition from some provincial governments and industries. While political approaches to the climate change issue have differed between the U.S. and Canada, practical cooperation has been close. In 2002, we signed agreements on Renewable Energy and Climate Science, and formed a bilateral Working Group on Climate Change. Few Canadians understand just how much we do on climate change, reducing U.S. efforts only to Kyoto. Canada participates in several U.S.-led multilateral initiatives, such as the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum and the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy. We expect that they will soon join the Methane to Markets Partnership.

Visit Canada’s Classified Web Site at http://www.state.gov/p/wha/ottawa

CELLUCCI

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“U.S. Diplomats Noted Canadian Mistrust”
Anti-American Canadian TV

In a 2008 cable, the American Embassy in Ottawa analyzed the increase in “anti-American melodrama” on Canadian television and advised more public diplomacy to counter it.

DATE 2008-01-25 23:15:00

SOURCE Embassy Ottawa

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 OTTAWA 000136

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A TAGS: PGOV, KPAO, CA SUBJECT: PRIMETIME IMAGES OF US-CANADA BORDER PAINT U.S. IN INCREASINGLY NEGATIVE LIGHT

OTTAWA 00000136 001.2 OF 003

1. (SBU) Summary: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has long gone to great pains to highlight the distinction between Americans and Canadians in its programming, generally at our expense. However, the level of anti-American melodrama has been given a huge boost in the current television season as a number of programs offer Canadian viewers their fill of nefarious American officials carrying out equally nefarious deeds in Canada while Canadian officials either oppose them or fall trying. CIA rendition flights, schemes to steal Canada’s water, “the Guantanamo-Syria express,” F-16’s flying in for bombing runs in Quebec to eliminate escaped terrorists: in response to the onslaught, one media commentator concluded, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, that “apparently, our immigration department’s real enemies aren’t terrorists or smugglers -- they’re Americans.” While this situation hardly constitutes a public diplomacy crisis per se, the degree of comfort with which Canadian broadcast entities, including those financed by Canadian tax dollars, twist current events to feed long-standing negative images of the U.S. -- and the extent to which the Canadian public seems willing to indulge in the feast -- is noteworthy as an indication of the kind of insidious negative popular stereotyping we are increasingly up against in Canada. End Summary.

"THE BORDER" -CANADA’S ANSWER TO 24, W/O THAT SUTHERLAND GUY

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2. (SBU) When American TV and movie producers want action, the formula involves Middle Eastern terrorists, a ticking nuclear device, and a (somewhat ironically, Canadian) guy named Sutherland. Canadian producers don't need to look so far -- they can find all the action they need right on the U.S.-Canadian border. This piece of real estate, which most Americans associate with snow blowing back and forth across an imaginary line, has for the past three weeks been for Canadian viewers the site of downed rendition flights, F-16 bombing runs, and terrorist suspects being whisked away to Middle Eastern torture facilities. “The Border,” which state-owned CBC premiered on January 7, attracted an impressive 718,000 viewers on its first showing -- not exactly Hockey Night in Canada, but equivalent to an American program drawing about eight million U.S. viewers. The show depicts Canadian immigration and customs officers’ efforts to secure the U.S.-Canadian border and the litany of moral dilemmas they face in doing so. The CBC bills the high-budget program as depicting the “new war” on the border and “the few who fight it.” While the “war” is supposed to be against criminals and terrorists trying to cross the border, many of the immigration team’s battles end up being with U.S. government officials, often in tandem with the CIA-colluding Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS).
3. (SBU) The clash between the Americans and Canadians got started early in the season and has continued unabated. In episode one a Syrian terrorist with a belt full of gel-based explosives is removed from a plane in Canada while the Canadian-Syrian man sitting next to him is rendered by the CIA/CSIS team to Syria -- a fairly transparent reference to QCIA/CSIS team to Syria -- a fairly transparent reference to the Maher Arar case. Fortunately for the incarcerated individual, the sympathetic Canadian Immigration and Customs Security official recognizes the mistake and shrewdly causes the government to rescue him from a Syrian jail through organized media pressure. The episode ends with a preview of things to come when one of the Canadian immigration officers notes with disgust, “Homeland Security is sending in some hot shot agent.”

4. (SBU) Episode two expands on this theme, featuring the arrival of an arrogant, albeit stunningly attractive female DHS officer, sort of a cross between Salma Hayek and Cruella De Vil. The show portrays the DHS official bossing around her stereotypically more compassionate Canadian colleagues while uttering such classic lines as, “Who do you think provides the muscle to protect your fine ideals?” and “You would have killed him. Let the American justice system do it for you.” Her fallback line in most situations is “it’s a matter of national security.”

5. (SBU) But the one-liners and cross-border stereotypes really take off in episode three, in which an American rendition aircraft with three terrorist suspects on the “Guantanamo to Syria express” crashes in Quebec and the terrorists escape -- however, not before killing a Quebec police officer, whose sympathetic widow appears throughout the show. The DHS officer’s answer to everything is American firepower, but in this episode even CSIS gets a chance at redemption as the CSIS officer in charge challenges her. Ms. DHS barks back, “You really want to talk territorial sovereignty, or should we talk about getting the terrorists back?” After being chased through the woods of Quebec by a cross-culturally balanced CSIS-JTF2 team which kills a 15-year-old terrorist in a shootout, the bad guys are finally cornered on the side of a pristine Canadian lake. Then, after a conversation with Washington in which she asks “can you bypass NSA and State?”, our DHS official calls in an air-strike on the terrorists without Canadian concurrence. Canadian planes, another official has explained, are “already deployed to Afghanistan, helping our neighbors fight their war on terror.” With only seconds to spare before the bombs are dropped on the Quebec site, the planes are called off when the CSIS-JTF team affirms positive control over the terrorists. Finally, in a last-minute allowance for redemption, the CSIS officer informs his DHS colleague that the captured terrorists will not be turned over to the U.S. but will stand trial for the death of the Quebec police officer. She does get the final word, though, hissing the classic phrase “you people are so nave,” before the screen goes blank.

DEA ALSO TAKES SOME HITS
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6. (SBU) If that isn’t enough, “the Border” is only one of the CBC programs featuring cross-border relations. “Intelligence,” which depicts a Canadian intelligence unit collaborating with a local drug lord-turned government informant, is just as stinging in its portrayal of U.S.-Canada law enforcement cooperation. Through its two seasons, the program has followed plot lines including a DEA attempt to frame the Canadian informant for murder, a CIA plot to secretly divert Canadian water to the American southwest, and a rogue DEA team that actually starts selling drugs for a profit. A columnist in conservative Canadian daily newspaper “The National Post” commented, “There’s no question that the CSIS heroes on ‘Intelligence’ consider the Americans our most dangerous enemies.”

EVEN THE LITTLE MOSQUE GETS IN TO THE ACT
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7. (U) Even “Little Mosque on the Prairie,” a popular Canadian sitcom that depicts a Muslim community in a small Saskatchewan town, has joined the trend of featuring U.S.-Canada border relations. This time, however, the State Department is the fall guy. A December 2007 episode portrayed a Muslim economics professor trying to remove his name from the No-Fly-List at a U.S. consulate. The show depicts a rude and eccentric U.S. consular officer stereotypically attempting to find any excuse to avoid being helpful. Another episode depicted how an innocent trip across the border became a jumble of frayed nerves as Grandpa was scurried into secondary by U.S. border officials because his name matched something on the watch list. Qhis name matched something on the watch list.
8. (U) And it appears that the season is just warming up. After CIA renditions, DEA murder plots, DHS missteps, and unhelpful consular officers, a U.S. takeover of Canada may have been the only theme left for the CBC “H2O” mini-series. The series was first broadcast in 2005, when it featured an investigation into an American assassination of the Canadian prime minister and a very broad-based (and wildly implausible) U.S. scheme to steal Canadian water. A two-part sequel, set to be broadcast in March and April 2008, will portray the United States as manipulating innocent, trusting Canadians into voting in favor of Canada’s becoming part of the United States. Then, after the United States completely takes over Canada, one brave Canadian unites Canadians and Europeans in an attempt to end America’s hegemony. Another

program could prove more benign but will certainly include its share of digs against all things American: Global TV reportedly is gearing up for a March 2008 debut of its own border security drama, set to feature Canadian search-and-rescue officers patrolling the U.S.-Canada border.

COMMENT
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9. (SBU) EKOS pollster Frank Graves told Poloff he thought that at this point such shows are reflective and not causal in determining attitudes in Canada. They play on the deep-seated caution most Canadians feel toward their large neighbor to the south, a sort of zeitgeist that has been in the background for decades. As one example, a December 2007 Strategic Counsel poll showed that nine percent of Canadians thought U.S. foreign policy was the greatest threat to the world -- twice as high as those who were concerned about weapons of mass destruction. What Graves does find disturbing -- and here he believes that the causal or reflective question is not important -- is that support for a less porous border is increasing in both Canada and the U.S.: in the U.S. because of generalized fear of terrorism and in Canada because of concern over guns, sovereignty, and the impact that a terrorist attack on the U.S. would have on trade. Graves has detected an increasingly wary attitude over the border that he believes could lead to greater distance between the two countries.

10. (SBU) While there is no single answer to this trend, it does serve to demonstrate the importance of constant creative, and adequately-funded public-diplomacy engagement with Canadians, at all levels and in virtually all parts of the country. We need to do everything we can to make it more difficult for Canadians to fall into the trap of seeing all U.S. policies as the result of nefarious faceless U.S. bureaucrats anxious to squeeze their northern neighbor. While there are those who may rate the need for USG public-diplomacy programs as less vital in Canada than in other nations because our societies are so much alike, we clearly have real challenges here that simply must be adequately addressed.

Visit Canada’s Economy and Environment Forum at http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/can ada

WILKINS
1. (S/NF) Summary. Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Director Judd discussed domestic and foreign terror threats with Counselor of the State Department Cohen in Ottawa on July 2. Judd admitted that CSIS was increasingly distracted from its mission by legal challenges that could endanger foreign intelligence-sharing with Canadian agencies. He predicted that the upcoming release of a DVD of Guantanamo detainee and Canadian citizen Omar Khadr’s interrogation by Canadian officials would lead to heightened pressure on the government to press for his return to Canada, which the government would continue to resist. Judd shared Dr. Cohen’s negative assessment of current political, economic, and security trends in Pakistan, and was worried about what it would mean for the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Canada has begun formulating an inter-agency Pakistan strategy, and CSIS had agreed to open a channel to Iran’s intelligence service which Judd has not yet “figured out.” (Septel will cover Dr. Cohen’s discussions regarding Pakistan and the OEF and ISAF missions in Afghanistan.) End summary.

2. (S/NF) Counselor of the Department of State Eliot Cohen and CSIS Director Jim Judd in Ottawa on July 2 discussed threats posed by violent Islamist groups in Canada, and recent developments in Pakistan and Afghanistan. (CSIS is Canada’s lead agency for national security intelligence.) Director Judd ascribed an “Alice in Wonderland” worldview to Canadians and their courts, whose judges have tied CSIS “in knots,” making it ever more difficult to detect and prevent terror attacks in Canada and abroad. The situation, he commented, left government security agencies on the defensive and losing public support for their effort to protect Canada and its allies.

Legal Wrangling Risks Chill Effect
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3. (S/NF) Responding to Dr. Cohen’s query, Judd said CSIS had responded to recent, non-specific intelligence on possible terror operations by “vigorously harassing” known Hezbollah members in Canada. According to Judd, CSIS’ current assessment is that no attack is “in the offing” in Canada. He noted, however, that Hezbollah members, and their lawyers, were considering new avenues of litigation resulting from recent court rulings that, Judd complained, had inappropriately treated intelligence agencies like law enforcement bodies (refs A and C). The
Director observed that CSIS was “sinking deeper and deeper into judicial processes,” making Legal Affairs the fastest growing division of his organization. Indeed, he added, legal challenges were becoming a “distraction” that could have a major “chill effect” on intelligence officials.

4. (S/NF) Judd derided recent judgments in Canada’s courts that threaten to undermine foreign government intelligence. These judgments posit that Canadian authorities cannot use information that “may have been” derived from torture, and that any Canadian public official who conveys such information may be subject to criminal prosecution. This, he commented, put the government in a reverse-onus situation whereby it would have to “prove” the innocence of partner nations in the face of assumed wrongdoing.

5. (S/NF) Judd credited Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s minority Conservative government for “taking it on the chin and pressing ahead” with common sense measures despite court challenges and political knocks from the opposition and interest groups. When asked to look to the future, Judd predicted that Canada would soon implement UK-like legal procedures that make intelligence available to “vetted defense lawyers who see everything the judge sees.”

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Terror Cases and Communities Present Mixed Pictures

6. (C/NF) Judd commented that cherry-picked sections of the court-ordered release of a DVD of Guantanamo detainee and Canadian citizen Omar Khadr (ref D) would likely show three (Canadian) adults interrogating a kid who breaks down in tears. He observed that the images would no doubt trigger “knee-jerk anti-Americanism” and “paroxysms of moral outrage, a Canadian specialty,” as well as lead to a new round of heightened pressure on the government to press for Khadr’s return to Canada. He predicted that PM Harper’s government would nonetheless continue to resist this pressure. 7. (C) The Director mentioned other major cases that also presented CSIS with major legal headaches due to the use of intelligence products in their development: Momin Khawaja has been on trial for his role in an Al Qaeda UK bomb plot since June 23 in the first major test of Canada’s 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act, and Canada’s ability to protect intelligence supplied by foreign government sources (ref D); the trial of the first of the home-grown Toronto 11 (down from 18) terror plotters, which is also now underway; and, the prosecution of Global Islamic Media Front propagandist Said Namouh, who was arrested in Quebec in 2007 for conspiring to conduct bombings in Austria and Germany.

8. (C) Judd said he viewed Khawaja and his “ilk” as outliers, due in part to the fact that Canada’s ethnic Pakistani community is unlike its ghettoized and poorly educated UK counterpart. It is largely made up of traders, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and others who see promise for themselves and their children in North America, he observed, so its members are unlikely to engage in domestic terror plots. He said that therefore CSIS main domestic focus is instead on fundraising and procurement, as well as the recruitment of a small number of Canadian “wannabes” of Pakistani origin for mostly overseas operations.

Pakistan and Afghanistan

9. (C) Turning to Pakistan, Counselor Cohen briefed his recent trip to Islamabad and Peshawar, noting his alarm at the degrading economic, political, and security situation there, and its implications for Pakistan, Afghan, and regional stability. Judd responded that Dr. Cohen’s sober assessment tracked with CSIS’ own view of Pakistan, and that “it is hard to see a good outcome there” due to that country’s political, economic, and security failures, on top of fast-rising oil and food prices. Canada does not have an explicit strategy for Pakistan, Judd said, but Privy Council Deputy Secretary David Mulroney (who leads the interagency on Afghanistan) now has the lead on developing one (septel). Dr. Cohen remarked, and Judd agreed, that it would be necessary to avoid approaching Pakistan as simply an adjunct to the ISAF and OEF missions in Afghanistan.

10. (S/NF) CSIS is far from being “high-five mode” on Q10. (S/NF) CSIS is far from being “high-five mode” on Afghanistan, Judd asserted, due in part to Karzai’s weak leadership, widespread corruption, the lack of will to press ahead on counter-narcotics, limited Afghan security force capability (particularly the police) and, most recently, the Sarpoza prison break. He commented that CSIS had seen Sarpoza coming, and its link to the Quetta Shura in Pakistan, but could not get a handle on the timing.
11. (S/NF) Judd added that he and his colleagues are “very, very worried” about Iran. CSIS recently talked to Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) after that agency requested its own channel of communication to Canada, he said. The Iranians agreed to “help” on Afghan issues, including sharing information regarding potential attacks. However, “we have not figured out what they are up to,” Judd confided, since it is clear that the “Iranians want ISAF to bleed...slowly.”

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12. (U) Dr. Cohen has cleared this message.

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WILKINS
The U.S. and the Canadian Election

The American Embassy in Ottawa analyzed the coming 2008 Canadian elections, in which the lack of discussion of the United States was said to reflect the “inherent inferiority complex” of Canada toward its southern neighbor.

DATE 2008-09-22 18:59:00

SOURCE Embassy Ottawa

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

1. (C) Summary. Despite the overwhelming importance of the U.S. to Canada for its economy and security, bilateral relations remain the proverbial 900 pound gorilla that no one wants to talk about in the 2008 Canadian federal election campaigns. This likely reflects an almost inherent inferiority complex of Canadians vis-a-vis their sole neighbor as well as an underlying assumption that the fundamentals of the relationship are strong and unchanging and uncertainty about the outcome of the U.S. Presidential election. End Summary.

2. (C) The United States is overwhelmingly important to Canada in ways that are unimaginable to Americans. With over $500 billion in annual trade, the longest unsecured border in the world, over 200 million border crossings each year, total investment in each other’s countries of almost $400 billion, and the unique North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) partnership to ensure continental security, excellent bilateral relations are essential to Canada’s well being. Canadians are, by and large, obsessed with U.S. politics -- especially in the 2008 Presidential race -- and follow them minutely (with many Canadians even wishing they could vote in this U.S. election rather than their own, according to a recent poll). U.S. culture infiltrates Canadian life on every level. 80 pct of Canadians live within 100 miles of the border, and Canadians tend to visit the U.S. much more regularly than their American neighbors come here.

3. (C) Logically, the ability of a candidate, or a party, or most notably the leader of a party successfully to manage this essential relationship should be a key factor for voters to judge in casting their ballots. At least so far in the 2008 Canadian federal election campaign, it is not. There has been almost a deafening silence so far about foreign affairs in general, apart from Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s pledge on September 10 that Canadian troops would indeed leave Afghanistan in 2011 according to the terms of the March 2008 House of Commons motion, commenting that “you have to put an end on these things.” The Liberals -- and many media commentators -- seized on this as a major Conservative “flip flop,” with Liberal Party leader Stephane Dion noting on September 10 that “I have been calling for a firm end date since February 2007” and that “the Conservatives can’t be trusted on Afghanistan; they can’t be trusted on the climate change crisis; they can’t be trusted on the economy.” He has returned in subsequent days to the Conservative record on the environment and the economy, but has not pursued the Afghan issue further. All three opposition party leaders joined in calling for the government to release a Parliamentary Budget Officer’s report on the full costs of the Afghan mission, which PM Harper agreed to do, with some apparent hesitation. However, no other foreign policy issues have yet risen to the surface in the campaigns, apart from New Democrat Party leader Jack Layton opining on September 7 that “I believe we can say good-bye to the George Bush era in our own conduct overseas.”
4. (C) The U.S. market meltdown has provided some fodder for campaign rhetoric, with the Conservatives claiming their earlier fiscal and monetary actions had insulated Canada from much of the economic problems seen across the border. (Comment: there is probably more truth in the fact that the Canadian financial sector does not have a large presence in U.S. and other foreign markets, and instead concentrates on the domestic market. The Canadian financial sector has also been quite conservative in its lending and investment choices. End comment.) PM Harper has insisted that the “core” Canadian economy and institutions were sound, while promising to work closely with “other international players” (i.e., not specifically the U.S.) to deal with the current problems. He warned on September 19 that “voters will have to decide who is best to govern in this period of economic uncertainty -- do you want to pay the new Liberal tax? Do you want the Liberals to bring the GST back to 7%?” The Liberals have counter-claimed that Canada is now the “worst performing economy in the G8,” while noting earlier Liberal governments had produced eight consecutive balanced budgets and created about 300,000 new jobs annually between 1993 and 2005. The NDP’s Layton argued on September 16 that these economic woes are “the clearest possible warning that North American economies under conservative governments, in both Canada and the United States, are on the wrong track,” but promised only that an NDP government would institute a “top-to-bottom” review of Canada’s regulatory system -- not delving into bilateral policy territory.

5. (C) On the environment, Liberal leader Dion, in defending his “Green Shift” plan on September 11, noted that

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“both Barack Obama and John McCain are in favor of putting a price on carbon. Our biggest trading partner is moving toward a greener future and we need to do so too.” PM Harper has stuck to the standard Conservative references to the Liberal plan as a “carbon tax, which will hit every consumer in every sector” and claimed on September 16 that, under earlier Liberal governments, greenhouse gas emissions increased by more than 38 percent, one of the worst records of industrialized countries.” NDP leader Layton argued that, on the environment, PM Harper “has no plan” while “Dion’s plan is wrong and won’t work,” unlike the NDP plan to reward polluters who “clean up their act and imposing penalties on those that don’t,” which he said had also been “proposed by both U.S. Presidential candidates, Barack Obama and John McCain.”

6. (C) NAFTA? Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative? Border crossing times? The future of NORAD? Canada’s role in NATO? Protection of Canadian water reserves? Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and the Northwest Passage? At least among the leaders of the major parties, these issues have not come up so far in the campaigns, although they seize much public attention in normal times. Even in Ontario and Quebec, with their long and important borders with the U.S., the leadership candidates apparently so far have not ventured to make promises to woo voters who might be disgruntled with U.S. policies and practices. However, these may still emerge as more salient issues at the riding level as individual candidates press the flesh door to door, and may also then percolate up to the leadership formal debates on October 1 and 2.

7. (C) Why the U.S. relationship appears off the table, at least so far, is probably be due to several key factors. An almost inherent Canadian inferiority complex may disincline Canadian political leaders from making this election about the U.S. (unlike in the 1988 free trade campaigns) instead of sticking to domestic topics of bread-and-butter interest to voters. The leaders may also recognize that bilateral relations are simply too important -- and successful -- to turn into political campaign fodder that could backfire. They may also be viewing the poll numbers in the U.S. and recognizing that the results are too close to call. Had the Canadian campaign taken place after the U.S. election, the Conservatives might have been tempted to claim they could work more effectively with a President McCain, or the Liberals with a President Obama. Even this could be a risky strategy, as perceptions of being too close to the U.S. leader are often distasteful to Canadian voters; one recurrent jibe about PM Harper is that he is a “clone of George W. Bush.” Ultimately, the U.S. is like the proverbial 900 pound gorilla in the midst of the Canadian federal election: overwhelming but too potentially menacing to acknowledge.

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WILKINS
RETURN TO ARTICLE

“U.S. Diplomats Noted Canadian Mistrust”
Obama Briefed for Canada Visit

American diplomats briefed President Obama before his first foreign trip — to Canada, where they told him that “no Canadian politician of any stripe is nearly as popular, respected, or inspiring as you are to Canadian voters.”

DATE 2009-01-22 16:35:00

SOURCE Embassy Ottawa

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000064

SIPDIS

FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA FROM CHARGE D'AFFAIRES BREESE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/22/2019 TAGS: PREL, ETRD, ECON, MARR, SENV, AF, CA SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE PRESIDENT’S TRIP TO OTTAWA

Classified By: Charge d’Affaires Terry A. Breese, reason 1.4 (d)

1. (C) Mr. President, Mission Canada warmly welcomes you and the First Lady to Ottawa. We and Canadians alike are thrilled that your first foreign trip as President will be to Canada, which Canadians claim as a long-standing tradition reflecting the vital importance of this bilateral relationship between two democratic neighbors.

SOME HOME TRUTHS

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2. (C) Your enormous popularity among Canadians (an 81 pct approval rating) is to Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper both a blessing -- because he can for the first time since taking office in 2006 gain politically from public and policy association with the U.S. President -- and a curse -- because no Canadian politician of any stripe is nearly as popular, respected, or inspiring as you are to Canadian voters, a genuine factor in the historically low turnout in the October 2008 Canadian federal election. Many Canadians, especially university students, volunteered on your campaign, and busloads traveled to Washington for your inauguration.

3. (C) Your decision to make Ottawa your first foreign destination as President will do much to diminish -- temporarily, at least -- Canada’s habitual inferiority complex vis-a-vis the U.S. and its chronic but accurate complaint that the U.S. pays far less attention to Canada than Canada does to us.

4. (C) The minority status in Parliament of Harper’s Conservative Party means that it and all other parties now remain in almost permanent campaign mode; there have been three successive minority governments (one Liberal, two Conservative). The bottom line questions remain when the government will fall and on what issue. Your trip will help to ensure that the government will survive an early February vote of confidence on the federal budget, in which Canada will post its first deficit in more than a decade as it provides a stimulus package of $30-40 billion.

5. (C) The U.S. and Canada enjoy the world’s largest trading relationship, with more than $1.5 billion in two-way trade crossing the border each day, including 77 pct of all Canadian exports. With the border central to Canada’s economic well being, Canadians chafe about what they see as a "thickening of the border" caused by U.S. actions to strengthen homeland security since 9/11. Canadians claim that these measures have driven up business costs and delayed border crossers. The business and trade communities in the U.S. and Canada both believe that the “balance” between
trade and security has been tilted too far toward security, and are hopeful that your administration will tilt that balance back. Canada may argue for a new mechanism (separate from the trilateral Security and Prosperity Partnership) to address bilateral concerns.

6. (C) Canadians wish that more Americans would recognize that Canada is the largest source of imported energy for the U.S. (including for both oil and natural gas), although there is also keen sensitivity over the higher environmental footprint of oil from western Canada’s oil sands and concern about the implications for Canada of your energetic calls to develop renewable energies and reduce our reliance on imported oil. Canada is also rich in hydroelectric power, has similar objectives for developing renewables, and is working strenuously to improve the environmental impact of production from the oil sands and to expand its own wind power capacity.

7. (C) Given the high integration of our two economies, Canada will hope for a truly North American discussion of economic stimulus, job creation, and sectoral support, as in coordinated bilateral measures on the auto sector (for which Canada promised a $3.4 billion assistance plan - 20 pct of what the U.S. offered, matching a pledge that PM Harper made to then-President Bush in December) and in the G-20 commitments on financial sector regulation. We should ensure that both nations continue to design complementary packages to revive our economies.

8. (C) Although the climate change issue has largely been the province of the official opposition Liberal Party, the Conservative government now seeks to set in place measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advocates a coordinated policy with the U.S. on expanded efforts to protect our shared environment. They hope and expect this will be a central theme of your visit.

9. (C) Arctic sovereignty is a motherhood-and-apple-pie issue for Canadians of all political persuasions, and they are deeply suspicious of assertions by the U.S. (and most other concerned nations) that the Northwest Passage is a strait for international navigation, not Canada’s territorial sea. The new Arctic policy issued at the end of the Bush Administration, which reasserted our views on the Northwest Passage and emphasized cooperation among Arctic nations, has re-ignited these suspicions.

10. (C) Canada declined to join the U.S. in the invasion of Iraq and instead concentrated its global counterterrorism efforts on Afghanistan, including 2500 troops in Kandahar Province and its largest bilateral donor program worldwide. With the highest casualty rate among NATO partners and only about 65,000 Canadian Forces overall, there is virtually zero willingness across the Canadian political spectrum to extend the current Parliamentary mandate for these forces in Afghanistan beyond 2011, but Canada could offer up significant new funding to strengthen the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. Much will depend upon convincing Canada that its continued contributions to the Afghanistan effort are a critical component of your strategy for success in Afghanistan.

11. (C) No matter which political party forms the Canadian government during your Administration, Canada will remain one of our staunchest and most like-minded of allies, our largest trading and energy partner, and our most reliable neighbor and friend.

KEY THEMES
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12. (SBU) In your public remarks and media availability, these points would be most useful from Mission Canada’s perspective:

-- Canada is a true friend, trusted ally, valued trading partner, and democratic model for the world; -- around the world, the U.S. and Canada are working together to defeat terrorism, promote economic development through trade and investment, prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and advance the cause of human freedom and dignity; -- Canada and the U.S. are blessed to share the beauties and riches of North America, and will strive individually and jointly to protect and preserve its environment, while ensuring that our nations and the world benefit from its extensive natural and human resources; -- our highly integrated economies are now facing enormous challenges, but with our traditional resilience, creativity, sacrifice, and cooperation, our two countries will emerge from this crisis stronger than ever; -- while we share the prosperity that comes with the world’s largest bilateral trade relationship, we also share
the threats to that prosperity from international terrorism; -- 21st century technology can help ensure ever more safe and efficient transit of goods and people across this longest undefended border in the world, and we need to work together more fully to understand each other’s security and trade needs and to build a shared vision for the security of our two nations from new threats while investing in technology and infrastructure that can secure, support, and expand the benefits of our trade; -- the U.S. and Canada maintain extensive cooperation in the Arctic. The U.S. views the Northwest Passage as a strait used for international navigation -- not Canada’s territorial sea -- but does not dispute Canada’s sovereignty over its Arctic islands; -- Canada has paid a disproportionately high price in human life to help the people of Afghanistan emerge from their dark era under the Taliban, and the U.S. salutes these Canadian contributions to the building of a democratic and successful society in that troubled land and counts on continued Canadian cooperation to achieve this goal; -- U.S. Presidents and Canadian Prime Ministers come and go, but our shared values and aspirations will continue to underpin a robust, mutually respectful, and hugely successful friendship and partnership that benefits not only our two peoples but the world.

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RETURN TO ARTICLE

“U.S. Diplomats Noted Canadian Mistrust”
Analyzing the Weakness of Cuba’s Dissidents

In this April 15, 2009, cable, the United States Interests Section in Havana describes how Cuba’s political dissidents, long supported by Washington, have become less relevant in Cuban society as they age. Opposition groups, it says, are weakened by internal feuds and are vulnerable to being infiltrated by Cuban intelligence agents.

1. (C) SUMMARY: As the Raul Castro government of Cuba (GOC) appears to have settled into a position of undisputed authority internally, it is worth asking what the Cuban political opposition is doing and the role it may play in the future. Two recent op-ed pieces in the international press that have infuriated dissident leaders argue that the answers are: not much and none. Though the op-ed pieces do not mention it, this assessment should carry the caveat that part of the reason for the relative inaction of the opposition is that the GOC is taking active steps to undermine it. Many opposition groups are prone to dominance by individuals with strong egos who do not work well together and are therefore easy targets for manipulation by the Cuban security services. The Agenda para la Transicion, which was launched with much promise one year ago, is on the verge of breaking apart. Oswaldo Paya’s Dialogo Nacional has picked up some stray dissidents, but has not taken any significant action in months. Though dissidents have reacted very negatively to the articles in the international press, the fact is that they contain more than a grain of truth and it would have been better if the criticism had been taken as a wake-up call.

2. (C) Without some true epiphany among the opposition leadership and a lessening in official repression of its activities, the traditional dissident movement is not likely to supplant the Cuban government. The dissidents have, and will continue to perform, a key role in acting as the conscience of Cuba and deserve our support in that role. But we will need to look elsewhere, including within the government itself, to spot the most likely successors to the Castro regime. End Summary.

Public Criticism Touches a Nerve in the Dissident Community

3. (C) Two recent op-ed pieces that ran in the Miami press, one by Ivette Leyva Martinez entitled “the Wall of Dissidence,” and the other by Fernando Ravsberg entitled “Cuba, the Dissidents and the World,” argued that the dissident movement in Cuba has become as old and as out of touch with the lives of ordinary Cubans as the regime itself. The articles represented comprehensive and fairly balanced critiques of the dissident movement, and appeared at a time when the dissidents are under more pressure than ever from the Cuban government. As such, they might have generated a reframe debate among the dissident leaders, but instead they simply focused dissident frustration with the Cuban exile community.

4. (C) In general, we would make the same criticisms of most of the official dissident movement
that we have contact with in Havana. In fairness to the dissidents we would add--as the op-ed pieces did not--that being an anti-GOC activist in Cuba is enormously difficult, and that any effort to move beyond small meetings in private homes would almost certainly be quickly and firmly repressed by the security services. That said, we see very little evidence that the mainline dissident organizations have much resonance among ordinary Cubans. Informal polls we have carried out among visa and refugee applicants have shown virtually no awareness of dissident personalities or agendas. Judging from the reactions we have heard from our dissident contacts, the most painful accusation made by the commentators was that the dissidents are old and out of touch. Many of the leaders of the dissident movement are indeed comparatively old. Long-time dissidents like Martha Beatriz Roque, Vladimir Roca, Felix Bonne, Roberto de Miranda, Oscar Espinosa Chepe, Elizardo Sanchez and Hector Palacios are in their 60s. Others such as Francisco Chaviano and wife Ana Aguillilla, Rene Gomez Manzano and Oswaldo Paya are well into their 50s. They have little contact with younger Cubans and, to the extent they have a message that is getting out, it does not appeal to that segment of society. Their very valid focus on the plight of friends and relatives being held as prisoners of conscience, and on the government’s failure to uphold basic human rights, does not address the interests of Cubans who are more concerned about having greater opportunities to travel freely and live comfortably.

Dissident Movement Not a Coherent Whole

5. (C) Whether or not the opposition organizations have agendas that can be made to appeal to a broad range of interests on the island, they must first begin to achieve some level of unity of purpose as an opposition, or at least stop spending so much energy trying to undercut one another. Despite claims that they represent “thousands of Cubans,” we see little evidence of such support, at least from the admittedly limited vantage point we have in Havana. When we question opposition leaders about their programs, we do not see platforms designed to appeal to a broad cross section of Cuban society. Rather, the greatest effort is directed at obtaining enough resources to keep the principal organizers and their key supporters living from day to day. One political party organization told the COM quite openly and frankly that it needed resources to pay salaries and presented him with a budget in the hope that USINT would be able to cover it. With seeking resources as a primary concern, the next most important pursuit seems to be to limit or marginalize the activities of erstwhile allies, thus preserving power and access to scarce resources.

6. (C) Younger individuals, including bloggers, musicians, and performing and plastic artists do not belong to identifiable organizations, though they are much better at taking “rebellious” stands with greater popular appeal. However, these individuals are still tightly controlled by the GOC, eschew the label of “dissident,” and do not seem to aspire to any leadership role. The international fame gained by a few, such as blogger Yoanny Sanchez, fuels further jealousy among the traditional dissident organizations and prevents them from working with the incipient networks that the younger generations are beginning to form.

Internal Divisions and Limited View Hamper Activity

7. (C) The current feud among the leadership of the Agenda para la Transicion is a case in point. When the organization was founded one year ago, it was ground breaking in that it brought together an unusually broad array of dissidents. The only significant groups missing were those of Oswaldo Paya, who was invited to join but refused, and the Arco Progresista led by Manuel Cuesta Morua, a group that is considered by other dissidents to be a “tame” opposition organization that is controlled by the GOC. However, after only a year in which its signal accomplishment was presenting a prize to a young graphic artist for designing a logo for the organization, the Agenda para la Transicion seems close to flying apart. The crux of the dispute appears to be a power struggle between Hector Palacios and several followers on one side and Martha Beatriz Roque and Vladimir Roca and some of their followers on the other. But the main problem lies in the fact that, while the concept of unifying the opposition under one umbrella organization has a great deal of merit, the members have not been able to overcome the challenge of keeping several very strong and uncompromising personalities working together. The splits that would be natural among the members of such a group are aggravated by active measures being taken by Cuban state security, which works to coopt certain members and infiltrate the organization with its own agents whose job it is to stoke any discord that exists.

8. (C) Oswaldo Paya and his supporters, who now include former Agenda member and lawyer Rene Gomez Manzano and dissident economist Oscar Espinosa Chepe, continue to be a very sober and serious force. Paya has outlined great plans to organize his “National Dialogue” in the same way he did the Varela Project in the late 1990s with grassroots support throughout the island, but
there is little activity apparent. The fact that 41 of the 54 prisoners of conscience arrested in the Black Spring of 2003 and still being held are Varela Project volunteers clearly weighs heavily on Paya. Therefore, much of his focus has been on defense of human rights and demands for the release of political prisoners. While these are laudable goals that must be pressed forward, as noted above, they have little resonance within Cuban society and do not offer a political alternative to the government of Cuba.

Incipient Political Parties in Cuba
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9. (C) The COM met on March 31 with the leaders of several self-professed political parties, most of them in some way claiming to be a successor to the old Cuban Liberal Party. These individuals at least claim to have political objectives. Each of the groups presented a platform, all of which were very similar. But they were also quite impressive, attacking tough issues like constitutional reform, the status of the armed forces and security forces, and domestic and international economic policy. However, when the COM asked representatives of each group to explain how they would appeal to the Cuban public at large if there were open national elections tomorrow, none had a good answer, and it was apparent that they had not given a great deal of thought to that possibility. The groups expressed their thanks to USINT for bringing them together in such a forum, and seemed prepared to contemplate the function of grassroots politics in their planning. There is as yet no indication that there is any general movement in that direction, however.

Relations with the Exile Community
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10. (C) A consistent problem, and one that is becoming more acute as the eventual end of the Castro brothers’ regime comes into sight, is the relationship between the on-island opposition and the exile community. Even though much of their resources continues to come from exile groups, opposition members of all stripes complain that the intention of the exiles is to undercut local opposition groups so that they can move into power when the Castros leave. The islanders accuse Miami and Madrid-based exiles of trying to orchestrate their activities from afar, and of misrepresenting their views to policy makers in Washington. Ironically, the “exile community” in many cases includes former dissidents who only just recently were able to get off the island. Their closeness to the remaining dissidents on the island does not appear to keep them in the latter’s good graces. Instead, they are almost immediately lumped into the “them” that defines the exile community for the on-island opposition.

COMMENT
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11. (C) COMMENT: Various dissident leaders have maintained their focus on specific issues like treatment of political prisoners, and such work is valuable and worthwhile. This is especially true of groups like the Damas de Blanco, whose very narrow focus on the plight of their imprisoned family members has made it one of the most effective organizations on the island. It is the dissident movement that holds the GOC accountable for its violations of basic human and civil rights. From our standpoint, however, there are few if any dissidents who have a political vision that could be applied to future governance. Though the dissidents will not acknowledge it, they are not widely known in Cuba outside the foreign diplomatic and press corps. A key factor that contributes to this is the GOC’s focused effort to keep dissidents divided and unable to reach out to ordinary Cubans. We have no doubt that, as alleged, the dissident movement is heavily penetrated by state security. This penetration allows the government to play on the egos and personal feuds that are normal in any society, and exacerbate the divisions that would exist naturally among the dissidents. Unless the GOC relaxes its suppression of opposition organizations, and the dissidents themselves become more capable of cooperative behavior, it is unlikely that they will play any significant role in whatever government succeeds the Castro brothers. Nevertheless, we should continue to support the good work being done by the dissident movement in promoting observation of internationally recognized human rights and making public the plight of political prisoners.

12. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: We believe it is the younger generation of “non-traditional dissidents,” xxxxxxxxxxx that is likely to have a greater long term impact on post-Castro Cuba. However, the most likely immediate successors to the Castro regime will probably come from within the middle ranks of the government itself. We do not know yet who might eventually rise to leadership positions in place of the old guard from within the government. The recent purge of younger officials like former Vice President Lage and former Foreign Minister Perez Roque must
have given pause to any in that cadre who had considered thinking out loud about the future. Still, we believe we must try to expand our contacts within Cuban society on leadership and democracy initiatives as broadly as possible. We also must continue to open up Cuba to the information age through measures such as those announced on April 13, to facilitate and encourage the younger generations of Cubans seeking greater freedom and opportunity. End Comment FARRAR

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cable Shows Nations Going Easy on Cuba”
Raul Castro Reaches out to the Obama Administration

In this Dec. 5, 2009 cable, the chief of mission in Havana, Jonathan Farrar, describes a meeting with Spain’s ambassador to Cuba, in which the two discuss how Spain’s approach to the Cuban government differs from the American approach. The Spanish diplomat passes along Raul Castro’s desire for a direct channel to the White House, which he raised in a meeting with Spain’s foreign minister.

DATE 2009-12-05 16:15:00

SOURCE US Interests Section Havana

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 HAVANA 000726

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CCA AND WHA/PD STATE FOR DRL CNEWLING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/03/2019 TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PGOV, CU SUBJECT: SPAIN ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIALOGUE WITH CUBA

REF: A. HAVANA 683 (“SPAIN ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SIGNS OF CHANGE”) B. MADRID 1146 C. MADRID 1157

HAVANA 00000726 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Principal Office Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) COM met December 2 with Spanish ambassador to Cuba Manuel Cacho at the latter,s request to discuss Spain,s plans vis--vis Cuba during Spain,s EU Presidency and the upcoming meeting between the Secretary and Spanish FM Moratinos. P/E Counselor separately met December 3 with his Spanish counterpart. A preview of issues that Moratinos may raise with the Secretary and other major points from both meetings follow.

CONVERGING VIEWS, BUT NOT CONVERGENCE

CONVERGING VIEWS, BUT NOT CONVERGENCE

2. (C) Ambassador Cacho stated that the USG and the Government of Spain (GOS) used to differ on both strategy and objectives for Cuba policy, with Spain seeking engagement and gradual liberalization and the USG seeking confrontation and regime change. COM noted that the United States is engaging with the GOC in a low-key manner on issues where we believe we can make progress, and continues to focus on improving respect for human rights. He agreed that there is opportunity for closer collaboration between the EU and United States on Cuba such as the recent (successful) approaches to the GOC to allow the travel to Spain of Elsa Morejon, wife of prominent political prisoner Oscar Biscet.

CLOSELY WATCHING U.S. MOVES

CLOSELY WATCHING U.S. MOVES

3. (C) The Spanish Polcouns told his USINT counterpart that Spain and all of the EU countries were closely watching U.S. moves in Cuba, but dismissed that the EU would wait for further developments in the U.S.-Cuba relationship. “We have been traditionally ahead of you in engaging with Cuba,” he said, “we can’t afford to fall behind.” He dismissed reports of new EU Foreign Minister Ashton’s comments on the need to wait for U.S.-Cuba developments as “rookie
misstatements."

MINIMAL CHANGE WITHIN CUBA

4. (C) The ambassador and COM agreed that there so far has been little political or economic reform within Cuba since the passing of the GOC reins from Fidel to Raul Castro. GOC exhortations to Cubans to work harder and more efficiently reflect a military mindset but are insufficient to improve in any meaningful way Cuba’s economy. Raul increasingly has brought his people into high-level positions, which also has increased the role and influence of the military. Ambassador Cacho said the changes have made the GOC more centralized and top-heavy, and that no outsiders have access to the small circle at the top. In contrast to when Cacho arrived a year ago, now even Cabinet ministers profess to him to have little idea of future policy directions. No one has stepped into the void left by the sacking of Carlos Lage. The Ambassador sees Fidel’s influence lately to be on the rise, and even speculated that Fidel might make an appearance at the upcoming ALBA summit in Havana.

DO AWAY WITH THE EU COMMON POSITION

5. (C) Cacho said that Foreign Minister Moratinos likely will raise with the Secretary Spain’s interest in doing away with the Common Position. The GOS feels the Common Position has failed to produce improvements in human rights in Cuba and should be replaced by a negotiated agreement between the EU and Cuba that would include human rights components. The Spanish Polcouns further added that Spain and likeminded EU countries see the Common Position as an irritant to the GOC, which impedes better EU-Cuba relations. Referring to the GOC’s release and exile to Spain of four political prisoners in 2007, and the release of one prisoner following Moratinos, most recent visit to Cuba, Ambassador Cacho asserted that the only human rights improvements in Cuba have come through Spain’s own bilateral dialogue with Cuba. Even those improvements were minimal, but the GOS feels the Common Position has run its course.

6. (C) COM asked whether the GOS believes that the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon means that unanimous consent is no longer required to do away with the Common Position. Ambassador Cacho said this remains unclear until the Council of Europe meets next April. In the meantime, the GOS’s position is that EU unity is more important than Cuba policy and thus the GOS would move only if there were no objections raised within the EU. Notwithstanding this, the Spanish are sounding much more resolute in their aims than they did just one months ago (Ref A).

CUBA WANTS A POLITICAL CHANNEL TO THE WHITE HOUSE

7. (C) The Spanish Ambassador said that Moratinos also is likely to raise Cuba’s interest, as reportedly expressed to him by Raul Castro, for a political channel to the USG, particularly to the White House. Only via such a political channel would the GOC be able to make major moves toward meeting U.S. concerns (note: Cacho was not in the Moratinos/Raul meeting). In response, COM ran through a list of specific issues on which we have engaged the GOC and made advances and of other areas, such as our offer to lift the travel restrictions on our respective Interests Sections, where we await concrete GOC action. The GOC should engage seriously through the existing channels. The COM noted also that the current domestic political situation in Cuba, as described above, was not conducive to grand gestures by the GOC. In a side note, Ambassador Cacho asked why the GOC had not accepted our offer to lift travel restrictions, which he felt would be to their advantage. Cuba’s territory was much smaller, and the GOC would control access to GOC entities, which encompass much of Cuba’s economy and societal institutions. CUBINT’s potential access would be much greater. COM said that was a question better posited to the GOC; our offer remains on the table.

EU TROIKA AND CUBA: NOT AS BAD AS IT SEEMS

8. (C) Ambassador Cacho said the recent Troika meeting had gone reasonably well considering the
difficulty the GOC had in engaging with the Swedish Presidency. COM noted the harsh rhetoric directed toward the EU in the GOC statement issued after the talks, and asked if that masked any progress on human rights issues during the talks themselves. Cacho said no, but that the GOS was hopeful of progress during its Presidency. In the meantime, the EU internally was in agreement that there was little to gain from responding publicly to such diatribes.

CUBAN FIVE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

9. (C) Ambassador Cacho said he had been asked that morning to demarche the GOC to ask that they be allowed to visit their imprisoned relatives on Christmas Day as a humanitarian gesture. He was prepared to do so but was skeptical he would obtain a positive response. The ambassador asked if Perez O, Conor and Salanueva, wives of two of the Cuban Five, would receive visas to visit their husbands. COM described the history of their ineligibilities and the differences between the two cases. The ambassador noted the GOC’s interest in swapping the Cuban Five for political prisoners in Cuba. COM responded that the vast majority of the Damas and their imprisoned relatives were opposed to any such offer.

HAVANA 00000726 003.2 OF 003

DOWNWARD ECONOMIC SPIRAL

10. (C) The ambassador said Cuban imports from Spain were down 38% in August, similar to the decline from other trading partners. Some Spanish exporters recently had been able to access and transfer funds previously frozen in their Cuban bank accounts but only if they agreed to invest some of these proceeds in new exports to Cuba. (Spanish demands for payment during the International Trade Fair were not well taken, and other contacts tell us that the head of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce had fallen from grace with the GOC after publicly criticizing Cuba for letting unpaid bills pile up.) Ambassador Cacho observed that the Cuban economy is in a downward spiral with no sign of when or how it might recover. His GOC interlocutors a year ago talked of increasing opportunities for small scale enterprises (paladares, etc.) and even timeshare developments, but such talk has ceased.

COMMENT: VALUE IN COORDINATION

11. (C) Despite differences in our views, we see value in coordinating with the GOS on human rights issues in Cuba both in capitals and on the ground in Havana. Spain leads a substantial bloc within the EU that favors engagement with the GOC at almost any cost but will raise human rights-related issues privately with the GOC when persuaded to do so. Spain desires to speak for the entire EU when it comes to Cuba policy and is quick to reinterpret the public statements of other EU interlocutors, e.g., European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Assistance de Gucht and EU Foreign Minister Ashton, when they don’t fit the Spanish line. FARRAR

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cable Shows Nations Going Easy on Cuba”
How Cuba Keeps Europeans from Meeting Dissidents

In this Nov. 24, 2009, cable, American diplomats describe how democracies like Canada, Australia and the European Union bow to Cuban demands that they do not meet dissidents or publicly criticize the government on human rights issues. The cable singles out the Vatican for praise, saying its representative called for Internet freedom and championed bloggers while visiting the country.

DATE 2009-11-24 13:33:00

SOURCE US Interests Section Havana

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HAVANA 000706

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CCA STATE FOR DRL CNEWLING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/23/2019 TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PGOV, CU SUBJECT: FEISTY LITTLE MISSIONS DENT CUBA'S RECORD OF BULLYING OTHERS TO SILENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: A. HAVANA 619 (RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR) B. HAVANA 592 (GOC SIGNALS “READINESS TO MOVE FORWARD”) C. VATICAN 117 (“VATICAN TWO-STEP WITH CUBA”)

HAVANA 00000706 001.3 OF 003

Classified By: Poloff Joaquin F. Monserrate for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. The Cuban Government has been able to stonewall its independent civil society from foreign visitors who have, for the large part, been all too ready to give in to Cuban bullying and give up on these encounters. A series of recent visits has shown the different approaches that foreign governments have taken to highlight, or not, Cuba’s sorry human rights record. The Australian Foreign Minister, Switzerland’s Human Rights Special Envoy and the Canadian Cabinet-level Minister of the Americas not only failed to meet with non-government Cubans, they didn’t even bother to publicly call for more freedoms after visiting Cuba in November. Though also shunning NGOs, recent emissaries from the Vatican and the EU, at least called out publicly for greater rights. Some holdouts remain, refusing to bring anyone of note if the Cubans insist on conditioning access. Regardless of the approach, the result tends to be the same. There is little of substance to be gained from a “friends-at-all-costs” approach to Cuba. End Summary.

THE “BEST-FRIENDS-FOREVER” APPROACH: DO, SAY NOTHING

2. (C) Practitioners of this approach to Cuba include most countries, including all Latin Americans and Africans, Russians and Chinese, and many Europeans. The Brazilian Polcouns in Havana best summed up this style: “We don’t raise (human rights) in public or private.” No wonder, the U.K. number-two in Havana grumbled, that “Cuba would love nothing more than to have the same relationship with us that they have with Brazil.” Most of these countries would not raise human rights even if the Government of Cuba (GOC) did not object to them doing so. This group apparently now includes the Swiss and Australians.

3. (C) The Swiss Human Rights Special Envoy Rudolf Knoblach met with his Cuban counterparts on
November 12, government-organized groups (GONGOs) and the Catholic Cardinal. He did not meet with civil society leaders nor make any public reference to Cuba’s human rights record (“not the Swiss way to do things,” they told us). More surprisingly, however, the Swiss admitted that Knoblauch did not raise Cuba’s human rights situation in private. As part of the “Periodic Review,” under their bilateral Dialogue, the Swiss and the Cubans discussed multilateral human rights issues, such as accession to international conventions and the UNCHR, but did not touch upon Cuba’s political prisoners, access to prisons or the still-unscheduled visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture (Ref A). They invited Cuban officials to tour Swiss jails, something the Swiss said “had worked” in their relations with Vietnam.

4. (C) Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith met with Cuba’s Vice President Jose Ramon Machado and Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez on November 23. According to Australian press reports, Smith said how “pleased” he was with Australia-Cuba relations and praised bilateral “friendship and cooperation,” while Rodriguez thanked Australia for its support against the U.S. embargo at the United Nations, the Cuban press reported. Nothing was said in public about political or economic reforms, or human rights.

THE “KEEP-IT-PRIVATE” APPROACH: SAY NOTHING PUBLICLY

5. (C) It is hard to gauge how many countries really bring up the tough subjects when they meet in private with the Cubans, but many claim to do so. Although nothing of substance stops visitors from engaging with civil society quietly (the way, for instance, we managed to do with our U.S. visitors in September, Ref B), most countries opt to shun meetings altogether, bowing to Cuban pressure. Spain falls mostly in this group, although to their credit, Foreign Minister Moratinos spoke of the need for “gestures” after his meetings here in September. Canada laid a claim on this group after the November visit of Americas Minister Peter Kent.

6. (C) The Canadians also failed to meet with the independent civil society or make public pronouncements after the visit of Minister Kent. This was surprising, since Kent and Prime Minister Harper had been publicly critical of Cuba’s human rights record, something that led the GOC to cancel Kent’s visit last April. Canadian officials in Havana told us that Kent raised the issue of Cuba’s political prisoners but that the GOC had immediately turned the discussion into one of definitions. (Note: The GOC claims all of its prisoners of conscience are common criminals. Its stock answer to the topic is to deny it holds political prisoners.) It’s an interesting debate, our Canadian counterparts claimed, “If someone takes money from the U.S., does that make him a political prisoner?”

7. (C) In his meetings with Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, Kent reportedly asked also about the visit of the Special Rapporteur, but again the Cubans changed the subject. “How many Rapporteur visits has Canada had?,” Rodriguez was said to have shot back. Kent left town saying little, a style that “works better for the (GOC),” our northerly neighbors assured us.

THE “WE-RESPECTFULLY-DISAGREE” APPROACH: GOING PUBLIC

8. (C) The missions that air their concerns publicly are in the minority. Although the official press ignores it, the GOC frowns upon these utterances and often acts offended. Countries that go public usually also meet with civil society, but others don’t. Outspoken visitors sometimes step out of their missions’ carefully managed talking points, as was apparently the case, for instance, of the latest high-level visitors to Cuba from the European Union and the Holy See.

9. (C) The EU Commission in Havana sits snuggly in the “Best-Friends-Forever” camp. Their functionaries share with us their reproach of the “radical” Swedes and Czechs, with their human rights priorities, and can’t wait for “moderate” Spain to take over the EU Presidency. The former Development Commissioner, Louis Michel, keenly followed that line during his visits to Cuba. Not so his successor.

10. (C) On an early November visit to Cuba, the Belgian Karel de Gucht put aside Cuban equivocations and declared that “there is a set of fundamental rights that are universal,” and
called on Cuba to “create the right conditions” to enact these rights. In respectful tones and emphasizing that the EU was not after “regime change,” De Gucht put the GOC on notice that, if it did not begin to improve its human rights record, it could give up any hope of normalizing relations with the EU. Despite this, in a November 23 interview with CNN, de Gucht seemed to soften this line and called for normalization without demanding prior gestures from Cuba.

11. (C) The Vatican’s Social Communications Council President Archbishop Claudio Cello, a grizzled veteran of China-Vatican negotiations, also mixed praise with tough love. Originally calling on the GOC to allow further radio access to Cuban churches, Celli went off script, and called on greater information and internet access for all Cubans. He even singled out Cuba’s blogger community for praise, something the GOC “didn’t like at all,” according to Holy See diplomats in Havana (leading Celli to “clarify” his comments upon his return to Rome).

THE “TAKE-YOUR-VISIT-AND-SHOVE-IT” APPROACH: LITTLE LOST

12. (C) Some countries refuse to let the GOC dictate to them when it comes to visitors. Although they will accommodate GOC petulance by hosting dual national day ceremonies (and spare Cuban officials the “affront” of sharing space with Cubans it deems unworthy) and cordon off their ambassadors from civil society engagement, the holdout countries resist pressure to disengage from civil society altogether. In many cases they have chosen to keep their principals at home if the price is kowtowing to the GOC. Germany, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom may pay a price in terms of lost business and access from their principled stance. Others who stand in this camp have less to lose from sticking it to the Cubans, and include Poland and Sweden.

13. (C) In November, the Ambassador for the Order of Malta (a Catholic church NGO given diplomatic status by the GOC) took the “take-it-and-shove-it” approach to new heights. After the GOC told him that he could only bring in the Belgian Ambassador (firmly in the “BFF” camp) but not the USINT Chief of Mission to a humanitarian event he was organizing at a leper hospital, he cancelled the event and left town.

14. (C) COMMENT. The Cuba overwhelming majority of the 100 foreign missions in Havana do not face a human rights dilemma in their dealings with the Cubans. These countries wouldn’t raise the issue anyway. The rest, a group that includes most of Europe, Canada, Australia, Japan and the United States, claim to employ different approaches to address their human rights concerns in Cuba -- but the truth is that most of these countries do not press the issue at all in Cuba. The GOC does not like to talk about its human rights situation, and even less to be lectured publicly. It deploys considerable resources to bluff and bully many missions and their visitors into silence. For the most part the rewards for acquiescing to GOC demands are risible: pomp-full dinners and meetings and, for the most pliant, a photo-op with one of the Castro brothers. In terms of substance or economic benefits, they fare little better than those who stand up to the GOC. FARRAR

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cable Shows Nations Going Easy on Cuba”
Fidel Castro’s Mid-air Health Scare

In this March 16, 2007, cable, the diplomats assess Fidel Castro’s worsening health, recounting a story of how he suffered a perforated intestine while on a domestic flight in July 2006. A Cuban doctor familiar with his case said his condition was incurable and that he would become progressively more debilitated.

DATE 2007-03-16 18:28:00
SOURCE US Interests Section Havana
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 HAVANA 000258

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2017 TAGS: PGOV, PINR, CU SUBJECT: CUBA: HOW BELIEVABLE IS A FIDEL CASTRO COMEBACK?

HAVANA 00000258 001.3 OF 002

Classified By: COM Michael E. Parmly; Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

1. (C) Summary: XXXXXXXXXX passed us a document March 14 that describes Fidel Castro’s declining health, as analyzed by a respected, XXXXXXXXXX. The document concludes by saying that Castro has a terminal condition, and will suffer an inevitable deterioration of his faculties until he dies. But he is not about to die “immediately.” This contrasts with a flurry of news and public statements by key regime figures about Castro making a comeback, including his having spoken to Hugo Chavez on the phone while the latter was in Haiti. We believe that a full comeback is unlikely, but that Fidel Castro is more of a presence behind the scenes -- and even “on stage” as a presence -- than he was a few months ago. End Summary.

2. (U) Media have reported increased activity on the part of Fidel Castro this past week: Speaking on the phone to Hugo Chavez during the Venezuelan’s visit to Haiti; and receiving Colombian author and long-time sympathizer Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Both Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque (in Europe) and Parliamentary Speaker Ricardo Alarcon stated publicly that Fidel Castro was making a comeback and would return to the GOC’s helm. Alarcon’s statement included Castro’s “winning reelection for president” in 2008. Interim dictator Raul Castro has kept a low profile during the past few weeks.

3. (C) XXXXXXXXXX passed COM and Pol-Econ Counselor a document based on XXXXXXXXXX interview with XXXXXXXXXX with an excellent reputation. The document traces Fidel Castro’s critical condition from its onset last July, through the various ups and downs with his local medical staff and with the visiting Spanish doctor, Garcia Sabrido. Most of this repeats what has previously been reported, with one new development: Castro has fired his long-time personal physician, Dr. Selman. Informal translation of this document follows in Para 4.

4. (C) XXXXXXXXXX Statement:

“The illness began in the plane from Holguin to Havana (Note: after a full day of July 26, 2006 activities. End note). As this was a short flight there was no doctor aboard and they had to land urgently once they knew of his bleeding. He was diagnosed with diverticulitis of the colon.
This illness is characterized by diverticulae in the large intestine, generally. A diverticula is a protuberant sack in a segment of the intestine, not in itself necessarily dangerous. Waste gets trapped in them, for example. Nevertheless, they can cause hemorrhaging, inflammation and infection, resulting in diverticulitis. (Health Unit Comment: Simple diverticulitis, without perforation, hemorrhaging or infection, is treatable. End Comment.)

The condition requires surgery when the diverticulae are gigantic, because they are more likely to become infected and burst.

He had a perforation in the large intestine and needed to have a colostomy done; which he opposed, saying that they should splice out the infected part and reattach the intestine to his colon. Dr. Selman, who was chief of the medical team, was in agreement, but the rest of the team opposed. But Fidel Castro, capriciously, did not permit the colostomy.

With the passage of time, as the colon was infected, the operation collapsed and the reattached part separated. They had to operate again, but found a fistula. It wasn’t known at that time what he had, but normally a fistula in the abdomen has the effect of blocking the digestion of food—resulting in the loss of 40 pounds. They began to feed him by IV serum, and they used a Korean-made device to treat the fistula, which didn’t have much success. That was when they called in the Spanish doctor, the one who said that they Cuban team had done what they could, but the correct treatment should have been a colostomy.

At that point they removed Selman from the team, who is now working as a low-level doctor someplace else.

XXXXXX explains that at his (Castro’s) age

HAVANA 00000258 002.3 OF 002

this illness is not curable, and will not XXXXX allow him to return to leading Cuba. He won’t die immediately, but he will progressively lose his faculties and become ever more debilitated until he dies.”

5. (C) This report is consistent with our reporting that Fidel Castro probably came close to death in July, 2006, and then again around October. Since then, as we have seen in video and audio broadcasts, Castro has been able to engage with Hugo Chavez and others for limited periods of conversation and other forms of carefully controlled activity. He has not appeared live on TV or in any other public context during the entire period of his critical illness, which caused him to miss the September, 2006 Non-Aligned summit and a large-scale celebration of his birthday and armed forces day in December, 2006.

6. (C) Cubans react to news about Fidel Castro with resignation and wild speculation. XXXXXX that he thought last month’s taped call-in by Castro to Hugo Chavez’s radio show was fake and that he would die by May. XXXXXXX described the Castro illness as having a similar effect on the public as the Pope’s 1998 visit: Greatly raised expectation for change, followed by disappointment and reversion to the totalitarian norm.

7. (C) Comment: We are missing too many variables to be able to predict accurately how many more months Fidel Castro will live. Frankly, we don’t believe anyone, including Castro himself, can state that with certainty. However, while he is still alive, even in a reduced capacity, his presence has a chilling and retardant effect on Cuban society. The high expectations for change are still out there, but are mostly associated with the idea that the dictator has to die first before anything substantial will happen. PARMLY

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cable Shows Nations Going Easy on Cuba”
What Happens After Fidel Dies?

In this Jan. 15, 2009, cable, the diplomats hazarded a guess at what might happen in Cuba after the hero of the revolution dies. Their answer: not much, at least not immediately. The Cuban government has made elaborate preparations for Fidel Castro’s death, and the reaction is likely to be muted. The United States does not expect Cubans to leave in large numbers, in part because people may want to stay in the country to see whether there will be changes.

DATE 2009-01-15 17:22:00

SOURCE US Interests Section Havana

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET HAVANA 000035

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/14/2019 TAGS: PINs, PGOV, PINR, SMIG, PREL, CU SUBJECT: THE SPECULATION ON FIDEL’S HEALTH

REF: 08 HAVANA 969

Classified By: COM Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Fidel Castro’s extended absence from public view, especially during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the revolution, combined with the long time since he has written one of his occasional “Reflections” pieces is prompting speculation in the international press that his health has taken a turn for the worse. Comments by Venezuelan President Chavez that Fidel will never be seen again have caused some to speculate that he may already be dead. There is, of course, no mention of this in local Cuban press and the rumor mill on the street is subdued, if not silent, on the issue. Whatever the situation, from our vantage point the likelihood of a substantial short term effect on migration or security in Cuba is small, even if the Comandante’s death is announced.

WHAT WE KNOW NOW

2. (C) Fidel has not written a “Reflection” piece since December 15. Especially given the significance of the 50th anniversary of the revolution on January 1, this is unusual. The celebrations themselves were surprisingly subdued, confined to a short ceremony featuring President Raul Castro in Santiago (ref tel). It also appears true that Fidel was not seen by the latest in a continuing stream of international visitors: Presidents Torrijos of Panama and Correa of Ecuador. It is particularly noteworthy that Correa did not see him, as he is considered an up and comer within the South American left. Fidel was last photographed with Chinese President Hu Jintao in November. In the picture he appeared alert, but thin and weak. Were it not for the 50th anniversary celebration, Fidel’s current absence would not have generated as much speculation in the international press. He has gone silent for extended periods on other occasions since he stepped out of public view in July 2006. But each time he reemerged after speculation about his condition in the foreign press reached a certain crescendo.

3. (C) Perhaps because the Cuban public has grown accustomed to false alarms over the past two years, while the level of speculation in the international press has increased, the local rumor mill is not producing much more than usual. We remain in regular contact with members of the dissident movement, and none has detected anything out of the ordinary in the past few weeks. The ongoing crackdown against their activities, which went into high gear following the hurricanes
last fall, continues unabated. We have noticed no notable change in the local security posture in Havana, e.g., no additional police on the street or obvious military movements.

AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN HE IS DEAD?

4. (S) At this point, we do not believe the announcement of Fidel’s death would alter the local security situation in any significant way. GOC officials would most likely manage the death announcement and subsequent funeral arrangements, etc., in great detail with a view towards putting the best face on the situation, both domestically and to the world. Utmost care will be given to ensuring that the Cuban public understands that Raul and the rest of the GOC remain in firm control. The event will be treated with appropriate solemnity, but also designed to achieve maximum propaganda value. It is probable that no announcement will be made until the GOC feels confident that all preparations have been made in accordance with the preceding.

5. (S) We do not believe the announcement of Fidel’s death will spark either violent demonstrations or a quick surge in migration. The security arrangements noted in the previous paragraph and the Cuban people’s generally conservative nature after 50 years of repression, combined with still significant admiration for Fidel personally, argue against short term disturbances. Far from generating a surge in migration, the announcement of his death could cause a drop in such activity as Cubans wait to see if Fidel’s passing brings any change to the island.

6. (S) USINT has reviewed its procedures for dealing with the death of Fidel and is prepared to deal with potential contingencies. FARRAR
Mexican Military Welcomes U.S. Help

In this October 2009 cable, Mexico’s defense secretary, Gen. Guillermo Galvan Galvan, told the visiting American director of national intelligence, Dennis C. Blair, that he welcomed American assistance in the battle against the drug cartels and could not rely on Mexican law enforcement agencies because of corruption and leaks.

DATE 2009-10-26 23:37:00

SOURCE Embassy Mexico

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 003077

NOFORN SENSITIVE SIPDIS

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Gustavo Delgado. Reason: 1.4 (b),(d).

1. (S/NF) Summary. DNI Dennis Blair met with Defense Secretary General Guillermo Galvan Galvan on October 19 on the heels of meetings with President Calderon and members of his national security team (ref a and b). The discussion focused largely on the military’s role in the counternarcotics fight, with Galvan lamenting a likely lengthy domestic mandate, the need for improved translation of intelligence into operations, and his mistrust of other GOM security elements. Galvan is clearly seeking cooperation from the USG to strengthen his institution’s capacity to fight drug trafficking organizations, but will try to keep military actions in its own channels rather than working more broadly with Mexico’s law enforcement community. End summary.

2. (S/NF) To open the discussion with General Galvan Galvan and high-ranking members of his intel team, DNI Blair recognized the challenges a military confronts when it has to fight a war -- in this case against drug trafficking organizations -- within its own country. In response to the DNI’s question on how the GOM can make the transition away from the armed forces to a strictly civilian counternarcotics domestic fight, Galvan said that he does not currently see a quick end to their internal deployment. He indicated that the effort is difficult for the military, in part due to the perception that they lack the legal framework to back their deployment. He noted that SEDENA is working with Congress to pass legislation that would address this matter. (Note: Calderon submitted to Congress last session a National Security Law that looks to codify the military’s role in the domestic CN fight. End note.) He also mentioned that Article 29 of the constitution calling for a state of exception” in certain areas of the country might provide them with such legal authority (see septel for discussion on Article 29). SEDENA runs the risk of losing public prestige and being criticized on human rights issues as its mandate is extended, but he nevertheless expects the military to maintain its current role for the next 7 to 10 years. Galvan did suggest that increased U.S. intelligence assistance could shorten that time frame, and also applauded USG efforts to prevent arms trafficking across the border into Mexico.

3. (S/NF) Galvan indicated that he is interested in establishing the highest levels of cooperation with the USG, particularly in light of its “new authorities” as the institution responsible for capturing high-value targets. Including two members of the Zetas and Sinaloa cartel head Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman Loera. He further said that SEDENA was implementing a three stage operation to specifically target Chapo. The first stage, which they have largely accomplished, is to establish a physical force in the area of his operation primarily intended to collect intelligence. He noted that they have found 10 to 15 locations where he moves, but that Chapo commands the support of a large network of informers and has security circles of up to 300 men that make launching capture operations difficult. The second stage is to deploy a circle of troops into the area of his movements, which Galvan hopes to do shortly. The third stage is his capture.
4. (S/NF) The DNI suggested that improving the intelligence capabilities of deployed units would
improve the troops’ ability to launch more rapid operations, as the USG learned in its experience
in Iraq. Galvan said the concept is clear -- he understands that good intelligence is worthless
without a capable reaction force. He noted SEDENA should improve vertical communication on
intelligence matters, and said they would be willing to accept any training the USG can offer.
Galvan complained that joint operations with law enforcement entities are challenging because
leaks of planning and information by corrupted officials have compromised past efforts. Bringing
police, particularly at the state and local level, up to standard will be challenging and a
prolonged process. Galvan said that SEDENA’s permanent deployment of two officers to the El Paso
Intelligence Center will help to disseminate rapidly information to the Ciudad Juarez commander.
Visit Mexico City’s Classified Web Site at

MEXICO 00003077 002 OF 002

http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/mexicocity and the North American Partnership Blog at
http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap / PASCUAL
Panama Wants U.S. to Wiretap Opponents

A cable from Panama reports pressure from that country’s president, Ricardo Martinelli, on the American Embassy to authorize the Drug Enforcement Administration to assist in wiretapping his political opponents.

DATE 2009-08-22 14:46:00

SOURCE Embassy Panama

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET PANAMA 000639

NOFORN SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2039 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, SNAR, KCRM, PM SUBJECT: MARTINELLI WIRETAP QUEST SHOWS DARK SIDE OF NEW GOP

 Classified By: Ambassador Barbara J. Stephenson for reason 1.4 b and d.

Summary
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1. (S//NF) President Martinelli has reached out to the Embassy, among other actors, to request help in building infrastructure to conduct wiretaps against ostensible security threats as well as political opponents. The Ambassador has made it clear to the president that the USG will continue our successful judicialized law enforcement wiretap program with Panama, but we will not be party to any effort to expand wiretaps to domestic political targets. Martinelli’s seeming fixation with wiretaps and his comments to Ambassador during an August 12 meeting demonstrate that he may be willing to set aside the rule of law in order to achieve his political and developmental goals. Martinelli has publicly declared that wiretapping will be a key law enforcement tool, and has submitted a draft wiretap bill to the national assembly. Civil liberties advocates are girding for a fight, and this issue could provide the first serious challenge to Martinelli’s popularity.

“I Need Help”
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2. (S//NF) Late last month Martinelli sent the Ambassador a cryptic Blackberry message that said, “I need help with tapping phones.” The Ambassador, who was traveling outside Panama at the time, did not respond to the substance of the message, but directed DCM and DEA chief to meet with Martinelli’s staff to get a better understanding of the president’s request. DCM and DEA chief met Minister of the Presidency Jimmy Papadimitriu on July 29 and again August 1. The latter meeting also included chief of intelligence Jaime Trujillo and newly-appointed Security Secretary Jose Abel Almengor. Papadimitriu explained that the Martinelli administration’s aggressive anti-corruption campaign is taking on powerful and corrupt individuals whose economic status is being threatened. He said some of those individuals may attempt to retaliate by threatening Martinelli’s personal safety. In addition, Martinelli believes that his right-of-center political orientation makes him a target of leftist governments in the region who will attempt to infiltrate Panama’s trade unions and destabilize the GOP. Papadimitriu said Martinelli believes he is not getting adequate information from Panama’s security services to counter these potential threats, and that he hoped to gain greater insight by establishing a wiretap program.

3. (S//NF) DCM and DEA chief explained the USG’s “Operation Matador” judicialized wiretap program which currently operates in conjunction with Panama’s police and security services. They emphasized the requirement that all targets must be related to drug trafficking and related crimes, and that all taps must be approved by a Panamanian supreme court judge, following basic legal protections that are well-established in the U.S. The present program provides half of the wiretapped lines to the GOP for its own organized crime investigations, which could include national security targets. Under current procedures, DEA prepares an affidavit every 30 days which contains a list of DEA and GOP wiretap targets, which is reviewed and approved by the
supreme court.

4. (S//NF) Papadimitriu, Trujillo and Almengor suggested that the current system did not allow the GOP enough flexibility to select targets, and mentioned short-fuse incidents such as kidnappings where rapid wiretap capability was needed. DCM and DEA chief countered that the technical capacity already exists, and that the GOP should explore a new rapid-response procedure for getting court orders that would authorize taps for emergency situations. DCM made very clear to Papadimitriu that the USG would not assist in expanding the program to include domestic political targets. Papadimitriu laughed and said that Panama’s security problems were far too serious to waste limited investigative capacity on political enemies.

Darker Intent
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5. (S//NF) A recent conversation with President Martinelli, however, paints a less benign picture. On August 12 Vice President Juan Carlos Varela invited Ambassador, DCM and DEA chief to meet with him and Papadimitriu to discuss the issue further. Upon arrival at Varela’s office, we were redirected to Martinelli’s office as the president had taken over the meeting.

6. (S//NF) Martinelli opened by repeating his request for USG help to expand wiretaps, saying “we are in darkness” fighting against crime and corruption. He said it is not fair that DEA collects information but that Panama does not benefit from that information. He made reference to various groups and individuals whom he believes should be wiretapped, and he clearly made no distinction between legitimate security targets and political enemies. Martinelli suggested that the USG should give the GOP its own independent wiretap capability as “rent” in exchange for the use of GOP facilities.

7. (S//NF) The Ambassador forcefully defended the DEA program and pointed out that the jointly-investigated cases were taking criminals off of Panama’s streets and making the country safer. Martinelli made an implicit threat to reduce counter-narcotics cooperation if the USG did not help him on wiretaps, to which the Ambassador promptly countered that she would readily inform Washington and we would all see Panama’s reputation as a reliable partner plummet dramatically. Martinelli immediately backed off, and said he did not want to endanger cooperation.

Naive and Dangerous
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9. (S//NF) Martinelli’s near-obsession with wiretaps betrays a simplistic and naive attitude toward the criminal investigative process. He appears to believe that wiretaps are the solution to all of his crime problems, and seems unable to grasp the concept that wiretaps are only one tool in the investigative process. We believe that he has tasked several subordinates to obtain wiretap capacity by reaching out to other governments and the private sector. His effort is an open secret among security professionals in Panama City. His behavior also tracks with an attitude of suspicion and vindictiveness we have seen since the early days of the campaign, when he was convinced that the PRD-controlled security service was tapping his phones. (Comment: This was very probably true.)

10. (S//NF) More worryingly, Martinelli seems prepared to dispense with legal procedure in order to achieve his reform agenda. During the August 12 meeting he proudly recounted to the Ambassador how, earlier that day, he had twisted the arms of casino operators and threatened to cancel their concessions if they did not pay their back taxes and cut their ties to the opposition political figures who had granted their generous concessions. Referring to businessmen who received corrupt concessions, Martinelli promised to “throw them to the sharks.” He chided the Ambassador for being “too legal” in her approach to the issue of wiretaps.

11. (S//NF) Martinelli has visited the DEA/GOP wire room and has been fully briefed on how the joint program operates. Our conversation made clear that he wishes to establish his own independent wire program under the cover of the DEA program. If he were able to establish such a program, he could blame it all on the gringos if it were exposed, which in this tiny country it inevitably would be. That would provoke a political backlash that would endanger the DEA wire program and its significant value to USG law enforcement. Martinelli’s bullying style with the Ambassador made it clear that he is prepared to push the limit to get what he wants, even with
his “friends.” VP/FM Varela went out of his way to apologize to the Ambassador and to minimize fallout from the meeting, noting that he hates Martinelli’s bluster but has not yet convinced him that whatever his persona is as “Ricardito,” such behavior is inappropriate for the President of the Republic.

Big Fight Coming
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12. (S//NF) The GOP last week introduced a draft bill to the national assembly that would require registry of prepaid cell phones and compel mobile operators to submit call data to the GOP for criminal investigations. Panama’s outspoken “civilista” sector has already voiced its strong opposition to the bill. In addition to the wiretap bill, civil liberties advocates are deeply concerned about Martinelli’s intent to defer modernization of the criminal code through transition to an accusatory system, as well as his moves to distance the new GOP from the process of civil society input to judicial policy dialogue established under the previous government. The noisy and potentially powerful forces who once resisted Manuel Noriega could unite in common cause over these issues to negatively impact Martinelli’s popularity. At the very least, Martinelli’s comportment manifests the autocratic tendencies which have long been predicted by friend and foe alike.

Comment:
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13. (S//NF) A president only gets his “first hundred days” once, and Martinelli is spending his obsessing about vengeance against his political foes. Most of his government appointments have favored loyalty over competence. This is negatively affecting his ability to pursue his top priorities, as well as our bilateral cooperation on shared priorities. His penchant for bullying and blackmail may have led him to supermarket stardom but is hardly statesmanlike. He risks losing the good will of his backers in the Panamanian elite and business communities. Martinelli is not a member of Panama’s traditional elite, and he could be on thin ice if his “anti-corruption” measures end up being seen primarily as shake-downs for fast cash.

14. (S//NF) Martinelli ran as a pro-U.S. candidate, and now assumes the U.S. owes him a debt as a right-of-center counterbalance to Hugo Chavez in the region. Our challenge is to convince him and others in his government that the 1980s are over in Central America. In our discussions with Panamanians across the board, we are emphasizing the message that the U.S. has no interest in a left-right divide in the hemisphere, but rather in long-term institutional stability. Our desire is that ten years from now, Panama is a stable, secure, democratic, prosperous country which is friendly to the U.S. and capable of administering and protecting the Canal.

15. (S//NF) In addition to sending that message, we are carefully directing embassy programs to take advantage of new opportunities, for example a reinvigorated effort to reach “youth at risk” and reduce street crime, while avoiding potential pitfalls, particularly in the security arena. Our wiretap program, which works well and upholds the rule of law, would easily withstand public scrutiny were it to come to light. We are coordinating closely with counterparts in the Council for National Security and Public Defense (Consejo) to meet our own collection requirements, but we must remain vigilant against the danger of local officials trying to commandeer the program for internal political games. We must be able to defend every action we take and in doing so make ourselves immune to threats to reveal our programs if we don’t cave to pressure. Close coordination by all USG agencies with Embassy Panama City is therefore more important than ever.

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency”
Pressure to Misuse D.E.A. Wiretaps in Panama

A December 2009 cable reports on six months of negotiations by the American Embassy in Panama, fending off pressure to permit the use of an American-backed wiretapping program for political purposes.

DATE 2009-12-24 16:58:00

SOURCE Embassy Panama

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET PANAMA 000905

NOFORN SIPDIS MEXICO AND EL SALVADOR FOR DEA


REF: PANAMA 639; PANAMA 699; PANAMA 777; PANAMA 776; PANAMA 799 PANAMA 877; PANAMA 901

CLASSIFIED BY: David Gilmour, DCM, State, EXEC; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1. (U) This is an action request, see para 8.

2. (S//NF) Since July 2009, Embassy Panama has grappled with President Martinelli’s desire to involve the USG in his efforts to construct a wiretap program that would target his domestic political opponents. Refs A, B and C document the sequence of events in which the president and subordinates employed a variety of tactics ranging from straightforward requests to intimidating threats, in order to obtain USG assistance and/or political cover for his wiretap project. Ample additional reporting on this topic is available in other agency channels.

3. (S//NF) From the time of our very first discussion with the GOP on this subject in July until now, we have clearly and consistently told all senior GOP officials that the USG will only conduct limited law enforcement wiretap programs in cooperation with Panamanian law enforcement and judicial authorities, directed only against genuine law enforcement targets, in a process managed by a Panamanian prosecutor and approved by a Panamanian supreme court judge.

4. (S//NF) Since our decision in late September (Ref B) to remove the DEA Matador wiretap program from control of the GOP’s Council for Public Security and National Defense (CSPDN), we have confronted a series of obstacles, including threats from the CSPDN director to expel the DEA from Panama (Ref C) and restrict payments to vetted units (Ref G), and generally weak support for the move from Martinelli and senior GOP leaders. Martinelli’s distrust of Panama’s attorney general (Ref D) has complicated the issue and he and his subordinates have repeatedly proposed alternative arrangements that would keep the Matador program within CSPDN, but would not fully maintain the “firewall” between law enforcement and intelligence activities.

5. (S//NF) We are still hopeful that we can complete the Matador move out of CSPDN early in the new year, but if we are unable to do so, we are faced with a difficult decision. If Matador remains in CSPDN, the GOP will continue its efforts to change procedures to weaken judicial controls over the program. CSPDN director Olmedo Alfar has told Embassy officers that the GOP plans to introduce legislation that would create a special judge to approve GOP wiretap targets on short notice. With Panama’s notoriously corrupt judicial system (rated 103 out of 133 by the World Economic Forum), we are not confident that the new judge will uphold the same standards and civil liberties protections that the Panama supreme court has exercised in its oversight of Matador to date.
6. (S//NF) All of this comes at a time when Panama’s judicial institutions are under assault by the executive, with Martinelli’s strong political pressure on the attorney general (Ref D) and the controversial appointment of two Martinelli political cronies to the supreme court (septel). For several weeks the Panamanian media has carried a steady stream of criticism of Martinelli’s actions, and most observers believe that the country’s already weak justice system is suffering serious body blows.

7. (S//NF) The Matador wiretap program is a valuable law enforcement tool, but we believe that the USG must not compromise democratic values in the employment of that tool. The United States itself has recently experienced a difficult debate over civil liberties and democratic principles being compromised in the name of security. We should not be a participant in questionable activities in Panama. The recent DAS scandal in Colombia illustrates the catastrophic consequences of politically motivated wiretaps, and such a scenario could easily unfold in Panama if the GOP continues its present course of action. If we cannot guarantee with a high level of confidence that the Matador program will not be misused for political purposes, then we prefer to suspend the program.

8. (SBU) Post requests Department coordinate with other stakeholder agencies to provide advice on a way forward. While we at post are in the strongest position to provide views on the operational impact of suspending the program, stakeholder agencies in Washington can best provide the perspective on the legal and policy factors against which the operational impact should be weighed. We will be pleased to provide extensive additional background material and technical details as requested. STEPHENSON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency”
Mexican Drug Traffickers Attack Police With Grenades

A February 2010 cable from Monterrey, Mexico, gives a dire account of drug violence there, including grenade attacks against the police. The cable calls the state’s security programs “notional at best.”

DATE 2010-02-28 21:46:00

SOURCE Consulate Monterrey

CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

UNCLAS MONTERREY 000066

SENSITIVE SIPDIS DS/IP/WHa, DS/IP/DEAV, AND DS/PSP/DEAV WHa/MEX

E.O. 12958: N/A TAGS: ASEC, KCRM, SNAR, CASC, PGOV, MX SUBJECT: Grenade Attacks Against Monterrey Police; Feb. 26 and 28th EACs

REF: 10 NUEVO LAREDO 56

1. (SBU). Late in the evening of February 27, hooded men conducted simultaneous grenade attacks against the facilities of five municipal police forces within the Monterrey metro area. At police stations in the working class suburbs of San Nicolas and Cadereyta, the grenades exploded, injuring two and causing significant property damage; in Guadalupe, Escobedo, and Apodaca the devices did not detonate. Law enforcement sources, but not the press, report a sixth attack in the city of Santiago, south of Monterrey, and there are sketchy indications of a seventh attack in Sabinas-Hidalgo, about an hour north of Monterrey. The authorities have arrested two attackers and recover three unexploded grenades and one grenade spoon. ATF Monterrey is in the process of obtaining access to the recovered physical evidence. Although there were civilian witnesses to the San Nicolas explosion, no one is likely to come forward to present evidence or testify. Law enforcement sources report that the police present when the stations were attacked fled their posts. It is now clear that the ongoing war between the Gulf and Zeta drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) has reached Monterrey.

Nuevo Leon Spin Control

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2. (SBU). While Nuevo Leon Secretary General Javier Trevino Cantu has characterized the coordinated attacks as a reaction by organized crime to the state government’s security efforts, this explanation is not persuasive as the state's programs are still notional at best. Neither the recently-announced military/federal/state plan to install roadblocks (68 checkpoints in 19 cities) along the Monterrey to Reynosa, Tamaulipas corridor nor the state's new plan to install checkpoints in 11 Monterrey metro area municipalities to stem car theft have begun. Given the thorough penetration by the Zetas of the police forces in those municipalities that were hit, a much more likely explanation is that the attacks were a signal from the Gulf cartel to the police to cease/desist their support of the Zetas and switch sides. Other plausible theories exist as well -- such as the attack was an attempt to “heat up” the Monterrey plaza -- but none involve organized crime responding to “effective” state government enforcement efforts.

Public Worried and Distrustful

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3. (SBU) Locally, the Monterrey public is worried as citizens fear that if the war between the cartels were to hit the city in earnest, Monterrey could experience the rampant violence seen at
the border. The continuing wave of car-jackings/car thefts -- the DTOs appear to be using the stolen cars to fulfill their transportation needs -- has many on edge. Citizens are curtailing trips to the border, and several bus companies are cancelling runs to outlying cities in the state. Indeed, if high-value targets fleeing Tamaulipas take up residence in Monterrey and nearby Saltillo, Coahuila, violence here between the cartels and between the cartels and the military (both army and navy) will increase. During the previous week reliable witness reported carloads of gunmen, with automatic weapons hanging out the window, retreating to Monterrey along the highways linking the city to Reynosa. Indeed, DEA confirms a rolling confrontation between the military and retreating Zetas on February 27 in the Nuevo Leon municipalities of Zuazua and Pesqueria, both to the north and east of Monterrey.

4. (SBU). A recent poll done by the Monterrey-based Grupo Reforma -- publishers of the influential local daily “El Norte” -- revealed that 58 percent of Tamaulipas respondents had seen or heard gun battles or violent acts that the media/government had not made public. From here, it looks as if Nuevo Leon residents share this view. Indeed, post law enforcement has learned that six died during the Zuazua/Pesqueria shoot-out, an incident which has not been reported in the local press. The rumor that Tamaulipas Governor Eugenio Hernandez had been kidnapped flew around among Monterrey elites at light speed on February 26. The comparative silence of Nuevo Leon Governor Rodrigo Medina on security issues in general has only heightened suspicions.

February 26 EAC Meeting and February 28 Follow-up

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5. (SBU) Prior to the grenade attacks, Consulate General Monterrey’s Emergency Action Committee (EAC) met on February 26, 2010 to discuss the current wave of narco-related violence and its potential impact on Consulate security and operations. The EAC was chaired by Consul General with the presence of MGT, RSO, CONS, POL, CLO, FBI, ATF, DEA, ICE, PD and OPAD. Among items discussed was the continued increase in car-jackings and stolen cars. During the previous evening, a local car lot was hit by a DTO and as many as 10 SUVs were taken. The group also kidnapped the owner and two other family members. It was reported that local police seen in the area did not respond to distress calls from the family.

6. (SBU) RSO relayed UnclassList reporting that the Los Zetas leader, Miguel Heriberto Lazcano-Lazcano is believed to be hiding in Monterrey and was planning for counter-offensive strikes against the Gulf Cartel in Tamaulipas. This information dovetailed with reporting from other sources and the members of post’s Law Enforcement Working Group elaborated that Saltillo, Coahuila would likely be considered a safehaven by the Zetas.

7. (SBU) The CG and RSO discussed obtaining further protective equipment for the Local Guard Force. RSO will submit a request for an emergency shipment of ballistic helmets and rifle grade body armor from DS/PSP/DEAV.

8. (SBU) At a February 28 follow-up session of the Law Enforcement Working Group, committee members discussed the probabilities of further Gulf Cartel retributions against Zeta controlled police departments in the Monterrey area. Various EAC members believe that the next targets of attack by the Gulf cartel might be the Monterrey and Santa Catarina police or Nuevo Leon state police facilities. On February RSO office distributed a security notice to Consulate employees reminding them of the need to remain vigilant. WILLIAMSON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War, With Frustration”
“Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency”
Paraguay Presses for D.E.A. Eavesdropping

A February 2010 cable reports that Paraguay is seeking to use Drug Enforcement Administration eavesdropping equipment for targets well beyond narcotics. Diplomats say they will go along with some of the demands because they have “no other viable choice.”

DATE 2010-02-18 20:52:00

SOURCE Embassy Asuncion

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T A S U N C I O N 0 0 0 0 9 7

SIPDIS NOFORN WHA/FO CMC MULLEN, WHA/BSC MDRUCKER, BFRIEDMAN, MDASCHBACH, INL/LP DHOOKER, DS/TIA/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2035/02/18 TAGS: PGOV, SNAR, ASEC, PREL, PA SUBJECT: GOP SEEKS TO IMPLEMENT NEW CELL PHONE INTERCEPT SYSTEM, BUT PROMISES TO KEEP SIU PROGRAM INTACT

CLASSIFIED BY: Ambassador Liliana Ayalde, Ambassador, State, Front Office; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Interior Minister Filizzola told the Ambassador February 10 that the GOP would soon be rolling out a new, expanded cell phone intercept program, which would continue to cover counternarcotics but would also include anti-kidnapping cases as the GOP ratchets up efforts to capture the EPP. Filizzola assured the Ambassador that the DEA-SIU cell intercept program would remain alive, but encouraged the Embassy to allow the use of the DEA-funded cell intercept software to the GOP or it would be rendered obsolete. Despite some initial technical doubts, it appears that Filizzola’s plan is technically feasible. However, we want to ensure that the DEA-supported program is not compromised in the process. Given the pressures on the GOP to arrest the EPP members responsible for the Zavala kidnapping, there is no doubt that the Lugo government will press to increase its intercept capability. Our participation and concurrence is key to our counternarcotics-- and broader law enforcement-- goals in Paraguay. END SUMMARY.

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FILIZZOLA INFORMS AMBASSADOR OF NEW GOP PROGRAM
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2. (S/NF) Interior Minister Rafael Filizzola told the Ambassador February 10 that the GOP would soon be rolling out a new, expanded cell phone intercept program, which would continue to cover counternarcotics but would also include anti-kidnapping cases as the GOP ratchets up efforts to capture members of the Paraguayan People’s Army (EPP) involved in the Fidel Zavala kidnapping. Since September 2009, DEA has had an active cell phone intercept program limited solely to counter-narcotics, managed by the Anti-Drug Secretariat (SENAD) (which is independent of the Interior Ministry). On several occasions since the October kidnapping of rancher Zavala by the EPP, Minister Filizzola asked Ambassador Ayalde and/or DEA to allow the Interior Ministry access to the cell intercept program so that it could pursue leads in the kidnapping case. Embassy declined access to the system, but cooperated with the Interior Ministry in order to monitor 12 lines related to the kidnapping. On February 10, Minister Filizzola told the Ambassador that the GOP had everything in place (legal framework, equipment, etc.) for a broader intercept program, but he learned that his program would impact the DEA-SIU program. The Ministry procured Brazilian intercept equipment for USD 1.2 million but needed access to the software available via the DEA-
SIU program at SENAD in order to make it operational. The Minister further said that he now understood that the technology did not permit both programs to operate independently. Thus the USG could either authorize the Ministry to link up with the DEA software or the GOP would procure the rest of its own system which would mean that the USG program housed in SENAD would be shut down. While acknowledging that drugs are a serious problem, the Minister stated that they are not the only security issue confronting Paraguay. Kidnapping, arms trafficking and corruption, the Minister stated, could not be subordinated to the war on drugs. Filizzola said the GOP’s top priority was capturing the EPP, which had to take precedence over counternarcotics. He was specifically concerned about the USD 556,000 the EPP received during the Zavala kidnapping, the EPP’s interest in generating instability, and the leads the GOP had on some other possible kidnappings. “Counternarcotics are important,” he said, “but won’t topple our government. The EEP could.”

3. (S/NF) Filizzola assured the Ambassador that the DEA-SIU cell intercept program would continue, but encouraged the Embassy to cede access to its cell intercept software to the GOP or it would be rendered obsolete. The Minister said SENAD would still be able to intercept lines, but the Ministry of Interior would need to utilize our software. Filizzola said President Lugo had approved the new program, and would speak to SENAD Minister Cesar Aquino regarding same. (NOTE: As of this writing, Lugo had not broken the news to Aquino. END NOTE). Filizzola told the Ambassador that he wanted to ensure transparency with the Embassy and secure our continued cooperation. The Minister stressed that he had the support and legal framework from the courts, Public Ministry, and the telephone regulatory agency CONATEL. The Minister noted that since the DEA already owns the connecting software (LMNS) equipment, it would be more sensible and helpful to the GOP if the U.S. would authorize its use by the Ministry. The alternative-the GOP starting from scratch- would waste precious time in the GOP’s urgent effort to capture members of the EPP and would render our equipment/software obsolete.

4. (S/NF) The Ambassador made clear that the U.S. had no interest in involving itself in the intercept program if the potential existed for it to be abused for political gain, but confirmed U.S. interest in cooperating on an intercept program with safeguards, as long as it included counternarcotics. While noting that the Interior Ministry’s current personnel are trustworthy, the Ambassador noted that others could abuse this technology in the future. The Minister concurred and added that both he and the President were keenly aware of the potential risks. The Minister added that he believes there are currently three or four clandestine pieces of equipment in Paraguay capable of intercepting cellular phone calls. This equipment was purchased by members of the previous government using questionable funding and disappeared once the Lugo government took over. Both Filizzola and Vice Minister Caballero, who was also present for the meeting, confirmed that controls are crucial. Caballero assured the Ambassador that the following judicial and procedural protections are in place: 1) the intercept room will be managed by Public Ministry prosecutors and the Interior Ministry; 2) cellular phone providers will know which lines the GOP is listening to and will only grant permission based on a judicial order; 3) judicial orders can only be issued by three Asuncion-based judges, which are the same judges authorized to issue the orders under the current DEA-SENAD program; 4) the Supreme Court will ensure that only authorized taps are in place; 5) the equipment purchased by the GOP automatically tracks every action taken and its historical account cannot be altered or erased; and 6) the law only permits cell phone interception for anti-kidnapping (in this case, pursuit of the EPP) and counter-narcotics; there are no other lawful purposes.

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IN SPITE OF SOME QUESTIONS, THE PROGRAM APPEARS TO BE FEASIBLE
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5. (S/NF) Despite some initial technical questions from DEA, it appears that Filizzola’s plan is feasible given the GOP’s purchase of additional technology. The highly technical nature of this program has lent itself to confusion about what is and is not possible. From Filizzola’s first request to use the software (LMNS) that the Embassy installed at SENAD, we had consistently indicated that DEA Washington had to weigh in. So the Embassy arranged for a February 17 video-teleconference (VTC) between the Minister, Vice Minister Caballero, and Filizzola’s Chief of Staff Claudia Guanes and DEA Washington, led by XXXXXXXXXX, DEA’s Unit Chief Coordinator for the Science and Technology Section. Also present were the Ambassador and DEA Country AttachC) XXXXXXXXXX.
6. (S/NF) During the VTC, Minister Filizzola laid out his plans for the program in general terms, highlighting its urgency. He said his program would start with cell phone provider PERSONAL, which is the only currently operational cell provider using the DEA-procured LMNS. Filizzola asked about the status of the second DEA-procured LMNS for TIGO, and expressed the GOP’s commitment to continue the counternarcotics intercept program. He discussed the technical limitations with the DEA experts and concluded that expansion of the intercept program was technically possible with the purchase of additional hardware and licenses. The Minister saw two alternatives: (1) the Ministry buys additional equipment/software and replaces the DEA-purchased LMNS; or (2) the Ministry and SENAD (read DEA-supported program) share the connecting software (LMNS). Both DEA and the Minister asked some clarifying questions which demonstrated that the Ministry had the equipment for the Monitoring Center and only needed the use of the DEA software currently in use at PERSONAL. Between PERSONAL and the next cell provider scheduled to come online, TIGO, they would cover 90% of the cellular telephone market. DEA indicated that it took them over a year to install the PERSONAL system because full cooperation from the company is required. The Minister emphasized that this would not be an issue because they already had the decree from CONATEL (telephone industry regulator) that forces the telephone companies to cooperate, in addition to the proper legal authorities (based on the Constitution and the anti-kidnapping law).

7. (S/NF) In light of the highly sensitive nature of this program, the Ambassador asked Minister Filizzola to provide the Embassy with a written request for access to the existing cell intercept software, along with copies of the laws that serve as a legal basis for the expanded program. Both Supreme Court President Fretes and SENAD Minister Aquino expressed doubts to Emboffs about the legality of the expanded program. (NOTE: While Fretes told Filizzola that he was “on board,” it is very common for Paraguayans to avoid voicing disagreement. Aquino’s concerns, in turn, may have more to do with his rivalry with Minister Filizzola. END NOTE). TIGO (Millicom), one of Paraguay’s leading cell phone providers, told the Ambassador that though they had concerns about the GOP’s decision to move forward with an intercept program, they felt that U.S. involvement in the program would provide them with some “cover.”

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COMMENT: GET ON BOARD OR GET LEFT BEHIND
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8. (S/NF) Given the political pressures on the GOP to arrest the EPP members responsible for the Zavala kidnapping, there is no doubt that the Lugo government will continue intense efforts to improve its intercept capability. Our participation and concurrence is key to our counternarcotics-- and broader law enforcement-- goals in Paraguay. If we are not supportive, the GOP will view us as an obstacle to a key priority, which could jeopardize our broader relationship and the DEA’s ability to pursue counternarcotics leads. Capturing the EPP has become a top priority of the Paraguayan government, and there is a real sense of urgency that it happen quickly. We now have an opportunity to help the GOP and be viewed as a reliable and valuable partner, as well as to ensure that U.S. interests in counternarcotics are protected. However, we want to limit our involvement to protecting DEA’s program, as opposed to legitimizing the GOP’s broader CT intercept program. DEA will send XXXXXXXXXXX to Asuncion in coming weeks, who will offer advice to the GOP on how to best set up the program (in order to protect our part of it). We have carefully navigated this very sensitive and politically sticky situation, and hope that we can move forward quickly in order to make the most of it. It appears that we have no other viable choice. END COMMENT. AYALDE

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables Portray Expanded Reach of Drug Agency”
Gauging Canada’s Reaction to Release of Interrogation Video

In this cable from late in the Bush administration, an American official discusses several terrorism policy issues with the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Jim Judd, including the likely public reaction to the expected release of a video showing the interrogation of a Canadian detainee at Guantánamo.

DATE 2008-07-09 18:49:00

SOURCE Embassy Ottawa

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 OTTAWA 000918

CORRECTED COPY//SUBJECT LINE//-------------------------------

NOFORN SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/09/2018 TAGS: PREL, PTER, MOPS, IR, PK, AF, CA SUBJECT: COUNSELOR, CSIS DIRECTOR DISCUSS CT THREATS, PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN, IRAN

REF: A. OTTAWA 360 B. OTTAWA 808 C. OTTAWA 850 D. OTTAWA 878

OTTAWA 00000918 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons, 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S/NF) Summary. Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Director Judd discussed domestic and foreign terror threats with Counselor of the State Department Cohen in Ottawa on July 2. Judd admitted that CSIS was increasingly distracted from its mission by legal challenges that could endanger foreign intelligence-sharing with Canadian agencies. He predicted that the upcoming release of a DVD of Guantanamo detainee and Canadian citizen Omar Khadr’s interrogation by Canadian officials would lead to heightened pressure on the government to press for his return to Canada, which the government would continue to resist. Judd shared Dr. Cohen’s negative assessment of current political, economic, and security trends in Pakistan, and was worried about what it would mean for the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Canada has begun formulating an inter-agency Pakistan strategy, and CSIS had agreed to open a channel to Iran’s intelligence service which Judd has not yet “figured out.” (Septel will cover Dr. Cohen’s discussions regarding Pakistan and the OEF and ISAF missions in Afghanistan.) End summary.

2. (S/NF) Counselor of the Department of State Eliot Cohen and CSIS Director Jim Judd in Ottawa on July 2 discussed threats posed by violent Islamist groups in Canada, and recent developments in Pakistan and Afghanistan. (CSIS is Canada’s lead agency for national security intelligence.) Director Judd ascribed an “Alice in Wonderland” worldview to Canadians and their courts, whose judges have tied CSIS “in knots,” making it ever more difficult to detect and prevent terror attacks in Canada and abroad. The situation, he commented, left government security agencies on the defensive and losing public support for their effort to protect Canada and its allies.

Legal Wrangling Risks Chill Effect

3. (S/NF) Responding to Dr. Cohen’s query, Judd said CSIS had responded to recent, non-specific intelligence on possible terror operations by “vigorously harassing” known Hezbollah members in Canada. According to Judd, CSIS’ current assessment is that no attack is “in the offing” in Canada. He noted, however, that Hezbollah members, and their lawyers, were considering new
avenues of litigation resulting from recent court rulings that, Judd complained, had
inappropriately treated intelligence agencies like law enforcement bodies (refs A and C). The
Director observed that CSIS was “sinking deeper and deeper into judicial processes,” making Legal
Affairs the fastest growing division of his organization. Indeed, he added, legal challenges were
becoming a “distraction” that could have a major “chill effect” on intelligence officials.

4. (S/NF) Judd derided recent judgments in Canada’s courts that threaten to undermine foreign
government intelligence that threaten to undermine foreign government intelligence- and
information-sharing with Canada. These judgments posit that Canadian authorities cannot use
information that “may have been” derived from torture, and that any Canadian public official who
conveys such information may be subject to criminal prosecution. This, he commented, put the
government in a reverse-onus situation whereby it would have to “prove” the innocence of partner
nations in the face of assumed wrongdoing.

5. (S/NF) Judd credited Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s minority Conservative government for
“taking it on the chin and pressing ahead” with common sense measures despite court challenges
and political knocks from the opposition and interest groups. When asked to look to the future,
Judd predicted that Canada would soon implement UK-like legal procedures that make intelligence
available to “vetted defense lawyers who see everything the judge sees.”

OTTAWA 00000918 002.2 OF 003

Terror Cases and Communities Present Mixed Pictures

6. (C/NF) Judd commented that cherry-picked sections of the court-ordered release of a DVD of
Guantanamo detainee and Canadian citizen Omar Khadr (ref D) would likely show three (Canadian)
adults interrogating a kid who breaks down in tears. He observed that the images would no doubt
toggle “knee-jerk anti-Americanism” and “paroxysms of moral outrage, a Canadian specialty,” as
well as lead to a new round of heightened pressure on the government to press for Khadr’s return
to Canada. He predicted that PM Harper’s government would nonetheless continue to resist this
pressure. 7. (C) The Director mentioned other major cases that also presented CSIS with major
legal headaches due to the use of intelligence products in their development: Momin Khawaja has
been on trial for his role in an Al Qaeda UK bomb plot since June 23 in the first major test of
Canada’s 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act, and Canada’s ability to protect intelligence supplied by
foreign government sources (ref D); the trial of the first of the home-grown Toronto 11 (down
from 18) terror plotters, which is also now underway; and, the prosecution of Global Islamic
Media Front propagandist Said Namouh, who was arrested in Quebec in 2007 for conspiring to
conduct bombings in Austria and Germany.

8. (C) Judd said he viewed Khawaja and his “ilk” as outliers, due in part to the fact that
Canada’s ethnic Pakistani community is unlike its ghettoized and poorly educated UK counterpart.
It is largely made up of traders, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and others who see promise for
themselves and their children in North America, he observed, so its members are unlikely to
engage in domestic terror plots. He said that therefore CSIS main domestic focus is instead on
fundraising and procurement, as well as the recruitment of a small number of Canadian “wannabes”
of Pakistani origin for mostly overseas operations.

Pakistan and Afghanistan

9. (C) Turning to Pakistan, Counselor Cohen briefed his recent trip to Islamabad and Peshawar,
noting his alarm at the degrading economic, political, and security situation there, and its
implications for Pakistan, Afghan, and regional stability. Judd responded that Dr. Cohen’s sober
assessment tracked with CSIS’ own view of Pakistan, and that “it is hard to see a good outcome
there” due to that country’s political, economic, and security failures, on top of fast-rising
oil and food prices. Canada does not have an explicit strategy for Pakistan, Judd said, but Privy
Council Deputy Secretary David Mulroney (who leads the interagency on Afghanistan) now has the
lead on developing one (septel). Dr. Cohen remarked, and Judd agreed, that it would be necessary
to avoid approaching Pakistan as simply an adjunct to the ISAF and OEF missions in Afghanistan.

10. (S/NF) CSIS is far from being “high-five mode” on Q10. (S/NF) CSIS is far from being “highfive mode” on Afghanistan, Judd asserted, due in part to Karzai’s weak leadership, widespread
corruption, the lack of will to press ahead on counter-narcotics, limited Afghan security force
capability (particularly the police) and, most recently, the Sarpoza prison break. He commented
that CSIS had seen Sarpoza coming, and its link to the Quetta Shura in Pakistan, but could not get a handle on the timing.

Iranian Outreach

11. (S/NF) Judd added that he and his colleagues are “very, very worried” about Iran. CSIS recently talked to Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) after that agency requested its own channel of communication to Canada, he said. The Iranians agreed to “help” on Afghan issues, including sharing information regarding potential attacks. However, “we have not figured out what they are up to,” Judd confided, since it is clear that the “Iranians want ISAF to bleed...slowly.”

OTTAWA 00000918 003.2 OF 003

12. (U) Dr. Cohen has cleared this message.

Visit Canada’s Economy and Environment Forum at http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/canada

WILKINS

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables Depict U.S. Haggling to Clear Guantánamo”
McDonald’s Wields Influence in El Salvador

A 2006 cable from El Salvador, where McDonald’s had been ordered to pay $24 million in damages to a disgruntled former franchise holder, describes the American Embassy’s discussions with the fast-food giant, whose negotiating tactics included trying to hold up the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

DATE 2006-02-16 20:55:00

SOURCE Embassy San Salvador

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 000407

1. (C) Summary. On December 7, 2005, an appeals court ruled that McDonald’s had illegally terminated its contract with a local franchisee on July 1, 1996, and therefore owed him $24 million in losses and damages. McDonald’s is appealing the decision, but the composition of the chamber that will hear the case makes it unlikely that justice will be served. On February 10, McDonald’s corporate representatives outlined for the Ambassador the company’s strategy to pressure the Salvadorans to ensure a fair hearing by linking the case to CAFTA-DR implementation—an approach the Ambassador suggested would be counterproductive. They also outlined efforts to convince Salvadoran government officials of the importance that the case get a fair hearing, which the Ambassador agreed to support vigorously. End summary.

2. (C) Since 1996, Post has supported McDonald’s in resolving its licensing dispute and related intellectual property rights dispute with a former franchisee, Roberto Bukele. The latest twist in this ten-year legal battle, described below in paras. 6-10, is an appeals court’s ruling on December 7, 2005, that McDonald’s had illegally terminated its contract with Bukele on July 1, 1996, and therefore owed him $24 million in losses and damages, a figure claimed by Bukele based on a projection of lost future earnings. On December 27, 2005, McDonald’s General Counsel for Latin America and Canada Maria Leggett briefed Ambassador Barclay on the case, expressing frustration with the legal system, but indicating that her firm would go forward with an appeal to the Supreme Court’s Civil Chamber—McDonald’s local counsel has told us that an appeal was filed on January 4, 2006. She suggested that a fair resolution of the case was unlikely given the
current composition of the Civil Chamber. Two neutral judges have recused themselves based on
previous involvement in the case. Judging from her case record on the bench, the third judge, an
FMLN partisan, will rule against McDonald’s regardless of the merits of the case. McDonald’s is
seeking to have this judge removed, and three substitute judges named. McDonald’s has filed a
motion to have the FMLN-linked judge recused from the proceedings on the grounds that her well-
documented anti-Americanism will prevent her from hearing the case impartially. Local counsel do
not believe Supreme Court Chief Justice Agustin Calderon will decide on the recusal or name
replacement justices until after March 12 elections.

3. (C) On February 10, McDonald’s Vice President for Government Relations Dick Crawford and Maria
Legett briefed the Ambassador on the company’s efforts to see a fair resolution of the case. They
explained that the company has engaged in a Washington-focused advocacy effort to put pressure on
the Salvadorans to resolve the case according to the rule of law, suggesting that CAFTA-DR
implementation should be delayed pending resolution of the case. The Ambassador, however, voiced
concern that McDonald’s strategy ran directly counter to U.S. interests in seeing CAFTA-DR
implemented as soon as possible. Emboffs also noted that McDonald’s invocation of CAFTA-DR in the
lead-up to legislative elections would play into the hands of those who have resisted CAFTA-DR by
alienating senior government officials who are already working to see that the case is resolved
according to the rule of law and by complicating efforts to get additional CAFTA-related reforms
through the Legislative Assembly. It would also unnecessarily thrust the case into the public
spotlight, creating just the kind of negative publicity that McDonald’s representatives have said
they seek to avoid. Crawford acknowledged these concerns and agreed to tone down, but not cease,
his company’s efforts on this issue.

4. (C) Through local counsel, McDonald’s representative also said they would continue to pursue
all available legal means to see that the case is decided according to the rule of law. Emboffs
suggested that this is essentially a political issue--getting a fair hearing for McDonald’s means
finding a way to exclude judges known to follow FMLN instructions in their rulings from the
process. This is an especially delicate issue at anytime, but especially in the run-up to
elections and a lame-duck legislative session that provides an excellent opportunity to push
through constitutional reforms to strengthen the judicial system. McDonald’s local counsel
outlined a strategy it is pursuing to pressure Chief Justice Agustin Calderon to name three
impartial judges to the Civil Chamber to hear the McDonald’s case. In particular, they are
meeting with local business associations, think tanks, and government officials to ask them to
press Calderon on naming judges who will ensure the rule of law is carried out. McDonald’s
representatives also suggested they might participate in some of those meetings through a “road
show” in El Salvador that would also include other corporate outreach activities.

5. (C) The Ambassador told Crawford and Leggett that he believes the Salvadoran Government is
extremely interested in seeing the case decided fairly, and that on February 7 Foreign Minister
Lainez raised the issue with the Ambassador and advised him to speak to President Saca and
impress upon him the importance of the case. The Ambassador said that on February 8, he did raise
the issue with Saca, emphasizing the stakes at play for a government in desperate need of foreign
investment. The Ambassador emphasized that he would continue pressing this issue as appropriate
to encourage resolution of McDonald’s investment dispute according to the rule of law. However,
he asked McDonald’s representatives to consider beefing-up their presence in El Salvador to more
actively work on the case to compliment his efforts here--a point that Crawford and Leggett took
on board.

Background
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6. (SBU) In 1972, Roberto Bukele, a licensed franchisee of McDonald’s, opened the first
McDonald’s restaurant in El Salvador. By 1992, Bukele operated three McDonald’s restaurants in El
Salvador, and on June 9 of that year, McDonald’s Corporation agreed to extend Bukele’s licenses
to operate all three restaurants until December 19, 1995. On April 27, 1994, McDonald’s wrote
Bukele outlining the terms under which the corporation would consider renewing Bukele’s licenses
and extending licenses for new restaurants. Terms included remodeling of existing restaurants (to
be financed by a loan from McDonald’s to Bukele), use of McDonald’s-approved sources for food
products, establishment of a staff hiring and training plan, and corporate approval of new
restaurant sites and new menu items. Although not in full compliance with the terms of the April
27 letter, in December 1995 McDonald’s agreed to extend Bukele’s existing licenses until June 30,
1996, and put forth specific actions Bukele must take to remain a McDonald’s franchisee.
Correspondence between Bukele and Bukele provided by McDonald’s suggest that Bukele did not meet
the terms of the April 27 letter.
7. (SBU) On July 1, 1996, McDonald’s wrote Bukele informing him that his licenses had expired, while offering him one last chance to remain a franchisee by closing unauthorized restaurants, using McDonald’s-approved food products, establishing a staff hiring and training program, and meeting other conditions—essentially, he was asked again to meet the terms established in the April 27 letter under which contract renewal would be considered. On July 10, 1996, McDonald’s notified Bukele that his right to be a McDonald’s licensee had expired and he no longer had the right to use McDonald’s trademarks or proprietary information. Bukele continued to use McDonald’s trademarks and proprietary information in his restaurants despite the expiration of the franchising agreement.

8. (SBU) Although there have been a number of court cases related to this dispute, the one in play now involves a suit Bukele filed against McDonald’s in the Fourth Mercantile Court in March 1997 claiming damages for an alleged breach of contract. The court ruled in favor of McDonald’s in 1999, and in 2000 the Second Appeals Court, at the time composed of two judges not linked to Bukele or the FMLN, affirmed the decision in response to an appeal Bukele had filed. Bukele then appealed to the Supreme Court’s Civil Chamber, which at the time included two pro-FMLN judges. In 2003, the Civil Chamber remanded the case to the Second Appeals Court, requiring that the appeals court to hear additional evidence to be submitted by Bukele and annulling the 2000 verdict in favor of McDonald’s. On December 6, 2005, the appeals court, which now included two judges rumored to be friendly to Bukele—either through church links or through Bukele’s attorney—ruled in favor of Bukele, declaring that the April 27, 2004, letter was actually a 20-year contract renewal and that McDonald’s owed Bukele $24 million in damages and losses resulting from the unlawful termination of the contract.

9. (SBU) On January 4, 2006, McDonald’s appealed the decision to the Supreme Court’s Civil Chamber, which now includes two neutral judges who have recused themselves based on prior involvement in the case and one FMLN judge XXXXXXXXXXX. McDonald’s has not been formally notified that the appeal has been accepted for consideration, nor has it been notified formally of the two recusals. However, the company has already filed a motion to have the FMLN-linked judge recused from the proceedings on the grounds that her well-documented anti-Americanism will prevent her from hearing the case impartially. Local counsel do not believe Supreme Court Chief Justice Agustin Calderon will forward the recusal to the entire 15-member Supreme Court for decision until after March 12 elections. Eight votes in favor of the motion would be enough to force recusal, at which point the Supreme Court en bloc would designate three judges from a pool of nine alternates to hear the case. Of the nine judges, four are linked to the FMLN. If XXXXXXXXXXX is not recused, two will be named from this list. Either way, the reconstituted Civil Chamber would then decide on the case, with a decision ready by 2007. If McDonald’s loses, they plan to appeal to the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court, and to the International Court of Justice if need be.

10. (SBU) There have been several other court cases related to this dispute. McDonald’s sued Bukele in 1996 in the Second Mercantile Court seeking the closure of one unauthorized restaurant. The court ruled in favor of McDonald’s, but Bukele appealed the case to an appeals court and then to the Supreme Court’s Civil Chamber, which remanded the case back to the Second Mercantile Court. The case currently languishes in that court of first instance, but in 2006 the police and prosecutors enforced an injunction issued by the Second Mercantile Court to force the restaurant involved to discontinue using McDonald’s intellectual property. McDonald’s also filed suit in 1997 in the Fifth Mercantile Court to seek an injunction under an unfair competition provision in the Commercial Code to prevent Bukele from using McDonald’s trademarks without authorization in all his restaurants. That court ruled in favor of McDonald’s, and in 1999 the Third Court of Appeals confirmed the decision. The Supreme Court’s Civil Chamber confirmed the decision of the Appeals Court in 2003, and that same year the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court denied an extraordinary appeal filed by Bukele. In July 2003, the police and prosecutor’s office enforced an injunction to remove all intellectual property from Bukele’s restaurants; this case is closed. Separate criminal charges filed by McDonald’s in 1997 were dismissed, and that case is closed. Two other cases Bukele filed against McDonald’s alleging breach of contract—one in 1996 in the First Mercantile Court and another in the third Mercantile Court—were dismissed and are closed. Barclay
Fears of Unrest Over Plans to Extradite Drug Suspect

In September 2009, diplomats in Jamaica reported on fears of political instability if the leader of a notorious drug gang, Christopher “Dudus” Coke, was extradited to the United States to face narcotics and weapons charges. He was extradited in June 2010.

DATE 2009-09-02 19:35:00

SOURCE Embassy Kingston

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

Wednesday, 02 September 2009, 19:35
C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 000666
SIPDIS
DEPT FOR WHA/CAR (J.MACK-WILSON, W.SMITH, V.DEPIRRO)
L/LEI (C.HOLLAND, A.KLUESNER)
INR/IAA (G.BOHIGIAN)
JUSTICE FOR OIA (P.PETTY)
TREASURY FOR IA/WH (E.NEPHEW)
PASS TO CENTRAL AMERICAN CARIBBEAN BASIN COLLECTIVE
EO 12958 DECL: 09/01/2019
TAGS CJAN, CVIS, PREL, PGOV, PINR, ASEC, SNAR, SOCI, KCOR, KCRM, JM, BR, XL
SUBJECT: JAMAICA: U.S. REQUEST TO EXTRADITE POWERFUL "DON"
PRESSENTS GOVERNMENT WITH A DANGEROUS DILEMMA; KINGSTON MAYOR WARNS OF "SEVERE REPERCUSSIONS"
REF: A. STATE 85807 (181409Z AUG 09)(NOTAL) B. KINGSTON 655 (2821557Z AUG 09) C. 08 KINGSTON 972 (171906Z NOV 08)(NOTAL)
Classified By: CDA ISIAH L. PARNELL, Reasons 1.5 (B) AND (D)

Summary and Analysis
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1.(C) The U.S. request to extradite a powerful "Don" with close ties to the ruling Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) has presented Prime Minister (PM) Bruce Golding's Government with a dangerous dilemma: the requested extradition could spark violent incidents, ignite rivalries among competing gang factions, and unleash a challenge to the state and to Golding's own influence in West Kingston and beyond. The Mayor of Kingston warns of "severe repercussions" and "collateral damage." His fears are not unfounded. End Summary and Analysis.

The Mayor's perspective: severe repercussions
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2.(C) The Mayor of Kingston and St. Andrew, Councillor Desmond Anthony McKenzie, requested to meet with EmbOff on September 1 to discuss an "urgent" matter; the private meeting was held in his downtown office. The Mayor began by stating pointedly that the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) faced a serious crisis because of Washington's request for the extradition of Christopher Coke to stand trial on narcotics and firearms charges in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York (reftels A,B). He predicted that there would be "severe repercussions" and "collateral damage" if Coke were arrested, and that this would "risk destroying everything the Government was trying to do on the economy and crime." The Mayor said that in recent years his administration had worked with Coke to reduce crime in the inner cities of Jamaica, particularly in West Kingston. If he now were extradited, this would "leave a vacuum," and matters would be much worse. McKenzie noted that in recent days several of his "contacts in the communities" had told him they "would not take this (Coke's extradition) lying down."

A "grim picture of the reality we face"
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3.(C) McKenzie then asked if there were any room for further discussions with U.S. officials.
Emboff replied by reiterating that the U.S. expected Jamaica to honor its obligations under the Extradition Treaty, and considered this a case of great importance; however, the Embassy would convey the Mayor's assessment and inquiry to Washington. McKenzie concluded by observing that his views were not only an assessment, but accurately portrayed the "grim picture of the reality we face."

Background: a powerful, well-connected "Don"

4.(C) Christopher Michael "Dudus" Coke is a wealthy "Don" who wields extraordinary power in the West Kingston inner city "garrison community" of Tivoli Gardens, whose Member of Parliament (MP) is Prime Minister Bruce Golding. Coke reputedly is closely connected with leading figures within Golding's Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), including McKenzie. In the island state's tribal political culture, over the years both major parties have developed symbiotic ties of patronage and influence with the "Dons" who control the garrison communities, and whose powers have grown as Jamaica's economy has struggled. Coke's gang provides social and welfare services and turns out the JLP vote in elections, while his business interests profit from lucrative Government contracts. He is the son of the late Lester Lloyd "Jim Brown" Coke, who, together with the recently deported Vivian Blake, for years master-minded the notorious "Shower Posse" drug gang, which wreaked havoc in Jamaica, the USA, and UK. "Jim Brown" died in prison under mysterious circumstances while awaiting extradition to the U.S. in 1992.

Analysis: a desperate Mayor, a nervous capital city

5.(C) McKenzie's fears are not unfounded: Coke's wealth, power, and influence are pervasive, and his sudden removal could spark violent incidents and/or unleash rivalries among competing gang factions in Kingston, Spanish Town, and Montego Bay. He is easily the highest profile figure whose extradition has been requested in many years, and his long-standing ties to the JLP have put McKenzie, Golding, and other leading Party figures in an extremely awkward position. (Note: The incendiary potential of rivalries among the various gangs with ties to the JLP was demonstrated during the Party's annual conference in November, 2008, when an eruption of gang-related violence at the packed national arena left one dead and several wounded, ref tel C. End Note.) Rumors in circulation over recent days have ranged from a false report of Coke's arrest to speculation that he will attempt to flee to Brazil.

Media Perspective: Do the right thing

6.(SBU) Local media have focused on the difficult challenge facing the JLP Government in extraditing Coke, but no one (aside from his prospective attorney, Tom Tavares-Finson) seriously maintains his innocence. The "Observer" newspaper, generally sympathetic to the JLP, maintained in an editorial of August 30: "They say he's a 'Don,' a good man who has kept many bellies in Tivoli Gardens full over the years. That may be so, but it cannot be the basis on which to resist an extradition request. We must, as a civilized, democratic society, be prepared to stand or fall with the systems of justice to which our Government has subscribed, bellyful or no bellyful." A Sept. 1 editorial in the "Gleaner" newspaper (generally more sympathetic to the opposition People's National Party), referred to: "the dilemma faced by the Golding administration ) a concern that an attempt to extradite someone whom a community views as benefactor could unleash a challenge to the state and to the JLP's and Mr. Golding's own influence in West Kingston. And perhaps elsewhere," but concluded: "we expect the administration, unswayed by politics, to do the right thing - which Mr. Golding promised would be the hallmark of his leadership. To do otherwise, not only diminishes Mr. Golding, but will hurt Jamaica's interests, political and economic, in the international community."

PARNELL
“Hurricane Anna Nicole” Hits the Bahamas

An amusing 2006 cable from Nassau reports that the arrival in the Bahamas of the former Playboy model Anna Nicole Smith had “changed the face of Bahamian politics.”

DATE 2006-11-15 15:15:00

SOURCE Embassy Nassau

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL NASSAU 001711
SIPDIS
CORRECTED COPY (REMOVAL OF SIPDIS CAPTION)
STATE FOR WHA/CAR RCBUDDEN, CA/OCS
EO 12958 DECL: 11/06/2016
TAGS BF, PGOV, PREL, CASC, SMIG
SUBJECT: HURRICANE ANNA NICOLE WRECKS HAVOC IN THE BAHAMAS

1. (C) SUMMARY: Several months into her Bahamian residency, American B-list celebrity and regular entertainment television fixture Anna Nicole Smith has changed the face of Bahamian politics. Not since Category 4 Hurricane Betsy made landfall in 1965 has one woman done as much damage in Nassau. Lying in disarray in her wake are Doctor's Hospital, the Coroner's Court, the Department of Immigration, local mega-lawyers Callenders and Co., formerly popular Minister of Immigration Shane Gibson, and possibly Prime Minister Christie's PLP government. At the eye of a series of scandals over her Bahamian residency application and the death of her son, Anna Nicole has inspired a revitalized Bahamian media to take aim at a system that too often rewards the privileged. Moreover, the titillating details of Anna Nicole's sordid affairs have enticed the Bahamian public to give renewed focus to government indiscretions. These shots have wounded the "people's party" PLP Government, which is responding by making changes, promising reform, and firing back in self-defense as elections approach. END SUMMARY.

Hurricane Anna Nicole Makes Nassau Landfall

2. (SBU) On August 11, Anna Nicole Smith filed for legal residency in The Bahamas as a result of her alleged ownership of a local home, pursuant to local immigration law permitting residence for persons owning homes of $500,000 or more. In September, the application was granted and Anna Nicole allegedly provided a $10,000 check directly to Immigration Minister Gibson at a meeting at her home. According to Anna Nicole, Minister Gibson personally approved her residency permit on September 20. In response to concern over the timing of the approval -- residency approval typically takes years in the Bahamas -- Gibson and PM Christie sought to reassure the public. They said that Anna Nicole was treated as any other applicant, noting glibly that the Ministry of Immigration should not be criticized for "improved efficiencies in government for which it deserves praise."

3. (SBU) Gibson's protestations of distance with the matter were shattered by a prominent local law firm and a local gossip publication. Callenders and Co., the law firm that handled Anna's home purchase and residency application, said it delivered a $10,000 check from Anna Nicole directly to Gibson at Anna Nicole's residence, and that it communicated to Anna Nicole repeatedly on Minister Gibson's government cell phone. Additionally, it supported claims that Anna Nicole did not yet own the home that was the basis for the residency claim, an issue currently being litigated in Bahamian courts. At the same time, widely read local gossip rag "The Punch" carried a People Magazine photo of Gibson at Anna Nicole's September 28 commitment ceremony (not technically a legal wedding) to her attorney, Howard Stern -- held days after Gibson approved her residency application -- next to a photo of a Haitian sloop allegedly landing at the time of the wedding. It also republished Gibson's People Magazine quote about his strong personal relationship with Anna Nicole. Gibson reportedly visited Anna Nicole in the hospital following the birth of her child.
4. (SBU) The resulting public furor over Gibson's favoritism has been strong. Before Anna Nicole came to Nassau, Minister of Immigration Gibson enjoyed strong public support as a result of his aggressive anti-immigrant policies. His midnight raids of Haitian communities and restriction of residency options for Haitians was widely applauded by a Bahamian public fearful of losing Bahamian opportunities to illegal immigrants. The Anna Nicole scandal has recast Gibson as puppet of the privileged rather than defender of the common people of The Bahamas.

5. (C) In response to the public outcry and mounting calls for Gibson's resignation, the Government promised a review of procedures in the Department of Immigration at the same time it fired back at Callenders and Co. for its role in the affair -- tactics that have brought criticism to others but have not helped turn the tide of public opinion. During a November meeting with Poloff, an opposition Free National Movement Central Committee member gleefully reported polling in Gibson's parliament district foretold a clear FNM victory in coming elections. Local newspaper and radio feedback on Gibson has been brutal. Even in the normally friendly Bahama Journal, Christie and Gibson have been roasted and a poll of the Journal's largely PLP readership showed 90% disapproval with Government handling of Anna Nicole. At the heart of Gibson's problems are the fact that Anna Nicole received residency in a matter of days, when the process normally takes many months or years. His reported direct receipt of the $10,000 check for residency represents another flagrant violation of the normal process, leading to bitter denunciations of the whole process by which residency is granted to persons for buying property here.

Anna Nicole Kills the Coroner's Court
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6. (SBU) Gibson and the PLP have not been the only victims of Hurricane Anna Nicole. Following the death of her son in Nassau's Doctor's Hospital on September 10, international media descended upon Doctor's Hospital, which carefully guarded Anna Nicole's privacy in the face of heavy criticism. The quality of care at Doctor's came under fire for its treatment -- or more pointedly its complete lack of treatment -- of Anna Nicole's son while in Doctor's. For the record, Doctor's Hospital is regarded as the finest medical institution in the country and has enjoyed an excellent reputation among the expatriate community.

7. (SBU) The criticism of the hospital was nothing compared to the criticism of the Bahamas Coroner's Court. The Court, which served to review death cases and determine cause, was under heavy fire for its inability -- or unwillingness -- to provide a cause of death for Anna Nicole's son. It had yet to issue a statement when a US pathologist issued a report concluding that a toxic cocktail of drugs caused the death, leading to speculation that the government was protecting Anna Nicole from embarrassment by delaying its findings. Before the Coroner's Court concluded its inquest, the government disbanded the inefficient Court and fired the Coroner. Local legal professionals offer the move mixed reviews, agreeing that the Coroner's Court process was inefficient and needed review, but some worried that the Magistrate's Courts now handling inquest duties will be less open and even more inefficient. The Coroner's Court was originally created to speed up a process of making a legal determination for cause of death that could take years. The elimination of the court will literally affect every Bahamian citizen -- an effect caused by Anna Nicole and the bright lights of the international media.

Invigorated Media Takes on Government
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8. (SBU) In Anna Nicole's wide swath of destruction, one entity has flourished -- the Bahamian media. At Post's quarterly media reception in October, a newspaper editor gushed about the increase in sales on days when Anna Nicole coverage is featured. Those days are all too common, and the type of critical investigative work that has helped the Bahamian press during Anna Nicole's Bahamian residency carried over to other hard-hitting articles targeting lack of government transparency in housing contracts and related lack of a Freedom of Information Act. The public demand for information and exposure to international press have done Bahamian reporters tremendous good as they have taken off their kid gloves to hit hard at local leaders perceived as failing the public interest.

10. (C) COMMENT: Not since Wallace Simpson dethroned a King and came to Nassau has an American
femme fatale so captivated the Bahamian public and dominated local politics. Gossip in The
Bahamas is an art form -- called "sip sip" -- and the Anna Nicole saga has been quite a show for
connoisseurs. The sordid details of Anna Nicole's private life inspire readers to pick up a
paper, and when they do they read about a Government bending the rules for personal benefit and
the privileged elite. The Anna Nicole affair has severely damaged Shane Gibson's political
career, tarnishing one of the PLP's brighter stars. It also killed the Coroner's Court and may
lead to changes in the laws allowing foreign property
owners to obtain Bahamian residency. Whether the scandals also determine the fate of the PLP in
coming elections is still to be seen, but a newly energized media holding the government
accountable will almost certainly make the campaign more difficult for the incumbent party. END
COMMENT.

ROOD
Diplomats’ Doubts About a Billionaire

The American ambassador to Barbados reports on a 2006 meeting with the Texas billionaire Allen Stanford, who would be arrested on fraud charges three years later. The ambassador said that American diplomats tried to steer clear of him because of allegations that he was involved in bribery and money laundering.

DATE 2006-05-03 22:01:00

SOURCE Embassy Bridgetown

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000755

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 04/26/2016

TAGS EINV, EAIR, EFIN, PREL, PGOV, PINR, KCRM, AC, BB, XL

SUBJECT: CRICKET BREAKFAST SERVES UP FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH ALLEN STANFORD

REF: A. BRIDGETOWN 578
B. BRIDGETOWN 178

Classified By: Ambassador Mary E. Kramer for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: Ambassador Kramer met controversial Texan billionaire Allen Stanford for the first time at an April 21 “Legends of Cricket” breakfast in Barbados. Stanford bent the Ambassador’s ear concerning his significant new tourism and property investments in Antigua and plans for his Caribbean Star and Caribbean Sun airlines. Also present that morning was Barbados PM Arthur, who pulled the Ambassador aside to express his view that President Bush needs to lay out an innovative, ambitious energy strategy to serve as an example to the hemisphere. The breakfast was an attempt by legendary Barbados cricketers to whip up more enthusiasm for the sport. Stanford was likely invited due to his “Cricket 2020” initiative to revive West Indies Cricket. End Summary.

2. (C) At an April 21 “Legends of Cricket” breakfast at the Barbados Hilton, Ambassador Kramer found herself seated at the head table, along with Allen Stanford, the UK High Commissioner, and Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur. The Barbados group “Legends of Cricket” organized the breakfast with cricket greats from the past. Stanford cancelled another cricket-related event in Antigua and flew to Barbados to participate. (Note: Allen Stanford is a controversial Texan billionaire who has made significant investments in offshore finance, aviation, and property development in Antigua and throughout the region. His companies are rumored to engage in bribery, money laundering, and political manipulation. End Note.)
3. (C) This chance encounter was the first time the Ambassador had met Stanford. In response to the Ambassador’s question about his business ventures, he discussed his plans to develop a number of homes in the US$10-20 million range and a world class golf course on a small island off the coast of Antigua. (Note: Stanford was likely referring to his Guiana Island project. End Note.) So far, he has invested about US$35 million of his own just in the design and acquisition phases. He expects to have a front-end membership fee of several million dollars and approximately US$1 million per year in dues from the residents of these high-end communities. He also plans to pay up front about $1 million (unclear which currency - US$ or EC$) in taxes to Antigua each year. He believes this development and the tax revenue it generates will make a huge difference in the local economy.

4. (C) Stanford’s second big venture in the Caribbean is investment in new airplanes for his Caribbean Star airline. (Note: The recent Federal Aviation Administration Category One rating for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States means Antigua-based Caribbean Star can begin flights to the U.S. See Ref A for more details. End Note). He expects to be running about 400 flights a week throughout the Caribbean, including to San Juan and Caracas, but it is unclear when this expansion will occur. A number of the planes on order are jets and the others are the familiar regional DASH-8s that currently make up most of the Caribbean Star and LIAT fleet. During his speech at the event, PM Arthur suggested that Stanford should merge his Caribbean Star airline with cash-strapped LIAT. (Comment: This scenario is highly unlikely as Stanford does not believe in partnerships. He is reportedly the sole shareholder in all his businesses, and would likely only go into business with LIAT by purchasing the government-owned airline. End Comment.)

5. (C) Prime Minister Arthur was very cordial, seeking out the Ambassador for conversation. At the breakfast table, he expounded upon the friendship he feels he established with President Bush and how well he believes they work together for the benefit of the region. (Note: The PM was likely referring to their collaboration at the November 2005 Summit of the Americas in Buenos Aires. End Note.) Arthur also discussed how he is trying to engage other players in CARICOM to work with others--pointing to the Ambassador and UK High Commissioner--saying, “We must stop talking about bananas and sugar and move on to talk about something we can actually accomplish together.”

6. (C) Another table topic was PM Arthur’s belief that it is critical the United States provide leadership and make some specific statements about how it will move away from its “addiction” to oil. As the morning was coming to a close, he took the Ambassador’s arm and privately delivered a message for the President. President Bush, in his opinion, must lay out a new, innovative, and ambitious energy strategy for the U.S. In Arthur’s view, this is absolutely necessary for the the region, the hemisphere, and the world.
7. (C) Embassy officers do not reach out to Stanford because of the allegations of bribery and money laundering. The Ambassador managed to stay out of any one-on-one photos with Stanford during the breakfast. For his part, Stanford said he preferred to conduct his business without contacting the Embassy, resolving any investment disputes directly with local governments. It is whispered in the region that Stanford facilitates resolution with significant cash contributions.

8. (C) PM Arthur’s desire for bold U.S. leadership on energy echoes the commitments he made to help reduce his country’s fuel import bill via alternative energy during his budget speech earlier this year (Ref B). GILROY
A Congressman, His Friends and a Pitch to Honduras

On an official Congressional trip to Honduras in February 2010, Representative Dana Rohrabacher, Republican of California, advocated policy positions that conflicted with those of the Obama administration. He also invited along California businessmen who had contributed to his election campaigns, and he urged the government of Honduras to consider working with at least one of the businesses, a small biofuel company that wanted to grow its special fuel-rich plant in Honduras.

DATE 2010-02-24 20:28:00

SOURCE Embassy Tegucigalpa

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEGUCIGALPA 000169

SENSITIVE SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2020 TAGS: ECON, PGOV, OVIP, PREL, HO SUBJECT: ROHRABACHER CODEL

1. (SBU) Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) visited Honduras January 31-February 2 and called on Hondurans to “turn the page” on the political events of the summer. Congressman Rohrabacher commended the Honduran people for their commitment to democracy and said he would urge the U.S. government to re-instate revoked U.S. visas. Congressman Rohrabacher expressed concern that establishment of a “truth commission,” as called for by the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord, would have the effect of continuing to divide Hondurans. Congressman Rohrabacher, who was accompanied by several American businessmen and investors, endorsed US investment and particularly lauded the benefits of the development of biofuel industry in Honduras. He enthusiastically promoted a start-up biofuel company, SG Biofuels. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Congressman Dana Rohrabacher visited Honduras January 31-February 2, accompanied by President and Vice-President of SG Biofuels, Kirk Haney and Greg Simon-Miro; John Saunders and James Righeimer; and political consultant Mark Klugman. The delegation met on February 1 with President Porfirio Lobo, who was accompanied by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Mario Canahuati; with President of Congress Juan Orlando Hernandez; and with Science Advisor to the President Ramon Espinoza. The delegation met on February 2 with President of the Supreme Court Jorge Alberto Rivera Aviles. The Ambassador and the Embassy country team provided Congressman Rohrabacher with a briefing. In addition to these official meetings, the delegation met independently and informally with several important actors in the Honduran political scene including: former President Ricardo Maduro; current Mayor of Tegucigalpa Ricardo Alvarez; businessmen Camilo Atala, Robert Vinelli and Richard Vinelli; and President of the Honduran Association of Small Renewal Energy Producers Elsia Paz.

TURNING THE PAGE ON THE COUP D’ETAT

3. (SBU) Throughout his visit, Congressman Rohrabacher stressed his great admiration for the commitment of the Honduran people to democracy. He warned of the danger of allowing “caudillos” or strongmen, like Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, to assume control and praised the recently replaced Honduran de facto regime. (Note: Rohrabacher did not request a meeting with Roberto Micheletti. End Note).

4. (SBU) In his conversation with President of Congress Juan Orlando Hernandez on February 1, Congressman Rohrabacher told Hernandez that he was an emissary of Honduras’ friends in Congress, in particular member of Congress Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Congressman Rohrabacher told Hernandez he believes it is important to bring closure to the Honduran political crisis. Hernandez agreed that Honduras needs to put the crisis behind it, adding that the political amnesty decree passed by
the congress on January 26 will contribute to that.

5. (SBU) Hernandez told Congressman Rohrabacher that it is difficult to understand why some foreign nations have not recognized the government of President Porfirio Lobo. Hernandez noted that the electoral process that led to the November 29 general election began long before the June 28 coup d’etat and was organized by an autonomous body, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Hernandez asked Congressman Rohrabacher for assistance with resumption of U.S. assistance. Hernandez stated that some steps on re-engagement had already taken place, noting his meeting with the Ambassador earlier that day. Hernandez told Congressman Rohrabacher that all political parties represented in congress are ready to take measures to attract foreign investment. Hernandez said that he is committed to modernizing the congress and requested information about the workings of U.S. congressional committees.

6. (C) Hernandez noted that he was scheduled to meet with an Israeli delegation on February 5 to discuss their concerns about Iranian contacts with Venezuelan President Chavez; Hernandez added that he knew the U.S. was also concerned about such contact.

TEGU01GALP 00000169 002 OF 003

7. (SBU) During Congressman Rohrabacher’s meeting with the President of the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court Justices on February 2, he congratulated the Supreme Court for its actions in removing President Jose Manuel “Mel” Zelaya from office. He urged the Government of Honduras to eschew establishing a “truth commission,” asserting that the “Supreme Court is the truth commission” and that any further investigation into the events of the summer would result in continued political division and animosity in the country. He also explained that he would return to the US and urge the administration to reissue visas for those people whose visas were revoked or suspended in response to the coup.

8. (SBU) The Supreme Court Justices each took the opportunity to thank Congressman Rohrabacher for his comments and defended the integrity of the legal process used to remove President Zelaya. Justice Victor Manual Martinez Silva said that the Organization of American States (OAS) had expelled Honduras and the European Union (EU) had censured Honduras without even hearing their legal justifications and he urged that international financial sanctions be removed. Justice Rosalinda Cruz Sequiera observed that various human rights reports, including the Committee on Inter-American Dialogue report, contained statements that were “completely false” in referring to the removal of former President Zelaya as a “coup d’etat”. She expressed the belief that history would bear out the correctness of their actions. Vice-President of the Supreme Court-Jose Tomas Arita Valle emphasized that the actions taken by the court were not driven by political interests and were practically unanimous.

SUPPORTING US INVESTMENT IN HONDURAN BIOFUEL

9. (U) Congressman Rohrabacher and members of his delegation met on February 1 with Ramon Espinoza, an agricultural expert who serves as science advisor to President Lobo. Mr. Espinoza was accompanied by Manlio Martinez, a development economist who works in Mr. Espinoza’s office. The economic counselor also attended the meeting.

10. (SBU) Congressman Rohrabacher introduced Kirk Haney and Greg Simon-Miro, representatives of the company SG Biofuels, which has been developing a highly productive strain of jatropha, a biofuel, in Guatemala. Congressman Rohrabacher told Mr. Espinoza that experts from the University of California at San Diego had been working with the company to develop the strain. Haney said that the company had planted 600 hectares of the seed, which is the top-producing jatropha strain to date, in Guatemala. The challenge now is to bring the technology to the market. Haney told Espinoza that, when he first met with Congressman Rohrabacher about this topic two years ago, Congressman Rohrabacher had told him that the best way to do this would be to make the seed available to small farmers. The company would give the farmers a contract to buy the seed at a pre-set price.

11. (SBU) Espinoza said that he had worked on a biofuel project while in academia. He stated that he has talked about biofuels to President Lobo and believes that the President wants to make this area a priority. Espinoza noted that Brazil had benefited from its foresight in making this a priority starting in the 1980s. Honduras, Espinoza said, is behind in this area and the challenge will be to select two or three key priorities. He told Congressman Rohrabacher that he had opposed Honduras’ emphasis on palm oil, since he does not think it is advisable to turn a food material into an energy source, given the distortions this causes to food prices. He said that
the jatropha project was an excellent opportunity. Haney said that his company was not looking for special favors from the Honduran government but wanted to make the government aware that the project was available.

12. (SBU) Espinoza said that Honduras’s development is hampered by the country’s lack of technical skills. He noted that Intel had just announced that its highest-end chip will be produced in Costa Rica, but that this type of manufacturing would not be possible in Honduras. Congressman Rohrabacher recommended that Honduras develop its patent and copyright framework so that there will be an incentive to innovate. The Congressman said one way that Honduras could attract innovators would be to make income derived from patents and copyrights tax-free.

13. (SBU) In a productive meeting with Ambassador Llorens, the representatives from SG Biofuel presented their proposal for initiating jatropha planting operations in Honduras. The Ambassador and Congressman Rohrabacher discussed the many ways that this serious initiative coincides with the Mission’s Strategic Goals on renewable energy. The Ambassador arranged break-out meetings for the SG representatives with the economic section, Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and USAID to discuss further opportunities for collaboration.
Asia

Chinese Government Singles Out Google

A “well-placed contact” told American diplomats in Beijing in January that intrusions into Google’s computer systems in China were coordinated by the Chinese government. Another source claimed that a top Chinese leader was working closely with Google’s Chinese competitor, Baidu, and there was a perception that Google was working with the United States government.

DATE

SOURCE Embassy Beijing

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SIPDIS

NSC FOR BADER, MEDEIROS, AND LOI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2030 TAGS: ECON, PGOV, PHUM, PREL, EINV, CH SUBJECT: GOOGLE UPDATE: PRC ROLE IN ATTACKS AND RESPONSE STRATEGY

REF: 

SIPDIS

Classified By: DCM Robert Goldberg. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

1. (S) Summary: A well-placed contact claims that the Chinese government coordinated the recent intrusions of Google systems. According to our contact, the closely held operations were directed at the Politburo Standing Committee level.

-- Another contact claimed a top PRC leader was actively working with Google competitor Baidu against Google.

-- Chinese concerns over the recent Google threat to take down the company’s Chinese-language search engine google.cn over censorship and hacking allegations were focused on the service’s growing popularity among Chinese Internet users and a perception that the USG and Google were working in concert.

-- An appeal to nationalism seems to be the Chinese government’s chosen option to counter Google’s demand to provide unfiltered web content.

-- Contacts in the technology industry tell us that Chinese interference in the operations of foreign businesses is widespread and often underreported to U.S. parent companies. End Summary.

Attacks Directed at High Level
PRC Sees USG and Google Working Together

3. (C) XXXXXXXXXXX told PolOff XXXXXXXXXXX that Google’s recent move presented a major dilemma (maodun) for the Chinese government, not because of the cyber-security aspect but because of Google’s direct challenge to China’s legal restrictions on Internet content. The immediate strategy, XXXXXXXXXXX said, seemed to be to appeal to Chinese nationalism by accusing Google and the U.S. government of working together to force China to accept “Western values” and undermine China’s rule of law. The problem the censors were facing, however, was that Google’s demand to deliver uncensored search results was very difficult to spin as an attack on China, and the entire episode had made Google more interesting and attractive to Chinese Internet users. All of a sudden, XXXXXXXXXXX continued, Baidu looked like a boring state-owned enterprise while Google “seems very attractive, like the forbidden fruit.” He said it “seems clear” to the Chinese people that Google and the U.S. government were working together on Internet freedom and to undermine Chinese government controls on the Internet. That made some intellectuals happy, XXXXXXXXXXX said, but “some others” regarded it as interference in China’s internal affairs.

Industry: Interference Common, Paranoia Driving PRC Policy

4. (C) XXXXXXXXXXX (please protect) noted the pronounced disconnect between views of U.S. parent companies and local subsidiaries. PRC-based company officials often downplayed the extent of PRC government interference in their operations for fear of consequences for their local markets. Our contact emphasized that Google and other U.S. companies in China were struggling with the stated Chinese goal of technology transfer for the purpose of excluding foreign competition. This consultant noted the Chinese were exploiting the global economic downturn to enact increasingly draconian product certification and government procurement regulations to force foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs) to transfer intellectual property and to carve away the market share of foreign companies.

Chinese Media: American Hypocrisy and Cultural Hegemony

5. (U) The Secretary’s speech continued to dominate headlines January 25-26, with the official People’s Daily (circ 2.2 million) alleging collusion between U.S. officials and the business community as evidenced by the propinquity of Google’s rethink of its China business and the Secretary’s speech. Chinese media again accused the U.S. of “cultural hegemony” for setting the standards for “so-called Internet freedom and of hypocrisy for calling for the free flow of information while using the Internet as a political and military tool. People’s Daily-affiliated Global Times English (circ 150,000) called the speech a “milestone” showing that U.S. and Western political interests were “taking over every dimension” of cyberspace.

6. (U) The Party-affiliated Beijing News (circ 530,000) opined that the speech showed “a huge gap between Chinese and American information industries, which may lead to a trade war strategy.” In an article headlined “China Intensifies Counterattack on Internet Accusation,” Global Times Chinese (circ 1.3 million) quoted Chinese scholar Niu Xinchun as rejecting the theory that U.S.-China conflict would replace the “G2” cooperation model, noting that U.S. attacks usually ended “poorly” when the U.S. considered its practical interests. Many papers quoted statements from the State Council Information Office and Ministry of Industry and Information Technology calling Chinese Internet controls “legitimate” and saying they should not be subject to “unjustifiable interference.” Papers continued to conflate Google’s China business strategy with the Secretary’s speech.

Blogging Circumscribed

7. (SBU) Anecdotally, censors appear to have cracked down on blogging about the Secretary’s speech. XXXXXXXXXXX Secretary Clinton’s speech is currently blocked in Chinese on state.gov but remains accessible on the U.S. Embassy website in both English and Chinese. HUNTSMAN
RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Vast Hacking by a China Fearful of the Web”
Chinese Press Controls Discussed

A 2007 Communist Party congress in China was covered by more domestic and foreign journalists, American diplomats reported, but some independent publications were excluded and Internet controls were tight.

DATE 2007-11-08 10:53:00

SOURCE Embassy Beijing

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 007035

SIPDIS

SIPDIS


REF: A. BEIJING 6606 B. OSC CPP20071019968173

Classified By: Political Internal Unit Chief Dan Kritenbrink. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary
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1. (C) Although the Communist Party employed a more sophisticated media strategy during the 17th Communist Party Congress October 15-21, local contacts tell us they were disappointed with the Party’s tight regulation of domestic coverage while the Congress was in session. Press controls inside China were at least as severe, if not slightly more so, than during the 16th Party Congress in 2002. Although reporters this time were treated to more press conferences and granted greater access to meetings and delegates, journalists were given very little of substance to report. Caijing, a magazine known for cutting edge reporting, was denied press credentials altogether, according to one contact. Some sources tell us, however, that the Party leadership believes the improved treatment of foreign journalists resulted in more positive international coverage of the Congress. End summary.

Access Versus Substance
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2. (C) In the lead up to the 17th Communist Party Congress, Chinese official media trumpeted the unprecedented number of journalists, both foreign and domestic, who had received credentials to cover the event. Altogether, according to a Xinhua News Agency report, the Party accredited 807 domestic and 1,135 foreign reporters, compared with 570 domestic and 840 foreign journalists for the 16th Party Congress in 2002. Xinhua also boasted about the greater number of press conferences that took place on the margins of the Congress and the expanded ability of journalists to observe meetings and interview delegates.

3. (C) Local journalists generally agreed that while Party propaganda officials went through the motions of media openness, they offered reporters very little of substance. The “unprecedented” access to delegates, several contacts told us, amounted to little more than listening to a wider array of Party leaders robotically praise General Secretary Hu Jintao’s political report. XXXXXXXXXXX told Poloff XXXXXXXXXXX that even though domestic journalists were granted entree to more meetings than at previous Party Congresses, the reporting they were actually allowed to print was so restricted that the greater access did not result in better coverage. XXXXXXXXXXX
(protect) told Poloff xxxxxxxxxxxx that he had originally wanted to skip covering the 17th Party Congress altogether. Domestic reporting of the Congress was “meaningless,” xxxxxxxxxxxx

Press Controls at Least As Tight As 2002
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4. (C) xxxxxxxxxxxx that controls on domestic coverage of the 17th Party Congress were at least as tight, if not more so, than they were during the 16th Party Congress in 2002. The extent of these restrictions can be seen, xxxxxxxxxxxx said, in the nearly identical front pages Chinese newspapers printed October 23, the day after the Party unveiled the new nine-member Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC). Nearly every Chinese paper, xxxxxxxxxxxx observed, ran “Hu Jintao Elected General Secretary” as the top headline. The Southern SIPDIS Metropolis News (Nanfang Dushi Bao) was the only paper to push these limits by inserting some actual news into its October 23 headline: “Still Nine Standing Committee Members, Four Are New.” Had Chinese journalists been allowed to report the unveiling of the new PBSC as a real news event, xxxxxxxxxxxx said, then the headlines would have been about the promotion of Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang directly to the PBSC thus bypassing the regular Politburo.

5. (C) While several media contacts have said that press credentials for this latest Congress were easier to obtain than in the past (Ref A), at least one independent-minded publication was left in the cold.xxx

No Tears On CCTV
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6. (C) China’s domestic media took to heart Party guidance that news coverage remain upbeat and that negative stories should be avoided (Ref A). xxxxxxxxxxxx told Poloff xxxxxxxxxxxx that some media outlets took these directives against negative news to extremes. xxxxxxxxxxxx said his friends at China Central Television (CCTV) told him that station managers had banned all “negative” images from the screen. During the Congress, CCTV would not show images of people crying, regardless of the circumstances. Even nature shows depicting animals stalking and killing prey were cut because such scenes were considered “inharmonious,” xxxxxxxxxxxx said.

Party Happy With International Coverage
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7. (C) Some contacts, however, said that the Party Congress media strategy of keeping journalists busy with press conferences and junkets (propaganda officials took foreign journalists to visit the newly constructed National Grand Theater as well as Olympic sites) was effective in terms of managing international coverage. Communist Party leaders, xxxxxxxxxxxx said, are generally pleased with the international coverage of the Congress. Overall the international press was more positive than it was during 16th Party Congress in 2002, xxxxxxxxxxxx commented, with more focus on individual leaders and less on factional infighting. xxxxxxxxxxxx said he gives the Party Congress Media Center a grade of “90 percent” for its management of the international press. xxxxxxxxxxxx agreed with xxxxxxxxxxxx that international reporting was more to the Party’s liking than in 2002. While reporters for the Associated Press might have been upset with the lack of substance, xxxxxxxxxxxx said, reporters from the developing world were generally pleased with the cushy treatment they received.

Internet Controls and Baidu Hijacking
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8. (C) Contacts were nearly unanimous in their assessment that Internet controls were extremely tight during the Congress. Popular websites scrubbed their chat rooms of even the most mildly negative or sarcastic postings, several of our interlocutors told us. Numerous foreign media outlets reported that on October 18 Chinese Internet users conducting searches using Yahoo and Google were redirected to the Chinese search engine Baidu (Ref B). While many Beijing-based contacts had not heard of these reports, Emboffs experienced this hijacking phenomenon first hand both in Beijing and in Chengdu. XXXXXXXXXX (protect) told Poloff on XXXXXXXXXX that certain Google searches had indeed been rerouted. For example, typing in “Dalai Lama” would get you immediately rerouted to Baidu, with a message that “there is no information on your request.” Most searches on Google, however, were not interfered with, XXXXXXXXXX said. XXXXXXXXXX told Poloff that Baidu has a bad reputation among journalists because of its alleged kowtowing to Chinese authorities. For example, XXXXXXXXXX said, a Baidu search of former Party Secretary Jiang Zemin reveals nothing but fawning news pieces. Baidu, XXXXXXXXXX said, actually gets more freedom because of its close relationship with the Chinese Government and thus is the best search engine for searches using Chinese characters. Google remains the best for English searches, XXXXXXXXXX said.

"Depressing" State of Press Freedom
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9. (C) XXXXXXXXXX told Poloff XXXXXXXXXX that the tight media controls surrounding the Congress were expected but “depressing” nonetheless. XXXXXXXXXX commented that no information about internal Party deliberations was revealed in the media and China’s press was devoid of any real news during the Congress. “Even at the very end, nobody knew for sure if the Standing Committee would have nine or seven members,” XXXXXXXXXX said, “why must all of this be kept so secret?” This information control has had a dampening effect on public and academic debate about policy directions China should take, XXXXXXXXXX told Poloff XXXXXXXXXX that he and other liberal academics have had great difficulty in recent months publishing “sensitive” articles, particularly dealing with democracy and rule of law, as a result of the Congress. However, XXXXXXXXXX said that even though press controls remain tight, the Party has lost much of its ability to set the public agenda. The Communist Party can still control what is covered in the media, XXXXXXXXXX said, “but they cannot dictate what people care about.” XXXXXXXXXX echoed this point, noting that the wider array of media options now makes it easier for Chinese to tune out Party Congress propaganda. “Rather than watch CCTV coverage of the Congress,” XXXXXXXXXX said, “people can now just switch to one of the 60 other channels available.” Randt

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Vast Hacking by a China Fearful of the Web”
Chinese Warning about Google Earth

A Chinese official tells the American Embassy that China wants the United States to persuade Google Earth to reduce the resolution of images of Chinese military, nuclear, space, energy and other government facilities, saying the images could help terrorists plan attacks.

DATE  2006-11-07 06:48:00

SOURCE Embassy Beijing

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 023571

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/07/2021 TAGS: PREL, PINR, TSPA, CH SUBJECT: PRC CLAIMS HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGERY ON GOOGLE EARTH COULD AID TERRORIST ATTACKS ON CHINA

SUMMARY
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1. (C) China wants the United States Government to take action to get Google to reduce the resolution of the Google Earth images of China’s military, nuclear, space, energy and other sensitive government agency installations in order to deprive terrorists of potentially dangerous information, XXXXXXXXX said the Beijing request was based on possible “grave consequences” if terrorists exploit the information to harm China. Google Earth is a private company, the DCM reminded XXXXXXXXX was noncommittal on whether China would directly contact Google or the European imagery providers and the other sources of high resolution imagery on the Internet. Other countries have shared similar concerns with China, XXXXXXXXX said, but he refused to divulge country names. End Summary.

Google Earth High Resolution Images a Threat to China
---------------------------------------------

2. (C) Google Earth is providing high resolution images of sensitive Chinese facilities over the Internet, thereby endangering PRC national security, XXXXXXXXX told the DCM during a XXXXXXXXX meeting. These facilities include military installations, nuclear test sites, satellite launch sites, oil production facilities, power generating plants and important government departments. The resolution is one meter for most of China, and is as fine as 0.6 meters in Beijing and Shanghai, allowing anyone with Internet access to view these facilities in great detail. Moreover, Google Earth allows users to post information about specific locations, XXXXXXXXX continued, which means information about important Chinese agencies and sensitive installations is effectively being published on the Internet.

"Grave Consequences" if Terrorists Use Imagery
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3. (C) XXXXXXXXX said China is extremely concerned that terrorist organizations could access the high resolution imagery and posted information and present a grave threat to PRC national security. If terrorists used the imagery from Google Earth to cause damage to China, there would
be “grave consequences,” warned xxxxxxxxxxxx. In the spirit of our sound bilateral cooperative relationship, particularly on counterterrorism issues, xxxxxxxxxxxx asked that the United States place “great importance” on China’s concerns, understand the sensitivity of the matter and take action so that Google will reduce the resolution of the images of China’s sensitive facilities.

DCM: Google a Private Company, and Not Imagery Source

3. (C) The DCM told xxxxxxxxxxxx that he would report the request to Washington, but noted that Google is a private company. The DCM said he had no information to offer on what, if any, role or response the United States Government might have to the Chinese presentation. The DCM noted that the Chinese points only asked for a reduction in the resolution and asked if the Chinese sought any specific level. The DCM also asked whether xxxxxxxxxxxx had contacted Google directly and, since Google purchases the imagery as any individual or entity can, whether China had contacted the satellite imagery providers.

xxxxxxxxxxx: Other, Unspecified Countries Have Similar Concerns

4. (C) xxxxxxxxxxxx responded that China is approaching the United States Government because the issue is directly relevant to counterterrorism and that while Google is a private company it operates in the United States “political and legal environment.” China is requesting the United States take action to prevent the information from being misused to cause damage to China, xxxxxxxxxxxx reiterated. He offered that China had been in discussions with other countries with similar concerns about Google Earth. However, xxxxxxxxxxxx refused to provide the names of the other countries, noting he was unable to share the information due to prior agreements with those countries.

Europe the Source of Imagery, But Google Earth is the Key

5. (C) China will talk to Google about the “technical details,” xxxxxxxxxxxx continued, adding that it is not for the MFA to determine the appropriate resolution level. China knows the source data comes from European companies, satellite operators and the European space agency but xxxxxxxxxxxx said China sees Google as the problem because it makes the information easily accessible. When pressed, xxxxxxxxxxxx admitted that Beijing had not yet contacted the European providers or the governments associated with the European space program. xxxxxxxxxxxx said that while China will look at the other Internet sources of the high resolution imagery, Google’s well known imagery is of greatest concern. Randt
Cyber-Attacks and Other Security Threats

While surveying threats of violence from Cameroon to Bangladesh, the State Department’s Diplomatic Security Daily in one 2008 issue discussed in detail the cyber threats posed mostly by Chinese hackers.

DATE 2008-11-03 18:12:00

SOURCE Secretary of State

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET STATE 116943

NOFORN


Classified By: Derived from Multiple Sources


2. (U) Significant Events ) Paragraphs 7-13

3. (U) Key Concerns ) Paragraphs 14-18

4. (U) Threats & Analysis ) Paragraphs 19-31

5. (U) Cyber Threats ) Paragraphs 32-45

6. (U) Suspicious Activity Incidents ) Paragraphs 46-49

7. (U) Significant Events

8. (SBU) EUR - Ireland - Emergency Action Committee (EAC) Belfast met October 31 to discuss the armed forces homecoming parade scheduled for November 2 and the planned simultaneous counter-demonstrations by Sinn Fein and the dissident republican group Eirigi. Discussions centered on the parade route and the possibility of confrontations and violence in different areas, as well as the presence of AmCits along the parade and demonstration routes. The EAC decided the U.S. Consulate General should release a Warden Message to warn AmCits in Belfast. (Belfast 0137)

9. (SBU) Sweden - Approximately 12 to 15 protesters, carrying banners and flags requesting fair treatment for the Cuban Five in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, made an unscheduled appearance at U.S. Embassy Stockholm November 1. The group emerged from the nearby German Embassy and stopped briefly in front of Post. The RSO monitored the group; they did not attempt to contact Embassy officials, but appeared more interested in photographing the front of Post. The protesters departed within a few minutes before Embassy police could respond. No damages or injuries were reported. (RSO Stockholm Spot Report)

10. (S//NF) NEA - Egypt - EAC Cairo convened October 20 to review recent threat reporting and access any threats specific to the planned visit by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on November 8 and 9. The EAC agreed there is no new, specific, and/or credible threat to U.S.
interests in Egypt, but also assessed that Egypt remains a very tempting target for both indigenous and transnational terrorist elements. EAC members also agreed to enhance security measures at the American Presence Post in Alexandria. The EAC continues to assess the Government of Egypt’s (GoE) counterterrorism efforts as effective, and Post has a close relationship with the GoE on security matters. (Appendix 1)

11. (S//NF) Kuwait - EAC Kuwait City convened November 2 to discuss the security impact of recent threat reporting, Embassy Kuwait election coverage, U.S. Marine Corps Birthday Ball, and the upcoming visit of the former U.S. President William J. Clinton. The EAC was briefed on the recent reporting of possible terrorist surveillance of housing areas within Kuwait City. Post is coordinating the release of this information to the Kuwait Security Service for further action. The RSO stated the Local Guard Force (LGF) Mobile Patrol unit will increase coverage in the housing occupied by Chief of Mission personnel within the named areas, defensive counterintelligence training will be given to locally employed staff, and a Security Notice reminding personnel to remain vigilant in their personal security procedures will be released. The EAC concluded that Post’s current security posture is appropriate for the planned events. (Appendix 2)

12. (S//NF) EAP - Indonesia - EAC Jakarta convened October 30 to discuss the security implications of the anticipated execution of the Bali bombers. The Government of Indonesia (GoI) recently announced they would be executed during the first week of November. Rumors are circulating around Jakarta that retaliatory attacks and demonstrations by those who support the bombers are possible. However, there is no specific or credible information regarding the planning of these types of attacks. One report mentioned possible suicide bomber attacks on shopping malls in Jakarta, specifically the Kelapa Gading mall in northern Jakarta, but without details. The U.S. Embassy assesses the likelihood of a terrorist attack conducted against U.S. or other Western interests in direct response to the executions is low. (Appendix source 3)

13. (SBU) SCA - Pakistan - A motorcade carrying Pakistani Deputy Inspector General of Police Syed Akhtar Ali Shah was targeted by a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (IED) attack in Marden Province on October 31 at around 2:30 p.m. Ali Shah and 20 others were wounded, and nine police officers were killed in the attack. On November 1, at approximately 2:33 a.m., an explosion occurred at a police substation approximately 2,000 meters from the U.S. Consulate Peshawar residential area and official annexes. One police officer was killed and several other individuals were badly wounded. It is undetermined at this time whether the explosion was from a rocket or an explosion charge placed at the structure. The RSO will monitor these attacks. (RSO Peshawar Spot Report)

14. (U) Key Concerns

15. (S//FGI//NF) NEA - Lebanon - Al-Qaeda affiliate to attack U.S. Embassy motorcade: According to a source of the Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate, as of mid-October, al-Qaeda-affiliated elements in the Ayn al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp plan to attack a U.S. Embassy motorcade in Beirut. The men planning the operation had already collected an unspecified amount of explosives and a white 1983 Mercedes, which was currently inside the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp. The Mercedes was to be rigged with the explosives. (Appendix source 4)

16. (S//FGI//NF) SCA - Maldives - Continued monitoring of al-Qaeda associates: The Maldives Police Service continued to investigate and monitor the activities of Maldives-based al-Qaeda associates Yoosuf Izadhy, Easa Ali, and Hasnain Abdullah Hameed (a.k.a. Hameed). Izadhy was reportedly in contact with a militant group in Waziristan, which allegedly maintained unspecified links to al-Qaeda. Izadhy was clandestinely working to recruit others into his organization, specifically seeking individuals who had undergone basic terrorism training in Pakistan. Izadhy planned to create a terrorist group in the Maldives with the assistance of the Waziristan-based group. Izadhy planned to send his members to Waziristan for training. Hameed was in close contact with a number of individuals who had undergone training in Pakistan, including individuals who were members of Jamaat-ul Muslimeen and completed basic and advanced training by Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT) in Pakistan. They followed the ideology of Abu Easa.

17. (S//FGI//NF) DS/TIA/ITA notes, while the operational aspirations of Yoosuf Izadhy (Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) number 17312323), Easa Ali (TIDE number 17312652), and Hasnain Abdullah Hameed (TIDE number 20686145) are unclear; past reporting suggests Maldivian extremists have demonstrated interest in actively participating in global jihadi activities by attempting to arrange travel and terrorist training in Pakistan. While many Maldivian participants of extremist online forums aimed to ultimately fight Coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, mid-October 2007 debrief information following the September 29 bombing in Male that
targeted tourists indicates at least two of the operatives participated in the attack in exchange for travel from the islands after the operation and arranged study at a madrassa in Pakistan.

18. (S//NF) Specific links to al-Qaeda remain unclear; although, reporting from May detailed recruitment activity by Maldivian national Ahmed Zaki of Maldivians into the Kashmiri extremist group LT madrassas and training camps in Pakistan. A variety of reports from 2006 details linkages between Maldivians belonging to a group known as Jama-ah-tul-Muslimeen (JTM) and individuals participating in an anti-American Islamic extremist online forum called Tibyan Publications. JTM is an extremist group based in the UK that follows an extremist ideology known as Takfir that actively encourages violent jihad and supports criminality against apostate states. (Appendix sources 5-18)

19. (U) Threats & Analysis

20. (S//NF) WHA - Mexico - Violence spikes again in Tijuana: According to a mid-level Baja California state police official, a turf war between the Arellano Felix Organization (AFO) and the Sinaloa Cartel has caused another increase in violence in Tijuana. The Mexican Government,s counternarcotics efforts -- in the form of 3,300 military and police assets patrolling the area under Operation Tijuana -- have severely weakened the AFO,s operations. The Sinaloa Cartel, hoping to capitalize on the AFO,s weaknesses, is battling for control of Tijuana,s drug plaza. While the AFO assassins are skilled, Sinaloa Cartel hit men are poorly trained and have no aversion to public shootings; however, if the Sinaloa Cartel successfully ousts the AFO from Tijuana, DS/TIA/ITA notes the levels of violence should decrease. While residents and visitors are not being targeted, the likelihood of being in the wrong place at the wrong time is of increasing concern. Cartel targets are being killed during daytime hours in public areas of Tijuana, including restaurants, shopping centers, and near school buildings. The DoS, Travel Alert for Mexico was extended for six months on October 14 to reflect the current and widely reported crime and violence occurring throughout Mexico. (Open sources; Appendix sources 19-20)

21. (SBU) In the early morning of October 31, a group of armed men in three boats attacked a French Total vessel named Bourbon Sagita, which was located off the Cameroonian shore between Bakassi and Limbe. Although no Americans were directly impacted, at least seven French citizens, one Tunisian, one Senegalese, and several Cameroonian nationals were kidnapped; five remaining oil workers were left on the boat. Nobody was injured in the attack.

22. (SBU) According to unconfirmed media reports, shortly after the raid, the BFF, part of a larger and shadowy alliance of the Niger Delta Defense and Security Council and the Bakassi Freedom Fighters: (S//NF) The October 31 kidnapping of approximately 10 hostages off the shores of the Bakassi Peninsula has magnified the role of two groups -- the Bakassi Freedom Fighters (BFF) and the Niger Delta Defense and Security Council (NDDSC) -- in the increasing insecurity in the Bakassi. The kidnappings, an overview of the NDDSC,s and BFF,s background, and an examination of their past operations, highlight the groups, possible intent to use novel, deadly, and unprecedented tactics to achieve their goals.

23. (S//NF) The NDDSC/BFF is likely referring to discussions over the status of the Bakassi Peninsula in its statement. The region was transferred from Nigeria to Cameroon on August 14, per an International Court of Justice ruling. According to e-mails it sent to media outlets, the NDDSC/BFF merged into an official alliance at the end of July in an attempt to forestall the hand over. Led by Commander Ebi Dari and General A.G. Dasuo, who claim they are fighting for self-determination and freedom of the Bakassi Peninsula which contains a majority of Nigerian citizens. They are also demanding that two of their fighters captured in July be released and that Nigerians on the Bakassi Peninsula be compensated.

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25. (S//NF) An intelligence and open media search of the BFF provided negligible results. Meanwhile, although little background information is known about the NDDSC, it claims to have approximately 1,050 fighters. It has been in existence since at least 2002 and previously conducted low-level attacks against Cameroonian troops on the Bakassi. It can also be linked to three deadly operations prior to the hand over of the controversial region. In the most macabre raid, on June 9, the NDDSC allegedly killed and mutilated six members of a Cameroonian delegation visiting the Peninsula, including the deputy subregional commander. It also claimed
responsibility for a November 2007 raid on a Cameroonian military outpost which killed 21 soldiers; this claim remains unconfirmed. (Please see the July 26 DS Daily for further information on the pre-hand over security incidents in the Bakassi.)

26. (S//NF) Although the post-hand over period has been defined by a series of attacks, the NDDSC/BFF has released statements denying culpability in some of those operations. These include a September 28 bank robbery in Limbe and a September 13 attack against a trawler off the Bakassi Peninsula. The NDDSC/BFF may be responsible for some post-hand over operations, while others may have been conducted by different militants in the region, including in the Niger Delta. Despite similar tactics in all these operations, including the use of speedboats carrying heavily armed masked men, at this time, there are no clear indications the NDDSC/BFF has a defined relationship with the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) or any other prominent Niger Delta group.

27. (S//NF) Instead, the series of raids by the NDDSC/BFF may possibly signify new tactics being pursued in the Bakassi region. In its early raids, the NDDSC/BFF primarily used deadly and brutal force against the Cameroonian military, but often spared expatriates and civilians. Two recent attacks, however -- the June 9 attack and the October 31 hostage-taking operation -- have demonstrated its desire to expand its targets. In the June 6 raid, the NDDSC targeted a political delegation and mutilated a deputy subregional commander, the equivalent of a governor. It is unclear if the NDDSC was directly targeting the governor; but, nevertheless, the group demonstrated its desire to also kill politicians. For its part, the October 31 attacks was the first kidnapping of expatriates off the coast of Cameroon.

28. (S//NF) Also of concern is the NDDSC/BFF’s intent to hold hostages indefinitely after initially threatening to kill them. Whereas MEND and other Delta groups kidnapped hostages primarily to garner ransom money or to force oil companies to scale back operations, they had seldom directly harmed or threatened to kill hostages. They also often released hostages shortly after their capture. Moreover, given its intent to hold the hostages for a political objective, the NDDSC/BFF may find it convenient to continue operations against expatriates in the region to pressure the Cameroonian Government and to ensure that its political demands are met. (Open sources; Yaound 1071; 0754; 0706; Appendix sources 21-28)

29. (S//FGI//NF) SCA - Bangladesh - Rejection of IDP to register for December elections: As of late October, the Bangladeshi Election Commission was set to reject the Islamic Democratic Party’s (IDP’s) attempt to register for the December parliamentary elections. The IDP is a nascent political party formed by senior members of the Islamic terrorist group Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B). Bangladesh’s Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) supported the formation of the IDP as a way to bring HUJI-B into the mainstream and reported it tightly monitored the group’s activities; although, HUJI-B has never renounced the use of violence to implement its vision of transforming Bangladesh into a Muslim theocracy. According to U.S. Embassy Dhaka, which strongly opposed the creation of the IDP, the party and its leadership will likely be angered by the decision and may respond with violence possibly against the commission or the U.S. Mission or interests.

30. (S//NF) Arrests and monitoring have undoubtedly hindered HUJI-B’s capabilities in recent years, and it is entirely plausible the group is pursuing the creation of a political wing to improve its ability to support and carry out terrorist activity. A late-September assessment from Bangladesh’s National Security Intelligence Organization (NSI) voiced concern that the party’s creation would free extremists to pursue extremist activity under the cover of a moderate front organization. Indeed, there are no indications IDP would garner a significant number of votes. Analysis from the DoS, Office of Research noted the majority of Bangladeshis want Awami League and Bangladesh National Party leaders Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia to participate in the December elections. Interestingly, 80 percent stated they would ignore a call by either party to boycott the vote. One-third further stated they would join street protests in the face of a cancellation of elections.

31. (S//FGI//NF) Although there is little information available regarding HUJI-B’s current capabilities, its membership likely does retain the ability to manufacture and use explosives and has previously favored targeting high-profile individuals for attack. While there is no specific reporting at the present time detailing plots against U.S. interests in Bangladesh, the group has publicly articulated its anti-Western and -Indian stance, including signing Usama Bin Ladin’s 1998 fatwa against the West. In regards to HUJI-B’s capabilities, DGFI’s, Rapid Action Battalion’s (RAB’s), and NSI’s assessments vary significantly. Following the early-March U.S. designation of HUJI-B as a foreign terrorist organization, RAB assessed HUJI-B would not respond with violence due to the severe degradation of the group’s capability and leadership structure from arrests and active surveillance. Some member who wanted to independently attack Western
interests, however, remained technically capable of carrying out low-level attacks using small arms, grenades, and IEDs. DGFI likewise reported HUJI-B was an organization on the run and that it did not pose a threat to U.S. interests in Bangladesh. NSI conversely assessed HUJI-B would react violently to the designation and would attempt to conduct an attack against the U.S. official presence in Dhaka; although, there was no information available detailing such an operation. Thus far, HUJI-B has not carried out an attack against American interests in Bangladesh, but the group has been linked to assassination attempts on intellectuals, journalists, and politicians, including two thwarted attempts on the life of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during public addresses and a grenade attack that injured the British high commissioner in May 2004. (Bangladeshis have high hopes for national elections, DoS Office of Research; Appendix sources 29-40)

32. (U) Cyber Threats

33. (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) WHA - CTAD comment: On October 16, at least one e-mail account within the Government of Canada received a Trojanized message from a Yahoo account claiming to represent a U.S. embassy. The bogus subject line was an invitation for a private meeting with a named DoS employee. The attached Microsoft Word document was a malicious invitation file that, when opened, attempts to beacon and create a connection to jingl.cable.nu via port 8080. The cable.nu domain remains one of concern, as it has historically been associated with activity from Chinese hacker organizations.

34. (U) EUR - CTAD comment: The European Commission (EC) this week proposed legislation to establish a Critical Infrastructure Warning Information Network (CIWIN) to improve information sharing among European Union (EU) member nations. The proposed legislation would enable the EC to launch and manage the CIWIN, a secure information technology (IT) system aimed at sharing knowledge on threats, vulnerabilities, and protection of critical infrastructures. The CIWIN would be a voluntary tool for transmitting sensitive information and would also include a rapid alert system for critical infrastructure, allowing EU nations to post alerts on immediate threats.

35. (U) AF - CTAD comment: Sudanese law enforcement recently reported the arrest of three hackers who have allegedly attacked more than 390 government and public websites during the last few months. Among the hacked sites was that of the National Telecommunication Corporation, which is responsible for oversight of telecommunication service providers as well as many other aspects of Sudanese IT and network stability. The three highly skilled hackers, all of whom are Sudanese, reportedly caused significant damage to their targets, but their motivation for the attacks and any potential group affiliations are yet undetermined.

36. (C) NEA - CTAD comment: On October 21, officials from the Kuwaiti Central Agency for Information (CAIT) and the National Security Bureau (NSB) expressed concerns for foreign and domestic threats to Kuwaiti information systems. According to these organizations, some of the issues plaguing Government of Kuwait (GoK) networks are suspected attacks from Iranian hackers, insider corruption and misuse of resources, and a lack of sufficient interagency coordination and guidance for monitoring users, activities and investigating incidents. For example, the groups, inability to adequately examine malicious software (malware) injections or internal abuse of system access continues to hinder the GoK's capacity to ensure the protection of sensitive information. Therefore, the CAIT and NSB are interested in learning more about U.S. cyber security programs as well as receiving additional training and support.

37. (S//NF) EAP - CTAD comment: Between September 29 and October 2, a conference was held by the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV). During this conference, the BfV delivered a briefing on its analysis of the cyber threat posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC), which appears to mirror conclusions drawn by the U.S. Intelligence Community. The BfV surmises the intention of PRC actors is espionage, and the primary attack vector used in their malicious activity is socially engineered e-mail messages containing malware attachments and/or embedded links to hostile websites. According to reporting, from October 2006 to October 2007, 500 such e-mail operations were conducted against a wide range of German organizations, and the attacks appear to be increasing in scope and sophistication. The socially engineered e-mail messages delivered to German computer systems were spoofed to appear to come from trusted sources and contain information targeted specifically to the recipient's interests, duties, or current events. This malicious activity has targeted a wide variety of German organizational levels to include military, economic, science and technology, commercial, diplomatic, research and development, as well as high-level government (ministry and chancellery) systems. In addition, German intelligence reporting indicates an increase in activity was detected immediately preceding events such as German Government, or commercial, negotiations involving Chinese interests.
38. (U) SCA - CTAD comment: The National Science Foundation and the Pakistan Higher Education Commission recently announced the establishment of a Pakistan extension to an international high-speed network already connecting U.S. and EC systems. The new portion of the network links Pakistani scientists and students to facilities in the U.S. through additional connections to Singapore and Japan. This project emerged from February 2007 discussions of the U.S.-Pakistan Joint Committee on Science and Technology that sought to promote cooperation and innovation among education and business sectors. (Open sources; Appendix sources 41-43)

39. (S//NF) Worldwide - BC conducting CNE on USG systems:

40. (S//NF) Key highlights: BC actively targets USG and other organizations via socially engineered e-mail messages. BC actors recently compromised the systems of a U.S. ISP to carry out CNE on a USG network. Additional IP addresses were identified this month as compromised and used for BC activity. BC has targeted DoS networks in the past and may again in the future via spoofed e-mail.

41. (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) Source paragraph: Byzantine Candor (BC) actors have compromised multiple systems located at a U.S. Internet service provider (ISP) and have used the systems as part of BC's U.S.-based attack infrastructure since at least March, targeting multiple victims including at least one USG agency.

42. (S//NF) CTAD comment: Since late 2002, USG organizations have been targeted with social-engineering online attacks by BC actors. BC, an intrusion subset of Byzantine Hades activity, is a series of related computer network intrusions affecting U.S. and foreign systems and is believed to originate from the PRC. BC intruders have relied on techniques including exploiting Windows system vulnerabilities and stealing login credentials to gain access to hundreds of USG and cleared defense contractor systems over the years. In the U.S., the majority of the systems BC actors have targeted belong to the U.S. Army, but targets also include other DoD services as well as DoS, Department of Energy, additional USG entities, and commercial systems and networks. BC actors typically gain initial access with the use of highly targeted socially engineered e-mail messages, which fool recipients into inadvertently compromising their systems. The intruders then install malware such as customized keystroke-logging software and command-and-control (C&C) utilities onto the compromised systems and exfiltrate massive amounts of sensitive data from the networks. This month, BC actors attempted to compromise the network of a U.S. political organization via socially engineered e-mail messages (see CTAD Daily Read File dated October 16).

43. (S//REL TO USA, ACGU) CTAD comment: Also discovered this month by USG analysts was the compromise of several computer systems located at a commercial ISP within the United States. According to Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) reporting, hackers based in Shanghai and linked to the PRC's People's Liberation Army (PLA) Third Department have been using these compromised systems as part of the larger BC attack infrastructure to facilitate computer network exploitation (CNE) of U.S. and foreign information systems. Since March, the responsible actors have used at least three separate systems at the unnamed ISP in multiple network intrusions and have exfiltrated data via these systems, including data from at least one USG agency. AFOSI reporting indicates, on March 11, BC actors gained access to one system at the ISP, onto which the actors transferred multiple files, including several C&C tools. From here, the intruders used the tools to obtain a list of usernames and password hashes for the system. Next, on April 22, BC actors accessed a second system at the ISP, where they transferred additional software tools. From April through October 13, the BC actors used this computer system to conduct CNE on multiple victims. During this time period, the actors exfiltrated at least 50 megabytes of e-mail messages and attached documents, as well as a complete list of usernames and passwords from an unspecified USG agency. Additionally, multiple files were transferred to the compromised ISP system from other BC-associated systems that have been previously identified collecting e-mail messages from additional victims. The third system at the U.S. ISP was identified as compromised on August 14, when BC actors transferred a malicious file onto it named salaryincrease-surveyandforecast.zip. According to AFOSI analysis, BC actors use this system to host multiple webpages that allow other BC-compromised systems to download malicious files or be redirected to BC C&C servers.

44. (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) CTAD comment: Additional DoD reporting this month indicates BC actors have used multiple other systems to conduct CNE against U.S. and foreign systems from February through September. A October 23 DoD cable states Shanghai-based hackers associated with BC activity and linked to the PLA have successfully targeted multiple U.S. entities during this time period. The cable details dozens of identified Internet Protocol (IP) addresses associated with BC activity as well as the dates of their activity. All of the IP addresses listed resolve to the
CNC Group Shanghai Province Network in Shanghai, and all the host names of the addresses contained Asian keyboard settings as well as China time zone settings. Most of these IP addresses were identified as responsible for direct CNE of U.S. entities, including unspecified USG organizations, systems and networks. Interestingly, although the actors using each IP address practiced some degree of operational security to obfuscate their identities, one particular actor was identified as lacking in these security measures. On June 7, the BC actor, using an identified IP address, was observed using a Taiwan-based online bulletin board service for personal use.

45. (S//NF) CTAD comment: BC actors have targeted the DoS in the past on multiple occasions with socially engineered e-mail messages containing malicious attached files and have successfully exfiltrated sensitive information from DoS unclassified networks. As such, it is possible these actors will attempt to compromise DoS networks in the future. As BC activity continues across the DoD and U.S., DoS personnel should practice conscientious Internet and e-mail use and should remain informed on BH activity. (Appendix sources 44-46)

46. (U) Suspicious Activity Incidents

47. (SBU) EUR - Azerbaijan - A vehicle with Iranian license plates was parked adjacent to U.S. Embassy Baku October 29. The driver was the only occupant in the car. Another subject appeared and got into the car, which then took off. The police have been asked to check the vehicle registration. Post is awaiting the results. (SIMAS Event: Baku-00507-2008)

48. (SBU) EAP - Taiwan - An Asian male with a professional video camera stood across the street from the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) October 29. He filmed a number of buildings in the area and possibly the AIT. After a few minutes, the subject departed the area on a motor scooter. (SIMAS Event: Taipei-00194-2008)

49. (SBU) Taiwan - An Asian male stood in front of the Bank of Taiwan and photographed various buildings -- including the AIT -- on October 31. An LGF member stopped and questioned the man, who refused to show identification or the pictures he took. He left the area on foot shortly afterward. (SIMAS Event: Taipei-00195-2008)

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RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Vast Hacking by a China Fearful of the Web”
China’s Ties to the World of Computer Hackers

A daily security report about threats worldwide examines (in paragraphs 50 to 57) the murky ties between the Chinese government, Chinese computer security companies and notorious hackers, including one who calls himself Lion.

DATE 2009-06-29 16:59:00

SOURCE Secretary of State

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET STATE 067105

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 Classified By: Derived from Multiple Sources

SECRET//FGI//NOFORN

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2. (U) Iraq - Paragraphs 7-11

3. (U) Significant Events - Paragraphs 12-23

4. (U) Key Concerns - Paragraphs 24-43

5. (U) Cyber Threats - Paragraphs 44-57

6. (U) Suspicious Activity Incidents - Paragraphs 58-64

7. (U) Iraq

8. (S/NF) Alleged plans by various insurgent groups to conduct attacks during anticipated U.S. military withdrawal from urban areas: According to recent multiple source reports, various insurgent groups and militias intend on attacking multiple venues throughout Iraq in anticipation of U.S. military forces withdrawal from urban areas. Specific targets mentioned included the International Zone (IZ), Victory Base Complex, joint security stations, and various forward operating bases in Baghdad and in Maysan Province (southern Iraq). Allegedly, insurgent groups also are prepared to target key infrastructure, such as bridges and major supply routes used by Coalition forces (CF) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) convoys. According to one source, an unidentified group had access to a large tank of chlorine, 16 V-8 rockets, and three torpedoes which were supposedly recovered by the CF and ISF. The reports mentioned the attacks would commence on or about July 1. The Government of Iraq is anticipating the offensive and has placed ISF units on alert and cancelled all leave effective June 28.

9. (S/NF) DS/TIA/ITA would like to note the series of reports are consistent with other recent threat reporting indicating the possibility of insurgent groups and militias preparing to increase attacks in anticipation of troop withdrawal from urban areas. It is possible that
10. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA would also highlight the allegation of the existence of the weapons cache, as the materials could possibly be used as components for improvised rocket-assisted munitions or an improvised explosive device (IED). According to the Multi-National Forces in Iraq Combined Intelligence Operations Cell, the first documented chlorine attack occurred in Al-Anbar Province (western Iraq) on October 21, 2006, and the first documented chlorine vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) in the Baghdad area occurred in Taji on February 28, 2007. Despite the claims by insurgent groups and militias of chlorine-related attacks, their incident rates remain low and inconsistent. While DS/TIA/ITA cannot corroborate the veracity of the recent threat reporting, overall, there is nothing to suggest that the intention to attack the U.S. presence in Iraq will subside once a military troop withdrawal is completed. (Appendix sources 1-7)

11. (SBU) Indirect fire (IDF) of unknown size was launched against the IZ in Baghdad at 9:22 p.m. on June 24. The IDF impacted in the river approximately 250 meters south of the U.S. Embassy compound. No injuries or damages were reported. (RSO TOC Baghdad Spot Report)

12. (U) Significant Events

13. (C) WHA Honduras - Honduran military forces arrested President Manuel Zelaya June 28 according to orders issued by the National Congress and the Supreme Court of Honduras. Zelaya was taken to a local air force base and flown to Costa Rica. Emergency Action Committee (EAC) Tegucigalpa subsequently met to discuss the ramifications of the seizure of the president by host-cost country military forces. The RSO noted the general climate in the capital was calm; however, a standstill order was issued, and additional security measures were implemented. The Embassy released a Warden Message regarding the actions against Zelaya and urged AmCits to remain in the residences or hotels for the day.

14. (C) Later in the day, Congress officially named Roberto Micheletti interim president. The U.S. Ambassador gave a press conference outside the Embassy; he insisted that President Zelaya was the only democratically elected president of the country and urged that freedom of expression and circulation be restored. He also demanded the release of those government officials said to be in military custody. The EAC reconvened to assess the situation. Protest activity has centered around the presidential palace, some roads in the capital were blocked, and there were some troops on the street. However, traffic flow was reported normal in most of the city. Authorized Departure for family members was discussed, but not warranted at this time. Embassy personnel were advised to remain in their homes for the rest of the day and to limit their movements today, June 29. All Peace Corps volunteers have been accounted for and are on standfast. Post will be open today for emergency services only. The EAC will continue monitoring events in-country and provide updated information as available. (Tegucigalpa Spot Report; telcon; Warden Message; Appendix sources 8-10)

15. (SBU) EUR Germany - A Local Guard Force (LOF) member of U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt discovered two suspicious cases with protruding wires June 26 while on foot patrol in the clustered housing area. The guard notified his supervisor, and the area and two nearby apartment buildings were evacuated. Responding police requested canine and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) support. After the EOD team arrived, a local telecom technician, who had been working nearby, arrived at the scene and claimed the unattended cases; the technician had inadvertently left the cases. After further investigation and corroboration with the technician, police declare the area safe. (RSO Frankfurt Spot Report)

16. (SBU) AF Liberia - Two acts of vandalism were reported to U.S. Embassy Monrovia on the night of June 27. One took place at the residence of the chief of the DoD Office of Security Cooperation, approximately 2.5 miles from Post, where graffiti was spray painted on the perimeter wall stating, “COL THE WAR HAS JUST BEGAN.” The second incident occurred at the facility of a USAID-funded project, approximately 1.5 miles from the Embassy, where the messages “INTERCON MUST LEAVE NOW, TAKE INT” and “DANGER” were spray painted on the compound wall. The RSO assesses these incidents are consistent with the pattern of threats and intimidation used by dismissed Embassy guards to obtain a favorable settlement with their former employer through the Liberian Ministry of Labor. (RSO Monrovia Spot Report)

17. (SBU) Mauritania - U.S. Embassy Nouakchott received a credible threat June 27 regarding a
kidnapping against an American in the capital sometime during the night (NFI). The RSO considers the information credible and made notifications to staff to assure that all official Americans were accounted for. All residential LGF posts were manned, and radio checks were increased. Post also issued a Warden Message advising AmCits in-country of the threat. Please see the Key Concerns section for further information. (RSO Nouakchott Spot Report)

18. (C//NF) Mauritania - EAC Nouakchott met June 26 to discuss developments surrounding the murder of an unofficial American on June 23. Members were updated on the investigative progress of local authorities. The EAC reviewed the U.S. Embassy’s tripwires for consideration of Authorized Departure and/or drawdown and determined there was insufficient information at this time to recommend either action. EAC members were reminded of the importance of random arrival arrivals at Post (effective June 25) along with other augmented security measures.

19. (S//NF) The EAC reconvened June 28, and members were introduced to FBI assets assigned to investigate the AmCit’s murder with host-country law enforcement personnel. Members welcomed the team and support their efforts on the investigation while in-country. Members also discussed the credible kidnapping threat against an AmCit in-country and reviewed the enhanced security measures already in place. Post issued a Consular short message system alert to the American community advising of the threat. The EAC will continue to review all threat information as it becomes available, while supporting the ongoing murder investigation, and the EAC will reconvene as needed. (Appendix sources 11-12)

20. (SBU) Sudan Update - On June 24, verdicts were issued in the trial of the five Sudanese men charged with the January 1, 2008, murder of U.S. Embassy Khartoum employees John Granville and Abdelrahman Abbas. Four of the defendants were found guilty of intentional killing and sentenced to death by hanging. The fifth defendant was found guilty on weapons charges and sentenced to two years in prison, including credit for time served since his January 2008 arrest. (Khartoum 0790)

21. (SBU) The Gambia - EAC Banjul met June 23 for its monthly meeting. It was determined that the recent activity in Tehran, Iran, should not present any additional danger for U.S. personnel or citizens in-country; however, the EAC agreed U.S. Embassy staff must be more diligent in practicing common-sense security measures. EAC members deemed Post’s current security posture is sufficient. (Banjul 0190)

22. (S//NF) NEA Yemen - EAC Sana’a met June 28 to discuss a write-in threat concerning a VBIED attack against the U.S. Embassy planned for today, June 29. The threat was traced to Algeria, and, although such threats are considered relatively common, Post officials are taking the threat seriously. Members agreed that Post’s current security upgrades were sufficient to deter and, if need be, withstand an attack; however, members deemed it would be prudent to request additional security from the Republic of Yemen Government at Post’s perimeter, in light of the approaching July 4 holiday. Please see the Key Concerns section for further details. (Appendix source 13)

23. (C) SCA Bangladesh - U.S. Embassy Dhaka officials met with the secretary of Home Affairs to discuss concerns over an uptick in crimes directed against foreigners in Dhaka’s Diplomatic Enclave. The secretary stated the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) had increased the police presence in the enclave May 7, when threat letters were sent to several diplomatic missions. Post officials will continue to monitor the situation and keep pressure on the GoB to provide adequate security to the U.S. Mission. (Appendix source 14)

24. (U) Key Concerns

25. (S//NF) AF Mauritania - AQIM threat to kidnap American citizen: According to the Spanish National Intelligence Service (CNI), an unidentified source for the CNI service center stated al-Qa’ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) planned to kidnap an unidentified AmCit in Nouakchott during the evening of June 27. According to the report's context statement, a CNI official provided the information during the course of a routine liaison meeting. There are no additional details on this information, and the report’s originators are unable to assess the reliability of the ultimate source(s) of the information. In addition, it is not known what, if any, vetting or validation procedures the Spanish service may use to evaluate its sources. In separate reporting, AQIM, as of late June, had sent three unidentified members to Mauritania from northern Mali to conduct operations against government interests in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, according to the Mauritanian External Intelligence Service. It was unknown, according to the Mauritanian service, whether AQIM intended to attack Mauritanian and/or foreign government facilities in those cities. Separately, AQIM Tariq Ibn Ziyad battalion leader ‘Abd al-Hamid (Abu Zaid), as of late June, had delayed an order for four men to travel to Nouakchott to conduct
unspecified operations, according to the Mauritanian service. DS/TIA/ITA notes the latest threat information follows last week's killing of an American in Nouakchott and the possible involvement of AQIM. (Appendix sources 15-16)

26. (S//NF) Nigeria - Extremists believed to be planning a massive terrorist attack: (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) Tearline states, “Unspecified extremist groups, suspected to be operating in concert with Nigerian Shi’ites, Salafiya, or Muhammad Yusuf’s Nigerian Taliban are reportedly planning to launch a massive surprise attack on some piece of critical infrastructure or against high-profile targets within Nigeria. Probable targets of this attack include top Nigerian Government officials or security agents. Members of the general public, who might be opposed to the attackers’ doctrines, were also believed to be possible targets. This planned attack is reportedly aimed at sparking sectarian clashes across Nigeria.”

27. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA cannot immediately corroborate the current threat with additional intelligence. While no connection can be made between this threat and previous reports, DS/TIA/ITA is concerned about recent activity surrounding extremists associated with the Nigerian Taliban.

28. (S//NF) A well-trained veteran Chadian extremist, Abu-Mahjin (Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) number 24350378), who has limited ties to al-Qa’ida associates, recently traveled to Nigeria. He may be planning to conduct or facilitate a terrorist operation. Indeed, tearline from May 1 claimed, “An Islamic extremist named Abu-Muhjin has recently been in northeast Nigeria. It is likely that he will be joined by other Islamic extremists in the coming weeks.” More recent tearline stated, “Nigerian-based probable Chadian extremist Abu-Mahjin is keen to obtain more funds in connection with some sort of nefarious activity (possibly terrorism related) he is engaged in. However, it is not clear when he will receive this additional finance.” Little more is known about Abu-Mahjin’s apparent efforts to organize a near-term operation.

29. (S//NF) Though neither the Nigerian Taliban nor its more militant subset -- Tanzim al-Qa’ida group -- has ever attacked Western interests, they have discussed targeting foreign embassies in the past. In 2007, they reportedly plotted to attack the U.S., British, and Israeli embassies in Abuja, according to a single source that remains unsubstantiated. (Appendix sources 17-19)

30. (C//NF) NEA Algeria/Yemen - Unsubstantiated threat claiming suicide bombing against U.S. embassies: On June 26, a write-in to a USG website provided a message involving an unsubstantiated threat to U.S. embassies in Algiers, Algeria, and Sana’a, Yemen. The message was posted in Arabic and appeared to originate in Algeria. The writer warned of a “big attack against your embassies in Algeria and Yaman by suicide car on 29/06/2009” and claimed to be an agent of the Algerian Intelligence Service. The writer provided an apparent telephone number for confirming his information and warned, “The second attack what you will see it is in Hassi Messaud in Sahara by a big number of terrorists.” The report's originators note that they have no further information to corroborate the information, and the source may have intended to annoy, mislead, or disrupt rather than to provide legitimate information. The originators further note that the vast majority of such information is not true, but, since volunteers have provided authentic leads on occasion, the information is provided for evaluation purely due to its threat content. (Appendix source 28)

31. (S//NF) Yemen - Al-Qa’ida possibly planning Embassy attacks: (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) According to tearline information, “Saudi authorities learned in late June that al-Qa’ida may be planning an attack on Western and Middle Eastern embassies in Yemen. There was no additional information on the timing or exact location of the planned attack.”

32. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA notes this report is likely related to recent information provided by a Yemeni security official in late June regarding possible unspecified al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) attacks against the embassies of the U.S, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and unnamed European nations in Sana’a. No further information was provided on this general threat report.

33. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA also notes the continuing AQAP threat to Western and host-nation interests both in Sana’a and throughout Yemen. Previous AQAP attacks illustrate a willingness and capability to target Western citizens and diplomatic facilities, highlighted by the brazen attack against U.S. Embassy Sana’a in mid-September 2008. The lack of host-nation political will to combat AQAP contributes to an extremely permissive operating environment for extremist elements, suggesting threat reporting against U.S. and other foreign interests in Yemen will continue in both the near and medium term. (Appendix sources 21-22)
34. (S//NF) SCA Afghanistan - Threat to unspecified American in Kandahar: As of late June, Kandahar Taliban members Sadiq, Mullah Hamdullah, and Qari Yousef intended to kidnap an unspecified American who travels from Kandahar Airfield to work in Kandahar city to hold for ransom. The kidnappers planned to use a local Afghan who the American trusted to place a substance in his food to render him unconscious. Hamdullah, a.k.a. Bari Alai, worked under the command of Mullah Faizel who was currently in detention at Guantanamo Bay.

35. (S//NF) While the Taliban operatives named in this report are indeed active in and around Kandahar city to include involvement in kidnapping plots, DS/TIA/ITA questions the source’s access to operational plans by the Taliban. In past reporting, the source has reported primarily on Taliban member atmospherics and movements in southern Afghanistan and only occasionally on threats. DS/TIA/ITA assesses information provided by the source regarding the January 2008 kidnapping of an American non-governmental organization (NGO) worker to be inaccurate.

36. (S//NF) That said, periodic reporting indicates extremists remain keen to abduct another Westerner in Kandahar city, possibly while traveling to/from Kandahar Airfield. Tearline states, “Taliban insurgents reportedly planned in late January to kidnap a U.S. national as he traveled between Kandahar Airfield and Shur Andam Pass, Kandahar Province.” Reporting from November 2008 alleged the Taliban planned to kidnap two foreign women possibly from their residence in northeast Kandahar city or at the Rang Rezano market they frequented.

37. (S//NF) Mullah Faizel (variants: Faisal, Faizilfazul; TIDE number 72569) was being held at Guantanamo Bay as of early April 2008. Mullah Hamdullah (possible TIDE number 75483) is characterized in late-2008 sensitive reporting as a group commander of a large number of Taliban in Helmand Province. The same report noted Sadiq, the brother of the Taliban’s second-in-command Mullah Berader (TIDE number 76541), worked at an unnamed U.S. NGO and was involved in planning an unspecified kidnapping. (Appendix sources 23-30)

38. (S//FGI//NF) Pakistan - Militants may be planning to abduct U.S. and UK citizens from NGOs and consulates; dual-citizens in Peshawar: Tearline intelligence reports, “Militants attached to Pakistan’s Mumtaz group may be planning to kidnap U.S. and UK citizens working in NGOs and consulates, as well as dual-citizen Pakistanis who are either visiting or residing in Peshawar, as of June 26. Peshawar’s University Town could be the likely venue for such an operation. Further, the following individuals who probably reside in (the) Peshawar area could be supporters of the Mumtaz Group: Fahim, son of Ihsanullah; Ayaz; Abdul Rehman Khan (Awami National Party) and his son, Yunas Khan, residents of Kafir Dheri, Peshawar; Garib Shah Badshah; and Muazzam Badshah, son of Shah Badshah.”

39. (S//FGI//NF) DS/TIA/ITA assesses the Mumtaz Group may be a reference to operations linked to al-Qa’ida leader Hamza al-Jawfi (a.k.a. Mumtaz; TIDE number 70390) who died in a late-February explosion in North Waziristan. Mumtaz is an oft-used alias by senior al-Qa’ida leaders that is arguably inauspicious. The now-deceased Hamzah Rabi and Abu Khabab al-Masri both used this alias as well. Worryingly, the other operatives DS/TIA/ITA suspects belong to this group are linked to ongoing, credible planning against Peshawar cantonment as well as American personnel and convoys belonging to U.S. Consulate Peshawar.

40. (S//FGI//NF) Although al-Jawfi is dead, it is possible the operations referenced can be linked to al-Jawfi’s former courier and Imran (TIDE number 14399906), who collaborates closely with Mohmand Agency-based Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander Hakimullah Mahsud. Early-April reporting from Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) links Imran -- described as an Uzbeki militant responsible for the November 12, 2008, murder of a USAID contractor and the August 26, 2008, ambush of the principal officer’s (PO’s) vehicle in Peshawar -- to TTP operative Faruq’s ongoing planning for an attack on Peshawar’s cantonment using multiple suicide operatives. Faruq is also likely involved in conducting al-Qa’ida-linked operational surveillance against the PO of U.S. Consulate Peshawar, a four-vehicle SUV protective convoy, and a vehicle workshop also affiliated with Post. Of note, however, ISI reported the capture of an individual named Imran in mid-June; although, it cannot be confirmed if this is the same Uzbeki Imran mentioned in earlier reporting. (Appendix sources 31-38)

41. (S//FGI//NF) Pakistan - Threats against Punjab and Islamabad: Reporting continues to circulate detailing ongoing plans by Pakistani extremists to launch suicide operations in Punjab Province and Islamabad. In Islamabad, threats specify the targeting of embassies located in the F-6/2 sector, police post Aabpara in Islamabad, the Imam Bargah in G-6/2, Senator Tariq Azim, and Barri Imam Shrine. In Lahore and greater Punjab Province, suicide operatives may seek to strike against foreigners in crowded areas or the Barbar Data Sahib Shrine. Although it remains unclear
if these named targets are an accurate reflection of extremists’ operational plans, it is of note late-June reporting also mentions the cultivation and use of sympathetic madrassas and extremists located in targeted cities to carry out future attacks.

42. (S//NF) As of late June, TTP reportedly tasked Abdul Malik Mujahid to launch suicide attacks against unspecified foreigners in crowded places in Punjab, with Mujahid considering the use of sympathetic madrassas as shelter prior to conducting an attack. Madrassas under consideration included the Jami Ashrafia and Jamiat ul-Manzur ul-Islami in Lahore. Separately, tearline from late June reports, “Militant commander Khan Bahadur, son of Sher Bahadur, is the local militant commander in the Watkai area. Bahadur currently may be residing in Islamabad, while reorganizing his group to operate in different parts of Pakistan, as of June 25.” Although there is limited information regarding the identity of Khan Bahadur (possible TIDE number 238258), earlier sensitive intelligence suggests he has served as an interlocutor in urban areas for Waziristan-based militants since 2007. According to late-January 2008 tearline, “... A Khan Bahadur (or Bhadur) in Lahore was involved in efforts to arrange talks and perhaps a government announcement for a cease-fire and helping coordinate a separate announcement from the Mujahidin, hopefully by October 13....”

43. (S//FGI//NF) As underscored by the events during and following the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) confrontation in Islamabad in July 2007, the continued existence of networks in Islamabad that can organize and facilitate protests and terrorist activity in the vicinity of the capital is indeed troubling. Notably, a body of intelligence reporting preceding the Lal Masjid confrontation suggests Pakistan-based extremists viewed the brewing tension between the madrassas and Islamabad one part of a larger comprehensive effort to re-energize and expand their jihadi operations from their strongholds in the tribal areas and Northwest Frontier Province. Interestingly, reporting from May 2007 citing a commander 10 corps lieutenant also noted 70 mosques in and around Islamabad would likely support extremist activity associated with the now-infamous Lal Masjid, which was also an unauthorized mosque. Of concern, since 2008 attacks in Pakistan have repeatedly targeted Westerners, coinciding with an unprecedented number of attacks in both Lahore and Islamabad. (Appendix sources 39-47)

44. (U) Cyber Threats

45. (U) EUR CTAD comment: The latest version of the National Security Strategy released by the UK Government includes a public cyber security strategy. The report calls for the establishment of two new offices with cyber security responsibilities and approves the use of offensive operations as a countermeasure to attacks against British systems. The Office of Cyber Security, falling under the Cabinet Office, will be the central body charged with coordinating with industry and developing strategy. The Cyber Security Operations Centre based at Government Communications Headquarters, the UK’s primary signals intelligence agency, will be responsible for conducting offensive operations. According to press reports, the UK Government has hired several former hackers to staff the centre.

46. (S//NF) NEA CTAD comment: DoD reporting indicates as of mid-May, several Persian-language hacker forums are sharing information pertaining to a variety of hacking codes, tools, and video tutorials. One of the more notable findings was a PHP-based “simattacker code” -- a backdoor Trojan horse program that allows for remote exploitation of an affected system and can provide denial-of-service capabilities. This particular malicious code is reportedly similar to a tool used against Georgian systems in 2008 (NFI).

47. (SBU) EAP CTAD comment: According to South Korean press reporting, the Republic of Korea’s (Rok’s) Defense Security Command (DSC) has declared intrusion attempts against the Rok’s military computer networks have increased 20 percent in 2009, compared to those detected in 2008. The DSC further stated that 89 percent of the attempts are unsophisticated efforts to hack into servers and Internet homepages, whereas the remaining 11 percent appear to be more advanced attempts to obtain intelligence information. Of note, in an effort to deal with the increasing cyber threat, the Rok’s National Intelligence Service has recommended President Lee Myung-bak appoint an aide to assist with the country’s cyber security issues.

48. (S//NF) SCA CTAD comment: According to Defense Intelligence Agency reporting, the Government of India (GoI) continues efforts to advance its computer security programs -- particularly in light of increased concerns over Chinese computer network exploitation efforts -- but progress is hampered by significant disagreements within its departments. The key GoI organizations involved in developing and implementing security policies are identified as the Ministry of Telecommunications and the Research and Analysis Wing. Although the Indian Army is primarily responsible for the security of military networks, Indian officials acknowledge Army
representatives have been largely left out of discussions. Additionally, some other key groups, such as the National Technical Reconnaissance Organization and the Indian Defense Intelligence Agency, have reportedly failed to offer significant contributions. Private security companies are also concerned that the lack of input from the private sector may lead to unfair regulations regarding telecommunications monitoring.

49. (SBU) Domestic CTAD comment: On June 22, Websense Security Labs issued an alert after discovering the official website of the Embassy of Ethiopia in Washington, DC, had been subverted with obfuscated JavaScript code hidden in an inline frame (IFrame) with the goal of infecting visitors to the site with malicious software (malware). The code redirected users to sites where malware, including Trojan downloaders, were installed without explicit user action. According to the alert, the site that hosted the malicious JavaScript is currently down. On March 28, security company Sophos discovered a similar IFrame infection on the same website. At the time, researchers at Sophos noted it resembled the attack on the Washington, DC, Embassy of Azerbaijan website that occurred in early March. The researchers also indicated the redirected sites had been used by Russian cyber criminals in previous malware infections. (Appendix sources 48-50)

50. (C) EAP China - Beijing TOPSEC founder indicates PRC investment:

51. (S//NF) Key highlights: o Founder of TOPSEC and iTrusChina notes PRC funding and directive in media interview. o TOPSEC is China’s largest provider of information security products and services. o TOPSEC provides services and training for the PLA and has recruited hackers in the past. o Potential linkages of China’s top companies with the PRC illustrate the government’s use of its “private sector” in support of information warfare objectives.

52. (SBU) Source paragraph: “During an interview with journalists from China News Network, chairman of both Beijing TOPSEC and iTrusChina, He Weidong, spoke about the two companies, to include investment and contract from the Chinese Government (People’s Republic of China (PRC)) .... Tianrongxin’s capital came from two parts. The Chinese Government share one part of the investment, and the management department (of Tianrongxin) share the other part. He further stated that Tianrongxin was not really a company but a research institute; in 1995, the company took contracts from the government’s research and development tasks.”

53. (S//NF) CTAD comment: In November 1995, He Weidong founded the security company Tianrongxin, a.k.a. Beijing TOPSEC Network Security Technology Company, Ltd. TOPSEC is a China Information Technology Security Center (CNITSEC) enterprise and has grown to become China’s largest provider of information security products and services. TOPSEC is credited with launching China’s first indigenous firewall in 1996, as well as other information technology (IT) security products to China’s market, to include virtual private networks, intrusion detection systems, filtering gateways, and security auditing and management systems. Additionally, in September 2000, Weidong founded the company Tianweichengxin, a.k.a. iTrusChina, which became the first experimental enterprise to develop business Public Key Infrastructure/Certification Authority services approved by China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

54. (SBU) CTAD comment: During an interview with China News Network, Weidong stated that half of TOPSEC’s start-up capital came from the PRC, with the other half coming from the company’s management department. Additionally, he pointed out that TOPSEC began not as a company, but as a small research institute that took contracts from the government’s research and development tasks (NFI). The turning point for TOPSEC came in 1996 when the company won a significant contract bid from the Chinese State Statistics Bureau. Since winning the bid, TOPSEC maintained a 100-percent sales growth in the following years. Weidong noted the company started out with 30,000 RMB (approximately $4,400) in 1995, and by 2002, had earnings of 3 billion RMB (approximately $440,000,000). Interestingly, shareholders did not receive bonuses, as all earnings went for future investment. Weidong also stated a bank loan was never used.

55. (S//NF) CTAD comment: Of note, the CNITSEC is responsible for overseeing the PRC’s Information Technology (IT) security certification program. It operates and maintains the National Evaluation and Certification Scheme for IT security and performs tests for information security products. In 2003, the CNITSEC signed a Government Security Program (GSP) international agreement with Microsoft that allowed select companies such as TOPSEC access to Microsoft source code in order to secure the Windows platform.

56. (S//NF) CTAD comment: Additionally, CNITSEC enterprises has recruited Chinese hackers in support of nationally-funded “network attack scientific research projects.” From June 2002 to March 2003, TOPSEC employed a known Chinese hacker, Lin Yong (a.k.a. Lion and owner of the Honker Union of China), as senior security service engineer to manage security service and training.
Venus Tech, another CNITSEC enterprise privy to the GSP, is also known to affiliate with XFocus, one of the few Chinese hacker groups known to develop exploits to new vulnerabilities in a short period of time, as evidenced in the 2003 release of Blaster Worm (See CTAD Daily Read File (DRF) April 4, 2008). 57. (S//NF) CTAD comment: While links between top Chinese companies and the PRC are not uncommon, it illustrates the PRC’s use of its “private sector” in support of governmental information warfare objectives, especially in its ability to gather, process, and exploit information. As evidenced with TOPSEC, there is a strong possibility the PRC is harvesting the talents of its private sector in order to bolster offensive and defensive computer network operations capabilities. (Appendix sources 51-52)

58. (U) Suspicious Activity Incidents

59. (SBU) EUR Iceland - A man and a woman photographed in the area north of U.S. Embassy Reykjavik June 25. They then walked toward the backside of the Post, where they took additional photographs before departing on foot. The man was seen photographing in the neighborhood for an additional 3 hours. The Surveillance Detection Team found it unusual the subjects photographed sites other than tourist attractions. (SIMAS Event: Reykjavik-00257-2009)

60. (SBU) AF Guinea - Two young men were photographed U.S. Embassy Conakry June 25. A gendarme stopped the pair and took them to a nearby security booth where they were interviewed by Post’s foreign security national investigator. Their photos of the Embassy were deleted, and the subjects were released with a warning.


62. (SBU) NEA Tunisia - A man sat at Marsaoul Caf in Tunis focusing on the road leading to the U.S. Ambassador’s residence June 4. After 30 minutes, the subject got into his car and departed the area. The man was previously seen at the caf on May 15 for approximately 1 hour.

63. (SBU) RSO Action/Assessment: The caf is located at the foot of the hill near the Ambassador’s residence (the residence is located at the end of the road, approximately one-quarter to one-half mile away). This is the second time the individual and vehicle were spotted. However, Tunisian police do not share information concerning routine traffic stops or suspicious persons questioned/seen near the Embassy or Ambassador’s residence. If the vehicle is seen again, the RSO will attempt to retrieve information on the owner.

64. (SBU) Record Check/Investigation: Vehicle: Gray Volkswagen; License plate: 8820TU97. (SIMAS Event: Tunis-02054-2009)

SECRET//FGI//NOFORN

Full Appendix with sourcing available upon request. CLINTON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Vast Hacking by a China Fearful of the Web”
A Fervent Appeal From the Dalai Lama

In 2008, during the Chinese crackdown and following unrest in Tibet, the Dalai Lama hugged an American political officer at the embassy in New Delhi, declaring that “Tibet is a dying nation. We need America’s help.”
U.S. to take action that will “make an impact” in Beijing. At the end of the thirty-minute meeting, the Dalai Lama embraced PolCouns and made a final plea: “Tibet is a dying nation. We need America’s help.” End Summary.

3. (C/REL UK, CANADA, AUSTRALIA) The Dalai Lama related an earlier conversation with a Chinese scholar that convinced him the “positive scenario” he outlined on March 28 -- where the PRC agrees to dialogue and permits a degree of Tibetan autonomy -- was a possibility. The Dalai Lama described this unnamed scholar as interpreting the regular use of the Dalai Lama’s name by Chinese leaders and references to ‘the Dalai clique’ as signs they were prepared to engage with him. If PRC leaders ignored the Dalai Lama and focused instead on the Tibetan Youth Congress and Tibet-based leaders of the uprising, that would indicate the PRC planned to bypass him, according to this scholar.

4. (C/REL UK, CANADA, AUSTRALIA) Immediately prior to meeting with PolCouns, the Dalai Lama met with XXXXXXXXXXXX. The Dalai Lama said XXXXXXXXXXXX had been in touch with Chinese interlocutors who convinced XXXXXXXXXXXX that a deal could be made: if the Dalai Lama supported peaceful transit of the Olympic torch through Tibet, then the PRC would simultaneously release Tibetans who had been detained since March 10. Comment: XXXXXXXXXXXX. End comment.

5. (C/REL UK, CANADA, AUSTRALIA) The Indian media continues to headline plans for the April 17 Olympic torch transit through New Delhi, with much speculation about which celebrities and leaders will choose to carry the torch, thereby pleasing the Chinese. India’s first female director-general of police, Kiran Bedi, has declined the honor, stating that protection of the torch by China’s Special Police Force guards has robbed it of its desired symbolism. Indian football captain Bhaichung Bhatia has also pulled out, expressing solidarity with Tibetan activists. China’s defense attache in New Delhi informed the Indian Army’s director of foreign liaison that planned Army-to-Army exercises will be cancelled if New Delhi fails to protect the torch during its 2.5-kilometer sprint through the capital.

6. (C/REL UK, CANADA, AUSTRALIA) Comment: While Indian observers believe that pressure on the PRC to engage with the Dalai Lama is growing, his candid comment that “Tibet is a dying nation” indicates increasing desperation as a result of his ability to affect events in his homeland. The President’s comments that dialogue provides the only way forward have resonated here, and Tibet Coordinator Dobriansky’s April 24 visit to New Delhi gives the U.S. an opportunity to reinforce the President’s message. The Dalai Lama, who has studied China for most of his 73 years, appears to be persuaded that a united show of strength will nudge Beijing in his direction, and that by vilifying him, China’s leaders may have laid the groundwork for engagement. End comment.

7. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: Post emailed and pouch letters from the Dalai Lama to President George Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senator Harry Reid requesting that the USG appeal to China to end the current crackdown on Tibetans immediately; release all Tibetans arrested and ensure they receive proper medical attention; and, asked for assistance in facilitating a group of international observers and media to affected areas in the TAR to ensure compliance. Post requests guidance/reply on who should assume the lead coordination in the reply to the Dalai Lama. DEIKUN
Dalai Lama on Tibet and Environmental Concerns

In a 2009 meeting with the American ambassador to India, the Dalai Lama said that the political conflict over Tibet should be set aside and the threat of climate change emphasized, a shift the cable suggests might be an attempt to “reframe the Tibet issue as an environmental concern.”

DATE 2009-08-10 13:20:00

SOURCE Embassy New Delhi

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

Monday, 10 August 2009, 13:20

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001667

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 08/08/2019

TAGS SENV, PHUM, PREL, PGOV, PREF, KDEM, CH, IN

SUBJECT: DALAI LAMA SEEKS U.S. ENGAGEMENT WITH CHINA ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN TIBET, SAYS POLITICAL AGENDA CAN WAIT

REF: A. 08 NEW DELHI 2884 B. NEW DELHI 1487

 Classified By: Ambassador Timothy J. Roemer for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

1. (C) SUMMARY. In an August 8 introductory meeting, the Ambassador sought the Dalai Lama’s views on his upcoming October visit to the U.S. and his strategy for engaging China. The Dalai Lama suggested the U.S. engage China on climate change in Tibet, recognizing that Tibetans could wait five to ten years for a political solution. The Ambassador assured the Dalai Lama that climate change was a priority for President Obama and the U.S. was prepared to work with China and India. Regarding next steps in dialogue with China, the Dalai Lama reported that he awaited a positive sign from China before attempting to reengage the PRC; in the meantime, he continued to strengthen ties with Chinese scholars and authors. The Dalai Lama supported closer U.S.-India relations and praised the Secretary’s recent visit to India. He doubted the sustainability of China’s authoritarian regime and warned that if China achieved its global aspirations, it would resemble the former Soviet Union. The Dalai Lama said he had no specific goals for his trip to Washington, adding that President Obama should not expect any change in the Tibetans’ stance. END SUMMARY.

Focus on Climate Change

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2. (C) The Dalai Lama argued that the political agenda should be sidelined for five to ten years and the international community should shift its focus to climate change on the Tibetan plateau. Melting glaciers, deforestation, and increasingly polluted water from mining projects were problems that “cannot wait.” The Dalai Lama criticized China’s energy policy, alleging that dam construction in Kham and Amdo have displaced thousands of Tibetans and left temples and monasteries underwater. He recommended the PRC compensate Tibetans for disrupting their nomadic
lifestyle with vocational training, such as weaving.

3. (C) The Dalai Lama requested the United States consider engaging China on environmental issues in Tibet and suggested increased collaboration between U.S. and Chinese scientists. The Ambassador assured the Dalai Lama that President Obama remained concerned about climate change and specifically asked him to address the issue in India and the region.

Waiting for the PRC to Reengage

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4. (C) The Dalai Lama reiterated that while his faith in the Chinese government had grown “thinner” after eight rounds of failed negotiations, his faith in the Chinese people had “never shaken.” During the past year, the Dalai Lama met with several hundred Chinese scholars and writers to discuss Tibet. The Dalai Lama was heartened by the increased “expressions of solidarity from Chinese brothers and sisters” and reported that 682 Chinese-language articles focused on Tibet were published over the past year. The Dalai Lama conveyed he would continue to engage the Chinese people who wanted a more open society.

5. (C) The Dalai Lama provided the Ambassador with a brief account of the most recent negotiations between his envoys and the PRC, expressing disappointment that the Chinese government had rejected the Memorandum for Genuine Autonomy before his envoys reached Beijing (Ref A). When Ambassador Roemer inquired about sending envoys to Beijing again, The Dalai Lama needed some positive sign from the PRC that it was prepared for substantive dialogue because Tibetans currently felt China preferred “ruthless oppression.” On the sidelines of the meeting, Representative of the Dalai Lama in India Tempa Tsering told Poloff that the clarification note for the Memorandum of Autonomy had not been completed and confirmed he would send the Embassy a copy of the note after its completion (Ref B).

PRC’s Authoritarian System “Not Sustainable”

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6. (C) The Dalai Lama told the Ambassador that “narrow mindedness” had led China to feel threatened by Tibetans’ desire to preserve their culture and language. “The past was

NEW DELHI 06001667 002 OF 002

the past,” and now Tibetans and Chinese must envision a new reality based on “common sense and common interest.” The European Union and United Kingdom were examples of countries uniting for these reasons, while preserving national identity. He cited these examples as high goals to aspire toward for this region’s peace and prosperity. The Dalai Lama acknowledged the greatness of China and its people, but maintained that the authoritarian system was not sustainable. If China succeeded in becoming a superpower, it would resemble the former Soviet Union, securing its rule using suspicion and fear. The U.S. should consider China’s values when doing business with the PRC and strive to bring China into the democratic mainstream.

October Visit

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7. (SBU) When the Ambassador asked about the objective of his October visit to Washington, the Dalai Lama replied that he had “no particular points at this moment,” adding President Obama should not anticipate a shift from the Middle Way. He underlined that Prime Minister-in-exile Samdhong Rinpoche was the “real authority” and would set the political agenda. The Dalai Lama applauded efforts to strengthen the U.S.-India relationship, adding it was “logical and essential” for the two greatest democracies to collaborate closely. He told the Ambassador that his Indian friends praised the Secretary’s visit and urged the U.S. and India to continue along this positive trajectory, “whether other countries like it or not.” The Ambassador said the U.S.-India partnership is a top priority for President Obama and Secretary Clinton and we were pursuing a broad and deep strategic partnership.
8. (C) COMMENT. The Dalai Lama’s message to the Ambassador may signal a broader shift in strategy to reframe the Tibet issue as an environmental concern. When Ambassador Roemer discussed the importance of climate change issues and mentioned bilateral projects between the U.S. and India, the Dalai Lama said that there were “three poles” in danger of melting: the north pole, the south pole, and the glaciers at the pole of Tibet. Tibetans have watched closely as the United States launched the new Strategic and Economic Dialogue with China, with climate change as a main focus, as well as the Secretary’s emphasis on climate change during her July visit to India. In this new context, the Dalai Lama appears intent on leveraging closer U.S.-China relations to address the pressing environmental challenges and problems in Tibet. END COMMENT. ROEMER
Ahmadinejad Visits India

The Indian foreign minister describes a 2008 visit from the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, but also “cautioned the U.S. against telling India what to do, especially in public.”

DATE 2008-05-01 11:39:00

SOURCE Embassy New Delhi

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

Thursday, 01 May 2008, 11:39

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 001194

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 05/01/2018

TAGS PREL, PGOV, KNNP, EPE, KISL, ENRG, ECON, ETRD, IR, IN

SUBJECT: MENON SAYS AHMADINEJAD PLAYED TO MASSES DURING INDIA VISIT

Classified By: Ambassador David Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

1. (C) Summary: Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon related to the Ambassador May 1 that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told the Prime Minister during his April 29 stop in Delhi that the world is changing in Iran’s favor. When asked for specifics, Menon noted, Ahmadinejad voiced more mild opinions, and called for strengthening the governments in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regarding the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline, Menon said that the Prime Minister laid down three criteria that would determine whether India signed a deal with Iran: commercial and economic viability, assured supply, and security. Menon confided that Ahmadinejad concocted the widely reported 45-day window for negotiating the pipeline when he talked to the press on his way to the airport, and Menon doubted that the countries would resolve the outstanding pipeline issues anytime soon. The Ambassador underlined that senior leaders in the U.S. Congress will likely criticize India for giving a platform to the leader of a country engaged in killing American soldiers in Iraq, developing nuclear weapons with which to blackmail other countries, and sponsoring terrorism worldwide. End Summary.

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Ahmadinejad Broadly Ideological But Mild on Specifics

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2. (C) Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon related to the Ambassador May 1 that he wanted to provide a briefing of the April 29 “transit stop” in Delhi by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. (Note: Menon had originally requested the meeting on the evening of April 30, but rescheduled when the Prime Minister summoned Menon to his residence. End Note.) Menon outlined that, after landing at the airport at 16:30, Ahmadinejad met the Indian President for 45 minutes,
followed by a meeting and dinner with the Prime Minister, in which Menon participated. During the 
meeting with the Prime Minister, Menon related, Ahmadinejad described a world that has improved 
from Iran’s point of view, and would continue to shift in Iran’s favor. Menon admitted that “I 
had not realized how ideological Ahmadinejad is.” He noted that while Ahmadinejad did not attack 
the U.S. explicitly, he opined that the U.S. has destabilized Iraq and would withdraw soon. When 
asked about specifics, Menon continued, Ahmadinejad became “relatively mild.” Regarding 
Afghanistan, Ahmadinejad noted that there was no alternative to Hamid Karzai and called for 
strengthening the government in Kabul, and regarding Iraq, he called for greater law and order, 
but considered the Maliki government good. “There was no fire and brimstone in the details,” 
Menon observed.

India Lays Down Criteria for Pipeline

3. (C) Menon said that the discussion with the Prime Minister focused on the Iran-Pakistan-India 
(IPI) pipeline, and Ahmadinejad made clear that he aimed to produce an agreement in Delhi. 
However, the Prime Minister laid down that India required more detailed discussions to obtain 
three conditions that would allow India to sign up to the IPI: commercial and economic viability, 
assured supply, and security of the pipeline. Ahmadinejad gave his word that the pipeline would 
satisfy those conditions, and asked that Indian leaders trust him. He then agreed to more 
detailed discussions, but to commence within a month. “We said no to artificial deadlines,” Menon 
stressed to the Ambassador. Ahmadinejad later told the press that the countries have 45 days to 
work out an agreement, but Menon maintained, “I don’t know where he got that number from, but his 
goal in India was to say that.” (Note: Menon has not corrected Ahmadinejad’s statement in public. 
End Note.) “We made clear that our issues are more than just the price of a transaction,” he 
underscored, averred that it would take a long time to resolve the conditions set out by the 
Indian government.

India Pushes Iran for Full Disclosure in IAEA

4. (C) Regarding Iran’s nuclear program, Menon related that Ahmadinejad reiterated his public 
points that Iran intended the program for peaceful use. Menon said that the Prime Minister 
acknowledged Iran’s right to a peaceful nuclear program, but urged Ahmadinejad to assure the 
international community of its peaceful intentions by coming clean with the IAEA, which Iran has 
not done. Ahmadinejad also made clear that the uranium enrichment program would continue, Menon 
added. India’s votes against Iran in the IAEA did not come up, he continued. Menon thanked the 
Ambassador for the April 27 briefing prior to Ahmadinejad’s arrival, and enthusiastically 
remarked that he found it “very useful.”

Ahmadinejad Performed in Delhi

5. (C) Menon puzzled about Ahmadinejad’s “self-congratulatory, self-referential” style, which he 
found particularly odd during an exchange about oil prices, during which Ahmadinejad bragged that 
the cost of oil would remain high. Ahmadinejad also bad-mouthed other countries, including China, 
which he claimed had put all its money in U.S. dollars and now had nothing left. As a result, 
Menon judged, “we assume he speaks badly about us to other countries.” Menon also noted that 
Ahmadinejad refrained from direct attacks on Israel, and did not bring up the Indian launch of an 
Israeli satellite nor the U.S.-India relationship. Overall, Menon assessed, Ahmadinejad appeared 
to have performed in Delhi for his domestic audience, showing Iranian voters that he can still
travel and interact with other countries.

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Expect Senior-Level Criticism, Ambassador Warns

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6. (C) The Ambassador underlined that Americans, particularly members of Congress, will view Ahmadinejad’s visit as India providing a platform for an enemy of the U.S. Members of Congress and the Administration strongly believe that Ahmadinejad is guilty of killing Americans in Iraq, developing a nuclear weapons program to blackmail the world, and sponsoring international terrorist activities, the Ambassador outlined. Moreover, the U.S. has maintained a long-term alliance with Israel, which Ahmadinejad has called for “wiping off the face of the earth,” the Ambassador added. The average American will wonder why the U.S. has gone out of its way to have a nuclear cooperation initiative with India, when India is so friendly to Iran, he warned. “I cannot predict what the effect of this visit will be,” he cautioned, but noted that he expected the Ahmadinejad stop to exercise those members of Congress who have gone out of their way on India’s behalf.

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Nothing Should Upset You, Menon Presses

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7. (C) Menon responded that “there is nothing in this visit that should upset you.” He emphasized that the Indian government had little choice to say yes when the Iranian government requested a stop in transit. Moreover, Menon explained, India and Iran need to talk about Afghanistan and energy issues. “We can talk with him without affecting our other relationships,” Menon contended, and cited the strong India-Israel relationship that withstood India’s flirtation with Iran. Menon also cautioned the U.S. against telling India what to do, especially in public. “This government has to be seen following an independent foreign policy, not responding to dictation from the U.S.,” he stated. He recognized that Iran presents a global problem, and the U.S. and India differ in how to fix the situation because of geography. For instance, Menon pressed, India must work with Iran to deal with Afghanistan.

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Ambassador Asks If India Is Ready for Prime Time

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NEW DELHI 00001194 003 OF 003

8. (C) The Ambassador recounted that the U.S. government and Congress stood up for India by passing the Hyde Act because they believed that as a rising power, India must come into the global nonproliferation system. However, the Ambassador posited, those supporters will wonder if India is ready for prime time since it “let the enemy in and did not stand up and say, ‘don’t do this.’” Menon countered that such a position sounded like what the Communists have accused the U.S. of doing. The Ambassador clarified that the Communists suspect the Indian and U.S. governments of trading foreign policies in a clandestine cabal, when in this case, the Ambassador simply wished to make the Indian government aware of the possible repercussions that come from hosting the hostile Ahmadinejad.

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Comment: India and Iran Relationship Needs No U.S. Interference

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By providing Ahmadinejad with a platform to berate the U.S., the Indian government has attempted to prove that it has an independent foreign policy, as the Communist critics have demanded since India’s first vote against Iran in the IAEA in 2005. By kowtowing to political concerns, India has put at risk its image of an emerging, responsible major player in the world. We have warned the Indian government quietly about the implications, but sharp, public comments from the U.S. government will only push India and Iran closer together. MULFORD
Guitar Hero Proposed as Diplomatic Carrot for North Korea

A 2007 cable from Seoul reports on a suggestion that helping arrange a tour of North Korea by the guitar legend Eric Clapton might improve the North’s relations with the West, given that a son of the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il is a fan of Mr. Clapton.

DATE 2007-05-23 02:45:00

SOURCE Embassy Seoul

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SEOUL 001576

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 11/26/2026

TAGS PREL, PREF, PGOV, KS, KN

SUBJECT: XXXXXXXXX SHARES IDEAS ON DPRK

INTERACTION


SUMMARY

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1. (C)XXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

   Arranging an Eric Clapton concert in Pyongyang could also be useful, he said, given Kim Jong-il’s second son’s devotion to the rock legend. END SUMMARY.

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2. (C) XXXXXXXXX

   DOING BUSINESS IN THE DPRK

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3. (C) For an outsider to get anything done in the DPRK, XXXXXXXXX advised, it is necessary to get the DPRK’s various institutions to cooperate. Each institution seems to have veto power, but none has the power to push anything forward. XXXXXXXXX the only organizations that can really deliver are the military, which does not talk to anybody, or the Red Cross. XXXXXXXXX

DIVIDED FAMILIES INITIATIVE
4. (C) XX_ advocated in favor of USG involvement in facilitating the reunification of Korean-American families divided by the Korean War. XX_ said that currently two groups organize these visits for Korean-Americans. The first is Compatriots United, which has arranged thousands of reunions. However, the group is controlled by the DPRK’s Overseas Compatriots Committee and extorts a tremendous amount of money from desperate families to arrange the visits. Families seeking to participate must pay USD 300 to apply and submit comprehensive personal and financial information. If selected, the families are forced to pay for unwanted sightseeing excursions in North Korea. Before they are finally able to see their relatives, which is always just hours before their departing flight, they are often told that the relatives had to travel to the meeting place by taxi and owed several thousand dollars in fare. As XX_ explained, these are desperate, old people who would pay anything.

After the trip, the participants typically get repeated correspondence from the North Korean government asking for money to assist the family members, who are sometimes falsely alleged to be ill.

5. (C) The other group active in family reunions is Pyongtong in Los Angeles. XX_ said that the group recently arranged for 15 persons to visit family members in the DPRK. However, the DPRK canceled the arrangement after the group went to the press. Pyongyang ultimately intervened and instructed the Compatriots Committee to help facilitate the visit. Thus, Pyongtong was able to arrange a visit for six people a few weeks ago.

6. (C) XX_ said that North Korea would not run such an exploitative system if the United States government were involved in the process. There is a reluctance, he said, for Korean-Americans to pursue family reunions because they do not want to divulge their personal information to the DPRK and they do not want the North Koreans to milk them for money before, during and after the reunion. The USG could at least volunteer to serve as a conduit for correspondence between these families and North Korea to prevent the DPRK from learning the home addresses and bank accounts of participants. The DPRK might be willing to accept this structure because it badly wants a relationship with Washington.

XX_

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8. (C) XX_ did not see hope for inter-Korean engagement, despite the widely acclaimed railroad test. “North Koreans have no intention of dealing with (South Koreans). The South Koreans really think they can help. They don’t understand that North Korea is sealed.”

BOOK ERIC CLAPTON

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9. (C) XX_ passed on the suggestion from his North Korean interlocutors that the USG arrange for Eric Clapton to perform a concert in Pyongyang. As Kim Jong-il’s second son, Kim Jong-chol, is reported to be a great fan, the performance could be an opportunity to build good will. VERSHBOW
High-Level North Korean Defections

This cable, which is classified for a longer-than-usual period, describes how in January 2010 the South Korean foreign minister revealed that there had been a spate of high-level defections of North Koreans to the South.

DATE 2010-01-14 09:40:00

SOURCE Embassy Seoul

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SEOUL 000062

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/14/2030 TAGS: PHUM, PREL, PGOV, PINR, SOCI, ECON, KN, KS, CH SUBJECT: SPECIAL ENVOY KING’S 1/11 MEETING WITH FM YU

 Classified By: Ambassador D. Kathleen Stephens. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary
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1. (C) During a January 11 meeting with Special Envoy Robert King, FM Yu downplayed press speculation that a North-South summit is imminent. Yu asserted that Kim Jong-il (KJI) would visit China in late January or early February; the North Korean leader needed both Chinese economic aid and political support to stabilize an "increasingly chaotic" situation at home. An unspecified number of high-ranking North Korean officials had recently defected to the ROK, according to Yu. The foreign minister thanked King for his willingness to press the PRC on the treatment of North Korean refugees. Yu said the ROK would provide "significant" food aid to the DPRK if Pyongyang asked for it and agreed to monitoring. The ROK also planned to help fund work by NGOs to combat TB and multi-drug-resistant TB in the North, which has spread widely within the DPRK’s chronically malnourished population. At a lunch following the meeting, Seoul’s point man on DPRK issues, Ambassador Wi Sung-lac, reiterated the FM’s call for U.S. help in persuading China to go easier on North Korean refugees. Wi also thanked Ambassador King for his willingness to keep the ROK updated on discussions between the American Red Cross and its DPRK counterpart regarding potential reunions between Korean-Americans and their North Korean kin. End summary.

FM Yu on: Prospects for North-South Summit...
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2. (C) During a January 11 meeting with Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues Robert King, Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan downplayed press speculation that a North-South summit is imminent. The ROK was discussing the issue with the DPRK, Yu said, noting that there were two major Blue House preconditions: the nuclear issue had to be on the agenda and the ROK would not pay the North to hold a summit. Yu speculated that it would “take some time” for the North Koreans to “digest” the preconditions.

...Rumors of a KJI Visit to China...
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3. (C) Yu asserted that Kim Jong-il (KJI) would visit China in late January or early February. The North Korean leader had visited the PRC twice before in that timeframe, Yu related, adding that KJI needed both Chinese economic aid and political support to stabilize an "increasingly chaotic" situation at home. In particular, FM Yu claimed that the North’s botched currency reform had caused “big problems” for the regime and that the power succession from KJI to Kim Jong-eun...
was “not going smoothly.” Moreover, Yu confided, an unspecified number of high-ranking North Korean officials working overseas had recently defected to the ROK. (Note: Yu emphasized that the defections have not been made public. End note.)

...Pressuring Beijing on Refugees...

4. (C) Yu thanked Ambassador King for stating that he intended to work closely with the ROK on the issue of improving human rights conditions in North Korea. Yu also expressed appreciation for Ambassador King’s willingness to engage the Chinese on the issue of North Korean refugees. Yu said he has repeatedly raised the matter with PRC FM Yang, only to get a boilerplate response emphasizing that North Koreans in China are economic migrants. Yu claimed that the number of North Koreans fleeing into China continues to increase; 2,952 North Koreans made it to the ROK in 2009 and more than that are expected in 2010. Yu noted that at least 80 percent of the refugees who come to the South are women, adding that they are often abused by human traffickers. Yu added that he was skeptical that the DPRK would engage in dialogue with the EU about human rights.

...and Humanitarian Assistance to the North

5. (C) Responding to a question from Ambassador King, Yu said the North Korean grain harvest was approximately 4 million metric tons (MMT), which was better than expected but still short of the 4.5 MMT the regime needs to ensure stability. (Note: The official ROKG estimate is that the DPRK harvest was approximately 5 MMT. End note.) Given the North’s chronic transportation and storage problems, there would be starvation “here and there” during the spring, Yu lamented. The foreign minister said the ROK would be willing to provide “significant” food aid to the DPRK if Pyongyang asked for it and agreed to monitoring. The ROK would not, Yu said, simply give the North a huge amount of grain. Any aid would be given in small amounts, he stressed. The foreign minister also said the ROK would help fund work by NGOs to combat multi-drug-resistant TB in the North, which has spread widely within the DPRK’s chronically malnourished population.

Follow-On Lunch with Wi Sung-lac

6. (C) At a lunch following the meeting with FM Yu, ROK Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs Wi Sung-lac reiterated the FM’s call for the United States to XXXXXXXXXXXX

7. (C) Wi thanked Ambassador King for his willingness to keep the ROK updated on discussions between the American Red Cross and its DPRK counterpart regarding potential reunions between Korean-Americans and their relatives in North Korea. Wi said that North Korea has made only token efforts to support North-South family reunions and has “reacted badly” to Seoul’s repeated calls for the release of the approximately 1,000 abductees and POWs believed to be still held by the DPRK. Wi stressed that Seoul appreciated Ambassador King’s effort to keep the family reunion, abductee, and POW issues on the proverbial agenda. STEPHENS

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“North Korea Keeps the World Guessing”
U.S.-South Korea Relations

This cable from the American ambassador to South Korea in August 2009 to a senior member of Congress covers the range of issues between Washington and Seoul, including the free-trade agreement that has yet to be concluded. But it notes the South’s fear that the United States might recognize North Korea as a nuclear state, and that South Korea could be surprised by American policy changes toward the North.

DATE 2009-08-06 06:45:00

SOURCE Embassy Seoul

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SEOUL 001241

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/06/2019 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, KS, KN SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR CODEL BERMAN’S VISIT TO KOREA

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Mark A. Tokola. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: CODEL Berman, welcome to Korea. The alliance between the U.S. and the Republic of Korea (ROK) is strong, enduring, and strategically important. Your visit follows the successful June 16 U.S.-ROK Presidential Summit and adoption of the Joint Vision Statement. The Joint Vision Statement was well-received here, both for its recommitment to a continued strengthening of our security relationship (including its affirmation of the U.S. nuclear umbrella and extended deterrence to the ROK), and for outlining what a 21st century U.S.-ROK relationship entails. To realize this vision, we will need to continue to expand our cooperation, both regionally and globally. Security in the region, particularly in view of North Korea’s continued belligerent posture and Kim Jong-Il’s declining health, is important to Korean officials. Like us, the ROK supports the Six Party Talks and remains adamant that we should not recognize North Korea as a nuclear state. Your South Korean interlocutors are very interested in how you view the proposed North Korean contingency plan, and prospects for denuclearizing North Korea.

2. (C) President Lee has faced criticism from his opponents for his inability to generate momentum for the Korea-U.S. (KORUS) FTA in Washington. Ratification of the FTA is seen as a sign of America’s strategic commitment in northeast Asia. President Obama’s statement at the April G20 meeting with Lee, that the U.S. wanted to find a way forward on the KORUS FTA, allayed some of the anxiety in Seoul, and enabled Lee to push the FTA through the committee of jurisdiction in Korea’s National Assembly in late April. A full plenary vote in the National Assembly has not been scheduled; while opponents are vocal, the KORUS FTA continues to receive about a 60 percent approval Korean public opinion polls, is strongly supported by the majority GNP party, and is expected to pass once there is some sign of movement in Washington. The Obama Administration is conducting a thorough review of the KORUS FTA and consulting closely with all stakeholders to understand the exact nature of their concerns, and to develop recommendations for addressing them. To assist with this review, and to ensure that all who may have an interest in this free trade agreement are able to fully express their views, we issued a Federal Register Notice on July 27, 2009, requesting comments on the KORUS FTA. End Summary.

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BACKGROUND
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3. (C) The ROK, with its vibrant democracy, free market, high-tech economy, highly educated population, free press, and ever-deepening people-to-people ties with the United States, is a
striking success story, including for U.S. foreign policy. Our intensive engagement with the ROK since its founding in 1948 exemplifies the importance of all three pillars Secretary Clinton has outlined describing U.S. foreign policy: defense, diplomacy, and development. South Korea’s success is based on a shared commitment to defense, as shown by the 28,500 U.S. troops still on the Peninsula, the substantial development assistance the U.S. provided after the Korean War, and our close diplomatic cooperation to achieve a denuclearized North Korea and a more secure and prosperous future for the region.

4. (C) Now a developed country with a tested democratic system, South Korea increasingly has the capability as well as the political will to assume larger regional and global roles. Your visit will encourage your interlocutors to become even more active partners with us on issues ranging from human rights promotion to climate change to sea piracy to counter-terrorism. We share values and strategic goals with this highly capable ally; we need to give substance to our shared aspiration to upgrade our bilateral relationship, making it a global partnership.

The Domestic Situation

5. (C) President Lee, of the center-right Grand National Party (GNP), began his single five-year term in February 2008, ending ten years of center-left control of the Presidency. In April 2008 the GNP won a solid majority over the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) in the unicameral National Assembly. The GNP’s success at the polls, however, belied the lack of consensus among the South Korean public on domestic political issues like media law reform, labor relations, tax policy, and education. President Lee has struggled with low approval ratings -- about 30 percent -- since taking office, especially following his decision to re-open the Korean market to U.S. beef last year. In the National Assembly, the GNP and DP have even lower approval ratings than President Lee, resulting in a virtually deadlocked domestic agenda.

6. (C) President Lee has remained publicly disengaged from the squabbling in the National Assembly and is focusing instead on foreign policy, resource diplomacy, and international cooperative efforts on green growth, climate change, and overcoming the economic crisis. He campaigned on a pledge to strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance, and is widely seen as having been successful. With China and Russia, he has substantially expanded the ROK’s economic and political ties. He has attempted to overcome historical animosities with Japan to advance Korea-Japan ties based on Korea’s pragmatic interests, but sensitivities to Japan’s colonization of Korea run deep. Looking wider, President Lee is actively cultivating new ties with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Europe.

7. (C) Former President Kim Dae-jung’s health has been failing and he is currently hospitalized in Seoul in intensive care. The prognosis for President Kim, who was in office 1998-2003 and who is 84, is not good.

The Alliance

8. (C) Over half a century the U.S.-ROK alliance has provided the foundation for peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia. The ROK has benefitted greatly; neither the economic “Miracle on the Han” nor Korea,s democratic flowering would have been possible absent a U.S. defense shield and economic assistance and support. The U.S. too has benefited. USFK (U.S. Forces in Korea) is our only troop presence in mainland East Asia, and South Korea contributes billions of dollars to USFK operating expenses.

9. (C) The Summit Joint Vision Statement offers a compelling vision of expanding the role of the U.S.-ROK alliance regionally and globally. On the Korean Peninsula, we are also working to strengthen, further broaden, and appropriately evolve the security relationship by implementing three key bilateral transformation agreements known as YRP, LPP and STP.

-- YRP: The Yongsan Relocation Plan will relocate the headquarters of U.S. Forces (USFK) from the middle of Seoul to a new, purpose-built war-fighting headquarters south of the city, thereby giving back to the Koreans a large tract of land historically associated with Japanese occupation which they plan to turn into a central park. Progress on the implementation of YRP continues but faces obstacles that require President Lee,s and his administration,s support if we
are to meet the agreed 2014 completion date.

-- LPP: The Land Partnership Plan will consolidate over 100 U.S. military bases spread all across Korea into two key strategic hubs south of the Han River, replacing an outdated military footprint from the end of the Korean War with a modern and better-positioned force posture. The ROK Ministry of National Defense (MND) seeks to complete the LPP by the end of 2015.

-- STP: The Strategic Transition Plan is the process under which we are transferring wartime operational control (OPCON) of South Korean forces from the U.S. military to the ROK military by April 17, 2012. President Lee has emphasized the need to keep the spotlight off of wartime OPCON transition due to increased scrutiny by ROK domestic opposition groups regarding the April 17, 2012 transition date (in the wake of North Korea’s recent claimed nuclear test). We are continuing to emphasize the process for close cooperation in reviewing OPCON transition progress through the SCM and management of messaging and public perceptions to highlight the value of the restructuring.

10. (C) We must continue to emphasize the importance of completing the two relocation elements of USFK transformation, YRP and LPP. Those agreements, signed in 2004, did not come with appropriated funds. The Master Plan, finished in 2007, lays out the cost and timeline but the ROKG has yet to request funding from the National Assembly. Other U.S. and ROK private sector initiatives are failing to fill the funding gap. As a result, alliance transformation, which was originally scheduled for completion in 2008, is facing a delay of many more years. To avoid further delays, the ROKG must make implementation of these moves a priority. For our part, we must be clear and consistent in identifying our own top priorities.

11. (C). The time is right to expand the areas in which the U.S. and the ROK cooperate on global security issues. You may want to raise the following areas where the ROK may be ready to increase its global security role:

-- Afghanistan: The ROKG is planning to provide more assistance and training in Afghanistan, including building a new hospital and a training center in Bagram, and contributing ambulances, motorcycles, and police trainers. However, we need a lot more from the ROK, especially financial support for the Afghan Army, for which we have requested USD 100 million a year for five years, which is the USG primary request of the ROK. The ROKG also is considering sending a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to Afghanistan, which we would welcome, but we also have insisted that any such PRT include a military unit to provide for its own security. Such a deployment (the PRT as well as any other military assets, such as an ISR unit) intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) will need National Assembly approval, which will pose difficult, but not insurmountable, political problems for President Lee.

-- UN Peacekeeping Operations: The National Assembly is deliberating on a bill that will allow the ROK military to be deployed for peacekeeping missions without prior legislative approval. In the meantime, the National Assembly in July approved extending the ROK’s PKO deployment in Lebanon until the end of December 2010. The ROK has contributed 367 soldiers for peacekeeping in Lebanon since 2007 and is participating in eight other PKO operations around the world. As of January 1, 2008 the ROK was the 10th largest provider of assessed contributions to the UN PKO budget.

-- Combating Piracy off Somalia: The ROK is a member of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. Additionally, the ROKG deployed a 4,500 ton class destroyer equipped with a Lynx helicopter and rigid inflatable craft to the Gulf of Aden to be part of the maritime security operations of the combined maritime forces. The destroyer carries up to 310 personnel.

-- Proliferation Security Initiative: In response to the DPRK’s May rocket launch and nuclear test, the ROK on May 26 joined the U.S.-initiated Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). In June the ROK participated in a PSI meeting in Poland, and held a workshop in Seoul in July. The ROKG plans to attend the next workshop in Sydney in September, and has expressed interest in attending the interdiction exercises in Singapore in October. PSI is an international, interagency effort aimed at preventing or interdicting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction using existing domestic laws and established international agreements. The ROKG currently is formulating an interagency strategy for its effective PSI participation.

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U.S.-ROK Global Partnership
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12. (C) The ROK also wants to play a bigger role on other global issues and the following are good areas for increased cooperation:

-- Democracy and Human Rights: The ROK has demonstrated a new readiness to address human rights concerns in the DPRK, co-sponsoring the annual UNGA North Korea human rights resolution in 2008 for the first time. In October 2008 the ROK agreed to chair the first Senior Officials’ Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership, a U.S.-supported regional subset of the Community of Democracies.

-- Climate Change: Korea, the 13th largest per capita emitter of greenhouse gases and the world’s 15th largest economy in terms of GDP, is playing a constructive role in discussions on global climate change. The ROKG shares the U.S. view that that investment in new and renewable energy sources not only can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also can create jobs, spur economic growth, and enhance energy security. The U.S. Department of Energy is engaged in a variety of collaborative R&D activities with Korea, including in nuclear energy, fusion, gas hydrates, “smart grids,” and other new and renewable energy technologies, but there is room to expand and strengthen our cooperation.

-- Development Assistance: Korea’s overseas development assistance program currently includes nearly USD 500 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA), as well as a roughly similar figure for North Korea (suspended). The ROKG target is to triple ODA (as a percentage of GDP) by 2015. With limited functional and regional capacity, Korea should be receptive to policy discussions on ODA coordination.

-- Counter-Proliferation: The ROKG has told Iranian counterparts at every opportunity that Tehran’s uranium enrichment activities are unacceptable and has supported the P5-plus-1 incentives package.

FTA and Economic Issues
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13. (C) President Lee has faced criticism from his opponents for his inability to generate momentum for the Korea-U.S. (KORUS) FTA in Washington. President Obama’s statement at the April G20 meeting with Lee, that the U.S. wanted to find a way forward on the KORUS FTA, allayed some of the anxiety in Seoul, and enabled Lee to push the FTA through the committee of jurisdiction in Korea’s National Assembly in late April. A full plenary vote in the National Assembly has not been scheduled; while opponents are vocal, the KORUS FTA continues to receive about a 60 percent approval Korean public opinion polls, is strongly supported by the majority GNP party, and is expected to pass once there is some sign of movement in Washington. The Obama Administration is conducting a thorough review of the KORUS FTA and consulting closely with all stakeholders to understand the exact nature of their concerns, to develop recommendations for addressing them. To assist with this review, and to ensure that all who may have an interest in this free trade agreement are able to fully express their views, we issued a Federal Register Notice on July 27, 2009, requesting comments on the KORUS FTA.

14. (C) Korea is our seventh largest trading partner, with total merchandise trade in 2008 of over USD 82 billion (and more than USD 100 billion if services are included). The U.S. International Trade Commission estimated in September 2007 that U.S. merchandise exports to Korea would expand by USD 10-12 billion on an annual basis as a result of the FTA and that services exports would also expand. The United States has traditionally been the ROK’s biggest trading partner in the post-WWII era. One tangible sign of China’s growing importance in Asia and in Korea, however, is that China displaced the United States as Korea’s top trading partner in 2004. By 2008, China-ROK merchandise trade reached USD 168 billion, doubling the U.S.-ROK total. With respect to North Korea, China accounts for nearly 50 percent of that country’s total trade. The growing economic and political role of China on the Korean peninsula is one of the most important motivations for Korea to enter into FTA negotiations with the United States. Successive ROK Governments have seen the ratification and implementation of the KORUS FTA as symbolic of the U.S. will to remain fully engaged in Northeast Asia in the face of increasing Chinese influence.

15. (C) Korea also wants to conclude an FTA with the United States because Korean economic reformers recognize that the Korean economy needs to liberalize and open in order to promote greater competitiveness vis-à-vis China and Japan. South Korea has concluded a number of FTAs and launched negotiations on others since the signing of the KORUS FTA negotiations on June 30, 2007.
The ROK has implemented FTAs with Chile, Singapore, EFTA, and ASEAN (except investment). The ROK has concluded negotiations with India and signing is reportedly imminent. Negotiations are underway with Canada, Mexico, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Australia, New Zealand, and Peru. In July, the ROKG announced that negotiations on the EU-Korea FTA were concluded (but the agreement is not yet signed). ROK media have been filled with stories of the increasing economic weight of Europe in Korea as a result of the FTA. The Board of Governors of the American Chamber of Commerce has expressed concern that the EU-Korea FTA will disadvantage the competitiveness of U.S. firms vis-a-vis their European competitors in Korea.

16. (C) The reopening of the beef market was accomplished in an April 2008 agreement separate from the FTA. Under this agreement, the United States and Korea agreed to reopen Korea’s market to U.S. beef and beef products in a manner fully consistent with international standards and science. In June 2008, following massive street protests in Seoul, U.S. beef exporters and Korean beef importers reached a temporary commercial agreement to only export beef and beef products from cattle under 30 months of age, as a transitional measure, until Korean consumer confidence improves. While beef sales have not yet returned to past levels due to Korea’s currency exchange fluctuations, increased competition from Australian beef, and lingering public concerns about the safety of U.S. beef, the market is open and we expect increased sales over the medium term. Korea is also watching closely our ongoing negotiations with other countries that have stricter restrictions on U.S. beef.

17. (C) On the global financial reform discussions, Korea is a strong ally in the G-20 process (which it will chair in 2010). Korea is enthusiastic about the G20 as the global forum for action on the global financial system. The ROKG is concerned that European countries are advocating other formulas for such discussions that would exclude Korea. Within the G20, President Lee has called for a strong fiscal response and refraining from protectionism as well as necessary regulatory improvements. President Lee Myung-bak has strongly argued that it would be premature to withdraw the national fiscal stimulus packages at this juncture. Korea sees itself as lining up on the U.S. side on almost all G20 debates.

18. (C) The Korean economy is looking better and is increasingly forecast to be one of the first major economies to emerge from recession. The benchmark KOSPI stock index in early August reached the highest level since mid-August 2008 and the won, the Korean currency, closed at 1218 per dollar on August 4, the strongest level since October 14, 2008. Most analysts foresee further strengthening of the won in the months ahead. The picture looked far different last fall, when the financial crisis hit Korea hard. A USD 30 billion swap line extended by the U.S. Federal Reserve in October, as the Korean won was plummeting and Korea looked to be on the brink of a financial panic, helped Korea weather the worst of the storm, and gained tremendous gratitude. The later Japanese and Chinese swap mechanisms did not have the same impact. In the closing months of 2008 Korea experienced dramatic contraction of demand for its exports. The ROKG’s stabilization and stimulus packages mitigated the impact and the weakened currency has generated a significant current account surplus in recent months. Sectors of the Korean economy facing restructuring challenges include construction, shipbuilding, shipping and automotive. GM Daewoo, GM’s Korean subsidiary, is negotiating with the Korea Development Bank for a sizeable loan to restructure its operations.

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North Korea

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19. (C) Presidents Obama and Lee agreed to send a clear message to North Korea that its provocations come at a price. They also agreed on principles to deal with North Korea’s nuclear and missile threats, including commitments to achieving the “complete and verifiable elimination” of North Korea’s nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs as well as the ballistic missile program. Korean officials continue to seek assurances that the United States will consult closely with the ROK on its North Korea policy and that the United States will not recognize North Korea as a nuclear state.

20. (C) North Korea policy is almost always the most sensitive issue on the South Korean agenda. Fifty-five years of alliance notwithstanding, the ROKG still fears being left out or surprised by Washington’s initiatives or policy changes on North Korea. Simply put, the ROKG must be seen by South Koreans as being informed and consulted on all USG moves on North Korea. Korean officials see Washington and Seoul as partners in formulating and implementing policies toward the North and consistently seek affirmation that Washington will not allow Pyongyang to drive a wedge between us.
21. (C) There is virtually no chance of early improvement in South-North relations; President Lee is determined to stick to principle and to insist on a more reciprocal relationship with the North, and Kim Jong-il will not give in for his own domestic reasons. Importantly, South Koreans appear tired of, but not particularly bothered by, the continuing threatening rhetoric from the North, and therefore seem largely comfortable with their government’s stance. Heightening tensions in the West Sea and missile launches have created less public anxiety than might be expected. The ROKG will welcome the opportunity to present with you a united front of calm and determination toward the North, combined with a call to return to the Six-Party Talks.

22. (SBU) The Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) is the only remaining joint economic project between North and South Korea. (The other joint venture, Mt. Kumkang tours, was closed on July 11, 2008, after North Korean security forces shot a South Korean tourist to death.) Located in North Korea, six miles north of the DMZ, the KIC opened in December 2004 and is home to 166 ROK-owned factories employing approximately 40,000 North Korean workers (84 percent are women age 20-39). Since late 2008, North-South tensions regarding the KIC have increased. The DPRK closed the border temporarily on multiple occasions, and has placed limits on the number of South Korean employees allowed in the KIC. The DPRK is demanding drastically higher wages for employees (up from USD 55 to USD 300 per month), construction of additional dormitories and an additional fee of USD 500 million for land usage.

23. (SBU) North Koreans detained a South Korean Hyundai Asan employee working at KIC on March 30, accusing him of defaming North Korea and attempting to suborn a North Korean female worker. In addition to securing the release of the ROK citizen, South Korea’s priorities at the KIC include guaranteeing employee safety, freedom of access and border-crossing, and increasing the number of North Korean workers brought in from outside the Kaesong area. Although the South Korean firms at KIC are concerned about the current tension and complain of financial losses, only one company has withdrawn from KIC to date.

24. (SBU) The DPRK and the ROK have held four rounds of negotiations between April and July 2009 without any breakthrough, with the most recent session taking place on July 2. Both sides appear to be committed to continuing KIC operations. The United States has consistently supported North-South dialogue and expressed hope that the two sides will resolve their disputes over the KIC.

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VWP/WEST
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25. (U) The ROK was included in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) in October 2008. This step has been a success in facilitating travel and improving people-to-people ties between nations. As of the beginning of July, approximately 200,000 Koreans had applied for VWP approval using the ESTA (Electronic Approval for Travel Authorization). More than 99 percent of the ESTA applications have been approved and we continue to see an upward trend in ESTA usage.

26. (U) The WEST (Work, English Study, and Travel) program, inaugurated in March 2009, allows qualifying college students and recent graduates to enter the U.S. for up to 18 months on J-1 exchange visitor visas that allow them to study English, participate in professional-level internships and travel independently. A group of 185 Korean students have already travelled to the U.S. on the WEST program and a second wave of 159 is preparing to depart. As of December 2008, there were 110,000 South Koreans studying in the U.S. at all levels, from elementary to graduate school. According to Korean Ministry of Education data for 2007, 27% of all postgraduate students choosing to study abroad chose to study in the U.S.

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The Bottom Line
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27. (C) South Korea is a like-minded, energetic partner that is ready, prepared, and wants to have a broader and deeper alliance with the United States. Koreans would like the alliance to be a lot more than a security arrangement. Yes, they want more say, even a more equal relationship, but this is only part of their motivation. Rather, they see that their ties with the U.S. are deeper now than ever; witness, for example, the two million-strong Korean American community, and the enormous numbers of Koreans studying in the United States. Above all, however, a very large majority of South Koreans are convinced that the ROK and the United States have shared values and shared strategic interests. It’s time to take the relationship to a new level of global partnership, even as we deepen our cooperation on the Korean peninsula.
28. (C) You are scheduled to meet with President Lee Myung-bak, National security Advisor Kim Sung-hwan, Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan, Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon, Speaker of the National Assembly Kim Hyong-o, and Chairman of the National Assembly Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification Committee Park Jin. Likely topics of discussion include:

-- North Korea: Your interlocutors may seek assurances that the U.S. will consult closely with the ROK on its North Korea policy and that the U.S. will not recognize North Korea as a nuclear state.

-- U.S.-ROK Alliance: Your interlocutors may stress the importance of the U.S. commitment to the defense of the Korean peninsula.

-- Global Partnership: Your interlocutors may gauge your level of interest in ROK contributions to reconstruction and stabilization of vital countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan; ROK peacekeeping in Lebanon; and anti-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia.

-- FTA: Your interlocutors will seek your views on the prospects for Congressional approval of the agreement. The Trade Minister will stress that the FTA represents a balance of American and Korean interests and that the ROKG cannot re-negotiate the text of the FTA. STEPHENS

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“North Korea Keeps the World Guessing”
Chinese Scholar on North Korean Weapons

In section 12 of this 2009 cable, a Chinese scholar told the American Embassy that North Korea was far from being able to enrich uranium. Events have shown that he was badly mistaken.

DATE 2009-06-26 07:14:00

SOURCE Embassy Beijing

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL BEIJING 001761

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/26/2034 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PARM, KNNP, MODS, EFIN, KN, KS, CH

SUBJECT: PRC/DPRK: CHINESE SCHOLARS ON UNSCR 1874 AND POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS FOR CHINA AND WASHINGTON

Classified By: Deputy Political Section Chief Ben Moeling. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

SUMMARY
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1. (C) Chinese scholars in recent conversations with PolOff said that Pyongyang’s response to UNSCR 1874 had been “tepid” so far and that North Korea’s domestic political situation did not appear to be tense. The DPRK had not anticipated such a strong reaction to its nuclear test from the international community, especially from China and Russia. Several contacts insisted that the Six-Party Talks were “not dead yet” and remained a good framework to discuss the DPRK nuclear issue. Although Seoul and Tokyo would likely urge Washington to take a harder line on the DPRK, Chinese scholars urged the United States to take the lead on resolving the North Korean nuclear problem and not be “led by the nose” by its treaty allies. One contact proposed a U.S.-PRC-Russia trilateral dialogue to generate new ideas on the future of Northeast Asia. In light of the threat posed by North Korea, a former MFA official said China should strengthen its export control regime and target materials related to uranium enrichment activities. He also urged Washington and Beijing to have a discussion about strengthening the monitoring of illegal financial activities during the Strategic and Economic Dialogue. End Summary.

UNSCR 1874
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2. (C) Pyongyang’s response to UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1874 so far, including the June 15 Foreign Ministry statement and the June 15 mass rally in Pyongyang, had been “surprisingly tepid,” claimed XXXXXXXXXX negotiations during a XXXXXXXXXX discussion. Pyongyang’s threats to weaponize plutonium and begin enriching uranium were “empty threats” and it was clear that North Korea had run out of leverage. XXXXXXXXXX opined that the DPRK had miscalculated and had not anticipated that there would be such a strong reaction to its nuclear test from the international community, including China and Russia. Pyongyang, he added, was “scared” of U.S. military pressure.

3. (C) XXXXXXXXXX, noted in a XXXXXXXXXX conversation with PolOff that senior North Korean leaders, including officials from the influential National Defense Commission, were noticeably absent from the Pyongyang rally protesting UNSCR 1874 that had been attended by tens of thousands North Koreans. This signaled to XXXXXXXXXX that the domestic situation was not that tense.

4. (C) Pyongyang, said XXXXXXXXXX, was unhappy with China’s support of Resolution 1874. China would have no problem implementing UNSCR 1874 but would do so in its “own way,” he added.
suggested that China’s enforcement would elicit a reaction from Pyongyang, and recalled that the DPRK Embassy had complained to him previously about China’s strict enforcement of UNSCR 1718, especially with regard to inspection of possible dual-use items. Regarding new restrictions placed on individual North Koreans, expressed concern that it would be difficult for Chinese host organizations to confirm the details of every individual North Korean participating in a visiting delegation.

5. (C) urged the United States and other nations not to go beyond the scope of the resolution. He noted to PolOff in a conversation that PRC President Hu Jintao had sought to have a balanced response to the nuclear test by supporting Resolution 1874 but had failed to fully please Washington or Pyongyang.

Future Nuclear or Missile Tests?

6. (C) Pyongyang would not conduct a third nuclear test unless absolutely necessary, according to . He predicted that North Korea was more likely to conduct a missile test, but noted that missile tests were extremely expensive for the regime. North Korea’s recent nuclear and missile tests had been possible because the country had had two consecutive years of good harvests, he speculated.

Six-Party Talks: “Not Dead Yet”

7. (C) Several contacts insisted that the Six-Party Talks remained a good framework to discuss the DPRK nuclear issue. The Six-Party Talks were not “dead yet,” said . He urged the United States not to set any preconditions on the DPRK returning to negotiations. The United States should be willing to talk to the DPRK so that Pyongyang did not become “desperate.” The long-term objective was still denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the medium term aim was to prevent more missile and nuclear tests and a regional arms race, said .

Washington Should Take the Lead

8. (C) Several contacts urged the United States to take the lead on resolving the DPRK nuclear issue. Several suggested it was essential that Washington be “led by the nose” by Tokyo and Seoul. acknowledged that, for understandable reasons, the ROK and Japan tended to take a harder line on North Korea. While the real threat to South Korea posed by the DPRK nuclear test and missile launches was minimal, he acknowledged the psychological threat the tests posed to the ROK, especially to its economy. While Washington should certainly consult with Tokyo and Seoul, it should be wary of being pushed by its allies to take a more strident position. “Harsh enforcement” of UNSCR 1874 might push Pyongyang to retaliate, cautioned .

9. (C) China was reluctant to be at the forefront of attempts to resolve this issue, assessed . admitted that China had a credibility issue. He expressed hope that Washington could come up with a bold proposal to break the current deadlock.

10. (C) emphasized the importance of China-U.S. cooperation and suggested that if Washington wanted to engage in bilateral talks with Pyongyang, Beijing could help facilitate the engagement and be a mediator. also suggested a possible U.S.-PRC-Russia trilateral dialogue on the future of Northeast Asia as a useful mechanism noting that all three countries were members of both the Six-Party Talks and the P5.

Sustainable Security

11. (C) suggested that Sino-American cooperation on the DPRK issue presented opportunities to address more fundamental issues such as the concept of “sustainable security.” noted that the United States, despite having invested energy, money, and lives on the global war on terror, had not necessarily increased the security of the American people. In the long-term, Beijing and Washington needed to find ways to guarantee the strategic security of other countries, including North Korea. Doing so would require less investment and offer greater security returns, he suggested, emphasizing that military power alone would not resolve the DPRK
issue. Peaceful multilateral processes, such as the Six-Party Talks, would be more effective, he concluded.

Strengthen Export Controls and Financial Sanctions

12. (C) XXXXXXXXXX said China was happy to see the adoption of UNSCR 1874, but he questioned the effectiveness of the counterproliferation and financial sanctions on the DPRK regime. According to XXXXXXXXXX, the DPRK had a limited stock of plutonium, possibly enough for two more bombs, and did not appear to have a working uranium enrichment program yet. Thus, he concluded, Washington and Beijing should focus on preventing the further development of the DPRK’s uranium enrichment program. XXXXXXXXXX suggested that China strengthen its export control regime and target materials that North Korea might need for its highly enriched uranium (HEU) program. XXXXXXXXXX advised that the current level of risk posed by North Korea’s provocative behavior was “affordable” since North Korea did not have any HEU in the pipeline or have a sustainable source of fissile material. However, once Pyongyang developed its HEU capabilities, the situation would become much more dangerous and difficult to resolve, warned XXXXXXXXXX.

13. (C) On financial sanctions, XXXXXXXXXX urged the United States and China to have a discussion about strengthening the monitoring of illegal financial activities, possibly including terrorism finance, corruption, and proliferation finance during the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED). It would be more effective, cheaper and less risky to intercept financial transactions for proliferation-related materials, especially since North Korea only had a few financial outlets, than to enforce the interdiction of contraband goods, suggested XXXXXXXXXX. The global financial crisis had spurred international cooperation on financial matters and Washington and Beijing should take advantage of this opportunity to enhance the monitoring of illegal financial transactions. He emphasized that this type of monitoring should be done on a global scale, and not simply targeted at the DPRK, said XXXXXXXXXX.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“North Korea Keeps the World Guessing”
China-United States Talks on North Korea

This cable, dated October 2009, gives a sense of the private dialogue between a high-ranking American official, Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg, and an influential Chinese official, Dai Bingguo, a state councilor. It suggests that the North Koreans were misleading the Chinese about their nuclear intentions: Mr. Dai talks about the North reaffirming its commitment to “denuclearization”; at the same time the North was building its new uranium enrichment plant.

DATE 2009-10-26 00:33:00

SOURCE Embassy Beijing

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 BEIJING 002965

SIPDIS

PACOM FOR FPA PICCUTA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/29/2029 TAGS: OVIP (STEINBERG, JAMES B.), PREL, PGOV, PARM, MNUC, CH, KN, KS
SUBJECT: PRC: DEPUTY SECRETARY STEINBERG’S SEPTEMBER 29, 2009 CONVERSATION WITH STATE COUNCILOR DAI BINGGUO

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1 .4 (b/d).

1. (SBU) September 29, 2009; 3:00 p.m.; Zhongnanhai Leadership Compound; Beijing

2. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.
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The Deputy Secretary Amb. Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., Embassy Beijing Joseph Donovan, EAP Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Rear Admiral Charles Leidig, Joint Chiefs of Staff Amb. Joseph DeTrani, Mission Manager for North Korea, DNI Derek Mitchell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Amb. Sung Kim, Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks Pamela Park, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary Nancy Leou, Embassy Political Officer (notetaker) James Brown, Interpreter

PRC
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State Councilor Dai Bingguo Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei Guan Youfei, Ministry of National Defense, Deputy Director, International Office Zheng Zeguang, Director General, MFA North American and Oceanian Affairs Department Zhang Kunsheng, Director General, MFA Protocol Department Yang Houlan, Ambassador for Korean Peninsula Issues Li Song, Deputy Director General, MFA Arms Control and Disarmament Department Cong Peiwu, Counselor, MFA North American and Oceanian Affairs Department

3. (S) SUMMARY: In a September 29 meeting with State Councilor Dai Bingguo, the Deputy Secretary stressed the importance of persuading Pyongyang to return to the path of denuclearization. Dai said that the U.S.-China relationship was off to a good start under the new U.S. administration and urged the two countries to avoid “setbacks.” During his recent trip to North Korea, Dai said, he met with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il for two and one half hours and Kim appeared to be in reasonably good health. Dai said he had urged Pyongyang to return to the Six-Party Talks. Dai’s
DPRK interlocutors had responded that they wanted bilateral engagement with the United States first and that they would consider next steps, including possible multilateral talks, depending on the outcome of U.S.-DPRK bilateral talks. Dai said that Premier Wen’s October 4-6 visit to Pyongyang would be another opportunity for China and North Korea to exchange views on the nuclear issue. On Iran, Dai said China and the United States had the same objectives but that China would work on Iran in its own way. China believed peaceful negotiation would achieve a more meaningful resolution than sanctions would, and, Dai urged, the United States should be more patient. Dai responded that patience could not be unlimited in light of Iran’s continued enrichment program in violation of UNSC resolutions. Dai assured the Deputy Secretary that China and the United States would work together to prepare for President Obama’s November visit to China. Dai supported the idea of a “concise and substantive” joint document to be issued in conjunction with the visit.

End Summary.

Full Strategy to Address North Korea

4. (S) The Deputy Secretary met with State Councilor Dai Bingguo for an eighty-minute discussion on North Korea, Iran, and the U.S.-China relationship on September 29. The Deputy Secretary stressed the importance of fashioning a full strategy to address the DPRK nuclear issue and having a unified position among Six-Party Talks partners and allies that would lead to an effective and diplomatic resolution of the problem. He expressed support for Premier Wen Jiabao’s October 4-6 trip to Pyongyang and said both countries should work to persuade Pyongyang to return to the Six-Party Talks and to reaffirm the 2005 Joint Statement. The United States was prepared to have meaningful, substantive engagement with a senior North Korean official and would use the any bilateral discussion to encourage Pyongyang to return to the Six-Party Talks. The Deputy Secretary expressed appreciation for China’s efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1874.

U.S.-China Relations on Positive Track

5. (S) State Councilor Dai said that President Obama and President Hu had had several opportunities to meet in recent months. After watching the two leaders interact in New York, Dai observed, the two presidents appeared to be “old friends.” Dai thanked the U.S. Government for its “careful arrangements” for President Hu’s visit to New York, as well as for National People’s Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo’s recent, successful visit to the United States. Dai expressed appreciation to President Obama, Secretary Clinton and Treasury Secretary Geithner for their personal contributions in making the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) a great success. Dai was confident that the S&ED would have a positive global impact and confided that China had already begun thinking about the next round. The U.S.-China relationship was off to a good start under the new U.S. administration despite some “unpleasant things.” Dai urged the two countries to keep up a good momentum in the bilateral relationship and to work hard to avoid “setbacks.”

Dai’s Visit to Pyongyang

6. (S) Regarding his recent visit to Pyongyang, Dai briefly recounted his two-hour meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. Dai said he was on relatively familiar terms with Kim, because he had met with Kim on several occasions in his previous role as Director of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee International Liaison Department (CCID). Dai admitted that in contrast with his discussion with Vice FM Kang (see below) his conversation with Kim was not as direct and candid and joked that he “did not dare” to be that candid with the DPRK leader. Dai noted that Kim had lost weight when compared to when he last saw him three years earlier, but that Kim appeared to be in reasonably good health and still had a “sharp mind.” Kim told Dai that he had hoped to invite the Chinese official to share some liquor and wine, but that because of scheduling problems, he would have to defer the offer to Dai’s next visit to North Korea. Kim Jong-il had a reputation among the Chinese for being “quite a good drinker,” and, Dai said, he had asked Kim if he still drank alcohol. Kim said yes. Dai said he also met briefly with Kim Yong-nam, President of the Supreme People’s Assembly, who invited him to attend the performance of a famous Chinese opera, “The Dream of the Red Chamber.”

7. (S) Dai said that he had had frank and blunt discussions with DPRK First Vice Foreign Minister
Kang Suk-ju that totaled over two and one half hours. Dai said he told Kang that denuclearization should be Pyongyang’s first choice and that it was important for North Korea to return to Six-Party Talks. He had stressed to Kang that the Six-Party Talks mechanism was useful and explained that the ultimate resolution of the Korean Peninsula issue could not be resolved without the participation of the Six Parties. According to Dai, Kang responded that North Korea was still committed to the goal of denuclearization. Dai believed that the North Koreans had not categorically denied the Six-Party Talks and opined that under the right circumstances, it might be possible to revive the Six-Party Talks process. Dai’s North Korean interlocutors had emphasized the strong security threat it faced. The North Koreans told Dai that they wanted to have dialogue with the United States first and that they would consider next steps, including possible multilateral talks, depending on their conversation with the United States. North Korea held “great expectations for the United States,” said Dai. DPRK officials had told Dai that North Korea viewed former President Clinton’s visit to Pyongyang positively.

8. (S) Even though he had not had an opportunity to visit or observe any place other than Pyongyang, Dai said, his impression of North Korea was that the domestic situation appeared stable and normal. Dai opined that the DPRK appeared focused on two issues: improving its relationship with the United States and developing its economy.

U.S.-DPRK Bilateral Engagement
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9. (S) China was aware that the United States was considering possible re-engagement with North Korea and supported U.S.-DPRK bilateral discussions, said Dai. With bilateral dialogue, there was “no limit to how far you could go.” China appreciated U.S. understanding and support for Premier Wen’s upcoming visit to Pyongyang. President Hu had already informed President Obama of the trip. Dai explained that it would have been “impolite” for China to not reciprocate with a high-level visit to Pyongyang after DPRK Premier Kim Yong-il had visited Beijing in March for the 60th anniversary celebration of Sino-DPRK ties. Wen’s visit would provide an opportunity for China and North Korea to exchange views on the nuclear issue, stated Dai.

10. (S) The Deputy Secretary thanked Dai for sharing his perceptions of the North Korea nuclear issue and stressed that President Obama wanted to make clear to the North Korean people and to Kim Jong-il that the United States did not have any hostile intent toward North Korea. The United States was ready to move forward to normalize relations with North Korea if Pyongyang moved toward denuclearization. The Deputy Secretary expressed hope that North Korea would agree to a meeting between Ambassador Bosworth and First VFM Kang Suk-ju to achieve that goal.

Iran
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11. (S) The Deputy Secretary said the United States valued the joint effort it took to create the P5-plus-1 foreign ministers statement on Iran. He acknowledged that the United States and Iran had a long and complicated history of mistrust. The Deputy Secretary explained U.S. objectives and stressed that all sides had to take confidence-building steps that would lead to a diplomatic resolution. Recent disclosures by Iran underscored the need to deal with the issue urgently, and it was important that Iran give a strong signal during the October 1 meeting that demonstrated it was ready for serious engagement.

12. (S) Dai responded that China and the United States saw eye to eye on the Iran nuclear issue. Nuclear states should reduce their nuclear arsenal with the goal of eventual elimination and should work to prevent other nations, including Iran, from developing nuclear weapons. However, China and the United States had different considerations on how we advanced these goals. With a history of mistrust and mutual suspicion between the United States and Iran, it would not be easy to resolve the Iran nuclear issue. Dai urged the United States to have more patience, address Iran’s legitimate concerns, and work to identify and expand on the positive areas in the bilateral relationship.

13. (S) Dai characterized President Obama’s policy to resolve issues through dialogue and engagement as “wise.” Sanctions might work up to a point, but China believed peaceful negotiation
would achieve a more meaningful resolution. Dai warned that pressing too hard might risk antagonizing Iran. Iran was not a small country, it had a long history and culture, and its people were not dumb. Dai urged the United States to resolve the issue in a “smart” manner. One meeting would not be able to resolve all problems, so the United States lower its expectation for the October 1 meeting. China would work on Iran in its own way and would urge Iran to seize the window of opportunity. Dai said China and the United States had the same objective, but said that each country would play a different role in achieving that objective.

14. (S) The Deputy replied that it was Iran that was “impatient” in its ongoing program of uranium enrichment in violation of the UNSC resolutions. The U.S. and the P5 1 would be more willing to be patient in discussions if Iran agreed to suspend its enrichment and forgo its overall program. This would create an appropriate context for all sides to address underlying issues of concern.

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U.S. National Security Strategy
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15. (S) Noting the Deputy’s interest in “strategy” Dai asked whether the Obama administration had an overarching national security strategy. the Deputy Secretary said that the National Security Strategy, which would likely be issued before the end of the year, would articulate the administration’s global strategy. He noted that the Secretary had recently identified major themes during her speech to the Council of Foreign Relations, including the importance of global cooperation in confronting today’s challenges. In that context, the U.S.-China relationship would play a core role. Dai said he looked forward to reading the strategy paper.

President Obama Visit to China
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16. (S) Dai said that President Obama had recently told President Hu that he looked forward to having a “magnificent” visit to China. Asked how China could help achieve this, the Deputy Secretary said the two countries should seek to demonstrate to our peoples and to the international community how the U.S.-China relationship would help address global challenges in areas such as public health, nonproliferation and the environment. The two countries should seek to demonstrate how U.S.-China ties were between the two peoples, not just between the governments, diplomats and leaders. Dai assured the Deputy Secretary that China would work with the U.S. to prepare a successful visit. It would be “great,” said Dai, if the two sides could agree on language for the joint visit document that would be “concise, as well as substantive.”

Global Nuclear Security Summit
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17. (S) Asked about U.S.-sought outcomes and goals for the Nuclear Security Summit, the Deputy Secretary explained that President Obama had laid out the three pillars of his nuclear policy during his Prague speech. The Nuclear Security Summit was designed to focus on one of those pillars-the need to safeguard nuclear material against theft or diversion. The risk of proliferation had increased with the expansion of new nuclear power programs and with the existence of unsecured legacy nuclear materials in former Soviet states. We needed to have assurances that the peaceful development of nuclear power programs and nuclear research did not pose proliferation risks.

The Same Boat
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18. (S) The U.S.-China relationship was of crucial importance, said Dai. China would do its best to cooperate with the United States wherever possible. “If we expand the pie for the common interest, the pie will be larger and more delicious.” Together, the two sides should work collaboratively for the good of the world, especially since the two countries were “passengers in the same boat.” Dai urged careful management of the relationship and respect for each other’s core interests and concerns.

19. (U) The Deputy Secretary cleared this message. HUNTSMAN
American Ambassador on North Korea’s Future

This extremely frank cable from Kathleen Stephens, the American ambassador in Seoul, touches on South Korean views of eventual reunification with the North, and includes a discussion of how China and Japan would react if Seoul takes effective control of territory that is now North Korea. It was classified for an unusually long period, a reflection of the delicacy of those discussions.

Summary
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1. (S) Vice Foreign Minister Chun Yung-woo told the Ambassador February 17th that China would not be able to stop North Korea’s collapse following the death of Kim Jong-il (KJI). The DPRK, Chun said, had already collapsed economically and would collapse politically two to three years after the death of Kim Jong-il. Chun dismissed ROK media reports that Chinese companies had agreed to pump 10 billion USD into the North’s economy. Beijing had “no will” to use its modest economic leverage to force a change in Pyongyang’s policies -- and the DPRK leadership “knows it.” It was “a very bad thing” that Wu Dawei -- whom Chun characterized as “the most incompetent official in China” -- had retained his position as chief of the PRC’s 6PT delegation. Describing a generational difference in Chinese attitudes toward North Korea, Chun claimed Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai and another senior PRC official from the younger generation both believed Korea should be unified under ROK control. Chun acknowledged the Ambassador’s point that a strong ROK-Japan relationship would help Tokyo accept a reunified Korean Peninsula. End summary.

VFM Chun on Sino-North Korean Relations...
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2. (S) During a February 17 lunch hosted by Ambassador Stephens that covered other topics (septel), ROK Vice Foreign Minister and former ROK Six-Party Talks (6PT) Head of Delegation Chun Yung-woo predicted that China would not be able to stop North Korea’s collapse following the death of Kim Jong-il (KJI). The DPRK, Chun said, had already collapsed economically; following the death of KJI, North Korea would collapse politically in “two to three years.” Chun dismissed ROK media reports that Chinese companies had agreed to pump 10 billion USD into the North’s economy; there was “no substance” to the reports, he said. The VFM also ridiculed the Chinese foreign ministry’s “briefing” to the ROK embassy in Beijing on Wang Jiarui’s visit to North Korea; the unidentified briefer had “basically read a Xinhua press release,” Chun groused, adding that the PRC interlocutor had been unwilling to answer simple questions like whether Wang had flown to Hamhung or taken a train there to meet KJI.

3. (S) The VFM commented that China had far less influence on North Korea “than most people believe.” Beijing had “no will” to use its economic leverage to force a change in Pyongyang’s policies and the DPRK leadership “knows it.” Chun acknowledged that the Chinese genuinely wanted...
a denuclearized North Korea, but the PRC was also content with the status quo. Unless China pushed North Korea to the “brink of collapse,” the DPRK would likely continue to refuse to take meaningful steps on denuclearization.

...China’s “Most Incompetent” Official...

4. (S) Turning to the Six Party Talks, Chun said it was “a very bad thing” that Wu Dawei had retained his position as chief of the PRC’s delegation. It had been the ROK’s expectation that Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai, who was hastily transferred from Tokyo back to Beijing, would be taking over from Wu. Chun said it appeared that the DPRK “must have lobbied extremely hard” for the now-retired Wu to stay on as China’s 6PT chief. The VFM complained that Wu is the PRC’s “most incompetent official,” an arrogant, Marx-spouting former Red Guard who “knows nothing about North Korea, nothing about nonproliferation and is hard to communicate with because he doesn’t speak English.” Wu was also a hardline nationalist, loudly proclaiming -- to anyone willing to listen -- that the PRC’s economic rise represented a “return to normalcy” with China as a great world power.

...China’s “New Generation” of Korea-Hands...

5. (S) Sophisticated Chinese officials like Cui Tiankai and Chinese Communist Party Central Committee International Department Vice Director Liu Jieyi stood in sharp contrast to Wu, according to VFM Chun. Citing private conversations during previous sessions of the Six Party Talks, Chun claimed Cui and Liu both believed Korea should be unified under ROK control. The two officials, Chun said, were ready to “face the new reality” that the DPRK now had little value to China as a buffer state -- a view that since North Korea’s 2006 nuclear test had reportedly gained traction among senior PRC leaders.

...PRC Actions In A DPRK Collapse Scenario...

6. (S) Chun argued that, in the event of a North Korean collapse, China would clearly “not welcome” any U.S. military presence north of the DMZ. Again citing his conversations with Cui Tiankai and Liu Jieyi, Chun said the PRC would be comfortable with a reunified Korea controlled by Seoul and anchored to the United States in a “benign alliance” -- as long as Korea was not hostile towards China. Tremendous trade and labor-export opportunities for Chinese companies, Chun said, would also help salve PRC concerns about living with a reunified Korea. Chun dismissed the prospect of a possible PRC military intervention in the event of a DPRK collapse, noting that China’s strategic economic interests now lie with the United States, Japan, and South Korea -- not North Korea. Moreover, Chun argued, bare-knuckle PRC military intervention in a DPRK internal crisis could “strengthen the centrifugal forces in China’s minority areas.”

...and Japan

7. (S) Chun acknowledged the Ambassador’s point that a strong ROK-Japan relationship would help Tokyo accept a reunified Korean Peninsula under Seoul’s control. Chun asserted that, even though “Japan’s preference” was to keep Korea divided, Tokyo lacked the leverage to stop reunification in the event the DPRK collapses. STEPHENS

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“North Korea Keeps the World Guessing”
Chinese Complaints About North Korea

This cable describes complaints by China about how little influence it has over the North Koreans. The Chinese worry that they could be victims of a North Korean nuclear test if the radiation drifts over the border, and they complain that the South Koreans have no new ideas about how to deal with the North.

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**DATE** 2009-06-17 06:45:00

**SOURCE** Embassy Beijing

**CLASSIFICATION** CONFIDENTIAL

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**SIPDIS**

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/CM AND EAP/K


Classified By: Charge d’Affaires, a.i., Dan Piccuta. Reasons 1.4 (b/d ).

**Summary**

1. (C) In a June 16 luncheon in honor of visiting Hong Kong CG Joe Donovan hosted by the Charge, XXXXXXXXXX said that China liked a U.S. proposal described by Ambassador Bosworth here on June 5 to put all issues related to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula into a package for negotiation. XXXXXXXXXX maintained that the United States holds the key to bringing the DPRK back to the negotiation table and suggested that succession concerns in North Korea might be causing Kim Jong-il to escalate tensions with the United States so that his successor, perhaps Kim Jong-un, could then step in to ease pressure. XXXXXXXXXX acknowledged that China experts believe the DPRK has been processing highly enriched uranium but asserted that the program was only in an initial phase. XXXXXXXXXX suggested that ROK envoy to the Six-Party Talks had not offered any new ideas during his June 9 visit to Beijing and that Japan’s focus on the abductee issue continued to cause concerns at the MFA. End Summary.

Chinese Protests to DPRK Have Had No Effect

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2. (C) In a June 16 luncheon hosted by the Charge, XXXXXXXXXX made clear that the PRC viewed recent provocative actions by the DPRK as having gone too far. He assured the Charge that Chinese officials had expressed Chinese displeasure to North Korean counterparts and had pressed the DPRK to return to the negotiation table. Unfortunately, XXXXXXXXXX added, those protests had had “no effect.” “The only country that can make progress with the North Koreans is the United States,” he maintained. XXXXXXXXXX said that, although China had assured North Korean leaders that the United States was ready to have bilateral talks with them, the North Koreans had insisted that any message from the United States to the DPRK should be delivered directly, not through China. XXXXXXXXXX took this as further evidence that only by having direct talks with the United States would North Korea return to the Six-Party Talks.

China Likes a Package Approach

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3. (C) XXXXXXXXXX told the Charge that China viewed favorably the USG proposal of putting all
facets of a possible Korean Peninsula denuclearization agreement into one package. He characterized Chinese and U.S. core interests in a nuclear free Korean Peninsula as “shared.” He reminded his hosts that Punggye, the site of the DPRK nuclear test, was near the Chinese border and that any accident there could have had dire consequences for Northeast China. Insisted that China was as concerned as the United States about proliferation from North Korea. The only difference in the China and U.S. positions, maintained, was “the United States was the key while China was only in a position to apply a little oil to the lock.”

Building Trust
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4. (C) cautioned that building trust between the DPRK and the United States would be difficult. In North Korea’s view, explained, the destruction of its nuclear capability was an irreversible step while decisions by the United States could be easily reversed. When CGs Donovan and Goldberg both pointed out that trust was a two-way street and that North Korea had not evinced a great deal of it, was evasive. When pressed whether he believed the DPRK had been reprocessing highly enriched uranium (HEU), said yes, adding that Chinese experts believed the enrichment was only in its initial phases and that any DPRK HEU program would not be “very useful.”

Domestic Concerns in North Korea Influence Talks
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5. (C) suggested that domestic politics in North Korea were in a large way responsible for Pyongyang’s recent actions. He was dismissive of DPRK justifications for the nuclear test as a response to the UN Security Council.

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Presidential Statement critical of North Korea’s April 5 Taepo-Dong 2 launch. “Kim Jong-il was obviously planning the nuclear test at the same time as the missile launch so his justification for the test makes no sense,” said. opined that the rapid pace of provocative actions in North Korea was due to Kim Jong-il’s declining health and might be part of a gambit under which Kim Jong-il would escalate tensions with the United States so that his successor, presumably Kim Jong-un, could then step in and ease those tensions.

6. (C) told the Charge that he kept abreast of Western media reports about North Korea. cautioned that U.S. experts should not assume North Korea would implode after Kim Jong-il’s death. He said that PRC analysts concluded that the regime would still function normally and discounted strongly any suggestion that the system would collapse once Kim Jong-il disappeared.

ROK has no new ideas - Japan can only scuttle talks
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7. (C) said that ROK Six-Party Talks envoy had met with VFM Wu Dawei on June 9 but had offered nothing new. “The South Koreans have plenty of ideas, but we’ve heard them all before,” he complained, adding that the ROK government was too close to the situation in North Korea to be objective. Turning to Japan, said that Japan’s obsession with the abductee issue reminded him of a Chinese expression for an individual who was too weak to make something work, yet strong enough to destroy it.

Participants
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Charge Dan Piccuta Joe Donovan, U.S. Consul General Hong Kong Robert Goldberg, Consul General Guangzhou Mark Lambert, Regional Unit Chief Jim Brown, interpreter

XXXXXXXXXXX PICCUTA
North Korea’s Future

A top American diplomat speaks with South Korean experts about the future of North Korea and the prospects for Kim Jong-un to succeed his ailing father, Kim Jong-il.

DATE 2010-02-18 04:57:00

SOURCE Embassy Seoul

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SEOUL 000248

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/18/2035 TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PGOV, SOCI, KN, KS, CH SUBJECT: A/S CAMPBELL DISCUSSES DPRK FUTURE WITH EXPERTS

 Classified By: AMB D. Kathleen Stephens. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

SUMMARY
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1. (C) A group of five ROK opinion leaders and experts on North Korea issues told A/S Kurt Campbell on February 3 it was difficult to predict whether Kim Jong-il’s youngest son Kim Jong-un would be able to succeed his father without sparking instability in the North. Of the five experts, one thought the younger Kim might succeed and one argued his lack of leadership experience made it unlikely he would win the support of the ruling elites. They agreed that Kim Jong-il’s brother-in-law Jang Song-taek would prove a strong rival for the younger Kim and would probably be tempted to challenge him. Kim Jong-il had used draconian controls and international aid to discourage coups after having foiled three such attempts in the late 90s. China’s strategic interests were fundamentally at odds with U.S.-ROK interests in North Korea. End Summary. Succession in Progress but Success in Doubt

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2. (C) Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell met on February 3 with Korean opinion leaders with a keen interest in DPRK issues to hear their views on the future of North Korea. The experts agreed that regime succession was fully underway and that the North Korean people had accepted the process. Kim Sung-min, Representative for Free North Korea Radio, a VOA-style broadcast station run by North Korean refugees, said a North Korean diplomat based in Beijing had told him over the phone that morning that the DPRK Foreign Ministry had instructed all of its overseas missions to “lay the foundation for leadership change in Pyongyang.” Most of the experts believed the challenge for Kim Jong-il’s youngest son and designated heir, Kim Jong-un, would most likely come after his father died. Former Prime Minister Chang Sang recalled the Chosun Dynasty’s 500 year history in which political intrigue and tension might simmer for years, but tended to erupt only after the king died. 3. (C) The group agreed that Kim Jong-il’s brother-in-law and right-hand man Jang Song-taek was spearheading the succession drive and would be a rival for power once Kim Jong-un’s father died, but the group was split on the younger Kim’s prospects for holding onto power. Kim Sung-min believed it would be difficult for Jang to wrest power from the younger Kim once the succession process was complete. National Assemblywoman Park Sun-Young suggested it was unclear whether Jang would be content to control the younger Kim from behind the curtain, or would challenge him directly for outright control. Park is a member of the right-of-center Liberty Forward Party and was formerly the Director of the North Korea Human Rights Studies Center at Korea’s Catholic University.

Doubts About Younger Kim’s Experience
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4. (C) There were many reasons to doubt that Kim Jong-un would be able to successfully fend off challenges to his control after his father died, according to Han Ki-Hong, President of DailyNK, an NGO focused on democratizing North Korea and disseminating information about conditions within the country. Han noted that Kim Jong-il had twenty years of experience as an official of the
Korean Workers' Party before his father died. Furthermore, Kim Jong-il had the benefit of years of guidance from his father after he had been officially anointed in 1980 to eventually succeed him. By contrast, Kim Jong-un had very limited experience and might not get much direct guidance before Kim Jong-il dies. Even now, Han said, it was not clear that Kim Jong-il’s health was good enough to exercise the faculties necessary for day-to-day management of state affairs. Given the limited opportunity the younger Kim had to gain experience, Han doubted his ability to solidify his position in the Party and win the unwavering support of Pyongyang’s power elites. Han recalled the tumultuous state of affairs in the ROK following the death of President Park Chung Hee in 1979 and suggested the DPRK succession would be “100 times more troublesome.” Han is a veteran of the ROK student democratization movement that emerged in the post-Park era. Tight Control and Aid Kept Regime Afloat

5. (C) Kim Heung-kwang, Representative for North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity, an NGO formed by intellectuals who had defected from the North, opined that brutal repression and international aid had been the secrets of Kim Jong-il’s ability to fend off challenges. After three separate coup attempts in the 90s, Kim Jong-il had implemented very strict controls and sent a stern warning to would-be plotters by executing anyone who had been even remotely involved in the plots. Therefore, only the military could even dare consider rising up, but the Security Services had successfully kept the military in check. Kim Heung-kwang went on to suggest that the “indulgence” of the international community over the past ten years had also helped sustain the regime. The large-scale assistance provided to the regime by the ROK, China, the U.S., Japan and others had been intended in part to avoid a hard landing, and indeed had kept the regime afloat, he said. Park Sun-Young suggested that North Korea had skillfully played Washington and Beijing off one another. She believed that the DPRK had exploited large amounts of assistance from China, taking advantage of a situation in which Beijing was presumed by Washington to have significant influence over Pyongyang. China Complicates the Endgame

6. (C) The experts agreed that China’s obsession with DPRK stability at all costs, was clearly and fundamentally at odds with U.S. and ROK interests. Given a choice between reaching out to Seoul or Beijing, Park believed that Pyongyang elites would reflexively look to China for support if they believed they needed help in maintaining stability. The Seoul option would be unacceptable because of the U.S.-ROK alliance and concerns over becoming subservient to Seoul. China, on the other hand, would gladly provide support with few or no strings attached, just to maintain the DPRK as an independent entity, she maintained.

7. (C) Han Ki Hong noted that although Washington had a keen interest in both denuclearization and human rights, the U.S. stake in North Korea was minimal compared to that of China by virtue of its proximity to the North. China did not share American perspectives on these two key issues, considering them somewhat abstract. Rather, Beijing was concerned about what it considered to be more concrete issues, such as a potential flood of “economic migrants” and broader social unrest on its immediate border. Reaching the People and Close Cooperation are Key

8. (C) Negating Chinese influence over the long term, Park Sun-Young observed, would involve close U.S.-ROK cooperation in winning the hearts and minds of the North Korean people. Park said that while she understood the importance of the nuclear issue for Washington, she urged more focus on human rights issues that would convince the populace that “we are on their side.”
Clash on Human Rights

The American ambassador to China, Clark T. Randt Jr., raises the case of the imprisoned human rights activist Liu Xiaobo, who would become this year’s Nobel Peace Prize laureate, with a senior Chinese official but is rebuffed in this 2008 cable.
another, Liu said.

3. (C) China believes U.S.-China counter-terrorism cooperation should be based on reciprocity and mutual benefit and therefore opposes transferring the Uighur detainees to a third country. Noting that Sino-U.S. relations are at an important “moment of transition,” he urged the United States to consider overall bilateral relations, our common counter-terrorism interests and the “utmost sensitivity” of the issue and repatriate the individuals to China. Doing so would avoid harm to bilateral relations and to cooperation “in important areas.” AFM Liu also urged the USG to advise the incoming administration of the importance of this issue. The Ambassador took note of PRC concerns.

Taiwan Inauguration Delegation

4. (C) China is “extremely concerned” by reports in the Taiwan press that Taiwan’s “so-called” Legislative Yuan President Wang Jyng-ping will “lead an official delegation” to the United States for the January 20 inauguration, Liu said. Furthermore, the delegation may include opposition party DPP representative Annette Lu, whom he described as “bent on Taiwanese independence.” Noting that Taiwan is the most sensitive issue in Sino-U.S. relations and that China’s one-China principle “cannot change,” Liu said that China firmly opposes official exchanges between the United States and Taiwan. As the inauguration is an important and official event, participation by the delegation and Annette Lu would be a serious violation of the One China policy and the three Joint Communiques, would “send a seriously wrong signal” to Taiwan independence forces, and would interfere with bilateral and cross-Strait relations, Liu said. He urged the United States to recognize the sensitivity and complexity of the Taiwan issue and not allow the delegation or Annette Lu or other “independence characters” to attend, nor to conduct any official U.S.-Taiwan exchanges, and to advise the incoming administration and Congress of the sensitivity of the issue. Liu added that the United States should guard against allowing Wang and the delegation to travel to the United States and to characterize the trip as “official.”

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5. (C) The Ambassador responded that while representatives of the Washington-based diplomatic corps are invited to the inauguration, no delegations are invited from abroad. As such, there are no “official” foreign delegations attending at the invitation of the Administration.

Human Rights: Charter 08 and Liu Xiaobo

6. (C) The Ambassador raised U.S. concerns regarding the continued detention of dissident writer and rights activist Liu Xiaobo (reftel), a signer of and organizer behind the Charter 08 democracy manifesto issued in conjunction with international Human Rights Day December 10. The Ambassador noted deep U.S. concern regarding reports that Chinese citizens have been detained, interrogated and harassed as they prepared to commemorate Human Rights Day and the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He stressed particular concern regarding the well-being of Liu, who remains in custody and called on the Chinese Government to release Liu and cease harassment of all Chinese citizens who peacefully express the desire for internationally recognized fundamental freedoms.

7. (C) AFM Liu responded that this issue is a rule of law issue, not a human rights issue and expressed certitude that the case would be dealt with in accordance with PRC law. He disagreed with the U.S. assertions as to what should be done with Liu and any others on the grounds that the only determinant for the correct handling of the matter will be PRC law. Furthermore, AFM Liu stated, the Chinese Government does not accept outside interference in China’s internal affairs. Randt
Diplomats Clash Over Future Nobel Winner

This 2009 cable reports that an American diplomat, summoned to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, discussed American concern about Liu Xiaobo and other imprisoned activists. Mr. Liu would later be awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize.

DATE 2009-12-21 11:37:00

SOURCE Embassy Beijing

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 003416

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2034 TAGS: PHUM, PREL, CH SUBJECT: PRC DEMARCHE ON AMBASSADOR’S LIU XIAOBO LETTER, RIGHTS LAWYERS

REF: BEIJING 3321

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor Eric Barboriak. Reasons: 1.4 (b), (d).

1. (C) On December 21, MFA Americas Department Deputy Director General Ding Xiaowen summoned Acting PolMinCouns to receive a formal response to a December 10 letter from Ambassador Huntsman to Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi raising USG concerns about the detention of Charter 08 drafter Liu Xiaobo and other human rights issues.

2. (C) Noting that he would attempt to refrain from “becoming emotional,” Deputy Director General Ding Xiaowen told Acting PolMinCouns that China was strongly dissatisfied and registered its firm opposition to Ambassador Huntsman’s letter and to his December 9 meeting with human rights lawyers (reftel). DDG Ding asserted that, during his meeting with Jiang Tianyong and four other rights lawyers, Ambassador Huntsman had said he would make representations to China to safeguard the freedom of religion and legal rights of Chinese citizens. In addition, the Ambassador had made inappropriate comments in his letter to FM Yang on the handling of specific human rights cases including those of Liu Xiaobo and Huang Qi. China was firmly opposed to these actions, DDG Ding said.

3. (C) DDG Ding said that in recent years China had made “huge progress on human rights” and that all its citizens were equal before the law. In that context, if persons violated the law they should be brought to justice, no matter who they were or what the situation. Certain “so-called” human rights lawyers and dissidents had sought to advance their “selfish interests” by attacking the Chinese government. It was inappropriate and unacceptable for the Ambassador to meet with these types of people, Ding said.

4. (C) China was a country “ruled by law” and the cases in question would be handled according to law, DDG Ding continued. The United States had no right to “point fingers” at China and interfere in its internal affairs. The bilateral human rights dialogue would take place in February and would serve to deepen mutual understanding and reduce differences between the United States and China on the basis of equality, mutual trust and noninterference in internal affairs, DDG said. In order to avoid harm to bilateral relations, China called on the United States to respect China’s judicial sovereignty and to cease using human rights as an excuse to “meddle” in China’s internal affairs.

5. (C) Acting PolMinCouns noted that the Ambassador’s letter reflected the degree of USG concern over the cases of Liu Xiaobo, Huang Qi and others. He further noted that, as the Secretary had made clear in her December 14 speech, human rights remained a key component of U.S. foreign
policy. Human rights had also been addressed in the joint statement by President Obama and President Hu with both sides acknowledging internationally recognized rights. The cases of Liu Xiaobo and Huang Qi were clear violations of those internationally recognized norms. While the U.S. was willing to address these issues quietly through diplomatic channels, little progress had been achieved and China had not acknowledged U.S. concerns. A/PolMinCouns affirmed that the Ambassador would continue to meet freely with a range of Chinese citizens.

6. (C) In a lengthy and disjointed digression, DDG Ding noted that he had formerly been Ambassador to Botswana and recounted his conversations with the Botswana Foreign Minister who told him that the most fundamental human rights were the right to food and shelter. While it was true that there are fundamental rights of religion, speech and assembly, Ding said, “we must not forget the right of human dignity and the pursuit of happiness.” In this area it was “a basic fact” that the PRC had made huge progress in the basic welfare of the Chinese people. DDG Ding suggested that the United States had not come to China’s aid in this respect when it had declined to provide spare parts for Blackhawk helicopters to assist with relief efforts in the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake. Repeating that human rights cases could be “emotional,” DDG Ding said the U.S. should seek to understand China’s position through dialogue.

7. (C) A/PolMinCouns replied that the United States agreed that dialogue was important and would continue to address human rights issue through bilateral consultations. However, U.S. concerns over abuses of internally recognized human rights norms remained. A/PolMinCouns also pointed out that during relief efforts after the Sichuan earthquake, the United States, in addition to the other relief assistance it had provided, had offered to arrange airlift support for China, an offer which China had rejected. GOLDBERG

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“China Resisted U.S. Pressure on Rights of Nobel Winner”
Middle East

Profile of the Libyan Leader

This 2009 cable offers a colorful profile of the Libyan leader, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, by the American ambassador to Libya, Gene A. Cretz.

DATE 2009-09-29 17:21:00

SOURCE Embassy Tripoli

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000771

NOFORN SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/MAG AND INR.


CLASSIFIED BY: Gene A. Cretz, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy Tripoli, Department of State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (S/NF) Summary: Recent first-hand experiences with Libyan Leader Muammar al-Qadhafi and his staff, primarily in preparation for his UNGA trip, provided rare insights into Qadhafi’s inner circle and personal proclivities. Qadhafi appears to rely heavily XXXXXXXXXX, and reportedly cannot travel with his senior Ukrainian nurse, Galyna Kolotnytska. He also appears to have an intense dislike or fear of staying on upper floors, reportedly prefers not to fly over water, and seems to enjoy horse racing and flamenco dancing. His recent travel may also suggest a diminished dependence on his legendary female guard force, as only one woman bodyguard accompanied him to New York. End Summary.

QADHAFI’S PERSONALITY REFLECTED IN HIS PHOBIAS

2. (S/NF) Muammar al-Qadhafi has been described as both mercurial and eccentric, and our recent first-hand experiences with him and his office, primarily in preparation for his UNGA trip, demonstrated the truth of both characterizations. From the moment Qadhafi’s staff began to prepare for his travel to the United States, XXXXXXXXXX of his 48-year rule, various proclivities and phobias began to reveal themselves in every logistical detail. When applying for Qadhafi’s visa, XXXXXXXXXX asked whether it was necessary for the Leader to submit a portrait of himself that fit consular application regulations, noting that his photo was displayed throughout the city and that anyone of hundreds of billboards could be photographed and shrunken to fit the application’s criteria. When the rule was enforced, XXXXXXXXXX reluctantly conceded to take a portrait of the Leader specifically for the visa application.

3. (S/NF) When XXXXXXXXXX began to search for proper accommodations for Qadhafi, XXXXXXXXXX informed us that the Leader must stay on the first floor of any facility that was rented for him. (XXX XXXXXXXXXX separately told U.S. officials in Washington that Qadhafi could not climb more than 35 steps.) XXXXXXXXXX cited this requirement as the primary reason that the Libyan residence in New Jersey was selected as the preferred accommodation site rather than the Libyan PermRep’s residence in New York City. XXXXXXXXXX also sought to find accommodations with room to pitch Qadhafi’s Bedouin tent, Qadhafi’s traditional site for receiving visitors and conducting meetings, as it offers him a non-verbal way of communicating that he is a man close to his cultural roots.
4. (S/NF) Qadhafi's dislike of long flights and apparent fear of flying over water also caused logistical headaches for his staff. When discussing flight clearances with Emboffs, XXXXXXXXXX explained that the Libyan delegation would arrive from Portugal, as Qadhafi “cannot fly more than eight hours” and would need to overnight in Europe prior to continuing his journey to New York. XXXXXXXXXX also revealed in the same conversation that Qadhafi does not like to fly over water. Presumably for similar reasons, Qadhafi’s staff also requested a stop in Newfoundland to break his travel from Venezuela to Libya on September 29. [Note: The Government of Canada recently confirmed that the Libyan delegation canceled plans to stop in Newfoundland. End Note.]

DEPENDENCIES: RELIANCE ON A SELECTIVE GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS

5. (S/NF) Qadhafi appears to be almost obsessively dependent on a small core of trusted personnel. This group includes XXXXXXXXXX coordinate the logistics of Qadhafi’s visit. XXXXXXXXXX balanced the UNGA preparations between equally frenetic preparations for the August 31 African Union (AU) Summit and September 1 celebration of Qadhafi’s coup. XXXXXXXXXX At large events such as the August 31 AU Summit and September 1 celebrations, XXXXXXXXXX every last detail of these complex gatherings, ranging from the overall program to the position of the press pool. At UNGA, XXXXXXXXXX Qadhafi to the podium at the UNGA and XXXXXXXXXX his papers and props upon the conclusion of the Leader’s remarks. Long-time Qadhafi Chief of Staff Bashir Salah appears to play an equally important role in Qadhafi’s personal retinue, and XXXXXXXXXX via an old-fashioned green phone XXXXXXXXXX. It is next to a red phone, which presumably connects to Qadhafi himself. We constantly hear that National Security Adviser and son, Muatassim, also plays a key role as his father’s confidante and handler during travel abroad. Muatassim also seems to have been tasked with insuring that the Leader’s image is well-preserved through the full array of carefully-planned media events.

6. (S/NF) Finally, Qadhafi relies heavily on his long-time Ukrainian nurse, Galyna Kolotnytska, who has been described as a “voluptuous blonde.” Of the rumored staff of four Ukrainian nurses that cater to the Leader’s health and well-being, XXXXXXXXXX emphasized to multiple Emboffs that Qadhafi cannot travel without Kolotnytska, as she alone “knows his routine.” When Kolotnytska’s late visa application resulted in her Security Advisory Opinion being received on the day Qadhafi’s party planned to travel to the U.S., the Libyan Government sent a private jet to ferry her from Libya to Portugal to meet up with the Leader during his rest-stop. Some embassy contacts have claimed that Qadhafi and the 38 year-old Kolotnytska have a romantic relationship. While he did not comment on such rumors, a Ukrainian political officer recently confirmed that the Ukrainian nurses “travel everywhere with the Leader.”

PREFERENCES - FROM DANCING TO HORSEMAN

7. (S/NF) In addition to the personality quirks revealed through Qadhafi’s travel to New York, the Qadhafi’s preferences for dancing and cultural performances were displayed over the last month. The three-day spectacle of his 40th anniversary in power included performances by dance troupes from Ukraine, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco, as well as musical performances by bands from Mexico, Russia, New Zealand, and a number of other nations. Qadhafi appeared particularly enthralled by Tuareg horse racing during two of the events, clapping and smiling throughout the races. The flamenco dancers that participated in his celebratory events appeared to spark a similar interest, as Qadhafi decided to stop in Seville (for a “personal trip” according to the Spanish Ambassador here) on his way back to Libya from Venezuela specifically to attend a flamenco dance performance. [Note: That stop has reportedly been scrapped for unknown reasons. End note.]

NO NEW YORK PHOTO OPS - QADHAFI LEAVES FEMALE GUARDS AT HOME

8. (S/NF) While Qadhafi’s reported female guard force has become legendary, it played no role in his travels to New York. Only one female guard was included among the approximately 350-person strong Libyan delegation to New York. This is the same female bodyguard who sticks close to Qadhafi in his domestic and international public appearances and may, in fact, play some sort of formal security role. Observers in Tripoli speculate that the female guard force is beginning to play a diminished role among the Leader’s personal security staff.

9. (S/NF) Comment: Qadhafi’s state visits and appearances at various conferences and summits, both at home and abroad, have revealed greater details about his personality and character. While it is tempting to dismiss his many eccentricities as signs of instability, Qadhafi is a complicated individual who has managed to stay in power for forty years through a skillful balancing of interests and realpolitik methods. Continued engagement with Qadhafi and his inner circle is important not only to learn the motives and interests that drive the world’s longest...
serving dictator, but also to help overcome the misperceptions that inevitably accumulated during Qadhafi’s decades of isolation. As xxxxxxxxxxx told us, pointing to a larger-than-life portrait of Qadhafi, “When you have been isolated for so long, it is important to communicate.” End comment.

CRETZ

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”
U.S. Warns Germany on Bungled Rendition

The ambassador to Germany, William R. Timken Jr., reports on a meeting to caution German officials against trying to enforce an arrest warrant against C.I.A. officers implicated in the kidnapping of Khaled el-Masri, a German citizen with the same name as a suspected militant.

DATE 2007-02-06 17:48:00

SOURCE Embassy Berlin

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET BERLIN 000242

SIPDIS

NOFORN SIPDIS

FOR S/ES-O, EUR AND L

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/06/2017 TAGS: KJUS, PTER, PREL, PGOV, GM SUBJECT: AL-MASRI CASE -- CHANCELLERY AWARE OF USG CONCERNS

REF: A. BERLIN 230
B. BERLIN 200

Classified By: DCM John M. Koenig for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (S/NF) In a February 6 discussion with German Deputy National Security Adviser Rolf Nikel, the DCM reiterated our strong concerns about the possible issuance of international arrest warrants in the al-Masri case. The DCM noted that the reports in the German media of the discussion on the issue between the Secretary and FM Steinmeier in Washington were not accurate, in that the media reports suggest the USG was not troubled by developments in the al-Masri case. The DCM emphasized that this was not the case and that issuance of international arrest warrants would have a negative impact on our bilateral relationship. He reminded Nikel of the repercussions to U.S.-Italian bilateral relations in the wake of a similar move by Italian authorities last year.

2. (S/NF) The DCM pointed out that our intention was not to threaten Germany, but rather to urge that the German Government weigh carefully at every step of the way the implications for relations with the U.S. We of course recognized the independence of the German judiciary, but noted that a decision to issue international arrest warrants or extradition requests would require the concurrence of the German Federal Government, specifically the MFA and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). The DCM said our initial indications had been that the German federal authorities would not allow the warrants to be issued, but that subsequent contacts led us to believe this was not the case.

3. (S/NF) Nikel also underscored the independence of the German judiciary, but confirmed that the MFA and MOJ would have a procedural role to play. He said the case was subject to political, as well as judicial, scrutiny. From a judicial standpoint, the facts are clear, and the Munich prosecutor has acted correctly. Politically speaking, said Nikel, Germany would have to examine the implications for relations with the U.S. At the same time, he noted our political differences about how the global war on terrorism should be waged, for example on the appropriateness of the Guantanamo facility and the alleged use of renditions.
4. (S/NF) Nikel also cited intense pressure from the Bundestag and the German media. The German federal Government must consider the “entire political context,” said Nikel. He assured the DCM that the Chancellery is well aware of the bilateral political implications of the case, but added that this case “will not be easy.” The Chancellery would nonetheless try to be as constructive as possible.

5. (S/NF) The DCM pointed out that the USG would likewise have a difficult time in managing domestic political implications if international arrest warrants are issued. He reiterated our concerns and expressed the hope that the Chancellery would keep us informed of further developments in the case, so as to avoid surprises. Nikel undertook to do so, but reiterated that he could not, at this point “promise that everything will turn out well.” TIMKEN JR

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Officials Pressed Germans on Kidnapping by C.I.A.”
Message From a Soon-to-Be Hostage in Iran

Months after the Islamic revolution in 1979, Bruce Laingen, a top American diplomat in Tehran, sends advice to Washington on how to handle the new government. Soon Mr. Laingen would be among the American hostages seized when students stormed the embassy.

DATE 1979-08-13 04:58:00

SOURCE Embassy Tehran

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 TEHRAN 08980
E.O. 12065: GDS 8/12/85 (TOMSETH, VICTOR L.) OR-P TAGS: PEPR, IR SUBJECT: NEGOTIATIONS

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT).

2. INTRODUCTION: RECENT NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN INVOLVED HERE, RANGING FROM COMPOUND SECURITY TO VISA OPERATIONS TO GTE TO THE SHERRY CASE, HIGHLIGHT SEVERAL SPECIAL FEATURES OF CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN THE PERSIAN ENVIRONMENT. IN SOME INSTANCES THE DIFFICULTIES WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED ARE A PARTIAL REFLECTION ON THE EFFECTS OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION, BUT WE BELIEVE THE UNDERLYING CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL QUALITIES THAT ACCOUNT FOR THE NATURE OF THESE DIFFICULTIES ARE AND WILL REMAIN RELATIVELY CONSTANT. THEREFORE, WE SUGGEST THAT THE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS BE USED TO BRIEF BOTH USG PERSONNEL AND PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES WHO ARE REQUIRED TO DO BUSINESS WITH AND IN THIS COUNTRY. END INTRODUCTION.

3. PERHAPS THE SINGLE DOMINANT ASPECT OF THE PERSIAN PSYCHE IS AN OVERRIDING EGOISM. ITS ANTECEDENTS LIE IN THE LONG IRANIAN HISTORY OF INSTABILITY AND INSECURITY WHICH PUT A PREMIUM ON SELF-PRESERVATION. THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF IT IS AN ALMOST TOTAL PERSIAN PREOCCUPATION WITH SELF AND LEAVES LITTLE ROOM FOR UNDERSTANDING POINTS OF VIEW OTHER THAN ONE’S OWN. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO AN IRANIAN THAT U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW MAY PROHIBIT ISSUING HIM A TOURIST VISA WHEN HE HAS DETERMINED THAT HE WANTS TO LIVE IN CALIFORNIA. SIMILARLY, THE IRANIAN CENTRAL BANK SEES NO INCONSISTENCY IN CLAIMING FORCE MAJEURE TO AVOID PENALTIES FOR LATE PAYMENT OF INTEREST DUE ON OUTSTANDING LOANS WHILE THE GOVERNMENT OF WHICH IT IS A PART IS DENYING THE VAILIDITY OF THE VERY GROUNDS UPON WHICH THE CLAIM IS MADE WHEN CONFRONTED BY SIMILAR CLAIMS FROM FOREIGN FIRMS FORCED TO CEASE OPERATIONS DURING THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION.

4. THE REVERSE OF THIS PARTICULAR PSYCHOLOGICAL COIN, AND HAVING THE SAME HISTORICAL ROOTS AS PERSIAN EGOISM, IS A PERVERSIVE UNEASE ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE WORLD IN WHICH ONE LIVES. THE PERSIAN EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT NOTHING IS PERMANENT AND IT IS COMMONLY PERCEIVED THAT HOSTILE FORCES ABOUND. IN SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT EACH INDIVIDUAL MUST BE CONSTANTLY ALERT FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO PROTECT HIMSELF AGAINST THE MALEVOLENT FORCES THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE HIS UNDOING. HE IS OBVIOUSLY JUSTIFIED IN USING ALMOST ANY MEANS AVAILABLE TO EXPLOIT SUCH OPPORTUNITIES. THIS APPROACH UNDERLIES THE SOCALLED “BAZAAR MENTALITY” SO COMMON AMONG PERSIANS, A MIND-SET THAT OFTEN IGNORES LONGER TERM INTERESTS IN FAVOR OF IMMEDIATELY OBTAINABLE ADVANTAGES AND COUNTENCANCES PRACTICES THAT ARE REGARDED AS UNETHICAL BY OTHER NORMS. AN EXAMPLE IS THE SEEMINGLY SHORTSIGHTED AND HARASSING TACTICS EMPLOYED BY THE PGOI IN ITS NEGOTIATIONS WITH GTE.

5. COUPLED WITH THESE PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS IS A GENERAL INCOMPREHENSION OF CASUALTY. ISLAM, WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD, APPEARS TO ACCOUNT AT LEAST IN MAJOR PART FOR THIS PHENOMENON. SOMewhat SURPRISINGLY, EVEN THOSE IRANIANS EDUCATED IN THE WESTERN STYLE AND PERHAPS WITH LONG EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE IRAN ITSELF FREQUENTLY HAVE DIFFICULTY GRASPING THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF EVENTS. WITNESS A YAZDI RESISTING THE IDEA THAT IRANIAN BEHAVIOR HAS CONSEQUENCES ON THE PERCEPTION OF IRAN IN THE U.S. OR THAT THIS PERCEPTION IS SOMEHOW RELATED TO AMERICAN POLICIES REGARDING IRAN. THIS SAME QUALITY ALSO HELPS EXPLAIN PERSIAN AVERSION TO ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE’S OWN ACTIONS. THE DEUS EX MACHINA IS ALWAYS AT WORK.
6. THE PERSIAN PROCLIVITY FOR ASSUMING THAT TO SAY SOMETHING IS TO DO IT FURTHER COMPLICATES MATTERS. AGAIN, YAZDI CAN EXPRESS SURPRISE WHEN INFORMED THAT THE IRREGULAR SECURITY FORCES ASSIGNED TO THE EMBASSY REMAIN IN PLACE. “BUT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TOLD ME THEY WOULD GO BY MONDAY,” HE SAYS. AN MFA OFFICIAL REPORTS THAT THE SHERRY CASE IS “90 PERCENT SOLVED,” BUT WHEN A CONSULAR OFFICER INVESTIGATES HE DISCOVERS THAT NOTHING HAS CHANGED. THERE IS NO RECOGNITION THAT INSTRUCTIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED UP, THAT COMMITMENTS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY ACTION AND RESULTS.

6. FINALLY, THERE ARE THE PERSIAN CONCEPTS OF INFLUENCE AND OBLIGATION. EVERYONE PAYS OBEISANCE TO THE FORMER AND THE LATTER IS USUALLY HONORED IN THE BREACH. PERSIANS ARE CONSUMED WITH DEVELOPING PARTE BAZI--THE INFLUENCE THAT WILL HELP GET THINGS DONE--WHILE FAVORS ARE ONLY GRUDGINGLY BESTOWED AND THEN JUST TO THE EXTENT THAT A TANGIBLE QUID PRO QUO IS IMMEDIATELY PRECEPTIBLE. FORGET ABOUT ASSISTANCE PROFERRED LAST YEAR OR EVEN LAST WEEK; WHAT CAN BE OFFERED TODAY?

7. THERE ARE SEVERAL LESSONS FOR THOSE WHO WOULD NEGOTIATE WITH PERSIANS IN ALL THIS:

- --FIRST, ONE SHOULD NEVER ASSUME THAT HIS SIDE OF THE ISSUE WILL BE RECOGNIZED, LET ALONE THAT IT WILL BE CONCEDED TO HAVE MERITS. PERSIAN PREOCCUPATION WITH SELF PRECLUDES THIS. A NEGOTIATOR MUST FORCE RECOGNITION OF HIS POSITION UPON HIS PERSIAN OPPOSITE NUMBER.

- --SECOND, ONE SHOULD NOT EXPECT AN IRANIAN READYLY TO PERCEIVE THE ADVANTAGES OF A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP BASED ON TRUST. HE WILL ASSUME THAT HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IS ESSENTIALLY AN ADVERSARY. IN DEALING WITH HIM HE WILL ATTEMPT TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS TO HIMSELF THAT ARE IMMEDIATELY OBTAINABLE. HE WILL BE PREPARED TO GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, INCLUDING RUNNING THE RISK OF SO ALIENATING WHOEVER HE IS DEALING WITH THAT FUTURE BUSINESS WOULD BE UNTHINKABLE, AT LEAST TO THE LATTER.

- --THIRD, INTERLOCKING RELATIONSHIPS OF ALL ASPECTS OF AN ISSUE MUST BE PAINSTAKINGLY, FORECEFULLY AND REPEATEDLY DEVELOPED. LINKAGES WILL BE NEITHER READILY COMPREHENDED NOR ACCEPTED BY PERSIAN NEGOTIATORS.

- --FOURTH, ONE SHOULD INSIST ON PERFORMANCE AS THE SINE QUA NON AT ESH STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS. STATEMENTS OF INTENTION COUNT FOR ALMOST NOTHING.

- --FIFTH, CULTIVATION OF GOODWILL FOR GOODWILL'S SAKE IS A WASTE OF EFFORT. THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE AT ALL TIMES SHOULD BE IMPRESSING UPON THE PERSIAN ACROSS THE TABLE THE MUTUALITY OF THE PROPOSED UNDERTAKINGS, HE MUST BE MADE TO KNOW THAT A QUID PRO QUO IS INVOLVED ON BOTH SIDES.

- --FINALLY, ONE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR THE THREAT OF BREAKDOWN IN NEGOTIATIONS AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT AND NOT BE COWED BY THE POSSIBLITY. GIVEN THE PERSIAN NEGOTIATOR’S CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS, HE IS GOING TO RESIST THE VERY CONCEPT OF A RATIONAL (FROM THE WESTERN POINT OF VIEW) NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

LAINGEN

CONFIDENTIAL

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”
U.S.-Macedonia Silence on Botched Rendition

A 2006 cable from the American Embassy in Macedonia reports that the prime minister, Vlado Buckovski, promised that Macedonian officials would remain mum about the detention of Khaled el-Masri, who was handed over to the C.I.A. and flown to Afghanistan as the result of a name mix-up. The Americans promised silence, too.

DATE 2006-02-02 07:14:00

SOURCE Embassy Skopje

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 SKOPJE 000105

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DEPT FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/RPM NSC FOR BRAUN DEFENSE FOR OSD/POLICY:WINTERNITZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/31/2016 TAGS: NATO, PREL, MARR, MASS, MK SUBJECT: MACEDONIA & NATO MEMBERSHIP: DEFENSE REFORMS ON TRACK; POLITICAL & ECONOMIC REFORMS KEY OBSTACLES

REF: STATE 7173

Classified By: P/E CHIEF SHUBLER, REASONS 1.4 (b) & (d).

1. (C/REL NATO) SUMMARY: Macedonia is in its 7th MAP cycle and has made significant progress in meeting its defense reform goals, but still falls short in terms of meeting political and economic MAP criteria. To be considered a strong candidate for NATO membership by mid-2007, with a view to receiving an invitation in 2008, we believe Macedonia should meet the following key criteria:

Strengthen democracy and the rule of law, and combat corruption by:

--conducting free and fair parliamentary elections in 2006 that meet internationally-accepted standards;

--fully implementing the judicial reforms package to strengthen the independence and efficiency of the judiciary; and,

--showing significant progress in aggressively prosecuting high-profile corruption cases.

Create a better business environment by:

--meeting the milestones established for World Bank-financed projects on real estate and cadastre registration, and implementing judicial reforms regarding contract enforcement; and,

--completing in a transparent manner the privatization of the state energy distribution and generation companies, with full accountability for the use of funds derived from that action.
Continue defense reforms by:

--pursuing defense personnel downsizing while ensuring equitable representation of ethnic minorities in the Armed Forces, but in a manner that ensures qualified personnel are selected and that training and promotion standards are not lowered.

This message develops these key criteria further and addresses additional political, economic, and defense issues and goals.

End Summary.

KEY POLITICAL CRITERIA:

2. (SBU/REL NATO) Electoral Reform: The 2005 local elections, as noted by OSCE and other international and domestic observers, were marred by serious electoral irregularities in some areas, including ballot-stuffing, group voting, and some election-day violence. Since then, the GOM has worked with OSCE experts to draft an electoral code that addresses electoral system concerns raised by the International Community (IC) in relation to the 2005 and other past elections. The electoral code is in the parliamentary review process, and Parliament is expected to pass it by mid-March.

--Electoral Bodies: In addition to revising the electoral code to strengthen administration of upcoming parliamentary elections in summer 2006, the government recently addressed long-held IC concerns regarding inadequate funding, housing, equipment, and staffing for the State Electoral Administration (SEC), which is responsible for administering the elections. The SEC now has an adequate budget; initial staffing; new offices; and sufficient equipment to allow it to perform its core functions. The SEC Secretariat already is undertaking planning and initial steps to prepare for the 2006 parliamentary elections.

--Parliamentary Elections: The key test of the strength of Macedonia's democratic system will be the 2006 parliamentary elections. The IC is working with the government, political party leaders and party cadres, and the state electoral bodies to help ensure free and fair elections, as judged by OSCE/ODIHR and other international and domestic monitors. Key Message: Should Macedonia fail this task, it would call into question the country's readiness to present itself as a strong candidate for a NATO membership invitation in 2008.

3. (C/REL NATO) Judicial Reform: The Parliament in December 2005 passed a package of 11 constitutional amendments strengthening the independence and efficiency of the judiciary. The amendments sharply curtail the role of Parliament in selecting judges, who will now be selected and dismissed by an independent State Judicial Council. The Parliament is expected to pass bylaws to implement the amendments in the first half of 2006. Key Message: By mid-2007, the government should have passed and implemented the draft Law on Courts to allow trials of serious crimes and organized crime cases, and should implement a court case management system assigning cases to judges on a random basis; implement and use the Law on Witness Protection as appropriate in prosecuting organized crime cases; and enforce asset forfeitures in money-laundering or other serious crime cases.

4. (C/REL NATO) Corruption: Macedonia was ranked 104 of 159 countries in the 2005 Transparency International annual corruption perception index (CPI) report. It dropped several places compared to 2004, although its overall score remained the same, at 2.7 out of a possible 10 (10 being least corrupt.). Combating corruption is one of the government's most daunting challenges; very few high-profile corruption cases have been successfully prosecuted, with even fewer cases involving a significant sentence as a sanction. Key Message: To enhance Macedonia's competitiveness as a NATO candidate, the Macedonian Public Prosecutor's office should successfully prosecute 3-5 high-profile corruption cases by mid-2007. In addition, the Macedonian courts should demonstrate that they can try those high-profile corruption cases in a fair and transparent fashion, as judged by independent observers (local NGOs, OSCE Rule of Law experts), and any guilty verdicts should be accompanied by sanctions that will have a deterrent effect.
OTHER POLITICAL ISSUES AND GOALS

5. (C/REL NATO) Rule of Law: General rule of law weaknesses hamper Macedonia’s ability to demonstrate progress in meeting the political criteria of the NATO MAP process. The Ministry of Interior’s Professional Standards Unit (PSU) has investigated a number of allegations of police abuse, and has sanctioned such abuse when it occurred. However, the PSU’s record is inconsistent, and systems to ensure transparency in the MOI are inadequate. Similarly, Macedonia’s fall from Tier 1 to Tier 2 in the State Department’s annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report for 2005 reflected lack of political commitment to combat aggressively lucrative organized crime activities, which was also reflected in the GOM’s continuing lack of a National Action Plan for combating TIP. The ability of defendants in civil lawsuits to file interminable, frivolous appeals prevents the Macedonian courts from enforcing valid judgments -- for example, ordering the owner of Macedonian TV station A-18 to repay debts owed to the U.S.-based non-profit Media Loan Development Fund. By mid-2007, the MOI’s PSU should have fully investigated and pressed charges, as applicable, in the majority of alleged police abuse cases alleged to have occurred in 2006; Macedonian authorities should ensure the anti-TIP National Action Plan has been approved and implemented, and Macedonia should demonstrate progress in moving toward a Tier 1 rating in the annual TIP report for 2006.

6. (SBU/REL NATO) Minority Rights: The final legislative requirement of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement (FWA) was met in 2005, but implementation of FWA-mandated measures to improve minority rights has been uneven. The government needs to continue steady efforts to implement equitable representation of minorities in public administration. At the same time, the government (across ethnic lines) should guard against fulfilling quotas at the expense of individual capacity to perform a job. The GOM also should continue to implement decentralization that empowers minorities at the local level, and in a manner that presents Macedonia as a regional model for consolidating stability through strengthening inter-ethnic cooperation.

7. (C/REL NATO) Neighborly Relations: Macedonia collaborates actively with its neighbors and other countries in the region, and should strive to export its experience as a positive example of best practices in that regard. It is working on resolving several outstanding bilateral issues, including the name dispute with Greece (through talks under UN auspices), and the question of demarcating its border with Kosovo. The dispute between the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) and the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) over which should enjoy primacy among orthodox Christian believers in Macedonia remains a challenge for the government, which is working on a draft law on religious communities that would make it possible for the SOC to officially register as a religious group in Macedonia. The imprisonment last year of a SOC Bishop (Bishop Jovan) on grounds of inciting religious hatred for publishing a calendar was roundly criticized by the international community and many human rights NGOs. The government should work to ensure passage of the draft Law on Religious Communities that would help ease tensions between the MOC and the SOC by allowing an SOC-affiliated group to receive legal protection as a recognized religious group in Macedonia. The government also should continue to work on resolving the name dispute with Greece through the talks being held under UN auspices.

8. (SBU/REL NATO) Border Issues: The only remaining contentious border issue is, as mentioned above, the unresolved demarcation of Macedonia’s boundary with Kosovo, which was delineated in a 2001 agreement between Belgrade and Skopje. Pristina does not recognize the 2001 agreement, and is unwilling to consider demarcating the border with Macedonia until after final status is resolved.

9. (C/REL NATO) POW and Holocaust Issues: There are no unresolved POW issues. The government receives high marks from the Israeli government and in the State Department’s International Religious Freedom report for handling Jewish community restitution issues. Ground-breaking for a Holocaust memorial site in downtown Skopje took place in 2005, and Jewish community representatives generally express satisfaction with the government’s actions to resolve outstanding property claims.

KEY ECONOMIC CRITERIA:

10. (SBU/REL NATO) Business Climate: The government has made significant economic reform progress in a number of areas, including recent implementation of a one-stop shop window that has significantly reduced the time required for registering a new business. However, more needs to be
done to create an economic climate that will attract increased investment (FDI was slightly lower in 2005 than in the previous year) and bring official unemployment figures down from their current high of 37 percent (taking the grey economy into account, the actual rate is closer to 25 percent).

11. (SBU/REL NATO) Macro-Economic Achievements: The government’s most significant economic achievement has been the maintenance of fiscal discipline, combined with consistent macroeconomic stability. The economy has grown at a consistent rate of 2 to 4 percent from 2002 to 2005. The government budget deficit is low (-0.6% in 2005), inflation minimal (0.5% in 2005), the currency is stable, and the level of debt-to-GDP (40%) is manageable. In 2005, the Government signed agreements for three-year programs with both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Both Standard & Poor’s and Fitch Rating Service rated Macedonia at or near investment grade for sovereign debt. In December 2005, Macedonia successfully sold 150 million euros worth of euro bonds and used the proceeds to purchase its London Club debt in order to lower its debt servicing costs.

12. (SBU/REL NATO) Foreign Investment & Economic Freedom: Despite significant progress, business investment, both domestic and foreign, is low; the current account deficit is relatively high; and GDP growth rate is not strong enough to significantly lower unemployment or the poverty rate. Macedonia ranks 57th in the Heritage Foundation’s 2005 Index of Economic Freedom, behind A-3 partners Albania (52nd) and Croatia (55th). If the government fails to take the following steps, among others, to enhance the business climate, FDI levels and economic growth will remain anemic:

--- Key Message: Business environment ) the government should meet the milestones for World Bank-financed project on real estate and cadastre registration, and implement judicial reforms regarding contract enforcement.

--- Key Message: Privatization ) the GOM should privatize the energy distribution (ESM) and generation (ELEM) companies in a transparent manner and should fully account for the use of funds derived from that action. It also should sell its remaining shares in the privatized Macedonian Telecommunication company.

KEY DEFENSE CRITERIA:

13. (C/REL NATO) Overall Progress. Macedonia continues to progress well on defense reforms. In 2005, Macedonia met its goal of restructuring 60% of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia’s (ARM’s) units in accordance with their Strategic Defense Review (SDR). By the end of 2006, the GOM expects 90% of the ARM’s units will have been restructured.

14. (C/REL NATO) Additional defense reform milestones completed under a dynamic and proactive CHOD include: reorganization of the General Staff and 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade; transfer of the Air Force to the ARM’s Air Wing; and establishment of the Joint Operations Command as the ARM’s Maneuver Force Headquarters. The ARM also took the first steps in 2005 toward assuming full host nation support responsibilities by assigning officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) to NATO Headquarters-Skopje. The MOD will establish a Host Nation Coordination Center by mid-2006.

15. (C/REL NATO) Personnel Reductions: The Ministry of Defense (MOD) and ARM have been less successful in carrying out the personnel reductions called for in the SDR. To date, they have made the easy cuts, mostly personnel transfers. For example, the MOD gave up the border security mission to the new Border Police. It also divested itself of the people and offices that are now independent governmental agencies, such as the Rescue and Protection Directorate and the Crisis Management Center. The MOD must cut approximately 1,200 military and civilian personnel to complete its personnel reductions plan. The new draft Law on Defense will open up the possibility of retiring excess officers with 25 years of service, but that measure does not apply to the civilians at the Ministry.

16. (C/REL NATO) Equitable Representation: Equitable representation of minorities in the armed forces continues to increase. Ethnic Albanians, for example, now constitute nearly 12 percent of the total force; the percentage is higher among the NCOs (15 percent) and soldiers (16 percent). However, there is clear evidence that the coalition ethnic Albanian governing party (DUI) is pressuring the military to accelerate the pace of integration, especially within the officer and
NCO ranks, even if that means lowering standards for promotions and professional development courses. Key Message: The government, including its ethnic Albanian coalition partners, should be reminded that equitable representation, which we support, nevertheless must not be implemented by placing unqualified personnel in positions of responsibility.

17. (C/REL NATO) Defense Spending. Macedonia continues to devote between 2.2-2.4 percent of its GDP to defense spending. This year the defense budget is 6.281 billion Macedonian denars (approximately 124 million USD), about 2.25 percent of GDP. Although that figure is two million dollars less than in 2005, it represents a net increase, since spending on functions such as border security and crisis management are no longer part of the MOD’s budget. Defense spending is expected to remain consistent in the near to mid-term; this predictability is assisting the MOD in managing its defense modernization programs for at least the next five years.

18. (C/REL NATO) Modernization. Macedonia has offered NATO eleven (11) units under the NATO Operational Capabilities Concept, ranging from an infantry company to a special forces company, helicopter detachment, engineer platoon, and demining squad. Some of these units are ready now; others will not be fully operational until the end of 2007. The ARM is rightly focusing its resources, both domestic and international, on getting these units fully operational, both in terms of equipment and training. The U.S. will provide $5 million in Foreign Military Funding in FY06, most of which is also being targeted for these “declared” units. One million U.S. dollars in Global Peace Operations Initiative funds have also become available, which the ARM would like to spend on readying their military police battalion for deployment. Macedonia also is an active participant in the Partnership for Peace (PfP), participating in over 15 different exercises in 2005, including hosting NATO’s “Cooperative Associate” Exercise in Skopje last November.

19. (C/REL NATO) Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Macedonia continues to be a net contributor to security, its armed forces earning high marks for their performance in GWOT operations. Macedonia’s troop contributions to the GWOT demonstrate that it can be a meaningful contributor as a future NATO member country as well. In December 2005, Macedonia increased its participation in Iraq by deploying five more staff officers above its normal 35-man rotation. In Afghanistan, it is deploying eleven officers/NCOs with the Headquarters of the Southeastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), rotating its four medical personnel with the Adriatic Charter’s Joint Medical Team, and increasing from 19 to 21 the personnel it has attached to the German Battle Group in Kabul. By the end of February, Macedonia will have increased its contribution to NATO Operations in Afghanistan from 23 personnel to 36. Including the personnel assigned to Iraq and U.S. Central Command Headquarters, it will soon have a total of 78 personnel deployed overseas. That figure represents a considerable commitment for Macedonia. While we expect the GOM to remain committed to participating in international military operations, the ARM will continue in the future to have to rely on other countries for strategic transport and logistical support in-theater.

20. (C/REL NATO) Interoperability with NATO. The combined effect of six ARM rotations in Iraq, eight ARM rotations in Afghanistan, PfP exercises, and U.S. FMF/IMET support has directly improved the ARM’s capabilities and interoperability with NATO. Not every unit of the ARM has benefited from this exposure, however. Many conscript units focus mainly on fulfilling garrison duties. Nevertheless, the performance of Macedonian units in Iraq and Afghanistan has been exemplary, and should be taken as a demonstration of the ARM’s potential as a future NATO member.

21. (C/REL NATO) Crisis Management Center: To get the MOD out of direct involvement in managing crisis management operations, the government created the civilian-run Crisis Management Center (CMC) in 2005. The CMC has received an independent budget for training in January 2006, but squabbles between the ethnic Albanian CMC Director and the government over equitable representation in staffing the center have prevented it from becoming fully operational. In a region plagued by frequent floods and occasional earthquakes, the country’s lack of effective crisis management capacity is unacceptable. Key Message: The CMC should be adequately staffed, fully operational, and capable of responding to disasters by mid-2007. Although equitable representation should be considered in deciding on personnel, the Center should be staffed by qualified personnel.

LEGAL ISSUES:
22. (SBU/REL NATO) There are no significant constitutional or legal barriers that would prevent Macedonia's accession to NATO or its participation in NATO operations. The Macedonian constitution provides that the Parliament can approve proposals to join international organizations by a majority vote. Participation in peacekeeping operations outside the country requires the approval of a majority in Parliament, and the government can decide to participate in exercises or humanitarian operations without Parliament's approval. Upon ratification of an accession agreement, the Law on Defense would have to be amended to harmonize Macedonian law with NATO's collective defense provisions, according to Macedonia's ANP.

SECURITY/INTELLIGENCE ISSUES:

23. (C/REL NATO) The Law on Classified Information was passed in March 2005, expanding the responsibilities of the Directorate for Security of Classified Information to include all classified information exchanged between the Republic of Macedonia and foreign countries or international organizations. According to the government, the provisions of the Law on Classified Information are consistent with NATO Security Policy requirements. In addition, the government is drafting guidelines for Security Officers charged by various state institutions to ensure the bylaws of the Law on Classified Information are implemented within those institutions. In practice, however, political control over Macedonian intelligence and security agencies results in occasional leaks of sensitive information to political parties.

24. (C/REL NATO) Macedonia's three intelligence services (Macedonian Intelligence Agency, subordinate to the President; military intelligence; and the MOI's counter-intelligence agency) do not cooperate closely and are hampered by outmoded missions.

PUBLIC SUPPORT:

25. (SBU/REL NATO) Public support for NATO membership is strong - 90 percent in a poll conducted in January (among ethnic Albanians, that figure reaches 96 percent.) No government or opposition Member of Parliament has voted against a deployment of Macedonian troops overseas to support alliance operations in Iraq or Afghanistan. Prudent expectations management -- on the part of the government, USG, and NATO -- will help ensure strong public support through the Riga Summit and well into 2007.

WATCH OUT FORS:

26. (C) The case of Khalid el-Masri, a German citizen of Lebanese descent who claims he was flown by the CIA from Macedonia to Afghanistan for interrogation, has generated intense press commentary here, most of it negative, over the past several months. Opposition parties and opinion-shapers accuse the government of jeopardizing Macedonia's EU accession chances by refusing to comprehensively answer Council of Europe and European Parliament requests for a full accounting in the case. Relevant government authorities have responded carefully to COE and EU requests for information, consistently explaining that they have little information to provide on el-Masri and his allegations. There has been some mention in the press of alleged secret CIA prisons on Macedonian soil, but those stories have not had the same staying power as the el-Masri case.

27. (C/NOFORN) Macedonia signed an Article 98 agreement with us in 2003, and the government has expressed concern that it eventually will come under strong EU pressure to abrogate that agreement as it works on bringing its legislation into compliance with the EU acquis communautaire. The matter is treated as a mid-to-long term issue in Macedonia's EU membership action plan, but could come up in the course of future discussions.

28. (C/REL NATO) The government will press for a positive statement at the Riga Summit, possibly singling out Macedonia as a leading NATO membership candidate due to its defense and political reform achievements, and assuring aspirants that enlargement will be on the agenda in 2008. MILOVANOVIC

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“Officials Pressed Germans on Kidnapping by C.I.A.”
Public Interest in Masri Rendition

In paragraph 26 of this 2006 cable, American diplomats in Macedonia report on the persistent interest of the local press in the case of Khaled el-Masri, the German citizen grabbed in Macedonia and sent by the C.I.A. to Afghanistan in a bungled rendition. Mr. Masri had the same name as the man the Americans considered a dangerous militant.

DATE 2006-02-06 18:11:00

SOURCE Embassy Skopje

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN

Confidential Section 01 of 03 Skopje 000118

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STATE FOR EUR/SCE (PFEUFFER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/03/2016 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, MARR, MK SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: PRIME MINISTER ON ELECTIONS, NATO ACCESSION, ICTY AND KOSOVO FINAL STATUS

REF: SKOPJE 104

Classified By: P/E CHIEF SHUBLER, REASONS 1.4 (B) & (D).

SUMMARY

1. (C/NF) PM Buckovski told the Ambassador February 1 that parliamentary elections likely will be held in late June/early July, and that he expects the opposition to use rough campaign and electoral tactics in trying to replace his government. On Macedonia’s NATO accession prospects, he agreed the government must do more to coordinate anti-corruption efforts and to ensure aggressive prosecution of corruption cases. The GOM will ask the ICTY to delay the return of four potential war crimes cases until at least the end of 2006. Buckovski believes Kosovo final status should be determined “the sooner the better” in order to safeguard regional stability; he is convinced final status ultimately will end in independence. The GOM will keep its head down and guard up regarding allegations that Macedonia has assisted the USG in the “el-Masri” case that has captured local media attention. With the 2006 parliamentary elections in mind and campaigning about to begin in the next several months, Buckovski wants to portray himself as a pragmatic leader, and to ensure that none of his policy stances differs significantly from ours. End Summary.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN EARLY SUMMER, CONCERNS ABOUT OPPOSITION TACTICS

2. (C) During a dinner with Ambassador, DCM, DATT, and P/E Chief on February 1, PM Buckovski said parliamentary elections likely would be held in late June or early July to allow the next government to organize itself during the summer. The draft electoral code would enter parliamentary debate by the first week of March, with passage expected by mid-March. Buckovski, who was accompanied by his foreign policy and national security advisers, said he was hopeful the parliament would have passed important judicial reform laws (on the police and on the courts) before the election date.

3. (C) Buckovski said he was concerned that opposition center-right party VMRO-DPMNE would play a
“destructive” role during the electoral campaign and elections. He cited recent demonstrations by unemployed tobacco workers from Kumanovo and Prilep, and ongoing street blockades by an NGO protesting government plans to privatize the state electrical power company, as typical examples of VMRO-DPMNE destabilization tactics. (Comment: We agree there was a partisan political dimension to the protests, in addition to the underlying socio-economic complaints by workers and citizens. End Comment.)

4. (C) Noting VMRO-DPMNE objections to government plans to staff local election boards with civil servants, Buckovski said that previous elections had been marred by the appointment of political party members to those boards, which made the board members susceptible to manipulation and fraud. The government proposal would, he claimed, be more reassuring to voters, especially in primarily ethnic Albanian areas where fraud had typically been most prevalent. Ethnic Albanians would put more stock in the integrity of civil service professionals than they would in party representatives.

DPA’S RETURN TO PARLIAMENT

5. (C) Buckovski thanked Ambassador for her constructive role in persuading the ethnic Albanian opposition party DPA to return to the Parliament after a 9-month hiatus to protest irregularities during local elections last March and April (reftel). He said that he would welcome receiving DPA’s suggestions for amendments to the draft electoral code, and would discuss those amendments the following day (February 2) with a DPA representative. During the conversation, Buckovski spoke by phone with DPA Vice President Menduh Thaci, and with Speaker of Parliament Jordanovski, to arrange for DPA’s return to Parliament the week of February 6.

NATO ACCESSION

6. (C) Ambassador briefed Buckovski on the upcoming visit by a high-level US delegation to review Macedonia’s progress toward meeting its MAP goals. She said it would be important for Macedonia to demonstrate that it was a net contributor to security. The country had to convince some skeptical NATO members that bringing Macedonia into the Alliance would not be tantamount to “importing instability.” Also, the GOM would have to do more to combat corruption, including better coordination of existing anti-corruption efforts and more aggressive efforts to prosecute high-level corruption cases.

7. (C) Buckovski agreed that more needed to be done to fight corruption. He accepted the need for stronger coordination, and said Foreign Policy Adviser Mersel Biljali was in charge of “finding a methodology” for tackling the problem. Buckovski noted his personal ties to both the Public Prosecutor (“a friend”) and the Minister of Justice (a former law student of his) and even offered personally to head the effort to improve coordination among the various judicial agencies to enhance anti-corruption efforts.

ICTY RETURN OF CASES -- REQUEST FOR DELAY

8. (C) Responding to the Ambassador’s request for an update on the status of the return of four unindicted cases from the ICTY to Macedonian jurisdiction, Buckovski said that Chief Public Prosecutor Prcevski would meet with ICTY investigators in late February to ask orally for a delay in the return. Buckovski did not want a paper trail or any documentation of the request for a delay, since that could later be used by the opposition to attack the government for being soft on the ethnic Albanians (all four cases involved eAlbanians alleged to have committed war crimes during the 2001 internal armed conflict.)

9. (C) Comment: Buckovski’s information was at odds with FM Mitreva’s report to the EU Special Representative this week that Prcevski would travel to The Hague on February 2 to request the delayed return of cases. This discrepancy reflects the general lack of coordination on this matter between the Prime Minister, Mitreva, and the President -- the only three GOM officials with the authority to make decisions regarding the return of cases. Buckovski reportedly told the press on February 2 that he expected the return of cases “to coincide with completion of the judicial reforms,” and that the cases likely would be returned “by the end of 2006.” End Comment.

KOSOVO FINAL STATUS
10. (C) On Kosovo final status, Buckovski said he could see no other possible outcome but independence. He said he agreed with the US position, that Kosovo final status should be determined “the sooner, the better” to reduce the potential for future instability in the region. As a positive example to Kosovo and the region of Macedonia’s multi-ethnic experience, he said, the GOM planned to host in Ohrid in August the 5th anniversary commemoration of the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which ended the 2001 internal armed conflict in Macedonia. Buckovski said he hoped for high-level representation at the event from those countries and organizations that had signed the original agreement, in particular the U.S. and EU.

EL-MASRI: STAY THE COURSE

11. (C/NOFORN) Concerning the case of a German citizen of Lebanese descent who has claimed that Macedonian authorities detained him in January 2004 and handed him over to the CIA for a rendition flight to Afghanistan, Buckovski noted that the GOM would stay the course and would continue to support the Minister of Interior, who has declined to discuss the matter with the local press. Buckovski was relieved to hear from the Ambassador that we would not shift course, either, and would continue to decline to discuss in public specific cases. The Prime Minister suggested that the Ambassador coordinate on the issue with the German Embassy in Skopje, suggesting that the Germans were putting pressure on the Macedonians to be more forthcoming. The Ambassador demurred.

TRILATERAL MEETING ALONG A-3 LINES

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12. (SBU) Buckovski mentioned that he was organizing a “trilateral meeting” in Tirana with his Albanian and Croatian counterparts ( mirroring the Adriatic Partnership), and hoped the U.S. Ambassador in Tirana would be able to participate. He gave no specifics regarding the objective of the meeting, other than to mention that it would strengthen regional cooperation.

COMMENT

13. (C) Buckovski characterized the dinner as a chance to further strengthen the close cooperation between the Embassy and his office. He pledged “open and frank” communication between his office and the Embassy, and suggested Macedonia continues to view the U.S. as its single most important “strategic partner.” Buckovski clearly was eager to get feedback on sensitive issues, and to portray himself as a pragmatic leader who can listen to arguments at odds with his own views, and who is ready to compromise when needed. With parliamentary elections likely in summer 2006 and the campaign season about to begin, Buckovski also feels it is necessary to show that he has international community support, especially from the US, and that his policy stances do not conflict with ours on any high-profile matters. MILOVANOVIC

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Officials Pressed Germans on Kidnapping by C.I.A.”
Islamic Extremism in Germany

A 2007 cable from Berlin recounts evidence of Islamic extremism in Germany, including militants with connections to an Islamic center in the city of Neu-Ulm.

DATE 2007-09-19 10:47:00

SOURCE Embassy Berlin

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 BERLIN 001767

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/AGS, EUR/PGI AND S/CT SIPDIS


REF: A. BERLIN 1681 B. BERLIN 1398 C. MUNICH 218

Classified By: DCM John M. Koenig for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

Summary

1. (C) The September 4 arrests of three terrorist suspects, two of whom are German citizens who converted to Islam, has given Germany its first high-profile case of homegrown Islamic terrorism and focused attention on the southern German area of Ulm/Neu-Ulm, which authorities have long identified as a hotbed of radical Islam. The arrests of Gelowicz and Schneider, both ethnic Germans and life-long residents of Germany, have changed public perceptions concerning the threat of Islamic extremism in Germany and raised questions within political circles as to what potential measures should be taken to more closely monitor extremists. Furthermore, the news that the three suspects received instructions from Pakistan-based Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) leadership has generated a new awareness and recognition of the need to increase surveillance capabilities as well as enhance cooperation with international partners. The Interior and Justice Ministries are preparing legislation to strengthen the capabilities of prosecutors and increase the investigative powers of security officials to counter the homegrown terrorist threat. End Summary

Germany's First Homegrown Islamic Terrorists

2. (U) The September 4 arrests of three suspects planning large-scale attacks in Germany has sent shockwaves through Germany, given that two of the alleged terrorists, Fritz Gelowicz and Daniel Martin Schneider, were German citizens with non-immigrant backgrounds who converted to Islam as teenagers (Ref A). Previous terrorist cases over recent history have typically involved individuals with immigrant backgrounds and/or dual nationalities who were generally raised as Muslims from birth. Although there has been at least one previous instance in which a German convert has taken up arms in the cause of Islam (e.g., Thomas “Hamza” Fischer who died fighting in Chechnya in 2003), the current case is the first in which such converts were planning their attacks on German soil against German (and U.S.) targets.

3. (U) Media coverage and editorials immediately following the arrests have expressed shock at how Gelowicz and Schneider, who had been raised in unremarkable typical German circumstances, managed to adopt an Islamic extremist ideology and plan violence against their fellow citizens. There has been much hand-wringing and anxious speculation on how many other potential homegrown terrorists in Germany might be planning similar attacks. A poll (by the national polling firm
Emnid) taken shortly following the arrests indicated that 85 percent of the public believe the threat of terrorist attacks in Germany has increased. This same poll showed that 56 percent of the public believe a strengthening of security legislation is the best response to the new threat.

4. (U) As the arrests have highlighted the homegrown terrorist threat, there have been calls for government monitoring of German converts to Islam, who number in the thousands each year. Though not likely to see the legislative light of day (see Septel), this proposal is a reaction to the perception that converts often tend to be more zealous believers in their new faith compared to those born into the religion. Minister Schaeuble, who leads the Federal government’s “German Islam Conference” initiative, which attempts to promote an intercultural dialogue with the Muslim community, commented that “One thing is certain: fighting the abuse of Islam and exaggerated fundamentalism is, above all, a task for the Muslims themselves.”

Ulm/Neu-Ulm - Centers of Radicalization
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5. (U) The Federal Prosecutors Office has identified a number of German cities as centers of Islamic associations and potential sites for extremism, including Ulm, Neu-Ulm, Braunschweig, Cologne, Berlin and Muenster. Of these, the neighboring cities of Ulm and Neu-Ulm have figured the most prominently over the past decade as breeding grounds for Islamic extremists. Ulm, a mid-sized city (population 120,000) in Germany’s relatively conservative southern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, is a leading center for scientific research and birthplace of Albert Einstein. Ulm was rated as Germany’s most healthy city by the health-oriented magazine “Healthy Living” in a nationwide survey last month. Neu-Ulm (population 51,000) is located on the eastern side of the Danube river in Bavaria.

6. (U) The cities received an influx of Muslim refugees from Bosnia in the mid 1990s, adding to their existing Muslim communities which came mainly from Turkey. Despite their traditionally moderate take on Islam, Bosnian Muslims developed ties with international extremists who were often viewed as the first to respond in Bosnia’s hour of need. During the 1990s, the region was seen as a staging point for Muslim extremist fighters going to Bosnia. More recently, Ulm and Neu-Ulm have both hosted organizations that have played central roles in Germany’s radical Islamist spheres.

7. (C) The Multicultural House (MCH) in Neu-Ulm was founded in 1996 and in the nine years that it was open attracted a series of noteworthy individuals and Islamic extremists including:


-- Reda Seyam, alleged to be one of the planners of the Bali attacks of 12 October 2002.

-- Dr. Yehia Yousif, an Egyptian who first came to Germany in 1988 as a researcher but later became a jihad recruiter and hate preacher who took on a leading role at the MCH. Yousif left Germany in 2002 as investigations of his activities increased. Yousif’s oldest son, who is alleged to have spent time in a Pakistan terrorist training camp, was deported after investigators found bomb-making instruction manuals in his apartment.

-- Khaled al-Masri was a visitor to the MCH.

-- Mohammed Atta, one of the 9/11 terrorist pilots, is reported to have visited the MCH.

-- Fritz Gelowicz is reported to have been a frequent visitor of the MCH.

8. (C) Following prolonged observation and investigation, Bavarian officials finally closed the MCH on 28 December 2005 and banned it on grounds that it promoted activities hostile to the constitution. Bavarian authorities indicate that MCH members had used the facility as a
recruiting station for global jihad and distribution source of extremist literature. The ban was subsequently confirmed by the courts in January 2007 (Ref C).

9. (C) The Islamic Information Center (IIC), founded in 1999 and located in Ulm, has developed into a center of extremist activity particularly following the closure of the MCH. Given its location in a different federal state, Baden-Wuerttemberg security officials monitoring the IIC have needed to overcome coordination issues with their counterparts in Bavaria to ensure that extremists cannot escape observations by merely crossing the Danube river. Baden-Wuerttemberg authorities have listed the IIC as an extremist center since 2003. Fritz Gelowicz is reported to have joined the center in 2005 under the name Abdullah after following an introduction by his co-worker Tolga Duerbin.

10. (C) Authorities searched the IIC in conjunction with the September 4 arrests and hope that materials collected will enable them to close the center. Baden-Wuerttemberg Minister of Interior Heribert Rech commented that he is confident that these materials will be sufficient to close the IIZ permanently. Ulm’s mayor has also expressed the desire to close the center.

Links to International Networks
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11. (C) All three of the terrorist suspects arrested

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September 4 are believed to have trained in Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) camps in Pakistan, and shortly following the arrests IJU leadership issued a statement confirming that the three had indeed been operating under IJU direction. The confirmation of this connection between an overseas terrorist organization and the Germany-based suspects demonstrates that the terrorist threat to Germany had reached a new level. Previous Islamic terrorism cases in Germany have not reached this level of sophistication and organization.

12. (C) The arrests in Pakistan and subsequent deportations back to Germany of multiple German citizens, or those with German residency permission, in the past few months has proven just how potentially widespread the links are between Germany-based Islamic extremists and overseas terrorist leadership. Some of these individuals, such as Tolga Duerbin, have been arrested on their return to Germany while others, such as Aleem Nasir and Nihad C., have been permitted to remain free. In any case terrorist training camp returnees are cause for concern among security officials.

Government Responses
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13. (U) In a September 16 interview Minister Schaeuble summed up how the arrests had changed the political debate, saying: “We now know better than before that we are very much in the focus of Islamist terrorists.” Since the arrests, Schaeuble has increased his calls for quick cabinet agreement on a number of legislative proposals to enhance the powers of the Federal Criminal Police (BKA) in counterterrorism investigations, as well as to permit the surveillance of the computers of terrorism suspects (Ref B). This proposal for on-line computer investigations has been particularly controversial due to privacy concerns but Schaeuble has remained adamant, stating “We will not submit a BKA bill without including the option of on-line searches.”

14. (U) Separately, the Justice Ministry has drafted a proposal that would significantly increase prosecutorial powers aimed at those who train in foreign terrorist camps as well as permit authorities to take earlier action against those in the planning stages of a terrorist attack (see Septel for analysis).

15. (U) This cable has been coordinated and developed jointly with Consulates General Munich and Frankfurt. TIMKEN JR

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Officials Pressed Germans on Kidnapping by C.I.A.”
1. (S) SUMMARY: Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Francis Fragos Townsend covered both counterterrorism cooperation and regional political issues in her meeting with Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal at his home in Jeddah on February 6. Saud described the February 2 arrests of ten suspected terrorism financiers in Jeddah and Medina as a positive step that could well result in other leads and arrests. On the proposed Charities Commission, Saud said that the SAG is leaning toward establishing a government entity that directly disburses charitable funds. He characterized engagement with Iran as a two-pronged approach involving frank dialogue and security pressure. “We will supply the logic and you supply the pressure,” he said, adding that the US Navy’s recent strengthening of presence in the Gulf was a good example of the force element. In response to APHSCT Townsend’s request to use SAG influence with Arabsat to block Al-Manar broadcasting, Prince Saud replied that Iranian-financed cultural centers in Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan are a greater source of Iranian influence in the region than Al-Manar television. On Arab-Israeli issues, Prince Saud hoped Secretary Rice would return to the region soon to address the “key substantive issues” of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees. In a subsequent private meeting, APHSCT Townsend renewed US concerns about the Saudi Ambassador in the Philippines; Saud said that the ambassador would be ending his tour shortly. END SUMMARY.

2. (S) APHSCT Townsend commended Prince Saud on efforts to counter terrorist financing but urged more progress. She noted that the President was quite concerned about bilateral cooperation in this area and that she had a letter for King Abdullah from the President on this subject. Prince Saud replied that the arrests of ten terror financing suspects on February 2 was “good progress” but that “more needs to be done.” Questioning these suspects could lead to more leads and arrests, he noted. APHSCT Townsend said she had just met with Finance Minister al-Assaf to ask about the royal decree on declaring cash upon exit and entry. The King had issued the decree over one year ago but it has yet to be implemented. Prince Saud noted that the Customs people are not the most capable, and that he was surprised at the lack of implementation.

3. (S) Asked by Prince Saud what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could do to help on counterterrorism cooperation, APHSCT Townsend raised establishment of the Charities Commission, which was announced two years ago but not yet implemented. She noted that it could be set up in either of two ways: as a government body which is responsible for disbursing charitable donations; or as a regulatory body to oversee acts of the private charities, which is the way the
US does it. She stressed that a decision, either way, is needed. Saud said the SAG was leaning towards an organization that has direct responsibility for disbursing charitable funds. He noted there are Islamic law implications, implying that these implications are slowing down the decision process but are important to consider carefully. APHSCT Townsend raised the issue of continuing activity by remnants of the UN-sanctioned al-Haramain organization. Saud responded that any proposed illegal transfers are being monitored and stopped. By following the trail of illegal transfers, the SAG has found and stopped the source of funding in many investigations—sending a strong preventative message to others engaging in similar, illegal activities. APHSCT Townsend thanked Prince Saud for the SAG’s efforts in this area.

4. (C) Asked by APHSCT Townsend about his views of developments in Iran, Prince Saud described the recent Iranian message, brought by Larijani, offering to help prevent a Sunni/Shi’ite sectarian divide. Saud said his government is focused on Iranian actions, not words. The Saudis had earlier warned the Iranians against pursuing a “dangerous” policy of sectarian division, especially in Iraq. He said Iran was embarking on a dangerous path of “fitna” (dissent) within the Muslim community. Although there is a Shi’ite majority in Iraq, elsewhere in the region the Shi’a are a minority. A sectarian-based policy in Iraq could jeopardize the situation of these Shi’ite minorities outside Iraq, he noted.

5. (C) Saud compared the Iranian influence in Iraq with Iranian influence in Lebanon, commenting that he saw positive signs in Lebanon, where Iran urged Hizbollah to stop street protests and go back to their homes. Saud said that it is SAG policy to pursue very frank discussions with the Iranians; we need a joint policy of frankness and security pressure, he stressed. Strengthening the US Navy presence in the Gulf sent a good message. “You provide the pressure and we’ll provide the logic,” he said.

6. (C) APHSCT Townsend said that Hizbollah does not appear to the US to have toned down its rhetoric, and she raised the request for Saudi help with Arabsat to block the broadcast of al-Manar television. Blocking al-Manar would help reduce Hizbollah’s sphere of influence, she said. The French have agreed not to permit the broadcast of al-Manar, she noted. Prince Saud replied that the “more important problem” is the Hizbollah cultural center, which exercises greater influence than al-Manar television and could be closed down by the multi-national forces, he asserted. The Iranians also fund such centers in Afghanistan and Iraq, he said.

7. (C) Ambassador Oberwetter asked Prince Saud about media reports ahead of Russian President Putin’s visit to Saudi Arabia on February 11-12 regarding a Russian interest in discussing a “Middle East Security Regime.” Prince Saud said that he was unaware of such a plan, and that the scheduled visit will focus on bilateral relations, including military cooperation and economic agreements. He noted that the Saudis will raise the possible purchase of military equipment from the Russians because “your people told us it would be better purchased from Russia, because they are cheaper and just as good.” He said he did not know why the US had told the Kingdom to go to the Russians, but that they would nonetheless. He added that the Saudis will raise UN Security Council issues, especially the tribunal to look into the Hariri assassination, and the Quartet issues.

8. (S) On Arab-Israeli issues, Prince Saud said that he talked with Secretary Rice via telephone on February 4 about the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation meeting in Mecca. He said if they reach an agreement, the Saudis would hope for a positive US reaction. He hoped that there would not be too many conditions placed upon Hamas in order for it to enter into a national unity government. APHSCT Townsend said they US expected Hamas to stop fighting and to make progress on peace with Israel. More important than what they say is what they do, she stressed. Saud stressed the importance of having clear guidelines and goals, which are applied to both sides of the conflict. He said he expects Secretary Rice to return to the region, to meet with Prime Minister Olmert and President Abu Mazen. He said he hopes she will address the substantive issues - Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees -- and noted that it has been seven years since anyone has discussed the status of Jerusalem. The side issues, for instance opening a passage between Gaza and the West Bank, should be handled at a different level, by Assistant Secretary Welch, he suggested.

9. (S) In a following private meeting with Saud, attended only by the Ambassador, APHSCT Townsend
raised US concerns with the potential involvement of the Saudi ambassador to the Philippines, Muhammad Amin Waly, in terrorism facilitation, particularly his intervention to get two members of IIRO out of prison. Prince Saud said some of his actions may have involved bad judgment rather than intentional support for terrorism. Waly had been investigated, he said, and no evidence was found regarding his involvement. Since this Ambassador’s assignment in Manila would be ending in several months, Saud asked for USG evidence of his involvement. APHSCT Townsend said the USG would cooperate with the Mubahith in providing evidence.

10. (S) Prince Saud then raised in the private meeting the Saudi Embassy in Washington’s problems with the US bank that handles the Embassy account. He asserted that the US bank is performing audits on the Saudi Embassy bank accounts beyond what is required by US law, and asking inappropriate and aggressive questions. He noted that the Saudi Embassy enjoys diplomatic immunity. If this is the bank’s initiative, he asked for USG intercession. APHSCT Townsend said we would look into it.

RIYADH 00000367 003 OF 003

11. (U) This cable has been cleared by APHSCT Townsend.

OBERWETTER

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cash Flow to Terrorists Evades U.S. Efforts”
Talking Counterterrorism With Kuwait

The American ambassador to Kuwait and Kuwait's interior minister discuss counterterrorism initiatives.

DATE 2009-02-05 16:36:00

SOURCE Embassy Kuwait

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000110

NOFORM SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2029 TAGS: PREL, PTER, PINR, KU, IR SUBJECT: THE INTERIOR MINISTER’S REMEDY FOR TERRORISTS: “LET THEM DIE.”

REF: KUWAIT 0095

Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: During a February 3 meeting in their ongoing dialog on US-Kuwait CT cooperation, Kuwaiti Minister of Interior Shaykh Jaber al-Khalid Al Sabah discussed with Ambassador US and Kuwaiti efforts to locate and apprehend terror financiers (including Mohammed Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Al-Al, aka Jawad/Abu Umar), applauded improved liaison information exchange, expressed skepticism Kuwait would ever develop a rehabilitation center for former GTMO detainees and other extremists supporting jihad, and suggested the US should release current GTMO detainees back into Afghanistan, where they could be killed in combat. He sardonically questioned why US NAVCENT forces had gone to the trouble of rescuing foundering Iranian hashish smugglers two weeks earlier, saying “God meant to punish them with death and you saved them. Why?” Characterizing the previous Saturday’s provincial elections as a “huge success,” Shaykh Jaber expressed his belief that President Obama and the US had the tools necessary to successfully confront all challenges. END SUMMARY.

2. (S/NF) Ambassador called on Shaykh Jaber February 3 to review progress on our CT liaison relationship and to seek the Interior Minister’s support for operational concepts aimed at intercepting individuals involved in the exploitation of traditional smuggling routes in the northern Gulf to move would-be jihadists and their financier/facilitators between Kuwait and Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Shaykh Jaber began the meeting by applauding the “huge success” of the provincial elections in Iraq and expressing his confidence in the ability of President Obama and the “super power” US to address current challenges.

3. (S/NF) Ambassador noted she’d met recently with VADM McCraven, now JSOC commander for this region, and that they’d discussed alternative approaches to staunching the flows of terror financing, given the constraints of Kuwait’s current legal and political systems. Offering his support for these approaches ) and underscoring that he was as concerned about terrorist influences from Saudi Arabia as from Iran, given the loose border controls -- the Minister expressed his understanding of what he characterized (fairly) as improved information exchange between our services, while acknowledging the ongoing deficiencies in Kuwait’s legal system that stymie effective prosecution and restraint of these individuals once captured.

4. (S/NF) Ambassador noted recent press reports that self-confessed jihadi recruiter and financier Mohammed al-Bathali had been released on a 500 dinar bond after being sentenced to three of a possible five years imprisonment for “inciting jihad against a friendly state.” (RefTel) At the same time, Kuwait’s Ambassador to the US, Shaykh Salem Al Sabah, had approached S/WCI Ambassador Clint Williamson to inquire after the status of Kuwait’s four remaining GTMO detainees. Ambassador clarified that President Obama’s announcement of our determination to close the detention center at Guantanamo did not mean we no longer had security concerns which would be
factored into any release scenarios; the Kuwaiti detainees were nasty, unrepentant individuals and Kuwait’s record had been tarnished by the example of former GTMO detainee al-Ajmi, who’d allegedly blown himself up in Mosul following his release to the Kuwaiti authorities. Ambassador asked the Interior Minister the status of the rehabilitation center Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al Sabah had mentioned in his September 18th conversation with then-Secretary Rice in Washington. Ambassador noted that we were aware of the stories of Saudis who’d gone through SAG rehabilitation centers only to re-emerge with Al Qaeda in Yemen; nonetheless, the GOK had to take steps to show its seriousness in changing and controlling the behaviors of extremists within its society.

5. (S/NF) Shaykh Jaber replied with an anecdote: Following the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and Desert Storm, General Schwarzkopf had raised the issue of “rehabilitating” Kuwaitis who’d been exposed to the brutality of war so that they could re-integrate into society. Shaykh (Ret,d General) Jaber had replied: “But you are thinking of the Vietnam model, where young war veterans came home to empty apartments or anonymous urban environments. That is not who we are. We are a small, close-knit society and everyone knows each other. No one will feel alienated; those who can heal will heal naturally with family; those who cannot heal in that environment will never heal.” Relating this to the current topic, Shaykh Jaber told the Ambassador: “You know better than I that we cannot deal with these people (i.e. the GTMO detainees). I can’t detain them. If I take their passports, they will sue to get them back (Note: as happened with Al-Ajmi. End note.) I can talk to you into next week about building a rehabilitation center, but it won’t happen. We are not Saudi Arabia; we cannot isolate these people in desert camps or somewhere on an island. We cannot compel them to stay. If they are rotten, they are rotten and the best thing to do is get rid of them. You picked them up in Afghanistan; you should drop them off in Afghanistan, in the middle of the war zone.”

6. (S/NF) Ambassador then raised with the Minister developing an SOP for dealing with incidents such as the recent rescue by US NAVCENT forces in the northern Gulf of seven Iranian smugglers whose boat was foundering while engaged in smuggling hashish. In the event, the Omani had agreed to repatriate the Iranians but we nonetheless needed to think about dealing with similar episodes in future in expeditious fashion. The initial response of the Kuwaiti Coast Guard had been to refer the matter to the Minister of Interior, via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ambassador noted our supposition that the Kuwaiti Coast Guard must have had similar experiences with Iranian smugglers who needed repatriation to Iran. Smiling broadly, the Interior Minister deflected the question, saying “God wished to punish them for smuggling drugs by drowning them, and then you saved them. So they’re your problem! You should have let them drown.” In any case, he added, the Kuwaitis generally sent the Iranians back to Iran in their own boats so there had not been a question of physically handing them over.

7. (S/NF) In closing, Ambassador noted that the Minister had created the position of Special Advisor to Shaykh Jaber for Kuwait Security Services (our GRPO liaison counterpart) and assigned Shaykh Salman Sabah al-Salem al-Humoud Al Sabah to that role. Ambassador asked whether the Minister believed there was any appropriate liaison relationship between the Embassy and Shaykh Salman, to which the Minister replied in the negative. Finally, the Ambassador invited the Minister to join her in attending the US Ambassador’s reception February 24 at the IDEX event in Abu Dhabi, as part of our efforts to boost the relationship.

8. (C) COMMENT: The Minister was as frank and pessimistic as ever when it came to the subject of apprehending and detaining terror financiers and facilitators under Kuwait’s current legal and political framework. Ongoing tensions between parliament and the PM and his cabinet make any changes highly unlikely any time soon. The remaining GTMO detainees remain a particularly thorny issue for the leadership here, who privately recognize the downsides of taking custody and readily acknowledge their inability to manage them but who remain under strong domestic political pressure to “bring their boys home.” Telling was the fact that press accounts of the Ambassador’s February 3 meeting with the Minister (which was one-on-one with a notetaker) and her meeting two days earlier with the MFA U/S focused solely on the GTMO issue, although it was discussed only marginally. END COMMENT.

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For more reporting from Embassy Kuwait, visit: visit Kuwait’s Classified Website at:

http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Kuwait
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RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cash Flow to Terrorists Evades U.S. Efforts”
Robbery in Yemen Aids Al Qaeda

A bank robbery in Yemen provides money for Al Qaeda’s affiliate in the country.

DATE 2009-09-02 13:39:00

SOURCE Embassy Sanaa

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 001632

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD AND INR SMOFFATT DEPT OF TREASURY FOR BRIAN MCCAULEY


Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: An armed robbery rocked Aden on August 17, in part due to the large amount stolen (100 million Yemeni riyals) and in part due to the belief of government and non-government sources that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) operatives are the culprits. The tactics utilized in the armed robbery bear a striking resemblance to AQAP methods used in previous attacks, and the sophistication of the attack discredits claims that ordinary robbers or bank officials acted alone. Given the ROYG’s lack of follow-through investigating a similar 1998 armed robbery attributed to an Islamic extremist group and the potential for these monies to be used to fund terrorist activities, this bold, unusual operation, if truly attributable to AQAP, would provide the organization with a substantial financial infusion at a time when it is thought to be short of cash. END SUMMARY.

HIGHLY COORDINATED ATTACK POINTS TO AQAP

2. (C) Armed gunmen robbed an Arab Limited Bank truck carrying 100 million riyals (equivalent to $500,000) in Aden on August 17 in a highly coordinated attack that many suspect was the work of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) operatives. The armed robbers were disguised as Yemeni policemen and conducted the robbery in a busy, downtown district in broad daylight, signaling a high level of operational sophistication uncommon among average Yemeni criminals. After hijacking the bank vehicle and transferring the money to a get-away car, they erased the serial number of a third car they used in the operation, which they abandoned outside Aden in order to delay authorities in tracing its ownership, according to press reports.

3. (C) According to independent and official sources, the precision of the attack and the tactics utilized during the armed robbery make it unlikely to be the work of ordinary criminals. Official government newspaper 26 September noted that a group of Islamic extremists are suspected to be behind the plot, though no confirmation of their affiliation or motives was published. XXXXXXXXX told PolOff on August 18, “Al-Qaeda is responsible and I reiterate that the robbed money may be used for terrorist operations,” underscoring the similarity to previous armed robberies by terrorist groups in the region. The attackers’ use of police uniforms is reminiscent of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) tactics utilized during the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Sana’a on September 17, 2008.

4. (C) Rather than attack the bank itself, the robbers conducted the heist in broad daylight in a busy sector of Aden, suggesting a high degree of operational sophistication and access to bank routes and times. XXXXXXXXX said, “There is no doubt that there were people who provided them with information about the amount of money and schedule of the movement.” Several bank officials have been arrested by ROYG security forces for possible complicity in the robbery, according to press reports. Lieutenant Colonel Haider Haider of the Political Security Organization in Aden
told EmbOff, "Preliminary reports indicate that there was an insider involved in this case."
Though no official word has been issued by the ROYG, Ministry of Defense-owned weekly 26
September noted on August 20 that security forces in Aden had arrested a group of Islamic
extremists they believe were involved in the robbery. On August 22 the Yemen Observer, an
English-language weekly owned by the President's secretary, quoted an anonymous security official
claiming that the Islamic extremists were affiliated with Tariq al-Fadhli, former pro-Saleh
jihadi turned Southern Movement leader. Interestingly, Free Aden, an anti-ROYG, openly
secessionist web publication, also identified AQAP as the likely perpetrator but claimed the ROYG
was attempting to frame the Southern Movement by highlighting the fact that the empty bank
vehicle was found in a district of Aden populated by Southern Movement activists.

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5. (C) XXXXXXXXX highlighted the similarity between the recent attack and a 1998 armed robbery
of a car carrying nine million Yemeni riyls of government salaries. The 1998 robbery was
conducted by eight men dressed in military uniforms at a checkpoint where they ordered the
vehicle to pull over, requested paperwork, and then shot two of the

SANAA 00001632 002 OF 002

passengers before hijacking the car with the stolen salaries. After the 1998 incident, the ROYG
simply compensated the government employees whose salaries were stolen without investigating the
robbery, according to XXXXXXXXX. Though independent reporters tried to garner updated
information from the ROYG on the whereabouts of the stolen money and the perpetrators, a follow-
up was never published by independent or government press. A few weeks after the 1998 robbery, 16
western tourists were kidnapped in Abyan by the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, an Islamic extremist
group believed to have cooperated with al-Qaeda in the 2000 USS Cole bombing in Aden. (Note. The
group was led by the late Abu al-Hassan al-Mihdar, who later confessed to the kidnapping and was
summarily executed after a Yemeni court sentenced him and two of his men to death. End Note.)
XXXxxxxxx told PolOff that at the time, the robbery was widely believed by Adenis to have been
carried out to fund the kidnapping operation, and he believes the same motives could be behind
this recent robbery.

COMMENT
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6. (C) It is unlikely that ordinary robbers were behind the August 17 attack, considering the
precision of the attack and the sophisticated tactics used. The fact that the attackers conducted
a coordinated attack requiring information on the specific routes and times of the bank vehicle
suggests that they enjoyed good connections and access to sensitive information, both historical
hallmarks of Islamic extremists in Yemen. The ROYG's lack of transparency regarding the 1998
armed robbery and its apparent failure to thoroughly investigate the whereabouts of the stolen
monies does not inspire confidence that the perpetrators of this attack will be apprehended. If,
in fact, they are affiliated with AQAP, $500,000 represents a significant influx of cash which
could be used to fund future attacks. END COMMENT. SECHE

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cash Flow to Terrorists Evades U.S. Efforts”
Clinton on Financing Terrorism

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton assesses the efforts of several Middle Eastern and South Asian countries to stop the flow of money for terrorist activities, and she directs several embassies to press officials in those countries to do better.

DATE 2009-12-30 13:28:00

SOURCE Secretary of State

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET STATE 131801

NOFORN SIPDIS FOR TFCO


REF: A. (A) STATE 112368 B. (B) RIYADH 1499 C. (C) KUWAIT 1061 D. (D) KUWAIT 1021 E. (E) ABU DHABI 1057 F. (F) DOHA 650 G. (G) ISLAMABAD 2799

Classified By: EEB/ESC Deputy Assistant Secretary Douglas C. Hengel for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

1. (U) This is an action request cable. Please see para 3.

2. (S/NF) Summary: In August 2009, Special Representative to the President for Afghanistan and Pakistan (S/SRAP) Ambassador Richard Holbrooke in coordination with the Department of Treasury established the interagency Illicit Finance Task Force (IFTF). The IFTF is chaired by Treasury A/S David Cohen. It focuses on disrupting illicit finance activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the external financial/logistical support networks of terrorist groups that operate there, such as al-Qa’ida, the Taliban, and Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT). The IFTF’s activities are a vital component of the USG’s Afghanistan and Pakistan (Af/Pak) strategy dedicated to disrupting illicit finance flows between the Gulf countries and Afghanistan and Pakistan. The IFTF has created a diplomatic engagement strategy to assist in the accomplishment of this objective. The strategy focuses on senior-level USG engagement with Gulf countries and Pakistan to communicate USG counterterrorism priorities and to generate the political will necessary to address the problem. The IFTF has drafted talking points for use by all USG officials in their interactions with Gulf and Pakistani interlocutors. These points focus on funding for terrorist groups threatening stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan and targeting coalition soldiers. These points have been cleared through the relevant Washington agencies.

3. (SBU) Action request: Drawing on the background materials for respective countries, and in preparation for the upcoming visits by Ambassador Holbrooke and Treasury U/S Levey in January, the Department requests all action posts deliver the general talking points in paras 5-6 and country specific talking points contained in the following paras: (1) Saudi Arabia ) para 8, (2) Kuwait ) para 10, (3) UAE ) para 12, and (4) Pakistan ) para 13. The talking points should be delivered by Ambassadors/Charge D’Affaires.

4. (C) In response to State 112368, the Department has received responses from Embassies Riyadh, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Doha, and Islamabad regarding the resource capabilities devoted towards these efforts. The Department also received each Mission’s evaluation of the effectiveness of host country institutions working on combating terrorism financing along with post’s recommendations
on ways forward.

General talking points for all Embassies

5. (SBU) Threat financing:

Cutting off the flow of funds to terrorist organizations and achieving stability in Af/Pak are top U.S. priorities.

These objectives require effective actions against terrorist fundraising in the Gulf by al-Qa’ida, the Taliban, LeT, and other Af/Pak-based violent extremist groups, all of which undermine the security of the entire international community. We will not succeed without your cooperation.

Long term success in combating terrorist financing requires a comprehensive, strategic approach that includes the following elements:

(1) aggressive action to identify, disrupt and deter terrorist donors, fundraisers and facilitators;

(2) appropriate legal measures, including effective prosecution, to hold terrorist financiers and facilitators publicly accountable and to send a strong message of deterrence to current and would-be donors that their actions face significant legal and social repercussions.

(3) strong oversight of charities, including their overseas branches, to ensure that these organizations are not supporting terrorist and extremist elements;

(4) strict enforcement of UN 1267 sanctions; and

(5) full compliance with international anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) standards, including vigorous enforcement.

6. (SBU) Charities:

The United States strongly supports legitimate charitable activities and is a strong proponent of private charitable giving.

We recognize and admire the emphasis placed on charity within Islam and we seek to work cooperatively with governments and organizations in the Islamic world to ensure that legitimate charitable activities thrive.

At the same time, we want to increase our cooperative efforts to ensure that extremists and terrorists do not exploit charitable giving.

Country-specific background material and talking points

7. (U) Saudi Arabia background

(S/NF) While the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) takes seriously the threat of terrorism within Saudi Arabia, it has been an ongoing challenge to persuade Saudi officials to treat terrorist financing emanating from Saudi Arabia as a strategic priority. Due in part to intense focus by the USG over the last several years, Saudi Arabia has begun to make important progress on this front and has responded to terrorist financing concerns raised by the United States through proactively investigating and detaining financial facilitators of concern. Still, donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide. Continued senior-level USG engagement is needed to build on initial efforts and encourage the
Saudi government to take more steps to stem the flow of funds from Saudi Arabia-based sources to terrorists and extremists worldwide.

(S/NF) The USG engages regularly with the Saudi Government on terrorist financing. The establishment in 2008 of a Treasury attaché office presence in Riyadh contributes to robust interaction and information sharing on the issue. Despite this presence, however, more needs to be done since Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qa’ida, the Taliban, LeT, and other terrorist groups, including Hamas, which probably raise millions of dollars annually from Saudi sources, often during Hajj and Ramadan. In contrast to its increasingly aggressive efforts to disrupt al-Qa’ida’s access to funding from Saudi sources, Riyadh has taken only limited action to disrupt fundraising for the UN 1267-listed Taliban and LeT-groups that are also aligned with al-Qa’ida and focused on undermining stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

(S/NF) Saudi Arabia has enacted important reforms to criminalize terrorist financing and restrict the overseas flow of funds from Saudi-based charities. However, these restrictions fail to include multilateral organizations such as the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), Muslim World League (MWL) and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY.) Intelligence suggests that these groups continue to send money overseas and, at times, fund extremism overseas. In 2002, the Saudi government promised to set up a Charities Committee that would address this issue, but has yet to do so. The establishment of such a mechanism, however, is secondary to the primary U.S. goal of obtaining Saudi acknowledgement of the scope of this problem and a commitment to take decisive action.

(S/NF) Department note: The Department received post’s comments regarding embassy staffing at Riyadh and recommendations for enhancing bilateral cooperation (ref B). The Department agrees with post’s recommendation that the U.S. must reinforce, on a political level, the Saudi Arabia Government’s recent acknowledgement that terrorist groups other than al-Qa’ida are a threat both to it and to regional stability. The Department also supports post’s assessment that consistent engagement, including the exchange of actionable intelligence, by senior USG officials is paramount. We plan to discuss these issues with the SAG during upcoming senior-level USG visits.

8. (U) Saudi Arabia talking points

(S/REL USA, SAU) We recognize your government’s efforts to disrupt al-Qa’ida networks in the Kingdom and we reaffirm our commitment to support the Saudi government in its actions on terror finance. We encourage your government to continue efforts against al-Qa’ida and stress the importance of sharing and acting on information related to terrorist financing.

(S/REL USA, SAU) We note your concerns with fundraising in the Kingdom by al-Qa’ida and other terrorist groups and urge decisive action to enforce the UN 1267-mandated asset freeze against Taliban and LeT fundraising similar to Saudi efforts to enforce UN 1267 sanctions and take other appropriate action to target al-Qa’ida.

(S/REL USA, SAU) We underscore that the Taliban and LeT are aligned with al-Qa’ida and that your government’s support for disrupting the financing of these groups is critical to the stability of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the broader Central and South Asian region. We emphasize the need to prevent the Taliban from using the cover of reconciliation talks to raise funds.

(S/REL USA, SAU) We urge your government to assume responsibility for the overseas operations of charities and NGOs headquartered in the Kingdom. We encourage you to prevent terrorists and their supporters from exploiting religious events (Hajj, Umrah, Ramadan) to raise funds. We acknowledge the recent adoption of stricter financial controls on charities, but urge greater regulation and oversight of the Saudi charitable sector.

(S/REL USA, SAU) We would like to stress our interest in broadening and deepening this dialogue and information exchange as we still lack detailed information on the ultimate sources of terrorist financing emanating from the Kingdom. We commend your government for recent efforts to put terrorists and terrorist financiers on trial, and we encourage you to publicize details of prosecutions to maximize the deterrent effects.

(S/REL USA, SAU) You have had success in detaining and deterring financial facilitators. However, we encourage your government also to focus on the long-term and more fundamental goal of dissuading donors from funding violent extremism.
We commend your government’s effort over the past several years to use the media, internet, and other forms of public outreach to discourage extremism. We emphasize that a critical component in this campaign is cutting off the flow of funds from Saudi Arabia to foreign religious, charitable, and educational organizations that propagate violent extremist ideologies to vulnerable populations.

9. (U) Kuwait background

The USG has consistently engaged the Government of Kuwait (GOK) about the specific activities of terrorist financiers in country, Kuwaiti charities financing terrorism abroad, and Kuwait’s lack of a comprehensive anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime. While the GOK has demonstrated a willingness to take action when attacks target Kuwait, it has been less inclined to take action against Kuwait-based financiers and facilitators plotting attacks outside of Kuwait. Al-Qaeda and other groups continue to exploit Kuwait both as a source of funds and as a key transit point.

The GOK has undertaken a number of initiatives to curb terrorist financing in the charitable sector (ending direct cash donations, increasing monitoring and supervising mosques and charitable organizations, and enhancing enforcement of regulations by a Ministry of Social Affairs task force). It also recently arrested some Kuwait-based Al-Qaeda facilitators, but it is too early to assess whether this marks a change in Kuwaiti policy of co-opting terrorists as a means of deflecting potential attacks against Kuwaiti interests.

Kuwait’s law prohibits efforts to undermine or attack Arab neighbors, a basis for the prosecution of Al-Qaeda facilitators, Kuwait remains the sole Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country that has not criminalized terrorist financing. The GOK faces an uphill battle to implement comprehensive terror finance legislation due to a lack of parliamentary support. However the government is also not currently prepared to push hard on this issue. The GOK at times has obstructed or been slow to enforce UN-mandated asset freezes of Kuwait-based entities.

A particular point of difference between the U.S. and Kuwait concerns Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS). In June 2008 the USG domestically designated all RIHS offices RIHS under Executive Order 13224 for providing financial and material support to Al-Qaeda and UN 1267-listed Al-Qaeda affiliates, including Lashkar e-Tayyiba, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Al-Ithida al-Islamiya. The United States nominated RIHS for listing under UNSCR 1267 but Indonesia placed a technical hold on the RIHS listing due concerns regarding RIHS’s presence in Indonesia. Libya also placed a hold - probably at Kuwait’s behest - citing insufficient information on RIHS’s activities. Indonesia has rotated off the United Nation’s Security Council so only Libya’s hold on RIHS remains. (Department note: Libya’s hold will drop in 2010 unless one of the newly elected UNSC Members places a hold on list RTHS.) In Kuwait, RIHS enjoys broad public support as a charitable entity. The GOK to date has not taken significant action to address or shut down RIHS’s headquarters or its branches, which is consistent with GOK tolerance of similar behavior by Kuwaiti citizens and organizations as long as the behavior occurs or is directed outside of Kuwait.

Department note: The Department appreciates post’s thorough description of the staffing situation at Mission Kuwait (ref B). The Department commends U.S. Embassy Kuwait for taking an active approach in proposing a strategy to build GOK capacity in combating financial crimes through training and seminars focused on legislation and law enforcement (ref C). The opportunity to engage the GOK on improving its capabilities to deal with financial crimes is enthusiastically welcomed by agencies in Washington. Washington agencies appreciate post’s assessment and identification of several focal areas that deal with financial crimes. These goals closely track the work of the IFTF Capacity Building Working Group. The Department commends Embassy Kuwait’s recent support of Kuwait’s National Anti Money Laundering Committee’s AML conference in early December 2009. In response to post’s request, the Department will work with relevant members of the Washington inter-agency to provide comments and feedback to the draft of Kuwait’s amended AML law.

10. (U) Kuwait talking points

We appreciate the breadth and depth of our strong bilateral relationship. We would like to see our cooperation on counter-terrorist financing improve to a level that matches our excellent cooperation in many other areas. In this respect, the recent Kuwait anti-money laundering conference held in Kuwait is a positive step forward.
Our information indicates that Kuwaiti donors serve as an important source of funds and other support for al-Qa'ida and other terrorist groups. The arrest in August of six Kuwaiti men who were plotting terrorist attacks on U.S. and Kuwait interests marks an important step in enhanced counterterrorism cooperation. We encourage you to keep up the positive momentum.

We underscore that the Taliban and LeT are aligned with al-Qa'ida and that your government’s support for disrupting the financing of these groups is critical to the stability of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the broader Central and South Asian region. We emphasize the need to prevent the Taliban from using the cover of reconciliation talks to raise funds.

We appreciate your government’s generosity for a wide range of important causes and for the positive contributions made by Kuwaiti charities. We commend Kuwait for some of the initiatives taken to enhance oversight of charitable donations, but we need you to do more to prevent the financing of terrorism abroad from Kuwaiti soil.

Our goal is to work more closely with your government to separate and protect legitimate charitable activity from those that fund terror. We have particular concerns about their foreign activities.

We remain concerned that the continued absence of counterterrorism legislation criminalizing terrorist financing will continue to prevent effective counterterrorist efforts.

We urge your government to prioritize the passage of counterterror finance legislation. Robust and comprehensive anti-money laundering and counterterror financing laws will enhance your government’s ability to prosecute those seeking to undermine Kuwait’s security, but will also enhance the reputation of Kuwait’s financial sector as a whole.

If raised, Kuwait RIHS: We have shared our concerns with your government regarding RIHS on numerous occasions. We designated the organization in the United States as a specially designated terrorist entity based on information that RIHS funds have supported terrorist groups in various regions of the world. The USG is not alone in its concern; six other governments (Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, and Russia) have taken enforcement action against RIHS branches in their countries.

We would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with you to ensure that RIHS and other charities cannot be used to support terrorists.

United Arab Emirates background

UAE-based donors have provided financial support to a variety of terrorist groups, including al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, LeT and other terrorist groups, including Hamas. Washington agencies note, however, that they have limited information on the identity of Taliban and LeT donors and facilitators in the UAE. Hence there is limited information to be shared with local interlocutors. Nonetheless, the point can be emphasized that the UAE’s role as a growing global financial center, coupled with weak regulatory oversight, makes it vulnerable to abuse by terrorist financiers and facilitation networks.

Department Note: The Department has received post’s comments regarding personnel staffing at Mission UAE and the challenges post faces. The Department is supportive of the action plan laid out on engaging with the UAE on Taliban finance issues (ref E). The Department assesses that a bilateral commitment by the United States and the UAE to focus on weaknesses within its financial regulatory measures is an important step in making progress on strengthening UAE efforts to disrupt potential terrorist financing.

United Arab Emirates talking points

We appreciate the depth and breadth of our bilateral relationship. Since 2001, we have developed a strong partnership with your government in countering financial support for al-Qa'ida, and more recently, in constricting Iran’s ability to use UAE financial institutions to support its nuclear program.

We would like to extend our cooperation and partnership to efforts to deal with
the threat represented by Taliban and LeT fundraising in the UAE. We believe that the United States and UAE, which both have troops in the field in Afghanistan, share a common interest in curtailing any Taliban or LeT fundraising activities and fully implementing UN 1267 sanctions on such activities on behalf of these groups in the UAE.

(S/REL USA, ARE) However, we are pleased that concerns have been raised in the UAE regarding the Taliban and LeT fundraising. We also commend the calls for increased vigilance, information sharing, and enforcement actions to disrupt and deter this activity.

(S/REL USA, ARE) In our view, the alignment of the Taliban and LeT with al-Qa’ida means that our mutual efforts to disrupt the financing of these groups also is critical to the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

(S/REL USA, ARE) We emphasize the need to prevent the Taliban from using the cover of reconciliation talks to travel and raise funds.

(S/REL USA, ARE) We appreciate your government’s willingness to work with the USG on cash courier interdiction and note that such efforts are crucial to undermine al-Qa‘ida, the Taliban, and other groups’ ability to exploit the UAE as a fundraising and facilitation hub. We urge your government to strengthen its regulatory and enforcement regime to interdict cash couriers transiting major airports.

13. (U) Pakistan background

(S/NF) Pakistan’s intermittent support to terrorist groups and militant organizations threatens to undermine regional security and endanger U.S. national security objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although Pakistani senior officials have publicly disavowed support for these groups, some officials from the Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) continue to maintain ties with a wide array of extremist organizations, in particular the Taliban, LeT and other extremist organizations. These extremist organizations continue to find refuge in Pakistan and exploit Pakistan’s extensive network of charities, NGOs, and madrassas. This network of social service institutions readily provides extremist organizations with recruits, funding and infrastructure for planning new attacks. On the international stage, Pakistan has sought to block the UNSCR 1267 listings of Pakistan-based or affiliated terrorists by requesting that China place holds on the nominations. China recently placed a technical hold on the designation of three Pakistan-based or affiliated terrorists nominated by India, although China did not prevent the most recent Pakistan-related U.S. designation nomination in June.

(S/NF) The Department has received post’s comments regarding personnel staffing and the detailed description of the challenges faced by Embassy Islamabad in the area of terrorism finance (ref D). Department leaves it to post discretion to determine which departments within the host government should receive the points provided in para 16 so that Pakistan fully understands the priority the USG places on this issue.

14. (U) Pakistan talking points

(S/REL USA, PAK) Emphasize that Pakistan’s support for disrupting financing to the Taliban and LeT obligatory pursuant to their obligations under UNSCR 1267 and successor resolutions, and is critical to achieving stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

(S/REL USA, PAK) We are deeply concerned that Pakistan has failed to enact an AML/CTF law that meets APG/FATF standards. As you may realize the FATF is currently engaged in a International Co-Operation Review Group exercise, that is likely to have very negative multilateral repercussions if the Parliament does not pass an adequate AML/CTF law.

(S/REL USA, PAK) We stress your government’s obligation, under UNSCR 1267, and successor resolutions to strictly enforce existing sanctions against the 142 Taliban, LeT leader Hafiz Saeed, LeT/JUD, al Rashid Trust, al Akhtar Trust and other individuals and entities on the UN 1267 Consolidated List.

(S/REL USA, PAK) We urge your government to support the international community’s efforts to combat terrorist financing. Your government’s views of UNSCR 1267 listing requests for LeT and other Pakistan-based terrorist groups should be made on the merits of the requests and not linked
to politics, including what country made the nomination or which countries are referenced in the public statements of the cases.

(S/REL USA, PAK) We urge your government to comply with UN and domestic legal obligations to enforce sanctions on the Pakistan-based, UN-proscribed NGOs al Rashid Trust and al Akhtar Trust, and all successor organizations that continue to funnel money and provide other forms of support to the Taliban and LeT.

(S/REL USA, PAK) We emphasize that social services provided by NGO extremist organizations, such as Jamaat-ud Dawa (JUD) challenge the legitimacy of your government to provide for its people. This includes relief efforts in the Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps of the Northwest Frontier Provinces by the new LeT/JUD charity Falah-e Insaniyat Foundation.

(S/REL USA, PAK) We stress that our governments must work together to ensure that there are moderate alternatives to terrorist-controlled social welfare networks upon which IDPs and other vulnerable populations currently rely. We must work together to develop and support NGOs not affiliated with terrorist groups, and establish a comprehensive oversight and enforcement mechanism for NGOs that is consistent with the Financial Action Task Force’s international standard.

(S/REL USA, PAK) We urge your Government in the strongest possible terms to take action against the Haqqani network, which is funneling weapons and fighters across the border to fight U.S. and Coalition Forces in Afghanistan. This network, led by Sirajuddin Haqqani who was listed by the UN under UNSCR 1267, funds its activities through illicit activities, including kidnapping, extortion, bank robbery, narcotics, smuggling, and fraud.

(S/REL USA, PAK) We urge your Government to replace the anti-money laundering decree recently promulgated by your Executive Branch with legislation fully consistent with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendations and to ensure that the current decree can stand in court. The FATF Forty Plus Nine Recommendations are international standards, which Pakistan, by virtue of its membership in the Asia-Pacific Group, committed to.

15. (U) Qatar background

(S/NF) Department Note: Qatar is one of the four Gulf countries included in the IFTF, and accordingly, the IFTF developed the background information included in para 16 for inclusion in the diplomatic engagement strategy. However, given the current focus of U.S. engagement with the GOQ on terror finance related to Hamas, it would be counter-productive for Embassy Doha to engage the GOQ at this time on disrupting financial support of terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

(S/NF) Qatar has adopted a largely passive approach to cooperating with the U.S. against terrorist financing. Qatar’s overall level of CT cooperation with the U.S. is considered the worst in the region. Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, UN-1267 listed LeT, and other terrorist groups exploit Qatar as a fundraising locale. Although Qatar’s security services have the capability to deal with direct threats and occasionally have put that capability to use, they have been hesitant to act against known terrorists out of concern for appearing to be aligned with the U.S. and provoking reprisals.

(S/NF) Department Note: The Department has received post’s comments regarding personnel staffing and the thorough description of the coordination process on terror finance issues at Embassy Doha (ref F). Department appreciates post’s assessment that GOQ definitions of what constitutes terrorism differs occasionally from those of the USG. Department agrees with post’s suggested approach on this issue of engaging with direct discussions with host government officials.

Points of contact and reporting deadline
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16. (U) Please direct any questions or comments on this request to EEB/ESC/TFS (Jay J. Jallorina or Linda Recht). Posts are requested to report back on responses from other governments by January 19, 2010. CLINTON
RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cash Flow to Terrorists Evades U.S. Efforts”
Assessing Saudi Counterterrorism Efforts

The American ambassador to Saudi Arabia expresses concern that money for terrorism emanating from the kingdom, and that the Saudis depend on leads from the C.I.A. in their efforts to counter the problem.

DATE 2010-02-12 12:15:00

SOURCE Embassy Riyadh

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 RIYADH 000182

NOFORN SIPDIS

S/FRAP FOR AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE DOHA FOR AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2020 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PTER, AFGN, SA, AF, PK SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE’S FEBRUARY 15-16 VISIT TO RIYADH

REF: KABUL 500

RIYADH 00000182 001.2 OF 003

classified By: Ambassador James B. Smith for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

1. (C) Ambassador Holbrooke, Embassy Riyadh warmly welcomes you to Saudi Arabia, which, by virtue of its historical and cultural ties to Central Asia; personal relationships between Saudi, Afghani and Pakistani leaders; financial power; and leadership of the Muslim world, can play a central role in implementing the President’s strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Your visit comes at a time of great potential but great uncertainty: the Saudi-Afghan relationship appears to be warming up, while the traditionally close Saudi-Pakistani relationship has grown increasingly strained. The Saudis are broadly supportive of our approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan, but occasionally express skepticism about our timing or our approach. Your visit provides an opportunity to mine the Saudis’ wealth of experience in dealing with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and extremism, and further explore ways to translate our shared goals into action in the unique Saudi context. We have requested meetings with GIP Director Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz, Assistant Interior Minister Prince Mohammed bin Nayif, and Prince Turki Al-Faisal during your visit.

2. (C) SAUDI-AFGHAN RELATIONS WARMING: President Karzai’s February 2-3 visit to the Kingdom, although richer in symbolism than substance, was a sign that lukewarm Saudi-Afghan relations may finally be warming up. In his official statement at the London Conference, FM Saud announced a $150 million pledge of additional financial support for Afghan reconstruction. He expressed broad Saudi support for reconciliation, adding that they would be willing to assist at the request of President Karzai-- on the condition that the Taliban sever its relationship with Al-Qaeda and cease providing refuge to its leaders. While not as forward leaning as we may have liked, FM Saud’s statement put the Saudis on the record and created an opportunity to put reconciliation talks back in motion--eventually. Saudi participation at the Turkish-led regional conference on Afghanistan on January 26 was further evidence of the Saudi commitment to engagement. Karzai’s visit showed that the King was ready to deal with Karzai as a legitimate, Muslim head of state. However, the Saudis continue to have concerns about Afghan corruption and believe greater political incorporation of the Pashtun community is essential. Their apparent wish to downplay Karzai’s visit--as compared to the Afghans (ref tel)--may also indicate the King’s desire to keep some distance and maintain his credibility as a potential reconciliation mediator.
3. (S/NF) BUT MEDIATION NOT READY FOR PRIME TIME: Privately, the Saudis tell us it's still “too soon” to be publicly discussing technical and financial aspects of reintegration efforts. GIP Director Prince Muqrin has made clear that his marching orders are to work through intelligence channels only until progress becomes sustainable, at which point foreign ministries will be brought in. In a recent meeting with the Ambassador, Prince Muqrin hinted at but did not provide details about what appears to be significant movement on the Saudi mediation effort, with visits by high-level Taliban and Afghan officials, since the Hajj. We surmise that Muqrin is reluctant to share information because the talks remain delicate and he fears U.S. involvement could derail progress. He has also voiced concern about how to address UNSCR 1267 prohibitions on dealing with various Taliban members.

4. (C) ZARDARI STILL THE PROBLEM IN PAKISTAN: The Saudis generally agree that there is a need to deny terrorists safehavens in Pakistan, but question whether the methods we have outlined will be effective. Despite tense relations with the Zardari government, close military and intelligence cooperation continues between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The Saudis believe opposition leader Nawaz Sharif can play a “great role” in working with tribal chiefs and that “money is better than bullets” in the fight against the Taliban. They have started to fulfill their pledge from the Tokyo donor’s conference (over half of the $700 million pledged has been disbursed) and have expressed a willingness to continue with financial support for a stable Pakistan. Saudi interlocutors stress the importance of remembering that Pakistan remains pre-occupied with issues on its Indian border, coloring its ability to deal with the Taliban.

5. (C) IN THE ARMY WE TRUST: The tumultuous democratic process in Pakistan makes the Saudis nervous, and they appear to be looking for “another Musharraf”: a strong, forceful leader they know they can trust. In his January meeting with General Jones, the King cited President Zardari as an impediment to denying terrorist safehavens, calling him an “obstacle” and “a rotten head” that was infecting the whole body. He maintained that the Pakistani Army was capable of being a strong partner for the U.S., and opined that U.S. development assistance would rebuild trust. He asserted that that the Army was staying out of Pakistani politics in deference to U.S. wishes, rather than doing what it “should.” FM Saud told General Jones that we must reach out to tribal leaders and separate “those we could work with” from “those we must fight.” He believed that using the military to fight extremists posed certain dangers, and that the credibility of the army must be maintained. The Saudis were pushing Pakistan’s civilian leaders to work together, but “compromise seemed alien to Pakistani politicians.”

6. (C) TURKI’S TAKE: During a recent meeting with Ambassador, former GIP Director Prince Turki Al-Faisal called Afghanistan a “puzzle,” where establishing trust with Afghan leaders, and recognizing the links between Pakistan and the Taliban, were keys to success. All financial aid to the Afghan government should be conditional: benchmarks must be set for the leadership, and aid must be withheld until these are met. Recent Saudi efforts to assist in Taliban mediation had failed, he said, when “both sides fell short.” He described the Taliban leadership as “fractured,” and suggested the U.S. and NATO needed to target criminal elements more vociferously and re-focus our attention on capturing Osama Bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri. He suggested Saudi Arabia, the U.S., China, Russia, Afghanistan and Pakistan could join forces and share assets in order to capture or kill bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri. This would break the terrorists’ “aura of invincibility” and allow the U.S. to “declare victory” and move on.

7. (S/NF) TERRORISM FINANCE: Terrorist funding emanating from Saudi Arabia remains a serious concern. Over the last year, however, Saudi Arabia has made important progress in combating al-Qaida financing emanating from the country. Sensitive reporting indicates that al-Qaida’s ability to raise funds has deteriorated substantially, and that it is now in its weakest state since 9/11. The Kingdom is also cooperating more actively than at any previous point to respond to terrorist financing concerns raised by the United States, and to investigate and detain financial facilitators of concern. Nonetheless, sustained engagement is required to maintain the current momentum, particularly in providing the Saudis with specific details and actionable information. Your visit provides another opportunity to welcome the progress Saudi Arabia has made, and reiterate the importance that President Obama and the USG place on curtailing fundraising activity by global terrorist groups in Saudi Arabia, particularly those that undermine the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

8. (S/NF) TERRORISM FINANCE, CONTINUED: While in the past the KSA stood reluctant to pursue Saudi donors who backed groups that did not directly threaten the Kingdom, the Saudi Ministry of Interior (MOI) has now demonstrated willingness to take action, and has begun to detain
individuals involved in funding networks for groups such as Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT), the Taliban, and in some cases even Hamas. Our TF cooperation with the MOI is of utmost strategic importance to U.S. national security as donors in Saudi Arabia continue to constitute a source of funding to Sunni extremist groups worldwide. Available intelligence reflects that the Kingdom remains an important fundraising locale—especially during the Hajj and Ramadan—for the Taliban, LeT, and other terrorist groups based in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The MOI remains almost completely dependent on the CIA to provide analytic support and direction for its counterterrorism operations. As such, our success against terrorist financing in the Kingdom remains directly tied to our ability to provide actionable intelligence to our Saudi counterparts. In order to enhance the USG’s ability to influence and direct Saudi efforts to disrupt terrorist financing, in 2008 we stood up a Treasury attach office in Embassy Riyadh. This office actively contributes to the daily intelligence sharing process that is led by CIA.

9. (S/NF) TERRORISM FINANCE, CONTINUED: Saudi Arabia has taken increasingly aggressive efforts to disrupt al-Qaida’s access to funding from Saudi sources. An example of recent progress by the KSA is the conviction of over 300 people for involvement in terrorism, including some for providing financial support. News reports suggest that appeals may be opened to the media in order to enhance the deterrent effects of such prosecutions. In addition, Assistant Interior Minister for Security Affairs Mohammed bin Nayif stated that the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) deliberately timed its August 19, 2009 press release regarding the arrest of 44 terrorist supporters to deter potential donors from giving money to suspected terrorist groups during Ramadan. Although a great deal of work remains to be done, Mohammed bin Nayif has given his commitment to work with the United States on Taliban finance, and has said that the MOI will arrest individuals involved in Saudi-based Taliban fundraising activities—even if involved in the reconciliation process—when provided with actionable intelligence.

10. (S/NF) IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES: The Saudis have expressed broad support for the President’s strategy on Afghanistan and Pakistan, but often balk when asked to designate an SRAP to coordinate policy with the USG and others. In part, this reflects the centralized Saudi decision-making process and the reality that issues related to Afghanistan and Pakistan policy are not delegated, but rather dealt with directly by the King and members of the intelligence community. While the Saudis are hesitant to delegate authority and tend to make only broad-based commitments to high-profile, multilateral initiatives, they appear ready, willing and eager to share their experiences with us and identify greater opportunities for cooperation on a bilateral basis. Your visit provides an opportunity to further explore how we can best translate our shared goals into action in the unique Saudi context.

SMITH
Kuwaiti Has Doubts on Return of Detainees

In this cable, Kuwait’s interior minister privately expresses doubts about his government’s ability to handle the return of Guantánamo detainees who are committed to militancy.

DATE 2009-02-05 16:36:00

SOURCE Embassy Kuwait

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000110

NOFORN SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2029 TAGS: PREL, PTER, PINR, KU, IR SUBJECT: THE INTERIOR MINISTER’S REMEDY FOR TERRORISTS: “LET THEM DIE.”

REF: KUWAIT 0095

Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: During a February 3 meeting in their ongoing dialog on US-Kuwait CT cooperation, Kuwaiti Minister of Interior Shaykh Jaber al-Khalid Al Sabah discussed with Ambassador US and Kuwaiti efforts to locate and apprehend terror financiers (including Mohammed Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Al-Ali, aka Jawad/Abu Umar), applauded improved liaison information exchange, expressed skepticism Kuwait would ever develop a rehabilitation center for former GTMO detainees and other extremists supporting jihad, and suggested the US should release current GTMO detainees back into Afghanistan, where they could be killed in combat. He sardonically questioned why US NAVCENT forces had gone to the trouble of rescuing foundering Iranian hashish smugglers two weeks earlier, saying “God meant to punish them with death and you saved them. Why?” Characterizing the previous Saturday’s provincial elections as a “huge success,” Shaykh Jaber expressed his belief that President Obama and the US had the tools necessary to successfully confront all challenges. END SUMMARY.

2. (S/NF) Ambassador called on Shaykh Jaber February 3 to review progress on our CT liaison relationship and to seek the Interior Minister’s support for operational concepts aimed at intercepting individuals involved in the exploitation of traditional smuggling routes in the northern Gulf to move would-be jihadists and their financier/facilitators between Kuwait and Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Shaykh Jaber began the meeting by applauding the “huge success” of the provincial elections in Iraq and expressing his confidence in the ability of President Obama and the “super power” US to address current challenges.

3. (S/NF) Ambassador noted she’d met recently with VADM McCraven, now JSOC commander for this region, and that they’d discussed alternative approaches to staunching the flows of terror financing, given the constraints of Kuwait’s current legal and political systems. Offering his support for these approaches ) and underscoring that he was as concerned about terrorist influences from Saudi Arabia as from Iran, given the loose border controls -- the Minister expressed his understanding of what he characterized (fairly) as improved information exchange between our services, while acknowledging the ongoing deficiencies in Kuwait’s legal system that stymie effective prosecution and restraint of these individuals once captured.

4. (S/NF) Ambassador noted recent press reports that self-confessed jihadi recruiter and financier Mohammed al-Bathali had been released on a 500 dinar bond after being sentenced to three of a possible five years imprisonment for “inciting jihad against a friendly state.” (Ref tel) At the same time, Kuwait’s Ambassador to the US, Shaykh Salem Al Sabah, had approached S/WCI Ambassador Clint Williamson to inquire after the status of Kuwait’s four remaining GTMO
detainees. Ambassador clarified that President Obama’s announcement of our determination to close the detention center at Guantanamo did not mean we no longer had security concerns which would be factored into any release scenarios; the Kuwaiti detainees were nasty, unrepentant individuals and Kuwait’s record had been tarnished by the example of former GTMO detainee al-Aljmi, who’d allegedly blown himself up in Mosul following his release to the Kuwaiti authorities. Ambassador asked the Interior Minister the status of the rehabilitation center Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al Sabah had mentioned in his September 18th conversation with then-Secretary Rice in Washington. Ambassador noted that we were aware of the stories of Saudis who’d gone through SAG rehabilitation centers only to re-emerge with Al Qaeda in Yemen; nonetheless, the GOK had to take steps to show its seriousness in changing and controlling the behaviors of extremists within its society.

5. (S/NF) Shaykh Jaber replied with an anecdote: Following the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and Desert Storm, General Schwarzkopf had raised the issue of “rehabilitating” Kuwaitis who’d been exposed to the brutality of war so that they could re-integrate into society. Shaykh (Ret,d General) Jaber had replied: “But you are thinking of the Vietnam model, where young war veterans came home to empty apartments or anonymous urban environments. That is not who we are. We are a small, close-knit society and everyone knows each other. No one will feel alienated: those who can heal will heal naturally with family; those who cannot heal in that environment will never heal.”

Relating this to the current topic, Shaykh Jaber told the Ambassador: “You know better than I that we cannot deal with these people (i.e. the GTMO detainees). I can’t detain them. If I take their passports, they will sue to get them back (Note: as happened with Al-Aljmi. End note.) I can talk to you into next week about building a rehabilitation center, but it won’t happen. We are not Saudi Arabia; we cannot isolate these people in desert camps or somewhere on an island. We cannot compel them to stay. If they are rotten, they are rotten and the best thing to do is get rid of them. You picked them up in Afghanistan; you should drop them off in Afghanistan, in the middle of the war zone.”

6. (S/NF) Ambassador then raised with the Minister developing an SOP for dealing with incidents such as the recent rescue by US NAVCENT forces in the northern Gulf of seven Iranian smugglers whose boat was foundering while engaged in smuggling hashish. In the event, the Omani had agreed to repatriate the Iranians but we nonetheless needed to think about dealing with similar episodes in future in expeditious fashion. The initial response of the Kuwaiti Coast Guard had been to refer the matter to the Minister of Interior, via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ambassador noted our supposition that the Kuwaiti Coast Guard must have had similar experiences with Iranian smugglers who needed repatriation to Iran. Smiling broadly, the Interior Minister deflected the question, saying “God wished to punish them for smuggling drugs by drowning them, and then you saved them. So they’re your problem! You should have let them drown.” In any case, he added, the Kuwaitis generally sent the Iranians back to Iran in their own boats so there had not been a question of physically handing them over.

7. (S/NF) In closing, Ambassador noted that the Minister had created the position of Special Advisor to Shaykh Jaber for Kuwait Security Services (our GRPO liaison counterpart) and assigned Shaykh Salman Sabah al-Salem al-Humoud Al Sabah, to that role. Ambassador asked whether the Minister believed there was any appropriate liaison relationship between the Embassy and Shaykh Salman, to which the Minister replied in the negative. Finally, the Ambassador invited the Minister to join her in attending the US Ambassador’s reception February 24 at the IDEX event in Abu Dhabi, as part of our efforts to boost the relationship.

8. (C) COMMENT: The Minister was as frank and pessimistic as ever when it came to the subject of apprehending and detaining terror financiers and facilitators under Kuwait’s current legal and political framework. Ongoing tensions between parliament and the PM and his cabinet make any changes highly unlikely any time soon. The remaining GTMO detainees remain a particularly thorny issue for the leadership here, who privately recognize the downsides of taking custody and readily acknowledge their inability to manage them but who remain under strong domestic political pressure to “bring their boys home.” Telling was the fact that press accounts of the Ambassador’s February 3 meeting with the Minister (which was one-on-one with a notetaker) and her meeting two days earlier with the MFA U/S focused solely on the GTMO issue, although it was discussed only marginally. END COMMENT.

For more reporting from Embassy Kuwait, visit: visit Kuwait’s Classified Website at:
RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Depict U.S. Haggling to Clear Guantánamo”
Concerns Over Releasing Yemeni Detainees

In this cable, the president of Yemen meets with a top counterterrorism adviser to President Obama. Among other things they discuss what to do about the dozens of Yemeni detainees still imprisoned at Guantánamo who have been deemed to pose little risk if they are transferred but who might cause problems because of the poor security conditions in Yemen.

DATE 2009-09-15 06:12:00

SOURCE Embassy Sanaa

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T SANAA 001669

SIPDIS NOFORN

NSC FOR APDNSA JOHN BRENNAN AND DENISE MORAGA DEPT FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD


REF: SANAA 01549

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b), (c), and (d).

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. In a September 6 meeting with Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan, President Saleh pledged unfettered access to Yemen’s national territory for U.S. counterterrorism operations, suggesting that in the process, the USG assumed responsibility for the success - or failure - of efforts to neutralize AQAP in Yemen. Saleh expressed dissatisfaction with the USG’s current level of aid for CT and security operations and insisted the ROYG began its war against the al-Houthi rebellion in northern Yemen on behalf of the U.S. Saleh stated his preference for Saudi Arabia over Jordan as a potential rehabilitation site for Guantanamo detainees of Yemeni origin, but claimed the ROYG was willing and able to accept them in Yemeni prisons. In a one-on-one that followed, Brennan extended an invitation to Saleh to visit President Obama at the White House on October 6. END SUMMARY.

"OPEN LAND, AIR, AND SEA" FOR U.S. STRIKES AGAINST AQAP

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2. (S/NF) In a September 6 meeting with Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan, President Saleh insisted that Yemen’s national territory is available for unilateral CT operations by the U.S. Dissatisfied with current levels of USG funding and military training provided to the ROYG’s CT forces, Saleh asserted that the USG has produced “only words, but no solutions” to the terrorism issue in Yemen. Saleh repeatedly requested more funds and equipment to fight al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), while at the same time placing responsibility for any future AQAP attacks on the shoulders of the USG now that it enjoys unfettered access to Yemeni airspace, coastal waters and land. (NOTE. The USG has been actively engaged since 2001 in training elements of Yemen’s CT forces, including the Counter-Terrorism Unit (CTU), the Yemen Special Operations Force (YSOF), the Presidential Guard, the Yemeni Border Troops, Yemen Air Force (YAF), and the Yemen Coast Guard (YCG). The USG has expended over $115 million equipping CT forces since FY02. In 2009 alone, U.S. teams have instructed Yemeni CT forces in training valued at $5 million. END NOTE.)

3. (S/NF) While Saleh offered assurances that the ROYG is “determined to continue the war against
al-Qaeda because they’re targeting U.S. and Yemeni interests,” he continued to link increased U.S. access to AQAP targets with full responsibility for achieving CT goals. Highlighting the potential for a future AQAP attack on the U.S. Embassy or other Western targets, Saleh said, “I have given you an open door on terrorism, so I am not responsible.”

THE SA’ADA WAR: “THE HOUTHIS ARE YOUR ENEMIES TOO”

4. (S/NF) President Saleh expressed his frustration with the USG refusal to view the Sa’ada war against the al-Houthis in the north in the same light as the fight against AQAP. Claiming a need for increased aid and support, Saleh asserted that “this war we’re launching is a war on behalf of the U.S....the Houthis are your enemies too,” citing videos of al-Houthi followers chanting, “Death to Israel, death to America.” (NOTE: The Houthis have not attacked U.S. interests or personnel in the six rounds of fighting between the ROYG and the Houthis that began in 2004. END NOTE.) The USG’s failure to view the Houthis as terrorists and equip ROYG forces to fight them in Sa’ada undermines the USG’s claims of friendship and cooperation, according to Saleh. Commenting on the status of ROYG forces in Sa’ada, Saleh said, “we are suffering a lot of casualties and loss of material.” Renewing his requests for armored personnel vehicles, aircraft, and medical evacuation vehicles, Saleh echoed his criticism of U.S. efforts. “We need deeds, not only words,” he said. Brennan responded that the USG is prohibited by law from providing military support to the ROYG to be used against the Houthis since the USG considers the group a domestic insurgency.

5. (S/NF) Restating claims of Iranian support to the Houthi movement, ROYG officials present said they had provided files supporting an Iranian-Houthi connection to USG officials and would provide more if necessary. (NOTE. The Ambassador acknowledged receiving a file that was reviewed here and in Washington; however, no conclusive evidence of an Iranian-Houthi link has been made from these or other records. Brennan said that he would request a fresh scrub of all available intelligence to see if it turned up any evidence of Iranian involvement. END NOTE.) Saleh said, “Iran is trying to settle old scores against the U.S. by ruining relations between Yemen and GCC countries and the U.S.” He also made a tangential reference to Hezbollah, claiming the organization’s influence in the region also rendered the ROYG-Houthi war a fight on behalf of the U.S. Referencing the high poverty rate and illicit arms flows into both Yemen and Somalia, Saleh concluded by saying, “If you don’t help, this country will become worse than Somalia.”

MUDDLED MESSAGES ON GUANTANAMO DETAINEES

6. (S/NF) Saleh expressed his preference for the existing Saudi Arabia option as a potential site for rehabilitating Guantanamo detainees of Yemeni origin over a proposed Jordanian option, citing closer familial ties and cultural bonds in Saudi Arabia as mechanisms for more effective treatment. Saleh commented that he thought the Jordanians were too poor to support a rehabilitation program, but did not dismiss Jordan as an option. However, he signaled that rehabilitation is not his concern, but rather “the U.S.’s problem” as he is ready and willing to accept all Yemeni detainees into the Yemeni prison system. (COMMENT. Saleh would, in our judgment, be unable to hold returning detainees in jail for any more than a matter of weeks before public pressure or the courts forced their release. END COMMENT.) Saleh urged the USG to design and implement a rehabilitation and education program for the detainees and to build a rehabilitation center in Yemen, but reiterated that the U.S. would have to fund these projects, repeatedly asking, “How many dollars is the U.S. going to bring?” However, when Brennan offered $500,000 as an initial investment currently available for the crafting of a rehabilitation program, Saleh dismissed the offer as insufficient. Saleh also assured Brennan that he was committed to “freeing the innocent people after a complete and total rehabilitation,” suggesting a lack of clarity on his own policy and on the status of Guantanamo detainees in the ROYG legal system.

ECONOMIC REFORM AND CORRUPTION

7. (S/NF) Saleh welcomed the letter from President Obama that Brennan hand-carried, and expressed appreciation for U.S. concern over the stability and economic hardships facing the country. He agreed to move forward with the 10-point plan outlining necessary economic reforms (reftel) but did not provide details regarding dates or implementation goals. Responding to Brennan’s concerns that economic and other assistance might be diverted through corrupt officials to other purposes, Saleh urged the U.S. to donate supplies and hardware rather than liquid funds in order to curb corruption’s reach. Saleh also told US officials that they could have full access to financial records to ensure proper usage of donor funding. (COMMENT. Saleh’s preference for infrastructure...
and equipment over cash displays a lack of confidence in his own regime’s ability to handle liquid assets and hardly provides a viable solution for stemming the curb of corruption in the long run. END COMMENT.)

VISIT TO WASHINGTON & OTHER ISSUES
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8. (S/NF) Saleh again asked to visit the U.S., arguing that it was necessary to resolve issues regarding the Guantanamo detainees and increased military assistance. “We see this visit as very important to reach mutual understanding and so that you understand our requests and demands.” Brennan undertook to look into Saleh’s claims of “promised” military equipment that has not been delivered. In a one-on-one session that followed the formal meeting, Brennan extended an invitation to Saleh to meet President Obama at the White House on October 6. Saleh also stated that there would be no more delays in the U.S. Embassy’s request to purchase lands for the building of more secure housing facilities and that the Shari’a Council would approve the transfer of the lands from waqf (or publicly held) status to free-hold status.

COMMENT
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9. (S/NF) COMMENT. Saleh was in vintage form during the two hours he spent with DNSA Brennan, at times disdainful and dismissive and at others, conciliatory and congenial. One might easily conclude that his repeated assertion that Yemen’s national territory is open to the US to conduct operations against AQAP reflects his interest in outsourcing the CT effort in Yemen to the USG, especially in view of his somewhat ominous claim that, should AQAP attacks occur in the future, they will be the result of the U.S. having failed to do enough to put the organization out of business. Additionally, a concerted USG anti-terrorism campaign in Yemen will free Saleh to continue to devote his limited security assets to the ongoing war against Houthi rebels in Sa’ada. The net effect, and one we strongly suspect Saleh has calculated, of both the American and ROYG “iron fist” unleashed at the same time in Yemen will be a clear message to the southern movement or any other party interested in generating political unrest in the country that a similar fate awaits them.

10. (S/NF) COMMENT CONTINUED. Not surprisingly, Saleh was far less animated when Brennan attempted to focus his attention on the need for immediate action to relieve Yemen’s deteriorating socio-economic situation, largely limiting his response to a pitch that the USG persuade recalcitrant donors to speed up and increase their assistance to Yemen. After stating petulantly in the group session that he was no longer interested in an invitation to the White House, telling Brennan that “my relationship with you is sufficient,” Saleh’s mood changed noticeably for the better when the invitation was extended, and he had captured the prize he has been chasing for months. END COMMENT. SECHE

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Depict U.S. Haggling to Clear Guantánamo”
Saudi Rehabilitation Program for Militants

This cable, written to the ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee in advance of a visit to Saudi Arabia, discusses several foreign policy and national security matters involving the Saudis, including their much watched rehabilitation program aimed at persuading extremists to give up jihad and reintegrate into society.

DATE 2009-03-31 14:32:00

SOURCE Embassy Riyadh

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET RIYADH 000496

NOFORN

DEPT FOR H(SHANE) AND H/RGF(LANG)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/31/2019 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PTER, ECON, SA SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR SENATOR BOND’S APRIL 6-8 VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission David Rundell for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (U) The Embassy welcomes your visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This message provides a brief overview of key current issues in U.S. - Saudi relations, tailored to the particular issues that your Saudi interlocutors will likely raise with you.

2. (C) You will be arriving six days after an Arab League Summit in Doha. Despite the Saudis pulling out all the diplomatic stops to ensure the summit conveyed publicly a sufficient degree of Arab unity, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's eccentric outburst showed that deep fissures still exist. This was the second such embarrassment in the past three months showing the Arabs to be badly divided on regional security issues after public disagreements at the Arab Economic Summit in Kuwait in January.

U.S. Saudi Relations on the Mend

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3. (C) As you will hear, Saudi foreign policy calculations are driven by a deep fear and suspicion of expanding Iranian influence. While U.S.-Saudi relations have improved dramatically since their post-9/11 nadir, differences remain over U.S. Middle East policies. The Saudis have three principal issues areas of concern about U.S. policies:

--(C) As the author of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, King Abdallah risked his personal prestige to advocate a comprehensive Middle East peace as the “strategic option” for the Arabs, only to be frustrated by what he saw as U.S. reluctance to engage over the next seven years.

--(C) Similarly, in the Saudi view, we ignored advice from the King and Foreign Minister against invading Iraq. In the words of Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal, "military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan has tilted the (regional) balance of power towards Iran."

--(C) Finally, the U.S. debate over whether and how to engage Iran has fueled Saudi fears that a new U.S. administration might strike a “grand bargain” without first consulting Arab countries bordering the Persian Gulf.
4. (C) Saudi King Abdallah issued a royal decree appointing his half-brother, Interior Minister Prince Nayif bin Abdalaziz, as second deputy prime minister March 27. The position had been vacant since Abdallah became King in 2005. Though the previous two crown princes held Nayif’s new position prior to being formally tapped as heirs to the throne, this appointment does not necessarily mean Nayif is “Crown Prince in Waiting,” because King Abdallah created a committee -- the Allegiance Council -- to select the King’s successor.

5. (S) The King was likely driven by expediency. Crown Prince Sultan is for all intents and purposes incapacitated, and the King needed to travel abroad. Someone had to be left in charge and Nayif, by virtue of his seniority among the sons of Abdalaziz and his position as Minister of Interior, was by tradition the leading candidate for the job. Assistant Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayif (MBN) told the Ambassador that his father’s appointment should not be seen in the light of succession, but as “an administrative necessity.”

Internal security
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6. (C/NF) With our assistance, Saudi Arabia has largely defeated terrorism at home. The Saudis are now arguably our most important counterterrorist intelligence partner. They established tighter controls on charities and the transporting of cash to disrupt terrorist finance. We have signed an Information Sharing Agreement with the Kingdom and started to exchange Airline Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record (API/PNR) data to help track terrorist suspects and facilitate legitimate travel. We can say clearly that Saudi Arabia is now part of the solution, not the problem.

7. (S/NF) The Saudi leadership remains greatly concerned about the vulnerability of its energy production facilities, and has put MBN of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in charge of efforts to acquire the capability to defend this key infrastructure. He is looking primarily to the U.S. to build this capability through an initiative formalized in May 2008 when Secretary Rice and Prince Nayif signed a TCA creating the Joint Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection. We have established an inter-agency, DOS/DOD/DOE, security advisory organization, the Office of Program Management-Ministry of Interior (OPM-MOI), to implement this bilateral security agreement. King Abdullah has made the protection of Saudi Arabia’s critical infrastructure a top security priority, with MBN fully empowered to achieve this objective.

Rehabilitation Program
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8. (S/NF) We estimate that at least 1,500 former extremists have passed through the Interior Ministry’s rehabilitation program for extremists (1,200 through the prison rehab program and 300 through the care center), including 119 Guantanamo returnees, with an overall recidivism rate of 8-10 percent. Despite the front page treatment of former Guantanamo detainee Sa’eed al-Shihri’s appearance in Yemen, the real story of the Saudi rehabilitation program is one of success: at least 90 percent of its graduates appear to have given up jihad and reintegrated into Saudi society. The recidivists are the exception, not the rule. The Ministry takes a dynamic approach to the rehab program and will look for ways to strengthen it by learning from these incidents of recidivism.

9. (S/NF) We know less about recidivism among non-Guantanamo detainees since they were arrested here for activities inside Saudi Arabia and as such their cases are an internal Saudi matter. However we believe a small minority of these have re-engaged in violent extremist activity, and MOI tells us former Guantanamo detainees were harder to rehabilitate than this other category.

The Peace Process after Gaza
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10. (C) King Abdullah stated the Saudi position bluntly in the opening session of the January Summit in Kuwait: Israel should realize that the choice between peace and war will not be available indefinitely, and the Saudi-authored Arab Peace Initiative, currently on the table, will not remain there forever. However, the Saudis have made no move to withdraw the plan yet. Saudi and Arab public opinion have reacted strongly to the Israeli offensive on Gaza, creating
intense pressure on Arab governments to act. The Saudis fear instability and increasing Iranian influence could result, and believe that there is a limited window of opportunity for action.

Iran

11. (S) Iran remains the strategic threat at the forefront of Saudi security concerns. Senior U.S. officials visiting the Kingdom recently have heard the King expound at length about the great danger that Iran poses to the region. In general, the Saudi leadership has begun to look at all regional security issues through the prism of their fears about growing Iranian influence. They see Iran’s activities as dangerously provocative, not only in Iraq, but also in Lebanon, Bahrain, Yemen, parts of Africa, and southeast Asia. King Abdullah met with Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki earlier this month, and subsequently informed the NSC’s John Brennan that he had had a “heated exchange” with Mottaki, upbraiding him that “Persians” have no business meddling in “Arab” affairs and threatening that he would give Iran no more than a year to repair its relations in the region. Saudi intelligence chief Prince Muqrin told Brennan the “Shi’a crescent has become a full moon,” implying that the Saudis are surrounded by Iranian intrigues.

12. (S) On Iranian nuclear activities, the Saudi view is that nations have the right to a peaceful nuclear program, but that Iran does not have the right to do what it is doing. The Saudis want to see a peaceful solution to the Iran nuclear problem but they also want reassurance that Saudi interests will be factored into any deal struck with Iran.

Afghanistan

13. (S/NF) We have been encouraging the Saudi government to be more active in support of the Karzai government, in particular by helping to train, or to fund the training of, Afghan security forces. Saudi Arabia has been helpful in providing assistance, but we would like them to do more. One area in which Saudi diplomacy has been forward leaning is in offering to help mediate between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Pakistan

14. (C) The Saudis are extremely concerned about Pakistan’s political fragility, and have worked hard, through their embassy in Islamabad, to bring the Pakistani factions together. Saudi relations with Pakistan have been strained because the Saudis don’t trust Zardari and see him and other leading Pakistani politicians as corrupt. Zardari visited Saudi Arabia last November for talks with King Abdullah on Saudi support for the “Friends of Pakistan” initiative and oil subsidies. The visit was an opportunity for Zardari to persuade skeptical Saudis that he can be a trustworthy partner in managing one of Saudi Arabia’s most important regional relationships, but his trip appears not to have resulted in new Saudi assistance or other commitments. The Saudis say they have been holding back economic and political support pending evidence that the political situation in Pakistan is stabilizing.

FRAKER

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables Depict U.S. Haggling to Clear Guantánamo”
Arab League Weighed Boycott of Spielberg in 2007

A 2007 cable from Damascus, Syria, reported that the Arab League planned to boycott the American director Steven Spielberg and his foundation because he had made a $1 million donation to Israel during its 2006 conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon.
meeting, expressing confidence that the boycott was growing stronger and asserting that Israel’s position in the region was becoming weaker. Echoing what seemed like a SARG-supplied talking point, Ajami also claimed that Syria is now being recognized as a key player in regional problems and beyond. CORBIN
SECRET PARTY LIFE OF SAUDI ELITE

A 2009 cable from Saudi Arabia provided a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the wild social life of elite Saudi youth and their “freedom to indulge carnal pursuits” away from the prying eyes of the religious police.

DATE 2009-11-18 16:58:00

SOURCE Consulate Jeddah

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000443

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD

EO 12958 DECL: 10/31/2014

TAGS SA, SCUL, SOCI, ZR, KISL

SUBJECT: UNDERGROUND PARTY SCENE IN JEDDAH: SAUDI YOUTH

FROLIC UNDER “PRINCELY PROTECTION”

REF: A. JEDDAH 0292 B. JEDDAH 0079

JEDDAH 00000443 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Consul General Martin R. Quinn for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: Behind the facade of Wahabi conservatism in the streets, the underground nightlife for Jeddah’s elite youth is thriving and throbbing. The full range of worldly temptations and vices are available -- alcohol, drugs, sex -- but strictly behind closed doors. This freedom to indulge carnal pursuits is possible merely because the religious police keep their distance when parties include the presence or patronage of a Saudi royal and his circle of loyal attendants, such as a Halloween event attended by ConGenOffs on. [DETAIL REMOVED] Over the past few years, the increased conservatism of Saudi Arabia’s external society has pushed the nightlife and party scene in Jeddah even further underground. End summary.

Elite party like the rest of the world,

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just underground

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2. (C) Along with over 150 young Saudis (men and women mostly in their 20’s and early 30’s), ConGenOffs accepted invitations to an underground Halloween party at PrinceXXXXXXXXXXXX residence in Jeddah on XXXXXXXXXX. Inside the gates, past the XXXXXXXXXX security guards and after the abaya coat-check, the scene resembled a nightclub anywhere outside the Kingdom: plentiful
alcohol, young couples dancing, a DJ at the turntables, and everyone in costume. Funding for the party came from a corporate sponsor, XXXXXXXa U.S.-based energy-drink company as well as from the princely host himself.

Royalty, attended by “khawi,” keep religious police at bay

3. (C) Religious police/CPVPV (Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice) were nowhere to be seen and while admission was controlled through a strictly-enforced guest list, the partygoers were otherwise not shy about publicizing the affair. According to a young Saudi from a prominent Jeddah merchant family, the Saudis try to throw parties at princes’ houses or with princes in attendance, which serves as sufficient deterrent to interference by the CPVPV. There are over 10,000 princes in the Kingdom, albeit at various levels and gradations -- “Royal Highnesses” (“Saheb Al Sumou Al Maliki”) signified by direct descent from King Abdulaziz, and mere “Highnesses” (“Saheb Al Sumou”) from less direct branches of the Al Saud ruling family. Our host that evening, xxxxxx (protect), traces his roots to Thunayan, a brother of Mohammad, Amir of Diriiyah and Nejd (1725-65), King Abdullah’s direct ancestor, six generations back. Although Prince XXXXXXXXX is not in line for the throne, he still enjoys the perks of a mansion, luxury car, lifetime stipend, and security entourage. (Note: Most of the prince XXXXXXXXX’s security forces were young xxxxxxxxx men. It is common practice for Saudi princes to grow up with hired bodyguards from Nigeria or other African nations who are of similar age and who remain with the prince well into adulthood. They are called “khawi,” derived from the Arabic word “akh,” meaning “brother.” The lifetime spent together creates an intense bond of loyalty. End note.)

Availability of black market alcohol, prostitutes, and drugs

4. (C) Alcohol, though strictly prohibited by Saudi law and custom, was plentiful at the party’s well-stocked bar, well-patronized by Halloween revellers. The hired Filipino bartenders served a cocktail punch using “sadiqi,” a locally-made “moonshine.” While top-shelf liquor bottles were on display throughout the bar area, the original contents were reportedly already consumed and replaced by sadiqi. On the black market, a bottle of Smirnoff can cost 1,500 riyals when available, compared to 100 riyals for the locally-made vodka. It was also learned through word-of-mouth that a number of the guests were in fact “working girls,” not uncommon for such parties.

JEDDAH 00000443 002.2 OF 002

Additionally, though not witnessed directly at this event, cocaine and hashish use is common in these social circles and has been seen on other occasions.

5. (C) Comment: Saudi youth get to enjoy relative social freedom and indulge fleshly pursuits, but only behind closed doors -- and only the rich. Parties of this nature and scale are believed to be a relatively recent phenomenon in Jeddah. One contact, a young Saudi male, explained that up to a few years ago, the only weekend activity was “dating” inside the homes of the affluent in small groups. It is not uncommon in Jeddah for the more lavish private residences to include elaborate basement bars, discos, entertainment centers and clubs. As one high society Saudi remarked, “The increased conservatism of our society over these past years has only moved social interaction to the inside of people’s homes.” End comment.

QUINN
Israel Spy Scandal Touches New Zealand

This 2004 cable from New Zealand reports on the diplomatic dispute over a jail sentence for two Israelis suspected of being intelligence agents. They were charged with trying to obtain a false New Zealand passport.

DATE 2004-07-16 04:20:00

SOURCE Embassy Wellington

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000605

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/ANP

NSC FOR GREEN, JONES

EO 12958 DECL: 07/15/2014

TAGS PGOV, PREL, PINR, NZ

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND IMPOSES "STRICT CONSTRAINTS" ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL IN WAKE OF SPY SCANDAL

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION, DAVID R. BURNETT FOR REASONS 1. 5(B,D)

1. (U) In an escalating diplomatic row, two Israeli men were sentenced July 14 by the High Court of New Zealand to six months in jail on charges of trying to obtain a false New Zealand passport. The GoNZ has not pursued allegations that the men are agents of Israeli intelligence agency Mossad. While Prime Minister Helen Clark would not confirm which service employed the men, she noted “if one were to lay espionage charges, one would have to be prepared to offer the kind of evidence in court which our intelligence agencies don’t like coming forward to display. We have very strong grounds for believing these are Israeli intelligence agents.” Israeli citizens Uriel Zoshe Kelman and Eli Cara were sentenced to six months in jail, and ordered to each make a NZ$50,000 (US$35,000) donation to the Cerebral Palsy Society. (Note: In attempting to procure a passport, they had procured the birth certificate of a cerebral palsy sufferer.) The light sentence reflected the fact that the two men were not the principal actors in the plot, which was led by Israeli Zev William Barkan, who has fled New Zealand and is still wanted. Cara and Kelman pled guilty earlier this month to three charges, including attempting to obtain a New Zealand passport and participating in an organized crime group to obtain a false passport, and faced a maximum sentence of five years. The latter charge is a relatively new provision in the New Zealand Crimes Act, designed to counter transnational crime.

Fallout - “Strict Constraints”

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2. (SBU) Prime Minister Helen Clark suspended high-level contact with Israel and announced a range of diplomatic sanctions, including placing Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) officials under “strict constraints” in their contact with Israelis. Clark justified her actions by stating “the Israeli agents attempted to demean the integrity of the New Zealand passport...
system. The Israeli Government was asked for an explanation and an apology three months ago. Neither has been received.” Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom responded via radio, saying “we are sorry about this matter. It will be dealt with and all will be done to restore Israel’s long history of good relations with New Zealand.” Clark refused to accept this informal apology. She has announced New Zealand will continue plans to require Israeli officials to apply for visas, to postpone all Israeli consultations this year, and to delay the agreement for a new Israeli Ambassador, resident in Australia. Israel’s president, Moshe Katsov, was expected to visit New Zealand in August, but the GoNZ will likely refuse his request.

3. (SBU) In a separate, but possibly related incident, a Jewish cemetery in Wellington was vandalized July 15, and headstones were desecrated. Clark immediately condemned the attack.

4. (C) Comment: The GoNZ’s public reaction is its strongest diplomatic retaliation in 20 years since French spies bombed the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbor in 1985. Clark’s limitations on diplomatic contact go further than the GoNZ reaction in 1985, however, and it was reported that she toughened the language of her response from that put forward by MFAT. The GONZ has little to lose by such stringent action, with limited contact and trade with Israel, and possibly something to gain in the Arab world, as the GoNZ is establishing an Embassy in Egypt and actively pursuing trade with Arab states. With Israeli Government officials eager to repair the relationship, and no time limit on the GoNZ’s restrictions, it is possible the issue may be resolved in six months, when the Cara and Kelman have served their time, and leave the country. Swindells
New Zealand Copes With Praise From Hamas

A cable reports New Zealand’s discomfort with public praise from the Palestinian militant group Hamas in response to New Zealand’s handling of Israelis suspected of being intelligence agents who tried to get a false New Zealand passport.

DATE 2004-07-19 06:17:00

SOURCE Embassy Wellington

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFEIDENTIAL WELLINGTON 000611

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/ANP

EO 12958 DECL: 07/18/2014

TAGS PGOV, PREL, PINR, NZ

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND PRAISED BY ISLAMIC RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

HAMAS FOR RESPONSE TO ISRAELI SPY SCANDAL

REF: A. WELLINGTON 605 B. WELLINGTON 599

Classified By: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COUNSELOR, TIMOTHY ZUNIGA-BROWN, FOR REASONS 1.5(B,D)

1. (U) According to media reports, the Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas issued a press release July 17 thanking the GoNZ for Prime Minister Helen Clark’s strong response to the conviction of two suspected Israeli intelligence agents (ref a). The press release urged other countries to follow the model set by New Zealand in “adopting firm measures against the Zionist entity’s violations of laws on foreign lands to achieve certain targets.”

2. (U) The GNZ has been quick to renounce any sympathy for Hamas. PM Clark noted that Hamas should not take comfort from the GoNZ’s actions, and if Hamas agents had committed the same crimes, they would be subject to the same prosecution. Domestic media reported separately that a religious terrorism professor at Auckland University suggested that NZ’s position offers New Zealand military serving in Iraq “protection.”

3. (C) Comment: New Zealand continues to voice its strong support of the Roadmap, but is loathe to take actions that would identify it as a supporter of Israel and, by proxy, the United States. The GoNZ prides itself on its multi-lateral credentials (ref B) but has been increasingly trying to stand alongside “Non-Aligned” countries. Its overly strong reaction to Israel over this issue suggests the GNZ sees this flap as an opportunity to bolster its credibility with the Arab community, and by doing so, perhaps, help NZ lamb and other products gain greater access to a larger and more lucrative market. Swindells
U.S. Credit Cards Provide Link to an Assassination in Dubai

Investigators in the United Arab Emirates seek information on credit cards issued by an American bank to suspects in the killing of a Hamas leader, Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, in Dubai in January 2010, an act widely believed to have been carried out by Israeli agents.

DATE 2010-02-24 10:51:00

SOURCE Embassy Abu Dhabi

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 000103

NOFORN

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/24

TAGS: PREL PINS CJAN AE

SUBJECT: UAE REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN INVESTIGATION OF KILLING OF MAHMOUD AL-MABHOUH

CLASSIFIED BY: Doug Greene, DCM; REASON: 1.4(D)

1. (C/NF) On the margins of a meeting with visiting Secretary Chu, on Feb 24 MFA Minister of State Gargash made a formal request to the Ambassador for assistance in providing cardholder details and related information for credit cards reportedly issued by a U.S. bank to several suspects in last month's killing of Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Mabhouh in Dubai. According to a letter Gargash gave the Ambassador (which transmitted details of the request from Dubai Security authorities to the UAE Central Bank), the credit cards were issued by MetaBank, in Iowa. Embassy LEGATT is transmitting the request and associated details to FBI HQ. Gargash asked that Embassy pass any reply to the director of the General Directorate of State Security (GDSS) in Dubai.

2. (S/NF) Comment: Ambassador requests expeditious handling of and reply to the UAEG request, which was also raised by UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed in a February 23 meeting with Secretary Clinton in Washington.

3. (C/NF) Text of letter from GDSS to the Governor of the UAE Central Bank:

Excellency Sultan Al-Suwiaidi

UAE Central Bank Governor

Subject: Credit Cards

MC 5115-2600-1600-6190
MC 5115-2600-1600-5317

MC 5301-3800-3201-7106

General Management of The State Security offers greetings, and asks your Excellency to direct the money laundry and suspicious transactions unit at the Central Bank to urgently obtain details of the above credit cards, in addition to details for purchases, accounts, and payments on those cards, as the users of those cards were involved in the murder of Mahmoud Mabhouh. Those cards were issued by META BANK in the state of Iowa, USA.

Thank you for your kind cooperation.

END TEXT

(Letter is accompanied by a chart with identifying data for alleged credit card users - scanned and emailed to NEA/ARP.)

OLSON
Israel Suspected in Dubai Assassination

The American Embassy in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, reports on the facts and the political fallout from the January 2010 assassination of a Hamas leader, Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, in Dubai, including the early reports blaming Israeli intelligence.

DATE 2010-01-31 13:04:00

SOURCE Embassy Abu Dhabi

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000047

SIPDIS

NOFORN

FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/31

TAGS: PREL PGOV PTER PINR KPAL KWBG KCRM IS SY AE

SUBJECT: HAMAS COMMANDER KILLED IN DUBAI HOTEL

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard Olson, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1. (U) On January 29, approximately 9:00 am local time Friday, Reuters first reported the January 20 murder in a Dubai hotel of senior Hamas member Mahmoud Abdul Raouf Mohammad Hassan (known as Mahmoud Al Mabhouh). The brief wire story preceded the release of an official statement from the Dubai government later in the day. Al Mabhouh's remains were flown from Dubai to Syria on January 28. He was buried January 29 in a refugee camp in Damascus, as Dubai officials briefed local and international media on his murder.

2. (U) The initial Dubai government media office statement said Al Mabhouh "entered the UAE on January 19 at 3:15 pm from an Arab country. His body was found in the afternoon of January 20 in a Dubai hotel where he was staying." Official statements on January 29 expressed confidence the killers would be arrested: "The ongoing investigation will speed up and police will be presenting the suspects to court for trial as soon as possible, in coordination with Interpol. The suspects left the UAE before the deceased's body was found in a Dubai hotel." (Note: The hotel was the Al Bustan Rotana near Dubai International Airport. End Note.)

3. (U) On Al Jazeera television January 29, Dubai Chief of Police Dhahi Khalfan Tamim said "I cannot rule out the possibility of Mossad involvement in the assassination of Mabhouh." Tamim told local journalists Dubai Police were "pursuing individual suspects, not an organization" and that it was "still early to start pointing fingers on who is behind the crime." Tamim also confirmed the victim entered the UAE on a passport bearing his real name, after a Hamas spokesman in Damascus told the media Al Mabhouh possessed five passports but traveled frequently to Dubai using his actual identity.

4. (U) Local media coverage on January 30 and 31 focused on statements from Al Mabhouh's family members and Hamas officials in Gaza and Syria, where he lived since 1989. Local and international media reports noted he was the second foreign militant murdered in Dubai in less than a year. Former Chechen commander Sulim Yamadayev was shot and killed near an exclusive Dubai apartment complex in late March 2009.
5. (S/NF) Ambassador happened to be at a social event with Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed's media advisor when the story broke, and he drew the latter's attention to it. The media advisor (protect) after making a few calls reported back that the UAE's public posture was being discussed between Dubai Ruler Mohammed bin Rashid and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. The two options discussed were to say nothing at all, or to reveal more or less the full extent of the UAE's investigations. (Comment: Saying nothing would have been perceived as protecting the Israelis and in the end, the UAE chose to tell all. The statement was carefully drafted not to point any fingers, but the reference in the document (see below) to a gang with western passports will be read locally as referring to the Mossad. End Comment.)

6. (U)

Text of Official Statement

Dubai Police identify suspects in murder of Mahmoud Al Mabhouh

Jan 29, 2010 - 06:18

WAM Dubai, Jan 29th, 2010

WAM)--Dubai Government media office has announced that Dubai police have identified suspects in the murder crime of Palestinian Hamas member Mahmoud Abdul Raouf Hassan and that they would soon track them down and refer to court in conjunction with International Police (Interpol).

The suspects were reported to have left the country before the murder crime was reported. The deceased's body was later discovered at a hotel in Dubai.

An official security source in Dubai said that the initial investigations suggest that the murder was inflicted by experienced criminal gang, who had been tracking down the movements of the victim before entering the UAE. "Despite quick skill exhibited by murderers, yet they left behind evidence at the scene of crime that would help in tracking them down at earliest. Dubai police no longer believe in ambiguous or unknown crime".

The source further disclosed that the investigations revealed that the suspects hold European passports, adding that Dubai police would embark in arrangements with Interpol to arrest the suspects and bring them to books. "The evidence will speedily help competent authorities to track down the suspects".

Known as Mahmoud Al Mabhouh, the deceased, a Palestinian, entered into the UAE at 3.15PM, on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2010, from an Arab country. His body was found the following day at afternoon on Jan. 20, 2010, at a hotel he resided at in Dubai.

OLSON
Iran’s Leader Slapped During Dispute, Report Says

This February 2010 cable from Baku, Azerbaijan, reports on a rumored squabble inside the Iranian leadership in which the chief of staff of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards slapped President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the face after he suggested that restrictions on press freedom and other rights should be loosened.

DATE 2010-02-11 10:23:00

SOURCE Embassy Baku

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T BAKU 000098

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/11/2020

TAGS: PGOV PARM PHUM AJ IR

SUBJECT: IRAN: JAFARI REPORTEDLY SLAPS AHMEDINEJAD AT SNSC MEETING; TUDEH RE-EMERGING?

REF: A. A) 2009 BAKU 972
B. B) 2009 BAKU 921
C. C) 2009 BAKU 920 (NOTAL)
d. D) 2009 BAKU 909

 Classified By: XXXXXXXXXXXX for Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

1. (S) Baku Iran watcher met with XXXXXXXXXXXX (strictly protect - see reflets).

He who Got Slapped

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2. (S) According to source, President Ahmedinejad surprised other SNSC members by taking a surprisingly liberal posture during a mid January post-Ashura meeting of the SNSC called to discuss next steps on dealing with opposition protests. Source said that Ahmedinejad claimed that "people feel suffocated," and mused that to defuse the situation it may be necessary to allow more personal and social freedoms, including more freedom of the press.

3. (S) According to source, Ahmedinejad's statements infuriated Revolutionary Guard Chief of Staff Mohammed Ali Jafari, who exclaimed "You are wrong! (In fact) it is YOU who created this mess! And now you say give more freedom to the press?!" Source said that Jafarli then slapped Ahmedinejad in the face, causing an uproar and an immediate call for a break in the meeting, which was never resumed. Source said that SNSC did not meet again for another two weeks, after
Ayatollah Janati successfully acted as a "peacemaker" between Jafarli and Ahmedinejad. Source added that the break in the SNSC meeting, but not the slap that caused it, has made its way on to some Iranian blogs.

Sides Preparing for New Confrontations

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4. (S) Meanwhile, source said, both sides are digging in for new confrontations, while various sub-groups maneuver. He stressed the importance of recent speeches by Karroubi and Khatami to the effect that Ahmedinejad will not be able finish his term, and that Supreme Leaders should not take partisan political sides. He stressed that "Karroubi chooses each word carefully," and aid the recent speeches reflect an ongoing effort to split Khomeini from the Ahmedinejad group. Source described the overall political situation within and without the political elite as "getting worse and worse." XXXXXXXXXX opined that this situation (of protests and instability) cannot be sustained indefinitely, and predicted that events are trending towards major developments and a new phases. Asked what Iran will likely look like over the next year, he responded "ask me after 22 Bahman (February 11)."

Tudeh Activists Re-Emerging?

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5. (S) Source (a former non-Marxist revolutionary activist) also asserted that the Iranian Tudeh (communist) party is reorganizing among factory and government workers, and intellectuals. He claimed that many former Tudeh sympathizers hold positions in the bureaucracy and elsewhere, and opined that many still privately support the movement. He mentioned one XXXXXXXXXX organizer who has re-emerged behind the scenes of recent bus worker and other labor strikes.

Lu
Israel’s Economic Strategy in Gaza

This 2008 cable from Tel Aviv reports that Israeli officials have told American diplomats that their economic policy for Gaza, ruled by the militantly anti-Israeli Palestinian group Hamas, is “to keep the Gazan economy on the brink of collapse without quite pushing it over the edge.”

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1.(S) Since the Hamas takeover, Israel has designated Gaza as a “hostile entity,” and maintained an economic embargo against the territory. Under this designation, decisions on shekels in circulation in Gaza and the territory's economy in general are treated by the GOI as security matters, and therefore are subject to the same high levels of uncertainty that the GOI uses to keep potential sources of security threat off-balance. Israeli officials have confirmed to Embassy officials on multiple occasions that they intend to keep the Gazan economy functioning at the lowest level possible consistent with avoiding a humanitarian crisis. The Palestinian Authority's request for a guaranteed "floor" transfer rate of NIS 100 million per month will not be seriously considered by the GOI until after January 2009, when the Palestinian political situation becomes more clear. In any case, given the size of the population and economy in Gaza, GOI interlocutors find it implausible that the number of workers on the Palestinian Authority's (PA) payroll there and the amount of money to be paid each month accurately reflect the current size of the territory's civil service or its future government service requirements, nor do they agree with the PA's contention that these payments are buying loyalty. Furthermore, GOI officials doubt the effectiveness and authority of the Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA) to regulate and police banks in Gaza. Israeli officials reject the PA's argument that denying banks the liquidity to pay PA salaries in full bolsters the Hamas regime. While some acknowledge the gains to Hamas from a weakened formal banking sector in Gaza, they argue that such gains are small relative to the cost of giving Hamas greater access to shekels or the economic benefits they bring to Gazans. A USG policy that encourages the GOI to review its present policies (as requested by the Office of the Quartet Representative and the PA) while pressing the Israelis to approve as much funding each month as possible under security constraints, assisting the PA to improve its regulatory regimes and due diligence procedures, and continuing to foster direct dialogue between officials of the GOI and PA on Gaza issues in the monthly Joint Economic Commission meetings is our best bet for minimizing economic/political gains to Hamas in Gaza.
GAZA IS A HOSTILE ENTITY

2.(C) While the GOI believes that maintaining the shekel as the currency of the Palestinian Territories is in Israel’s interests, it treats decisions regarding the amount of shekels in circulation in Gaza as a security matter. Requests by Palestinian banks to transfer shekels into Gaza are ultimately approved, partially approved, or denied by the National Security Council (NSC), an organ of the Israeli security establishment, not by the Bank of Israel (BOI). As part of their overall embargo plan against Gaza, Israeli officials have confirmed to econoffs on multiple occasions that they intend to keep the Gazan economy on the brink of collapse without quite pushing it over the edge (see ref tel D). The PAs request to set an NIS 100 million floor on monthly transfers to Gaza is being looked at, but no action will be taken until after January 2009, when the Palestinians political situation becomes more clear. Complicating the Gaza issue, and Palestinian banking as a whole, is Bank Hapoalim’s recent decision to terminate its correspondent banking relationship with the Palestinian banking sector (see ref tel C). Hapoalim remains determined to stand by its objective to sever ties on November 30, though observers have their doubts that Hapoalim will follow through on the initiative (septel).

3.(SBU) The GOI’s monetary policy towards Gaza is consistent with its declaration that Gaza is a "hostile entity." Some observers have told Emboffs that political pressure arising from the issue of captured Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, may have influenced high-level Israeli officials to tighten their stance on monetary policy (see ref A). However, this has not been raised or confirmed by any high-level GOI contacts. The GOI position on cash to Gaza has remained negative since the Knessets declaration that it was a hostile entity.

THE PAYROLL DILEMMA: WHO IS ACTUALLY RECEIVING PA PAYCHECKS IN HAMAS-CONTROLLED GAZA?

4.(S) The PA contends that Hamas, ability to pay its workers, salaries each month combined with the inability of the PA to do so causes further deterioration in support for PA/Fatah relative to Hamas (ref tel I). The GOI, on the other hand, believes that many of the estimated 77,000 wage earners on the PAs payroll may actually be Hamas members or affiliates. Israeli security analysts argue that a considerable portion of the civil service salaries that the PA attempts to pay each month to its Gazan employees actually find their way to Hamas or Hamas supporters (see ref tel "D"). They have therefore determined that full coverage of the payroll is contrary to Israel’s security interests, even if Hamas gains some political advantage from being able to pay its salaries in full. Whether money finds its way into the territory by means of the PA payroll or the Hamas payroll, says the GOI, Hamas experiences a net increase in its funding. Israeli analysis suggests that it is best to deny the terrorist regime a larger pool of funds in Gaza, no matter the origin, preferring to minimize Hamas, ability to purchase weapons or equipment for use against Israeli civilians. Thus, they reject the PA’s argument that denying banks the liquidity to pay PA salaries in full bolsters the Hamas regime (see ref tel I).

5.(S) Furthermore, GOI officials, while often praising the credentials of PA technocrats, doubt the effectiveness and authority of the Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA) to regulate and police Palestinian, and especially Gazan banks. This double standard in the treatment of Gaza and the West Bank by the GOI is yet another example of how Gaza is becoming increasingly isolated from the West Bank, despite the best efforts of the PA/Fatah to maintain unity. These issues come to the fore at the end of every month when the PA tries to make payment to its employees in Gaza.

HOW MUCH MONEY DOES GAZA ACTUALLY HAVE?

6.(S) Observers speculate as to the amount of shekels circulating in Gaza. The BOI has established a history of routinely approving all requests from the Palestinian banks to exchange spoiled shekel notes from Gaza for new notes. This is not a security issue as it does not increase the total number of shekels in circulation. In order to support a minimal level of commerce and provide for minimal necessities such as food, utilities, and medical supplies, analysts agree that there must also be a certain outflow of cash from the territory to Israel, the West Bank, or other countries. The September 11, 2008 report of the International Crisis Group Middle East Briefing estimates this outflow as 30 percent of Gaza’s total shekel holdings each month. Unfortunately, since Gaza tends more and more towards a cash economy based upon movement of goods through its tunnels to the Sinai, it becomes increasingly difficult to estimate this amount with accuracy. Udi Levi (strictly protect), a high-ranking official in the Israeli
security establishment, commented to Econcouns in October that at least 1.8 billion shekels are currently unaccounted for in Gaza.

WHO APPROVES THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW CASH TO GAZA?

7.(C) The NSC, an organ of the Israeli security and intelligence community, ultimately has the final say in permitting new liquidity into Gaza. When the PA or a Palestinian commercial bank ask to move shekel bank notes into Gaza, the request is usually submitted to the BOI. The BOI defers to the NSC though it may act in an advisory capacity to inform the NSC on the state of the Gazan economy or possible consequences of action or failure to act. When the NSC ultimately approves a particular amount, the IDF routinely permits the cash to enter Gaza. In determining how much new liquidity can enter Gaza at any given time, the NSC considers several factors, including the humanitarian situation in the territory. The NSC abides by the principal that Gaza should receive just enough money for the basic needs of the population but it is not interested in returning the Gazan economy to a state of normal commerce and business. The agency tries to approve a reasonable amount of new money for entry into the territory each month; however, it will not permit any large scale transfer of assets from Ramallah-based banks to their branches in Gaza for fear of improving the purchasing power of entities wishing to harm Israel. NSC officials have been unable to advise econoffs of any particular formula used in arriving at a figure, but the fluid state of Gazan, PA, and Israeli politics make it difficult to anticipate factors that might have a bearing on the decision from month to month.

SO WHAT SHOULD THE USG DO?

8.(S) Embassy Tel Aviv has encouraged the GOI to review its policy on Gaza liquidity, as requested by the Office of the Quartet Representative and the PA. As noted above, we do not expect that review to result in any changes until the political situation between Hamas and Fatah becomes more clear, presumably after January 9, 2009. In the meantime, we believe the USG should continue to encourage the Israelis to approve as much funding as possible each month, consistent with our mutual political/security objectives in Gaza. We should continue to assist the PA to improve its regulatory regimes and due diligence. Finally, the USG should continue to promote use of the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Economic Committee as the appropriate venue for resolving Gaza liquidity issues.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviws Classified Website:

You can also access this site through the State Departments Classified SIPRNET website.
Bahrain’s King Says Iran Must Be Stopped

King Hamad of Bahrain tells Gen. David H. Petraeus that the United States must rein in Iran’s nuclear program by whatever means necessary. “That program must be stopped,” the king says. “The danger of letting it go on is greater than the danger of stopping it.”

DATE 2009-11-04 06:44:00

SOURCE Embassy Manama

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET MANAMA 000642

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/04/2019 TAGS: PREL, MARR, ENRG, BA, AF, IZ, IR, NATO SUBJECT: GENERAL PETRAEUS WITH KING HAMAD: IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, IRAN, NATO AWACS, ENERGY

Classified By: Ambassador Adam Ereli, reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: In an hour-long meeting on November 1 with CENTCOM Commander General Petraeus, Bahrain’s King Hamad said Arab states need to do more to engage Iraq, discussed Afghanistan and the positive role India could play, urged action to stop Iran’s nuclear program, and reviewed regional plans for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) IRAQ: King Hamad fully endorsed General Petraeus’s point that increased Arab engagement and influence would help frustrate Iranian designs in Iraq. He added that the Arabs need Egyptian and Saudi leadership in this matter and that he had tried to make this point to the Saudi government, but with little effect.

3. (C) AFGHANISTAN: General Petraeus praised Bahrain’s commitment of a police company for internal security at FOB Leatherneck. King Hamad confirmed that he would personally see the force off at the airport on December 16. This date will be the 10th anniversary of the King’s assuming the throne, and General Petraeus said that U.S. air assets would be available on the 16th to transport the company to Afghanistan. King Hamad inquired about the extent of India’s involvement in Afghanistan and noted that Bahrain saw India as very positive force in the region. “It’s a new era,” he said. “They can be of great help.”

4. (C) IRAN: King Hamad pointed to Iran as the source of much of the trouble in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He argued forcefully for taking action to terminate their nuclear program, by whatever means necessary. “That program must be stopped,” he said. “The danger of letting it go on is greater than the danger of stopping it.” King Hamad added that in light of these regional developments, Bahrain was working to strengthen GCC coordination and its relations with allies and international organizations. He specifically mentioned NATO and confirmed that Bahrain had agreed to the Alliance’s request to use Isa Airbase for AWACS missions, although the detail on numbers and timing have yet to be discussed.

5. (S/NF) BAHRAIN AIR SHOW AND NUCLEAR ENERGY: King Hamad asked General Petraeus for his help in encouraging U.S. aircraft manufacturers to participate in the inaugural Bahrain Air Show, scheduled for January 2010. He said that France was pushing the Rafale and would be there in force, although he agreed with Petraeus that the French fighter was yesterday’s technology. Warming to the subject of French commercial diplomacy and referring to President Sarkozy, King Hamad said, “The UAE will give him a hard time soon,” over France’s proposed deal for nuclear reactors. “They’re not happy with the project he’s offered them.” King Hamad also mentioned that Bahrain was studying options for using nuclear power to generate electricity. He said he had asked the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Public Works to present him recommendations and invited the Ambassador to discuss with them possible U.S. involvement. Post will do so.
RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Around the World, Distress Over Iran”
Treasury Official on Iran Sanctions

Daniel Glaser, a little-known Treasury Department official, is dispatched to Brussels to explain to confused European officials that the Obama administration does not expect engagement alone to halt Iran’s nuclear program. Sanctions would still be necessary, Mr. Glaser indicates. “Time was not on our side,” he said, according to the cable.

DATE 2009-04-08 12:23:00

SOURCE USEU Brussels

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 04 BRUSSELS 000536

SIPDIS NOFORN

STATE FOR P, S/SAGSWA, NEA/IR, ISN, EEB/ESC, S/CT, L, EUR, INL TREASURY FOR TFFC, TFI, OIA EU POSTS FOR IRAN WATCHERS AND TFCOS


Classified By: USEU EconMinCouns Peter Chase for reasons 1.4 (b), (d), (e).

1. (S//NF) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: During a March 2-3 visit to Brussels, Daniel Glaser, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes, assured an uncertain European Union that the United States remains committed to the dual track approach to Iran and said we would welcome additional EU designations targeting Iran’s proliferation and sanctions evasion activities. Delivering an unprecedented classified briefing to over 70 Middle East and nonproliferation experts from all 27 EU states and institutions, Glaser encouraged the EU to move forward on specific designations to support the current international framework targeting Iran’s illicit conduct through financial measures.

2. (C) EU Member States and officials uniformly praised the U.S. information-sharing on sanctions and the U.S. policy review. Capturing the predominant sentiment, the Czech Presidency expressed gratitude for AA/S Glaser’s presentation and confirmation that further EU measures “would be consistent with the U.S. policy review” as a signal the EU “are all waiting for, as this plays an important role in EU considerations.” However, some EUMS were uncertain whether they should move forward on pending designations before the completion of the policy review. During the briefing and on its margins, member states’ concerns emerged over national economic interests, unintended consequences (e.g., hurting average Iranians, sanctions efficacy, Iran’s regional role, lawsuits, and international unity). Glaser’s separate consultations with representatives from the Council Secretariat and Commission, and Ambassadors of the Czech Republic (Presidency), UK, France, Germany, Spain, and incoming EU-Presidency Sweden are reported septel.

3. (C) The content, tone, and timing of AA/S Glaser’s briefing impressed an appreciative EU audience as a sign of the new U.S. Administration’s seriousness about engagement with Europe. The EU is predisposed to respond positively to the new Administration’s policy on Iran and wants its views taken into account during the policy review stage. Glaser’s presentation kept the good feelings going, but also helped bring EU experts down to earth in terms of specific tasks on which the EU could usefully focus now. We hope the briefing provides a basis for further USG lobbying in individual EU Member States in capitals on pending EU designations. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.
4. (S) On March 3, the Czech EU Presidency convened a formal meeting of the EU-27 Iran and non-proliferation experts (COMOG/CONOP) to receive a classified briefing from a U.S. interagency delegation led by AA/S Glaser on measures in the financial and transport sectors to counter Iran’s illicit conduct. The session lasted a little over an hour (40 minute presentation followed by 30 minutes of Q/A). Given intense EU interest and in order to set the political context for the detailed technical briefing on specific U.S. designations that followed, AA/S Glaser noted that the U.S. policy review on Iran had not yet finalized, but it was already clear that the USG would remain committed to a dual track approach to resolving the nuclear issue. Consequently, the United States would welcome EU actions now to reinforce existing UNSCRs. The EU should act quickly to designate additional high priority proliferation targets.

5. (S) To be sure, “engagement” would be an important aspect of a comprehensive strategy to dissuade Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. However, “engagement” alone is unlikely to succeed. Diplomacy’s best chance of success requires all elements combining pressure and incentives to work simultaneously, not sequentially. Our shared challenge is to work together in finding the right mix of measures. Time was not on our side. The international community must urgently choose between several bad options facing us in 2009; none of these options were without cost. Glaser pointed out that the dynamic nature of the international financial system required that targeted financial sanctions against Iran must be continually adjusted to maintain, let alone increase, pressure on Iran. Over time, targeted Iranian entities were finding ways to evade sanctions via front companies and facilitators. Without continuous active management on the part of the international community, the measures taken thus far would be rendered merely symbolic gestures.

6. (S) Glaser stated that the EU had an important, but time-sensitive, opportunity to help diplomacy succeed by targeting illicit Iranian conduct that contravened UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs). The international framework for moving forward was already in place, under the auspices of the UNSCRs and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF); we should continue to support and operate within this framework. Glaser urged the EU not to Underestimate its influence on the actions of other key countries and regions.

Priority Designation Targets

7. (S) AA/S Glaser’s formal presentation provided U.S. views and specific intelligence on financial and transport entities under active EU consideration for designation, including Bank Mellat, the Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI), Bank Saderat, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line (IRISL), and Iran Air (the only entity not yet U.S.-designated, which AA/S Glaser explained remains a potential target). Separately, several EU contacts found our case against Bank Mellat, EDBI and shipping companies to be particularly well formulated.

EU Audience, Reactions

8. (C) All 27 EU Member States (EUMS) attended the Czech Presidency-hosted classified briefing on March 3 in Brussels. Indicative of the EU’s high level of interest, all but Slovakia sent their capitals-based nonproliferation working group (“CONOP”) technical expert in addition to their Middle East regional expert (mixture of capitals- and Brussels-based). This was the first time the USG was welcomed to address this combined EU expert working group, which meets ad hoc to decide on revising EU nonproliferation measures against Iran. Permanent institutional staff covering Iran, sanctions, and nonproliferation attended from the EU’s Commission and Council Secretariat. The EU’s Situation Center (SitCen), the community’s intelligence coordination unit, also sent several representatives.

9. (C) Capturing the main sentiment in the room, the Czech Presidency expressed gratitude for AA/S Glaser’s presentation
and confirmation that further EU measures “would be consistent with the U.S. policy review” as a signal the EU “are all waiting for, as this plays an important role in EU considerations.” The Czechs and several others noted that U.S. information-sharing was conducive to closer transatlantic cooperation on Iran policy, predicting this would directly influence internal EU debate on pending designations of entities and individuals supporting Iran’s proliferation.

10. (C) Betraying some smaller EU states’ resentment of the EU-3 countries’ (UK, France, Germany) prerogatives within the Council on Iran policy, Cyprus pointedly thanked the U.S. delegation for sharing information with the entire EU “so all can take an informed decision,” rather than being asked to take action through a “leap of faith” when some EUMS have information but the rest do not. “We also welcome that you are stressing the dual-track approach,” Cyprus added. (Comment: The Cypriot intervention notwithstanding, the Czechs took considerable risk just in hosting the U.S. presentation. The EU remains prickly over direct U.S. participation in their internal discussions and processes, particularly after the bitter divides over Iraq. The Czechs suffered some pushback prior to the event. End Comment.) 11. (C) At the conclusion of the briefing, a handful of smaller EUMS raised concerns routinely featured in the EU’s ongoing internal debate over next steps. (Note: The EU-3 and Italy refrained from speaking during the briefing in apparent deference to the rest of the membership who do not enjoy routine access to U.S. senior Iran policymakers. End Note.)

Unintended Consequences?
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12. (C) Poland, Cyprus, and Portugal asked about the impact of current sanctions against Iran on the elite, the broader population, and the deteriorating economy. Is the U.S. concerned that further moves could trigger an anti-Western backlash? Could we target political elites without victimizing or burdening the general population? While expressing support for targeted measures, Portugal and Cyprus worried that strengthening sanctions before Iran’s June presidential elections could prove counterproductive by radicalizing the electorate and leading to Ahmadinejad’s re-election. Cyprus flagged comments by Iranian human rights activist Shirin Ebadi against sanctions and stressed that it want to encourage Iranian moderates. Portugal asked whether the United States has considered Iran’s role in the region, e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq, and the broader Middle East.

13. (C) AA/S Glaser concurred that these are all important questions, but pointed out that the international community must choose among a set of bad options in a very compressed timeframe. The international community must convey an urgent sense of seriousness -- both to Iran and to other interested regional stakeholders in order to change strategic calculations and maximize the chance of a diplomatic success. By law, U.S sanctions target those engaged in illicit conduct, including proliferation and terrorist financing. Targeting the Iran’s access to the international financial system offers the best chance of reducing harm to the average population.

14. (C) As to the impact of sanctions, Glaser noted that disaggregating the effect of international sanctions and Iran’s own disastrous economic policies would be nearly impossible. Moreover, sanctions must be examined in the context of an overall policy approach and not in isolation. A more useful indicator is the perception of Iran’s decision-makers, who view sanctions as problematic, raising business costs, and necessitating evasive behavior: the elite are reacting as if sanctions are having an impact.

Russia and China?
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15. (C) The Netherlands asked for U.S. views on the roles of Russia and China. Cyprus referenced the importance of PS 1 unity to ensure Iran did not circumvent sanctions and promote efficacy, adding “UN backing is the best way.” AA/S Glaser agreed, but argued that we were already required to implement existing UNSCRs. This situation demanded a nimble response to changing conditions, including deceptive practices by designated entities. The U.S. closely consults Russia and China, who must play their parts.
16. (C) The Netherlands asked what the U.S. explicitly wanted from Europe in the diplomatic (“political”) track, and whether we plan to respond to the Iranian President’s earlier letters (to former President Bush). AA/S Glaser referred the Dutch to State on matters of diplomacy. On the sanctions front, he noted that the U.S. policy review should not be a reason for the EU to stop reviewing its existing sanctions for appropriate next steps. Given the tight timeframe, it would be helpful for the EU to make similar designations to those already included under existing U.S. sanctions authorities.

17. (S//NF) In his presentation, AA/S Glaser noted UNSCR 1803 and EU Common Position identification of Saderat for proliferation concerns, but explained that our domestic designation falls under U.S. counter-terrorism authorities. Although not raised by Member States in the formal briefing, several EU contacts (UK, France, Germany, Council Secretariat and Czech Presidency) had raised concerns that the EU would not be able to act upon the U.S. basis for designation of Bank Saderat (support for terrorist activity). The EU Common Position imposing measures against Iran is strictly limited to proliferation as a legal basis for inclusion on the list. Support for terrorist financing is not grounds for inclusion. (Comment: As the additional U.S. information presented was exclusively limited to terrorist financing concerns, some EUMS are questioning whether a sufficient proliferation basis exists for Saderat’s inclusion under EU Iran sanctions. The EU does not/not yet have consensus to include Saderat in the next round. End Comment.)

18. (U) AA/S Glaser has cleared this message.

MURRAY.
Abu Dhabi’s Prince on Iranian Threat

In this 2003 cable, the Abu Dhabi crown prince spoke “about the Iranian threat with a greater sense of urgency,” urging that action against Iran and its president “be taken this year or next year.”

DATE 2006-04-29 13:15:00

SOURCE Embassy Abu Dhabi

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ABU DHABI 001725

SIPDIS

NOFORN

STATE FOR S/CT - AMBASSADOR CRUMPTON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2016 TAGS: PTER, PINS, ASEC, EPET, MCAP, IR, IZ, AE, Terrorism SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR COUNTERTERRORISM COORDINATOR CRUMPTON’S VISIT TO THE UAE


1. (S) Summary. Embassy Abu Dhabi looks forward to welcoming you to the UAE on May 7. U.S. and UAE officials have had a number of productive meetings on the topic of counterterrorism, the most recent of which came on April 22, when Fran Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, met over lunch with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ) and his brother, Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed (AbZ). Your visit builds on our ongoing dialogue and efforts to push the UAE on several areas of interest to the USG: counterterrorism, counter terror finance, Iran, Hamas, Iraq, and ideological extremism (each is covered in the scenesetter). We have requested separate meetings with Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed (AbZ), whom you met in New York last September, and State Security Director Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed, whom Deputy Coordinator Urbancic met last October. In your meetings, you should commend the UAE for its assistance and cooperation, including its strong condemnation of the April 24 bomb attack in Dahab. The UAE remains a committed partner in the global war on terror, but it continues to take an ad hoc approach to countering terrorism that “solves” the problem for the UAE locally, but fails to contribute on a transnational basis. In January, the U.S. and the UAE held the first meeting of the Joint Terrorist Finance Coordinating Committee (JTFCC). Treasury U/S Levey is currently in the UAE to hold a second meeting that will focus on cash couriers and charities.

2. (S) Although the UAE regards Iran as one of its most serious threats to national security, UAE officials are reluctant to take actions that could provoke their neighbor and compromise their extensive trading relationship. At the same time, we are seeing more of a willingness on the part of the UAE to support USG initiatives without the full approval of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). As tensions escalate between Iran and the international community, the UAE is growing increasingly nervous. The UAE leadership, which has told us they consider Hamas a terrorist organization, plans to uphold its previous commitments of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. The UAE has taken an active role in encouraging Sunni participation in the Iraqi political process and continues to condemn the sectarian violence that is preventing stabilization of the country. In the face of growing ideological extremism in the Gulf, the UAE leadership is politically determined not to allow Islamist extremists to gain a foothold on UAE
soil. End Summary.

Counterterrorism Efforts

3. (S) The UAE is concerned about the terrorist threat to the UAE, but lacks a comprehensive implementation strategy for reducing its vulnerability (ref A). The UAE considers homeland security one of its top priorities, but rather than prioritizing national security projects, its efforts have focused on contracting risk assessments, forming committees, and procuring equipment. In your meetings, we recommend that you inquire about the government’s plan, announced by President Khalifa in December 2005, to place all the security agencies under a newly established National Security Council. MbZ, asked by Townsend if the UAE was worried about its oil infrastructure, responded emphatically, “absolutely.” He told Townsend that there are three international companies currently conducting risk assessments of the UAE oil infrastructure and maritime security for the UAEG. Townsend offered U.S. assistance in helping the UAE to reduce its vulnerability (ref O).

4. (S) The UAEG reacts quickly when presented with evidence of a terrorist presence inside the UAE, but does not approach the problem from a transnational posture. The UAE’s immediate response when terrorists pose a risk is to deport them. UAE agencies do not investigate fully to see how far the problem goes or whether there is an international network involved. Although the U.S./UAE counterterrorism cooperation is strong (with the UAE working closely with the USG on specific cases), Emiratis do not consistently share lead information found in the possession of individuals in their custody with each other or with the U.S. Government. These tactics limit law enforcement and intelligence services’ ability to use intelligence to disrupt extremist cells and planned attacks. The UAE’s insistence on deportation as a solution does not protect the country long-term or truly address the nature and scope of the problem. Townsend discussed this matter with MbZ and urged the UAE to instead to fully investigate terror suspects and share the results of those inquiries with the USG. Counterterrorism Finance

5. (S) The UAE has made significant strides in regulating the financial sector against money laundering and terrorist financing (ref B). Although the UAE now has a strong legal framework in place, it must turn its efforts to enforcement. It is imperative that UAE authorities investigate and prosecute violators of terror finance/anti-money laundering, cash courier, and charity laws and regulations. To date, investigation and prosecution have been weak. In an effort to increase U.S. and UAE cooperation on terrorist financing, the first meeting of the U.S./UAE Joint Terrorist Finance Coordinating Committee (JTFCC) was held in Abu Dhabi on January 24, 2005 (ref C). The UAE team had representatives from the Central Bank, State Security, Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Justice. However, no one participated from Dubai. In order for the JTFCC to be an effective committee, Dubai’s Police, State Security, Customs, and the Department of Islamic Affairs and Charities must participate. The April 30 meeting will focus on cash couriers and charity regulations.

Iran

6. (S/NF) UAE leaders are very concerned about escalating tensions between Iran and the international community. AbZ publicly expressed his country’s concern, and the entire region’s “vulnerability,” at a press conference in Kuwait April 25, while urging a peaceful resolution (ref M). Commercial ties between Dubai and Iran are significant (Dubai is Iran’s largest non-oil trading partner), and as a result the UAEG walks a fine line between maintaining and encouraging this trade and working to prevent suspected Iranian proliferation activities. Although the UAEG is worried about Iran’s nuclear ambitions, its short-term policy decisions regarding Iran center on not provoking its neighbor. The USG has approached the UAEG four times since January, asking it to interdict and inspect cargo suspected of going to Iran’s nuclear and/or missile programs. None of those instances has resulted in a successful interdiction. In the first two instances UAE officials simply refused to take action (refs F and G). The Director of Dubai’s State Security Organization explained during the 11 February U.S./UAE Counterproliferation Task Force meeting that the decision not to inspect the containers had been a political decision based on the UAE’s concern that Iran might retaliate (ref H). In the two later instances (ref K), ships that had been scheduled to arrive in Dubai went directly to Bandar Abbas. AbZ told U/S Joseph during his April 8 visit to Abu Dhabi that the USG should approach the UAE on interdiction requests “only as a last resort” (ref N). Two weeks later, he assured Townsend that the UAEG does not want Iran to take advantage of the UAE’s open trading environment. He said the UAE was in the final stages of ratifying its export control law and that it would be announced “soon.” In an encouraging development, the UAE on April 15 privately endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative’s
7. (S) In recent meetings with senior USG officials, Abu Dhabi’s ruling family has expressed clear support for U.S. initiatives against Iran. The U.S. and UAE have a “common desire to succeed,” AbZ told U/S Joseph, noting that the combination of Iran and terrorism is something that cannot be tolerated. “The threat from al-Qa’ida would be minor if Iran has nukes,” AbZ said (ref N). MbZ told Townsend April 22 that the Iranians think that the U.S. will not do anything about their recent declaration that they have successfully enriched uranium. He added that he thought the Iranians were wrong. MbZ and UAE Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid agreed with Secretary Rice February 23 about the need to counter Iran’s growing influence in the region and its nuclear ambitions, although they specified that any sanctions should target the key Iranian leadership, not the Iranian people (ref I). MbZ told A/S Welch March 28 that he did not think it was necessary to wait for all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to agree before proceeding with any U.S. plans against Iran (ref E). He told A/S Welch that the UAE would prepare a paper responding to USG concerns about Iran and mechanisms for addressing the challenge posed by Iran. In a March 27 meeting with CENTCOM Commander General Abizaid, MbZ spoke about the Iranian threat with a greater sense of urgency. He was strongly in favor of taking action against Iran and its president sooner rather than later. “I believe this guy is going to take us to war. ... It’s a matter of time,” MbZ warned, adding that action against Iran and President Ahmedinejad should be taken this year or next year.

8. (S/NF) SSD Director Hazza told A/S Welch March 29 that the Ayatollah Ali Khameini had once issued a fatwa prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons by Iran, but noted that this should not be considered a guarantee. Hazza assessed that Iran is also a threat due to its ties to international terrorist organizations, including al-Qa’ida, as well as their financial support to Hamas. He added that the relationship between Iran and Syria, and their links to Hizballah, was also of concern, as was Iran’s attempts to expand its influence in Iraq and elsewhere in the world. MbZ also expressed to A/S Welch March 28 the concern that Hizbollah was supporting Hamas. During your meetings, you should explain the graduated approach to addressing Iran in the United Nations Security Council and encourage the UAE to isolate Iran--regardless of potential economic backlash. You should also explain the importance of the UAE working closely with the USG on interdiction requests. These meetings will be a good follow-on to the discussion U/S Joseph had with AbZ April 8, when Joseph outlined the USG’s policy priorities for Iran. (Note: While AbZ, like MbZ, expressed support for U.S. initiatives against Iran, he stated that the USG should come to the UAE as a “very last resort. ... If you can solve something without involving the UAE, please do so.” End Note.)

Palestinian Territories/Hamas

9. (S) UAE leaders have told us that they consider Hamas a terrorist organization and that they would not fund Hamas unless they denounce violence (refs D and E). However, after Hamas political chief Khaled Mashaal visited Abu Dhabi on March 22 and met with UAE Minister of Presidential Affairs Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammed al-Sha’ali, Mashaal publicly claimed that the UAEG had pledged to continue to provide financial assistance to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (ref J). MbZ told A/S Welch March 28 that the UAEG allowed Mashaal to come, but that “officially, we don’t recognize Khaled Mashaal.” MbZ said that a new Palestinian Prime Minister is selected, UAEG officials will travel to the Palestinian territories to ascertain that UAEG assistance is “going to the right people.” In his meeting with Townsend, MbZ said that the UAE “felt the Muslim Brotherhood rally behind Hamas” after its electoral victory in the Palestinian territories, and that the Hamas victory should be a lesson to the West. UAE Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid sounded a note of optimism when he told Secretary Rice February 23 that Hamas, “with some pressure,” SIPDIS would understand the need to respect the will of the international community.

10. (S) The UAE has historically provided significant financial assistance to the Palestinian people. Typically, the UAE sends aid to the Palestinian territories through charity organizations, or by projectized assistance; but the UAEG has also provided financial assistance directly to the Palestinian Authority, most recently $20 million in March 2006 to Mahmoud Abbas for salaries. In the wake of the Hamas electoral victory, UAE leaders told us they intend to honor their previous commitments of humanitarian assistance (including the $100 million Sheikh Khalifa housing complex that was announced last year).

11. (S/NF) In his meeting with A/S Welch March 29, SSD Director Hazza assessed that there was both a positive and a negative side to the Hamas election win. On the negative side, he cited
Hamas' position with regard to Israel, and their violent agenda. On the positive side, Hazza noted the fact that Hamas was now in power and was accountable to the international community. He spoke to A/S Welch of the threat posed by the Muslim Brotherhood. Hazza also asked A/S Welch how the USG would react to those countries that did support the Hamas government, and whether they would run afoul of U.S. laws restricting support to terrorist organizations. A/S Welch replied that that would be a problem, emphasizing that no money should go to the government unless Hamas renounced violence and accepted Israel. A/S Welch also told Hazza that it was not the responsibility of the U.S. or other Arab countries to pay the salaries of the new Hamas government, underscoring the need for Hamas to show accountability. MbZ told A/S Welch that Hamas benefited from “official and private contributions” from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar. MbZ said it was “easy to take $1 million in a suitcase” to Lebanon, alluding to cash couriers.

Iraq ----

12. (S/NF) A partner in the war on terror, the UAE continues to provide U.S. forces access, overflight clearances, and other critical logistical assistance to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The UAE has also been a helpful supporter of Iraq’s burgeoning political process. It has worked with Iraqi political and religious figures to encourage greater Sunni integration, and it has consulted with Ambassador Khalilzad on a number of occasions about the need to stem sectarianism in Iraq. The UAE has publicly condemned acts of sectarian and terrorist violence in Iraq, most recently, the February 22 bombing of the al-Askariya Shrine. MbZ told Townsend that he had “no confidence” in the new Iraqi Prime Minister-designate, Jawad al-Maliki, and he reiterated his concern about Iran’s meddling in Iraq’s internal affairs. He has pledged the UAE’s support to the fight against al-Qaida.

Ideological Extremism
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13. (S) The Abu Dhabi ruling family continue to be outspoken on the issue of Muslim extremists and the threat they pose to the region. MbZ told Townsend that if there were an election in Dubai tomorrow, the Muslim Brotherhood would take over. He said the challenge is to find a way to remove the extremists in a way that they never come back. One way he and his brothers have been trying to accomplish this is by reforming the education system, which they say was penetrated by the Muslim Brotherhood in the late 1960s. (Note: The UAE has announced that half of the members of the Federal National Council would be elected while half would continue to be appointed by the rulers of the various emirates. Despite this announcement, the UAE still lags behind other Gulf states in terms of democratization. End Note.) UAE officials publicly and strongly condemn extremism and terrorist attacks, anti-extremism has been the focus of government-approved Friday sermons in the mosques. SISON

**RETURN TO ARTICLE**

“Around the World, Distress Over Iran”
Israeli Warning on Iran

The Israeli defense minister warns visiting Congressional delegations that Iran’s nuclear program cannot be allowed to expand indefinitely before Israel will be forced to attack. Within a year and a half, the minister says, the program will have progressed so far that the “collateral damage” of an attack would be too great.
the work of U.S. Security Coordinator Gen. Dayton training PA security forces, and commended Salam Fayyad’s concrete, practical approach.

6. (C) Barak made clear in these meetings that he feels the Palestinian Authority is weak and lacks self-confidence, and that Gen. Dayton’s training helps bolster confidence. He explained that the GOI had consulted with Egypt and Fatah prior to Operation Cast Lead, asking if they were willing to assume control of Gaza once Israel defeated Hamas. Not surprisingly, Barak said, the GOI received negative answers from both. He stressed the importance of continued consultations with both Egypt and Fatah -- as well as the NGO community -- regarding Gaza reconstruction, and to avoid publicly linking any resolution in Gaza to the release of kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Shalit.

Iran/North Korea
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7. (C) In his meeting with CODEL Casey, Barak said the GOI believes its “keystone” relations with the USG remain strong. He described the integral role the USG plays in preserving Israel’s Qualitative Military Edge (QME), especially when faced with threats posed by Iran, Hizballah, and Hamas. He noted that the GOI’s positions on Iran are well known, and described North Korea’s recent nuclear test as a “second wake-up call” (the first being the AQ Khan network). Barak asked rhetorically how a lack of firm response to North Korea would be interpreted by Iran’s leadership, speculating the USG would be viewed as a “paper tiger.”

8. (C) In both meetings, Barak said “no option should be removed from the table” when confronting Iran and North Korea; engagement will only work in conjunction with a credible military option, he said. Barak said he was personally skeptical that engagement would lead to an acceptable resolution, and argued in favor of a paradigm shift to confront the triple threat posed by nuclear proliferation, Islamic extremist terrorism, and rogue/failing states. He said a strategic partnership with China, Russia, India, and the EU is essential in facing these threats. Barak argued that failure to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran would result in a nuclear arms race in the region as Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia look to acquire nuclear weapons.

9. (C) When asked if the USG and GOI have fundamental differences of opinion when assessing Iran’s nuclear program, Barak said we share the same intelligence, but acknowledged differences in analysis. He suggested that the USG view is similar to presenting evidence in a criminal court case in which a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty. As such, USG standards are tougher -- especially following the failure to find WMD in Iraq -- while end-products such as the 2007 NIE unintentionally take on a softer tone as a result. Barak said the fate of the region and the world rests on our ability to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons -- as such, the standards for determining guilt should be lower as the costs are higher.

10. (C) In both meetings, Barak described Iranians as “chess, not backgammon players.” As such, Iran will attempt to avoid any hook to hang accusations on, and look to Pakistan and North Korea as models to emulate in terms of acquiring nuclear weapons while defying the international community. He doubted Tehran would opt for an open, relatively low-threshold test like the recent one in North Korea. Rather, Iran will seek ways to bypass the NPT while ensuring its program is redundant and well-protected to prevent an irreparable military strike. Barak estimated a window between 6 and 18 months from now in which stopping Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons might still be viable. After that, he said, any military solution would result in unacceptable collateral damage. He also expressed concern that should Iran develop nuclear capabilities, other rogue states and/or terrorist groups would not be far behind.

Pakistan
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11. (C) Barak reinforced his message regarding Pakistan in both meetings. He described Pakistan as his “private nightmare,” suggesting the world might wake up one morning “with everything changed” following a potential Islamic extremist takeover. When asked if the use of force on Iran might backfire with moderate Muslims in Pakistan, thereby exacerbating the situation, Barak acknowledged Iran and Pakistan are interconnected, but disagreed with a causal chain. To the
contrary, he argued that if the United States had directly confronted North Korea in recent years, others would be less inclined to pursue nuclear weapons programs. By avoiding confrontation with Iran, Barak argued, the U.S. faces a perception of weakness in the region.

12. (U) CODELS Casey and Ackerman did not have the opportunity to clear this message.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Around the World, Distress Over Iran”
Saudis Warn of Iranian Influence and Threat

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia is described as adamant that the kingdom and the United States need to work together to roll back Iranian influence in Iraq, talking openly about what he called the “Iranian connections” of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki of Iraq. Meanwhile, the Saudi ambassador to the United States “recalled the king’s frequent exhortations to the US to attack Iran and so put an end to its nuclear weapons program. ‘He told you to cut off the head of the snake.’”
need for the Saudis to join us in supporting Iraq.

The Saudi Embassy Issue

3. (S) King Abdullah, the Foreign Minister, and Prince Muqrin all stated that the Saudi government would not send an ambassador to Baghdad or open an embassy there in the near future, citing both security and political grounds in support of this position. The Foreign Minister stated that he had considered dispatching an ambassador and had sent Saudi diplomats to Baghdad to identify a site for the Saudi embassy. However, he said, “the King simply forbade us to go any farther.” King Abdullah confirmed this account in a separate meeting with Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus. The King asserted that the security situation in Baghdad was too dangerous for him to risk sending a Saudi ambassador there. “He would immediately become a target for the terrorists and the militias,” he said.

4. (S) The King also rejected the suggestion that by sending a Saudi ambassador to Baghdad he could give essential political support to the Iraqi government as it struggles to resist Iranian influence and subversion. He expressed lingering doubt on the Iraqi government’s willingness to resist Iran. He also repeated his frequently voiced doubts about Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki himself by alluding to his “Iranian connections.” The Saudi monarch stated that he does not trust al-Maliki because the Iraqi Prime Minister had “lied” to him in the past by promising to take certain actions and then failing to do so. The King did not say precisely what these allegedly broken promises might have been. He repeated his oft heard view that al-Maliki rules Iraq on behalf of his Shiite sect instead of all Iraqis.

5. (S) However, in a potentially significant move, the King did not reject the idea of dispatching a Saudi ambassador to Baghdad completely. Instead, he said that he would consider doing so after the Iraqi provincial elections are held in the autumn. The conduct of these elections would indicate whether or not the Iraqi government is truly interested in ruling on behalf of all Iraqis or merely in support of the Shia, King Abdullah asserted.

Grudging Acknowledgment of Change in Iraq

6. (S) The Foreign Minister signaled another potential softening in Saudi policy by saying that the Kingdom’s problem was not with al-Maliki as a person but rather with the conduct of the Iraqi government. The King himself admitted that the Iraqi government’s performance has improved in recent months and grudgingly accepted the point that al-Maliki and his security forces have indeed been fighting extremists, specifically Shia extremists in both Basra and Baghdad and Sunni extremists and Al Qaeda in Mosul. However, the King and the senior Princes argued that more time would be required to judge whether the recent change in Iraqi behavior was lasting and sincere. The King suggested that much of the Iraqi government’s improved performance is attributable to US prodding rather than change in Iraqi attitudes.

7. (S) The Foreign Minister also suggested that the USG should prod Ayatollah Sistani to speak out in favor of a unified Iraq and national reconciliation among different Iraqi sects and groups. “You have paid a heavy price in blood and treasure, and Sistani and his people have benefited directly. You have every right to ask this of him,” Prince Saud al-Faisal said.

Possible Saudi Economic Assistance

8. (S) The King, Prince Muqrin, and the Foreign Minister all suggested that the Saudi government might be willing to consider the provision of economic and humanitarian assistance to Iraq. Prince Muqrin asked Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus to send him a list of the kinds of assistance that the US government would like to see the Kingdom provide Iraq. Al-Jubeir later told the Charge’ that this assistance would be separate from the USD 1 billion in aid that the Saudi government had promised at the Madrid Conference but still not delivered due to security worries. He said that the Madrid commitment consisted of $500 million in trade credits and $500 million in project assistance with strict conditionality, along the lines of what the World Bank would require. Al-Jubeir added that the assistance the Saudi government might provide via Prince Muqrin would initially be in the range of $75-$300 million.
Possible Debt Relief

9. (S) The King noted that Saudi debt relief for Iraq “will come at some point,” although he did not say when. Al-Jubeir told the Charge’ that debt relief is a real possibility. He also noted that the Saudi government might make changes to its Iraq policy, perhaps including both assistance and debt relief, prior to the President’s visit to Riyadh.

The Need to Resist Iran

10. (S) The King, Foreign Minister, Prince Muqrin, and Prince Nayif all agreed that the Kingdom needs to cooperate with the US on resisting and rolling back Iranian influence and subversion in Iraq. The King was particularly adamant on this point, and it was echoed by the senior princes as well. Al-Jubeir recalled the King’s frequent exhortations to the US to attack Iran and so put an end to its nuclear weapons program. “He told you to cut off the head of the snake,” he recalled to the Charge’, adding that working with the US to roll back Iranian influence in Iraq is a strategic priority for the King and his government.

11. (S) The Foreign Minister, on the other hand, called instead for much more severe US and international sanctions on Iran, including a travel ban and further restrictions on bank lending. Prince Muqrin echoed these views, emphasizing that some sanctions could be implemented without UN approval. The Foreign Minister also stated that the use of military pressure against Iran should not be ruled out.

Riyadh 00000649 003 of 003

12. (S) Comment: Saudi attitudes toward Iraq, from the King on down, remain marked by skepticism and suspicion. That said, the Saudis have noticed recent events in Iraq and are eager to work with the US to resist and reverse Iranian encroachment in Iraq. The King was impressed by Ambassador Crocker’s and General Petraeus’ visit, as were the Foreign Minister, GPI Chief, and Interior Minister. Cautious as ever, the Saudis may nevertheless be willing to consider new measures in the areas of assistance and debt relief, although further discussions will be required to make these ideas a reality. End Comment. 13. (U) This cable was reviewed and cleared by Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus. GFOELLER

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Around the World, Distress Over Iran”
Saudis Assure China on Oil Supply

In a meeting between the Saudi and Chinese foreign ministers, the Saudis give assurances that they will supply any Iranian oil that is cut off if China agrees to join the sanctions effort led by the United States. The diplomatic maneuver was guided behind the scenes by the United States.

DATE 2010-01-27 12:27:00
SOURCE Embassy Riyadh
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 RIYADH 000123

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2015 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, ECON, ETRD, CH, KWBG, IR, SA SUBJECT: CHINESE FM YANG VISITS RIYADH
REF: A. BEIJING 69 B. 09 RIYADH 895 C. RIYADH 118

RIYADH 00000123 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador James B. Smith for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

SUMMARY:
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1. (C) Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi met with King Abdullah and FM Prince Saud Al-Faisal on January 13, during the last stop of a five nation Africa and Middle East tour. During the visit, FM Yang discussed deepening Saudi-Chinese ties in a variety of fields, emphasizing trade, in particular, with his Saudi counterparts. Responding to statements made by FM Saud, Yang also briefly discussed Chinese support for Iraq, concern about Iranian nuclear ambitions, and hopes for the Middle East Peace Process. FM Yang’s foray into regional political commentary appears to have been a result of FM Saud’s prodding, both publicly and behind closed doors, and is a reflection of the developing Saudi-Chinese relationship. END SUMMARY.

TRADE TAKES PRECEDENCE
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2. (U) FM Yang arrived in Riyadh on January 13, the first high-level visit since Chinese President Hu Jintao’s February 2009 “Trip of Friendship and Cooperation.” FM Yang’s visit coincided with the 20th anniversary of Saudi-Chinese diplomatic relations, and followed three days after Chinese Trade Minister Chen Deming co-chaired the 4th session of the Saudi-Chinese Joint Commission in Riyadh.

3. (U) The Chinese Foreign Minister has traditionally made his first overseas trip of the new year to Africa, visiting with African leaders and expressing Chinese goodwill and improvements in trade relations. This year, FM Yang extended his visit to include not only major trading partners like Nigeria, Kenya and Morocco, but also Saudi Arabia. In a January 13 statement to the press, FM Yang stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation in “energy, infrastructure, finance and science and technology.” He said that both sides should carry out cultural and education exchanges to deepen the bilateral relationship and pressed the need for closer relations between China and the GCC.
4. (U) These statements echoed similar announcements from Chinese Trade Minister Chen who, in a January 10 press conference, called for finalizing the Chinese-GCC free trade agreement and increasing bilateral trade by 50%, from a total annual value of $40 billion to $60 billion, over the next five years (ref A). During the Joint Commission meeting, Saudi Minister of Finance Ibrahim Al-Assaf reportedly urged the Chinese to participate in more joint ventures, noting that while bilateral trade increased 25 times over the past ten years, the two countries only have 19 joint projects. Al-Assaf also welcomed China’s 44 billion riyal ($11.7 billion) worth of infrastructure projects in the Kingdom.

DUMPING CAUSES A BUMP
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5. (C) This call to increase Sino-Saudi trade comes on the heels of a December 24 announcement that China would impose anti-dumping tariffs of up to 13.6 percent on Saudi and Taiwan-produced butanediol. Beijing began a dumping probe on methanol and butanediol (BDO) from Saudi Arabia in July, which caused an unusually public trade spat between the two countries (ref B). Methanol and butanediol make up 10 to 15 percent of Saudi Arabia’s $2 billion in annual non-oil exports to China. A Ministry of Commerce and Industry official told Econoffs on January 13 that Saudi Arabia was able to convince the Chinese not to impose tariffs on methanol, but said the BDO case was still pending. The Ministry recently appointed a new Deputy Minister for Technical Affairs, Dr. Hamad Al-Awfy, who will handle all anti-dumping issues, he said. Al-Awfy previously complained to EconCouns that the SAG was increasingly frustrated by the growing number of Saudi companies complaining about Chinese dumping in Saudi Arabia. Other senior SAG officials have caustically complained about the low quality of Chinese construction and the “short-term, extractive” approach of Chinese companies to investments in Saudi Arabia.

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A MATURING ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP?
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6. (C) China recently surpassed the U.S. as the largest importer of Saudi oil. Saudi Arabia’s investments in China have increased significantly over the last few years, including a $3.5 billion refinery in Fujian and a $2.86 billion joint-venture petrochemical complex in Tianjin. Additionally, President Hu Jintao commemorated the opening of a cement plant when he visited Saudi Arabia in February 2009. Saudi Arabia’s more forward-leaning approach, including large-scale investments in China, indicates a maturing of the bilateral relations and assumes a more proactive, rather than reactive, role towards economic engagement. (Note: China is now the SAG’s number two trade partner after the U.S. Saudi-Chinese bilateral trade was estimated at $40 billion in 2009, while Saudi-U.S. trade was estimated at $67 billion during the same time period. End note.)

FM SAUD PRODS, FM YANG RESPONDS
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7. (U) While trade issues dominated FM Yang’s agenda, both he and FM Prince Saud-Al Faisal commented on the regional political landscape in a press conference that followed their bilateral meeting. FM Saud spoke out against Israeli defiance of UN Security Council resolutions and called on China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, to “deal with world disputes in accordance to international legitimacy...as stipulated in the Arab Peace Initiative.” The meetings with FM Yang were “part of a framework of coordination and consultation.” FM Saud continued, that included not only the Palestinian cause but also Iran’s nuclear file, Iraq and Yemen. In particular, he emphasized China’s role as a member of the P5 plus 1 group and their responsibility “to solve the (Iranian nuclear) crisis through dialogue and peaceful means. “Our two nations are keen that the Middle East and the Gulf should be free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons,” he stressed.

8. (U) In response to FM Saud’s comments, FM Yang said China called for serious negotiations between Israel and Palestine that would carry out the peace process and establish the State of Palestine. “China is ready for cooperation with the world community to work for stability in the Middle East,” he added. In regard to Iraq, he said that China extended assistance by reducing Iraqi debt obligations to China and forging trade agreements between Iraqi and Chinese companies. With respect to Iran, FM Yang said the Iranian file should be solved through “political diplomatic channels which help stabilize the situation in the region.”
9. (C) Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Prince Torki told visiting NEA A/S Feltman on January 26 that FM Saud had pressed the Chinese Foreign Minister hard on the need to be more active in working with the rest of the international community and the UN Security Council to counter the threat of Iran developing a nuclear weapon. FM Saud told FM Yang that Saudi Arabia was convinced Iran intended to develop a nuclear weapon, despite its assurances, and that only concerted international action could stop that. While no explicit bargain was discussed, Dep FM Torki explained that Saudi Arabia understood China was concerned about having access to energy supplies, which could be cut off by Iran, and wanted to attract more trade and investment. Saudi Arabia was willing to provide assurances on those scores to China, but only in exchange for tangible Chinese actions to restrain Iran’s drive for nuclear weapons.

COMMENT:
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9. (C) Since King Abdullah’s historic visit to Beijing in January 2006, the Saudi-Chinese relationship has focused predominantly on energy and trade. However, the relationship may be showing signs of political evolution. While the Chinese would likely prefer to stay away from political controversy, their economic power and permanent seat on the UN Security Council has made it more and more difficult for them to avoid politics altogether.

10. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: The incentives for the Saudis to try and leverage their economic relationship with China for political gain with respect to sensitive regional issues, such as Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, are significant and growing. After patiently focusing on building the economic relationship since 2006, FM Saud’s public and private prodding of FM Yang indicates the Saudis are ready to try and cash in some political chips. End comment. SMITH

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Around the World, Distress Over Iran”
An Arab Defense Chief on Strikes Against Iran

The United Arab Emirates’ defense chief, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, worries in the first of these two cables that it is “only a matter of time before Israel or the U.S. would strike Iranian nuclear facility targets.” But even as he warned that such an action could lead the Iranians to retaliate by attacking American installations in the Persian Gulf, he expresses concern about the destabilizing impact of a nuclear-armed Iran and queries a visiting American general whether “it would be possible for anyone to ‘take out’ all locations of concern in Iran via air power.”

DATE 2005-05-16 09:12:00

SOURCE Embassy Abu Dhabi

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 ABU DHABI 002178

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2015 TAGS: PREL, MASS, PHUM, ELAB, IR, IZ, XF, SA, PK, FR, TC SUBJECT: MBZ ON IRAQ, IRAN, PAKISTAN

REF: ABU DHABI 1008

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison. For reasons 1.4 (a), (b), and (d).

1. (U) Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed’s weekly Sunday “VIP Majlis” provided an excellent opportunity for a visiting National Defense University delegation to observe first-hand the UAEG’s informal consultative process. MbZ, brothers MinState Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan and Interior Minister Sheikh Saif, and Labor Minister al Ka’abi were joined by several dozen prominent Abu Dhabi officials and businessmen for the weekly gathering at Bateen Palace.

Iraq

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3. (C) Ambassador Sison noted that day’s visit to Iraq by Secretary Rice, highlighting the Secretary’s encouragement

SIPDIS for continued momentum in the political process and her meetings with PM al-Jaafari and KDP leader Barzani. MbZ voiced disdain for al-Jaafari, citing (again) his concerns over the Prime Minister’s ties to Iran. These concerns were aimed at Jaafari’s Dawaa Party colleagues, as well.
While agreeing that it was important for Iraq’s Sunni Arabs to be more involved in the political process and in drafting the constitution, MbZ complained that “there wasn’t one worthwhile Sunni” on the scene. He criticized new Sunni Defense Minister Dulaimi as being “in it for himself.” Nonetheless, MbZ said he agreed with the USG’s efforts to encourage the various Iraqi factions to work together. The UAE would continue to help train Iraqi police forces at the UAE’s police academy in Al Ain and provide reconstruction assistance. It was important for the region as a whole that the U.S. and its allies “got it right” in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, he underscored. (Note: MbZ aide Yousef al Otaiba had a few days earlier shared with Ambassador concerns passed by former PM Allawi that Dulaimi was “devious,” “bad news,” “very close” to Iranian intelligence, and had been introduced to the Iranians by Chalabi. Yousef had also noted the UAEG’s impression Mahdi had not always been a “team player” in the government of former PM Allawi. End note.)

Iran

4. (S) Turning to Iran, MbZ voiced certainty that the EU-3 efforts with Iran would break down and that Iran would resume its nuclear activities if it had not already done so. Repeating concerns first voiced to us in February (reftel), MbZ appeared convinced that it was only a matter of time before Israel or the U.S. would strike Iranian nuclear facility targets. U.S. installations in the Gulf could be targeted by Iran in the aftermath of such an action, he warned. MbZ agreed with the USG’s tough line with Tehran and the Europeans. A nuclear-armed Iran would destabilize the Gulf region and possibly allow terrorist access to WMD. MbZ asked Lt. Gen. Dunn whether it would be possible for anyone to “take out” all locations of concern in Iran via air power; Lt. Gen. Dunn voiced doubt that this would be possible given the dispersed locations. “Then it will take ground forces!” MbZ exclaimed. Ambassador noted that the UAE’s Director of Military Intelligence, BG Essa al Mazrouei, would pay counterpart visits this week to CENTCOM, J-2, DIA, and CIA for discussions on Iran and Iraq-related matters. MbZ said he looked forward to sharing “contingency planning” scenarios in future conversations.

Pakistan

5. (C) Ambassador asked about MbZ’s visit the week before to Lahore to meet with Pakistani President Musharraf. MbZ chuckled and asked why the USG “always” convinced the Pakistanis to delay news of the capture of senior Al Qaeda operatives such as Abu Faraj al Libbi. MbZ went on to congratulate Washington for its decision to allow U.S. firms to bid for contracts to provide F-16s and other defense technology to Pakistan. It was important to support Musharraf as he battled the terrorists, he emphasized. While the Indians had and would continue to balk at the decision, the region needed Musharraf to stay strong. There was no alternative leader in sight, MbZ opined. Besides, he continued, the F-16 decision would not tip the military balance between India and Pakistan. Even if it had, India’s strength as a stable democracy would ensure that it would not ever be in as “risky” a situation as its neighbor. MbZ then slapped his knee and said “you’ll never guess what Musharraf asked me...he asked me whether the UAE had received approval for the Predator!” (Note: the USG’s inability to meet the UAE’s request for an armed Predator remains a sore point for MbZ, although he has not directly raised the issue with us for some time.)

Gyrocopter, GAWC

6. (SBU) MbZ also referred to his interest in exploring selling the UAE’s “gyrocopter” (a helicopter-supported UAV co-developed with Austrian company Schiebel) to the U.S. Air Force, an idea he first floated during Gen. Moseley’s visit for the May 3 F-16 ceremony. MbZ noted that his aide would pass detailed gyrocopter specifications to the Embassy this week. (Note: We will be exploring this initiative with CENTAF and CENTCOM in relation to force protection aerial surveillance system needs at Al Dhafra airbase for the 380 th Air Expeditionary Wing. End note.)

7. (C) Lt. Gen. Dunn complimented MbZ on the Gulf Air Warfare Center (GAWC), which he and the NDU group had toured that morning. MbZ expressed satisfaction over the relationship between the UAE and U.S. Air Forces, but expressed disappointment that more GCC countries had not joined recent GAWC classes. Ambassador noted the recent robust participation by Saudi Arabia in the GAWC’s fourth class, which had included six Saudi F-15s and two young pilots who were also members of the Saudi royal family. MbZ asked whether the two high-ranking Saudis had actually completed all
requirements for graduation or had been “passed through.” Ambassador confirmed that they had completed all course requirements. MbZ commented that “the real reason” the Saudis had turned out for the GAWC class had been “to see what the UAE was up to” with the F-16 Block 60 and other procurement successes. Although Egypt and Jordan wished to join in the next GAWC class, MbZ added, they also wanted the UAE Air Force to pay fuel costs. MbZ said he had asked both countries “to go talk to ADNOC,” the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

**France**

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8. (U) MbZ noted that he would travel to Paris June 18-20 to meet with President Chirac, recalling that he had canceled his trip to France at the last minute in mid-January.

**Camel Jockeys**

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9. (SBU) On the margins of the MbZ conversation, Ambassador thanked Interior Minister Sheikh Saif for his assistance the week before in allowing G/TIP visitor Feleke Assefa access to camel jockey rehabilitation and social support centers. Ambassador noted that a Tier 3 ranking remained a possibility despite the UAEG’s vigorous efforts since mid-March with UNICEF, IOM, and others. A trafficking in persons reassessment would take place in August, she noted, and it was important for the UAE to continue the good work it was doing in solving the problem. MbZ aide Yousef al Otaiba promised to forward a copy of the UAE-UNICEF TIP implementing agreement and budget. (Note: he has done so; we have forwarded the document electronically to G/TIP and NEA/ARPI. End note.)

**Labor and the FTA**

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10. (SBU) Labor Minister al Ka’abi noted he had received reports that the U.S. and UAE sides had moved closer on the text of the labor chapter of the FTA during the last day of negotiations. He reiterated the UAEG’s concern that it receive some recognition of its unique demographic situation, as only 15 percent of the population held Emirati citizenship.
“The Great Game” in Iraq, Part 1

This is one of two cables on “The Great Game” in Iraq. American diplomats in Baghdad offer a candid view of how Iraq’s neighbors have been trying to influence political developments inside the country and the difficulties of helping Iraq fend off Iranian interventions and win acceptance by Arab countries.

DATE 2009-09-24 03:22:00

SOURCE Embassy Baghdad

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 082562

SIPDIS


Classified By: Ambassador Christopher R. Hill, for reasons 1.4 b and d.

1. (U) This is the first of two cables reviewing Iraq’s relations with key neighboring states, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran and Turkey, in the wake of the August 19 bombings. Part II reviews Iraq’s relations with Syria, in the wake of the August 19 bombings.

2. (C) Summary: Iraq’s relations with its neighbors represent a critical element in its efforts to maintain security and stability and normalize its position in the Gulf and the broader region. While Iraq made substantial progress in 2008-09 on these fronts, there remained unfinished business, especially in terms of relations with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Syria. The August 19 bombings -- targeting the MFA, and by extension Iraq’s improving relations with its neighbors -- represent a serious setback to that progress and have alarmed senior Iraqi officials that Iraqi Sunni Arab neighbors in particular now view those earlier gains as “reversible.” Iraq views relations with Saudi Arabia as among its most challenging, given Riyadh’s money, deeply ingrained anti-Shia attitudes, and suspicions that a Shia-led Iraq will inevitably further Iranian regional influence. Iraqi contacts assess that the Saudi goal (and that of most other Sunni Arab states, to vary degrees) is to enhance Sunni influence, dilute Shia dominance and promote the formation of a weak and fractured Iraqi government. Coincidentally, Iranian efforts are driven by a clear determination to see a sectarian, Shia-dominated government that is weak, disenfranchised from its Arab neighbors, detached from the U.S. security apparatus and strategically dependent on Iran. Neither of these objectives is in the U.S. interest. In the longer term, we will need to flesh out ideas for a post-GCC security architecture that includes Iraq more fully, develops ways to contain Iranian regional influence, and shapes the special position Iraq will likely occupy in the Gulf in ways that further our interests and those of our Gulf partners. End Summary.

SAUDI ARABIA -- ANTI-SHIISM AS FOREIGN POLICY?

3. (C) Iraqi officials view relations with Saudi Arabia as among their most problematic, although they are usually careful with U.S. officials to avoid overly harsh criticism, given our close relations with the Saudis. Iraqi officials note that periodic anti-Shia outbursts from Saudi religious figures are often allowed to circulate without sanction or disavowal from the Saudi leadership. This reality reinforces the Iraqi view that the Saudi state religion of Wahabbi Sunni Islam condones religious incitement against Shia. The suspicion is that these anti-Shia attitudes color Saudi views of a Shia-led Iraq. The Saudis have traditionally viewed Iraq as a Sunni-dominated bulwark against the spread of Shiism and Iranian political influence. In the wake of bombings in predominantly Shia areas across the country in June 2009 that killed dozens, PM Maliki pointed publicly to one such statement, made by a Saudi imam in May, and noted, “We have
observed that many governments have been suspiciously silent on the fatwa provoking the killing of Shiites.”

4. (C) For now the Saudis are using their money and media power (al-Arabiyya, al-Sharqiya satellite channels, and other various media they control or influence) to support Sunni political aspirations, exert influence over Sunni tribal groups, and undercut the Shia-led Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) and Iraqi National Alliance (INA). NSC advisor Safa al-Sheikh told us recently that Saudi influence in Iraq was significant, perhaps more significant than Iran’s at the moment, given the financial and media assets at its disposal, and given Iran’s recent internal distractions. He described the Saudi “media message” as having shifted a few years ago from one that was hostile to the GOI and sympathetic to the insurgency, to one that focused now more on an anti-ISCI message. According to PM Advisor Sadiq al-Rikabi, the Saudis are opposed to a strong Shia-led INA. Al-Sheikh also assessed that the Saudis would try to curb ISCI and INA and throw support to Sunni groups to counter Iranian influence, steps that could end up indirectly supporting Maliki, if he continues to pursue a cross-sectarian coalition in the elections. These contacts assess that the Saudi goal (and to varying degrees most other Sunni states) is to enhance Sunni influence, dilute Shia dominance, and promote the formation of a weak and more fractured Iraqi government. (COMMENT: Coincidentally, Iran also sees as in its interest a weak Iraqi government, albeit one with Shia firmly in control.)

5. (C) Some observers see a more malign Saudi influence. A recent Iraqi press article quoted anonymous Iraqi intelligence sources assessing that Saudi Arabia was leading a Gulf effort to destabilize the Maliki government and was financing “the current al-Qaida offensive in Iraq.” The article also quoted MP Haidar al-Abadi, a Maliki political ally, insisting that Gulf Arab neighbors wanted to destabilize Iraq. A few of our more senior contacts hint at similar malign intentions “by some neighbors,” making clear without being explicit that they are referring to Saudi Arabia.

KUWAIT: RELATIONS HOSTAGE TO CHAPTER VII CONCERNS
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6. (C) Although Kuwait re-opened its Embassy and sent an ambassador in 2008, bilateral relations remain hostage to Chapter VII concerns. While the Kuwaitis have indicated some willingness to reduce significantly the amount of compensation Iraq is paying under UNSCR 687, they have insisted in return on GOI re-affirmation in its entirety of UNSCR 833, entailing acceptance of the land borders and maritime boundary between the two countries. The latter in particular is highly problematic for the Iraqi leadership, especially in an election year, according to senior contacts. At present, Iraq has unimpeded navigational access from the Gulf to the port of Um Qasr, but some two-thirds of the deep water channel of the Khor Abdullah now lies — as a result of the 833 demarcation — in Kuwaiti territorial waters. Some observers, such as Da’wa Party MP Sami al-Askari, have expressed concern to us that after U.S. forces withdraw fully, Kuwait will try to control Iraq’s access to the sea, “and that border demarcation will allow it.” In his view, “No Iraqi leader could ever formally recognize the maritime border.” Even PM Maliki believes this. Despite these difficulties, the Iraqi and Kuwaiti sides have made significant progress cooperating in the past six months on Kuwaiti missing persons and property. NSC advisor al-Sheikh believes that the Chapter VII issues with Kuwait will eventually be resolved and that “we do not consider Kuwait a problem country” like some of the other neighbors. Nevertheless, the border issue is an acute friction point and could, in the view of Maliki, become grounds for confrontation between the two.

IRAN’S LOOMING PRESENCE
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7. (C) Iranian influence in Iraq remains pervasive, as Tehran manipulates a range of levers to mold Iraq’s political, religious, social, and economic landscape. Overall, however, the GOI views its relations with Iran in a special category, posing risks that are manageable and not viewed as existential threats to the state. Obviously many Sunni contacts — and many of our allies in the region — see the situation in far starker terms and fear that Iraq could fall into Iran’s political orbit and rendered unable to speak or act independently, once U.S. troops draw down. Iranian efforts are driven by a clear determination to see a sectarian, Shia-dominated government that is weak, disenfranchised from its Arab neighbors, detached from the U.S. security apparatus and strategically dependent on Iran.
8. (C) While significantly weaker than the Saudis and others on media, the Iranians fund political parties and key individuals (as other neighboring countries do), according to a range of well-informed Iraqi contacts. Shia contacts like PM advisor Rikabi and NSC advisor al-Sheikh, as well as others such as (Kurdish) FM Zebari, do not dismiss the significant Iranian influence but instead argue that it:

-- is best countered by Iraqi Shia political actors, who know how to deal with Iran;

-- is not aimed, unlike that of some Sunni Arab neighbors, at fomenting terrorism that would destabilize the government; fomenting terrorism that would destabilize the government;

-- will naturally create nationalistic Iraqi resistance to it (both Shia and more broadly), if other outsiders do not intervene to stoke Sunni-Shia sectarian tension; and

-- has been frozen in place to some extent in the past few months by the political turmoil inside Iran.

9. (C) According to al-Sheikh, Iraq and Iran have “very special, very frank talks” in which Iraq’s Shia-led government is able to push back effectively against Iranian influence on some fronts. Observers generally credit the Iranians with playing a more sophisticated game than the Syrians, as they try to shape the political process to their liking. These contacts acknowledge that Iran is providing some form of covert support to armed groups like the Promise Day Brigades and other small groups, but maintain they have stopped support for the big militias. It should be noted that some contacts demonstrate discomfort when asked about Iranian influence and show an alacrity for moving on to other neighbors in the region. TURKEY: BETTER THAN THE REST

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10. (C) Relations with Turkey are relatively positive. Turkey intervened diplomatically to attempt to mediate the post-August 19 crisis with the Syrians, and unlike the Iranian effort, seems to have gotten some traction with the parties. The effort has been well-received here, even if concrete progress has been limited. The Iraqis and Turks have established a Strategic Commission that meets periodically at the ministerial level, paving the way for head of state visits marking significant economic cooperation. PM Erdogan is expected in Baghdad in October, following up on the ministerial in mid-September in Ankara. Bilateral trade is currently at $7 billion annually, and the two countries hope it will expand significantly in the coming decade. Moreover, Turkey has worked to improve its relations with the KRG, and they have significantly increased their diplomatic and commercial presence in the Kurdish areas. However, the Turks also have been active on the Iraqi political front, funding groups like the Mosul-based Sunni Al-Hudba movement, in an effort to offset Kurd influence in areas outside Kurdistan.

11. (C) It is the water issue that threatens to complicate an improving Iraq-Turkey relationship. According to DFM Labid Abbawi, Iraq needs a flow of 700 cubic meters of water for its needs but could get back with a minimum of 500. However, Turkey was only allowing a flow of about 230 cubic meters (with an uptick in August and September beyond that level). A recent visit to Turkey by the Iraqi Minister of Water was not very productive, he noted.

THE WAY FORWARD

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12. (C) It will help Iraq’s efforts to maintain stability and security, and to continue moving forward in normalization with neighbors, if we and the P-5 can provide the requisite support for the appointment by the UN of a senior official (someone other than SRSG head Melkert, who already has a full plate with UNAMI) to look into the August 19 bombings. We should also weigh in with key neighbors to urge a redoubling of efforts in normalizing relations with Iraq, keeping up the pressure on Egypt and Saudi Arabia in particular to return their Ambassadors. We should also caution Iraq’s Arab neighbors against efforts to inflame Shia-Sunni anxieties through their support for Sunni parties and by Shia-critical media attacks. Regarding Kuwait, we will need to work for steady progress on Chapter VII where possible, focusing on Oil-for-Food and WMD
resolutions 1546 and 707, initially, with a push after elections to make progress on the Kuwait-related resolutions.

13. (C) In the longer term, we will need to flesh out ideas for a post-GCC security architecture that includes Iraq more fully, develops ways to contain Iranian regional influence, and shapes the special position Iraq will likely occupy in the Gulf in ways that further our interests and those of our Gulf partners. The challenge for us is to convince Iraq neighbors, particularly the Sunni Arab governments, that relations with a new Iraq are not a zero-sum game, where if Iraq wins, they lose. We still have work to do to convince them that a strong, stable, democratic (and inevitably Shia-led) Iraq is the best guarantee that Iraq will be able to shake Iranian manipulation and see its future bound up with that of the West and its moderate Arab neighbors.

HILL

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Meddling Neighbors Undercut Iraq Stability”
This is one of two cables on “The Great Game” in Iraq. American diplomats in Baghdad offer a candid view of how Iraq’s neighbors have been trying to influence political developments inside the country and the difficulties of helping Iraq fend off Iranian interventions and win acceptance by Arab countries.

1. (U) This is the second of two cables reviewing Iraq’s relations with key neighboring countries. This cable focuses on Iraq’s relations with Syria, in the wake of the August 19 bombings.

2. (C) Summary: Iraq’s improving relations with its neighbors in 2008 and early 2009 represented a critical element in its efforts to maintain security and stability and normalize its position in the Gulf and the broader region. The August 19 bombings — targeting the MFA, and by extension Iraq’s improving relations with its neighbors — represent a serious setback and have alarmed senior Iraqi officials, suggesting that Iraqi Sunni Arab neighbors in particular now view those earlier gains as “reversible.” These fears help explain the rapid deterioration in relations with Syria and the GOI’s demand that the UN intervene to investigate the August 19 bombings, so as to put Syria on notice that the international community is scrutinizing its use of Iraqi Ba’athist proxies to interfere in Iraq. Iraq’s relations Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran and Turkey are covered in Part I of this message. End Summary.

3. (C) From 2008 through much of the summer, Iraq’s relations with its neighbors were on a positive trajectory overall. The breakthroughs in regional engagement began in the fall of 2008 (following sustained USG pressure), with the UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait all sending ambassadors to Baghdad, along with Jordan, the Arab League, and Syria. Iraq also began its regular participation in the GCC 3 in 2008. While there was less formal movement in 2009, the positive trend continued, as the GOI named 58 new ambassadors and the Egyptian government took steps to return its ambassador. The continuing signs of improvement in security in Iraq in 2008 and the first half of 2009 provided a growing sense that Iraq was becoming a much more secure place and getting strong enough to ward off, or at least better control, neighbors’ meddling in its internal affairs.

4. (C) However, not all the trendlines were positive during this period. Despite pressure from us, the Saudis refused to send an ambassador (although they received Iraq’s ambassador in Riyadh), reflecting Riyadh’s and King Abdullah’s, in particular, deep-seated doubts about a Shia-led democracy in Iraq. Relations with other key countries in the region, including Syria, Kuwait, and even Turkey, also experienced varying degrees of drag on positive movement, ranging from foreign fighters issues in Syria to Chapter VII issues in Kuwait and water shortfalls from Turkey. The perception among many Iraqis during this period was that despite the gains in
normalization and regional integration, Iraq was a pitiful (former) regional giant, preyed upon and held back in various ways by neighbors intent on keeping it weak and taking advantage of it.

AUGUST 19: A THREAT TO NORMALIZATION TRENDS

5. (C) The August 19 bombings which severely damaged the MFA and the Ministry of Finance buildings and Baghdad’s residents’ sense of improving security, brought these negative trendlines into sharp relief. The bombings undercut the perception of normalization that had become a commonplace over the past eighteen months (and undercut PM Maliki’s platform of having delivered on security). Iraqis, both official and unofficial, believe it was no accident that one of the main targets, and the one that suffered the most QoF the main targets, and the one that suffered the most damage, is the MFA, symbol of Iraq’s efforts to build relations with its neighbors and normalize its position in the region.

6. (C) In the immediate aftermath of the bombings, FM Zebari made accusations that one or more of the neighboring countries had conspired with al-Qaeda, possibly using proxies, to support the bombings. In a meeting with the Ambassador, PM Maliki referred to a “momentum of interference” that was building in the lead-up to the January national elections. Zebari described the next 5-6 month time-frame as “a period of maximum danger” for Iraq. The bombings were meant to convey the perception -- welcomed by some neighbors, he insisted -- that the security and normalization in Iraq of the past two years were “reversible.”

DO THE NEIGHBORS HAVE IT IN FOR IRAQ?

7. (C) Iraqi contacts speculated that regional unease about

BAGHDAD 000002561 002 OF 002

a Shia-led Iraqi government, and about the democratic character of that government, a model that could eventually undermine the legitimacy of more autocratic regimes in the region, helped explain why some neighbors would prefer a weak and unstable Iraq, where security and political gains of the past two years are rolled back. Acting NSC Advisor Dr. Safa al-Sheikh described the neighbors as bent on intervening in Iraq, especially in the months leading up to the January 2010 elections. While some used proxies to foment violence, others restricted themselves to money, media (propaganda), and meddling, all designed to help shape electoral coalitions, and block or further individual political careers, in order to better control Iraq and keep it weak, politically fractured, and pliable, insisted al-Sheikh. PM Maliki told the Ambassador that neighbors feared a resurgent Iraq that would capture too much of “the limelight.” According to Maliki, neighbors also feared Iraq’s “golden connection between Shia and Sunni Islam,” a legacy that gives Iraq special precedence in the region. His argument is based on a well-acknowledged fact that Iraq is the grand junction of Shia and Sunni Islam as well as of the Arab world and Persia, making it, therefore, both strategically vital but also vulnerable. The view of key contacts here is that some of Iraq’s Sunni Arab neighbors have concluded that in a stable, peaceful Iraqi democracy, Sunni political power in Iraq would be finished. These Arab neighbors, therefore, conclude that the only way the Sunnis will ever come back into power in Iraq is in the wake of a period of sustained instability and violence that de-legitimizes democratic governance and the Shia as Iraqi political leaders.

RELATIONS WITH SYRIA IN CRISIS

8. (C) Relations with Syria suffered the most precipitous decline in the wake of the attacks, with mutual recalls of Ambassador and public statements making clear the GOI felt Syria was complicit. While Syrian support for Iraqi Ba’athists has long been a significant bilateral irritant, the GOI’s public claim that Syrian-based insurgents were responsible for August 19 represented a significant shift. To the al-Maliki government, the problem was now seen as an existential threat to the state and the GOI could no longer treat the issue with routine diplomacy, especially given fears these attacks were only the first wave. According to Maliki and al-Sheikh, senior Iraqi security officers had seen a growing body of intelligence in the months leading up to attacks indicating significant cooperation between Iraqi Ba’athists and al-Qaeda, although Sheikh acknowledged that the proof for Iraqi Ba’athist involvement in the August 19 bombings had been assembled “somewhat quickly.” He explained that at the cell level, Ba’athists participate with some al-Qaeda groups -- usually disguising their Baathist sympathies -- and
often dominate the local groups because they have highly prized skills such as experience handling weapons and explosives.

9. (C) Iraqi officials make clear that despite the current problems with Syria, they foresee the possibility of improved relations in the future. PM Maliki recently stated that Iraq wanted a harder-line USG policy toward Syria only to the extent it would help compel Syria to stop misbehaving and be a better neighbor. The problem, according to Maliki and others, is that Syria is a neighborhood menace with a history of fomenting violence and inciting instability in the region -- and it viewed these tactics as part of the standard tools of diplomacy. Iraq’s problem is that it is too weak on its own to intimidate Syria into behaving. With no troops “to mass on the border” as a threat, as Turkey had once done, and taking his cue from Lebanon’s experience following the Hariri assassination, Maliki felt he had no recourse but to take the issue to the UNSC, hoping this diplomatic “stick” might persuade Bashar and his regime to back off. Iraq is looking to the United States and other members of the P-5 to endorse the appointment by the UNSYG of a senior official to investigate the August 19 bombings and external support for terrorism in Iraq. (NOTE: Not all Iraqi officials agreed with the PM’s approach. On September 5, Iraq’s three presidents -- Talabani, Hashimi and Abd al-Mahdi -- issued a statement calling for containing tension between Iraq and Syria through diplomatic channels, an obvious rejection of Maliki’s insistence on UN involvement. END NOTE.)

10. (U) Iraq’s relations Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran and Turkey are covered in Part I of this message.

HILL
Iraqi Leader Worries About Saudi Interference

Iraq’s prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, tells the American ambassador how he asked President Obama to stop the Saudis from interfering in Iraqi politics.

DATE 2009-09-24 13:51:00

SOURCE Embassy Baghdad

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET BAGHDAD 002569

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2029 TAGS: PRL, ECON, ENRG, EPET, IR, IZ, SY SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER ACCUSES IRAN OF TRYING TO DESTABILIZE IRAQ

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher Hill for reasons 1.5 b,d

SUBJ: Prime Minister Accuses Iran of Trying to Destabilize Iraq

1. (S) In a September 22 meeting, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki told the Ambassador that Iran is intervening increasingly boldly in the Iraqi political process in a bid to “control the COR” (the Council of Representatives, the Iraqi Parliament). Iran has not discarded use of military means to attain its objectives, Maliki said, but for now it is focusing on political means. If Iran does not succeed in influencing the upcoming Iraqi national elections, Maliki said, he expects to see them return to military actions. Maliki said that the Iranian initiative was thwarted -- dealt a “fatal blow” -- by Dawa’s refusal to join the Shi’a alliance being forged for the elections (the Iraqi National Alliance). Iran, he said, is trying to rally the Shi’a to counter the “Saudi project” to align the Sunni states. But if Dawa had joined the Shi’a alliance, he said, that “could have led to sectarian strife.”

2. (S) Maliki said that Iran is using the Saudi efforts as pretext to continue its intervention in Iraq. On September 21, for example, the Saudis sponsored a meeting in Amman at which at least ten senior Iraqi Sunnis attended, including Rafi al-Issawi. While in Washington, Maliki said, he asked POTUS to intervene with Saudi Arabia to ask them to stop their efforts at rallying the Sunni, in part precisely to avoid inflaming sectarianism and to deny Iran that pretext for similarly seeking to rally the Shi’a. Maliki’s concerns in this regard have not abated, he said. He chose not to press this issue again with VPOTUS during his September 18 visit to Baghdad because he felt he had expressed his concerns once and it was not necessary to continue to raise the same issue.

3. (S) Turning to the Mujahedin el Khalkh (MEK), the Ambassador urged Maliki not to take any provocative actions prior to the elections. Maliki took this point on board, but replied by asking what outcome the USG sees, and how long this situation can go on. Ambassador stressed that a.) the situation “won’t go on forever,” b.) the USG has sent a “stern message” to the MEK that they must deal directly with the GOI, not the USG, and c.) the U.S. base near the MEK camp will eventually be closing. The USG has urged the Europeans to take a similar stance, and is seeking greater United Nations involvement in treating the MEK as refugees. Maliki replied that the GOI “has to do something” so that it can say it has started the process. Otherwise, he said, this issue will be used against him in the elections. In Maliki’s view, “whoever wants to return to their country can do so.” The rest, he said, should be relocated away from the Iranian border, to protect them and Iraq from Iranian pressure. Iran, Maliki said, at one time was even contemplating a long-range missile strike on the camp, and even today is considering filing a case against Iraq for “harboring a terrorist organization.” The GOI must try to relocate “at least 1,000” members before the end of the year, Maliki said, returning to his theme that the GOI must do something prior to the elections. Ambassador emphasized that any attempt to forcibly remove members could lead to bloodshed and crisis, and again urged Maliki not to do so. Maliki said he felt most members would willingly relocate. Only the leadership of the group objects, and
they are “criminals.”

4. (S) Comment: Maliki’s comments regarding Iranian involvement in internal Iraqi affairs are the strongest we have heard. The Shi’a alliance INA is under considerable pressure from the Iranians to persuade or even threaten Maliki’s Dawa party to join the alliance, but on terms unfavorable or unsatisfactory to either Dawa or Maliki. He anticipates that if he pursues his non-sectarian State of Law alliance, he will encounter not only stiff resistance from the INA but also heavy and active opposition from the Iranians. Regarding MEK, while it appears that the GOI will not move immediately after Ramadan against the camp’s residents, the eventual transfer operation will likely occur before the end of the year. We will continue to advocate patience, direct GOI-MEK negotiation for a peaceful transfer and involvement of an international organization. End Comment. HILL
**Iran’s Role in Iraq**

Of all of Iraq’s neighbors, Iran is a “dominant player” in Iraq’s internal politics and spends up to $200 million a year to influence a diverse array of Iraqi political groups, the American Embassy reports.

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**DATE** 2009-11-13 12:46:00

**SOURCE** Embassy Baghdad

**CLASSIFICATION** SECRET

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**SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 002992**

**SIPDIS**

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/FO LIMBERT, NEA/IR AND NEA/I. NSC FOR TALWAR, MAGSAMEN, PHEE AND VROOMAN


**REF:** BAGHDAD 2288

**Classified By:** Political M/C Gary A. Grappo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. **(S) SUMMARY:** Iran is a dominant player in Iraq’s electoral politics, and is using its close ties to Shia, Kurdish, and select Sunni figures to shape the political landscape in favor of a united Shia victory in the January election. A pro-Iran, Shia-dominated, and preferably Islamist government, led by a united Shia alliance remains Iran’s top priority. Toward that end, Iran is seeking to increase pressure on Maliki to join forces with the other prominent Shia coalition (Iraqi National Alliance) led by the Sadrists and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI). END SUMMARY

2. **(S) Iran is arguably the most influential regional power seeking to shape and influence the outcome of Iraq’s election. This message offers an assessment of Iran’s efforts to shape Iraq’s electoral politics in anticipation of the national election in January.**

**Iran’s Policy Goals and Tools**

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3. **(S) Iran’s over-arching political objective for Iraq’s January election is the re-election of a Shia-dominated, preferably Islamist, coalition led by Tehran’s closest allies, notably ISCI and the Sadrist Trend under the rubric of the Iraqi National Alliance coalition (INA) (ref tel). Iraq, given its proximity to Iran and its shared Shia heritage, represents a vital foreign policy priority for the Iranian government’s (IRIG) efforts to project its ideology and influence in the region. An economically dependent and politically subservient Iraq would foster greater strategic depth for Tehran. Iranian president Ahmadinejad has referred to Iraq in recent press statements as “a Shia base” confronting the broader menace perpetrated by those opposed to Iraq’s identity and stability (i.e., Sunni states, the West).**

4. **(S) Iran’s approach to its bilateral relationship with Iraq ranges from political micro-management to broad strategic guidance emanating directly from Supreme Leader Khamenei in Tehran. The IRIG recognizes that influence in Iraq requires operational (and at times ideological) flexibility. As a result, it is not uncommon for the IRIG to finance and support competing Shia, Kurdish, and to some extent, Sunni entities, with the aim of developing the Iraqi body politic’s dependency on Tehran’s largesse. While exact figures are unknown, Tehran’s financial assistance to Iraqi surrogates is estimated at USD 100-200 million annually, with USD 70 million going to**
5. (S) Since at least 2003, Brigadier General Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF), has been the point main directing the formulation and implementation of the IRIG’s Iraq policy, with authority second only to Supreme Leader Khamenei. Through his IRGC-QF officers and Iraqi proxies in Iraq, notably Iranian Ambassador and IRGC-QF associate Hassan Kazemi-Qomi, Soleimani employs the full range of diplomatic, security, intelligence, and economic tools to influence Iraqi allies and detractors in order to shape a more pro-Iran regime in Baghdad and the provinces.

6. (S) Soleimani enjoys long-standing close ties with several prominent GOI officials, including President Talabani, Vice-President Adel Abdul-Mahdi (ISCI), Prime Minister Maliki (Da’wa), former PM Jaafari, and more recently, Speaker Samarra’i (Septel reports Iranian Speaker Qrecently, Speaker Samarra’i (Septel reports Iranian Speaker Lariji’s November 4-7 visit to Iraq at Samarra’i’s invitation.). Khamenei, President Ahmadinejad, Speaker Larijani, and former president Rafsanjani consult regularly with visiting GOI officials as part of the IRIG’s broader “strategic” council of advisers seeking to influence the GOI.

7. (S) Iran’s tools of influence include financial support to (and pressure on) a cross-spectrum of Iraqi parties and officials; economic development assistance, notably to religious organizations; lethal aid to select militant Shia proxies; and sanctuary to Iraqi figures fearful of USG targeting or those seeking to revitalize their political/religious credentials, most notably Moqtada al-Sadr. This leverage also extends, to a lesser extent, to select Sunni actors, including such public figures as Iraqi Speaker Samarra’i, whose September visit to Tehran included meetings with several senior IRIG officials.

Pre-Election Jockeying
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8. (S) Predictably, Iran is actively lobbying and recruiting Iraqis of various political stripes and affiliations, including Sunnis, in the run-up to the election to ensure a united Shia-led coalition government. Given the likelihood of a Shia-led victory in the election, Iran appears more concerned about the strength of a united Shia bloc in the post-election phase of government formation. For Iran, a “rebellious” Maliki pursuing a more nationalist vs. sectarian agenda risks splitting the Shia vote, which in turn weakens the Shia political bloc’s negotiating strength during the government formation period post-election. Iran’s greatest fear for the upcoming election is a fractured Shia coalition that is unable to coalesce and thereby dominate the next government. Iran’s worst-case election scenario (increasingly unrealistic) is a coup d’etat of former regime elements hostile to Tehran.

9. (S) A weak Shia coalition before or after the election would further undermine the INA and their pro-Iranian entities, notably ISCI and the Sadrist Trend. The Kurds, historically closer to ISCI, remain the swing vote and are unlikely to reveal their true coalition intentions until after the election. As seasoned masters of the Iraqi political chessboard, Kurdish leaders such as Talabani and Barzani will likely exploit their political strength among Shia/Sunni counterparts to protect and expand Kurdish influence in a future government. Iran’s historic ties to the PUK, and to a lesser extent KDP officials, make the Kurds an important element in ensuring a pro-Iranian Shia victory in the election. INA officials are confident that the Kurds will join their coalition, all but guaranteeing an election victory. An unknown factor in national elections is the Kurdish opposition party, Goran List, under the leadership of former PUK Secretary General Nawshirwan Mustafa. Goran is committed to unseating the PUK (and Talabani) in Suleymaniyah province but needs financial backing to ensure its long-term viability in the KRG and national politics. Iran could conceivably alleviate Goran’s financial woes, particularly through its close ties with the Kurdish Jaff tribe, some of whom are Goran members. However, doing so would undermine the IRIG’s valued relationship with Talabani, while also proving exceedingly duplicitous, even by IRIG and KRG standards.

10. (S) It is important to note that Iran’s power in Iraq, although extensive, is not without limitations. The IRIG’s greatest political roadblock remains the domineering authority and religious credibility embodied in Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani. Despite his Iranian heritage, Sistani is Iraq’s most revered Shia religious (and political) authority. A critic of Iran’s
"Velayet-e-Faqih" (rule of the jurisprudent) system of theocratic governance, Sistani's abstemious (aka Quietest school) approach to Shia politics has kept him well above the political fray while at the same time ensuring him significant impact on those rare occasions when he pronounces on politics. For example, Sistani’s public support for an open list ballot was instrumental in prompting ISCI, Sadrist Trend, Maliki’s State of Law, and other Shia parties to follow suit, despite Tehran’s preference for a closed list. Domestic political realities will continue to force Shia political parties like ISCI, Dawa Qwill continue to force Shia political parties like ISCI, Dawa and Sadr Trend, with close historic ties to Iran, to balance between support for a broader Iraqi-Shia agenda, as championed by Sistani, and the alternative, championed by Iran, that would subordinate Iraqi interests to Iran’s broader objectives (septel).

Soft vs. Hard Power
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11. (S) Following the GOI’s crackdown on Iranian-supported Sadrist militias in Basrah during the “Charge of the Knights” operation in March 2008, Iran has calibrated its operations in Iraq to encompass more “soft power” (economic, religious, educational) support and investment as part of a broader “hearts and minds” campaign. (NOTE: Iranian lethal aid to militant proxies continues; however, on a less visible scale. END NOTE). With annual bilateral trade estimated at USD 4 billion (up 30 percent since 2008) and comprised mostly of Iranian imports (approximately 48 percent of Iraq's imports are Iranian goods), the IRIG continues to jockey for economic domination in Iraq through targeted development assistance, focused largely on refurbishment of Shia religious shrines,

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and trade deals and bilateral agreements aimed at fostering greater Iraqi economic dependency on Iran. This measure has been successful, largely because of Iran’s geographic proximity and access to Iraqi markets that are otherwise financially or politically less appealing to other states, notably the United States, Europe, and other industrialized nations. Turkey, on the other hand, remains Iran’s biggest economic competitor, particularly in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Implications for U.S. Policy
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12. (S) COMMENT: Concerns about long-term U.S. influence, albeit tempered by the withdrawal deadline, continue to inform IRIG decision-making to ensure its strategic foothold in Iraq. Iran views Iraq as a natural (and more junior) strategic partner. As a result, Iran will continue to flex its muscles to ensure it’s strategic outcomes are met. This should not lead to alarmist tendencies or reactions on our part. The next Iraqi government will continue to cultivate close ties with Iran given long-standing historical realities that precede Iraq’s ties with the United States. On the other hand, Iran’s influence in Iraq should not be overestimated. As the GOI continues to gain its footing, points of divergence between Tehran and Baghdad become increasingly evident on such sensitive bilateral issues as water, hydrocarbons, maritime borders, and political parity. Some prominent Iraqi leaders, including those with close ties to Iran (i.e., Maliki, Ammar al-Hakim) are increasingly sensitive to being labeled Iranian lackeys.

13. (S) COMMENT CONT’D: Our objective in Iraq should be less about countering all-things Iranian, and more about developing viable alternatives and approaches that gradually alter the GOI’s political, economic, and social worldview. Development of viable international alternatives in Iraq is one of the most effective measures of countering Iranian ambitions and, ultimately, integrating Iraq as a constructive member of the international community. Specifically, our ongoing efforts to bolster the GOI through capacity-building and assistance within the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) and to remove Iraq from Chapter VII remain our most valuable tools in this regard. Given the value placed on the SFA by the GOI and the Iraqi public, our ability to recognize, enhance, and exploit the value of the partnership will constitute an essential element of any effort to counter “malign” Iranian influence.
“Meddling Neighbors Undercut Iraq Stability”
Political Intrigue Swirls Around Iraq

President Jalal Talabani of Iraq says that Syria tired to restore the Baath Party in Iraq. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Talabani confided, told him that “you and Iraq are in my hearts, but that man [Maliki] is not.”

DATE 2009-12-23 09:15:00

SOURCE Embassy Baghdad

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 BAGHDAD 003316

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/22/2029 TAGS: KDEM, PGOV, PHUM, PREL, SY, TU, EG, IR, IZ SUBJECT: NEA A/S FELTMAN’S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT TALABANI

REF: A. BAGHDAD 3193 B. BAGHDAD 3157 C. BAGHDAD 3229 D. BAGHDAD 3205 E. BAGHDAD 3196

Classified By: A/DCM Gary A. Grappo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a wide-ranging discussion with visiting NEA A/S Feltman on December 14, President Talabani underscored the importance for Kurds of the POTUS/VPOTUS telephone calls with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Barzani, the December 7 White House statement on Iraq’s election law and the message conveyed by Secretary of Defense Gates. He predicted a tough government coalition process in Iraq after the March elections, dismissed the significance of the Kurdish Goran (“Change”) Movement and said the PUK and KDP - which will again run on a united Kurdish list - had agreed with PM Maliki’s State of Law coalition to try to form a front as part of a government coalition after elections. On Iran (“a very difficult country”), Talabani said the domestic political situation is highly unstable and the regime’s leadership paralyzed: Supreme Leader Khamenei fears further alienating the Iranian street, but is hemmed in by regime hardliners and cannot afford to appease the opposition, either. Iran’s multi-ethnic population and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ (IRGC) efforts to expand its writ posed additional challenges for the regime. While Syria and Iran agreed on much, Syria’s attempts to resuscitate Iraq’s Ba’th Party (a mistake, in Talabani’s view) worried Tehran. Talabani said Saudi Arabia’s effort to re-tether Syria to the broader Arab community had prompted closer Egyptian-Iraqi ties. The Saudi effort to isolate Iraq from its regional neighbors was “misguided”, but given the personal enmity between King Abdullah and PM Maliki, Saudi-Iraqi rapprochement was unlikely if Maliki won another term as PM. Talabani said Iraq’s second oil bid round helped allay concerns about Iraq’s credit worthiness, highlighted its potential to become a wealthy country and gave Iraq a chance to rival Saudi Arabia’s oil production in 10-15 years. End summary.

ELECTION LAW AND SECRETARY OF DEFENSE GATES’ VISIT

2. (C) Talabani said KRG President Masoud Barzani was “very pleased and satisfied” with the recent visit of Secretary of Defense Gates (ref A) and his reiteration of the December 7 White House statement on the U.S. commitment to Iraq’s constitution (including Article 140), support for a census and pledge to help resolve outstanding Arab-Kurd issues. Talabani said that while some actors in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) claimed the Kurds were “deceived” into settling for 43 parliamentary seats as part of the recently-completed election law deal (ref B), he and Barzani believed long-term relations with the U.S., as manifested in the White House statement and the SecDef’s message, were more important than an additional 2-3 parliamentary seats. A/S Feltman underscored the U.S. commitment to resolve outstanding Arab-Kurd issues in accordance with Iraq’s constitution and Article 140.
3. (C) Talabani noted that “some Kurds” failed to understand that Article 142 stipulates that any proposed changes to the constitution cannot impinge on rights otherwise guaranteed to the provinces. (Comment: Mentioned in the White House statement of December 7, Article 142 provides a mechanism for amending the constitution. In mentioning it, Talabani likely intended to caution that any attempt to amend the constitution in a way that limited Kurds’ rights to resolve DIBs issues under Article 140 would be unacceptable. End comment.) While the Bush administration had been “very friendly” toward the Kurds, it had never publicly expressed support for Kurdish interests, Talabani said. (Note: He claimed former VP Cheney committed to doing so after Iraq adopted hydrocarbons legislation, which has still not occurred. End note.) Kurds were “very glad” about the POTUS/VPOTUS-Barzani calls and December 7 White House statement, which represented a commitment by the U.S. to them. (Note: As reported ref C, Kurdish, Arab and Turkoman interlocutors have publicly and privately expressed the fears that the POTUS/VPOTUS calls, together with the December 7 statement, represent a deal by which the KRG agreed to accept a consensus election law agreement in exchange for U.S. support of a process that would lead to the eventual annexation of Kirkuk into the IKR. End note.)

4. (C) While the negotiating for a consensus agreement on an election law compromise had been difficult, Talabani claimed delaying the election until March would mitigate weather-related complications during the polling. After that would come the effort to form a coalition government. "Then we will have problems", Talabani predicted. (Note: Responding to Ambassador Hill’s question about whether government formation negotiations would be over the position of the president or the presidency (encompassing the president and two vice-presidents), Talabani said that in accordance with the Iraqi constitution, they would only pertain to the office of the president. Referring to VP al-Hashimi’s unhelpful veto of the November 8 election law, Talabani noted that the current arrangement by which the president and two vice presidents may veto legislation had benefits and drawbacks. (Note: It is unclear whether parliament will approve holding a constitutional referendum to extend the current arrangement by which the president and two vice presidents have a veto. End note.) Responding to A/S Feltman’s question about whether government formation negotiations would be over the position of the president or the presidency (encompassing the president and two vice-presidents), Talabani said that in accordance with the Iraqi constitution, they would only pertain to the office of the president. Referring to VP al-Hashimi’s unhelpful veto of the November 8 election law, Talabani noted that the current arrangement by which the president and two vice presidents may veto legislation had benefits and drawbacks. (Note: It is unclear whether parliament will approve holding a constitutional referendum to extend the current arrangement by which the president and two vice presidents have a veto. End note.)

5. (C) Talabani said in recent negotiations the PUK and KDP reached agreement with PM Maliki’s Shi’a-led State of Law Alliance (SLA) to form a front as part of a coalition government after elections. The bloc with the largest number of seats would nominate a candidate for PM. (Comment: Consummation of the proposed deal will likely depend on how many seats SLA is able to win. End comment.) Talabani said that the KDP and PUK will again run together on a united Kurdish Alliance List (KAL). Nawshirwan Mustafa’s Goran (aka, “Change”) Movement would run on a separate list, as would the Kurdish Islamic Union and League of Muslims of Kurdistan.

6. (C) Responding to A/S Feltman’s question about what Goran meant for Kurdish internal politics, Talabani characterized the movement as an expression of dissatisfaction with the status quo. Criticizing Goran’s “negative agenda”, he claimed the movement lacked an organized party structure, a program and leadership. (Comment: As reported ref D, Goran largely agrees with the PUK/KDP’s “national” Kurdish agenda; however, unlike the PUK/KDP, Goran believes implementation of Article 140 and progress on resolving Kirkuk should be the first among them. End comment.) Talabani complained that although Goran members were part of a group of IKG parliamentarians that participated in election law negotiations in Baghdad, they later claimed they had been deceived into backing the compromise agreement.

7. (C) Sharply criticizing Goran, he claimed its members were “politically immature” and did not understand politics outside the IKR. Dismissing Goran’s significance for internal Kurdish politics, Talabani claimed “thousands” who had supported the party in July’s KRG parliamentary elections had been disappointed by it and were now disillusioned and had been disappointed by it and were now disillusioned and were now leaving. Talabani claimed many of those were joining Kurdish Islamic parties, whose ranks were swelling, to register opposition to the existing PUK-KDP bipolar order.
IRAN: "NO SECURITY AND NO STABILITY"
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8. (C) A/S Feltman gave the U.S. assessment that the Iranian regime’s failure to respond positively to elements of the October 1 proposal reflected divisions within the regime’s leadership and an inability to reach a decision on its nuclear aspirations. Talabani cautioned against ignoring “the real crisis” Iran’s regime now faced. Opposition born of the regime’s heavy-handed response to election protests had clearly demonstrated that the regime lacked the support of a majority of Iranians. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei does not want to lose the sympathy of the Iranian street, but “cannot afford to appease it, either.” Talabani expressed his view that recent remarks by Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani decrying "plots" against Iran’s nuclear program also constrained Khamenei’s room for maneuver and threw into stark relief the internal political crisis the regime faces. There is "no security and no stability in Iran now", Talabani said.

MULTI-ETHNIC POPULATION CHALLENGES IRAN’S REGIME
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9. (C) Compounding longstanding fissures in the political landscape is Iran’s multi-ethnic population, which had become an increasingly prominent source of friction, according to Talabani. Noting 14 Kurdish intellectuals were recently sentenced to death for peacefully opposing the Iranian regime, Talabani highlighted what he termed the emerging “partisan war” between the regime and ethnic Azeris. Talabani flatly said there had been “interference in and falsification of” election results by the regime. He agreed with A/S Feltman’s assessment that it was unlikely reformist Mir Hossein Mousavi had legitimately lost in his predominantly Azeri home province. Stressing the key role Mousavi played during his tenure as Iranian Prime Minister in developing ethnically Azeri areas of Iran, Talabani said he was genuinely popular and enjoyed wide support. Describing the current struggle between reformists and the regime, Talabani said Mousavi is “now engaged in a fight from which he cannot retreat”.

IRGC ANTAGONIZING IRANIAN ARMY AND BAZAARIS
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10. (C) A/S Feltman observed that Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was taking advantage of political instability and the leadership’s paralysis to expand its writ. Talabani agreed, but noted that while the IRGC’s leadership is united at the senior levels, divisions exist among the rank and file. The IRGC was not popular, he said: Iranian Army leaders were unhappy that the IRGC, a rival for resources and influence, was expanding its domain and Iranian merchants were unhappy about the IRGC’s increasing involvement in economic activities. A/S Feltman underscored potential short-term dangers stemming from increased IRGC influence. An example was the increased IRGC naval presence in the Persian Gulf, where the U.S. and Iranian navies had longstanding experience with each other’s operations and established bridge-to-bridge communication protocols to mitigate potential miscommunication.

11. (C) Agreeing that the IRGC was trying to extend its influence, Talabani said the IRGC had to approve the appointments of most Iranian ambassadors, including all those appointed to “important states”. He stressed the importance of differentiating between “what they (IRGC leaders) say and what is in their hearts”. In their hearts, IRGC leaders are afraid; however, they adopt a maximalist public line in the belief it will help the regime reach the best possible deal with the U.S. and Europe on the nuclear program and other issues. Talabani attributed significant changes in the IRGC’s leadership cadre to concerns about loyalty stemming from the widely-repeated view that 70 percent of IRGC officers voted for reformist former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami in 1997, and presumably remain sympathetic to the reform movement.

IRAN “A VERY DIFFICULT COUNTRY”
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12. (C) Noting that the U.S. had pursued bilateral and multilateral approaches, but had not been able to prompt Iran’s regime to respond, A/S Feltman asked Talabani what Qiran’s regime to respond, A/S Feltman asked Talabani what advice he might offer. After a long pause, Talabani sighed and conceded that Iran is “a very difficult country”. While some Iranians claimed nuclear
weapons were un-Islamic, the regime was making “quick progress” towards acquiring nuclear weapons capability. Talabani said he believed there were more secret sites than the recently disclosed one at Qom, and assessed that the Iranian regime sought to approach turn-key status with respect to its ability to initiate production of nuclear weapons. He noted the potency of the nuclear program as a “national issue” with which the regime could rally the Iranian people and deflect attention from shortcomings in domestic programs. Citing increased Russian pressure on Iran, Talabani said he thought U.S. policies had been “wise.” He offered that it would be helpful if China reached a similar decision with respect to its willingness to further pressure Iran, and suggested that increased Iraqi oil production could help mitigate China’s dependence on Iranian oil, potentially freeing China to pursue a harder policy on Iran’s nuclear program.

IRAN-IRAQ-SYRIA RELATIONS
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13. (C) While Iranian leaders’ views on individual Shi’a Iraqi leaders were “not homogeneous” (some supported former PM Jaafari, others supported PM Maliki), they are united in their desire for a Shi’a-led government and fear of a resurgent Ba’th Party. Talabani said a contact told him during his last visit to Iran that Muhammad Nassif Khayrbek, the former head of Syria’s General Intelligence Directorate and a senior advisor to President Bashar al-Asad recently visited Tehran and proposed that Iran and Syria cooperate to bring Iraq’s Ba’th Party back to power as “a bridge between Iran and Syria”. (Note: Talabani flew to Iran on/about November 22 to appeal for the lives of Iranian Kurds sentenced to death. End note.) A/S Feltman noted that while Iran and Syria agree on much, a major point of divergence is Iraq. Talabani agreed, noting that Syria heavily supported Iraqi Ba’thists, while Iran opposed them. Syria is actively working to change Iranian leaders’ minds; however, Syria’s support for the Iraqi National Movement coalition that includes, among others, former PM Ayad Allawi (secular Shi’a) and Saleh al-Mutlaq (Sunni with Ba’thist ties) “worried Iran.”

14. (C) Talabani said the Syrian regime approached him one month ago through a friend to ask that he help mediate between Syria and Iraq to reduce tensions stoked by PM Maliki’s accusation of Syrian complicity in recent bomb attacks against GOI facilities in Baghdad. The emissary said Talabani should contact President Bashar al-Asad directly, and that Syria was willing to “cease all support for action against Iraq” if an accommodation could be reached. A/S Feltman noted that the U.S. was trying to identify ways to improve relations with Syria. Talabani stressed that if there were any improvement on the Israeli-Palestinian track, better U.S.-Syria relations could be possible. Recalling an exchange several years ago with Bashar in which he asked what Syria wanted from the U.S., Talabani said Bashar answered that he wanted the Golan back and a stable Iraq that would not work against Syria, in that order. Talabani said he asked Bashar if the order could be reversed, pointing out that strong Syria-Iraq ties could help Damascus with respect to Israel.

SYRIA ERRS IN TRYING TO RESTORE IRAQ’S BA’TH PARTY
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15. (C) On Syria’s support for those conducting attacks in Iraq, Talabani said Syria made “a big mistake” in thinking it could return the Ba’th Party to power in Iraq, which was their ultimate goal. The nadir of Syrian-Iraqi relations coincided with the period in which the Ba’th ruled Damascus and Baghdad. Syrian leaders wanted to play the role of “fraternal helpers” in restoring Iraqi Ba’thists to power. Baghdad’s offer to reopen pipelines, supply gas and open points of entry on the Syria-Iraq border had been viewed suspiciously by Damascus, which did not believe a Maliki-led government would honor such commitments.

16. (C) A/S Feltman noted that in conversations with Syria, the SARG always raised Iraq. The U.S. recently asked Syria to stop broadcasts from Damascus of Ba’thist-backed satellite channels glorifying terrorism and violence, but had not seen any action. Talabani offered that Syria was Qhad not seen any action. Talabani offered that Syria was waiting for the results of Iraq’s upcoming elections, in which they hoped a strong Sunni bloc would emerge, before making any decisions on its Iraq policy. Noting that the SARG was good at collecting cards, A/S Feltman asked Talabani when they might actually play their hand. Talabani replied that while Hafez al-Asad had been an excellent player, Bashar was still young. Referring to Bashar’s leadership style, he said Arabs jokingly described Syria as a “Jamluka”, a play on the Arabic words “Jamahuriya” (Libya’s “state of the masses”) and “mamluka” (“monarchy”).
SAUDI-SYRIA THAW PROMPTS CLOSER EGYPTIAN-IRAQI TIES

17. (C) A/S Feltman asked Talabani what the visit to Damascus in October by Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah after a five-year hiatus in Saudi-Syrian relations meant for Iraq. Talabani laughingly said King Abdullah told him “You and Iraq are in my hearts, but that man (Maliki) is not”. Citing Maliki’s “failed promises” to Saudi leaders, Talabani said Abdullah and the Saudis refused to deal with the PM, despite U.S. attempts to mediate. Syria, too, blamed Maliki for Iraq’s anti-Syria policies and found it difficult to work with him. According to Talabani, Syrian officials told Maliki during the latter’s most recent visit to Damascus (shortly before the August 19 bombings in Baghdad) that they were supporting Iraq’s Ba’th Party, further stoking Maliki’s fear of Ba’thist conspiracies against him.

18. (C) Talabani said King Abdullah is trying to re-tether Syria to the broader Arab community, an initiative Egypt opposes. Partly as a consequence, Egyptian-Iraqi relations had improved. Riyadh tried to pressure Cairo not to facilitate Maliki’s recent visit to Egypt, but the visit had come off. A/S Feltman offered that King Abdullah’s visit to Damascus and the possibility of warming ties between Saudi Arabia and Syria was likely a factor in encouraging Egyptian ties with Iraq, to help counterbalance the Saudi effort. Noting Riyadh’s important regional role, Talabani said Saudi Arabia was actively working to prevent Iraq from developing relationships with its regional neighbors, and claimed it had pressured Kuwait to backtrack on initial agreements with Iraq on issues dating to the Saddam-era. Despite Saudi opposition, though, Qatar and Bahrain were seeking improved relations with Iraq.

SAUDI-IRAQI RAPPROCHEMENT UNLIKELY IF MALIKI PM AGAIN

19. (C) Talabani characterized the Saudi policy as misguided, noting that Iraq could play a positive role in attenuating tension between the Saudi government and its largely Shi’a opposition. A/S Feltman said the U.S. would encourage the Saudis to revisit their Iraq policy after upcoming Iraqi elections in March. Talabani offered that if Maliki remained PM, things would likely remain as is since the enmity was personal; however, with a different PM - even another Shi’ite like ISCI’s Ammar al-Hakim or Allawi - there was a chance for positive change. He cautioned that such an effort could be hurt if the Saudis’ efforts to support the emergence of a strong Sunni bloc in the Iraqi parliament failed, which he thought likely.

20. (C) Talabani assessed Turkey’s role with respect to Iraq as generally good and said his relations with Turkey were “excellent”. Noting improved relations between Ankara and the KRG, he pointed to Turkish FM Gul’s recent visit to Erbil. Turkey could play a positive role in the region and Ankara’s policy towards Kurds (Iraq) and Alawites (Syria) was generally positive, despite opposition from the Turkish General Staff and some quarters of Turkey’s parliament. He offered that Turkey could play a positive role with respect to Syria.

SECOND OIL BID ROUND

21. (C) Talabani expressed surprise that companies from the U.S., which “liberated Iraq and therefore earned the right”, had not won more contracts during Iraq’s recently-concluded Second Petroleum Licensing Round (“bid round”), held December 11-12 in Baghdad. (Note: As reported ref E, only three of the seven pre-qualified U.S. companies attended the bid round and only one (Occidental Petroleum) submitted a bid. No U.S. companies were awarded contracts during the second bid round; however, ExxonMobil and Occidental won contracts in the first round potentially allowing them to develop nearly three million barrels per day of future Iraqi oil production, representing nearly a third of the potential total increase in Iraqi oil production from the two bid rounds. End note.) Ambassador Hill underscored that U.S. oil and gas service companies were expected to garner significant business as part of the effort to increase Iraqi oil production under the new contracts. He also noted that with the second bid round, companies from all five UNSC permanent members had production contracts in Iraq. Noting that Iraq’s oil production could rival Saudi Arabia’s in 10-15 years, Talabani said the second bid round would help allay concerns about Iraq’s credit
worthiness and highlight its potential to become a wealthy country.

22. (U) A/S Feltman cleared on this message. FORD

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Meddling Neighbors Undercut Iraq Stability”
A Saudi’s Dim View of Iraq’s Leader

King Abdullah accused the Iraqi prime minister of being an Iranian puppet in a meeting with President Obama’s national security adviser and said that he refused President George W. Bush’s appeals to improve ties with the Iraqi leader.

DATE 2009-03-22 10:14:00

SOURCE Embassy Riyadh

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET RIYADH 000447

NSC FOR JBRENNAN AND JDUNCAN; STATE FOR S/WCI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2019 TAGS: PREL, PTER, KWBG, SA, AF, IN, PK, IR, IZ SUBJECT: COUNTERTERRORISM ADVISER BRENNAN’S MEETING WITH SAUDI KING ABDULLAH

REF: RIYADH 427

Classified By: Pol Counselor Lisa Carle, 1.4(b),(d)

1. KEY POINTS

-- (S) Saudi King Abdullah welcomed White House counterterrorism adviser John Brennan, S/WCI Ambassador Williamson, and Ambassador Fraker to his private palace March 15 for a 90-minute discussion focused on U.S. Saudi-relations, counterterrorism cooperation, the Yemeni Guantanamo Bay detainees, Iran, and Iraq.

-- (S) Brennan presented the King with a letter from President Obama expressing a personal message of friendship, appreciation for our close and collaborative relationship and concern over the disposition of Yemeni detainees at Guantanamo.

-- (S) The King said he had told Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki only minutes before that Iran should stop interfering in Arab affairs, and had given Iran a one-year deadline to improve its relations with Saudi Arabia.

-- (S) The King expressed a complete lack of trust in Iraqi PM al-Maliki and held out little hope for improved Saudi/Iraqi relations as long as al-Maliki remains in office.

-- (S) When asked what advice he had for President Obama, the King said he had “one request”: that it was “critically important to restore America’s credibility” in the world.

U.S. SAUDI RELATIONS

2. (S) PLEDGES OF FRIENDSHIP: Brennan asserted that the U.S./Saudi alliance must remain strong, and assured the King of President Obama’s wishes for a long and healthy U.S./Saudi relationship, and the President’s personal commitment that Saudi Arabia had a friend in the White House. The King replied that he appreciated the sentiments and that he had great respect for President Obama. “We (the U.S. and Saudi Arabia) spilled blood together” in Kuwait and Iraq, the King continued, and Saudi Arabia valued this tremendously. Friendship can be a difficult issue that requires work, Abdullah said, but the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have done it for 70 years over three generations. “Our disagreements don’t cut to the bone,” he stated.
3. (S) U.S. CREDIBILITY IS CRITICAL: The Bush Administration is now in the past, the King said. Both President Bushes were his friends, but the recent President Bush didn’t take his advice on dealing with issues in the region, and they found their problems “compounded.” The King said, “we are ready to consult, provide guidance and to do whatever is necessary. We are people of the region and we know it well.” Brennan responded that President Obama wants to listen, and asked what advice the King would offer to President Obama. Abdullah said his one piece of advice was that restoring U.S. credibility in the world was critically important. Brennan responded that this was an important issue for President Obama as well. Brennan said that under President Obama we will restore our credibility. He said the U.S. is a great country and we know what we have to do.

4. (S) THE WORLD NEEDS OBAMA: Brennan said President Obama looked forward to seeing the King at the G-20 summit in London. “Thank God for bringing Obama to the presidency,” the King answered, which has created “great hope” in the Muslim world. “May God grant him strength and patience, Abdullah continued, “May God protect him. I’m concerned about his personal safety. America and the world need such a president.”

5. (C) THAT WITHOUT WHICH NO SAUDI MEETING IS COMPLETE: Abdullah said “as a friend” that “it was a mistake” to limit access of Saudi citizens to the U.S., since “this damages bilateral relations and the image of the U.S. in Saudi Arabia.” The King noted there were 60,000 Saudi students abroad, about one third of whom were in the U.S., and “others would have gone” but for the difficulties in gaining access to the U.S. The King noted that for many years very senior Saudi officials, including Prince Saud al-Faisal, had studied in the U.S. He then noted that Saudi Ambassador to the U.S., Adel al Jubeir (who was interpreting for the King) had studied in the U.S. and was “half American” as a result. He also said he was aware of, and appreciated, Ambassador Fraker’s efforts to improve the visa situation “even though there were people in Washington who fought him.” Finally, he observed that anyone from Saudi Arabia who studies in the U.S. inevitably becomes a friend and advocate of the United States and that we only hurt ourselves by cutting off this flow of students.

DETAINEES

6. (S) GUANTANAMO WILL BE CLOSED: Brennan explained that President Obama had made a commitment to close Guantanamo to eliminate the potential propaganda benefits its existence provided to Al-Qaeda, but also because it was the right thing to do. Brennan reassured the King, however, that President Obama would remain strong on counterterrorism. Brennan presented the King with a letter from President Obama addressing the issue of Yemeni detainees at Guantanamo. Brennan noted that he had met with Prince Mohammed bin Nayef (MBN) the day before to discuss at length the issue of the Yemeni detainees. Brennan further stated that he would be traveling to Sanaa the next day to meet with President Saleh, as the issue of the remaining 99 Yemeni detainees still needed to be resolved. Brennan praised MBN as an outstanding counterterrorism partner, and that the MOI was doing a wonderful, courageous job in countering the terrorist threat to the Kingdom. Returning to the subject later in the conversation, Brennan warned that the U.S. feared Yemen could become another Waziristan, and urged that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia needed to work together to keep Al-Qaeda in Yemen from growing even more dangerous. The King replied that having Somalia next door to Yemen only adds to the danger. Brennan said that the capabilities of the Ministry of the Interior security forces had grown impressively over the past 10 years. Brennan added that counterterrorism and intelligence sharing cooperation between our countries had never been better and that MBN deserved the credit. In an unusual concession, made at the conclusion of their conversation, the King said, “be assured I am fully briefed on the work you are doing with Prince Mohammed bin Nayef.”

7. (S) HOW TO TRACK DETAINEES: “I’ve just thought of something,” the King added, and proposed implanting detainees with an electronic chip containing information about them and allowing their movements to be tracked with Bluetooth. This was done with horses and falcons, the King said. Brennan replied, “horses don’t have good lawyers,” and that such a proposal would face legal hurdles in the U.S., but agreed that keeping track of detainees was an extremely important issue that he would review with appropriate officials when he returned to the United States.

IRAN

8. (S) A “HEATED EXCHANGE”: The King noted that Iranian FM Mottaki had been “sitting in that same seat (as Brennan) a few moments ago.” The King described his conversation with FM Mottaki as “a heated exchange, frankly discussing Iran’s interference in Arab affairs.” When challenged by the King on Iranian meddling in Hamas affairs, Mottaki apparently protested that “these are Muslims.” “No, Arabs” countered the King, “You as Persians have no business meddling in Arab matters.” The
King said the Iranians wanted to improve relations and that he responded by giving Mottaki an ultimatum. “I will give you one year” (to improve ties), “after that, it will be the end.”

9. (S) “SPARE US YOUR EVIL”: The King expressed hope the U.S. would review its Iran policy and “come to the right conclusion.” Brennan responded that President Obama was personally reviewing U.S. Iran policy and wanted to hear the King’s thoughts. Abdullah asserted that Iran is trying to set up Hizballah-like organizations in African countries, observing that the Iranians don’t think they are doing anything wrong and don’t recognize their mistakes. “I said (to Mottaki) that’s your problem,” recounted the King. Abdullah said he would favor Rafsanjani in an Iranian election, were he to run. He described Iran not as “a neighbor one wants to see,” but as “a neighbor one wants to avoid.” He said the Iranians “launch missiles with the hope of putting fear in people and the world.” A solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict would be a great achievement, the King said, but Iran would find other ways to cause trouble. “Iran’s goal is to cause problems,” he continued, “There is no doubt something unstable about them.” He described Iran as “adventurous in the negative sense,” and declared “May God prevent us from falling victim to their evil.” Mottaki had tendered an invitation to visit Iran, but Abdullah said he replied “All I want is for you to spare us your evil.” Summarizing his history with Iran, Abdullah concluded: “We have had correct relations over the years, but the bottom line is that they cannot be trusted.”

10. (S) AN EMPTY CHANNEL: The King said “three years ago” Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei had sent his adviser Ali Akbar Velayati with a letter asking for Abdullah’s agreement to establish a formal back channel for communication between the two leaders. Abdullah said he had agreed, and the channel was established with Velayati and Saudi FM Saud al-Faisal as the points of contact. In the years since, the King noted, the channel had never been used.

11. (S) A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD: Brennan responded that the Saudis lived in a dangerous neighborhood with Iran across the Gulf, with Saudi Arabia sharing a long border with Yemen, and with a number of other troublesome countries nearby. Brennan noted that we have a lot of work to do in the Middle East together. The King responded that the world’s attention was focused on the region. He further stated that he believed that the U.S. could help in this sensitive region, but that we should not take matters lightly. Brennan noted that President Obama is fully aware of the dangers in the region, that the U.S. knew that it had to remain involved in constructing a solution, and that we would seek the King’s counsel in dealing with the many issues in the Middle East. The King asked if that included Iran. Brennan responded that it did. Brennan said that we had our eyes wide open to Iranian ambitions, that we were not nave to the dangers Iran posed to Saudi Arabia, and that Iran could not be allowed to succeed in its destabilizing activites. Brennan observed that the President had ordered a complete review of U.S. Iran policy and made reference to a passage in the President’s letter that we needed to test Iran’s intentions to cease its destabilizing behavior and live up to its international obligations. Brennan further observed that the U.S.-Saudi partnership had to remain strong and that together, and with others, we needed to thwart Iran’s nuclear ambitions. “That is important,” responded the King. Finally, Brennan said the President wanted the King to know he had a good friend in the White House who would be willing to assist in any way that he could. The King thanked Mr. Brennan, said he appreciated the sentiments, said that he had great respect for President Obama, and reflected that we had been great friends for many years and would remain friends as our disagreements were minor.

12. (U) SEE REFTEL: Ref A provided a separate readout on the Iran discussion and the King’s meeting with Mottaki.

IRAQ

13. (S) IN THE HANDS OF GOD AND IRAN: Brennan expressed the importance the U.S. attaches to achieving peace and stability in Iraq. The King replied that this was “in the hands of God,” though he agreed that Iraq was vitally important to both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. The King also pointed out that “some say the U.S. invasion handed Iraq to Iran on a silver platter; this after we fought Saddam Hussein.”

14. (S) NO HOPE FOR MALIKI: The King said he had “no confidence whatsoever in (Iraqi PM) Maliki, and the Ambassador (Fraker) is well aware of my views.” The King affirmed that he had refused former President Bush’s entreaties that he meet with Maliki. The King said he had met Maliki early in Maliki’s term of office, and the Iraqi had given him a written list of commitments for reconciliation in Iraq, but had failed to follow through on any of them. For this reason, the King said, Maliki had no credibility. “I don’t trust this man,” the King stated, “He’s an Iranian agent.” The King said he had told both Bush and former Vice president Cheney “how can I meet with
someone I don’t trust?” Maliki has “opened the door for Iranian influence in Iraq” since taking
power, the King said, and he was “not hopeful at all” for Maliki, “or I would have met with him.”

AN ALERT AND ENGAGING HOST

15. (S) I MISS MY HORSES: The King appeared alert and at times animated, entertaining his guests
with anecdotes about his encounters with Iranian leaders (septel), and throwing up his hands in
complaint when asked if he spent time with his horses: “I see them on television when they race,”
he said. “I love horses,” he exclaimed, “every couple of weeks I get to see them, and then I have
a very calm and restful sleep.”

16. (S) DIALOGUE AND REFORM AS DUTY: In response to Brennan,s praise for the King,s interfaith
dialogue initiative, his commitment to advancing rights as reflected by his recent appointment of
the first female (deputy education) minister, the King said “Thanks for the sentiment but I did
nothing special, only what I thought was my duty. I believe we do our duty as determined by God.”

17. (S) PARTICIPANTS:

Saudi Arabia -- Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud -- HRH
Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Assistant Minister of the Interior -- Ambassador
to the U.S. Adel al-Jubeir (interpreter)

U.S. -- John Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism --
Ambassador Ford Fraker -- Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes Issues Clint Williamson -- John
Duncan, NSC Director for Counterterrorism -- Shaun Coughlin, Special Assistant, S/WCI -- Embassy
control officer/notetaker

18. (U) Assistant to the President Brennan cleared this cable.

FRAKER

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Meddling Neighbors Undercut Iraq Stability”
A Standoff Over Uranium in Libya

A Russian plane leaves Libya without seven five-ton casks of highly enriched uranium after a four-day standoff. American officials are worried about the security of the material, potential fuel for a nuclear weapon.

DATE 2009-11-25 13:59:00

SOURCE Embassy Tripoli

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 TRIPOLI 000938

NOFORN SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO AND NEA/MAG. STATE PLEASE PASS TO ENERGY (ANDREW BIENIAWSKI AND KELLY CUMMINS).

SUBJECT: LIBYA HALTS HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FUEL TRANSFER

REF: Tripoli 870

TRIPOLI 00000938 001.2 OF 003

CLASSIFIED BY: Gene A. Cretz, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy Tripoli, Department of State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d) 1. (S/NF) Summary: Following a four-day standoff, the Russian plane scheduled to remove Libya’s last remaining HEU spent fuel stores departed Libya without its cargo. Despite bilateral agreements with the U.S. and Russia -- and intensive outreach efforts by the U.S. and Russian Ambassadors -- Libyan officials unexpectedly refused to allow the HEU to leave the country. DOE experts are deeply concerned by the safety and security risks posed by the Libyans’ decision. The seven five-ton casks, each closed with two IAEA seals, remain at the lightly-guarded Tajoura Nuclear Facility. DOE experts requested that the GOL disengage the loading crane and provide extra armed guards, but are not confident that the GOL will take the requisite security measures. The DOE experts will brief the IAEA of their concerns, and said the IAEA could provide additional seals appropriate for long-term storage and cameras.

2. (S/NF) Summary continued: According to the DOE experts, we have one month to resolve the situation before the safety and security concerns become a crisis. They believe Russia could provide another plane to remove the HEU in late December, at which point the casks must be moved to their next location. If the HEU is not removed from the casks within three months, its rising temperature could cause the casks to crack and to release radioactive nuclear material. If the HEU is not sent to Russia, the Russians would be required to develop entirely new technology to remove the spent fuel from the casks in Libya. Security concerns alone dictate that we must employ all of our resources to find a timely solution to this problem, and to keep any mention of it out of the press. End summary.

GOL UNEXPECTEDLY HALTS HEU FUEL SHIPMENT

3. (S/NF) On November 20 the GOL unexpectedly ordered a team of visiting Department of Energy and Russian (from Rostom Kirienko) officials to halt preparations of Libya’s 5.2 kilograms of highly enriched uranium (HEU) fuel to ship to Russia for treatment and disposal, in spite of the government-to-government agreement signed by Libya and the United States on October 28 and a parallel agreement with the Russian government (ref tel). XXXXXXXXX The plane, a Russian Antonov 124-100, was scheduled to arrive on November 21, with loading to take place during the night of November 21, for shipment on November 22. Although the Russian crew already had official Libyan permission to land on November 21, XXXXXXXXX told the DOE and Russian teams, via his
staff, that the Libyan government did not approve the landing and asked that the plane be delayed. The teams delayed arrival of the plane until November 23. After several days on the ground without a change in the GOL’s position, the Russian plane and team from Rostom Kirienko departed early in the morning of November 25 without the shipment.

4. (S/NF) Since November 20, the Ambassador and emboffs have engaged Foreign Ministry officials, the National Security Advisor’s (NSA) office, the PM’s office, Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi’s staff, and Muammar al-Qadhafi’s staff, seeking an explanation and reversal of the GOL’s last-minute decision to halt the shipment. Foreign Ministry and NSA officials pledged to communicate the problems to Foreign Minister Musa Kusa and National Security Advisor, Mutassim al-Qadhafi, respectively. The Ambassador has also maintained close communication with the Russian Ambassador on the situation. One official insisted to the Ambassador that the Foreign Ministry had done everything “by the book” to prepare for the fuel transfer to move forward on November 21 and could not imagine what could have gone wrong. XXXXXXXXXXXXX he did not know what was holding up the program.

SECURITY CONCERNS

TRIPOLI 00000938 002.2 OF 003

5. (S/NF) On November 25, the DOE team briefed the Ambassador and emboffs on their concerns about the security of the HEU in its present state and next steps. The 5.2 kilograms of HEU are stored in seven five-ton casks, which the DOE experts said are “highly transportable.” The casks currently are at the lightly-guarded Tajoura Nuclear Facility, closed with two IAEA seals that are adequate only for transportation, not storage. The team asked the Director of the Tajoura facility to disengage the site’s loading crane, in order to prevent an intruder from using it to move the casks. They also asked that extra human security be added onsite, stating that the last time they were at Tajoura, on November 24, they only saw one security guard with a gun (although they did not know if it was loaded). The team plans to brief the IAEA about the situation and to express concern about the security of the fuel. They said it was possible that the IAEA would provide additional seals and/or cameras to increase the casks’ security.

6. (S/NF) According to the DOE experts, we have approximately one month to resolve the situation, before the safety and security concerns posed by the delayed shipment reach the level of a crisis. The casks in which the Libyan HEU is stored must be moved to their next location at the end of December. The DOE experts believe that the Russians could provide another plane to transport that shipment during that timeframe. However, if the Libyans refuse to allow the shipment to go forward, the Russian experts would be required to design new technology to remove the spent fuel from the casks and put it back into the ponds at Tajoura. DOE experts stressed that this would be an unprecedented operation. They also stated that the spent fuel must be either shipped to Russia or removed from the casks in the next three months. At that point, the temperature of the HEU fuel, which is radioactive, could reach such a level to cause cracking on the casks and release of radioactive nuclear material. The team stated that their Russian counterparts are deeply concerned about liability if the radioactive material leaks from the transportation casks.

NEXT STEPS

7. (S/NF) If the Libyans can be persuaded to allow the transfer to proceed, the DOE team will work with Russian counterparts to schedule another visit by the Russian plane for transportation of the fuel, which the team estimated could take up to a month (that will require the reissuance of overflight and entry permits for Turkey, Greece, and Libya, as well as cancellation of other transport contracts that the plane already has scheduled). Absent Libya’s agreement to allow the shipment to move forward, the DOE and Russian team will resort to designing and manufacturing the technology that would be necessary to unload the fuel casks remotely at the Tajoura facility.

COMMENT

8. (S/NF) Security concerns dictate that we must deploy all of our resources to find a solution to this problem. The Ambassador continues to seek an urgent meeting with the Libyan Foreign Minister and other senior officials to press for a resolution and to obtain information about what instigated the Libyan decision to halt progress on the fuel shipment. The Russian Ambassador has also been trying to meet with any of several high-level officials, but has been ignored. The situation has been complicated by a state visit by the Turkish PM as well as other visits, and the onset of the Eid al-Adha holiday, which began here today and extends for four days. The
Russians did manage to convey a letter from Vice FM Sultanov on November 24, urging the GOL to let the shipment take place. If further efforts fail over the next few days, it may be necessary to consider a senior-level official call to Muammar al-Qadhafi to stress the urgency of the situation and the high degree of concern about the possibility of Libya’s backtracking on its nuclear nonproliferation commitments. Lacking any other information, we have to assume that the Libyan leader is the source of the problem at this point.

9. (S/NF) Security concerns also dictate that we handle this issue with the utmost discretion. Given the highly transportable nature of the HEU and the shoddy security at Tajoura, any mention of this issue in the press could pose serious security concerns. We strongly urge that any press inquiries be addressed with a no comment -- or a more general reply along the lines of: The U.S. and the international community continue to work with the Government of Libya to address its WMD commitments. End comment. CRETZ
Libyan Uranium Finally Leaves for Russia

Relieved American diplomats report to Washington that after months of concern and negotiations, highly enriched uranium has been flown from Libya to Russia for disposal.

DATE 2009-12-21 16:26:00

SOURCE Embassy Tripoli

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET TRIPOLI 001025

NOFORN SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/F0 AND NEA/MAG. STATE PLEASE PASS TO ENERGY (ANDREW BIENIAWSKI, KELLY CUMMINS, AND SARAH DICKERSON).

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2019 TAGS: PREL, PINS, MNUC, PARM, PINR, RS, KGIC, KNNP, KRAD, ENRG, LY
SUBJECT: FINAL HEU SHIPMENT DEPARTS LIBYA

REF: A) TRIPOLI 938 B) TRIPOLI 966; C) TRIPOLI 941

CLASSIFIED BY: Gene Cretz, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy Tripoli, U.S. Department of State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d) 1. (S/NF) On December 21 at 0515, a Russian-chartered plane took off from Tripoli with the seven casks containing Libya's final Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) spent fuel stocks. Department of Energy (DOE) staff in Tripoli confirmed that the flight arrived in Russia at 11:15 local time. Today's flight marked the successful completion of Libya's commitments to dismantle its nuclear weapons programs.

2. (S/NF) Visiting DOE staff reported that the loading of the casks the overnight on December 20-21 went smoothly. XXXXXXXXXX provided no insights into the reasons behind the GOL's last-minute decision to cancel the planned November 25 shipment (ref a) or to put it back on track via a letter to Russian authorities on December 15 (ref b). DOE staff said the month-long impasse had taken a visible toll on XXXXXXXXXX

3. (S/NF) In reference to queries made by Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi regarding the disposition of Libya's centrifuges that were handed over to the U.S. (Ref C), the DOE visitors noted that any centrifuges that were sent to the U.S. were destroyed and could not be could be returned to Libya in their original form. If the Libyans were referring to other material, such as high efficient machinery, some equipment was moved to the U.S. and some was left in Libya to be used for peaceful purposes such for medical uses.

4. (SNF) The Ambassador would like to thank the DOE team - Kelly Cummins, Igor Bolshinsky, and Stan Moses - for their efforts to resolve this issue. Their on-the-ground, expert analysis ensured that the Embassy was fully apprised of all of the technical details, and their clear explanation of the complex timelines and constraints helped ensure a timely resolution. We are very grateful for their work.

CRETZ

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Libya Delayed Nuclear Fuel Disposal Deal”
Department of Energy Team Inspects Uranium

A cable reports that a Department of Energy team has visited Libya to check on increased security measures for highly enriched uranium as officials negotiate the details of its transfer to Russia for disposal.

DATE 2009-12-07 16:14:00

SOURCE Embassy Tripoli

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000950

NOFORN SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO AND NEA/MAG.

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/7/2019 TAGS: PREL, MNUC, PARM, PINR, RS, KGIC, KNNP, KRAD, ENRG, LY SUBJECT: LIBYAN HEU SHIPMENT SECURE; NO DECISION YET REGARDING NEXT STEPS

REF: A) TRIPOLI 938; B) TRIPOLI 941

CLASSIFIED BY: Joan A. Polaschik, Charge d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy Tripoli, Department of State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d) 1. (S/NF) Summary: Visiting DOE experts confirmed December 6 that the Libyan Government had taken the requisite steps to increase the security of the seven casks of HEU, and that the contents -- and IAEA seals -- remained unchanged since the shipment was halted November 25. The Libyan Government has not yet provided guidance to its nuclear scientists regarding next steps on the shipment, but Libyan scientists are developing contingency plans to remove the HEU from the casks in Libya in the event the casks must be returned empty to Russia. DOE experts estimate that Libyan approval must be received by December 10 in order for the shipment to be completed by the end of December. XXXXXXXXXX We continue to underscore with Libyan officials the need to resolve this issue. End summary.

HEU CASKS SECURE, UNCHANGED

2. (S/NF) Visiting DOE experts confirmed December 6 that the Libyan Government had taken the requisite steps to increase security at the Tajura Nuclear Facility, and that the seven casks of highly enriched uranium (HEU) appeared to have remained unchanged since the planned shipment to Russia was halted on November 25 (ref a). The DOE experts reported a visible increase in the number of armed guards surrounding the facility. They also confirmed that Tajura staff had disengaged the crane within the facility and had assured the team that a new, unassembled crane would not be built until after the shipment had taken place. DOE's measurements of the spent fuel within the casks determined that the content had remained unchanged. Likewise, the IAEA seals on each cask remained in place and uncompromised.

NO DECISIONS

3. (S/NF) The DOE team also reported that Libyan technical specialists at Tajura had not yet received guidance from the Libyan Government on next steps regarding the shipment. XXXXXXXXXX The team also reported that although the Libyan Government had sent the Russian Government a diplomatic note confirming that the GOL would complete its contract to return the casks to Russia by the end of the calendar year, the note did not specify whether the casks would be returned empty or with the HEU spent fuel shipment. The DOE team assessed the diplomatic note as an attempt to mollify Russian demands that the casks be returned.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS
4. (S/NF) The DOE team estimated that the GOL must give its approval to move forward on the shipment by December 10 in order for the shipment to take place by the end of December. The DOE experts emphasized that significant lead time is required in order set up the necessary logistical arrangements, permits and overflight clearances for the specialized Russian plane to return to Tripoli and transport the HEU to Russia.

5. (S/NF) The DOE team reported that Russian engineers had begun to design a remote-controlled grapple to be used in the event that the HEU spent fuel must be off-loaded from the casks in Libya. XXXXXXXXXXX told the DOE experts that, if GOL approval for the shipment was not forthcoming by December 10, XXXXXXXXXXX planned to start training on how to use the grapple to off-load the casks. (According to DOE experts, spent nuclear fuel has never been removed from casks for restorage; the removal of the spent fuel in Libya would be an unprecedented initiative.) DOE experts also commented that the return of the empty casks to Russia, if necessary, would be best done by boat and said they are developing contingency plans for that scenario.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM THE SECRETARY’S CALL

6. (S/NF) Separately, emboffs have attempted to seek clarification of the Libyan Government’s next steps regarding the HEU shipment. XXXXXXXXXXX told Pol/Econ Chief that the Secretary’s December 3 call to Libyan Foreign Minister Musa Kusa had expressed the statement of commitment requested by Saif during his recent meeting with the Ambassador (ref b), and that Kusa had passed the message to the “highest levels” of the Libyan Government. XXXXXXXXXXX emphasized that Saif had made a “commitment” to the Ambassador to ensure that the HEU shipment would be approved by the Libyan Government, and “Saif will follow-through on that commitment.” XXXXXXXXXXX said Kusa intended to call the Secretary within the “coming days” in order to personally assure her that the GOL had approved the shipment. Emboffs also briefed Ahmed and MFA officials on the requisite timeline and lengthy logistical preparations needed to ensure the spent fuel’s transfer to Russia by the end of the year.

COMMENT

7. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXXX comments indicate that the Secretary’s message to Kusa was positively received. A flurry of phone calls between DOE and Libyan experts today also indicated that working-level Libyan officials are seeking more time to resolve the issue, as the Libyans successfully convinced the DOE experts to extend the deadline for a Libyan decision by two days, to December 10 (the initial deadline proposed by DOE was December 8). At this point, we are interpreting the Libyan experts’ technical preparations for a possible unloading of the casks in Libya as the contingency planning required to address the very real safety and security concerns raised by the halted shipment. We will reassess that view on December 10, and will continue to underscore with Libyan officials the need for a resolution of the issue this week. POLASCHIK

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Libya Delayed Nuclear Fuel Disposal Deal”
Qaddafi’s Son Complains about U.S.

Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi’s son, Saif, tells American diplomats that his father has held up delivery of highly enriched uranium to Russia in part because he was angry over the slow pace of improved relations with Washington.

DATE 2009-11-30 17:19:00

SOURCE Embassy Tripoli

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 04 TRIPOLI 000941

NOFORN SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO AND NEA/MAG. STATE PLEASE PASS TO ENERGY (KELLY CUMMINS AND SARAH DICKERSON).

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2019 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, MNUC, PARM, PINR, RS, KGIC, KNNP, KRAD, ENRG, LY SUBJECT: LIBYANS SEEK RENEWED COMMITMENT FROM U.S. IN RETURN FOR PROGRESS ON HEU SHIPMENT

REF: TRIPOLI 938

CLASSIFIED BY: Joan A. Polaschik, Charge d’Affaires, U.S. Embassy Tripoli, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d) 1. This is an action request; see para 13.

2. (S/NF) Summary: Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi told the Ambassador November 27 that Libya had halted the shipment of its final HEU stockpiles because it was “fed up” with the slow pace of bilateral engagement. Saif claimed that Libya had not received the “compensation” it was promised in exchange for an end to its WMD programs, including cooperation in the military, security, nonproliferation, civilian-nuclear, and economic spheres. Libya sought a high-level reaffirmation of the United States’ commitment to the bilateral relationship, in the form of a message to Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi, in order to move forward on the HEU shipment. Saif al-Islam, who claimed that he was “back” on the U.S. portfolio, said his father did not want to move back to “square one” and wanted to develop a positive relationship with the new U.S. Administration. The Ambassador underscored the gravity of the situation and noted that the Libyan Government had chosen a very dangerous venue to express its pique. He also noted that many of the holdups in the bilateral relationship had been due to Libyan political missteps and bureaucratic bungling. The Ambassador told Saif he would try to get some kind of statement along the lines requested, but the HEU shipment should in no way be held hostage to any specific actions beyond that. Saif assured the Ambassador that once that message was conveyed to Tripoli, he would immediately “fix” the problem. End Summary.

3. (S/NF) Once again exhibiting their flair for the dramatic, and after almost one week of stonewalling regarding the decision to not allow the departure of the HEU shipment to Russia, the Libyan leadership authorized a meeting between Saif al-Islam (accompanied by an assistant) and the Ambassador (accompanied by Pol-Econ Counselor) as the Ambassador was departing for the airport to travel to Washington. During the November 27 meeting, the Ambassador expressed his deep concern about Libya’s decision to halt shipment of its remaining Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) stockpile to Russia for treatment and disposal. The Ambassador said that Libya’s WMD commitments were the cornerstone of the relationship, and the last-minute, unexplained disapproval of the shipment seemed to renege on those commitments. He emphasized that the Libyans must move forward with the shipment as soon as possible, for security reasons and to preserve the bilateral relationship. The Ambassador pressed Saif to explain why the shipment was held up and insisted that the Libyans must improve communication in times of crisis, stating that Libyan officials cannot simply ignore calls from high-level USG officials and refuse to explain their decisions that negatively affect bilateral interests. This was no way to conduct a relationship. The decision to halt the shipment and create this crisis was intensified by the timing and the international context, given the President’s focus on non-proliferation and the problems
4. (S/NF) Saif al-Islam explicitly linked Libya’s decision to halt the HEU shipment to its dissatisfaction with the U.S. relationship. Saif said the shipment was halted because the regime was “fed up” with the pace of the relationship and what it perceived as a backing-out of commitments to bilateral cooperation. The areas of specific concern were Libya’s purchase of military equipment (non-lethal and lethal weapons), an update on what was being done with Libya’s centrifuges, movement on the Regional Nuclear Medicine Center, and financial assistance for the chemical weapons destruction program, including construction of the destruction facility. Saif pledged to solve the HEU crisis and to allow the shipment to move forward as early as next week if the USG expressed a renewed commitment to the relationship and to deeper engagement. Saif noted that the message needed to be conveyed to (or addressed to) Libyan Leader Muammar al-Qadhafi.

5. (S/NF) Saif continued that prevailing domestic opinion and conservative forces were critical of Libya’s decision to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Noting that he personally had played an important role in Libya’s re-engagement with the West, Saif asserted that “If something goes wrong, people will blame me, whether I am in a certain official position or not.” Saif stated that Libya’s decision to give up its WMD programs was contingent upon “compensation” from the U.S., including the purchase of conventional weapons and non-conventional military equipment; security cooperation; military cooperation; civil-nuclear cooperation and assistance, to include the building of a Regional Nuclear Medicine Facility; and the end of “double taxation” and economic cooperation, such as the signing of a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

6. (S/NF) Saif noted that Libya was a small, rich country, surrounded by large, powerful, poorer neighbors. Yet Libya, the only Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) signatory in the region, had given up all of its conventional weapons and could not purchase replacement systems or military equipment from the United States. He highlighted Egypt, a non-MTCR signatory, as an example of a neighboring country that receives millions of dollars in U.S. aid and military assistance but did not have to share Libya’s nonproliferation commitments. Relative to such neighbors, Libya’s decision to dismantle its nuclear programs had weakened its ability to defend itself. He stated, “We share rich natural resources -- oil and gas -- along the borders, yet we have no capacity to defend that wealth.” Saif complained that Libya could not purchase conventional weapons from the United States or even from Sweden or Germany due to U.S. holds on the sale of those weapons to Libya -- “even until now, seven years later, there is an embargo on Libya’s purchase of lethal equipment.” He specifically mentioned a problem purchasing “Tiger” vehicles outfitted with American-manufactured engines from Jordan, due to a U.S. legal restriction on Libya’s purchase of American-equipment.

7. (S/NF) Inquiring about the status of the centrifuges Libya gave up as part of its WMD commitments, Saif argued that the U.S. had used the “deal” as a public relations coup for the previous administration. He said that the fact that the centrifuges were sent to the United States and are still there, rather than under IAEA surveillance and control was a “big insult to the Leader.” The fact that Libya was never “compensated” for the centrifuges added to the insult. In addition to the centrifuge problem, he complained that Libya had to pay for the destruction of its chemical weapons. Saif insisted that Libya was not able to pay to destroy its chemical weapons stock, noting that the construction of the destruction facility alone was estimated to cost US $25 million. For these and other reasons relating to “non-compensation” for WMD decisions, he stated that certain voices in Libya were pressuring the Leader to withdraw from the MTCR agreement. He lamented that “slowly, slowly, we are moving backward rather than forward.” He told the Ambassador that in order for the relationship to progress, the U.S. needed to make a move. “The ball is in your court,” Saif urged.

8. (S/NF) Continuing his lament, Saif said the U.S.-Libya relationship was “not going well.” Since his last visit to the United States in 2008, Saif said that both sides had deviated from the roadmap that had been agreed upon at that time, which specified cooperation in the military, security, nonproliferation, civilian-nuclear, and economic spheres. He asserted that the roadmap had gotten “lost” due to his own “disappearance” from the political scene and “preoccupation with other issues overseas.” He acknowledged that he was disconnected for a long time but that he was back on the political scene -- although he was careful to caveat that he had not yet accepted an official role in the regime.
9. (S/NF) Saif raised a few recent incidents that he argued illustrated how things were going wrong. First, he pointed to Muammar al-Qadhafi’s recent trip to New York, which in Saif’s opinion had not gone well, because of the “tent and residence issues and his [pere Qadhafi’s] inability to visit ground zero.” He said that all three issues had been complicated by local U.S. authorities and had humiliated the Libyan leader -- “even tourists can see ground zero without permission, but a Head of State cannot?” Secondly, Saif believed that his father’s UNGA speech had been misinterpreted by U.S. audiences; he specifically focused on statements involving moving the UN Headquarters outside of the United States and various assassination investigations (JFK, Rafik al-Hariri, etc.). Saif stated that the elder Qadhafi meant no offense by his statements, but was merely trying to “pave the way” for any future decisions that POTUS might make related to those issues. Lastly, Saif noted that the Libyan leader was worried about U.S. intervention in Africa. The elder Qadhafi was also against the linguistic and political division of Africa into “North” and “Sub-Saharan” Africa and wanted countries such as the United States to treat Africa as a single entity rather than two blocs.

10. (S/NF) Saif said that Muammar al-Qadhafi was serious about deepening engagement with the United States and establishing a relationship with the Obama Administration. Saif said that his father did not want to “go back to square one,” but wanted to move the bilateral relationship forward. Saif emphasized the Libyan leader’s interest in meeting POTUS in a third country if a meeting in the United States was not possible. Such a meeting would help overcome the negative history that our nations shared, would support the rebuilding of trust, and might even help with U.S. Embassy operations and activities in Libya, according to Saif.

11. (S/NF) The Ambassador noted that the relationship had seen several advancements and several serious setbacks since Saif’s last visit to the United States, including the August 20 hero’s welcome accorded to Lockerbie bomber Abdel Basset al-Megrahi by Saif himself. Megrahi’s return had severely offended American sensitivities and renewed tensions that set the relationship back. Until that point, there had been significant progress, with a military-to-military agreement signed in January and the positive April visit of National Security Advisor Mutassim al-Qadhafi and his meeting with the Secretary. Although the death of Fathi el-Jahmi had been a setback to the relationship, the U.S. and Libya had found a productive way forward through the establishment of a bilateral Human Rights Dialogue. Regarding concerns about U.S. intervention in Africa, the Ambassador reminded Saif that Colonel Qadhafi and General Ward had had what we believed to be a very productive meeting several months ago, which we had hoped would have dispelled any concerns the Libyans had about U.S. intentions in Africa. The Ambassador explained that Americans were hoping for a more forward-leaning statement by Muammar al-Qadhafi in New York but instead heard a series of remarks that were not agreeable to the American public. As a result, the relationship has been placed on a “low-burner” since August.

12. (S/NF) In spite of these issues, the Ambassador said the U.S. had managed to keep moving ahead in the areas of security, military, political, civilian-nuclear, and economic cooperation. However, many of the delays in implementation were due to Libya’s opaque bureaucracy. The Section 505 end user agreement, for example, had languished in the GOL for months, as had Libya’s response on TIFA. Libya’s slow-rolling on visa approvals for official American travelers had delayed movement in areas such as civilian-nuclear cooperation and on the Regional Nuclear Medicine Facility.

13. (S/NF) Saif acknowledged that he was disconnected for a long time from the bilateral relationship and recognized that the hero’s welcome for Megrahi had set engagement back. He reiterated that he was “back” on the scene and could serve as the “trouble-shooter” for any future problems. He urged the Ambassador to contact his office directly in times of crisis. He also promised to resolve the visa issue, stating that he understood the importance of a transparent and reliable system of issuance. In their one-on-one discussion afterwards, the Ambassador asked Saif to explain his actions when he accompanied Megrahi back to Tripoli. Saif said he knew what the reaction in the West would be, but that it did not constitute an “official” welcome. He had worked on the release for a long time, he was not a public official, and there were no international media like Al Jazeera present. In addition, Saif claimed that the Libyans would someday find a way to show that Megrahi was innocent. The Ambassador reiterated the damage the welcome had done and said no amount of justification could undo that. Saif nodded his understanding. Saif also replied that if he is confirmed in his new position, he was as yet not sure whether he would retain his current position as head of the Qadhafi Development Foundation.

COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST
14. (S/NF) The Libyan Government has chosen a very dangerous issue on which to express its apparent pique about perceived problems in the bilateral relationship, a point the Ambassador underscored with Saif al-Islam. If Saif is to be believed, it appears we might have a way forward. If the Department is willing, we would urge a phone call from the Secretary to Musa Kusa with a message for Colonel Qadhafi comprising a general statement of commitment to the relationship, a commitment to work with the Libyans to move the relationship ahead, and a strong point insisting that the HEU shipment be allowed to go forward immediately and not be held hostage to any further actions.

BIO NOTE

15. (S/NF) Saif met the Ambassador in an office on the Bab Al-Aziziya compound. The office was filled with books, including a high stack of art and interior design books and several brochures distributed by the Embassy’s Public Affairs Section. Saif conducted the meeting in English. He was accompanied by his personal assistant, Mohamed Ismail Ahmed (DOB 07/06/1968), who said that he was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and spent his childhood years traveling abroad with his diplomat father, including in Afghanistan in the late 1970s, where he attended the American School. Ahmed was soft-spoken and spoke fluent English. He asked Pol/Econ chief to provide him with additional information on the status of Libya’s military procurement requests and Letters of Offer and Assistance (LOA’s). POLASCHIK
Worries About American Ties to a “Sclerotic” Ally

In July 2009, a cable from the American Embassy in Tunis wrestled with what American policy should be toward Tunisia and the “sclerotic” government of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. Tunisia was an old friend but not a close ally, the cable said.

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(Date) 2009-07-17 16:19:00

(Source) Embassy Tunis

(Classification) SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 05 TUNIS 000492

NOFORN SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA AA/S FELTMAN, DAS HUDSON, AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE GRAY, AND NEA/MAG FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/13/2029 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, ECON, KPAO, MASS, PHUM, TS SUBJECT: TROUBLED TUNISIA: WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for E.O. 12958 reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

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Summary

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1. (S/NF) By many measures, Tunisia should be a close US ally. But it is not. While we share some key values and the country has a strong record on development, Tunisia has big problems. President Ben Ali is aging, his regime is sclerotic and there is no clear successor. Many Tunisians are frustrated by the lack of political freedom and angered by First Family corruption, high unemployment and regional inequities. Extremism poses a continuing threat. Compounding the problems, the GOT brooks no advice or criticism, whether domestic or international. Instead, it seeks to impose ever greater control, often using the police. The result: Tunisia is troubled and our relations are too.

2. (S/NF) In the past three years, US Mission Tunis has responded by offering greater cooperation where the Tunisians say they want it, but not shied from making plain the need for change. We have had some successes, notably in the commercial and military assistance areas. But we have also had failures. We have been blocked, in part, by a Foreign Ministry that seeks to control all our contacts in the government and many other organizations. Too often, the GOT prefers the illusion of engagement to the hard work of real cooperation. Major change in Tunisia will have to wait for Ben Ali’s departure, but President Obama and his policies create opportunities now. What should we do to take advantage of them? We recommend:

-- keep a strong focus on democratic reform and respect for human rights, but shift the way we promote these goals; -- seek to engage the GOT in a dialogue on issues of mutual interest, including trade and investment, Middle East peace, and greater Maghreb integration; -- offer Tunisians (with an emphasis on youth) more English-language training, educational exchanges, and cultural programs; -- move our military assistance away from FMF, but look for new ways to build security and intelligence cooperation; and, -- increase high-level contacts but stress that deeper US cooperation depends on real Tunisian engagement. End Summary.

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The Backdrop: Historic Relations and Shared Values

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3. (SBU) The United States and Tunisia have 200 years of close ties and common interests, including advancing regional peace, combating terrorism, and building prosperity. Since independence, Tunisia deserves credit for its economic and social progress. Without the natural resources of its neighbors, Tunisia focused on people and diversified its economy. In a success all too rare, the GOT is effective in delivering services (education, health care, infrastructure and security) to its people. The GOT has sought to build a knowledge economy to attract FDI that will create high value-added jobs. As a result, the country has enjoyed five percent real GDP growth for the past decade. On women’s rights, Tunisia is a model. And, Tunisia has a long history of religious tolerance, as demonstrated by its treatment of its Jewish community. While significant challenges remain (above all the country’s 14 percent unemployment rate) on balance Tunisia has done better than most in the region.

4. (SBU) On foreign policy, Tunisia has long played a moderate role (although recently its goal has been to get along with everyone). The GOT rejects the Arab League boycott of Israeli goods. Although it broke ties with Israel in 2000, the GOT has from time to time taken part in quiet discussions with Israeli officials. The GOT also supports Mahmoud Abbas’ leadership of the Palestinian Authority. Tunisia participated in the Annapolis conference and has supported our efforts to promote Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The GOT is like-minded on Iran, is an ally in the fight against terrorism, and has maintained an Embassy in Iraq at the Charge level. Moreover, Tunisia recently signed a debt forgiveness agreement with the GOI on Paris Club terms; it is the first Arab country to do so.

5. (SBU) Finally, although Tunisians have been deeply angry over the war in Iraq and perceived US bias towards Israel, most still admire the American dream. Despite the anger at US foreign policy, we see a growing desire for English-language instruction, a wish for more educational and scientific exchanges, and a belief in the American culture of innovation. Tunisians see these as important for their future.

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The Problem: A Sclerotic Regime and Growing Corruption
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6. (C) Despite Tunisia’s economic and social progress, its record on political freedoms is poor. Tunisia is a police state, with little freedom of expression or association, and serious human rights problems. The GOT has made some political progress in the last decade, including an end to prior review of books and ICRC access to many prisons. But for every step forward there has been another back, for example the recent takeover of important private media outlets by individuals close to President Ben Ali.

7. (C) The problem is clear: Tunisia has been ruled by the same president for 22 years. He has no successor. And, while President Ben Ali deserves credit for continuing many of the progressive policies of President Bourguiba, he and his regime have lost touch with the Tunisian people. They tolerate no advice or criticism, whether domestic or international. Increasingly, they rely on the police for control and focus on preserving power. And, corruption in the inner circle is rising. Tunisians intensely dislike, even hate, First Lady Leila Trabelsi and her family. In private, regime opponents mock her; even those close to the government express dismay at her reported behavior. Meanwhile, anger is growing at Tunisia’s high unemployment and regional inequities. As a consequence, the risks to the regime’s long-term stability are increasing.

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US-Tunisian Relations: If Only We Would Say This Is Paradise
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8. (S/NF) US-Tunisian relations reflect the realities of the Ben Ali regime. On the positive side, we have accomplished several goals in recent years, including:
-- increasing substantially US assistance to the military to combat terrorism; -- improving (albeit still with challenges) some important counterterrorism programs; -- strengthening commercial ties, including holding a TIFA Council meeting, hosting several trade and economic delegations and growing business activity; -- building ties to young people and the cultural
community through expanded English-language programs, a new film festival, and new media outreach efforts; and -- encouraging congressional interest in Tunisia.

9. (C) But we have also had too many failures. The GOT frequently declines to engage, and there have been too many lost opportunities. The GOT has:

-- declined to engage on the Millennium Challenge Account; -- declined USAID regional programs to assist young people; -- reduced the number of Fulbright scholarship students; and, -- declined to engage in Open Skies negotiations.

Most troubling has been the GOT’s unilateral and clumsy effort to impose new and retroactive taxes on the American Cooperative School of Tunis. There is little doubt that this action was at the behest of powerful friends (probably including Leila Trabelsi) of the International School of Carthage. It raises important questions about Tunisian governance and our friendship. If, in the end, the GOT’s actions force the school to close we will need to downsize the Mission, limit our programs, and dial down our relations.

10. (C) At the same time, the GOT has also increasingly tightened controls that make it exceptionally difficult for the US Mission to conduct business. The controls, put in place by Foreign Minister Abdallah, require the Mission to obtain written MFA permission for contact with all official and semi-official Tunisian organizations. Mid-level GOT officials are no longer allowed to communicate with embassy personnel without express authorization and MFA-cleared instructions. All meeting requests and demarches must be conveyed by diplomatic note. Most go unanswered. All Embassies in Tunis are affected by these controls, but they are no less frustrating for that.

11. (C) Beyond the stifling bureaucratic controls, the GOT makes it difficult for the Mission to maintain contact with a wide swath of Tunisian society. GOT-controlled newspapers often attack Tunisian civil society activists who participate in Embassy activities, portraying them as traitors. Plain-clothes police sometimes lurk outside events hosted by EmbOffs, intimidating participants.

12. (C) Some of the GOT’s actions may be related to its intense dislike of the former Administration’s freedom agenda. The GOT considered this policy dangerous and believed it opened the door for Islamic extremists to seize power. GOT leaders have made no secret of their disapproval of the Ambassador’s and other EmbOffs’ contacts with opposition activists as well as civil society activists who criticize the regime. They were intensely critical, as well, of the previous Administration’s use of public statements (such as on World Press Freedom Day 2008), which they believed unfairly targeted Tunisia.

So, What Should We Do?

13. (C) Notwithstanding the frustrations of doing business here, we cannot write off Tunisia. We have too much at stake. We have an interest in preventing al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other extremist groups from establishing a foothold here. We have an interest in keeping the Tunisian military professional and neutral. We also have an interest in fostering greater political openness and respect for human rights. It is in our interest, too, to build prosperity and Tunisia’s middle class, the underpinning for the country’s long-term stability. Moreover, we need to increase mutual understanding to help repair the image of the United States and secure greater cooperation on our many regional challenges. The United States needs help in this region to promote our values and policies. Tunisia is one place where, in time, we might find it.

The Extended Hand

14. (C) Since President Obama’s inauguration, Tunisians have been more receptive to the United States. Senior GOT officials have warmly welcomed President Obama’s statements and speeches. His
address in Cairo drew particular praise, with the Foreign Minister calling it courageous. Meanwhile, some civil society contacts who had been boycotting Embassy functions in opposition to the war in Iraq have started coming around again. Generally, the metaphor of the extended hand in President Obama’s inaugural address has resonated powerfully with Tunisians. Concretely, the Tunisians have welcomed many of the Obama Administration’s actions, including the decision to close the Guantanamo Bay detention center and the plans for troop withdrawals from Iraq. Above all, Tunisians have been pleased by the President’s tone, statements and actions (so far) on Middle East peace.

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**How To Advance Democracy and Human Rights**

15. (S) The Obama Administration creates an important opportunity, then, to explore whether and how to pursue a more productive bilateral relationship. GOT officials say the United States tends to focus on issues where we do not see eye-to-eye. They bristle at our calls for greater democratic reform and respect for human rights, and protest they are making progress. For years, the Embassy’s top goal has been to promote progress in these areas. We need to keep the focus, especially with 2009 an election year in Tunisia. Ben Ali is certain to be reelected by a wide margin in a process that will be neither free nor fair. In this context, we should continue to underscore the importance of these issues, and to maintain contacts with the few opposition parties and civil society groups critical of the regime.

16. (C) We should consider how this policy objective is publicly manifested, however. For several years, the United States has been out in front -- publicly and privately -- criticizing the GOT for the absence of democracy and the lack of respect for human rights. There is a place for such criticism, and we do not advocate abandoning it. We do recommend a more pragmatic approach, however, whereby we would speak to the Tunisians very clearly and at a very high level about our concerns regarding Tunisia’s democracy and human rights practices, but dial back the public criticism. The key element is more and frequent high-level private candor. We recommend being explicit with GOT leaders that we are changing our approach, while also making clear that we will continue to engage privately with opposition parties and civil society.

17. (C) In addition, we should increase our efforts to persuade our European partners, and other like-minded countries, to step up their efforts to persuade the GOT to accelerate political reform. While some in the EU (e.g., Germany, the UK) agree with us, key countries such as France and Italy have shied from putting pressure on the GOT. We should work to get them to do so, and to condition further assistance and advanced EU associate status on it.

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**Advancing Other US Interests**

18. (C) Whether we succeed on democracy and human rights, the United States has an interest in building relations with a wide spectrum of Tunisians, particularly the young. To do so, and to build good will with the GOT, we should offer the government a dialogue on a range of issues of mutual interest, backed up by increased assistance. Of greatest interest to the GOT would be increased engagement on economic issues, i.e., on increasing bilateral trade and investment, as well as the provision of technical assistance, especially involving technology transfer. The Tunisians would welcome a revival of the US-North African Economic Partnership, as well as other efforts that would promote North African economic integration.

19. (C) In addition, we should offer serious engagement in high-priority areas for Tunisians that will also benefit the United States, including:

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- more, and more comprehensive, English-language programs;
- Ph.D. scholarships for Tunisian students to study in the United States, such as those that USAID used to make available in the 1976’s and 1980’s;
- more support for University linkages;
- more science and technology exchanges -- to give substance to a bilateral S&T agreement that, with no money behind it, has had little impact; and
- more cultural programming.
20. (C) In addition to talking to the GOT, we need to engage directly with the Tunisian people, especially youth. The Embassy is already using Facebook as a communication tool. In addition, we have the Ambassador’s blog, a relatively new undertaking that is attracting attention. Over the past couple of years, the Embassy has substantially increased its outreach to Tunisian youth through concerts, film festivals, and other events. Our information resource center and America’s Corners are popular ways for Tunisians to access unfiltered news and information. We should continue and increase such programs.

Advancing Broader Foreign Policy Objectives And Security Cooperation

21. (C) We should also seek new ways to engage Tunisia in pursuit of our broader foreign policy agenda. We believe that the GOT would welcome this kind of engagement, and that it would pay dividends, not only in our bilateral relationship but also on transnational issues. For example, we continue to count on GOT support for our efforts to promote Israel-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab peace. Although Tunisia has limited influence within the Arab League, it remains in the moderate camp, as demonstrated most recently by its refusal to participate in the extraordinary Doha Summit on the situation in Gaza. At appropriate moments, we would recommend doing more to brief the GOT on our efforts in the peace process and to draw them into providing additional support. Special Envoy Mitchell’s stop here in April was well received and we should look for ways to continue such consultations.

22. (S/NF) There are opportunities in the area of security cooperation, too. For starters, we know that Tunisia could be doing a better job in sharing intelligence with us about the threat of terrorism in North Africa. This was all too clear when, yet again, the GOT failed recently to share information with us in a timely fashion on a reported plot against US military personnel. GRPO has been taking steps to increase cooperation through liaison channels; while there has been progress, more is possible.

23. (C) On military cooperation, the time has come to shift our military assistance away from FMF to more targeted programs that meet specific needs. There is increasing evidence the Tunisian military does not need FMF to the degree it claims, and in any event it has bought us too little in the way of cooperation. Rather, we should focus on working with the Tunisians to identify a small number of areas where cooperation makes sense. The recent use of the Section 1206 and PKO programs to provide the Tunisian military with ground surveillance radar and unmanned surveillance aircraft is a good example.

Our Message: Deeper Cooperation Depends On Real Engagement

24. (S) Tunisia is not an ally today, but we still share important history and values. It is fair to consider Tunisia a friend, albeit cautious, closed and distant. Most importantly, in a region in turmoil, Tunisia has better prospects than most even though it is troubled. In the end, serious change here will have to await Ben Ali’s departure. But President Obama’s new tone and policies may create a window of opportunity. We should use it to make overtures to the GOT in areas where they seek our involvement or assistance. And, we should seek to engage all Tunisians (especially the young) in ways that will improve the future for both our countries.

25. (S) To succeed, however, we need resources and commitment from Washington. New and expanded programs will require money and staff to implement them, particularly in public affairs. Senior US Government officials must also be prepared to visit more often than in recent years to engage the Tunisians. Meetings outside Tunisia are a good tool, too. The Secretary’s recent meeting with North African Foreign Ministers on the margins of the Gaza Reconstruction Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh provides one model for engagement and offers the added benefit of allowing us to also promote greater Maghreb integration.

26. (S) Finally, we recommend US officials be clear in all meetings with Tunisians: more US cooperation depends on real Tunisian engagement. For too long Tunisia has skated by. A small country, in a tough region, the GOT relies on vague promises of friendship and empty slogans.
More can and should be expected of Tunisia. The GOT frequently says it is a US ally and calls for
greater US engagement. We should respond clearly: yes, but only if we get genuine help from
Tunisia on the challenges that matter to us all. The Tunisian government loves the illusion of
engagement. The US government should press for the hard work of real cooperation.

Godec

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables From American Diplomats Portray U.S. Ambivalence on Tunisia”
Warnings About Corruption of Tunisia’s First Family

This 2008 cable reports on the worsening corruption in Tunisia involving the family of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. While petty corruption is common, the cable said, “it is the excesses of President Ben Ali’s family that inspire outrage among Tunisians.”

DATE 2008-06-23 13:55:00

SOURCE Embassy Tunis

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T TUNIS 000679

SIPODIS

STATE FOR NEA/MAG (HARRIS) STATE PASS USTR (BURKHEAD) USDOC FOR ITA/MAC/ONE (NATHAN MASON), ADVOCACY CTR (REITZE), AND CLOP (TEJTEL AND MCMANUS) CASABLANCA FOR FCS (ORTIZ) CAIRO FOR FINANCIAL ATTACHE (SEVERENS) LONDON AND PARIS FOR NEA WATCHER


REF: A. TUNIS 615 B. TUNIS 568 C. TUNIS 365 D. TUNIS 169 E. TUNIS 113 F. 07 TUNIS 1489 G. 07 TUNIS 1443 H. 07 TUNIS 1433 I. 06 TUNIS 2848 J. 06 TUNIS 1673 K. 06 TUNIS 1672 L. 06 TUNIS 1630 M. 06 TUNIS 1622 N. 01 TUNIS 2971

Classification By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

1. (S) According to Transparency International’s annual survey and Embassy contacts’ observations, corruption in Tunisia is getting worse. Whether it’s cash, services, land, property, or yes, even your yacht, President Ben Ali’s family is rumored to covet it and reportedly gets what it wants. Beyond the stories of the First Family’s shady dealings, Tunisians report encountering low-level corruption as well in interactions with the police, customs, and a variety of government ministries. The economic impact is clear, with Tunisian investors -- fearing the long-arm of “the Family” -- forgoing new investments, keeping domestic investment rates low and unemployment high (Refs G, H). These persistent rumors of corruption, coupled with rising inflation and continued unemployment, have helped to fuel frustration with the GOT and have contributed to recent protests in southwestern Tunisia (Ref A). With those at the top believed to be the worst offenders, and likely to remain in power, there are no checks in the system. End Summary.

The Sky’s the Limit

2. (C) According to Transparency International’s 2007 index, the perception is that corruption in Tunisia is getting worse. Tunisia’s ranking on the index dropped from 43 in 2005 to 61 in 2007 (out of 179 countries) with a score of 4.2 (with 1 the most corrupt and 10 the least corrupt). Although corruption is hard to verify and even more difficult to quantify, our contacts all agree that the situation is headed in the wrong direction. When asked whether he thought corruption was better, worse, or the same, XXXXXXXXXX exclaimed in exasperation, “Of course it’s getting worse!” He stated that corruption could not but increase as the culprits looked for more and more
opportunities. Joking about Tunisia’s rising inflation, he said that even the cost of bribes was up. “A traffic stop used to cost you 20 dinars and now it’s up to 40 or 50!”

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All in the Family
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3. (S) President Ben Ali’s extended family is often cited as the nexus of Tunisian corruption. Often referred to as a quasi-mafia, an oblique mention of “the Family” is enough to indicate which family you mean. Seemingly half of the Tunisian business community can claim a Ben Ali connection through marriage, and many of these relations are reported to have made the most of their lineage. Ben Ali’s wife, Leila Ben Ali, and her extended family -- the Trabelsis -- provoke the greatest ire from Tunisians. Along with the numerous allegations of Trabelsi corruption are often barbs about their lack of education, low social status, and conspicuous consumption. While some of the complaints about the Trabelsi clan seem to emanate from a disdain for their nouveau riche inclinations, Tunisians also argue that the Trabelsis strong arm tactics and flagrant abuse of the system make them easy to hate. Leila’s brother Belhassen Trabelsi is the most notorious family member and is rumored to have been involved in a wide-range of corrupt schemes from the recent Banque de Tunisie board shakeup (Ref B) to property expropriation and extortion of bribes. Leaving the question of their progenitor aside, Belhassen Trabelsi’s holdings are extensive and include an airline, several hotels, one of Tunisia’s two private radio stations, car assembly plants, Ford distribution, a real estate development company, and the list goes on. (See Ref K for a more extensive list of his holdings.) Yet, Belhassen is only one of Leila’s ten known siblings, each with their own children. Among this large extended family, Leila’s brother Moncef and nephew Imed are also particularly important economic actors.

4. (S/NF) The President is often given a pass, with many Tunisians arguing that he is being used by the Trabelsi clan and is unaware of their shady dealings. XXXXXXXXXX, a strong supporter of the government and member of XXXXXXXXXX, told the Ambassador that the problem is not Ben Ali, but “the Family” going too far and breaking the rules. Nevertheless, it is hard to believe Ben Ali is not aware, at least generally, of the growing corruption problem. This might also reflect the seeming geographical divisions between the Ben Ali and Trabelsi fiefdoms, with the Ben Ali clan reportedly focused on the central coastal regional and the Trabelsi clan operating out of the greater Tunis area and therefore, generating the bulk of the gossip. The Ben Ali side of the Family and his children and in-laws from his first marriage are also implicated in a number of stories. Ben Ali has seven siblings, of which his late brother Moncef was a known drug trafficker, sentenced in absentia to 10 years prison in the French courts. Ben Ali has three children with his first wife Naima Kefi: Ghaouna, Dorsaf and Cyrine. They are married respectively to Slim Zarrouk, Slim Chiboub, and Marouane Mabrouk -- all significant economic powers.

This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land

5. (S/NF) With real estate development booming and land prices on the rise, owning property or land in the right location can either be a windfall or a one-way ticket to expropriation. In summer 2007, Leila Ben Ali received a desirable tract of land in Carthage for free from the GOT in order to build the for-profit Carthage International School (Ref F). In addition to the land, the school received a 1.8 million dinar (US $1.5 million) gift from the GOT, and within a matter of weeks the GOT had built new roads and stoplights to facilitate school access. It has been reported that Ms. Ben Ali has sold the Carthage International School to Belgian investors, but the Belgian Embassy has as yet been unable to confirm or discount the rumor. XXXXXXXXXX asserted that the school was indeed sold for a huge, but undisclosed sum. He noted any such sale would be pure profit since Ms. Ben Ali’s received land, infrastructure, and a hefty bonus at no cost.

6. (S/NF) Construction on an enormous and garish mansion has been underway next to the Ambassador’s residence for the past year. Multiple sources have told us that the home is that of Sakhr Materi, President Ben Ali’s son-in-law and owner of Zitouna Radio. This prime real estate was reportedly expropriated from its owner by the GOT for use by the water authority, then later granted to Materi for private use. A cafe owner recounted a similar tale to an Embassy employee, reporting that Belhassen Trabelsi forced him to trade in a cafe he previously owned in a prime location for his current cafe. The cafe owner stated Trabelsi told him he could do whatever he wanted there; if 50 dinar bribes to the police were not effective, Trabelsi said the owner had only to call him and he would “take care of it.”
Yacht Wanted

6. (S/NF) In 2006, Imed and Moaz Trabelsi, Ben Ali’s nephews, are reported to have stolen the yacht of a well-connected French businessman, Bruno Roger, Chairman of Lazard Paris. The theft, widely reported in the French press, came to light when the yacht, freshly painted to cover distinguishing characteristics, appeared in the Sidi Bou Said harbor. Roger’s prominence in the French establishment created a potential irritant in bilateral relations and according to reports, the yacht was swiftly returned. The stolen yacht affair resurfaced in early 2008 due to an Interpol warrant for the two Trabelsis. In May, the brothers were brought before Tunisian courts, in a likely effort to satisfy international justice. The outcome of their case has not been reported.

Show Me Your Money

7. (S) Tunisia’s financial sector remains plagued by serious allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement. Tunisian business people joke that the most important relationship you can have is with your banker, reflecting the importance of personal connections rather than a solid business plan in securing financing. The legacy of relationship-based banking is a sector-wide rate of non-performing loans that is 19 percent, which remains high but is lower than a high of 25 percent in 2001 (Ref I). Embassy contacts are quick to point out that many of these loans are held by wealthy Tunisian business people who use their close ties to the regime to avoid repayment (Ref E). Lax oversight makes the banking sector an excellent target of opportunity, with multiple stories of “First Family” schemes. The recent reshuffle at Banque de Tunisie (Ref B), with the Foreign Minister’s wife assuming the presidency and Belhassen Trabelsi named to the board, is the latest example. According to a representative from Credit Agricole, Marouane Mabrouk, another of Ben Ali’s sons-in-law, purchased a 17 percent share of the former Banque du Sud (now Attijari Bank) shares immediately prior to the bank’s privatization. This 17 percent share was critical to acquiring controlling interest in the bank since the privatization represented only a 35 percent share in the bank. The Credit Agricole rep stated that Mabrouk shopped his shares to foreign banks with a significant premium, with the tender winner, Spanish-Moroccan Santander-Attijariwafa ultimately paying an off the books premium to Mabrouk.

The Trickle Down Effect

8. (S) While the stories of high-level, Family corruption are among the most flagrant and oft-repeated, Tunisians report encountering low-level corruption more frequently in their daily lives. Speeding tickets can be ignored, passports can be expedited, and customs can be bypassed - all for the right price. Donations to the GOT’s 26-26 Fund for development or to the Bessma Society for the Handicapped -- Leila Ben Ali’s favored charity -- are also believed to grease the wheels. Hayet Louani (protect), a well-connected member of Parliament, faced increased pressure from the GOT after refusing several “requests” to donate money to Trabelsi’s soccer team. Venture capitalist XXXXXXXXXXXX cited by an Embassy FSN reported that customs inspectors demanded 10,000 dinars to get his goods through customs; he did not indicate whether or not he acquiesced to the demand.

9. (S) Nepotism is also believed to play a significant role in awarding scholarships and offering jobs. Knowing the right people at the Ministry of Higher Education can determine admission to the best schools or can mean a scholarship for study abroad. An Embassy FSN stated that the Director of International Cooperation, a long-time contact, offered to give his son a scholarship to Morocco on the basis of their acquaintance. If you do not know someone, money can also do the trick. There are many stories of Tunisians paying clerks at the Ministry of Higher Education to get their children into better schools than were merited by their test scores. Government jobs -- a prize in Tunisia -- are also believed to be doled out on the basis of connections. Leila Ben Ali’s late mother, Hajja Nana, is also reported to have acted as a broker for both school admissions and government job placement, providing her facilitation services for a commission. Among the complaints from the protestors in the mining area of Gafsa were allegations that jobs in the Gafsa Phosphate Company were given on the basis of connections and bribery.
Mob Rule?

10. (S/NF) The numerous stories of familial corruption are certainly galling to many Tunisians, but beyond the rumors of money-grabbing is a frustration that the well-connected can live outside the law. One Tunisian lamented that Tunisia was no longer a police state, it had become a state run by the mafia. “Even the police report to the Family!” he exclaimed. With those at the top believed to be the worst offenders, and likely to remain in power, there are no checks in the system. The daughter of a former governor recounted that Belhassen Trabelsi flew into her father's office in a rage -- even throwing an elderly office clerk to the ground -- after being asked to abide by laws requiring insurance coverage for his amusement park. Her father wrote a letter to President Ben Ali defending his decision and denouncing Trabelsi’s tactics. The letter was never answered, and he was removed from his post shortly thereafter. The GOT’s strong censorship of the press ensures that stories of familial corruption are not published. The Family’s corruption remains a red line that the press cross at their own peril. Although the February imprisonment of comedian Hedi Oula Baballah was ostensibly drug-related, human rights groups speculate his arrest was punishment for a 30 minute stand-up routine spoofing the President and his in-laws (Tunis D). International NGOs have made the case that the harsh prison conditions faced by journalist Slim Boukdhir, who was arrested for failing to present his ID card and insulting a police officer, are directly related to his articles criticizing government corruption. Corruption remains a topic relegated to hushed voices with quick glances over the shoulder.

The Elephant in the Room

11. (S) Several Tunisian economists argue that it does not matter whether corruption is actually increasing because “perception is reality.” The perception of increasing corruption and the persistent rumors of shady backroom dealings has a negative impact on the economy regardless of the veracity. Contacts tell us they afraid to invest for fear that the family will suddenly want a cut. “What’s the point?” Alaya Bettaieb asked. “The best case scenario is that my investment succeeds and someone important tries to take a cut.” Persistently low domestic investment rates bear this out (Ref H). Foreign bank accounts, while illegal, are reportedly commonplace. A recent Ministry of Finance amnesty to encourage Tunisians to repatriate their funds has been an abject failure. Bettaeib stated that he plans to incorporate his new business in Mauritania or Malta, citing fear of unwanted interference. Many economists and business people note that strong investment in real estate and land reflects the lack of confidence in the economy and an effort to keep their money safe (Ref C).

12. (S) Thus far, foreign investors have been undeterred, and according to Tunisian business contacts, largely unaffected. Foreign investment continues to flow in at a healthy rate, even excluding the privatizations and huge Gulf projects which have yet to get underway. Foreign investors more rarely report encountering the type of extortion faced by Tunisians, perhaps reflecting that foreign investors have recourse to their own embassies and governments. British Gas representatives told the Ambassador they had not encountered any impropriety. XXXXXXXXXXXX stated that several years ago Belhassen Trabelsi attempted to strong arm a German company producing in the offshore sector, but that after the German Embassy intervened Trabelsi was explicitly cautioned to avoid offshore companies. Despite pronouncements about increasing domestic investment, the GOT focuses heavily on increasing FDI flows to the country, particularly in the offshore sector. Nevertheless, there are still several examples of foreign companies or investors being pressured into joining with the “right” partner. The prime example remains McDonald’s failed entry into Tunisia. When McDonald’s chose to limit Tunisia to one franchisee not of the GOT’s choosing, the whole deal was scuttled by the GOT’s refusal to grant the necessary authorization and McDonald’s unwillingness to play the game by granting a license to a franchisee with Family connections.

Comment

13. (S) Although the petty corruption rankles, it is the excesses of President Ben Ali’s family that inspire outrage among Tunisians. With Tunisians facing rising inflation and high unemployment, the conspicuous displays of wealth and persistent rumors of corruption have added fuel to the fire. The recent protests in the mining region of Gafsa provide a potent reminder of the discontent that remains largely beneath the surface. This government has based its legitimacy on its ability to deliver economic growth, but a growing number of Tunisians believe those as the top are keeping the benefits for themselves.
14. (S) Corruption is a problem that is at once both political and economic. The lack of transparency and accountability that characterize Tunisia’s political system similarly plague the economy, damaging the investment climate and fueling a culture of corruption. For all the talk of a Tunisian economic miracle and all the positive statistics, the fact that Tunisia’s own investors are steering clear speaks volumes. Corruption is the elephant in the room; it is the problem everyone knows about, but no one can publicly acknowledge. End Comment.

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RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables From American Diplomats Portray U.S. Ambivalence on Tunisia”
A Lavish Dinner with Tunisian President’s Son-in-law

A 2009 cable gives a detailed report on the American ambassador’s “lavish” dinner with Mohamed Sakher el-Materi, a wealthy businessman and a son-in-law of Tunisia’s president. He was living “in the midst of great wealth and excess,” with such luxuries as a pet tiger, the cable said, showing why Tunisians resented the president’s in-laws.

DATE 2009-07-27 16:09:00

SOURCE Embassy Tunis

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET TUNIS 000516

SIPODIS

NEA/MAG; INR/B

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/28/2017 TAGS: PREL, PTER, PGOV, PINR, ENRG, EAID, TS SUBJECT: TUNISIA: DINNER WITH SAKHER EL MATERI

REF: TUNIS 338

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

1. (S) The Ambassador and his wife had dinner with Mohammad Sakher El Materi and his wife, Nesrine Ben Ali El Materi, at their Hammamet home July 17. During the lavish dinner Al Materi raised the question of the American Cooperative School of Tunis and said he would seek to “fix the problem prior to the Ambassador’s departure” as a gesture to a “friend.” He praised President Obama’s policies and advocated a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians. He also expressed interest in opening a McDonald’s franchise and complained about the government’s delay in passing a franchise law. He expressed pride in his Islamic Zaitouna radio and in the interviews with opposition party leaders published in his newly purchased newspaper publishing group. During the evening, El Materi was alternately difficult and kind. He seemed, on occasion, to be seeking approval. He was living, however, in the midst of great wealth and excess, illustrating one reason resentment of President Ben Ali’s in-laws is increasing. End Summary.

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The ACST Situation

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2. (S) Presidential son-in-law and wealthy businessman Mohamed Sakher El Materi, and his wife, Nesrine Ben Ali El Materi hosted the Ambassador and his wife for dinner at their Hammamet beach residence July 17. El Materi raised the American Cooperative School of Tunis (ACST), asking what was happening. The Ambassador explained the situation and emphasized that there is anger and concern in Washington and the English-speaking American/international community in Tunis. He said if the school is closed, there would be serious consequences in our relations. El Materi said he could help and would seek to resolve the situation immediately, i.e., prior to the Ambassador’s departure. He wished, he said, to do so for a “friend.” He noted that he had helped the UK Ambassador secure several appointments (including a lunch with the Prime Minister) for UK Prince Andrew during his recent visit. Before his intervention, El Materi said, the Prince had only one appointment with a single Minister.
3. (S) Ambassador raised the need for more freedom of expression and association in Tunisia. El Materi agreed. He complained that, as the new owner of Dar Assaba, the largest private newspaper group in the country, he has been getting calls from the Minister of Communications complaining about articles he has been running (Comment: This is doubtful). He laughed and suggested that sometimes he wants to “give Dar Assaba back.” El Materi noted the interviews his newspapers have been running with opposition leaders (he mentioned FDTL Secretary General Mustapha Ben Jaafar). He was clearly proud of the interviews.

4. (S) El Materi said it was important to help others, noting that was one reason he had adopted a son. The Ambassador mentioned the Embassy’s humanitarian assistance projects, noting they could not get media coverage. El Materi said forcefully they should be covered, that it was important the Embassy seek such coverage. He said it would counteract some of the negative US image. The Ambassador asked if El Materi would send reporters to do stories on the US assistance projects. El Materi said yes, absolutely.

5. (S) El Materi complained at length about Tunisian bureaucracy, saying it is difficult to get things done. He said communication inside the bureaucracy is terrible. He said people often “bring wrong information” to the President implying he had to get involved sometimes to get things corrected.

6. (S) El Materi praised President Barack Obama’s new policies. He said the invasion of Iraq was a very serious US mistake that had strengthened Iran and bred hatred of the United States in the Arab world. He pressed for a two state solution to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and indicated Tunisia needs to accelerate convertibility of the dinar. In general, however, El Materi’s knowledge of and interest in international political and economic issues seemed limited.

7. (S) The Ambassador raised economic liberalization, noting the importance of opening up to franchising. El Materi agreed, noting that he would be pleased to assist McDonald’s to enter Tunisia, suggesting they begin at the new cruise port in La Goulette. He complained about the unhealthy food served by McDonald’s, however, adding it is making Americans fat. He also complained about the GOT’s delay in passing a franchising law.

8. (S) The Ambassador noted he has been asking Tunisians what ideas they have for the new US President and Administration. El Materi commented that Nesrine would like more done on the environment. The Ambassador responded by explaining some of the Administration’s policies on the environment. El Materi said Nesrine is focused on organic products and wants everything (even the paint and varnish) in their new house in Sidi Bou Said (next to the Ambassador’s residence) to be organic.

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Islam
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9. (S) El Materi said he had begun to practice Islam seriously at 17. He repeatedly said he was practicing, and had a strong faith. (NB. He went off to pray at the sunset call to prayer.) He suggested that if you have faith and pray to God, he will help. He emphasized that his religion is personal, and he does not believe it is appropriate to impose his views on others. (Comment. During the evening, El Materi seemed at his most passionate when describing the Koran, his belief in one God, and the importance of Mohamed as the final prophet of God.)

10. (S) El Materi said he was proud of Zeitouna radio, the first and only Tunisian Koranic radio station, and discussed how Zeitouna bank would be opening. He hopes to create a regional version of Zeitouna radio to spread the Malakite school of Islam. He expressed the view that Islamists and extremists pose a great threat to Islam and modernity. He said he follows Islam, but modern Islam.
11. (S) El-Materi’s house is spacious, and directly above and along the Hammamet public beach. The compound is large and well guarded by government security. It is close to the center of Hammamet, with a view of the fort and the southern part of the town. The house was recently renovated and includes an infinity pool and a terrace of perhaps 50 meters. While the house is done in a modern style (and largely white), there are ancient artifacts everywhere: Roman columns, frescoes and even a lion’s head from which water pours into the pool. El Materi insisted the pieces are real. He hopes to move into his new (and palatial) house in Sidi Bou Said in eight to ten months.

12. (S) The dinner included perhaps a dozen dishes, including fish, steak, turkey, octopus, fish couscous and much more. The quantity was sufficient for a very large number of guests. Before dinner a wide array of small dishes were served, along with three different juices (including Kiwi juice, not normally available here). After dinner, he served ice cream and frozen yoghurt he brought in by plane from Saint Tropez, along with blueberries and raspberries and fresh fruit and chocolate cake. (NB. El Materi and Nesrine had just returned from Saint Tropez on their private jet after two weeks vacation. El Materi was concerned about his American pilot finding a community here. The Ambassador said he would be pleased to invite the pilot to appropriate American community events.)

13. (S) El Materi has a large tiger ("Pasha") on his compound, living in a cage. He acquired it when it was a few weeks old. The tiger consumes four chickens a day. (Comment: The situation reminded the Ambassador of Uday Hussein’s lion cage in Baghdad.) El Materi had staff everywhere. There were at least a dozen people, including a butler from Bangladesh and a nanny from South Africa. (NB. This is extraordinarily rare in Tunisia, and very expensive.)

14. (S) They have three children, two girls and a boy. Leila is four and another daughter that is about 10 months. Their boy is adopted and is two years old. The youngest daughter is a Canadian citizen, by virtue of birth in Canada. The family’s favorite vacation destination spot is the Maldives Islands.

15. (S) El Materi said he has begun an exercise and diet regime. He has, he said, recently lost weight (it was visibly true). El Materi said he eats in a “balanced” way. He had just spent an hour on a bike, he claimed. Nesrine said she gets no exercise.

16. (S) Both El Materi and Nesrine speak English, although their vocabulary and grammar are limited. They are clearly eager to strengthen their English. Nesrine said she loves Disney World, but had put off a trip this year because of H1N1 flu. Nesrine has, for sometime, had Tamiflu nearby (even taking it on trips). Originally it was out of fear of bird flu. She packs it for El Materi too when he travels. Nesrine said she has visited several US cities. El Materi had only been to Illinois recently in connection with the purchase of a plane.

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Comment
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17. (S) Throughout the evening, El Materi often struck the Ambassador as demanding, vain and difficult. He is clearly aware of his wealth and power, and his actions reflected little finesse. He repeatedly pointed out the lovely view from his home and frequently corrected his staff, issued orders and barked reprimands. Despite this, El Materi was aware of his affect on the people around him and he showed periodic kindness. He was unusually solicitous and helpful to the Ambassador’s wife, who is disabled. Occasionally, he seemed to be seeking approval. One western Ambassador in Tunis, who knows El Materi, has commented that he has western-style political skills in his willingness to engage with ordinary citizens. It is an uncommon trait here.

18. (S) El Materi, in recent months, has been ever more visible in the local diplomatic community. He has clearly decided (or been told) to serve as a point of contact between the regime and key ambassadors. Nesrine, at age 23, appeared friendly and interested, but nave and clueless. She reflected the very sheltered, privileged and wealthy life she has led. As for the dinner itself, it was similar to what one might experience in a Gulf country, and out of the
ordinary for Tunisia.

19. (S) Most striking of all, however, was the opulence with which El Materi and Nesrine live. Their home in Hammamet was impressive, with the tiger adding to the impression of “over the top.” Even more extravagant is their home still under construction in Sidi Bou Said. That residence, from its outward appearance, will be closer to a palace. It dominates the Sidi Bou Said skyline from some vantage points and has been the occasion of many private, critical comments. The opulence with which El Materi and Nesrine live and their behavior make clear why they and other members of Ben Ali’s family are disliked and even hated by some Tunisians. The excesses of the Ben Ali family are growing.

Please visit Embassy Tunis’ Classified Website at: http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/tunis/index.cfm Godec
Spurned by Tunisia, Arafat’s Widow Criticizes President’s Family

A 2007 cable discusses how Suha Arafat, widow of the Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat, was stripped of the Tunisian citizenship she had been granted the year before. Ms. Arafat tells the American ambassador that her former friend Leila Ben Ali, Tunisia’s first lady, “and her family are stealing everything of value in the country.”

DATE 2007-11-16 17:13:00

SOURCE Embassy Tunis

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TUNIS 001489

SIPDIS

NOFORN SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/IPA AND NEA/MAG (HOPKINS AND HARRIS)


REF: A. IIR 6 897 0136 07 (NOTALS) B. 06 TUNIS 2570

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C/NF) Summary: The GOT’s decision last summer to revoke Suha Arafat’s Tunisian citizenship, which had only been granted less than a year earlier, made international headlines. Since the appearance of the official register notice on August 7, the chattering class in Tunisia has not ceased to speculate about the reasons behind the decision. In a mid-October telcon with Ambassador Godec, Mrs. Arafat attributed her ouster to the personal animus of First Lady Leila Ben Ali, following a dispute over the forced closure of the Bouebdelli School, a well-respected private school. Had it remained open, the Bouebdelli School would have represented serious competition to the new Carthage International School, a joint venture between the two First Ladies. It is doubtful that we will ever know all of the facts in this affair, but the stories of corruption swirling around the Carthage International School have a ring of truth to them. Meanwhile, Mrs. Arafat was not shy in sharing with the Ambassador stinging criticism of President Ben Ali, the First Lady, and the web of corruption that she says surrounds them. End Summary.

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Easy Come, Easy Go
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2. (C) On August 7, the GOT’s Official Journal contained a one-sentence announcement of decree number 2007-1976 of August 2, 2007, revoking the citizenship of Suha Arafat, wife of the late Palestinian Authority President Yassir Arafat. As reported Ref B, the GOT had only granted Tunisian nationality, by naturalization, to Mrs. Arafat and her 12 year-old daughter Zahwa in September, 2006. (Note: The GOT did not revoke the citizenship of Mrs. Arafat’s daughter. End Note.) The GOT’s decision to revoke the citizenship of Mrs. Arafat came without warning. In an early July telcon with the Ambassador, Mrs. Arafat gave no indication that anything was amiss. Indeed, she indicated that she would like to meet with the Ambassador when she returned from her vacation in Malta later in the summer. Nor were there any distress signals in Ref A conversation with Mrs. Arafat, which also took place in early summer.
3. (C/NF) In a mid-October telcon with the Ambassador, Ms. Arafat blamed her ouster on the personal animus of First Lady Leila Ben Ali. “I can’t believe what she’s has done to me,” Arafat exclaimed, “I’ve lost everything!” She charged that all of her properties in Tunisia had been confiscated, even by falsifying documents transferring ownership. (Note: It is rumored that Mrs. Arafat had invested -- and lost -- some 2.5 million euros in the Carthage International School. End Note.) In addition, she said, her friends and colleagues in Tunisia, including her banker, had also come under pressure. “Anyone who supports me is punished.”

But Why?: The School Theory, Version I

4. (C/NF) Mrs. Arafat attributed her ouster to her falling out with First Lady Leila Ben Ali over the Carthage International School, a new, private, for-profit school, of which they had been co-owners. According to Mrs. Arafat’s version of events, the dispute stemmed from Leila Ben Ali’s decision to force the closure of the Bouebdelli school (also known as by the name of its parent group, Le Fondation Louis Pasteur), a highly respected private school, from which many of Tunisia’s elite have graduated. (Note: The Bouebdelli school was notified in mid-May that the Minister of Education had ordered it to close, ostensibly for failure to comply with registration regulations. Public outcry ensued, fueled in part by a petition and letter-writing campaign organized by parents of Bouebdelli schoolchildren. Many local and international media reports criticized the decision to close the school as a flagrant attempt to stifle potential competition of the International School of Carthage. The fact that parents of Bouebdelli schoolchildren were encouraged to enroll their children at the Carthage school only served to fuel these charges, as did the August 29 Presidential decree in which President Ben Ali granted 1,794,600 Tunisian Dinars (approximately US $ 1.5 million) to the Carthage School, an estimated 25 percent of its operating budget.)

5. (C/NF) Mrs. Arafat asserted that Leila Ben Ali had overreached in the decision to force the Bouebdelli School to close. She claimed that she had tried to convince the Tunisian First Lady that “what we are doing is unethical,” and that competition ultimately would be healthy for the new school. Their arguments over this issue continued to escalate, according to Mrs. Arafat, culminating in the decision to revoke her citizenship while she was on vacation in Malta. Mrs. Arafat told the Ambassador that she intends to remain in Malta, where her brother serves as Palestinian Ambassador, but that she hopes to spend Christmas in the Palestinian Territories.

But Why?: Version II of the School Theory

6. (C/NF) Other rumors have circulated with a different spin on the school story. According to this theory, it was Mrs. Arafat who overreached, not Leila Ben Ali. Specifically, it is said that Mrs. Arafat convinced the Ministry of Education to force the closure of the Bouebdelli School. She reportedly did so by invoking the name of Mrs. Ben Ali. Critically, though, according to this theory, Leila Ben Ali was not aware that her name was being invoked. Thus, the Tunisian First Lady was incensed when she learned about the school’s closure -- and her alleged role in that decision -- in the highly critical pieces in the local and international media. (Comment: The fact that the Bouebdelli School did not reopen, even after the revocation of Suha Arafat’s citizenship, would seem to cast doubt on the accuracy of this theory. End Comment.)

But Why?: An Array of Other Theories

7. (C/NF) Plenty of other theories have stoked the rumor mill in the Suha Arafat affair. One well-connected Palestinian resident in Tunisia told EmbOff that what sealed Mrs. Arafat’s fate was that on a recent visit to Tripoli, she had asked Libyan Leader Qaddafi for money. Qaddafi had readily provided a hand-out, but he reportedly subsequently called President Ben Ali to chastise him for failing to provide adequately for the widow of the late Palestinian President. Ben Ali’s acute embarrassment, so the story goes, quickly turned to wrath. It was not long before Mrs. Arafat’s citizenship was revoked. Another theory holds that Suha Arafat was ousted because she
had absconded with a significant amount of the first family’s assets. Finally, in the face of persistent rumors that Mrs. Arafat had secretly married Belhassen Trabelsi, brother of the Tunisian First Lady, some commentators chalked up the whole ordeal to the failure of that relationship.

Scathing Commentary on the First Family

8. (C/NF) No doubt as a result of her tribulations, Mrs. Arafat was not shy about sharing with the Ambassador her negative impressions of President Ben Ali, his wife, and her family members, whom, she said, collectively represent a web of corruption. Drawing on her close contact with the first family over the past several years, she made several allegations, among them the following:

-- President Ben Ali remains weakened by his battle with cancer (NFI);

-- President Ben Ali spends all his time playing with his son and following him around the residence;

-- President Ben Ali simply does what his wife asks him to do;

-- Leila Ben Ali and her family are stealing everything of value in the country;

-- Leila Ben Ali believes that she will succeed her husband as President of Tunisia;

-- The members of Ben Ali’s extended family can do whatever they want with impunity, including the falsification of documents;

-- Leila Ben Ali dropped the American curriculum that had been planned for the Carthage school because she fundamentally wants nothing to do with Americans.

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Comment

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9. (C/NF) It is doubtful that we will ever know all of the facts in the Suha Arafat affair, or, for that matter in the Bouebedelli School/Carthage International School matter. Clearly, having been stripped of her Tunisian citizenship and deprived of her properties here, Suha Arafat has an ax to grind with the Ben Ali clan, so her allegations must be taken with a big grain of salt. Although difficult to prove, there is a certain ring of truth to the stories of corruption swirling around the school issue. While it is not clear who was behind the Bouebedelli closure, the ready-made pool of students for whom Bouebedelli was no longer an option was certainly convenient for filling the classrooms in the Carthage School’s opening year. Indeed, during a mid-September visit to the Carthage School, MgmtCouns learned that the school is filled to capacity. Beyond that, no school in recent memory has been constructed so quickly, had municipally provided access roads, street signs, and traffic lights installed so efficiently, or had such ease in getting certified (although it has not yet received the French accreditation the Bouebedelli School had). Nor is it common practice for the GOT to so generously subsidize a for-profit educational institution. Finally, it must be noted that the school affair, while rather blatant, is not an isolated case of favoritism and corruption. We will continue to follow this issue and report septel on other corruption charges. End Comment. GODEC
Tunisian President Praised by U.S. on Counterterrorism

A senior State Department official visits Tunisia in 2008 and a cable praises President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali as a “moderate” who has “promised counter-terrorism cooperation ‘without reservation.’”

DATE 2008-03-03 16:51:00

SOURCE Embassy Tunis

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET TUNIS 000193

SIPDIS

NOFORN SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO (WELCH, GRAY) AND NEA/MAG (HOPKINS, HARRIS) STATE ALSO FOR S/WCI (WILLIAMSON, GOREY) NSC FOR ABRAMS, YERGER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/28/2018 TAGS: PREL, PTER, PHUM, PGOV, KPAL, KDRG, KDEM, TS SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BEN ALI MEETS WITH A/S WELCH: PROGRESS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM COOPERATION, REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Summary

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1. (S/NF) President Ben Ali and NEA Assistant Secretary David Welch discussed regional and bilateral issues in a wide-ranging, warm and open meeting on Thursday, February 28. In response to A/S Welch’s remarks and requests, President Ben Ali:

-- promised counter-terrorism cooperation “without reservation,” including US access to a terrorist in Tunisian custody; -- said the GOT would accept the ten remaining Tunisian detainees in Guantanamo on the basis of the constitution; -- welcomed the Annapolis peace process, adding that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is “optimistic” a deal will be concluded and plans to visit Tunis in March; and, -- said there is “no reason” for an Arab League Summit in Damascus unless there is a Lebanese president and opined that the meeting might be postponed or representation downgraded.

2. (S/NF) Welch and Ben Ali also covered US-Libyan relations, relations between Morocco and Algeria, the situation in Iraq and the challenge of Iran. The constructive session underscored again that Tunisia is prepared to play a moderate, but not a leadership, role on regional problems. Overall, Ben Ali was clearly pleased with Welch’s visit and it received wide media coverage. End Summary.

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Meeting: The Setting

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3. (S/NF) During his February 27 - 29 visit, NEA A/S David Welch met with President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali for one hour 45 minutes at the Presidential Palace in Carthage on Thursday, February 28. Foreign Minister Abdelwaheb Abdallah and Ambassador Godec were also present. The
Director of Tunisia’s External Communications Agency (ATCE), Oussama Romdhani, was the interpreter.

Bilateral Relations: CT Cooperation “Without Reservation”

4. (S/NF) Ben Ali began by emphasizing the excellent, “strategic” relations between the United States and Tunisia. He continued, however, that he understood the United States had concerns about cooperation on counter-terrorism. Ben Ali said he had ordered Minister of Interior Rafik Belhaj Kacem and other senior officials to cooperate with the United States “without reservation” on counter-terrorism.

5. (S/NF) The President stressed that Tunisia cooperated with the United States on terrorism out of conviction, and said broader, deeper international cooperation is essential. Many countries, he said, have suffered as the result of terrorism. He expressed regret, however, over the human rights criticism Tunisia has faced as the result of its efforts to combat terrorism. Some governments have a “double standard,” he said, on the issue. He added “some embassies” in Tunis and human rights groups had taken positions that were “not friendly” over such cases such as the imprisonment of activist Mohammed Abbou and of the “Zarzis group.” (NB. The “Zarzis group” refers to six Tunisians detained in 2003 for allegedly preparing to commit terrorist attacks. The six were pardoned by Ben Ali in 2006 following international pressure.) Ben Ali acknowledged that there had been some problems with human rights in Tunisia, but stressed the GOT is addressing them. For example, he said, “tens” of police officers have been tried for corruption and other abuses. He said he would welcome the US Embassy receiving further information. He stressed that the GOT is committed to freedom and human rights, but no one is above the law.

6. (S/NF) A/S Welch thanked Ben Ali and expressed appreciation for his commitment to cooperation on counter-terrorism. He said he had two specific requests: 1) access for US officials to interview Tunisian terrorist Nourreddine Taam and 2) a commitment to accept the Tunisian detainees in Guantanamo on the basis of earlier assurances on treatment. Ben Ali responded that the United States would have immediate access to Taam. (NB. Additional details reported in GRPO channels.) He continued that the GOT would accept the detainees and do so on the basis of the Tunisian constitution. (NB. The Tunisian constitution offers guarantees on human rights, humane treatment and respect for international commitments.) Ben Ali emphasized again that on counter-terrorism and intelligence Tunisia would “cooperate with the United States without inhibitions” and the cooperation would be “total.”

Libya: Trying to Improve US Relations

7. (S/NF) A/S Welch said the United States is improving relations with Libya, but from time to time has difficulties with leader Muammar Qadhafi. Welch asked that Ben Ali communicate to Qadhafi that the United States wants to continue to improve relations. Ben Ali replied that Qadhafi also wants better relations, but there remain “anti-American radicals” in the government. Qadhafi plans, according to Ben Ali, a cabinet reshuffle that would address the problem and we should see how the situation evolves. Qadhafi, Ben Ali opined, is “not a normal person” and had experienced disappointments over the failure of Arab and African unity. Ben Ali promised to raise the US interest in improving relations with Qadhafi in person or by phone.

Middle East: The Peace Process Needs Support

8. (S) Welch stressed that President Bush’s highest priority this year is progress toward two states, Palestine and Israel, living side-by-side in peace. While Palestinian Authority President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert genuinely want peace, some of the Palestinian and Israeli people and leaders are skeptical. Welch stressed that all countries interested in peace need to make every effort to help move the process forward.

9. (S) Ben Ali agreed on the importance of the Annapolis process, adding he had spoken with Abbas who is “optimistic” an agreement will be reached by the end of the year. Nevertheless, progress
will remain very difficult. Ben Ali stressed Fatah and Hamas must try to reach an understanding. He noted that Abbas will visit Tunisia in March and there is a proposal for a Fatah-Hamas meeting in Tunis. Ben Ali said he will wait to hear Abbas’ views before proceeding on the proposal.

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### Arab League Summit: Not Without A Lebanese President

10. (S) Welch asked Ben Ali about his views of Syria and the proposed Arab League Summit. Ben Ali responded that Syria is a source of concern. He said Syria is acting for Iran and the latter is fueling regional problems. He said he had met (on February 18) with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Mu’allim who handed over an invitation from President Bashar Asad to attend the summit in Damascus. He said he told Mu’allim that Syria should help resolve the problems in Lebanon. Ben Ali emphasized the complexity of the situation in Lebanon, noting the unhelpful involvement of many regional actors. He added that there was some support for inviting Iran to the Damascus Summit. Ben Ali said, however, that he saw no reason for the summit unless there is a Lebanese president in attendance. Welch agreed. Ben Ali continued the summit may be postponed, or representation downgraded from the Chief of State level. He noted other states in the region, including Morocco, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia agreed. In any event, Ben Ali said he would not attend such a summit.

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### Iraq: Bleak Situation

11. (S/NF) Ben Ali said the situation in Iraq is “bleak,” but we must face it. The only party benefiting currently is Iran, and suggested that Turkey’s current actions against the PKK are making matters worse. Welch noted there is some progress on the security situation and the political front in Iraq.

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### Region: “Explosive”

12. (S) Looking more broadly, Ben Ali noted that Tunisia was happy it was part of the Maghreb, and not part of Levant or Gulf. He opined that the situation in Egypt is “explosive,” adding that sooner or later the Muslim Brotherhood would take over. He added that Yemen and Saudi Arabia are also facing real problems. Overall, the region is “explosive.”

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### Maghreb: Resolving the Western Sahara

13. (S) On the Maghreb, Ben Ali suggested extremism is a real and growing problem. Morocco, he said, was at the “beginning of the beginning” of its problem. It had ignored, he added, the issue for too long and former King Hassan II had refused to discuss it. Nevertheless, Morocco was a strategic partner for Tunisia and the GOT was working to strengthen cooperation. On Algeria, Ben Ali said the problem was a “little better” and may be at the beginning of the end. Ben Ali said Tunisia has strong and direct cooperation on counter-terrorism with Algeria. Welch noted that Morocco and Algeria trust Tunisia more than they trust each other. Welch agreed that there is a terrorism problem in Morocco.

14. (S) On the Western Sahara, Ben Ali said the Algerians are responsible for the ongoing impasse. Welch agreed, saying the issue was blocking progress in the region. He said the Algerians need to accept that there is not going to be an independent state in the Western Sahara. Ben Ali said the problem is complex, and will take years to resolve. He added it cannot be settled through the UN Security Council. He noted Tunisia had tried to convene a Maghreb meeting on it in Tunis. While Morocco and Libya had agreed to attend, Algeria refused, saying there was nothing to discuss.

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### Iran: A Threat
15. (S) Welch noted that President Bush considered Iran a threat “yesterday, today and tomorrow.” Noting the recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iran, Welch underscored that while the Iranians “may have put the gun in the closet, they are still trying to make the bullet.” Nevertheless, he added, there are signs economic pressure is working. Ben Ali concurred. Welch said the chances of a third Security Council resolution are good and President Bush wants a diplomatic option.

16. (S/NF) Ben Ali replied this is “quite wise” of President Bush. He stressed he opposed the use of force, and that “a second front is not needed.” Economic pressure on Iran will take longer, but it is working. Ben Ali added that he “does not trust” the Shia.

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Invitation: President Bush Welcome
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17. (S) President Ben Ali closed the meeting stressing his open invitation to President Bush to visit Tunisia before or after his time in office. Welch expressed his appreciation to Ben Ali for the meeting.

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Comment: Warm and Open Ben Ali
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18. (S/NF) Throughout the meeting, President Ben Ali was warm, open, and occasionally animated (at which point he sometimes slipped into Tunisian dialect). His quick and strong assurances on counter-terrorism cooperation were welcome, and may be an important step forward on what has been a troubling issue. Significantly, the President’s promise was followed within hours by action from GOT officials. The key test will be whether cooperation continues and is both broad and deep. Similarly, the President’s commitment on Guantanamo detainees was welcome.

19. (S/NF) On regional issues, Ben Ali showed again that he is a moderate. While the Tunisians will not take the lead on foreign policy challenges, they will help where they can (e.g., support for the Annapolis process). Finally, President Ben Ali was clearly very pleased to see A/S Welch and to exchange views with him. The meeting and visit got broad, major media coverage in Tunisia. End Comment.

20. (SBU) A/S Welch did not have a chance to clear this cable. GODEC

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables From American Diplomats Portray U.S. Ambivalence on Tunisia”
Tunisian President’s Family Takes Over a Bank

In what this 2008 cable calls “the latest in a long string of questionable business deals,” the family of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia muscled its way into the management of the country’s most profitable bank, Banque de Tunisie.

DATE 2008-05-28 12:04:00

SOURCE Embassy Tunis

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

TUNIS 00000568 001.2 OF 003

Summary

1. (S) In the latest in a long string of questionable business deals, the Ben Ali clan has recently entered the banking business, assuming leadership of Tunisia's most profitable private bank -- Banque de Tunisie (BT). In April, Alya Abdallah, wife of Foreign Minister Abdelwahab Abdallah, became President of BT, replacing Faouzi Bel Kahia, the highly respected banker who held the post for 16 years. According to an Embassy banking contact, Bel Kahia was forcibly removed to create an opening for Abdallah. Since taking office, Abdallah has replaced three members of the board -- two of them former ministers -- with insiders such as Belhassen Trabelsi, the President's brother-in-law and oft-cited as the ringleader behind Ben Ali clan corruption (Refs C, D, E, F). Abdallah also canceled a decision taken by shareholders to increase the number of shares. BT shares have fallen nearly 25 percent since the changes. End Summary.

Mrs. Abdallah’s Power Play

2. (S) Alya Abdallah, wife of Foreign Minister Abdelwahab Abdallah, was appointed President of Banque de Tunisie (BT) in April, replacing Faouzi Bel Kahia, the highly respected banker who held the post for 16 years. Abdallah was officially nominated by the board of directors and her position will be ratified by BT shareholders at the next general assembly. BT is Tunisia's most profitable and best managed private bank. While most Tunisian banks remain saddled with non-performing loans, BT’s assets are strong and 2007 net profits are expected to be in the neighborhood of 160 million dinars. Although Abdallah comes to BT from her position as chairman of the board at Union Internationale de Banque (UIB -- majority-owned by Societe Generale), Embassy contacts are quick to point out she is not qualified for either position.
3. (S) Prior to UIB, Abdallah's only banking experience was as the head of human resources at state-owned Societe Tunisienne de Banque (STB). As one contact, a former bank chairman himself, complained, "she has never been a banker and has no financial experience." Abdallah's tenure at UIB is reported to have been rocky, with stories of shouting matches between Abdallah and the French General Manager. According to the former bank chairman, Abdallah asked Central Bank Governor Taoufik Baccar to get rid of the GM. The GM was asked to leave the country, which he did. Abdallah then asked Baccar for a new position, with her sights on Banque de Tunisie's presidency.

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Out With the Old...
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4. (S) Although BT and former president Bel Kahia enjoy excellent reputations in the Tunisian banking community, several factors made BT ripe for takeover. BT is fully private, but held by numerous small shareholders, with the largest stakeholder -- French Industrial and Commercial Credit (CIC) -- holding only 20 percent of the bank. Faouzi Bel Kahia is reportedly suffering from multiple sclerosis. Although Bel Kahia’s illness provided this opening, rumors indicate and an Embassy contact in the industry confirmed that Bel Kahia was pushed out. Bel Kahia had wanted to stay through the bank’s General Assembly, during which BT's stellar 2007 profits will be reported. According to this contact, Bel Kahia was visited twice by Baccar: during the first visit Bel Kahia pleaded to stay, but during the second visit Baccar told him he was out, to which Bel Kahia is reported to have responded with tears. The contact noted that the level of the governor’s intervention in this situation was unprecedented. Bel Kahia was rumored to have chosen a successor, who had already been approved by the board. While not currently involved in politics, Bel Kahia is a friend of the regime, serving previously as Minister of Transport and Director General of state-owned Tunisair. Since assuming her new position, Abdallah has removed three members of the board -- Abderrazak Rasaa, former Deputy Minister of Finance, Ilyes Jouini, Professor at Dauphine University in Paris, and Tijani Chelli, a former Minister of Public Works, Minister of Telecommunications and Minister of Economy.

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In With the New
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5. (S) Although the departure of three notable board members is a surprise, it was one replacement in particular that drew the attention, and ire, of the Tunisian business community. Abdallah named Belhassen Trabelsi, the President’s brother-in-law and widely believed to be the key player in Ben Ali clan corruption, to the bank’s board of directors and also to the credit committee. Trabelsi has reportedly been involved in a wide range of corruption schemes -- with stories ranging from him setting up shop in a gas station across from the airport to facilitate customs shipments in return for large bribes and to expropriating property at will from hapless homeowners. In February, Trabelsi began buying huge numbers of BT shares (20,000 a day), drawing attention to his interest in the bank. His current stake in BT is unknown. In addition to Trabelsi, Lotfi Hamrouni, chairman of the Hamrouni Group, and Ali Bakir, SFBT (Tunis Refrigeration and Brewing Company) -- Tunisia’s Coca-Cola bottler, were named to the board.

6. (S) In addition to changing the composition of the board, Abdallah cancelled a communique issued by the shareholders prior to her arrival. The shareholders signed a Pacte d’Actionnaires to double their shares and increase bank capital. The former banker characterized the pacte as an effort by shareholders to protect their influence within the bank. BT shares have fallen 25 percent since Abdallah cancelled the communique. The former bank chairman noted that control of BT is a significant boon to the family, giving them a financial tool at their disposal with which they can acquire and finance new ventures. As such, bank performance is a secondary concern.

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Comment
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7. (S) Tunisia’s financial sector is already plagued by high-levels of non-performing loans, many
of which are a result of corrupt banking practices. Belhassen Trabelsi’s position on any bank board, or credit committee, would be significant cause for concern. In the case of BT, his participation jeopardizes the integrity of Tunisia’s premiere banking institution. Moreover, the Central Bank Governor’s involvement in this scenario casts doubt on his ability or willingness to serve as an independent actor. Serious efforts at banking sector reform were just dealt a heavy blow.

8. (S) Tunisians are unable to complain publicly, but do so loudly in private about crony capitalism and ill-gotten gains. Rumors of familial corruption have become widespread in Tunisia, with Banque de Tunisie just one of many examples. Despite their frustration, many Tunisians are quick to absolve Ben Ali of any direct responsibility and lay the blame squarely on the Trabelsis. Yet, claims that he is unaware of the situation strain credibility. GOT insiders and the President’s extended family are reaping the benefits from Ben Ali’s continued reign, but in doing so have undermined the effectiveness and credibility of the government. Even if the money is not flowing into Ben Ali’s bank account, he bears responsibility for what happens on his watch. The economic impact is clear, with Tunisian investors -- fearing the long-arm of the family -- forgoing new investments, keeping domestic investment rates low and unemployment high (Refs A, B). Faced with high unemployment and high prices, Tunisians are simultaneously confronted with obvious corruption and conspicuous displays of wealth. The frustration is palpable, but it appears there is no end in sight. End Comment.

Please visit Embassy Tunis’ Classified Website at: http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/tunis/index.cfm GODEC

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables From American Diplomats Portray U.S. Ambivalence on Tunisia”
Mostly Rosy U.S. View of Tunisia in 2008

An August 2008 cable briefing Condoleezza Rice, then the secretary of state, for a visit to Tunisia offers a positive spin, noting the “strong U.S.-Tunisian relations” and suggesting that Ms. Rice “welcome Tunisia’s moderation and its economic and social progress.” But the cable also reports “barely perceptible” progress toward political reform.

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Summary

1. (C) Madame Secretary, my team and I look forward to your visit to Tunis. President Ben Ali and Foreign Minister Abdallah are delighted you are coming and will provide a warm welcome. They will want to hear your thoughts on regional issues and to reaffirm strong US-Tunisian relations. For us, your visit is an opportunity to welcome Tunisia’s moderation and its economic and social progress. We recommend you stress the value of our excellent, long-standing ties, but add that more is possible. If the Tunisians make progress on US concerns, we would be ready to respond in ways that address Tunisian interests.

2. (C) Specifically, your visit will allow you to: -- welcome Tunisia’s moderate positions on key regional priorities while seeking greater GOT engagement; -- commend recent progress on counterterrorism cooperation, but urge further steps; -- ask Ben Ali for assurances on humane treatment for past and future detainees transferred from Guantanamo; -- underscore the need for more political reform against the backdrop of Tunisia’s 2009 presidential and legislative elections; and, -- offer the GOT an additional $4.1 million in military assistance that will help in the fight against terrorism. End Summary.

Background

3. (C) Tunisia styles itself “a country that works”. Ben Ali and other Tunisian leaders often contrast their successes with the problems elsewhere in the region. There is much in what they say. While Tunisians grumble privately about corruption by the First Lady’s family, there is an abiding appreciation for Ben Ali’s success in steering his country clear of the instability and violence that have plagued Tunisia’s neighbors. Recent events have underscored this accomplishment and the continuing threat: Tunisian security forces took down a terror cell in December 2006-January 2007; we were reportedly among the group’s targets. In late February, al-Qaeda in the lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) kidnapped two Austrian tourists who were in the desert along the Tunisian-Algerian border.
4. (C) Tunisians also widely recognize, and welcome, the country’s social successes. Tunisia is a model for the region on women’s rights; its 1956 Personal Status Code abolished polygamy and required consent for marriage, among other protections. Women today play an important role in the public and private sectors.

5. (C) There is also real economic progress. GDP growth has averaged five percent over the past decade, and the Tunisian people enjoy a relatively high standard of living. About 80 percent of Tunisians are considered middle class, and live in family-owned homes. Notwithstanding the progress, unemployment remains very high, officially estimated at 14 percent. But it is generally acknowledged to be higher in certain regions and much higher in the 25-30 age bracket, particularly among university graduates. The average Tunisian’s purchasing power is under pressure due to world commodity price increases. These strains have manifested themselves most acutely through protests and arrests in the southern mining basin of Gafsa province. The GOT responded with a very heavy show of force.

6. (C) In the political arena, however, progress is barely perceptible. Ben Ali announced recently that he would be running for a fifth term in Tunisia’s next elections, most likely in October, 2009. There is no chance the elections will be free or fair; freedom of expression and freedom of association are severely constrained, and independent opposition parties are not allowed to operate effectively. Indeed, one authentic opposition candidate is no longer eligible to run, due to a recent constitutional amendment. When asked about political freedom, Ben Ali will insist the GOT is making progress, but that it takes time. He may point to such steps as the lifting of the prior review of books and newspapers. While welcome, the GOT has often found ways to limit the impact of such advances.

7. (C) President Ben Ali will welcome your visit and meeting. He will wish to spend much time on regional issues, including developments in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, Iraq, Lebanon, Iran and Mauritania. He may also emphasize, as he has done in other recent discussions, that US-Tunisian political ties are strong, but that we should do more to deepen our economic links. If Ben Ali is “on his game,” he will be affable, open and engaged. Ben Ali will have just turned 72, however. He reportedly has health problems and they may affect the quality and tenor of the meeting.

8. (C) Foreign Minister Abdelwaheb Abdallah is delighted that you are coming. He speaks fondly of his previous interactions with you, including during his June, 2007 visit to Washington and at the Annapolis Conference. Abdallah can be charming in meetings, but he rarely departs from standard GOT talking points. He has been known to open his meetings with lengthy soliloquies about Tunisia’s political, social, and economic successes and moderate positions on regional issues. This is the spin that Abdallah himself crafted during his years as Presidential Advisor responsible for domestic media control and international media spin. During his three-year tenure as Foreign Minister, Abdallah has maintained significant influence -- if not control -- over the local media.

9. (C) Tunisia is like-minded on Iran, recognizes the importance of restoring stability in Iraq before the Coalition departs, and backs the Annapolis negotiations on the Israeli-Palestinian situation. The GOT has maintained its Embassy in Iraq with a Charge d’Affaires, and has provided some training to GOI officials. However, the GOT assiduously avoids getting out in front of the Arab League consensus on most foreign policy issues. Moreover, when other interests are at stake, the GOT is prone to waffle. Ben Ali surprised us by attending the Arab League summit in Damascus this spring, after telling A/S Welch that he would not go.

10. (C) It is not clear that the GOT has a guiding principle for its foreign policy other than to
“get along with everyone.” The GOT has declined to condemn publicly the coup d'état in
Mauritania, although it has signaled its private objection. Likewise, it has been silent on
Russia’s recent military actions in Georgia. To the extent that GOT leaders speak in generalities
about their moderate foreign policy stance, we remind them that Tunisia’s moderation does not
help us, unless its views are made public and its influence is used actively in international
fora.

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Guantanamo Detainees
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11. (S) Based on humane treatment and security assurances provided by the GOT, the United States
transferred two Guantanamo detainees in June, 2007. Following the transfer, credible allegations
surfaced that one of the detainees was mistreated while in Ministry of Interior custody (slapped
and threatened with rape as well as the rape of his wife and daughter). In February, A/S Welch
raised the return of detainees with Ben Ali. Ben Ali provided the somewhat vague response that
they would be accepted in accordance with the Tunisian Constitution. Your visit represents an
opportunity to confirm that past and future transferees will be treated in accordance with
Tunisia’s constitutional guarantees on human rights and humane treatment, as well as its
international commitments, notably the Convention Against Torture.

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Counterterrorism/Security Cooperation
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12. (C) Tunisian officials are rightfully concerned about the terrorism threat posed by violent
extremists. As Tunisians often tell us, they “live in a bad neighborhood”. Indeed, the core
members of the terror cell the GOT took down in January, 2007 had infiltrated from Algeria. But
the cell then recruited from the local population, mushrooming from four to 40 people in just six
weeks. The GOT’s success in taking down the group was welcome, but there is clearly some support
for extremist ideologies among Tunisians. We would like to help the GOT deal with this, but it
would require the

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GOT to admit there is a domestic problem, and to share knowledge about its extent. That is not
happening: the GOT maintains that the threat of terrorism in Tunisia is due to external factors,
whether border infiltrations or incitement broadcast on pan-Arab satellite TV.

13. (S/NF) Tunisian cooperation in the intelligence arena has been uneven. On the positive side,
we have some successful programs being run through GRPO. We also have good intelligence sharing
on Tunisians who are outside the country. On the negative side, however, intelligence sharing on
the threat inside Tunisia is thin, although it has improved somewhat in recent months. The
improvements are probably in response to a commitment made by President Ben Ali to A/S Welch in
February to cooperate on counterterrorism “without reservation.”

14. (C) The GOT places a high value on its historic and robust military-military relationship
with us. In FY 2008, Tunisia is receiving approximately $8 million in Foreign Military Financing
(FMF), nearly all of which is used for maintenance of its aging of US-origin equipment, which
needs major upgrades. In addition to FMF, the Mission received almost $10 million in Section 1206
funding in FY 2008. We are using the funding to provide the Tunisian military with night-vision
goggles and ground surveillance radar. We also have a robust program of military exercises and
training with the Tunisians.

15. (C) You will be able to inform the GOT that we can provide $4.1 million in Peacekeeping
Operations (PKO) funds (originally intended for Mauritania) to meet GOT requests for unmanned
aerial vehicles, night vision equipment for Tunisia’s UH-1H helicopters, and associated training.
The Administration has proposed approximately $2 million in FMF in FY 2009 for Tunisia. GOT
leaders view FMF as a barometer of the US commitment to Tunisia, and thus have complained about
cuts in FMF levels in recent years. We have told them that we continue to seek ways to help their
military combat the threat of regional terrorism. We have traded texts on a Status of Forces
Agreement (SOFA), but the GOT has not replied to our latest draft delivered over a year ago. In a
meeting with Minister of Defense Morjane in May, Secretary Gates noted the United States would
like to complete a SOFA with Tunisia.
Economic Ties

16. (C) Ben Ali and other Tunisian officials frequently call for greater US economic engagement, by which they mean more investment. Today, some 70 US companies are operating in Tunisia, with close to $1 billion in investment since 1994. Trade between the two countries remains small, with agricultural commodities the largest US export to Tunisia. In March, we held a meeting of our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) council and discussed intellectual property, services, market access, and investment. One key to improving US trade and investment is a further opening up of Tunisia’s economy. Notably, Tunisia still does not permit most types of franchising, although they are working on a new services law.

Bilateral Engagement

17. (C) While we enjoy a long-standing and generally positive bilateral relationship with Tunisia, difficulties remain. The GOT is slow to engage, often unresponsive, and periodically takes counterproductive steps. Most recently, the GOT rejected all nine American Fulbright Scholars planning study here this coming year. Strong reclamas resulted in the GOT accepting four scholars, but the process was tough. Underlying some GOT actions is a distrust of our motives, and specifically the Freedom Agenda. GOT leaders bristle at public criticism. For example, Abdallah convoked me to express his “disgust” that Tunisia was condemned for its treatment of journalists in President Bush’s May 1 statement on World Press Freedom. But the difficulties are also the result of the controls imposed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These controls limit the Embassy’s ability to engage with other agencies, and with universities, business organizations and even the country’s labor union. While these restrictions affect all Embassies, not just ours, the effect is to limit the quality and depth of our relations.

18. (C) In our contacts with Tunisian officials, they emphasize our strong ties of over 200 years. But they rarely move from the general to the specific. Your visit is an opportunity to make clear that more is possible. If Tunisia is prepared to open up and do more on issues of concern to the United States, e.g., regional challenges and/or political liberalization, we are prepared to look for ways to deepen our relationship.

Please visit Embassy Tunis’ Classified Website at: http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/tunis/index.cfm GODEC

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables From American Diplomats Portray U.S. Ambivalence on Tunisia”
An Inside Account of Tunisian Corruption

A 2009 cable, heavily redacted to protect American diplomats’ sources, gives an inside account of corruption at the top, including a reported attempt by President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali to obtain 50 percent of a private university.

DATE 2009-06-16 18:45:00

SOURCE Embassy Tunis

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TUNIS 000372

NOFORN SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/MAG (NARDI AND HAYES)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/16/2019 TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, KCOR, SOCI, PREL, TS SUBJECT: TUNISIAN CRITICIZES REGIME IN FORTHCOMING BOOK; SHARES ANECDOTE OF BEN ALI CORRUPTION

REF: 07 TUNIS 1489

TUNIS 00000372 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Book: Xxxxxxxxxxxxx

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1. (C) Xxxxxxxxxxxxx approached Ambassador and Pol/EconCouns Xxxxxxxxxxxxx to share with us Xxxxxxxxxxxxx the Ambassador gave him assurances that we would. Xxxxxxxxxxxxx shared a rare first-hand account of corruption from several years ago in which Ben Ali himself was described as asking for a 50 percent stake in Xxxxxxxxxxxxx private university. Xxxxxxxxxxxxx End Summary.

2. (C) On the margins of a networking event for aspiring and successful social entrepreneurs Xxxxxxxxxxxxx The book is extremely critical of the Ben Ali regime for, among other things, the “duality” between official discourse and the reality on the ground. Specifically, Xxxxxxxxxxxxx points to the “stifling” of political liberties and “omnipotent” controls on the media. He also charges that freedom of association is “illusory” and assesses that “the rule of law is more fiction than reality.” Xxxxxxxxxxxxx

3. (C) Xxxxxxxxxxxxx asked that the US Embassy follow his case Xxxxxxxxxxxxx; the Ambassador assured him that we would do so. Pol/EconCouns reviewed Xxxxxxxxxxxxx some of the accounts of life in prison that we have heard from released political prisoners; Xxxxxxxxxxxxx
Tale of Corruption I: The French Connection?

4. (C/NF) Asked whether he had also been in touch with other western embassies, XXXXXXXXXX said that he had not. He had avoided reaching out to the French, in particular, arguing that Ambassador Degallaix is seen as Ben Ali’s Ambassador to French President Sarkozy, not vice versa. In addition, XXXXXXXXXX alleged that the GOT has improperly given Ambassador Degallaix a villa, which is registered in his daughter’s name, on rue Sidi Dhrif, near the President’s own residence. He did not offer any evidence of this alleged corruption or explain how this knowledge came to him.

TUNIS 00000372 002 OF 003

Tale of Corruption II: Ben Ali Seeks 50 Percent Stake XXXXXXXXXX

5. (C) XXXXXXXXXX likened corruption to a dangerous cancer that is spreading in Tunisia, spurred on by the corrupt practices of President Ben Ali and his extended family. When Pol/EconCouns responded by noting that most tales of corruption that we hear concern “The Family” rather than the President himself, XXXXXXXXXX recounted an incident in which Ben Ali himself was involved. XXXXXXXXXX Ben Ali came off as “very uneducated” in the meeting, failing to grasp some of the key points XXXXXXXXXX about the virtues XXXXXXXXXX Ben Ali abruptly told him that he wanted a 50-50 stake in the enterprise. Fearful of responding in the negative, XXXXXXXXXX said he “played dumb,” pretending not to understand the President’s proposition.

Other Run-ins with “The Family”

6. (C) XXXXXXXXXX also reviewed the difficulties that lead to the closure XXXXXXXXXX

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XXXXXXXXXXX

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TUNIS 00000372 003 OF 003

How Suha Arafat Got Into Trouble

7. (C) XXXXXXXXXX also offered a theory as to what was behind the GOT’s decision to revoke Suha Arafat’s Tunisian citizenship in 2007. (Note: RefTel also reports on this incident.) He said that he had heard that Leila Ben Ali at that time had been scheming to marry off an 18 year-old niece (NFI) to UAE Prime Minister and Dubai Ruler Sheik Mohamed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, one of whose wives is the half-sister of the King of Jordan. According to this rumor, Suha Arafat warned Jordanian Queen Rania about Leila Ben Ali’s plans. Word of Arafat’s intervention got back to the Tunisian First Lady, who turned against Arafat and soon forced her out of Tunisia.

XXXXXXXXXXX
9. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX is extremely well respected and considered an upstanding member of the community. While we might doubt the veracity of some of the rumors that he shared with us, we have no reason to doubt his account of his conversation with President Ben Ali, in which he described the President as seeking a 50 percent stake in his private university. We routinely hear allegations of corruption, and such allegations are inherently difficult to prove. XXXXXXXXXXXX anecdote strikes us as credible. It is also significant in that it implicates Ben Ali himself, while so many other reported incidents of corruption involve his extended family.

10. XXXXXXXXXXXX

Please visit Embassy Tunis’ Classified Website at: http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/tunis/index.cfm Godec

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables From American Diplomats Portray U.S. Ambivalence on Tunisia”
Reports of Syrian Missiles for Hezbollah

Concerned about intelligence reports that Syria is shipping ballistic missiles to Hezbollah, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton instructs diplomats to raise the issue in Arab capitals. American information about the arms deliveries followed a Feb. 17 assurance by President Bashar al-Assad that no “new” weapons were being sent.

DATE 2010-02-26 00:36:00

SOURCE Secretary of State

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET STATE 017894

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2020 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PTER, MASS, IS, LE, SY SUBJECT: DEMARCHE: CONTINUED CONCERN OVER SYRIAN SUPPORT TO HIZBALLAH

REF: A) 2009 STATE 129636

Classification By: NEA A/S Jeffrey D. Feltman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph four.

Summary

2. (S) We previously demarched Britain, France, and Turkey on our increasing concerns over Syria’s continued provision of advanced weapons to Hizballah (Ref A). In London, Paris and Ankara, the demarches were taken seriously and all governments pledged to raise their concern with Syrian officials. French diplomats noted that they routinely deliver the same message to the Syrians, but that Damascus denies involvement. This issue now needs to be reinforced with these governments and brought to the attention of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Qatar. Under Secretary Burns visited Damascus on February 17 and stressed U.S. concerns about weapons transfers to Hizballah directly with Syrian President Bashar Asad, who bluntly stated that he knew of no new weapons systems going to Hizballah. In light of disturbing and weighty evidence to the contrary -- that Syria currently provides Hizballah with advanced ballistic missiles and other weaponry -- we want France, Britain, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Qatar to make a renewed push to echo our concerns with Syria, given that Syria continues to ignore warnings that its transfers of advanced surface-to-surface and surface-to-air weapons to Hizballah could jeopardize prospects for an agreement with Israel or spark a conflict significantly more destructive than the 2006 Israel-Hizballah war. Syria’s actions clearly jeopardize regional stability and could risk drawing Damascus into any future war between Israel and Hizballah.

3. (S) The Syrian leadership views military support to Hizballah as integral to Syria’s security and as a bargaining chip in its negotiations with Israel over the return of the Golan Heights, as well as a possible stick to bring the Israelis back to the table. While our commitment to principled engagement with Syria -- as demonstrated by Under Secretary Burns’ recent visit -- remains strong, we must enlist additional French, British, Turkish, Saudi, Jordanian, and Qatari support to help dissuade Syria from expanding its ties to Hizballah any further, especially via the transfer of additional sophisticated weaponry.

Objectives

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4. (S/REL FRANCE, BRITAIN, TURKEY, SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN, AND QATAR) Drawing on paragraphs 2 and 3 for context, we request that Embassies in Paris, London, Ankara, Riyadh, Amman, and Doha pursue the following objectives with senior French, British, Turkish, Saudi, Jordanian, and Qatari officials at the highest appropriate levels.

-- Highlight that Under Secretary Burns visited Damascus on February 17 as part of our ongoing engagement with Syria. Reiterate our commitment to sustained, principled engagement with Syria. We plan to continue our dialogue with Syria and look forward to the arrival of our new ambassador in Damascus once the confirmation process is complete.

-- Stress that in addition to discussing bilateral issues of mutual interest, Under Secretary Burns conveyed to President Asad a number of our priority concerns with Syria, specifically cross-border weapons smuggling into Lebanon destined for Hizballah.

-- Note that in response, Asad claimed that Syria could not be Israel’s policeman and that he knew of no new weapons systems being smuggled from Syria to Hizballah.

-- Underscore that, contrary to President Asad’s statements, we are aware of current Syrian efforts to supply ballistic missiles to Hizballah.

-- We also note President Asad’s recent comments -- during a February 25 joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart -- that support for Hizballah was a “moral and legal duty.”

-- Express deep concern that Syria’s expanding military ties to Hizballah, including the supply of ballistic missiles to Hizballah, jeopardize regional prospects for peace and stability. Specifically, Syrian transfers of increasingly sophisticated weaponry risk renewed conflict between Israel and Hizballah that may expand, unlike in 2006, into Syria.

-- Convey that arms shipments to Hizballah -- especially ballistic missiles -- increasingly undermine Israel’s confidence in Syria’s willingness and ability to deliver peace and diminish the value of an eventual Syrian-Israeli accord, as Hizballah will not return the weapons it has already received.

-- Underscore that the next report on Security Council resolution 1701 will be discussed on March 12. Full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701, including the arms embargo and weapons-free zone, remains a priority for the United States. In light of the upcoming report, it is especially important to stress that Syria’s actions constitute serious violations of Security Council resolution 1701 -- which will be taken seriously by the international community -- and belie its claims to respect Lebanon’s sovereignty.

-- Express our appreciation for your host government’s support on the critical issue of Syrian weapons transfers to Hizballah and note that we hope to continue our cooperation to prevent serious miscalculations by the Syrian government.

-- Share the following S/REL FRANCE, BRITAIN, TURKEY, SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN, QATAR text verbatim:

(Begin releasable text.)

We would like to convey to you that we have information indicating that Syria is providing increasingly sophisticated weapons to Hizballah, including from its own military stocks.

For example, we assess that Syria has provided or will provided guided short range ballistic missiles to Hizballah that could target two-thirds of Israel, including Tel Aviv, from launch sites north of the Litani.

Our information also indicates that Syria has made advanced surface to air missile systems available to Hizballah and has probably provided training on these systems to Hizballah personnel.
-- Urge France, Britain, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Qatar to raise these concerns once again in their dialogue with senior Syrian officials. We do not want to undermine our collective outreach to Syria. However, we are increasingly concerned that the Syrian government is making a strategic miscalculation by incorrectly assuming that increasing Hizballah’s military capability concomitantly bolsters Syria’s security and strength at the negotiating table with Israel, when the opposite is more likely to be true.

-- Syria’s desire for a deterrent against Israeli military action -- presumably a motivation for the transfer of ballistic missiles to Hizballah -- is not producing a stable deterrent because there are no mechanisms to prevent unanticipated escalation. Not having control over Hizballah’s missiles increases the risk of this danger.

-- Emphasize that Syria’s actions risk derailing our common efforts to bring peace to the region.

-- Note that we are raising our concerns with Syrian officials in Damascus and with the Syrian Ambassador here in Washington.

-- Also note our continuing strong commitment and support to the full implementation of resolutions 1747 and 1701, encouraging France, Britain, and Turkey to stress their continuing support for the full implementation of resolution 1701 -- in its entirety (including the arms embargo and weapons free zone) -- with senior Syrian officials.

-- These are U.S. concerns. We are not carrying somebody else’s “water” on this issue.

-- (For Turkey) Express that we greatly appreciate Turkey’s continued efforts to combat weapons smuggling. As conveyed by Under Secretary Burns when he was in Ankara on February 18, we urge Turkey to use its close ties with Damascus to underscore the repercussions that Syria’s continued provision of weapons to Hizballah has for regional stability and the broader goal of Middle East peace. We hope that Turkey will leverage its influence with Syria on this crucial issue.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“U.S. Strains to Stop Arms Flow”
Clinton Protests to Syria Over Missiles

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton orders that a formal protest be made to the Syrian government for its decision to send ballistic missiles to Hezbollah.

DATE 2010-02-25 00:03:00

SOURCE Secretary of State

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T S T A T E 017307

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/24/2020 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PTER, MASS, IS, LE, SY SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON TRANSFER OF BALLISTIC MISSILES TO HIZBALLAH

REF: TEL AVIV 484

Classified By: NEA A/S Jeffrey Feltman for reasons 1.4(b,d)

1. (U) This is an action request: see paragraph 3.

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Summary
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2. (S/NF) Per reftel and other information, the Government of Israel (GOI) is concerned that Syria intends to imminently transfer SCUD-D missiles to Hizballah in Lebanon. We share this concern. The transfer of such weapons would constitute a significant escalation of a potentially volatile situation that could threaten regional stability. Embassy is requested to demarche SARG officials at the highest possible level to communicate the points below and report responses via front channel cable. NEA will deliver the same points to the Syrian Ambassador upon his return to Washington. End summary.

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Action Request
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3. (S/REL SYRIA) Post is requested to use the following points in demarching the SARG on the imminent missile transfers to Hizballah. Begin points:

-- Mr. Vice Minister, Washington has asked me to follow up on an issue that Under Secretary Burns raised privately with President Asad last week. We are growing increasingly concerned about the risk of a regional military conflict -- one that could have dire consequences for Syria. We believe it is in our mutual interests that we share our concerns with you again.

-- Just weeks ago, we saw how the war of words between yourself, Foreign Minister Muallim and the Israelis could have quickly escalated out of control. President Asad assured U/S Burns that Syria had no interest in escalating the potential for conflict with Israel. With that assurance, we want to discuss with you frankly two increasingly worrisome issues that we believe could spark the next conflict.

-- First, we are concerned about Syria’s provision of increasingly sophisticated weapons to Hizballah. In our meetings last week it was stated that Syria is not transferring any “new”
missiles to Lebanese Hizballah. We are aware, however, of current Syrian efforts to supply Hizballah with ballistic missiles. I must stress that this activity is of deep concern to my government, and we strongly caution you against such a serious escalation.

-- Next, we are concerned that Hizballah is still planning an operation to avenge the death of Imad Mughniyeh. While Hizballah may be willing to risk a renewal of the 2006 conflict, it does not seem to be in Syria’s interest to accept that risk.

-- While Syria’s influence over Hizballah’s operational decision-making may be limited, the political reality is such that a major escalation would surely complicate our efforts to improve our bilateral relationship, and undermine our efforts to build political conditions conducive for re-launching Middle East peace negotiations. We therefore urge you to use whatever influence you have to avoid such a scenario.

-- Your interest in avoiding war should require you to exert maximum restraint, including restraining Hizballah and preventing the group’s acquisition of such lethal, long-range weapons.

-- Iran and Hizballah both have interests that are not in Syria’s own strategic interest. I know you are a strategic thinker, which is why I want to underscore for you that, from our perspective, your operational support for Hizballah is a strategic miscalculation that is damaging your long-term national interests.

End points. CLINTON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“U.S. Strains to Stop Arms Flow”
**Syria Denies Supplying Missiles to Hezbollah**

Syria denies the allegation that it is sending missiles to Hezbollah in a meeting with an American Embassy official, according to an embassy cable.

**DATE** 2010-02-25 13:43:00

**SOURCE** Embassy Damascus

**CLASSIFICATION** SECRET

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1. **Summary:** Responding to Ref A demarche, Syrian Vice Foreign Minister (V/FM) Miqdad expressed surprise the U.S. was sharing such a strong message in the wake of Under Secretary (U/S) William Burns’ positive February 17 visit. He argued Israel represented the major threat to stability in the region and that the U.S. should be directing its message toward Israeli officials. Syria, he claimed, wanted peace and was working with Turkey and the U.S. toward that end. Flatly denying any Syrian role in the supply of weapons to Hizballah, Miqdad contended Damascus supported Lebanese independence while Israel violated Lebanese sovereignty on a daily basis. Miqdad argued Syria wanted to preserve the positive results of U/S Burns’ recent visit and promised to convey the message. He also pledged to review our request for assisting the Center for Victims of Torture and agreed to follow up Charge’s request for official written notification of the government’s decision to allow the Damascus Community School (DCS) to reopen. End Summary

2. **Miqdad: Direct Your Message to Israel**

3. Referring to Hizballah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah’s February 16 speech, Miqdad emphasized that Hizballah was responding to Israeli threats and clearly conveyed Hizballah’s intent to respond only if Israel attacked first. Syria believed in and supported the role of UNIFIL, and was using its contacts with the Lebanese Government to “insist” on Lebanon’s full cooperation with UNIFIL. Miqdad insisted Israel, not Syria or Lebanon, was issuing provocative
threats and using Hizballah as a pretext. The Syrian government had been pleased to hear Lebanese PM Hariri’s remarks expressing concerns about Israeli provocation, including the violation of Lebanese airspace and assassinations. The U.S. message, summed up Miqdad, “should be directed to Israel not to escalate.”

Denial of Supply of Weapons to Hizballah

4. (S) Charge replied that the U.S. message had come in the context of improving bilateral relations, which depended on a frank and candid exchange of assessments of regional developments. The U.S. was issuing neither threats nor ultimatums, but rather it sought to convey what it believed to be a shared interest in avoiding conflict. Miqdad commented that it was “strange” the U.S. had chosen to deliver “harsh words while we’re trying to build better relations.” He promised to convey the message to his superiors but reiterated Syria’s desire to avoid escalation. “You may hear about weapons going to Hizballah,” he claimed, “but they are absolutely not coming through Syria.” The real threat to stability was coming from Israeli officials who had threatened recently to attack Damascus and to change the Syrian regime. “Please convey to Washington, while we take note of your demarche, this message should be directed at Israel,” he said.

5. (S) Charge replied that, as U/S Burns had conveyed to President Asad, the U.S. was urging all parties in the region, including Israel, to exercise restraint and support Lebanese independence. “This is our commitment,” Miqdad responded, “we shall not interfere (in Lebanon).” The Lebanese should be allowed to decide for themselves on how to resolve their own issues; those who would interfere want to disturb the peace after Lebanon successfully conducted national elections and formed a consensus government. “We’re confident the Lebanese can deal with their own situation,” he said. Charge rejoined that the military capabilities of a non-state actor like Hizballah represented a major concern because Hizballah responded only to its own leadership and not to government authorities.

6. (S) Miqdad said this issue should be discussed in the overall framework of the situation. He then contended the provision of U.S. weapons to the region represented a destabilizing factor. “The most sophisticated weapons are coming to Israel, to be used against whom?” he asked. When the U.S. pressed Israel to stop threatening its neighbors, the situation would stabilize. “We want peace. It’s the only solution. We are the ones who are threatened,” he declared. Charge replied the whole region was threatened. Miqdad said the U.S. and Syria needed to worked toward peace. “You should address your message to the people who don’t want peace,” he added, noting the results of U/S Burns’ visit should be preserved and continued to improve relations. Syria had responded positively to U/S Burns’ message because it felt more confident of Washington’s desire to move forward.

CVT and DCS Follow-Up

7. (C) Charge affirmed the U.S. shared this intent and wanted to maximize the opportunity by staying in close contact. In that context, he raised PRM’s pending request to Miqdad to assist the Center for the Victims of Torture to receive approval to begin a proposed project in Syria; Miqdad agreed to look at the matter and requested Embassy follow-up. Likewise, on the issue of visas for the next group of DHS circuit riders, Miqdad asked that the circuit riders not apply for visas until he had had a chance to intervene. (Note: Embassy will provide Miqdad with a list of the circuit riders.)

8. (C) Charge also asked Miqdad for advice on how to proceed regarding Damascus Community School (DCS). FM Muallim had instructed the Embassy to “start hiring teachers,” but the MFA had not yet provided any written notification of President Asad’s decision to allow the school to re-open. There also remained the issue of whether Syrian students would be allowed to enroll. Miqdad agreed that this matter required a response and advised the Charge to follow up with him in the coming week. (Note: Miqdad reported he would be traveling to Libya for two days to discuss bilateral relations.)
9. (S) In the midst of hosting a quick-notice visit by Iranian President Ahmedinejad (who openly criticized the Secretary’s Congressional testimony expressing concern about Syria and Hizballah), the SARG might interpret our demarche as an attempt to divert the spotlight from the show of mutual support between Tehran and Damascus. Miqdad’s surprise that we would raise this issue so forcefully on the heels of U/S Burns’ visit may have been genuine, but the abject denial of any Syrian role in supplying arms to Hizballah and the verbal counter-attack against Israeli provocation were standard (if disingenuous) responses. Yet even a seasoned diplomat like Miqdad could not restrain a raised eyebrow at our mention of the transfer of ballistic missiles to Hizballah. We expect the specificity of this concern could well prompt further discussions among Syrian officials, Hizballah, and the visiting Iranian delegation.

10. (S) Miqdad notably did not respond to our concern about a possible Hizballah revenge operation for the assassination of Imad Mughniyeh. While Miqdad and Syrian officials might take some comfort in UNIFIL’s role in preventing the spillover of recent tensions in south Lebanon, a Hizballah operation against Israeli targets could easily result in a situation in which UNIFIL found itself unable to contain rising escalation. One point we might stress in the future: Syria’s desire for a deterrent against Israeli military action -- presumably a motivation for the transfer of ballistic missiles to Hizballah -- will not increase stability because there are no mechanisms or rules of the road to prevent and/or manage unanticipated escalation. Not having control over Hizballah’s missiles or influence over Hizballah’s military plans to avenge Mughniyeh increases this danger. Our demarche might resonate more fully here if we can persuade other key countries, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, France, and others, to underscore their concerns about regional instability, to which Syria’s supply of ballistic missiles to Hizballah is directly contributing.

11. (S) Leaving aside the substance of Miqdad’s response to the demarche, his agreement to meet us on two hours’ notice on a Syrian holiday (the Prophet’s birthday) and during the Ahmedinejad visit is worth noting. Miqdad’s Chief of Staff is typically the recipient of Embassy demarches; CDA’s only other meeting with Miqdad apart from appointments involving Washington visitors was to discuss the Vice Minister’s trip to the U.S. last September. His future willingness to meet directly with us -- which FM Muallim instructed him to do to follow up on DCS issues -- will serve as one more barometer of the SARG commitment to engagement in the weeks and months ahead.

HUNTER

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“U.S. Strains to Stop Arms Flow”
American Embassy on Relations with Syria

An American Embassy cable assessed the Obama administration’s gradual efforts to build ties with Syria and recommended that the administration consider pressing more energetically the issue of arms shipments to Hezbollah.

DATE 2009-11-19 09:00:00

SOURCE Embassy Damascus

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 DAMASCUS 000804

NOFORN SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA, S/CT NSC FOR SHAPIRO/MCDERMOTT PARIS FOR NOBLES LONDON FOR LORD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/07/2029 TAGS: PTER, PREL, LE, IZ, IS, SY SUBJECT: IS NOW THE TIME TO RAISE HIZBALLAH WITH SYRIA?

 Classified By: CDA Charles Hunter, Reasons 1.4 b and d.

1. (S/NF) Summary: Syria’s determined support of Hizballah’s military build-up, particularly the steady supply of longer-range rockets and the introduction of guided missiles, could change the military balance and produce a scenario significantly more destructive than the July-August 2006 war. If rockets were to rain down on Israeli civilians in Tel Aviv, Israel would still have powerful incentives, as it did in 2006, to keep Syria out of the conflict, but it might also face compelling reasons for targeting Hizballah facilities in Syria, some of which are in and around populated areas. Syria’s current strategic mindset appears to assume Syria could avoid involvement in a new conflict, based largely on its 2006 experience. Syrian leaders also appear convinced that arming Hizballah will increase Syria’s leverage in bringing Israel to the negotiating table. As Washington weighs how to approach Syrian officials in upcoming engagement efforts, discussing Hizballah from the perspective of the regional strategic landscape may help to facilitate a “big picture” conversation in which we could challenge these assumptions and focus Damascus on the importance of taking cooperative steps with the U.S. now. Though raising this subject could well distract from a cooperative approach that shows signs of progress after months of investment, we believe sounding a warning, probably in a one-on-one meeting with President Asad, would be worth considering in pursuit of a broader, more strategic dialogue. End Summary.

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Is the Strategic Balance Changing?
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2. (S/NF) Syria’s determined efforts to re-arm Hizballah during and after the July-August 2006 war between Israel and Hizballah have consistently grabbed Israeli headlines, most recently with Israeli Chief of Staff Ashkenazi’s November 10 revelation that Hizballah possessed 320-kilometer range rockets. Jane’s Defense Weekly reported October 28 on Hizballah’s deployment of the first guided surface-to-surface M600 missile on Lebanese soil, with a range of 250 kilometers and circular error probability of 500 meters. Public estimates put Hizballah’s stockpile as high as 40,000 rockets and missiles, reinforcing assessments by some experts that this build-up may portend a shift in the military balance between Israel and its northern nemesis. Hizballah SecGen Nasrallah’s recent claims of possessing a capability to “destroy” the IDF may overstate the case for domestic and regional propaganda purposes, but reporting in other channels confirms Nasrallah’s bragging on November 11 that Hizballah can sustain fire on Tel Aviv and reach “all of Israel.” This capability, if fully used, would represent a quantum leap over the damage and psychological terror Hizballah rockets caused in northern Israel during the 2006 war.
3. (S/NF) There is overwhelming evidence that shows Syria provided not just logistical and other support in moving the weapons, but was the main source of the weapons. Syria’s integration of Hizballah into its military doctrine, moreover, means that Hizballah operatives and facilities enjoy a growing footprint in Syria.

4. (S/NF) At least two potential consequences flow from Hizballah’s increased capabilities and Syria’s role in creating them: (1) If there is another war between Hizballah and Israel, it will be far deadlier than the 2006 conflict; (2) as in 2006, there would be compelling reasons for Israel to want to keep Syria out of any future war if possible, but there might be a countervailing need to hit Hizballah and perhaps targets in Syria, some of which are located in populated areas.

Agreeing to Disagree on Hizballah

DAMASCUS 06090884 092 OF 093

5. (S/NF) U.S.-Syrian discussions on Hizballah have tended to “agree to disagree” after hitting the wall of conflicting views on the legitimacy of armed resistance and Israeli occupation. Syrian officials, including President Asad, emphasize their political link to Hizballah and flatly deny that Syria is arming Hizballah. They then defend the right to armed resistance in response to prolonged Israeli occupation of Syrian and Lebanese territory. When convenient, Syrian officials claim they no longer have responsibility for Hizballah, noting “we are out of Lebanon.” President Asad and FM Muallim have also suggested that the challenge of disarming Hizballah would be solved after Syria and Israel signed a peace treaty. This agreement would lead naturally to a deal between Lebanon and Israel, thereby removing the rationale for Hizballah’s resistance movement and setting the stage for the transition of Hizballah to a purely political party.

6. (S/NF) The Syrian government’s strategic view of relations with Hizballah is difficult to assess with high confidence. According to various contacts, President Asad appears to be focused on the possibility of a new conflict between Israel and Syria, but many suggest he believes that the red lines of the 2006 war would be preserved. According to this model, Syria could avoid direct involvement as long as Israel refrained from striking targets on Syrian soil. Syria also seems to be hedging its bets through improved relations with Turkey, France, and Saudi Arabia, which, Syrian officials probably hope, would object to Israeli attacks against Lebanon and/or Syria.

7. (S/NF) Asad nonetheless appears more convinced than ever that arming Hizballah is necessary for Syrian security and perhaps as a stick to bring the current Israeli government back to negotiations on the return of the Golan. Syrians remain resistant to the notion that Syria bears responsibility for managing a potentially explosive situation that could draw Damascus into a war neither sought nor winnable. They have ably deployed a force field of cognitive dissonance to resist arguments linking Syria’s arming of Hizballah and the future prospects of Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations. Israel, they insist, remains the problem, and only a more active U.S. role can bring and sustain a resolution. According to the prevailing Syrian view, however, U.S.-Syrian relations must normalize before the U.S. can play the role of a credible honest broker.

The Cooperative Approach Shows Potential

8. (S/NF) As the interagency continues to plot future plans to engage Syrian officials and thinks about how to recruit other countries to support our efforts, we face a choice not only about the level of our engagement, but about the approach itself. Up to now, U.S. efforts have largely focused on developing a cooperative relationship on issues of mutual interest, such as Iraq and U.S. sanctions. Our four month pursuit of military-to-military cooperation on Iraqi border security represented, in effect, a first step toward establishing a broader and higher-level dialogue on Iraqi security issues, including Syrian support of foreign fighters. After the August 19 bombings Baghdad rendered implementation of this initiative impracticable, discussions in late-September shifted toward a possible CT dialogue. This new focus provides an alternative mechanism to continue discussions on Iraqi security issues such as foreign fighters. Syrian officials appear willing to go along with this approach, as long as the emphasis is on building
bilateral relations first. After months of investment, our engagement efforts are close to enabling both sides to exchange positive gestures. This cooperation should help to the stage for more focused discussions on a broad range of issues and strategic choices about the future direction of the relationship.

9. (S/NF) During this process, U.S. officials have carefully placed markers on key issues, including human rights, IAEA compliance, Bank Aman, Lebanon (e.g., border demarcation), and Palestinians (pushing Hamas to accept the Quartet principles), and the new embassy compound. We have addressed these issues mainly in discussions with Vice Foreign Minister Miqdad and the Syrian Embassy in Washington (with less dialogue between Embassy Damascus and the Syrian MFA). Our view is that the cooperative approach will have more chance of success if we continue to use these channels to deal with such issues, until the relationship can sustain discussion at higher levels that will yield a higher probability of favorable progress.

10. (S/NF) Against this backdrop, sending U.S. officials to focus on Syrian relations with Hizballah could distract significantly from our efforts to build a cooperative foothold. There is unlikely to be common ground or any breakthroughs, and a new focus on Hizballah-related issues could further set back our efforts to re-energize the engagement process, not least by spurring the Syrians to demand a reciprocal change in U.S. behavior, e.g., lifting sanctions. Focusing our higher political-level discussions on the issue of foreign fighters provides a more familiar subject with a higher chance for initial progress.

But Hizballah’s Arsenal Poses Urgent Challenges

11. (S/NF) While the near-term chances for a successful dialogue on Syria’s strategic relationship with Hizballah are much lower, the stakes -- the possibility of a regional conflict and significant obstacles to achieving comprehensive peace -- are just as, if not more, urgent. Sharing our concerns about the dangers of Syria’s arming of Hizballah, probably best done privately in a one-on-one session with President Asad, could serve to establish the basis of a more frank exchange about Syria’s role, and enable us to challenge potentially dangerous Syrian assumptions as part of a wider strategic dialogue. Recent revelations about Syria’s role in weapons shipments create some urgency in turning Syrian attention toward ending these supplies and restraining Hizballah from making good on its provocative rhetoric.

12. (S/NF) We don’t expect these points immediately to change Syrian behavior or its relations with Hizballah, but we believe sounding this warning would put President Asad and others (such as Turkey and France) on notice that Syria’s actions have created a situation in which miscalculation or provocative behavior by Hizballah could prove disastrous for Syria and the broader region. This message could likewise underscore our belief that Syria needs to demonstrate a more active role in achieving peace with Israel and better relations with the United States. Even if a war between Israel and Hizballah does not materialize in the immediate future, we should try find a way to use our ongoing cooperative engagement with Syrian officials to help them recognize their overriding interest and responsibility in preventing this unappealing scenario altogether.

HUNTER

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“U.S. Strains to Stop Arms Flow”
Americans Arrested in Yemen for Militant Ties

The American ambassador to Yemen, Stephen A. Seche, wrote to Washington last Feb. 17 asking for more personnel as the embassy coped with an increased workload, in part to deal with the increasing number of American citizens arrested in Yemen on suspicion of extremism.

DATE 2010-02-17 10:29:00

SOURCE Embassy Sanaa

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SANAA 000317

NOFORN SIPDIS

CA/OCS/ACS/NEA FOR ERINN STOTT AND PAMELA KAZI, CA/EX FOR HENRY HANDB,CA/VO/F/P FOR SADIA NIAZI, NEA/ARP FOR ANDREW MACDONALD, DS COMMAND CENTER, CAIRO FOR RCO CHRISTOPHER ROWAN, RIYADH FOR ICE ATTACHE RONALD KRISKE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/17/2020 TAGS: ASEC, CASC, CMGT, PTER, YM SUBJECT: (S/NF) SPIKE IN NATIONAL SECURITY-RELATED ARREST CASES STRAINS POST,S RESOURCES


Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

This is an action request: see paragraph 12.

1. (S/NF) Summary: Since the start of 2010, Post has seen a dramatic increase in the number of Amcits arrested. Over 80 percent of these cases (REF A-E) have had a nexus to terrorism and national security issues that have required substantial involvement from RSO and LEGATT. This comes as the Consular Section is attempting to alleviate its six-month backlog in upcoming CRBA appointments. Post requests TDY personnel to assist with the anticipated staffing gaps in Consular from April to September and renews its call to increase FSO staffing (REF F) to address the sharply increased workload. End Summary.

Arrests of Americans Up, New ROYG Procedures

2. (S/NF) Post has noted a dramatic increase in arrests of Americans in Yemen since the attempted Christmas Day bombing of Northwest 253. In the last seven weeks, seven Amcits were arrested for national security concerns and violations of immigration laws (Ref A-E), compared to only six in the entire four months prior. Six of these cases have suspected links to terrorism that have required significant coordination with LEGATT and RSO. Comment: This upsurge in arrests is the result of more scrupulous ROYG focus on visa overstay cases due to increased international attention to terrorism in Yemen. End Comment.

3. (S/NF) Previously, a visa overstay would present himself at the immigration authority, pay his fines, and obtain an exit visa. Recently, however, overstays have been detained and have required post intervention in securing their exit from Yemen. Four of the arrestees were ‘abducted’ by the Political Security Organization (PSO) or National Security Bureau (NSB) and were held for between 3-10 days before post was given official notice of their whereabouts. Note: In the past two years, the Muslim convert community of Amcits living in Yemen ) who make up the majority of
overstays - has been increasingly linked to extremist activities. End Note. In one case, Post has still not received official word of the arrest and is unable to inform the family in the US, who still believes the individual has been kidnapped. The issue of timely notification of arrests was recently raised by post’s DCM with the Yemeni Chief of Protocol.

Direct Namecheck Hits Increasing
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4. (S/NF) In addition to the spike in arrest cases, post routinely sees cases of national security interest in the course of its daily visa and American citizen services (ACS) operations. On average, post has 3-5 cases per week that require LEGATT and RSO attention. The processing time required to clear these hits and allow time for additional interviews is increasingly straining our ability to provide routine services in a timely fashion. Comment: Post had reduced appointment wait time for first-time CRBA applications from six months to three months. We will not be able to continue such high appointment numbers given the recent increase in arrest cases and our current staffing levels. End Comment.

Status of Arrestees
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5. (S/NF) Post is currently processing five arrest cases, most of which have begun as welfare and whereabouts requests, or visa overstays. A sixth, who was not a national security or terrorist case, was recently released. All five that remain have had strong links to terrorism or national security concerns. The following is an update on these cases.

6. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXX (REF A) was being held at the Passport Authority pending further investigation into both his visa overstay and possible links to terrorism. ROYG previously attempted to deport XXXXXXXXXX. He was denied boarding, however, due to his presence on the no fly list (NFL). Post had requested guidance from CA on this matter (REF G), as per applicable FAM NFL guidance. Post, s A/RSO-I received a call from Consulate Istanbul, s A/RSO-I (REF H) that XXXXXXXXXX arrived in Istanbul on February 16, but was denied onward travel to the U.S due to his NFL status. Post later received notice that XXXXXXXXXX is scheduled to board Turkish Airlines flight TK1236 to Sanaa on February 17 (REF I). Note: XXXXXXXXXX no longer has a valid Yemeni visa and airport visas are no longer available (REF J). End Note.

7. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXX (REF B) is being held at the PSO prison. He is currently still under investigation by the PSO, which plans to deport him. No date for his release has been set. FBI and DS plan to meet him in the US upon his return.

8. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXX (REF C) is being held by the Passport Authority and is awaiting deportation. Currently, ROYG authorities are waiting for Mr. XXXXXXXXXX to secure an itinerary and tickets to the US before his release.

9. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXX (Ref D) is also being held at the PSO prison. He is currently being investigated for his links to terrorism. The ROYG has not given any information regarding possible charges.

10. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXX (Ref E) is currently being held at the Immigration Authority prison pending possible deportation. It is currently unclear if Mr. XXXXXXXXXX will be able to pay his overstay fines and obtain a standard exit visa to return to the US or if he will be deported.

COMMENT
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11. (SBU) Post currently has five full-time officers assigned to the consular section and one part-time officer. Prison visits must occur during morning hours pulling officers away from visa and ACS cases. This increase in workload has pushed our already strained operation beyond capacity and has hampered our ability to work through existing backlogs in ACS and IV. In REF F and through Diplomacy 3.0, post requested at least one additional ACS officer based on workload and staffing in FY09. Post’s workload in IV has increased by 5,722 cases or over 2.5 times from FY08 to FY09. Additionally, post’s NIV workload increased by 918 adjudications, up nearly a third
from FY08 to FY09. End Comment.

ACTION REQUEST
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12. (SBU) Post renews its call for a full-time FS-03 ACS officer and FS-04 Vice Consul, and requests TDY support to cover officer leave and the anticipated staffing gap from April through September. In addition, post requests experienced Arabic-speaking LE Staff and officer TDY support as soon as possible to assist in working through backlogs in ACS and IV. Post fully expects that the trends of increasing arrests and direct hit cases will continue and looks forward to a positive and expeditious response to this request. SECHE

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Yemen Sets Terms of a War on Al Qaeda”
Yemeni President on U.S. Missile Strikes

In a Jan. 2, 2010, meeting, President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen promises to continue to cover up the fact that missile strikes against Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula inside Yemen are being carried out by the United States military. He negotiates with Gen. David H. Petraeus, then the top American commander in the Middle East, over military aid and rules for American military advisers.

DATE 2010-01-04 13:33:00

SOURCE Embassy Sanaa

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T S A N A A 000004

NOFORN

DEPT FOR NEA/FO AND NEA/ARP NSC FOR DPNSA BRENNAN HQ USCENTCOM/CCCC-CIG FOR JSEATON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/04/2019 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PTER, PINR, PINS, MOPS, MASS, MCAP, SA, AE, UK, ER, DJ, QA, VM SUBJECT: GENERAL PETRAEUS’ MEETING WITH SALEH ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE, AQAP STRIKES

REF: 2009 SANAA 1430

Classification By: Ambassador Stephen A. Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Commander of the U.S. Central Command General David Petraeus congratulated President Saleh on recent successful operations against AQAP, and informed him that U.S. security assistance to the ROYG would increase to USD 150 million in 2010, a substantial increase over the 2009 amount of USD 67 million. Also present were Minister of Defense MG Muhammed Nasser Ahmad Ali and Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Affairs Rashad al-Alimi. Raising a topic that he would manage to insert into almost every item of discussion during the hour and half-long meeting, Saleh requested that the U.S. provide 12 armed helicopters and train and equip three new Republican Guard brigades. Saleh rejected the General’s proposal to have USG personnel armed with direct-feed intelligence present inside the area of CT operations, but agreed to a have U.S. fixed-wing bombers circle outside Yemeni territory ready to engage AQAP targets should actionable intelligence become available. END SUMMARY.

SALEH: HELICOPTERS, HELICOPTERS, HELICOPTERS

2. (S/NF) CENTCOM Commander General David Petraeus, accompanied by the Ambassador, CENTCOM aides, the Embassy DATT, and Econoff note taker, congratulated President Saleh on successful operations against AQAP during a January 2 meeting. The General told Saleh that he had requested USD 150 million in security assistance for 2010, a substantial increase over the 2009 amount of USD 67 million. Also present were Minister of Defense MG Muhammed Nasser Ahmad Ali and Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Affairs Rashad al-Alimi. Raising a topic that he would manage to insert into almost every item of discussion during the hour and half-long meeting, Saleh requested that the U.S. provide the ROYG with 12 armed helicopters. Possessing such helicopters would allow the ROYG to take the lead in future CT operations, “ease” the use of fighter jets and cruise missiles against terrorist targets, and allow Yemeni Special Operations Forces to capture terrorist suspects and identify victims following strikes, according to Saleh. The U.S. could convince Saudi Arabia and the UAE to supply six helicopters each if the American “bureaucracy” prevented quick approval, Saleh suggested. The General responded that he had already considered the ROYG’s request for helicopters and was in discussions with Saudi Arabia on the matter. “We won’t use the helicopters in Sa’ada, I promise. Only against al-Qaeda,” Saleh told General Petraeus.
3. (S/NF) Saleh agreed to General Patraeus’ proposal to allocate $45 million of 2010 security assistance funds to help establish and train a YSOF aviation regiment, allowing YSOF to focus on al-Qaeda targets and leaving Sa’ada air operations to the Yemeni Air Force. Without giving much detail, Saleh also requested that the U.S. equip and train three new Republican Guard brigades, totaling 9,000 soldiers. “Equipping these brigades would reflect upon our true partnership,” Saleh said. The General urged Saleh to focus first on the YSOF aviation regiment.

AQAP STRIKES: CONCERN FOR CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

4. (S/NF) Saleh praised the December 17 and 24 strikes against AQAP but said that “mistakes were made” in the killing of civilians in Abyan. The General responded that the only civilians killed were the wife and two children of an AQAP operative at the site, prompting Saleh to plunge into a lengthy and confusing aside with Deputy Prime Minister Alimi and Minister of Defense Ali regarding the number of terrorists versus civilians killed in the strike. (Comment: Saleh’s conversation on the civilian casualties suggests he has not been well briefed by his advisors on the strike in Abyan, a site that the ROYG has been unable to access to determine with any certainty the level of collateral damage. End Comment.) AQAP leader Nasr al-Wahishi and extremist cleric Anwar al-Awlaki may still be alive, Saleh said, but the December strikes had already caused al-Qaeda operatives to turn themselves in to authorities and residents in affected areas to deny refuge to al-Qaeda. Saleh raised the issue of the Saudi Government and Jawf governorate tribal sheikh Amin al-Okimi, a subject that is being reported through other channels.

SHIFTING AIRSTRIKE STRATEGIES

5. (S/NF) President Obama has approved providing U.S. intelligence in support of ROYG ground operations against AQAP targets, General Petraeus informed Saleh. Saleh reacted coolly, however, to the General’s proposal to place USG personnel inside the area of operations armed with real-time, direct feed intelligence from U.S. ISR platforms overhead. “You cannot enter the operations area and you must stay in the joint operations center,” Saleh responded. Any U.S. casualties in strikes against AQAP would harm future efforts, Saleh asserted. Saleh did not have any objection, however, to General Petraeus’ proposal to move away from the use of cruise missiles and instead have U.S. fixed-wing bombers circle outside Yemeni territory, “out of sight,” and engage AQAP targets when actionable intelligence became available. Saleh lamented the use of cruise missiles that are “not very accurate” and welcomed the use of aircraft-deployed precision-guided bombs instead. “We’ll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours,” Saleh said, prompting Deputy Prime Minister Alimi to joke that he had just “lied” by telling Parliament that the bombs in Arhab, Abyan, and Shebwa were American-made but deployed by the ROYG.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN MIL-MIL RELATIONS

6. (S/NF) General Petraeus praised cooperation between the Embassy and the NSB, YSOF, Yemeni Coast Guard (YCG), and Counterterrorism Unit (CTU), but singled out relations with the Yemeni Air Force as problematic. Only four out of 50 planned U.S. Special Operations Forces Command training missions with the Yemeni Air Force had actually been executed in the past year, he said. Saleh said he would personally instruct Minister of Defense to improve the situation. The General also urged Saleh to stop Yemeni Customs’ habit of holding up Embassy cargo at the airport, including shipments destined for the ROYG itself, such as equipment for the CTU. Saleh laughed and made a vague pledge to have the customs issue “taken care of.” Saleh complained that the ROYG had not yet received the necessary training to operate 17 Iraqi Light Armored Vehicle (ILAVs) provided by the USG in 2008, saying that YSOF may still be telling. Saleh said that he would look into having U.S. Special Operations Forces personnel conduct the training.

7. (S/NF) Pointing to the ROYG’s problems in combating rampant drug and arms smuggling, Saleh told General Petraeus that U.S. maritime security assistance was insufficient to cover Yemen’s nearly 2,000 km of coastline. “Why not have Italy, Germany, Holland, Japan, Saudi, and the UAE each provide two patrol boats?” Saleh suggested. The General told Saleh that two fully-equipped 87-foot patrol boats destined for the Yemeni Coast Guard were under construction and would arrive in Yemen within a year. Saleh singled out smuggling from Djibouti as particularly troublesome, claiming that the ROYG had recently intercepted four containers of Djibouti-origin TNT. “Tell (Djiboutian President) Ismail Guelleh that I don’t care if he smuggles whiskey into Yemen - provided it’s good whiskey — but not drugs or weapons,” Saleh joked. Saleh said that smugglers of
all stripes are bribing both Saudi and Yemeni border officials.

SALEH WELCOMES LONDON CONFERENCE
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8. (S/NF) Saleh told the General that he welcomed PM Gordon Brown’s announcement of the London conference and said that the cooperation on Yemen between the U.S., EU, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE would be beneficial. Qatar should not be involved, however, because “they work with Iran.” In this regard, Saleh also identified Qatar as one of those nations working “against Yemen,” along with Iran, Libya, and Eritrea.

9. (U) General Petraeus did not have an opportunity to clear on this cable.

SECHE

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Yemen Sets Terms of a War on Al Qaeda”
Yemeni President Gives U.S. Free Reign

President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen tells President Obama’s counterterrorism adviser, John O. Brennan, that the United States can have free reign in pursuing terrorists on Yemeni soil – and as a result, he should not be blamed if an attack directed from Yemen takes place.

DATE 2009-09-15 06:12:00

SOURCE Embassy Sanaa

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SANAA 001669

SIPDIS NOFORN

NSC FOR APDNSA JOHN BRENNAN AND DENISE MORAGA DEPT FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD


REF: SANAA 01549

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b), (c), and (d).

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. In a September 6 meeting with Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan, President Saleh pledged unfettered access to Yemen’s national territory for U.S. counterterrorism operations, suggesting that in the process, the USG assumed responsibility for the success - or failure - of efforts to neutralize AQAP in Yemen. Saleh expressed dissatisfaction with the USG’s current level of aid for CT and security operations and insisted the ROYG began its war against the al-Houthi rebellion in northern Yemen on behalf of the U.S. Saleh stated his preference for Saudi Arabia over Jordan as a potential rehabilitation site for Guantanamo detainees of Yemeni origin, but claimed the ROYG was willing and able to accept them in Yemeni prisons. In a one-on-one that followed, Brennan extended an invitation to Saleh to visit President Obama at the White House on October 6. END SUMMARY.

"OPEN LAND, AIR, AND SEA" FOR U.S. STRIKES AGAINST AQAP

2. (S/NF) In a September 6 meeting with Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan, President Saleh insisted that Yemen’s national territory is available for unilateral CT operations by the U.S. Dissatisfied with current levels of USG funding and military training provided to the ROYG’s CT forces, Saleh asserted that the USG has produced “only words, but no solutions” to the terrorism issue in Yemen. Saleh repeatedly requested more funds and equipment to fight al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), while at the same time placing responsibility for any future AQAP attacks on the shoulders of the USG now that it enjoys unfettered access to Yemeni airspace, coastal waters and land. (NOTE. The USG has been actively engaged since 2001 in training elements of Yemen’s CT forces, including the Counter-Terrorism Unit (CTU), the Yemen Special Operations Force (YSOF), the Presidential Guard, the Yemeni Border Troops, Yemen Air Force (YAF), and the Yemen Coast Guard (YCG). The USG has expended over $115 million equipping CT forces since FY02. In 2009 alone, U.S. teams have instructed Yemeni CT forces in training valued at $5 million. END NOTE.)

3. (S/NF) While Saleh offered assurances that the ROYG is “determined to continue the war against al-Qaeda because they’re targeting U.S. and Yemeni interests,” he continued to link increased U.S. access to AQAP targets with full responsibility for achieving CT goals. Highlighting the
potential for a future AQAP attack on the U.S. Embassy or other Western targets, Saleh said, “I have given you an open door on terrorism, so I am not responsible.”

THE SA’ADA WAR: “THE HOUGHTHS ARE YOUR ENEMIES TOO”

4. (S/NF) President Saleh expressed his frustration with the USG refusal to view the Sa’ada war against the al-Houthis in the north in the same light as the fight against AQAP. Claiming a need for increased aid and support, Saleh asserted that “this war we’re launching is a war on behalf of the U.S.... the Houthis are your enemies too,” citing videos of al-Houthi followers chanting, “Death to Israel, death to America.” (NOTE: The Houthis have not attacked U.S. interests or personnel in the six rounds of fighting between the ROYG and the Houthis that began in 2004. END NOTE.) The USG’s failure to view the Houthis as terrorists and equip ROYG forces to fight them in Sa’ada undermines the USG’s claims of friendship and cooperation, according to Saleh. Commenting on the status of ROYG forces in Sa’ada, Saleh said, “we are suffering a lot of casualties and loss of material.” Renewing his requests for armored personnel vehicles, aircraft, and medical evacuation vehicles, Saleh echoed his criticism of U.S. efforts. “We need deeds, not only words,” he said. Brennan responded that the USG is prohibited by law from providing military support to the ROYG to be used against the Houthis since the USG considers the group a domestic insurgency.

5. (S/NF) Restating claims of Iranian support to the Houthi movement, ROYG officials present said they had provided files supporting an Iranian-Houthi connection to USG officials and would provide more if necessary. (NOTE. The Ambassador acknowledged receiving a file that was reviewed here and in Washington; however, no conclusive evidence of an Iranian-Houthi link has been made from these or other records. Brennan said that he would request a fresh scrub of all available intelligence to see if it turned up any evidence of Iranian involvement. END NOTE.) Saleh said, “Iran is trying to settle old scores against the U.S. by ruining relations between Yemen and GCC countries and the U.S.” He also made a tangential reference to Hezbollah, claiming the organization’s influence in the region also rendered the ROYG-Houthi war a fight on behalf of the U.S. Referencing the high poverty rate and illicit arms flows into both Yemen and Somalia, Saleh concluded by saying, “If you don’t help, this country will become worse than Somalia.”

MUDDLED MESSAGES ON GUANTANAMO DETAINEES

6. (S/NF) Saleh expressed his preference for the existing Saudi Arabia option as a potential site for rehabilitating Guantanamo detainees of Yemeni origin over a proposed Jordanian option, citing closer familial ties and cultural bonds in Saudi Arabia as mechanisms for more effective treatment. Saleh commented that he thought the Jordanians were too poor to support a rehabilitation program, but did not dismiss Jordan as an option. However, he signaled that rehabilitation is not his concern, but rather “the U.S.’s problem” as he is ready and willing to accept all Yemeni detainees into the Yemeni prison system. (COMMENT. Saleh would, in our judgment, be unable to hold returning detainees in jail for any more than a matter of weeks before public pressure or the courts forced their release. END COMMENT.) Saleh urged the USG to design and implement a rehabilitation and education program for the detainees and to build a rehabilitation center in Yemen, but reiterated that the U.S. would have to fund these projects. Brennan repeatedly asked, “How many dollars is the U.S. going to bring?” However, when Brennan offered $500,000 as an initial investment currently available for the crafting of a rehabilitation program, Saleh dismissed the offer as insufficient. Saleh also assured Brennan that he was committed to “freeing the innocent people after a complete and total rehabilitation,” suggesting a lack of clarity on his own policy and on the status of Guantanamo detainees in the ROYG legal system.

ECONOMIC REFORM AND CORRUPTION

7. (S/NF) Saleh welcomed the letter from President Obama that Brennan hand-carried, and expressed appreciation for U.S. concern over the stability and economic hardships facing the country. He agreed to move forward with the 10-point plan outlining necessary economic reforms (refel) but did not provide details regarding dates or implementation goals. Responding to Brennan’s concerns that economic and other assistance might be diverted through corrupt officials to other purposes, Saleh urged the U.S. to donate supplies and hardware rather than liquid funds in order to curb corruption’s reach. Saleh also told US officials that they could have full access to financial records to ensure proper usage of donor funding. (COMMENT. Saleh’s preference for infrastructure and equipment over cash displays a lack of confidence in his own regime’s ability to handle liquid assets and hardly provides a viable solution for stemming the curb of corruption in the
VISIT TO WASHINGTON & OTHER ISSUES
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8. (S/NF) Saleh again asked to visit the U.S., arguing that it was necessary to resolve issues regarding the Guantanamo detainees and increased military assistance. “We see this visit as very important to reach mutual understanding and so that you understand our requests and demands.” Brennan undertook to look into Saleh’s claims of “promised” military equipment that has not been delivered. In a one-on-one session that followed the formal meeting, Brennan extended an invitation to Saleh to meet President Obama at the White House on October 6. Saleh also stated that there would be no more delays in the U.S. Embassy’s request to purchase lands for the building of more secure housing facilities and that the Shari’a Council would approve the transfer of the lands from waqf (or publicly held) status to free-hold status.

COMMENT
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9. (S/NF) COMMENT. Saleh was in vintage form during the two hours he spent with DNSA Brennan, at times disdainful and dismissive and at others, conciliatory and congenial. One might easily conclude that his repeated assertion that Yemen’s national territory is open to the US to conduct operations against AQAP reflects his interest in outsourcing the CT effort in Yemen to the USG, especially in view of his somewhat ominous claim that, should AQAP attacks occur in the future, they will be the result of the U.S. having failed to do enough to put the organization out of business. Additionally, a concerted USG anti-terrorism campaign in Yemen will free Saleh to continue to devote his limited security assets to the ongoing war against Houthi rebels in Sa’ada. The net effect, and one we strongly suspect Saleh has calculated, of both the American and ROYG “iron fist” unleashed at the same time in Yemen will be a clear message to the southern movement or any other party interested in generating political unrest in the country that a similar fate awaits them.

10. (S/NF) COMMENT CONTINUED. Not surprisingly, Saleh was far less animated when Brennan attempted to focus his attention on the need for immediate action to relieve Yemen’s deteriorating socio-economic situation, largely limiting his response to a pitch that the USG persuade recalcitrant donors to speed up and increase their assistance to Yemen. After stating petulantly in the group session that he was no longer interested in an invitation to the White House, telling Brennan that “my relationship with you is sufficient,” Saleh’s mood changed noticeably for the better when the invitation was extended, and he had captured the prize he has been chasing after for months. END COMMENT. SECHE

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Yemen Sets Terms of a War on Al Qaeda”
Hunting for Dangerous Weapons in Yemen

Stephen A. Seche, the American ambassador, reports on progress in collecting and destroying “manpads” – shoulder-fired missiles capable of shooting down aircraft – some of which are reportedly held secretly by Yemen’s Defense Ministry.

DATE 2009-08-04 11:58:00

SOURCE Embassy Sanaa

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SANA 001402

NOFORN SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD AND PM/WRA SPICO AND SCOSTNER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2019 TAGS: PARM, PREL, PTER, MASS, YM SUBJECT: (S/NF) PROGRESS ON US-ROYG COOPERATION TO REDUCE MANPADS THREAT

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. On June 20-22, a PM/WRA delegation visited Yemen to discuss MANPADS threat reduction efforts with ROYG officials. Since 2004, US-ROYG cooperation has dramatically reduced the availability of MANPADS on the black market in Yemen. Although the program has likely recovered the bulk of the illicit MANPADS available on the black market, several more will likely be collected in the coming years. MOD insists that there are no official MANPADS stocks, and that they have already implemented necessary stockpile security and inventory controls, but the intelligence community and the National Security Bureau (NSB) believe that is not the case. The USG will offer the MOD, through NSB interlocutors, payment for destruction of MOD MANPADS and stockpile security upgrades. ROYG officials seem more receptive to a TSA-sponsored MANPADS Assist Visit. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

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2. (S/NF) After years of uncontrolled weapons imports and the chaos of the 1994 civil war, MANPADS were widely available on the illicit arms market in Yemen, making these systems a critical proliferation threat. MANPADS that leaked from official Yemeni stocks were used in al-Qaeda (AQ) operations in Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen in 2001 and 2002. In 2003, the ROYG began collecting MANPADS from weapons souks throughout the country, and in 2004 the USG agreed to compensate the ROYG for the acquisition and destruction of these and other black market MANPADS. In February 2005, US-ROYG cooperation resulted in the destruction of 1,161 MANPADS.

MEETINGS READOUT

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3. (S/NF) On June 20-22, a PM/WRA delegation consisting of Dennis Hadrick, PM/WRA Program Manager; Santo Polizzi, DHS Liaison; Nils Talbot, PM/WRA technical expert; and Laurie Freeman, PM/WRA Foreign Affairs Officer, visited Yemen to discuss US-ROYG cooperation to reduce the threat of MANPADS. The delegation began with a June 20 meeting at the NSB with Col. Hefed Al Jamrah, the NSB official in charge of airport security in Sana’a. Polizzi briefed Jamrah on the MANPADS threat to civilian aviation. He also offered a MANPADS Assist Visit (MAV), in which experts from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) identify airport vulnerabilities to MANPADS attacks and recommend ways to mitigate them. Following the meeting, the delegation toured the current airport and the site of the new airport. During the tour, several lapses in airport
security practices were observed regarding passenger screening, cargo security, and Secure Identification Display Area (SIDA) badge and access procedures. Polizzi recommended that the TSA Representative (TSAR) in Amman, Jordan be contacted for follow-on discussions with airport officials. NSB officials seemed receptive to the MAV offer.

4. (S/NF) On June 21, the delegation met with NSB Deputy Director Ammar Saleh to discuss ongoing efforts to acquire MANPADS from the black market in Yemen. Since the program’s inception in August 2004, this program had resulted in the destruction of 1,161 black market MANPADS in 2005. Hadrick thanked the ROYG for its efforts, expressed the USG’s continued interest in supporting the program, and pressed the ROYG to destroy an additional 162 MANPADS they had collected since 2005.

5. (S/NF) Ammar Saleh agreed with USG assessments that the majority of black market MANPADS had been collected in Yemen, and said that a few more might trickle in with the increase in price. (Note: In July 2008, the price for first generation systems was increased from $7,700 to $15,000. End Note.) The small quantity of illicit MANPADS that still exist outside of state control in Yemen are in the hands of tribal leaders or AQAP, neither of which is likely to part with them at any price. He could not estimate how many MANPADS Yemeni tribal leaders possess, but he believes that AQAP has six MANPADS (NFI). Finally, he expressed skepticism that the MOD would accept U.S. assistance to destroy its official MANPADS stocks (an offer on the table since 2005). He believes MOD would want a more modern air defense system in return, not cash payment or stockpile security upgrades. He offered to attempt to broker a cash-for-destruction deal.

6. (S/NF) Accompanied by NSB official Akram al-Qassmi, the delegation visited a warehouse to view 96 MANPADS collected between 2005 and May 2009 that were awaiting destruction. (Note: These systems had already been verified by U.S. personnel and disabled. End Note.) The delegation verified an additional six SA-7s, four SA-7 gripstocks, and six batteries collected by the NSB since May 2009. The delegation disabled the six MANPADS and expended the six batteries.

7. (S/NF) On their last day, June 22, the delegation accompanied the Ambassador to a meeting with Minister of Defense Mohammed Nasser Ahmed. Ahmed denied that the MOD has any MANPADS in its official stocks, saying that they had already been handed over to NSB and destroyed. (Note: This is in direct contradiction to NSB’s June 21 assertion that the MOD had excess stocks of MANPADS, but would part with them only in exchange for a more modern air defense system. End Note.) The Minister described the MOD’s progress on SA/LW issues since S/E Bloomfield’s July 2008 visit. He noted that more than 250 weapons souks had been closed and more than 140 weapons dealers prosecuted. Furthermore, he remarked that the MOD has established an inventory system for all Armed Forces and MOD weapons, all of which are now marked. He invited U.S. officials to visit the warehouses to see how the system works. Finally, the Minister shared the delegation’s concerns about the airport’s MANPADS vulnerability, and said that as a member of the Supreme Security Committee, he would support a MAV.

NEXT STEPS
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8. (S/NF) Post worked with NSB to ensure that all 182 collected MANPADS were destroyed on July 27 (septel). Post has requested a meeting with the MOD Chief of Staff to observe the stockpile security and inventory control system reportedly in place. Post will follow up with NSB to find out whether it will accept a MAV and, if so, identify possible dates for the assessment. (Note: Despite ministerial-level support, the final decision on the MAV will be made by President Saleh. End Note.) Finally, Post will work with the Department to present a specific offer to the Yemeni government for assistance with physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) and destruction and marking of Yemeni SA/LW.

COMMENT
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9. (S/NF) It is hard to know what to believe regarding the presence or absence of MOD MANPADS. In a subsequent meeting on June 27, XXXXXXX told PoIOffs that the MOD does indeed have MANPADS, but would never speak of them because they are considered a state secret. While MOD realizes their MANPADS are of little military value, they consider them better than nothing and would turn them over for destruction only if they were able to get a modern air defense system in return, according to XXXXXXXXX. PoIOffs agreed to continue negotiating the destruction of MOD MANPADS
through NSB interlocutors, since the MOD appears unwilling to discuss the issue with USG officials directly. END COMMENT. SECHE

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Yemen Sets Terms of a War on Al Qaeda”
Yemeni President on Guantánamo Prisoners

In a March 16, 2009, meeting, President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen discusses with John O. Brennan, President Obama’s counterterrorism adviser, the options for getting Yemeni prisoners out of Guantánamo. An embassy report is highly critical of Mr. Saleh.

DATE 2009-03-23 07:00:00

SOURCE Embassy Sanaa

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SANA 000495

NOFORN SIPDIS

NSC FOR APDNSA JOHN BRENNAAN AND JOHN DUNCAN DEPT FOR S/WCI AMBASSADOR CLINT WILLIAMSON AND SHAUN COUGHLIN, NEA/ARP ANDREW MACDONALD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/23/2019 TAGS: KDRG, PGOV, PINR, PTER, PINS, IZ, SA, YM SUBJECT: SALEH SHOWS NO FLEXIBILITY ON GTMO DETAINEES

Classified By: CDA Angie Bryan for reasons 1.4(b), (c), and (d)

SUMMARY
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1. (S/NF) President Saleh on March 16 rejected a proposal by visiting Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor (APDNSA) John Brennan that Yemeni Guantanamo detainees be sent to a Saudi rehabilitation center jointly run by Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Saleh instead insisted that the Yemeni detainees be returned to Yemen as soon as a proposed rehabilitation center in Aden, funded by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, is ready to accept them. End Summary.

SALEH INTRANSIGENT ON DETAINEES
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2. (S/NF) President Saleh on March 16 repeatedly rebuffed suggestions by visiting APDNSA John Brennan that Yemeni Guantanamo detainees be sent to Saudi Arabia, insisting on a Saudi-style rehabilitation center inside Yemen, funded by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. Brennan, accompanied by the Ambassador, NSC Director John Duncan, S/WCI Ambassador Clint Williamson, and Pol/Mil Chief, told Saleh that the U.S. wanted detainees to return to Yemen eventually. In the absence of a Yemeni program, however, the best near-term solution was for Saudi Arabia and Yemen to jointly run a program, at a Saudi-built rehabilitation facility at Abha in KSA with an immediate capability of receiving up to 120 detainees and open to Arabs from across the region. Saleh refused to address this suggestion directly, saying Yemen would build its own rehabilitation center in Aden. “We will offer the land in Aden, and you and the Saudis will provide the funding.” It will be ready 90 days after receipt of the USD 11 million required for construction, Saleh said.

3. (S/NF) Growing increasingly impatient, Saleh said that the U.S. could duplicate the Saudi program in Yemen. Brennan responded that such a program takes time to develop and that Saleh had his hands full dealing with al-Qaeda in Yemen. Saleh said that while he personally had no problem with detainees being sent to KSA, Yemeni opposition parties are the real obstacle because they will not allow him to give KSA control over Yemeni citizens. Brennan told Saleh that a leader of his depth of experience could surely figure out a way to deal with the opposition’s concerns. Saleh asked why the U.S. didn’t simply keep the detainees at Guantanamo or send them to the “Moayad prison” while Yemen builds its own facility. (Note: Saleh was referring to the federal
prison in Colorado where convicted Yemeni terrorist financier Mohammed al-Moayad is currently being held. End Note.) Signaling his bottom line, Saleh told Brennan that Yemen already had plans for a rehabilitation center and repeated his demand that the U.S. and KSA fund it. At this point, Brennan asked to speak with Saleh and the Ambassador privately.

4. (S/NF) In the pull-aside with Brennan and the Ambassador, Saleh said that he wouldn’t object if the U.S. and Saudi Arabia entered into a bilateral agreement regarding disposition of the Guantanamo detainees. (Comment: Saleh said this knowing full well that the Saudis are unwilling at this point to take in the Yemeni detainees without his concurrence. End Comment.) In a brief meeting outside Saleh’s gazebo, Ambassador Williamson described to Saleh’s nephew, Deputy Director of the National Security Bureau (NSB) Ammar Saleh, the USG’s review process for evaluating possible destinations for detainees and praised the Saudi program. Ambassador Williamson said that Saudi Arabia was closer to Yemen than Guantanamo and that if the Saudi solution didn’t work, then the Yemenis would be transferred to other countries, but not to Yemen. Ammar proposed sending the Yemenis to the ROYG facility for a brief (e.g. 3 month) period at which time Saleh could announce that they had asked to be transferred to KSA, and it would be done. He cautioned that he had not yet proposed the idea to Saleh and that any such transfers would have to be approved by both the family and the tribes involved. Ambassador Williamson thanked Ammar Saleh for his suggestion and said he would take it up with Mr. Brennan, but noted that he did not think it was a viable alternative given the caveats imposed.

RETURN OF THE BAATH IN IRAQ??

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5. (S/NF) In a bizarre postscript to the morning meeting with Saleh, the Palace protocol office called an hour later to request that Brennan meet with Ammar Saleh. Expecting a continuation of the Guantanamo detainee discussion, the Brennan delegation and the Ambassador met with Saleh, who said that he had been instructed by the President to share “very important” intelligence information with Brennan. Ammar said the NSB had what it considered reliable information that the Iraqi Baath party was reconstituting itself and would reclaim power in Baghdad once the U.S. pulled out. Upon hearing this, Brennan ended the meeting, telling Ammar that he had come expecting to discuss detainee issues, and that he would report to President Obama his disappointment that the ROYG was being inflexible in dealing with the issue. In a final twist, the protocol office called to say that Ammar Saleh would meet Mr. Brennan at the airport as he departed Yemen (raising again the possibility that there could be further discussion of the detainee issue) only to call back to say Ammar Saleh had been called away to another meeting.

ROYG SPIN AND EMBASSY PRESS STATEMENT

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6. (C) Official news agency Saba released a statement after the meeting saying that Saleh had called on the U.S. to “extradite” Yemeni citizens at Guantanamo to Yemen so they could be rehabilitated and integrated into society. The Saba statement also noted that Brennan had delivered a letter from President Obama praising Yemen’s efforts in counterterrorism and that Saleh had given Brennan a response letter for President Obama. (Note: Brennan did deliver a letter from President Obama, but the letter focused on the danger of transferring detainees directly to Yemen. Contrary to the Saba statement, Saleh did not give Brennan a letter for President Obama. End Note.)

7. (U) The Embassy issued the following press release, cleared by Brennan, the afternoon of March 16.

Begin Embassy press release text:

John Brennan, Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor, visited Yemen on March 16, 2009 as part of a visit to the region to discuss continued cooperation between the United States and Yemen in combating terrorism. As part of the ongoing dialogue between Yemen and the United States regarding the remaining Yemeni detainees at Guantanamo, Mr. Brennan raised with President Ali Abdullah Saleh the U.S. Government’s concerns about the direct return of detainees to Yemen.

End Embassy press release text.

COMMENT
8. (S/NF) To say Saleh missed a good chance to engage the new Administration on one of its key foreign policy priorities would be a severe understatement. He appeared alternately dismissive, bored, and impatient during the 40-minute meeting. Saleh’s knowledge that Saudi Arabia will not accept Yemeni detainees without at least tacit support from Saleh has likely emboldened the ROYG to press publicly and privately for an all-or-nothing push for the direct transfer of detainees to Yemen. Saleh clearly feels that he has the better hand in any negotiations on the issue. He may have concluded that, if he holds out long enough, the USG will eventually acquiesce to his demands because of the Administration’s timeline for closing Guantanamo in spite of Mr. Brennan’s clear message that the USG is actively seeking alternatives. End Comment.

9. (U) APDNSA Brennan cleared this cable. S/WCI Ambassador Williamson did not have the opportunity to clear this cable. BRYAN

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Yemen Sets Terms of a War on Al Qaeda”
Russia and Europe

A Wild Wedding in Dagestan, Russia

An American diplomat goes to a wedding in Dagestan, in the Caucasus region, and comes back with quite a tale.

DATE 2006-08-31 06:39:00

SOURCE Embassy Moscow

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 05 MOSCOW 009533

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/30/2016 TAGS: PGOV, ECON, PINR, RS SUBJECT: A CAUCASUS WEDDING

Summary
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1. (C) Weddings are elaborate in Dagestan, the largest autonomy in the North Caucasus. On August 22 we attended a wedding in Makhachkala, Dagestan's capital: Duma member and Dagestan Oil Company chief Gadzhi Makhachev's son married a classmate. The lavish display and heavy drinking concealed the deadly serious North Caucasus politics of land, ethnicity, clan, and alliance. The guest list spanned the Caucasus power structure -- guest starring Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov -- and underlined just how personal the region's politics can be. End Summary.

2. (C) Dagestani weddings are serious business: a forum for showing respect, fealty and alliance among families; the bride and groom themselves are little more than showpieces. Weddings take place in discrete parts over three days. On the first day the groom's family and the bride's family simultaneously hold separate receptions. During the receptions the groom leads a delegation to the bride's reception and escorts her back to his own reception, at which point she formally becomes a member of the groom's family, forsaking her old family and clan. The next day, the groom's parents hold another reception, this time for the bride's family and friends, who can "inspect" the family they have given their daughter to. On the third day, the bride's family holds a reception for the groom's parents and family.

Father of the Groom
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3. (C) On August 22, Gadzhi Makhachev married off his 19 year-old son Dalgat to Aida Sharipova. The wedding in Makhachkala, which we attended, was a microcosm of the social and political relations of the North Caucasus, beginning with Gadzhi's own biography. Gadzhi started off as an Avar clan leader. Enver Kisriyev, the leading scholar of Dagestani society, told us that as Soviet power receded from Dagestan in the late 1980s, the complex society fell back to its pre-Russian structure. The basic structural unit is the monoethnic “jamaat,” in this usage best translated as "canton" or "commune." The ethnic groups themselves are a Russian construct: faced with hundreds of jamaats, the 19th century Russian conquerors lumped cantons speaking related dialects together and called them “Avar,” “Dargin,” etc. to reduce the number of “nationalities” in Dagestan to 38. Ever since then, jamaats within each ethnic group have been competing with one another to lead the ethnic group. This competition is especially marked among the Avars, the
largest nationality in Dagestan.

4. (C) As Russian power faded, each canton fielded a militia to defend its people both in the mountains and the capital Makhachkala. Gadzhi became the leader from his home canton of Burtunay, in Kazbek Rayon. He later asserted pan-Avar ambitions, founding the Imam Shamil Popular Front -- named after the great Avar leader of mountaineer resistance to the Russians -- to promote the interests of the Avars and of Burtunay’s role within the ethnic group. Among his exploits was a role in the military defense of Dagestan against the 1999 invasion from Chechnya by Shamil Basayev and al-Khattab, and his political defense of Avar villages under pressure in Chechnya, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

5. (C) Gadzhi has cashed in the social capital he made from nationalism, translating it into financial and political capital -- as head of Dagestan’s state oil company and as the single-mandate representative for Makhachkala in Russia’s State Duma. His dealings in the oil business -- including close cooperation with U.S. firms -- have left him well off enough to afford luxurious houses in Makhachkala, Kaspysk, Moscow, Paris and San Diego; and a large collection of luxury automobiles, including the Rolls Royce Silver Phantom in which Dalgat fetched Aida from her parents’ reception. (Gadzhi gave us a lift in the Rolls once in Moscow, but the legroom was somewhat constricted by the presence of a Kalashnikov carbine at our feet. Gadzhi has survived numerous assassination attempts, as have most of the still-living leaders of Dagestan. In Dagestan he always travels in an armored BMW with one, sometimes two follow cars full of uniformed armed guards.)

6. (C) Gadzhi has gone beyond his Avar base, pursuing a multi-ethnic cadre policy to develop a network of loyalists. He has sent Dagestani youths, including his sons, to a military type high school near San Diego (we met one graduate, a Jewish boy from Derbent now studying at San Diego state. He has no plans to enter the Russian military).

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Gadzhi’s multi-ethnic reach illustrates what the editor of the Dagestani paper “Chernovik” told us: that in the last few years the development of inter-ethnic business clans has eroded traditional jamaat loyalties.

7. (C) But the Avar symbolism is still strong. Gadzhi’s brother, an artist from St. Petersburg, ordered as a wedding gift a life-sized statue of Imam Shamil. Shamil is the iconic national symbol, despite his stern and inflexible character (portrayed in Tolstoy’s “Hadji-Murat” as the mountaineers’ tyrannical counterpart to the absolutist Tsar). Connection with Shamil makes for nobility among Avars today. Gadzhi often mentions that he is a descendant on his mother’s side of Gair-Bek, one of Shamil’s deputies.

The Day Before
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8. (C) Gadzhi’s Kaspysk summer house is an enormous structure on the shore of the Caspian, essentially a huge circular reception room -- much like a large restaurant -- attached to a 40-meter high green airport tower on columns, accessible only by elevator, with a couple of bedrooms, a reception room, and a grotto whose glass floor was the roof of a huge fish tank. The heavily guarded compound also boasts a second house, outbuildings, a tennis court, and two piers out into the Caspian, one rigged with block and tackle for launching jet skis. The house filled up with visitors from all over the Caucasus during the afternoon of August 21. The Chair of Ingushetia’s parliament drove in with two colleagues; visitors from Moscow included politicians, businessmen and an Avar football coach. Many of the visitors grew up with Gadzhi in Khasavyurt, including an Ingush Olympic wrestler named Vakha who seemed to be perpetually tipsy. Another group of Gadzhi’s boyhood friends from Khasavyurt was led by a man who looked like Shamil Basayev on his day off -- flip-flops, t-shirt, baseball cap, beard -- but turned out to be the chief rabbi of Stavropol Kray. He told us he has 12,000 co-religionists in the province, 8,000 of them in its capital, Pyatigorsk. 70 percent are, like him, Persian-speaking Mountain Jews; the rest are a mixture of Europeans, Georgians and Bukharans.

C) Also present was XXXXXXXXXXXX He was reserved at the time, but in a follow-up conversation in Moscow on August 29 (please protect) he complained that Chechnya, lacking experts to develop programs for economic recovery, is simply demanding and disposing of cash from the central government. When we pressed him on disappearances, he admitted some took place, but claimed that often parents alleged their children had been abducted when in fact their sons had run off to
join the fighters or -- in a case the week before -- they had murdered their daughter in an honor killing. We mentioned the abduction of a widow of Basayev, allegedly to gain access to his money. XXXXXXXXXXXX said he had not heard of the case, but knew that Basayev had had no interest in wealth; he may have been a religious fanatic, but he was a “normal” person. The fighters who remain are not a serious military force, in XXXXXXXXXXXX view, and many would surrender under the proper terms and immunities. He himself is arranging the immunity of a senior official of the Maskhadov era, whose name he would not reveal.

10. (C) During lunch, Gadzhi took a congratulatory call from Dagestan’s president, Mukhu Aliyev. Gadzhi told Aliyev how honored he would be if Aliyev could drop in at the wedding reception. There was a degree of tension in the conversation, which was between two figures each implicitly claiming the mantle of leadership of the Avars. In the event, Aliyev snubbed Gadzhi and did not show up for the wedding, though the rest of Dagestan’s political leadership did.

11. (C) Though Gadzhi’s house was not the venue for the main wedding reception, he ensured that all his guests were constantly plied with food and drink. The cooks seemed to keep whole sheep and whole cows boiling in a cauldron somewhere day and night, dumping disjointed fragments of the carcass on the tables whenever someone entered the room. Gadzhi’s two chefs kept a wide variety of unusual dishes in circulation (in addition to the omnipresent boiled meat and fatty bouillon). The alcohol consumption before, during and after this Muslim wedding was stupendous. Amidst an alcohol shortage, Gadzhi had flown in from the Urals thousands of bottles of Beluga Export vodka (“Best consumed with caviar”). There was also entertainment, beginning even that day, with the big-name performers appearing both at the wedding hall and at Gadzhi’s summer house. Gadzhi’s main act, a Syrian-born singer named Avraam Russo, could not make it because he was shot a few days before the wedding, but there

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was a “gypsy” troupe from St. Petersburg, a couple of Azeri pop stars, and from Moscow, Benya the Accordion King with his family of singers. A host of local bands, singing in Avar and Dargin, rounded out the entertainment, which was constant and extremely amplified.

10. (C) The main activity of the day was eating and drinking -- starting from 4 p.m., about eight hours worth, all told -- punctuated, when all were laden with food and sodden with drink, with a bout of jet skiing in the Caspian. After dinner, though, the first band started an informal performance -- drums, accordion and clarinet playing the lezginka, the universal dance of the Caucasus. To the uninitiated Westerner, the music sounds like an undifferentiated wall of sound. This was a signal for dancing: one by one, each of the dramatically paunchy men (there were no women present) would enter the arena and exhibit his personal lezginka for the limit of his duration, usually 30 seconds to a minute. Each ethnic group’s lezginka was different -- the Dagestani lezginka the most energetic, the Chechen the most aggressive and belligerent, and the Ingush smoother.

Wedding Day 1
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11. (C) An hour before the wedding reception was set to begin the “Marrakech” reception hall was full of guests -- men taking the air outside and women already filling a number of the tables inside, older ones with headscarves chaperoning dozens of teenaged girls. A Dagestani parliamentarian explained that weddings are a principal venue for teenagers -- and more importantly their parents -- to get a look at one another with a view to future matches. Security was tight -- police presence on the ground plus police snipers positioned on the roof of an overlooking apartment block. Gadzhi even assigned one of his guards as our personal bodyguard at the reception. The manager told Gadzhi there were seats for over a thousand guests at a time. At the height of the reception, it was standing room only.

12. (C) At precisely two p.m. the male guests started filing in. They varied from pols and oligarchs of all sorts -- the slick to the Jurassic; wizened brown peasants from Burtunay; and Dagestan’s sports and cultural celebrities. XXXXXXXXXXXX presided over a political table in the smaller of the two halls (the music was in the other) along with Vakha the drunken wrestler, the Ingush parliamentarians, a member of the Federation Council who is also a nanophysicist and has lectured in Silicon Valley, and Gadzhi’s cousin Ismail Alibekov, a submariner first rank naval captain now serving at the General Staff in Moscow. The Dagestani milieu appears to be one in which the highly educated and the gun-toting can mix easily -- often in the same person.
13. (C) After a couple of hours Dalgat’s convoy returned with Aida, horns honking. Dalgat and Aida got out of the Rolls and were serenaded into the hall, and into the Makhachev family, by a boys’ chorus lining both sides of the red carpet, dressed in costumes aping medieval Dagestani armor with little shields and swords. The couple’s entry was the signal for the emcee to roll into high gear, and after a few toasts the Piter “gypsies” began their performance. (The next day one of Gadzhi’s houseguests sneered, “Some gypsies! The bandleader was certainly Jewish, and the rest of them were blonde.” There was some truth to this, but at least the two dancing girls appeared to be Roma.)

14. (C) As the bands played, the marriageable girls came out to dance the lezginka in what looked like a slowly revolving conga line while the boys sat together at tables staring intently. The boys were all in white shirts and black slacks, while the girls wore a wide variety of multicolored but fashionable cocktail dresses. Every so often someone would shower the dancers with money -- there were some thousand ruble notes but the currency of choice was the U.S. hundred dollar bill. The floor was covered with them; young children would scoop the money up to distribute among the dancers.

15. (C) Gadzhi was locked into his role as host. He greeted every guest personally as they entered the hall -- failure to do so would cause great insult -- and later moved constantly from table to table drinking toasts with everyone. The 120 toasts he estimated he drank would have killed anyone, hardened drinker or not, but Gadzhi had his Afghan waiter Khan following him around to pour his drinks from a special vodka bottle containing water. Still, he was much the worse for wear by evening’s end. At one point we caught up with him dancing with two scantily clad Russian women who looked far from home. One, it turned out was a Moscow poet (later she recited an incomprehensible poem in Gadzhi’s honor) who

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was in town with a film director to write the screenplay for a film immortalizing Gadzhi’s defense of Dagestan against Shamil Basayev. By 6 p.m. most of the houseguests had returned to Gadzhi’s seaside home for more swimming and more jet-skiing-under-the-influence. But by 8 the summer house’s restaurant was full once more, the food and drink were flowing, the name performers were giving acoustic renditions of the songs they had sung at the reception, and some stupendously fat guests were displaying their lezginkas for the benefit of the two visiting Russian women, who had wandered over from the reception.

The Wedding -- Day 2: Enter The Man
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16. (C) The next day’s reception at the Marrakech was Gadzhi’s tribute to Aida’s family, after which we all returned to a dinner at Gadzhi’s summer home. Most of the tables were set with the usual dishes plus whole roast sturgeons and sheep. But at 8:00 p.m. the compound was invaded by dozens of heavily armed mujahedin for the grand entrance of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, looking shorter and less muscular than in his photos, and with a somewhat cock-eyed expression on his face. After greetings from Gadzhi, Ramzan and about 20 of his retinue sat around the tables eating and listening to Benya the Accordion King. Gadzhi then announced a fireworks display in honor of the birthday of Ramzan’s late father, Ahmat-Hadji Kadyrov. The fireworks started with a bang that made both Gadzhi and Ramzan flinch. Gadzhi had from the beginning requested that none of his guests, most of whom carried sidearms, fire their weapons in celebration. Throughout the wedding they complied, not even joining in the magnificent fireworks display.

17. (C) After the fireworks, the musicians struck up the lezginka in the courtyard and a group of two girls and three boys -- one no more than six years old -- performed gymnastic versions of the dance. First Gadzhi joined them and then Ramzan, who danced clumsily with his gold-plated automatic stuck down in the back of his jeans (a houseguest later pointed out that the gold housing eliminated any practical use of the gun, but smirked that Ramzan probably couldn’t fire it anyway). Both Gadzhi and Ramzan showered the dancing children with hundred dollar bills; the dancers probably picked upwards of USD 5000 off the cobblestones. Gadzhi told us later that Ramzan had brought the happy couple “a five kilo lump of gold” as his wedding present. After the dancing and a quick tour of the premises, Ramzan and his army drove off back to Chechnya. We asked why Ramzan did not spend the night in Makhachkala, and were told, “Ramzan never spends the night anywhere.”

18. (C) After Ramzan sped off, the dinner and drinking -- especially the latter -- continued. An Avar FSB colonel sitting next to us, dead drunk, was highly insulted that we would not allow him
to add “cognac” to our wine. “It’s practically the same thing,” he insisted, until a Russian FSB
general sitting opposite told him to drop it. We were inclined to cut the Colonel some slack,
though: he is head of the unit to combat terrorism in Dagestan, and Gadzhi told us that
extremists have sooner or later assassinated everyone who has joined that unit. We were more
worried when an Afghan war buddy of the Colonel’s, Rector of the Dagestan University Law School
and too drunk to sit, let alone stand, pulled out his automatic and asked if we needed any
protection. At this point Gadzhi and his people came over, propped the rector between their
shoulders, and let us get out of range.

Postscript: The Practical Uses of a Caucasus Wedding
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19. (C) Kadyrov’s attendance was a mark of respect and alliance, the result of Gadzhi’s careful
cultivation -- dating back to personal friendship with Ramzan’s father. This is a necessary
political tool in a region where difficulties can only be resolved by using personal
relationships to reach ad hoc informal agreements. An example was readily to hand: on August 22
Chechnya’s parliamentary speaker, Dukvakha Abdurakhmanov, gave an interview in which he made
specific territorial claims to the Kizlyar, Khasavyurt and Novolak regions of Dagestan. The first
two have significant Chechen-Akkin populations, and the last was part of Chechnya until the 1944
deporation, when Stalin forcibly resettled ethnic Laks (a Dagestani nationality) there. Gadzhi
said he would have to answer Abdurakhmanov and work closely with Ramzan to reduce the tensions
“that fool” had caused. Asked why he took such statements seriously, he told us that in the
Caucasus all disputes revolve around land, and such claims can never be

dismissed. Unresolved land claims are the “threads” the Russian center always kept in play to
pull when needed. We asked why these claims are coming out now, and were told it was euphoria,
pure and simple. After all they had received, the Chechen leadership’s feet are miles off the
ground. (A well-connected Chechen contact later told us he thought that raising nationalistic
irredentism was part of Abdurakhmanov’s effort to gain a political base independent from
Kadyrov.)

20. (C) The “horizontal of power” represented by Gadzhi’s relationship with Ramzan is the
antithesis of the Moscow-imposed “vertical of power.” Gadzhi’s business partner Khalik Gindiyev,
head of Rosneft-Kaspoil, complained that Moscow should let local Caucasians rather than Russians
-- “Magomadovs and Aliyevs, not Ivanovs and Petrovs” -- resolve the region’s conflicts. The
vertical of power, he said, is inapplicable to the Caucasus, a region that Moscow bureaucrats
such as PolPred Kozak would never understand. The Caucasus needs to be given the scope to resolve
its own problems. But this was not a plug for democracy. Gadzhi told us democracy would always
fail in the Caucasus, where the conception of the state is as an extension of the Caucasus
family, in which the father’s word is law. “Where is the room for democracy in that?” he asked.
We paraphrased Hayek: if you run a family as you do a state, you destroy the family. Running a
state as you do a family destroys the state: ties of kinship and friendship will always trump the
rule of law. Gadzhi’s partner agreed, shaking his head sadly. “That’s a matter for generations to
come,” he said.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy”
Conflict Over Money-Tracking Program

Dozens of secret cables since 2006 discussed the diplomatic tensions in Europe over an American program to monitor international banking transactions through a Brussels database known as Swift. A cable in February detailed the “paranoia” among some European diplomats toward the program as well as the anger expressed by Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany anger over a vote by the European Parliament a day earlier to temporarily halt the program.

DATE 2010-02-12 17:09:00

SOURCE Embassy Berlin

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 000180

SENSITIVE SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR, L, S/CT, EEB, INL TREASURY FOR TFI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/11/2020 TAGS: PTER, KTFN, PGOV, PREL, PINR, ETTC, EAIR, EFIN, KCRM, KJUS, KJLS, GM SUBJECT: CHANCELLOR MERKEL ANGERED BY LACK OF GERMAN MEP SUPPORT FOR TFTP

REF: A. BERLIN 176 B. BERLIN 128

1. (C) SUMMARY: Chancellor Merkel is privately angry over the lack of support German members of the European Parliament gave the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) interim agreement and is worried that Washington will view the EP’s veto as a sign that Europe does not take the terrorist threat seriously. Merkel is particularly irritated with German MEPs from her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and sister Christian Social Union (CSU) parties, most of whom reportedly voted against the agreement despite previously indicating they would support it. Public German reactions to the EP vote have come exclusively from TFTP detractors who portrayed the veto as a sign that the European Parliament has won a victory over an arrogant Commission/Council, as well as delivering a rebuke to U.S. counterterrorism policies that undervalue data privacy. These events suggest the need to intensify our engagement with German government interlocutors, Bundestag and European parliamentarians, and opinion makers to demonstrate that the U.S. has strong data privacy measures in place. END SUMMARY

2. (C) Hamburg Mayor Ole von Beust (CDU) told Ambassador today (2/12) that he had met with Chancellor Merkel last night and she was “very, very angry - angrier than he had ever seen her” with the outcome of the vote. Beust said that the Chancellor had personally lobbied German MEPs from the CDU/CSU parties to support the agreement, but that most of these MEPs ended up voting against the agreement anyway. Merkel expressed concerns to Beust that Washington will view the EP veto as a sign that Europe does not take the terrorist threat seriously. Merkel also worried about the ramifications (presumably within Europe and for transatlantic relations) that might follow were a terrorist attack to occur that could have been prevented had SWIFT data been exchanged.

3. (C) Federal Justice Minister Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, a strong proponent of data privacy rights from the Free Democratic Party (FDP; see refelts), quickly welcomed the TFTP veto. She said “the citizens of Europe have won a victory today that strengthened not just data protection, but democracy in all of Europe.” The Minister has been a vocal critic of the TFTP and in
interviews today stressed that the EP veto will lead to a change of European policy in which "data protection is no longer just an appendix of security policy." She also restated her understanding that German investigators believe TFTP data has not contributed meaningfully to terrorism investigations. She said the EP decision paves the way for new negotiations that take into account European notions of data protection.

4. (C) Some German members of the European Parliament likewise applauded the TFTP veto. Green Party MEP Jan Philipp Albrecht stated that the vote would not cause a "transatlantic ice-age" because President Obama has more important concerns and would not "emphasize this defeat too much at home." Werner Langen, head of the EP CDU/CSU group, said that his group did not vote against the United States, but rather against the European Commission and the Council who had "negotiated a bad agreement." Martin Schulz, head of the Social Democratic faction, said that the "negotiating position of the EU is now better." FDP MEP Alexander Graf Lambsdorff acknowledged that the decision could be a temporary irritation in transatlantic relations, but believed that this would not last long and the time would soon come to "negotiate a reasonable agreement." Bavarian State Minister Mueller told Munich CG that the CSU is interested in moving forward with the negotiation of a new agreement that meets US and European needs.

5. (C) COMMENT: Why did so many German MEPs oppose TFTP?

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First, the debate was not just about TFTP. Germans across the political spectrum adamantly support data protection whether it has to do with Passenger Name Records, Google’s supposed monopoly on data searches, or individual credit ratings. Recent scandals in which major firms such as Deutsche Telekom and Deutsche Bahn illegally tapped phones or files of tens of thousands of employees and customers reinforced Germans, concerns about the misuse of data technology. Historical memory also plays a part, as stories about how the Stasi abused information to destroy people’s lives still regularly circulate in the press. Paranoia runs deep especially about U.S. intelligence agencies. We were astonished to learn how quickly rumors about alleged U.S. economic espionage at first associated with the new U.S. air passenger registration system (ESTA), then with TFTP gained currency among German parliamentarians in the run-up to the February 11 vote in Strasbourg. Moreover, the fact that the libertarian Free Democratic Party (FDP) made data privacy a central plank of the pact with its coalition partners, the CDU/CSU and more importantly, captured the Justice Ministry made it very difficult for TFTP advocates like Interior Minister de Maiziere to speak up. None of this may excuse the behavior of certain German MEPs, but it says something about the challenge ahead.

6. (C) COMMENT CONT.: The overwhelming rejection of the interim agreement by German MEPs from all political parties nonetheless is surprising. Although we anticipated that the FDP and Greens would come out strongly against the interim agreement, the broad lack of support it received from the CDU/CSU and Social Democrats was unexpected. We believe a number of factors contributed to this including the fact that MEPs of all stripes saw this as an early opportunity to exert their new post-Lisbon powers and send a message to the Commission and Council. Specific to Germany, the almost complete absence of public statements by German leadership in support of the agreement resulted in a situation in which MEPs received no political coverage supporting a positive vote and saw little political cost for a no vote. Furthermore, the German public and political class largely tends to view terrorism abstractly given that it has been decades since any successful terrorist attack has occurred on German soil. This week’s TFTP vote demonstrates that we need to intensify our engagement with German government interlocutors, Bundestag and European parliamentarians and opinion makers to get our views across. We need to also demonstrate that the U.S. has strong data privacy measures in place so that robust data sharing comes with robust data protections. Murphy
American Ambassador on Sarkozy

In this cable, the American ambassador, Charles Rivkin, reviews President Nicolas Sarkozy’s domestic political situation ahead of regional elections in March 2009. He shares his perception of the French president as operating with “monarch-like impunity” after a string of scandals and notes his decision to promote his son Jean, then 23 years old, as the head of France’s most prestigious business district.

DATE 2009-10-21 15:09:00

SOURCE Embassy Paris

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 001416

SIPDIS


Classified By: POL M/C Kathy Allegrone for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: French regional elections scheduled for March 2010 are shaping up as a measurement of President Nicolas Sarkozy’s strength at the mid-point of his term. Despite rumors of malaise and dogged by a series of internal political tempests including the Clearstream trial, rumors of his Culture Minister’s participation in sex tourism, and his son Jean’s appointment to a coveted business position amidst charges of nepotism, no other political figure or party can match the dominance of Sarkozy on the French political scene. The opposition Socialists (PS) are in tatters, with Martine Aubry, as Party Chairman, vying for control of the left against her bitter rival, 2007 PS presidential candidate, Segolene Royale. With Sarkozy’s UMP controlling only two of 22 regions, and following their impressive victory in the European elections last June, the center-right appears to have nothing to lose. The debate has been how many more regions will tip their way -- and what will constitute victory. Regional councils play a role in the selection of French Senators, and by extension that body can take on a different complexion than the UMP-controlled National Assembly. As the only national vote before the 2012 presidential and legislative races, all eyes view this round of regional elections as a preview Sarkozy’s reelection bid. End Summary.

2. (U) Regional elections will be held in France in mid-March 2010 to elect local leadership for the 22 regions of mainland France and four additional overseas regions. In 2005, Socialists overwhelmed the UMP in the regional elections, winning all but two regions. The huge Socialist victory was viewed widely as a repudiation of then-President Chirac’s leadership. As the only nationwide elections before the 2012 presidential and legislative elections, “the regionals” are viewed as a referendum on Nicolas Sarkozy’s leadership and a snapshot of parties’ relative strength heading into 2012.

Mechanics
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3. (U) As elsewhere in Europe, regional elections in France are a confusing system combining proportional and majority voting. Like other elections in France, voters choose a party list, or slate of candidates, representing various parties. Any list winning 10% of the vote in the first round of elections (likely to be on March 14 or 21, 2010), advances to a second round of elections (one week later, thus either March 21 or 28, 2010). Parties that win only 5% of the vote may join efforts with other parties to advance to the second round. If one party wins 25% of the votes, they win the right to form the regional council; the remaining seats are divided...
proportionally depending on the results of the second round.

Sarkozy's Dominance, Despite Governing Woes

4. (C) Regional councils finance education, transport and other key infrastructure, and are locked in a struggle with national authorities over taxation. They also participate, along with other municipalities, in the selection process of French Senators, and will do so again in September 2011. With only two regions controlled by conservative majorities (in Alsace and Corsica), President Sarkozy would welcome extending his political dominance to regional councils, to match his lionized role in the executive and legislative branches. But Sarkozy faces his own challenges, and the press is abuzz about malaise in his administration, as well as Sarkozy's "monarchial tendencies." Concretely, Sarkozy first urged cabinet members to head the UMP ticket in various regions. He then flipped and decided it was incompatible to hold both jobs simultaneously. That decision forced three ministers to opt out of running in regional races, and has left the President’s UMP party ill prepared for March, scrambling to find suitable candidates. Sarkozy has also been dogged by recent scandals, including his Culture Minister Frederic Mitterrand’s dalliance in possible sex tourism. Mitterrand chronicled his appetite for paying for sex with young men in a 2005 book (that Sarkozy described as “courageous”) but subsequently publicly denied and condemned “sexual tourism,” and vigorously denied that any of his actions extended to under-aged youth. Sarkozy has come in for withering criticism when news broke that his 23-year old son, Jean, an undergraduate law student, was to be named head of the regional business authority of France’s premier business district, La Defense. Both the Mitterrand affair and the apparent favoritism enjoyed by the younger Sarkozy have given the president’s opponents two potential campaign issues, that could damage his party’s chances in the upcoming regionals.

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Weakened Opposition Focused on Infighting

5. (C) Despite the challenges facing Sarkozy, other parties are far from fighting shape. The opposition Socialists (PS) are locked in their own internecine struggle for dominance between party leader, Martine Aubry, and 2007 presidential candidate, Segolene Royal. Sarkozy confidant Alain Minc told Ambassador Rivkin in September, 2009 that he was a close friend of Aubry’s whom he had known since their days at France’s Ecole Nationale d’Administration (ENA), and that Aubry told him she ran for the PS leadership in order to clip Royale’s wings. The PS is preoccupied with how to position the party for the 2012 presidential race, either by forming a broad left coalition, or moving into alliance with the centrist Mouvement Democratique (MoDem) party.

6. (SBU) The PS faces a real challenge from its left, with the Green party hoping to repeat their surprisingly strong showing in European parliamentary elections. The Greens have refused to run with PS in the first round of regional elections and are counting on the growing profile of their 34 year old leader, Cecile Duflot to win in Paris. A Green win in high-profile Paris would be a serious rebuke to the PS, and if repeated elsewhere in France could precipitate Aubry’s ouster from her leadership role in the PS.

7. (SBU) MoDem will be challenged by a new group of centrists called Nouveau Centre, which is largely allied with Sarkozy’s UMP. Neither party is expected to win any regional contest, but there is an open question of where MoDem will throw its support in a second round of elections. Their electoral results will be watched closely as a barometer for the 2012 presidential race, and whether MoDem will join forces with the PS to create a united coalition to oppose Sarkozy in 2012.

8. (C) The far right National Front (FN) will focus its efforts in the Provence Alpes Cote d’Azur (PACA) region in southern France, a traditional area of support. With his party’s finances in tatters and its traditional themes co-opted by Sarkozy’s UMP, this race likely represents Jean Marie Le Pen’s final campaign. He has passed the torch to his daughter, Marine, who broke the Frederic Mitterrand story, largely to energize her flagging campaign. Fearing association with the FN, other mainstream political parties were slow to criticize Mitterrand, although some PS leaders eventually joined the chorus calling for his resignation.

9. (C) Comment: Although the Mitterrand story has largely disappeared, it has been replaced since by the embarrassing issue of Jean Sarkozy’s likely election to head the La Defense business
district. Combined, these stories have bolstered the impression that Sarkozy is operating in a zone of monarch-like impunity, and his aides, according to an article in Le Figaro, are unwilling to question the President’s views. UMP party leaders have turned to the traditional canard of lashing out at the media for their unfair attention, but they have just as quickly sought to lower expectations for a strong conservative comeback in the March 2010 elections. After losing 13 regions in 2005, UMP election expert Alain Marleix said winning six back was a possibility, but that estimate was lowered by UMP President Xavier Bertrand, who said this week that a center-right win in four would “be a miracle.” Regardless of the result, Sarkozy will head into 2012 enjoying an outsized role in the French political firmament -- beloved by some, reviled by others -- and the failure of the opposition to do anything other than bicker amongst themselves spells a positive forecast as Sarkozy eyes a re-election bid in two more years.

RIVKIN

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Praise French Friend With ‘Mercurial’ Side”
An Intimidating Boss

In this cable, sent to Washington last December, Ambassador Rivkin describes how Mr. Sarkozy’s advisers often fail to give him honest counsel and can go to great lengths to avoid displeasing their boss. The cable includes an anecdote about some advisers rerouting the presidential plane to so that the president would not see that the city of Paris had used Turkey’s national colors to light up Eiffel Tower during a visit by the Turkish prime minister in April 2009. Mr. Sarkozy is a staunch opponent of Turkey’s application to become a member of the European Union.
which place his personal approval ratings at 39 percent. His center-right UMP party controls both houses of parliament, and opposition leaders in France have spent the past two years fighting among themselves rather than mounting any serious political challenge to the incumbent president. Sarkozy’s policy of “openness” in appointing opposition politicians to high-profile positions has contributed to the leadership drain on the left. IMF President Dominique Strauss-Kahn and FM Kouchner are just two examples of this successful political ploy. Despite this political security -- or perhaps because of it -- there is some internal grumbling about Sarkozy’s high-handed style within his own party, revealed by the recent attempt to name his 23-year old son Jean Sarkozy, who is still an undergraduate student, to a position at the head of Paris’s most prestigious business development commission. A brilliant political tactician, Sarkozy is raising the profile of the March 2010 regional elections to rally his base and steal voters from the far right as part of a ramp-up to his re-election bid in 2012. While this makes him more sensitive to the near-term domestic political impact of certain foreign policy issues (like Afghanistan), his domestic stature remains fundamentally secure, freeing him to focus on his goal of leveraging French power in Europe and globally.

FOREIGN POLICY SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

3. (C/NF) The net result of Sarkozy’s dominance of the domestic political scene is that he is also one of the most secure leaders in Europe, with no awkward coalition partner or imminent presidential elections to distract or hinder him. Sarkozy occasionally recognizes that to be heard on the world stage -- whether on strategic questions or the global financial crisis -- France’s voice is amplified when speaking in concert with others. Sarkozy has worked hard to successfully parlay an initially awkward personal relationship with German Chancellor Merkel into a smoothly coordinated tandem that drives much of European policy. Likewise, he will frequently pair with Merkel and UK PM Brown to add needed clout to messages in Brussels and Washington. Sarkozy’s ability to leverage his (and France’s) voice on the world stage by building on strategic partnerships is one of his greatest strengths; one of his greatest weaknesses, however, may be his impatience and penchant to launch proposals with insufficient consultation with other major players.

4. (C/NF) Sarkozy’s most visible successes to date are largely in the foreign affairs domain, with his greatest achievements within Europe. He championed the Lisbon treaty in his first months in office, helping to end the stalemate over reform of EU institutions. This was succeeded by his leadership of the rotating EU presidency in the second half of 2008, which included the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the launch of the EU’s counter-piracy operation, and his negotiation of a cease-fire after the Russian invasion of Georgia. Characteristically, he didn’t hesitate to disregard European sensitivities by attempting to retain the lead on specific portfolios where he doubted the Czech ability to provide the necessary follow-on EU lead after Prague took over the rotating presidency in January 2009. On security issues, Sarkozy is equally bold. He personally authorized additional French troops for Afghanistan at the 2008 Bucharest NATO summit and this year he fought to bring France back into NATO’s integrated military command, reversing more than 40 years of bipartisan French policy, in spite of strong skepticism within his own party and intense opposition from others.

NEW PARTNERS, NEW IDEAS

5. (C/NF) In a departure from previous French leaders, Sarkozy has also devoted a great deal of effort to reaching out bilaterally to countries like Israel, Saudi Arabia and Syria, recognizing that they are major players in the Middle East where French ambitions have been frustrated. French officials are convinced that Sarkozy’s outreach to Syria has made Syrian President al Asad a more productive partner in resolving Middle East issues (although they are hard-pressed to provide concrete examples of a change). Sarkozy fully recognizes the growing role played by emerging powers like Brazil (he has meet with Brazilian President Lula nine times in the past two years) and India (whose troops he invited to star in the July 14, 2009 military parade). He lobbied successfully for the G-20 meeting in Washington to address the global financial crisis, and he supports an expanded UN Security Council, which earns him additional popularity among rising powers. The Elysee has also looked to Brazil as a partner in climate change negotiations
and a buyer of French defense equipment -- including potentially the first overseas sale of the Rafale fighter aircraft. All of these outreach efforts stem from genuine convictions as well as an eye to the image of France at the center of a global network of influential leaders.

6. (C/NF) Sarkozy is most prone to disappoint when, in his impatience for action, he effectively “gets ahead” of other key players and his own advisors. Sarkozy is firmly convinced that the most intractable diplomatic problems can only be solved by getting leaders together in person to cut through bureaucratic red tape and make bold decisions -- hence his predilection for proposing summits. He has little patience for the incremental steps of diplomacy and once he latches onto an idea he is loath to let it go. Impatient for progress in the Middle East, he has sought ways to make France a player, first through creation of the UfM and second by championing a summit, either in the guise of the UfM or now through other partners (such as the U.S., the Quartet, etc) to achieve his goals. In another example, his surprise announcement last June in support of a new treaty on European security architecture took many allies, and his own staff, by surprise. Although that debate has been channelled into the OSCE Corfu process for the present, Sarkozy is already chafing at what he considers lack of progress on this strategic issue and is continuously tasking his staff to come up with new proposals to address the impasse of CFE, improve the partnership with Russia, and provide other ideas to overcome blocked initiatives.

7. (C/NF) Sarkozy has few restraints -- political, personal or ideological -- to act as a brake on his global ambitions. Domestically, he rewards party leaders prepared to adopt his policies and marginalizes any opponents with a diverse view. Several “favored” cabinet ministers with high profiles early in his administration -- including Rama Yade and Rachida Dati -- were subsequently bumped into secondary jobs after having disagreed with Sarkozy. On the other hand, State Secretary for European Affairs, Pierre Lellouche, willingly muzzled his long-term outspoken support for Turkish Accession to the EU in exchange for his current post. While Diplomatic Advisor (NSA-equivalent) Jean-David Levitte remains a key player, with an extensive background in diplomacy and a calming personality, other advisors like Secretary General Claude Gueant are playing an increasingly public role. Despite having Sarkozy’s ear to various degrees, few appear to exercise any significant degree of influence over the activist president.

8. (C/NF) Sarkozy’s own advisors likewise demonstrate little independence and appear to have little effect on curbing the hyperactive president, even when he is at his most mercurial. Elysee contacts have reported to us the great lengths they will go to avoid disagreeing with him or provoking his displeasure -- even recently reportedly re-routing the President’s plane to avoid his seeing the Eiffel Tower lit up in Turkey’s colors on the visit of PM Erdogan (a decision made by the Paris city hall). After two years in office, many seasoned key Elysee staff are leaving for prestigious onward assignments as a reward for their hard work, raising questions as to whether new faces will be any more willing to point out when the emperor is less than fully dressed.

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE FUTURE

9. (C/NF) When he was elected in 2007, Sarkozy was among the first French leaders to openly embrace the United States, despite a U.S. administration very unpopular in Europe at the time. This was due to Sarkozy’s conviction that France can accomplish more in cooperation with, rather than opposition to, the United States. When then-Senator and presidential candidate Obama came to France in July 2008, Sarkozy cleared his schedule to meet with him and further broke his own protocol rules and held a joint press conference (a privilege normally reserved exclusively for visiting heads of state). Sarkozy is prepared to be the U.S.’s key partner in Europe and is hoping for intense regular contact with President Obama (which enhances Sarkozy’s domestic stature and therefore directly increases his ability to make hard decisions). French journalists are pointing out with increasing frequency that Sarkozy has not paid a White House call on President Obama, and French officials are beginning to express concern over this perceived lack of high-level visits and other regular consultations. Journalists and officials alike are expressing the concern that France, and Europe as a whole, may be of less strategic importance to the United States today (a view that, all things being equal, does not enhance their incentives to work closely with us).
10. (C/NF) On strategic questions, Paris is frequently willing to back U.S. positions, even in the face of general European reluctance. Paris has welcomed U.S. efforts to “re-set” relations with Russia and has consistently emphasized developing a common approach with Washington toward Moscow. On Iran, Presidents Sarkozy remains personally engaged and is willing to work intensely within Europe (both institutionally in the EU and through efforts to persuade individual countries to adopt national measures). On non-proliferation and disarmament issues, the GOF has urged regular consultations in the run up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference and launch of discussions on a FMCT treaty. The most important thing for French officials and Sarkozy himself is to feel like they are part of the decision-making process and not simply called in to ratify decisions after they have been made in Washington.

AFGHANISTAN: AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

PARIS 00001638 004 OF 004

11. (C/NF) Our effort to secure increased French contributions to Afghanistan underlines how much decision-making power is vested in the French president and how best we can work with him to achieve desired results. Last year, on our request, President Sarkozy went against all of his political and military advisors to deploy a French OMLT to assist the Dutch forces in Uruzgan, a critical reinforcement of a key ally. It was also Sarkozy alone who made the decision to deploy an additional 700 troops at last year’s Bucharest summit -- at the time of the announcement, even key staff were still unsure what the final decision would be. This year, in intense exchanges with all the major French players including FM Kouchner, NSA-equivalent Levitte and French CHOD Georgelin, each one expressed support for U.S. policy but were doubtful about additional French financial or military resources, frequently citing Sarkozy’s earlier statement of “no additional troops.”

12. (C/NF) However, following a direct conversation with President Obama, President Sarkozy dropped the formerly firm “no” position and moved forward more quickly and proactively than we envisioned, opening the door to military reinforcements “in time” and promising increased financial and training assistance. Although the specifics are not yet provided, the personal outreach to President Sarkozy made the difference between getting a cautious bureaucratic response and a genuine commitment from a key ally when we needed it. The French press led their reports noting Sarkozy was the first foreign leader on Obama’s call sheet, thereby increasing the pressure on Sarkozy to respond favorably.

COMMENT

13. (C/NF) Comment: As one of Europe’s most politically secure leaders at the head of a country with significant ability to contribute more to global problem-solving across a broad front, from Afghanistan to climate change, economic stabilization, Iran, and the Middle East Peace Process, Sarkozy represents a key actor in the fulfillment of our shared policy goals. We will not always see eye-to-eye, and differences on key issues (such as non-proliferation and disarmament, which are seen as critical to French national interests) are looming. However, though enhanced consultation (including, and perhaps especially, at the highest levels), I believe we can address these differences, minimize unhelpful proposals and foster increased collaboration to better leverage French interests to fulfill ours. France is a like-minded country with a major economy and the second-largest deployed military and diplomatic forces in the world. By striking the right note in our bilateral relationship, we can leverage Sarkozy’s strengths, including his willingness to take a stand on unpopular issues, to be a major contributor to U.S. goals. We must also recognize that Sarkozy has an extraordinary degree of decision-making power which is vested in him alone as the French president. In my opinion it will necessitate periodic Presidential intervention to reassure Sarkozy of our commitment as an ally and partner and, in many cases, to close the deal. Sarkozy will remain a power to be reckoned with in France and a significant driver of Europe for the foreseeable future. It is clearly in our interest to work hard to channel his energy and initiatives into a constructive form of cooperation that enhances our ability to solve global issues together. End comment. RIVKIN
RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Praise French Friend With ‘Mercurial’ Side”
Sarkozy Portrayed as “Pro-American”

In August 2005, American diplomats are charmed and impressed by the “viscerally pro-American” Mr. Sarkozy, who is then the interior minister in Jacques Chirac’s administration.

DATE 2005-08-04 10:27:00

SOURCE Embassy Paris

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 005335

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR, DRL, AND EB COMMERCE FOR ITA LABOR FOR ILAB NSC FOR TRACY MCKIBBEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2015 TAGS: PREL, ECON, EFIN, ELAB, PGOV, FR SUBJECT: ALLAN HUBBARD’S CALL ON INTERIOR MINISTER SARKOZY

REF: PARIS 5232

Classified By: Ambassador Craig R. Stapleton for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d ).

1. (C) SUMMARY. Ambassador Stapleton and National Economic Council Director Allan Hubbard met with Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy on August 1. Sarkozy expressed his admiration for President Bush and said he looked forward to the opportunity to tackle France’s economic and social problems with the same directness for which the President is justly famous. Sarkozy confirmed that he would be running for President of France in 2007. He said his own struggle to rise to high office, as the son of immigrants challenging entrenched elites, in part explained his deep admiration for America’s values. He said he would stress opportunity and making a “deep break with the past” -- by proposing significant change to France’s social model -- in his 2007 campaign. On economic issues, Sarkozy reprised many of his now familiar policy themes: France’s economic model holds back growth; people need to work more and be rewarded for doing so; and people need to be told the truth about the economic situation. He was upbeat about France’s future if the country seized the opportunity that reforms could bring. He also tossed out a few of the “policy zingers” for which he is well known, notably “The European Central Bank confuses a strong currency with a strong economy,” and “France needs to do what Reagan did in the U.S., Thatcher in Britain, and Gonzales in Spain.” End Summary.

2. (U) Ambassador Stapleton and Allan Hubbard, Director of the National Economic Council, met with France’s Minister of Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy on 1 August. Sarkozy is also the president of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) party, a coalition of center-right parties founded by President Chirac in 2002. The meeting took place in Sarkozy’s office at the Ministry of the Interior and was also attended by Sarkozy Chief of Staff Claude Gueant and Interior Ministry Staffer Cederic Goubet. Embassy Econ Counselor, Poloff and Economic Analyst (as interpreter) accompanied Mr. Hubbard and Ambassador Stapleton.

ADMIRATION FOR PRESIDENT BUSH

3. (C) Sarkozy expressed his admiration for President Bush. Sarkozy said that, like the President, he too was committed to keeping his word and to dealing honestly with the real problems of the country, “unlike the rest of those politicians.” Throughout the hour-long meeting, Sarkozy returned again and again to the importance of leveling with people. He illustrated his point by saying the “French people have to be told the truth -- and they want to hear it.” He added that most politicians, and specifically President Chirac, just keep stringing the people along with their “constant tergiversating.” Economic Council Director Hubbard’s
presentation of the President’s direct and principled tackling of America’s major domestic
challenges (taxes, social security, education), drew the high compliment from Sarkozy that he too
would like to tackle the same problems, in the same way, for France.

DISAGREING WITH VERSUS UNDERCUTTING THE U.S.
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4. (C) Sarkozy lamented the troubled state of U.S.-France relations during recent years. He drew
a sharp distinction between disagreeing with friends and undercutting them. He said, “we should
always be able to disagree.” Calling it something he “would never do”, he cited President
Chirac’s, and then-foreign Minister de Villepin’s, use of France’s Security Council veto against
the U.S. in February 2002 as an unjustifiable and excessive reaction to a difference of views. He
added that he would have advised the U.S. not to undertake the invasion and occupation of Iraq --
but that that didn’t prevent him from “feeling it personally when American soldiers die in
combat.” He proudly pointed out how, at the height of anti-American feeling and anti-U.S.
demonstrations (contemporaneous to Sarkozy’s first stint as Minister of the Interior (2002 -
2004), he took it as a personal responsibility to see to it that “no U.S. Embassy or Consulate
was so much as touched” by demonstrators.

IDENTIFYING WITH AMERICA’S VALUES
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5. (C) “They call me ‘Sarkozy the American,’” he said, “they consider it an insult, but I take it
as a compliment.” Sarkozy stressed how much he “recognized himself” in America’s values. He
recalled how as a boy, he told his father that he wanted to grow up to be president. He said his
Hungarian-born father retorted, “In that case, go to America -- because with a name like Sarkozy,
you’ll never make it here.” Proving that wrong, Sarkozy said, was a touchstone for his efforts
both to succeed and to transform France into a place where “outsiders” like him could also enjoy
opportunity untrammeled by prejudice. Comment: Very much unlike nearly all other French political
figures, Sarkozy is viscerally pro-American. For most of his peers the U.S. is a sometimes
reviled or admired, but decidedly foreign, other. Sarkozy identifies with America; he sees his
own rise in the world as reflecting an American-like saga. End Comment.

FIGHTING FRANCE’S ELITE
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6. (C) Sarkozy pointed to his own political career as an example of both his success and the
difficulty of achieving it. “I’m not a member of the elite...I’m someone who wants to speak for
the France that gets up every morning and works,” he said, as he recalled his own rise from
“knowing nobody and beginning as a simple party supporter, and climbing every step in the ladder”
to his current bid for the presidency. With some vehemence, Sarkozy insisted on his having had to
“challenge those stronger than me” every step of way.

CONFIRMING HE WILL RUN
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7. (C) Sarkozy confirmed his intention to run for president to Ambassador Stapleton and NEC
Director Hubbard, saying, “I am going to be a candidate in 2007”. Outlining his campaign
strategy, Sarkozy said, “we are going to propose change to the French people.” “I’m convinced
that it can work...people want to believe they can succeed.” Sarkozy then touched on many of his
specific proposals for providing more opportunity for the able and more support for the
disadvantaged -- tax cuts, labor law reform, affirmative action, immigration reform, and monetary
policy that “recognizes that the currency is an instrument for supporting a strong economy.”

RECALLING REAGAN, THATCHER AND GONZALES
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8. (C) On economic affairs, Sarkozy repeated his often-stated assertion that the French economic
model is “bad.” France needs to do what Spain, the UK and other successful countries have done
over the past twenty years; take the best of what they have done and adopt those policies in
France. In response to Mr. Hubbard’s question on what Sarkozy’s economic vision for France was,
Sarkozy said that the French people have to understand that they need to work more and that the
Government must make it more profitable for people who do so. He said that France needed to a go
through a period similar to the U.S. under Reagan, the UK under Thatcher, and Spain under
Gonzalez. “France is not an old country,” he said, “but right now it’s acting like one.”

INCENTIVES FOR TAKING INITIATIVE
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9. (C) Sarkozy explained his theory that unemployment benefits should be higher than they
currently are for people immediately after they are laid off. However they should quickly phase
out to provide an incentive for people to look for work. Unemployed people should be required to
look for work; now they are not required to. Echoing comments made by Finance Minister Breton,
Sarkozy said, “people are ready for the politics of truth.” He added that his directly expressed assessments of France’s economic problems and his insistent advocacy of work, innovation and entrepreneurship in fact contribute to his popularity. “Some people told me never to say such things, people will hate you; clearly they don’t hate me,” he observed.

OVER-VALUED EURO AND NO ALAN GREENSPAN
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10 (C) On the deficit, Sarkozy said that for 25 years France has been living beyond its means. Now it is paying the price for that. He said that the U.S. had two advantages that France did not have: “Greenspan and the dollar.” He said that France was suffering from no longer having control of its own currency and observed that European Central Bank (ECB) president Trichet was pursuing exactly the wrong policies; “he confuses a strong currency with a strong economy.” Europe needed a pro-growth ECB, not one focused on fighting inflation only. The U.S., he observed, “has often had its strongest economy when the dollar was at its weakest.” Turning to Chairman Greenspan, Sarkozy said, “he is a genius. A genius. He has pursued exactly the right policies.”

FRANCE’S ECONOMIC CHALLENGES
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11. (C) Returning to his priorities for France, Sarkozy noted that France’s biggest challenges were outsourcing, a lagging research sector, savings that are “too static and don’t really help move the economy,” and a lack of profitable mid-size companies; “we have lots of big ones and lots of really small ones, but few in between.” He sees natural strengths for France in the health, agriculture and food, transportation, communication and nuclear energy sectors.

WORKING TOGETHER AT THE WTO
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12. (C) Responding to Mr. Hubbard’s observation on the need for the Doha trade round to move forward this autumn, Sarkozy agreed, and noted that the EU needed to reach a better understanding with the U.S. on agricultural issues. He said that U.S. and EU officials were talking but prescribed much more intensive discussion so that a common understanding could be reached. If that happened, he believed the upcoming Hong Kong ministerial could be a success.

COMMENT
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13. (C) For many years, Nicolas Sarkozy has been France’s most popular politician. Current polls show his approval ratings holding steady at around 60 percent, and defeating any probable opponent in 2007. By experience and conviction -- his experience as interior minister and his “liberal,” free-market oriented convictions -- he seems particularly well-suited to lead France in meeting the key challenges it now faces: security in this era of global terrorism and prosperity in this era of adapting to economic globalization. In addition, Sarkozy’s deep identification with American values -- opportunity, initiative, competition, society that sustains individual liberty as much as it supports national power, make him France’s best hope for catalyzing the shift in social values that the French need to make if they are to take full advantage of globalization.

COMMENT CONTINUED
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14. (C) Sarkozy’s vision for France is a powerful one, and, as his popularity reflects, it resonates with a big part of the electorate. However, resistance to social change is particularly strong in France. Attachment to the benefits and advantages that most of them receive, in one way of another, from the state -- the substance of the “French social model” -- is very strong among ordinary French people. Sarkozy’s popularity may be a reflection of change the French would like to make, but are too conservative to in fact undertake. End Comment. STAPLETON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Praise French Friend With ‘Mercurial’ Side”
Adopting Georgia’s Views

This cable is from the American Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, written the morning after Georgia’s army attacked Tskhinvali, the capital of the separatist enclave of South Ossetia. The cable, citing no independent sources and apparently drawing from no firsthand observation, strongly endorsed the Georgian government’s view of its own actions, including Georgia’s claim that South Ossetia had attacked Georgian villages with artillery in the hours before the Georgian bombardment. The cable played down the account from independent military observers in the conflict zone, who had no evidence of any such South Ossetian attacks and instead were reporting that Georgia had attacked the capital with an intensive barrage in spite of its own cease-fire. At the time this cable was written, the enclave had plunged into war that would quickly be disastrous for Georgia and soon cost American taxpayers more than $1 billion in aid.
continues with Russian fighters north of Tskhinvali; it is not clear if they are regular army or North Caucasian irregulars. Saakashvili has said that Georgia had no intention of getting into this fight, but was provoked by the South Ossetians and had to respond to protect Georgian citizens and territory. Meanwhile, the Georgian National Security Council (NSC) has formally requested 1,000 of its combat troops in Iraq be returned to Georgia within 72 hours. End Summary.

3. (C) Comment: All the evidence available to the country team supports Saakashvili’s statement that this fight was not Georgia’s original intention. Key Georgian officials who would have had responsibility for an attack on South Ossetia have been on leave, and the Georgians only began mobilizing August 7 once the attack was well underway. As late as 2230 last night Georgian MOD and MFA officials were still hopeful that the unilateral cease-fire announced by President Saakashvili would hold. Only when the South Ossetians opened up with artillery on Georgian villages, did the offensive to take Tskhinvali begin. Post has eyes on the ground at the Ministry of Interior command post in Tbilisi and will continue to provide updates. The Embassy held an EAC and will hold another to reassess the situation by COB. We have issued a warden message and are looking at the situation very carefully. If the Georgians are right, and the fighting is mainly over, the real unknown is what the Russian role will be and whether there is potential for the conflict to expand. End comment.

Current Situation

4. (C) Saakashvili, who told the Ambassador that he was in Gori when a Russian bomb fell in the city center, confirmed that the Georgians had not decided to move ahead until the shelling intensified and the Russians were seen to be amassing forces on the northern side of the Roki Tunnel. He said that the Georgian military action had been successful, Tskhinvali was mainly under Georgian control and that reservists would be brought in to defend the city while armed forces were moved further north to continue the fighting. According to Saakashvili, the EU was sending in Carl Bildt and the Lithuanian Foreign Minister to Tbilisi. Although most in the Georgian government believed that the fighting had started as a ploy of de facto leader Kokoity, Saakashvili was now concerned that this might have been a Russian pretext and a further attack could be expected. The Foreign Minister briefed the diplomatic corps on the situation, noting that “all red lines had been crossed,” but expressing hope that negotiations could take place and noting that a full amnesty would be offered to anyone involved in the fighting. She called on the international community to put pressure on the Russian Government to take no action.

TBILISI 00001341 002 OF 002

5. (C) The battle in South Ossetia took place throughout the night of August 7. During the night, four short range ballistic missiles were fired from within Russia toward Tskhinvali. On August 8, Russian aircraft flew into Georgian airspace in central Georgia and dropped ordnance on a radar installation near Gori and a police station in Kareli. Post understands that at this point the Georgians control 75 percent of Tskhinvali and 11 villages around it. Journalists report that Georgian forces are moving toward the Roki tunnel. That road has been cratered by Georgian aircraft to make it difficult to navigate with vehicles. We are told fighting continues with Russian fighters north of Tskhinvali. It is not clear if they are regular army or North Caucasian irregulars, as an MOIA spokesman said that approximately 1500 uniformed, unidentified forces with tanks and artillery entered South Ossetia via the Roki tunnel on August 8 at 0200. Reports indicate many casualties, but none are reliably accurate. State Minister of Conflict Settlement and Reintegration Temuri Yakobashvili said again on August 8 that Georgia will grant amnesty to all Ossetian fighters.

Chronology of Events

6. (C) On August 7 at 1925 Yakobashvili returned from the conflict zone and the Ambassador that the South Ossetians continued to shoot at the Georgian villages despite the announcement of the cease-fire. Yakobashvili said that he waited with General Kulakhmetov, the Head of the Russian peacekeepers in Tskhinvali for some time for the South Ossetians to show up. Kulakhmetov tried to call Chochiev, and other South Ossetians to get them together with Yakobashvili, but they did not respond. Kulakhmetov said, he “does not control anything” and that the South Ossetians were “shooting at the Georgians behind my back.” Yakobashvili said that the Russians originally agreed to host a bilateral meeting with the Ossetians and the Georgians outside the JCC. Popov came to Georgia for this purpose and announced publicly it was his intention to do so. Then, the Russians flipped and said the meeting should be under the JCC. Yakobashvili said it was the JCC system that had caused the mess and it was time for real face to face talks.
7. (C) OSCE observers on the ground in Tskhinvali told Poloff that Georgia’s attack on Tskhinvali began at 2335 on August 7 despite the cease-fire declared at 1900. The shelling intensified at 2345, with the Georgians possibly using large caliber mortars and GRAD artillery, with impacts every 15-20 seconds, and the South Ossetians returning fire. By observers’ calculations, by 0035 there were at least 100 hits on the city of Tskhinvali, some of them damaging the OSCE field office there. Currently, the OSCE has electricity, but part of the building has sustained damage and the internet is down. There was a lull in the activity between 0145 and 0415, when the situation began to re-intensify, and by 0615 loud explosions could be heard. The number of casualties are unknown as emergency services are unable to move freely on the ground due to firing. Most local residents are confined to cellars and basements waiting for calm to return.

8. (C) At approximately 0400 on August 8, the Georgian National Security Council asked the U.S. for the return of 1,000 of its troops from Iraq, 500 within the next 24 hours, and the remainder within 48 hours. A regularly scheduled rotator flight may return up to 250 troops to Georgia by this afternoon. (Note: USG agreement with the GOG provides for emergency return of 1,000 troops within 96 hours. End note.) Later, Saakashvili announced a general mobilization of all reserves. In a second address, he called Russia’s actions “open aggression” and called on the international community to help repel it.

9. (C) Conversely, the Russians have said they believe Georgian forces are targeting Russian peacekeepers. They have told the Georgians that in view of these attacks Georgia bears responsibility for anything that might follow. The Georgians have replied that they are avoiding any conflict with the peacekeepers as well as civilians. The Georgians believe the South Ossetians are targeting the Russians to provoke a bigger Georgian-Russian conflict.

10. (C) The South Ossetians are reportedly now accusing the Russians of betraying them. One plausible explanation for all this is that de facto leader Kokoity decided to roll the dice and stimulate a conflict with the Georgians in hopes of bringing in the Russians and thereby saving himself or enhancing his position. Reports that Kokoity has left Tskhinvali remain unconfirmed.

TEFFT

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Embracing Georgia, U.S. Misread Signs of Riffs”
Siding With Georgia’s Leader

A cable from the American Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, as Russian forces were scattering Georgia’s army after its failed attack to seize the separatist enclave of South Ossetia. The American ambassador reports that President Mikheil Saakashvili, who had ordered his army into the attack two days before, now claims that the Russians seek his ouster, part of “a grand design” by Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin “to retake Georgia.” Mr. Saakasvili’s account included exaggerations of Georgian casualties.

DATE 2008-08-09 07:56:00

SOURCE Embassy Tbilisi

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 001343

SIPDIS DEPT FOR EUR/CARC


REF: TBILISI 1341

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) Begin Summary and Comment: Multiple bases, airports, and Georgia’s port of Poti were all bombed overnight by Russian aircraft, with bombing continuing in the daylight hours of August 9, with bombs hitting civilian targets in the Georgian city of Gori. Reports of casualties continue to come in, most still unreliable and unverifiable, but it is clear that casualty numbers are growing. There were reportedly dozens killed in Senaki and Poti. The government of Georgia has not declared a state of emergency, but is limiting news being aired on TV and has evacuated some key government buildings in Tbilisi. The bombing is causing widespread fear in the Georgian population. In South Ossetia, OSCE confirms that artillery fire continued into the morning hours near Tskhinvali. The MFA has released no new statements, and the Ministry of Reintegration has said the Abkhaz de-facto authorities have asked UNOMIG to immediately withdraw from Kodori. This sitrep covers events that have transpired overnight on August 8-9 in Georgia (reftel). End Summary and comment.

2. (C) President Saakashvili told the Ambassador in a late morning phone call that the Russians are out to take over Georgia and install a new regime. They will not stop at retaking South Ossetia, but will move on Tbilisi. He fears the Russians will never agree to a ceasefire. Saakashvili and the Georgian leadership now believe that this entire Russian military operation is all part of a grand design by Putin to take Georgia and change the regime. Saakashvili said that the Russian forces are now attacking Tskhinvali and the Georgian forces are resisting. We believe the Georgians are out of air defense supplies, which makes them vulnerable to Russian air attacks. He also believes the Russians will soon attack and try to seize the upper Kodori valley. Ominously, the Abkhaz formally asked UNOMIG this morning to withdraw their detachment in the Upper Kodori.

3. (C) OSCE observers report that beginning at 0600 on August 9 Georgian artillery began shelling Tskhinvali and becoming heavy after 0900 to the Southwest of the city. The JPFK commander reported that ten of his Russian peacekeepers were dead, and others were wounded. OSCE observers said that Georgian aircraft were bombing the city at 1100 on August 8. According to OSCE, there
has been no visible presence of Georgian forces in the city since 1500 on August 8 when they withdrew. No accurate numbers of casualties are available and no international organizations such as Red Cross are present to assist with casualties.

4. (C) Poloff called the MFA and was told that there are no new statements since August 8, but confirmed that the Government has not called a state of emergency. The MFA website: www.mfa.gov.ge appears to have been hacked.

5. (C) Deputy Minister of Reintegration Ruslan Abashidze told Poloff that the situation in South Ossetia is the same as August 8, with shelling coming from Java, but he believes Georgian forces control the nearby villages. He said that Georgian forces are in control of Tskhinvali and are inside the city. Turning to the Abkhaz conflict he reported that the Abkhaz side has asked UNOMIG to withdraw immediately from Kodori (note: we have been unable to confirm request this with UNOMIG but such a move indicated intended hostilities).

6. (C) UNOMIG observers reported that all was quiet in the Zugdidi on the evening of August 8, aside from Abkhaz moving 9 T-55 (1960,s Soviet era) tanks toward the cease-fire line.

7. (C) Confirmed overnight (August 8-9) bombings include:

-- Vaziani, again. This former Soviet military base, which is usually home to 4th Brigade is being used as a mobilization site for reservists. It lies only a few kilometers east of Tbilisi. Buildings were reportedly hit this time.

-- Senaki military base in west Georgia. This base is home to the 2nd Brigade. Unconfirmed reports indicate 20 killed there.

-- The Port of Poti. Georgia’s deepest port outside of Ochamchire in Abkhazia. Several “flat racks” where ships are loaded and unloaded were bombed, as was the nearby Coast Guard station. Press reports indicate at least 15 people were killed.

-- Kopinari Airport near Kutaisi. This joint civilian and military airport was also bombed. It is home to Su-25 fighters and AN-2 Colt resupply aircraft.

-- Marneuli Airbase, approximately 40 km south of Tbilisi, was bombed for the third time.

-- The city of Gori. Apparently, one attempt by Russian jets to bomb an artillery position near Gori missed. A bomb landed in town destroying some stores and abandoned buildings. No casualties were reported in this attack. Georgian radio later reported that Russian bombers attacked Gori early August 9, attempting to knock out the last bridge linking the road crossing Georgia from east to west as well as a communications tower. President Saakashvili reported that at mid-day August 9, Russian planes had begun bombing housing blocks in Gori, with hundreds of casualties, calling this “pure terror.”

-- Upper Kodori was also bombed. Details are sketchy.

8. (C) Additional unconfirmed reports include:

-- Sections of the railroad running from Poti toward Kutaisi may have been bombed.

-- Dozens of police in Mestia (north west Georgia) have mobilized and are moving toward the Russian border.

-- The Zugdidi road is open, and Georgian troops are moving north toward Kodori.

9. (C) On the economic front, the Government has been undertaking contingency planning in case of a prolonged conflict. During an August 8 meeting with the Ambassador, Prime Minister Gurgenidze
talked about his efforts to calm investors during the current crisis. He noted that the economy had been remarkably calm. There had been no change in the currency and the stock exchange was working normally. Georgia had not touched its Eurobond money, and natural gas and electricity supplies were in good shape. The PM noted that the Georgians were considering contingencies, especially with regard to energy supplies, should the conflict continue. For example, one major power plant had already shifted over to natural gas from electricity and there are plans to import gas from Turkey. The Georgians are also planning to stop exports of electricity to Russia and have made arrangements to purchase “off-peak” energy from Azerbaijan. Although investors were nervous, the PM noted that there was no panic buying among the population. TEFFT

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Embracing Georgia, U.S. Misread Signs of Rifts”
Skepticism About Azerbaijan

A cable from the United States Embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan, shows that beneath the warm words Washington and its emissaries offered to Azerbaijan’s government, which controls plentiful oil and gas reserves, the embassy held the government in low esteem, privately comparing the ruling Aliyev family to the Corleone family of the “Godfather” movies. The American diplomats’ description of the leadership of this strategically located country in the Caucasus (Azerbaijan borders both Iran and Russia, and sits astride an energy corridor that leads west) stood in sharp contrast to their colleagues’ almost unchecked support for Georgia, where an impulsive young president was moving his country toward war, and the embassy routinely passed his government’s accounts of its behavior to Washington without skepticism or challenge.

DATE 2009-09-18 11:17:00
SOURCE Embassy Baku
CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 BAKU 000749
SIPDIS NOFORN
DEPT FOR EUR/CARC, DAS KAIANDAN


REF: A. BAKU 724 AND PREVIOUS B. BAKU 534 C. 08 BAKU 1136 D. BAKU 526 AND PREVIOUS E. BAKU 696 AND PREVIOUS F. BAKU 287

Classified By: Charge Donald Lu, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S/NF) Summary: Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev utilizes distinctly different approaches to foreign and domestic policies. He typically devises the former with pragmatism, restraint and a helpful bias toward integration with the West, yet at home his policies have become increasingly authoritarian and hostile to diversity of political views. This divergence of approaches, combined with his father’s continuing omnipresence, has led some observers to compare the Aliyevs with the fictional “Corleones” of Godfather fame, with the current president described alternately as a mix of “Michael” and “Sonny.” Either way, this Michael/Sonny dichotomy complicates our approach to Baku and has the unfortunate effect of framing what should be a strategically valuable relationship as a choice between U.S. interests and U.S. values. End Summary.

2. (S/NF) This striking aspect of President Ilham Aliyev’s governing style was very neatly summed up recently by the witty, but somewhat past-his-prime XXXXXXXXXX (protect). Commenting on the GOAJ’s harsh reaction to the YouTube “donkey video” (Ref tel A), XXXXXXXXXX quipped to the Charge that what one must understand about Aliyev, “He’s not Michael Corleone, he’s Sonny.” To some in Baku, XXXXXXXXXX Godfather analogy seems apt - capturing essential truths not only about Ilham Aliyev, but his father Heydar, who becomes by implication the “Vito Corleone” of Azerbaijan. With that in mind, this cable attempts to explain who Ilham Aliyev is and why he does what he does. Aside from XXXXXXXXXX analogy, it also owe much to the appraisals of Michael and Sonny from “The Godfather Doctrine (2008),” by John Hulsman and A. Wess Mitchell.
"That's my family, Kay. It's not me."

3. (C) Ilham Aliyev inherited a newly independent, resource-rich state, brought to order in the post-Soviet era by his father, Heydar Aliyev, scarred by a catastrophic war with Armenia that resulted in occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave and seven surrounding Azerbaijani regions. He assumed the presidency in 2003, concurrent with his father’s death, in an election marked by a lack of competition and debate, at a time when Azerbaijan’s re-developed oil and gas resources were being brought on line for export. Dogged by widespread doubts about his suitability for leadership based on his age (then 41), lack of achievements and a “playboy” image, he oversaw the launch of a one million-barrels-per-day oil pipeline, which has flooded official and unofficial coffers in Baku and serves as the financial backbone of the country.

4. (C) The President and his cohorts, who largely were carried over from his father’s administration, now seek predictability, stability and continuity to preserve and protect public and private fortunes. Ilham Aliyev’s landslide 2008 re-election was followed by a hastily-called March 2009 referendum, which among other things removed term limits for the President. Aliyev’s cabinet has changed very little over the years, with few “reformers” brought in or remaining in power. The Prime Minister position is largely ceremonial and weak. Because of family connections, dynastic succession, the strong arming of the opposition and the creation of an elaborate patronage/protection network, the Aliyev Administration has developed an “organized crime” image in some quarters, leading some analysts to see Ilham Aliyev at times in a mafia-like role.

"Never hate your enemies. It affects your judgment."

5. (C) In their short study “The Godfather Doctrine,” Hulsman and Mitchell present brothers Sonny and Michael Corleone from “The Godfather” as exemplars of two out of three schools of U.S. foreign policy thought (with consigliere Tom Hagen representing the third.) However, there are important points they raise about the two that apply well to Aliyev and his policies abroad and at home. Michael, they write, is a talentedbalancer of alliances, aware of limitations on his own power who, importantly, knows when something isn’t personal, but only business. Sonny, by contrast, is brash, impulsive, and puts blind faith in force to address affronts to the Corleone family. For him, business is personal. Finally, Sonny refuses to contemplate a present or a future in which the Corleone family does not dominate New York, despite obvious and growing portents to the contrary.

"This is business, not personal" - Balanced Foreign Policy

6. (S) President Aliyev inherited from his father a clever, realistic foreign policy that he has largely maintained. With the overarching goal of maintaining and increasing Azerbaijan’s independence and sovereignty, he encourages involvement with NATO and Euro-Atlantic security and political structures and supports a policy of westward transit of Azerbaijani oil and gas through non-Russian channels. Otherwise, though, he alternates between assertiveness and appeasement where his powerful neighbors Russia and Iran are concerned. For example, Azerbaijan routinely accuses Russia of supplying Armenia with weapons and pointedly absents itself from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), while participating in GUAM. At the same time, Aliyev constantly plays up his relations with President Medvedev with frequent visits and has kept open the channels of negotiation on energy issues, concluding a small but symbolically important agreement with Gazprom to supply gas to Dagestan (Reftel B). He is assertive enough to defend Azerbaijan’s prerogative for an independent policy, but discreet enough that he is in no danger of joining Saakashvili on Moscow’s hit list.

7. (S) In foreign policy, Aliyev has also been able to maintain generally the distinction between “business and personal.” For all his bluster about Azerbaijan’s legal right to liberate the Armenian-occupied territories by force, Aliyev has worked constructively on the Minsk Group-proposed Basic Principles and developed a reportedly good rapport with Armenian President Sargsian - in contrast to the much more confrontational relationship between the countries’ foreign ministers. Similarly, even as Aliyev regards with horror the prospect of Turkey-Armenia
rapprochement ahead of Nagorno-Karabakh resolution, the President has instructed SOCAR to continue gas transit and supply talks with Turkey, and no one in Baku has dared to consider a cut in oil exports through the BTC pipeline. The gas transit talks are a hardball affair to be sure, but Aliyev surely recognizes that Azerbaijan cannot really afford a total rupture with Turkey and certainly is not going to go so far as to foreclose on options out of pique while the Turkey-Armenia question remains open.

"You touch my sister again and I’ll kill you." - The Hardliner

8. (S) For all of the cool-headed calculation that generally influences Aliyev’s foreign policy, his domestic policies are another matter. As Aliyev perceives a challenge to his authority or affronts to his family dignity, even minor ones, he and his inner circle are apt to react (or overreact), much to the detriment of the country’s democratic development and movement toward Western alliances. The example of the crude retaliation against the young bloggers Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizade is the most recent and public example (Reftel A). Earlier, defending his decision to rescind licenses for foreign broadcasters, Aliyev expressed his anger that Radio BAKU 00000749 003 OF 004

Liberty had mocked his plan to build the world’s tallest flagpole in the Baku port area, demonstrating exceedingly thin skin (Reftel C).

9. (S/NF) It is examples like these that inspired XXXXXXXXXXX quip to the Charge about Sonny and Michael. XXXXXXXXXXX elaborated on the point in that conversation, recalling times when he was an XXXXXXXXXXXX and similar situations arose. Heydar would never have allowed himself to be goaded into ridiculous reactions, he said. (Note: XXXXXXXXXXX memory on this might be a little selective, but he has a point that the space for opinion was wider under the last President, a view often echoed by journalists who look back to the 1990s nostalgically. End Note.) Ilham Aliyev, in XXXXXXXXXXX view, is not inclined to subtlety or deliberation in his response to these kinds of issues.

"I don’t feel I have to wipe everybody out. Just my enemies."Q-----------------------------------

10. (S) Aliyev takes the actions he does in order to eliminate even the semblance of risk to his political prominence. His goal appears to be a political environment in which the Aliyev dynasty is unchallenged, which was demonstrated by the hastily organized March 2009 constitutional referendum removing presidential term limits. This strangled the hopes of any and all pretenders to succession, including his wife (who in Azeri politics is thought of as a rival Pashayev, not an Aliyev).

11. (S) The dissonance between Aliyev’s sensible approach to foreign affairs, manifested by the cosmopolitan image he presents to Western visitors, with his tailored suits and flawless English, and the unpleasant reality of his approach to domestic issues raises the obvious question of how these two realities coexist. One explanation is that Aliyev is insecure in domestic politics and relies heavily on the advice of old-line Soviet-style political figures carried forward from his father’s administration, such as Presidential Chief of Staff Ramiz Mehdiyev. Alternatively, Aliyev’s domestic actions are free choices made in accordance with his instincts, with Mehdiyev and others playing the “heavy.”

12. (S) Occasionally, Aliyev’s confident tough-guy image gives way to an impression that he is yielding on domestic issues. Outside pressure does not always fail. A recent positive example was the outcome of the parliament’s initiative to ram through a Russian-style law on NGOs. In the face of a domestic outcry - including from government-supported NGOs, the Presidential Administration intervened to prevent the law as drafted from passing (Reftel D). Likewise, the President recently rejected a bill from parliament that would have required foreign-based entities to hire vetted Azerbaijanis citizens as deputy directors. The business community strongly opposed this bill (Reftel E). Also, the government earlier this year released one of the prominent journalists whose imprisonment was widely believed to have been politically motivated (Reftel F).

"Keep your friends close and your enemies closer."
Comment: It is clear that Azerbaijan’s future development would better suit United States policy goals if Aliyev pursued his domestic policies in a manner that resembled his foreign policy methods, however imperfect they may be. A full-scale democratic conversion, however, is an unlikely outcome, and the record of presidents in this region leaving office voluntarily is rather thin. What is desirable and perhaps achievable, however, is that Aliyev would govern as a manager of alliances, viewing the political space occupied by dissents as a source of ideas and a warning system for when policies are hurting the national interest; and ceasing to feel that he should strike hard at every criticism that arises, or that he can do so without consequences. At least this type of evolution would better prepare Azerbaijan for the post-Ilham Aliyev era, whenever

BAKU 00000749 004 OF 004

that begins.

Comment Continued: Here is where the Godfather analogy begins to break down. In Azerbaijan the role of loyal consigliere to the father and the son is played by the long-time head of Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev. Mehdiyev is no calm, conciliating Tom Hagen. We do not know if President Aliyev personally ordered the many iron-fisted domestic initiatives, although he almost certainly approved them, even if after-the-fact. We do see Mehdiyev’s fingerprints all over the arrests of journalists, the stifling of opposition leaders, the closure of mosques, the restrictions on the media and the general law-and-order approach to governance. Is he the puppet or the puppet-master? At age 71 and often seen in frail health, this is an increasingly important question. While the rule of 47-year old Ilham Aliyev could continue for decades, it would be most likely without the benefit of his consigliere. Without Mehdiyev, it is not clear whom Aliyev will turn to for help in maintaining the same firm grip on the instruments of power.

“Don Corleone, I need a man with powerful friends . . . I need all of those policians you carry around in your pocket, like so many nickels and dimes.” LU

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Embracing Georgia, U.S. Misread Signs of Rifts”
Former Detainee Urges Europe to Accept Other Released Detainees

In this cable, a diplomat recounts efforts by a former Guantánamo detainee, Moazzam Begg, to persuade Europe to take in more detainees who have been cleared for release but could not be sent home.

DATE 2010-01-15 15:34:00

SOURCE Embassy Luxembourg

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 LUXEMBOURG 000005

SIPDIS DEPT FOR EUR/WE VALERIE BELON, S/GC MICHAEL WILLIAMS AMEMBASSY ANKARA PASS TO AMCONSUL ADANA AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO AMCONSUL ALMATY AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/15 TAGS: PGOV, KDRG, PREL, LU SUBJECT: TO HELL AND BACK: GITMO EX-DETAINEE STUMPS IN LUXEMBOURG

REF: 09 LUXEMBOURG 328; 09 LUXEMBOURG 288; 09 LUXEMBOURG 302

CLASSIFIED BY: Adam Center, Consul; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Former Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) detainee Moazzam Begg met with Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn 14 January 2010 to press the government of Luxembourg to accept GTMO detainees for resettlement. Begg, a British citizen of Pakistani origin, was arrested in Pakistan in 2002 and imprisoned in Kandahar, Bagram, and Guantánamo Bay, before his release to Britain in 2005. In a statement to RTL Television, Asselborn said that Luxembourg will do what is possible and reiterated the government’s position to provide financial assistance, training and housing costs, and other technical assistance. Consular officer attended an evening screening of the documentary film “Taxi to the Dark Side,” followed by a Q&A session with Begg. When asked if he thought Luxembourg will do more than contribute financially to the resettlement efforts, Begg replied that he was “pleasantly surprised” with his conversations with MFA officials and “hopeful.” END SUMMARY

AUDIENCE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

2. (C) Ex-GTMO detainee Moazzam Begg, released from Guantánamo Bay in 2005, is barnstorming throughout Europe, pushing governments to accept GTMO detainees for resettlement. Following his release from GTMO, Begg created an NGO dedicated to this cause, called Caged Prisoners. Representatives from two additional NGOs, Reprieve and Center for Constitutional Rights, accompanied Begg on his visit to Luxembourg. Luxembourg media coverage on the Asselborn-Begg meeting was ubiquitous, but superficial. With numerous reports that the meeting occurred, nearly all media outlets were silent on the actual substance of the meeting. Only Begg provided some limited insight into the outcome of the meeting. Speaking later in the evening (see para 4), he responded to an inquiry about the meeting by saying that “without giving anything away,” he was “pleasantly surprised” and “hopeful.”
3. (C) In an interview following his meeting with Begg, Asselborn avoided specifics of the discussion. He reiterated Luxembourg’s willingness to provide financial assistance to the resettlement efforts - the GoL party line for many months. Asselborn said, however, that he was in regular contact with American officials, including Special Envoy Dan Fried, as recently as last week. (See refs a and b on the Asselborn-Fried meeting in September 2009 in Luxembourg and subsequent exchange of letters.) In comments to the press following the meeting, Begg only explained what the messages he delivered were - not how those messages were received. Begg’s primary message is that European governments have to step up and accept some of the GTMO detainees for resettlement. Begg, an articulate man, argued that there are dozens of prisoners in GTMO just like him - not dangerous to society, able to communicate and assimilate, able to be a contributing and responsible member of society - and they just need governments to stand up and offer them a place to call home. In an interview prior to his meeting with Asselborn, Begg was asked if countries like Luxembourg have a responsibility regarding ex-detainees. Begg reportedly responded that it is a European tradition to offer asylum to refugees, and that this tradition also should be extended to former Guantanamo detainees who have not been convicted of crimes, are not dangerous, and are deemed as releasable.

4. (SBU) Begg later attended an Amnesty International-hosted screening of 2007 Oscar Winner for Best Documentary "Taxi to the Dark Side" (French translation of film title: "Taxi to Hell"). Conoff attended screening and Begg’s Q&A session following the film. The film, a harrowing depiction of alleged torture inside Bagram, Abu Ghraib, and Guantanamo, was an undisguised attack on the Bush Administration, focusing much of its venom on Former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Former Vice President Cheney. Mr. Begg, on the other hand, presented an image of “forgive, but never forget,” and has focused his attentions not on the ill treatment he allegedly received, but on what can be done to resettle the remaining “releasable” prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. Reporting officer estimates 100-150 people attended the filming and Q&A session and noted the complete absence of press, other diplomats, or GoL officials.

5. (C) During his presentation, Begg spoke almost exclusively of the future, with hardly any mention of the past. He did not discuss the question of legality of torture. Rather than stressing past injustices, he focused on what to do now. He acknowledged that he lives with the past, but that he now wants to be part of the solution, and is working to convince Luxembourg and other governments - and their populaces - to want the same.

6. (SBU) In a 90-minute Q&A session, Begg was asked, how would ex-detainees fit in in Luxembourg.
How would it work? Where would they live? How would they be supported? The fear and skepticism was palpable in the audience. Begg and his NGO cohorts stressed that there were Algerians and Tunisians in GTMO who could come to Luxembourg and speak French, one of Luxembourg’s official and most-commonly used languages. He stressed that neighboring countries - France, Belgium, Portugal, Ireland - provided examples. Begg even argued that if detainees could fit in in Palau, they could do the same in Luxembourg. Begg deplored that certain people believe the world is not big enough for the ex-detainees. He added that if there were colonies on the Moon, “I’m sure they’d send us there.”

7. (SBU) Begg declined to speak about specific physical transgressions against his person. When told how physically well and mentally sound he appeared, he joked, “Well, I used to be taller.” Begg spoke articulately, demonstrating minimal ill will toward his captors - even going so far as to say he speaks on the phone occasionally with his former interrogators. Consular officer took note of the following exchange: Asked if he would ever consider a return to the U.S., Begg replied that he had never been to the U.S., but that the U.S. had come to him. Begg commented that as a British citizen, he could travel to the U.S. without a visa, but that he thinks he would need “a lot more than a visa to get out.”

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COMMENT
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8. (C) Mr. Begg is doing our work for us, and his articulate, reasoned presentation makes for a convincing argument. It is ironic that after four years of imprisonment and alleged torture, Moazzam Begg is delivering the same demarche to GOL as we are: please consider accepting GTMO detainees for resettlement. Despite Begg’s optimism, the Prime and Foreign Ministers continue to publicly state that the GoL supports the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility and stands ready to assist from a financial and logistical perspective, but cannot accept detainees for resettlement.


RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Cables Depict U.S. Haggling to Clear Guantánamo”
Death of a Romanian Rock Star

In 2007, diplomats in Romania worried that a “final offer” of $80,000 by the United States to settle a claim over the death of a Romanian rock star in a car accident involving an American Marine commander could seriously damage relations with Romania.

DATE 2007-11-16 15:46:00

SOURCE Embassy Bucharest

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 BUCHAREST 001286

1. (C) Summary: The impending “final offer” by the U.S. Army Foreign Claims Service, Europe to the family of the late Romanian rock star Teofil Peter, who was killed in a 2004 car accident involving Embassy Bucharest’s former Marine detcommander, seems certain to have a significant, negative effect on the U.S.-Romanian relationship. In the likely event that the family of Peter will go public with the news that the U.S. government has met their multi-million dollar settlement claim with an offer of only $80,000, Romanian leaders and opinion makers will react loudly and emotionally, calling into question some of the most important features of our bilateral partnership. President Basescu, PM Tariceanu and other prominent politicians will almost certainly rally to the family’s side, even if some normally pro-American officials will still try behind the scenes to calm the anticipated public outrage. In particular, the popular outcry over what will be seen by most Romanians as an insultingly small offer to Peter’s survivors will prompt renewed calls, with much more potential popular support, for the rapid withdrawal of Romanian troops from Iraq. Likewise, backing in the Romanian parliament and among members of the public for the new U.S. troop presence at joint U.S.-Romanian military facilities on the Black Sea will plummet, at least temporarily. The November 21 notification date to the Peter family’s lawyers is fast approaching, and will nearly coincide with the December 4 anniversary date of Peter’s death, the occasion for past anti-U.S. demonstrations in Romania. In short, we are bracing ourselves for a stormy downturn in the relationship, prompted by the continuing negative legacy of the death of this Romanian cultural icon. Some of the damage to our popular standing and to our interests in Romania may be lasting. End Summary.

2. (C) Teo Peter, one of Romania’s best known and most beloved rock musicians, was killed on December 4, 2004, in a Bucharest car accident involving the taxi he was riding in and the official Embassy vehicle being driven in the early morning hours by former Bucharest Marine detachment commander Staff Sgt. Christopher Van Goethem. Van Goethem departed Romania within a few hours after the accident, under the terms of his diplomatic immunity, but many Romanians viewed his abrupt departure before local investigators had the opportunity to question him and
conduct tests on his blood alcohol level as a slap in the face and an effort to shield the Marine from justice. Demonstrations were held outside the Embassy, and an effort was made to rename a nearby street after the deceased musician. Sgt. Van Goethem did subsequently face a range of charges in the U.S. military justice system. A military courts martial concluded in January 2006 that while he was guilty of making false statements and obstructing justice, he was not guilty of the more serious negligent homicide charge. The jury, somewhat unexpectedly, limited the Marine’s punishment to an official letter of reprimand. This news brought, in turn, another wave of protests.

3. (C) The U.S. Army Claims Service, Europe currently plans to send legal representatives of the Peter family final offers amounting to $80,000, divided among three claimants, including Teofil Claudiu Peter, the musician’s son. In briefing material recently forwarded to the Embassy, the Army’s Foreign Claims Service states that the Peter family claims were adjudicated pursuant to the Foreign Claims Act, which “uses foreign law to measure damages.” The accompanying press guidance then asserts: “That means the law of the country in which the claim arises are used -- in this case Romanian law.” “The awards are consistent with Romanian court decisions measuring damages in similar cases,” the guidance continues, “and reflect U.S. and Romanian principles of just compensation and respect for human life.” The U.S. Army Claims Service, Europe documents go on to say that the Service contracted a “prestigious Romanian law firm to advise the Commission on the pertinent provisions of the Romanian law...(and) determined that the amount requested by the claimants greatly exceeded the economic loss substantiated by the claimants. Moreover, the Commission found no relevant precedent justifying an award of moral damages anywhere near the amount requested.” Part of the award that has been approved will be centered on reimbursing the family for the funeral costs of Mr. Peter’s burial.

4. (C) Teo Peter’s survivors reportedly initially requested a multi-million dollar settlement. In a November 1 letter to the Ambassador from the Peter family’s law firm, Arent Fox, attorney John M. Gurley suggests that the claimants are currently requesting an award of $1 million. In what is labeled “The Peter Family Claim: October 2007,” Gurley cites various past precedents for awards at that level or above, including for an Australian woman’s successful claim for $1 million after being hit by a Navy serviceman’s golf ball, and a $1.9 million claim to survivors of a teenage Mexican goat herder, the victim ostensibly of an accident involving the U.S. military. Gurley also cites the $2 million awards presented to the survivors of the Italian cable car accident involving a U.S. warplane, a case which has been cited repeatedly in the Romanian media and by Romanian government officials. Gurley writes in his letter that he had unsuccessfully requested a transfer of the claim from the U.S. Army Claims Service, Europe in Mannheim to Fort Meade (the headquarters of the Claims Service) or Washington, D.C. Citing “the very discouraging signals” the Peter family has received to date from the Claims Service, Gurley concludes by saying he hoped the Peter claim could be settled “in a manner suitable to all parties” before the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, asserting that “it would truly be unfortunate for Romania, as well as the United States, if the NATO summit were to be marred by the U.S. government’s inability to close the Teo Peter matter in a fair fashion.”

5. (C) Once the award is communicated to the family’s legal counsel at Arent Fox on Wednesday, November 21 (the day before Thanksgiving), we expect the family and its legal representatives to move quickly to condemn the U.S. offer publicly and to appeal to top Romanian officials and the Romanian media to put immediate pressure on U.S. representatives for a higher award. Romanian MFA officials have reported to us informally that the family has met with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister in recent weeks to express their determination to conduct a public fight should the final award offer be unacceptably low. Under these circumstances, and in light of the proximity to the anniversary of the rock musician’s death, we expect the Embassy to be the focus of multiple demonstrations, including concerts and candlelight vigils. There will be a renewed effort to rename after Teo Peter the street on which the Embassy is located, and it is possible that city officials may accede to the anticipated wave of public indignation over the amount of the award offer.

6. (C) Another report we received in recent days was a suggestion that Romanian law enforcement authorities, working through EU channels, would attempt to serve a legal summons to Van Goethem, who we believe is currently a U.S. Embassy dependent at AmEmbassy Berlin.

7. (C) More seriously, we anticipate that the Peter award offer, and subsequent media attention, will embolden critics of the Romanian deployment in Iraq, along with other anti-American politicians like Chamber of Deputies President Bogdan Olteanu, to call for the immediate
withdrawal of Romanian troops. Under these circumstances, they could build sufficient traction to reinvigorate the opposition to Romania’s support for U.S. efforts there, and potentially force a change in policy. While President Basescu has been steadfast in his support for our continued troop presence in Iraq, he would be conscious of the fact that even before a renewed public outcry over the Peter case, only one-third of the Romanian public supports maintaining troops there. Either way, reinvigoration of the controversy over U.S. handling of the case will put our closest friends within the Romanian government, including President Basescu, into a very awkward political position. Likely enough, the Liberal Party and other political groups hoping to find a hook to boost their support in the run-up to the November 25 Euro-parliamentary elections in Romania will wrap themselves in the flag and try to capitalize on the political moment with anti-U.S. political rhetoric. More broadly, news of the Peter award offer will cut deeply into support for the new U.S. military presence at joint facilities on the Black Sea, including Kogalnicoenu air base and the Babadag training grounds -- at least temporarily. While public approval of the bases has been steady, our contacts have always cautioned us that it is vulnerable to concerns over an increased terrorist threat to Romania -- and to negative stories concerning the conduct of U.S. service personnel, with the first point of reference the Teo Peter accident and the subsequent handling of the charges against Sgt. Van Goethem.

8. (C) There are other, less predictable, risk factors at play. In the wake of this week’s controversy over the Ambassador’s criticism of the Parliament’s efforts to undermine the independence of Romanian prosecutors and their ability to investigate cases of bribery and corruption, a controversy over the Teo Peter award could enable our critics and opponents on the Romanian political scene to undermine other important initiatives which are just gathering momentum. First and foremost among them is our accelerating effort, alongside Lockheed-Martin, to persuade Romania to pursue an F-16/JSF option to replace the country’s aging MiG fleet. Lockheed-Martin, in tandem with allies in the Presidency and Ministry of Defense, are seeking a “sole-source” route to the fighter plane decision, which they do not want to see tied up in the Brussels bureaucracy by the F-16/JSF’s principal European competitors, Gripen and Eurofighter. This was always going to be a tricky exercise, with an expectation that supporters of a European fighter option would loudly cry foul. A firestorm over the Teo Peter case could possibly represent a tipping point away from a U.S. option, if only because of the optics.

9. (C) What little guidance we have received from the U.S. Army Claims Service, Europe suggests that all Romanian media inquiries are to be steered towards the USAREUR public affairs staff, or alternatively USMC spokespersons at Quantico. This will limit severely our ability to respond here in Romania, and to help address some of the most pernicious charges that we will face. We believe that the risk of unintended consequences in this media strategy, across geographic, language and cultural barriers, is huge. That, too, has to be factored into our overall risk assessment of the impending Claims Service actions.

10. (C) In short, our hope is that this latest policy and public affairs challenge related to the 2004 car accident will be manageable. But we are concerned that under the present circumstances, some lasting damage could be done to our core interests, including keeping Romanian troops deployed in Iraq and continuing to build on the positive momentum in our close defense and security partnership with Bucharest. This has been an especially difficult issue from the beginning, and remains the biggest single “black spot” in our recent bilateral experience.
German Conflict Over Scientology

Diplomats in Germany discussed the conflict in the state of Hamburg between the Church of Scientology and state authorities, which was drawing attention in part because the actor Tom Cruise, a Scientologist, was starring in a movie filmed in Berlin.

DATE 2007-12-21 16:46:00

SOURCE Consulate Hamburg

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

Friday, 21 December 2007, 16:46

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HAMBURG 000073

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/AGS AND DRL.

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 12/21/2017

TAGS PGOV, PHUM, SOCI, GM

SUBJECT: HAMBURG VS. SCIENTOLOGY

REF: BERLIN 2211

HAMBURG 00000073 001.2 OF 003

CLASSIFIED BY: Karen Johnson, Consul General, U.S. Consulate General Hamburg, U.S. Department of State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d) CONFIDENTIAL

SIPDIS

1. (C) SUMMARY: Since the creation of the Working Group on Scientology (AGS) in 1992 within its interior ministry with its firebrand leader, Hamburg has been at sharp odds with the Church of Scientology and more recently has taken a leading role in an attempt to ban the organization. On August 7, Hamburg’s Interior Minister Udo Nagel (independent) announced the proposal to ban Scientology under Germany’s Law of Associations. In November, the Hamburg State Parliament mandated him with submitting the proposal to the state interior ministers at their December meeting. Leadership within the Hamburg interior ministry, including from the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (OPC), has confirmed to ConGen Hamburg that the proposal is mainly politically motivated and that they expect the issue to die down at the latest after state elections in Bavaria. This cable examines the background to the heightened debate over Scientology in Hamburg. END SUMMARY.

HAMBURG’S WORKING GROUP ON SCIENTOLOGY

2. (SBU) In 1992, the Hamburg State Parliament created the Working Group on Scientology (Arbeitsgruppe Scientology or AGS) within the Hamburg interior ministry mandated to address all “destructive groups,” which endanger society, in particular young people. AGS not only focuses on
Scientology’s activities within Hamburg, but also other organizations such as the Church of Satan, Transcendental Meditation, and the Unification Church. According to AGS Director Ursula Caberta, AGS and the Hamburg interior ministry view Scientology as a “politically motivated destructive cult.” Thus, Caberta explained, as a state institution, it is their duty to protect the public from such organizations. In her meeting with Hamburg’s Pol/Econ Officer and Specialist on November 13, she stressed that she viewed her work as that of a civil servant assigned to do a particular job by the state parliament. Currently, AGS’s responsibilities are three-fold: 1) to analyze what steps the state must take to protect the public from “destructive groups;” 2) to educate the public about the dangers of such organizations; and 3) to assist victims. Hamburg is the only state in Germany with a Scientology working group. Under Caberta’s leadership the working group has five employees. AGS offices were filled with books on Scientology, including all of L. Ron Hubbard’s works and many of his lectures.

EUROPE UNDER ATTACK?

3. (C) Caberta stated that Scientology has declared “war on Europe.” She cited evidence from Hamburg’s Office for the Protection of the Constitution (OPC) annual reports of how Scientology attempts to influence politicians and political institutions as well as the press. According to the OPC’s 2006 report, Scientology continues to use methods that are “against the free, democratic constitutional structure,” as was established in the 1997 State Interior Ministers meeting. Caberta asserted that Scientology in Germany has received orders from the Los Angeles headquarters to “conquer” Europe. She contends that the new Berlin headquarters have been set up for this “campaign.” She continually stressed that she views Scientology not as a religious organization, but as a “political extremist” one. According to Caberta, the Hamburg Scientologists as well as most of the Scientology members in Germany are only “small fish” and the organization’s strategic planning is conducted in the United States. Caberta showed Pol/Econ Officer and Specialist a booklet she had received early November that appeared to be published by Hamburg’s mayor. The booklet contained the mayor’s photograph and signature, yet was actually a publication from Scientology’s “The Way to Happiness Foundation.” Caberta contended that Scientology regularly used misleading methods to fool individuals into joining and said that such booklets had been distributed to other German cities. For someone unfamiliar with Scientology publications, the booklet looked very much like information brochures from the City of Hamburg.

4. (C) In a meeting at the consulate on December 19, Hamburg OPC leadership explained that it was a political decision for the

HAMBURG 00000073 002.2 OF 003

state OPCs to observe Scientology, based upon the “totalitarian assertions” described in L. Ron Hubbard’s writings. They called their observation of Scientology “special,” making it clear that they did not view the organization as a threat and that it was their responsibility to only collect information and not to pass judgment on the organization. They noted that while the OPC does not view Scientology as a religious organization, this would have no bearing on their work as the OPC observes both religious and non-religious institutions.

CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY’S TAKE

5. (C) In Hamburg’s Pol/Econ Officer and Specialist’s meetings with Hamburg Scientology figures, our contacts made it clear that the Hamburg church faces a particularly challenging situation with Caberta, who is now considered Germany’s “expert” on Scientology. They also noted that Hamburg is the only German state that has a Scientology working group, although Berlin’s ministry for education has a “sect-watcher” position. (Note: In a meeting on December 14, Hamburg Deputy State Minister of the Interior Christoph Ahlhaus told CG Johnson that Berlin has been trying to convince Caberta to transfer there. End Note.) Scientology press spokesman Frank Busch claimed that AGS is exempt from the German version of the Freedom of Information Act. He complained that Caberta is “above the law” and her work is not being assessed or monitored by the interior ministry. Busch questioned why this lack of scrutiny existed since Scientology found her work to be one-sided, factually incorrect, and “playing with the people’s emotions.” They believe that a normal citizen would have difficulty gathering objective information on Scientology in Hamburg. According to Busch, none of Hamburg’s public libraries have any of L. Ron Hubbard’s books. Scientology members are not allowed to distribute flyers in the city and private individuals allegedly monitor whether members overstep these boundaries. Busch also claimed that Hamburg’s Chamber of Commerce still screens out Scientology members from hiring and encourages members to do so as well, even though the city of Hamburg has ceased such practices (known locally as a “sect-filter”). (Note: Documents containing the “filter” are available on-line at the Chamber of Commerce’s webpage. End Note.)
NAGEL’S PROPOSAL TO BAN SCIENTOLOGY

6. (C) On August 7 at the press release of Caberta’s “Black Book Scientology” Nagel announced that he would propose discussing banning Scientology at the December 7 state interior ministers meeting. In a conversation with Pol/Econ Specialist on August 13, Hamburg Interior Ministry Spokesman Marco Haase suggested that the announcement was the result of several unrelated occurrences, such as the recent publication of Caberta’s book, the case of the Berlin girl and her brother seeking refuge in Hamburg (Ref.), the attention to Scientology generated during the filming of the movie “Valkyrie” in Berlin, in which Tom Cruise stars, and the summer media slump. According to Haase, Nagel believes that a ban alone is not the answer. Rather, assistance to ex-Scientologists and education on Scientology also have important roles to play. Nagel also believes that there is sufficient evidence suggesting that Scientology undertakes activities that undermine the German constitution.

7. (C) In a meeting on December 14 with Hamburg’s CG and Pol/Econ Officer, Hamburg’s Deputy State Minister for the Interior Christoph Ahlhaus clarified that Nagel certainly believes that Scientology should be banned, but he also realizes the political difficulties of such an endeavor. Ahlhaus explained that the Hamburg parliament charged Nagel in a unanimous decision on November 11 to propose the ban at the interior ministers meeting. He also stated that the ministry’s involvement in the issue stems foremost from the criminal cases brought annually against Scientology. Ahlhaus said these numbered over 100 and had been increasing significantly. He also explained that the issue of Scientology was very popular with voters and confirmed that it had come up because of the February 24 Hamburg state elections. Ahlhaus expected that findings would be addressed at the interior ministers’ spring meeting and that perhaps the issue would come up again with the Bavarian state elections next year. After that, he believed that the issue would fizzle out. Ahlhaus portrayed Hamburg as Scientology’s German headquarters and noted that the organization is also present in Berlin, Baden-Wurttemberg, and Bavaria, where banning Scientology also has political support. He commented that Scientology is almost like a “criminal organization” with Mafia-type structures.

COMMENT

8. (C) With a strong Scientology Church and the Scientology working group both located in Hamburg, the debate on Scientology in Germany reaches a zenith in this city. Caberta has become a national figure on the organization and Ahlhaus revealed that she often speaks to the press without clearing remarks through the interior ministry. He stated that Nagel believes she is a little “crazy” and assured the CG that Nagel’s office keeps a close watch on her activities. In the meantime, although Nagel is an independent, he has stakes in the upcoming elections and other local politicians are keen to show voters that they are actively addressing their concerns. It is doubtful that the Hamburg government will change their view of Scientology in the future even though officials openly and cordially discuss with ConGen representatives USG policy on religious freedom. Nevertheless, the ban proposal may move to the back burner once elections have passed, leaving Scientology Hamburg and AGS to deal with their regular concerns. END COMMENT.

9. (U) This message has been coordinated with Embassy Berlin. JOHNSON
A Swedish View of Political Ferment

Sweden’s deputy prime minister, discussing alternative energy sources and other matters with the American ambassador, said that the strong showing of Sweden’s Pirate Party in the European Parliamentary elections suggested that “young people ‘do not trust us.’”

DATE 2009-09-08 05:22:00

SOURCE Embassy Stockholm

CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Tuesday, 08 September 2009, 05:22

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 STOCKHOLM 000569

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

EO 12958 N/A

TAGS ENRG, EUN, ECON, EIND, KGHG, SENV, SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH DEPUTY PM URGES SENIOR USG VISITS TO SWEDEN DURING EU PRESIDENCY; WANTS TO LAUNCH U.S.-EU ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PARTNERSHIP AT U.S.-EU SUMMIT

This is an Action request. Please see para 2.

1. (SBU) Summary: On September 2, Deputy Prime Minister Olofsson pressed for the strong U.S.-Sweden cooperation in alternative technology to show results. She urged a ministerial-level U.S. official come to the October 14-16 Informal meeting of EU Competitiveness Ministers to present U.S. efforts to transform the United States into an eco-efficient economy -- or another event during the Presidency. Olofsson’s State Secretary Altera explained that Sweden wants to expand the U.S.-EU alternative energy partnership to the EU level, and needs to work intensely to launch this effort at the US-EU summit planned for early November. The meeting ended with a conversation of the challenge of convincing young people not to share files illegally via the internet. End Summary.

2. (U) ACTION REQUEST: The USG is currently batting 0 for 8 in responding to Swedish invitations for minister-level attendance at EU meetings. Post requests Washington’s help in securing a senior USG official visit to a suitable Presidency event in Sweden during this fall. End Action request

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Plea for Senior U.S. Official to Attend EU Informal Ministerial on Competitiveness

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3. (SBU) On September 1, the Ambassador paid a courtesy call on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Enterprise and Energy Maud Olofsson, the Swedish official at the forefront of the robust U.S.-Swedish cooperation in alternative technology through the “One Big Thing” alternative
energy partnership, and related programs. Olofsson explained the main theme of Sweden’s EU Presidency, transformation to an eco-efficient economy, i.e. achieving economic growth while reducing green house gas emissions. (Comment: Sweden is a proven leader in this area having grown its economy 46 percent between 1992 and 2008, while reducing its green house gas emissions by 9 percent.)

4. (SBU) Sweden has held a series of EU-related meetings and Informal Ministerials to promote eco-efficiency, including a July 2009 meeting of Ministers for Energy and Environment. The Swedish government has invited White House, cabinet-level and sub-cabinet level U.S. officials to these events to present U.S. efforts to the informal gatherings of European Ministers, but so far none have been able to come. (Comment: It is unprecedented for an EU Presidency host to invite USG officials of any level to their informal ministerial meetings. During the Swedish Presidency, there have been a flood of such invitations. This may have to do with Foreign Minister Carl Bildt’s personal predilection, now shared by his fellow Ministers, to shake things up and to do things differently. While USG officials may have been surprised by such invitations, we should seriously consider taking advantage of the unprecedented opportunity the Swedes have given us. End Comment)

5. (SBU) Olofsson said it is time to see results from strong U.S.-Swedish cooperation in clean technology in line with efforts toward a climate change agreement in Copenhagen and the new U.S. Administration’s investment in new alternative energy technology.

6. (SBU) Olofsson noted that Sweden would have liked a senior U.S. official to attend some of the meetings at the July 2009 EU Informal Ministerial in Are of Energy and Environment Ministers in order to be part of the dialog on eco-efficiency and tell the EU Ministers what is happening in the United States.

7. (U) Olofsson said her priority is to have a Ministerial-level U.S. official attend the Informal Meeting of EU Competitiveness Ministers in Umea, Sweden on October 14-16. She stressed the importance of showing European Ministers that developing a green economy is a U.S. priority.

8. (U) Note onInvitations Extended to USG officials:

The Embassy is aware of the following USG officials being invited by the Swedish EU Presidency to present to EU Informal Ministerial meetings in Sweden:

Secretary of Energy Chu
Deputy Secretary of Energy Poneman
Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Browner
Secretary of Labor Solis
Secretary of Health Sebelius
Secretary of Homeland Security Napolitano
Secretary Clinton
Deputy Secretary Lew
Special Envoy Stern

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Of those, the invitations Secretary Clinton, Deputy Secretary Lew and Special Envoy Stern to attend EU Development Days October 22-24 are still pending. The other invitations were declined.

In addition, Sweden has invited Assistant Secretary-level and other U.S. officials.

Assistant Secretary of Energy Zoi invited to the EU Strategic Energy Plan conference October 20-21, invitation still pending.

Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Carson represented the USG at the U.S.-EU Troika Meeting on Africa July 14

Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Phil Gordon represented the U.S. at the U.S.-EU Political Director Troika on July 3.

Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretary Lute visited Sweden at the U.S. initiative for bilateral discussions, which was much appreciated by the GOS.

Other U.S. officials who have visited recently at the U.S. initiative for bilateral consultations with Sweden related to the Swedish EU Presidency include:
Need to See Results From U.S. Interest in Green Technology

9. (U) Olofsson said she discussed eco-efficiency with U.S. Energy Secretary Chu. She noted that there was a lot of “low hanging fruit” where the U.S. and Sweden could get results, such as cooperation in building technologies and transport systems. She said the challenge was to find proactive cooperation between U.S. and Swedish businesses on concrete projects in the U.S. and Europe. She said possible areas for business collaboration included building sustainable cities, and rebuilding in older communities, such as the sustainable development project in Stockholm’s formerly run-down Hammarby district. Olofsson invited U.S. officials to call her to propose projects.

10. (U) Olofsson suggested that Sweden could perhaps arrange an eco-efficient activity in the years ahead to promote business and innovation. Altera noted that the way to do this was to ask for practical advice from businessmen on productive areas. The U.S. side noted that U.S. firms are in the forefront of many of these areas, such as energy efficiency and improved housing construction.

Taking the U.S.-Sweden Alternative Energy Partnership to the EU Level

11. (U) Olofsson noted that U.S.-Sweden cooperation included extending the U.S.-Sweden Alternative Energy Partnership to the EU level. Her State Secretary Ola Altera explained how said Sweden was ready to launch the Next Big Thing (NBT), the U.S.-EU Alternative Energy Partnership, and wanted to launch it at the U.S.-EU Summit planned for early November.

12. (U) Altera said he had consulted his State Secretary colleagues, Gustav Lind in the PM’s office and MFA’s Frank Belfrage, and everyone agreed that Sweden should be talking to the European Commission about NBT.

13. (SBU) Altera said the Swedish EU Presidency is positive to both U.S. energy initiatives, NBT and the U.S.-EU Energy Council, and to the broad approach behind both efforts. He said Sweden’s priority is NBT, technology, research, entrepreneurship of alternative technology, and being results-oriented. He said Sweden does not want to see these efforts bogged down by geo-political discussions of the security side of the energy issue. Therefore, he said, if NBT can be part of the U.S.-Energy Council that would be good, but we should drop that link if it would bog down work on NBT.

14. (SBU) Altera also noted the value of the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), but said Sweden wants to avoid the risk of bogging down NBT if it is “run through people in Brussels.”

15. (SBU) Altera said we need to work intensely to get NBT as a result of the U.S.-EU Summit. He said it would be important for the NBT, U.S.-EU Energy Council or “whatever we call it” to meet before Christmas 2009 in order to set the course, and get the
16. (U) Altera said his Ministry was taking a pragmatic approach to launching the NBT, listening to various views. When the U.S. side suggested that NBT needed to be distilled down so it could be absorbed into the systems of other countries, Altera referred to practical meetings on the U.S.-Sweden Alternative Energy Partnership held between U.S. and Swedish business that helped shape the successful bilateral U.S.-Sweden alternative energy partnership. Olofsson said Sweden could arrange meetings to connect companies as part of the US-EU alternative energy partnership, and even co-finance projects if that is needed. Referring to her government’s report on eco-efficient economies (which is at the link www.se2009.eu/polopoly_fs/1.6629 !menu/standard/file/AN%20European%20Eco%20Efficient%20Economy.pdf), Olofsson said we should pick out areas in the forefront of this effort for such cooperation.

17. (U) Finally, Altera noted that NBT does not replace the strong U.S.-Sweden bilateral cooperation on alternative energy.

18. (SBU) Comment: Following the meeting, the Embassy got additional details about Swedish plans for launching the NBT from Marla Brogren at the Energy Division of the Ministry. She noted that the European Council had ordered the Commission to give its opinion on the U.S.-proposed U.S.-EU Energy Council. She repeated that her government’s first priority and preference would be to launch NBT at the U.S.-EU Summit with participation by Secretary Chu, Secretary Clinton, Minister Olofsson and Foreign Minister Bildt. She said Sweden would like to see that foursome present for the first meeting of the Energy Council. But, she said, if geopolitics bogs down the Energy Council, Sweden would want to move on the technology sub group effort of the Energy Council by launching the Next Big Thing and later folding it into the technology working group of the Energy Council. End Comment.

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Bridging the Gap on Illegal File Sharing

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19. (SBU) The Ambassador concluded the meeting by raising intellectual property rights, since Olofsson’s party (the Center Party) is the one member of the ruling coalition least supportive of U.S. efforts to improve Sweden’s efforts against illegal file sharing. Olofsson said there are discussions within the government about putting more legislation in place against file sharing. While legislation is needed, and Sweden follows European level legislation, she argued that a solution should not only be left to politicians via legislation. The problem was a market failure, the lack of a product that people could easily access at a reasonable price. Many young people, she said, think that all file sharing is free. It is hard to change their perception of the rules. Olofsson said she wanted artists and creative people to be paid for their ideas, but we need to create a market solution that is easy for people to follow.

20. (SBU) The U.S. side countered that as knowledge-based economies, both the U.S. and Sweden have a lot to lose from illegal file sharing. We need to make this public debate about the artists being stolen from.

21. (SBU) Olofsson noted that Nokia and Ericsson have introduced new services to share products while paying the artists, which is good. We need to find a way to pay artists property, not just to pass legislation, she repeated.

22. (SBU) Olofsson said we need to understand how young people see the problem. We should talk about what is happening now, not just pass legislation, she stressed. She pointed to the success of Sweden’s Pirate Party in the European Parliamentary elections as an example of that young people “do not trust us.” She said the Pirate Party attracted voters from both the right and the left, and the Pirate Party MEP now has two advisors, one with a background in the Left Party, and one from a neo-liberal party.

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Final Comment
23. (SBU) The request for help in securing a senior USG official visit to Sweden during the remaining months of the Presidency was a direct plea for help. Olofsson said that she is hopeful that the USG will be able to demonstrate the importance it attaches to the bilateral links in the Alternative energy area by actually sending a senior official to a meeting where the Swedes host its European partners. End comment.

BARZUN
British Outreach to Muslims at Home

A 2006 cable offered American diplomats’ harsh assessment of British government efforts to reach out to Muslims after a plot to blow up airliners bound for the United States using liquid explosives, saying there has been “little progress.”

DATE 2006-08-14 17:17:00

SOURCE Embassy London

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

Monday, 14 August 2006, 17:17

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 005958

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EO 12958 DECL: 08/14/2011

TAGS PGOV, PTER, KISL, UK

SUBJECT: (U) TENSIONS RISE BETWEEN BRITISH MUSLIMS AND HMG IN THE WAKE OF THWARTED TERRORIST ATTACK

REF: A) LONDON 5921 B) LONDON 5884

Classified By: PolMinCouns Maura Connelly, Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Frustrated by the bruising that their community has taken after 24 UK-born Muslims were arrested in connection with the recently-thwarted air terrorist plot (reftels), prominent British Muslims sent an open letter to PM Tony Blair August 12 blaming his policy on Iraq and the Middle East for fueling extremism and putting British citizens at risk. HMG reacted angrily to the letter; in a series of meetings with Muslim community leaders August 14, government ministers planned to demand that the Muslim community itself do more to root out terrorists in its midst. At the same time, officials were scheduled to hold talks with leaders of seven UK localities where they judge unrest among Muslims may turn into street violence. Two British mosques have been set on fire since the story of the thwarted attacks broke, and UK police suspect revenge arson. Meanwhile, media sources are reporting that Blair has made contingency plans to return to the UK from holiday in Barbados if events warrant. END SUMMARY.

(U) BRITISH MUSLIMS ANGRY

2. (U) The arrest of 24 UK-born Muslims (one has since been released) in connection with the recently-thwarted air terrorist plot angered and frustrated Britain’s Muslim community. Most feel they are being unjustly blamed and stereotyped. “You cannot assume that Muslims are collectively responsible for the actions of a few,” Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) media spokesman Inayat Bunglawala said August 14. Many Muslims feel HMG is employing a double standard in dealing with Muslim suspects, pointing to the Bank of England’s decision to release the names of 19 of the suspects when their assets were frozen at the time of their arrest. (UK officials defend this unusual practice as necessary to ensure that all assets were properly frozen.) “It is important to wait until a thorough investigation has taken place before pointing fingers and drawing
conclusions. It is important to maintain the legal principles we hold dear, namely the concept of innocent until proven guilty,” Federation of Students Islamic Societies (FOSIS) spokesman Wakkas Khan said August 11.

3. (U) The Muslim community’s anger is also fueled by continued resentment of HMG’s handling of the June raid on a home in Forest Gate in East London, when 250 officers arrested two Muslim brothers, shooting one of them in the process, only to release them without charge a few days later. Chairman of the Birmingham Central Mosque Mohammed Nassem said August 12: “With the track record of the police, one doesn’t have much faith in the basis on which people are detained. And it poses the question of whether the arrests are part of a political objective, by using Muslims as a target, using the perception of terrorism to usurp all our civil liberties and get more and more control while moving towards a totalitarian state.” (Note: The follow-up to the botched raid has irked some other Britons after the media reported that, since their release, the brothers and their families have been housed at a central London hotel at taxpayer expense while raid-related damage to the house is repaired, also at government expense. End Note)

4. (U) Prominent British Muslim leaders sent an open letter to PM Tony Blair August 12 stating that his policy on Iraq and the Middle East offers “ammunitions to extremists” and puts British lives “at increased risk.” Appearing as a full page advertisement in newspapers August 13, the letter was signed by three of the four Muslim MPs, three of the five Muslim members of the House of Lords, and 38 Muslim organizations (for full text and list of signatories see para 10). Although the letter states specifically that “attacking civilians is never justified,” its signatories have used this sentence as a double-edged sword in defending the letter publicly, in effect equating civilian deaths in Lebanon with potential civilian deaths from terrorism. As MCB Secretary General Dr. Mohammed Abdul Bari told the press, “As Muslims, we condemn attacks on civilians wherever they happen. Civilians in the UK, the Middle East, and the rest of the world should all enjoy protection.”

(U) HMG ANGRY

5. (U) HMG reacted sharply to the letter. A spokesman for PM Blair (currently on holiday in Barbados), noting that al-Qaida terrorist attacks began well before Iraq, said, “To imply al-Qaida is driven by an honest disagreement over foreign policy is a mistake.” Home Secretary John Reid told the BBC, “I’m not going to question the motives of anyone who has signed this letter, but I think it is a dreadful misjudgment if we believe the foreign policy of this country should be shaped in part, or in whole, under the threat of terrorist activity if we do not have a foreign policy with which the terrorists happen to agree.” Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander echoed these sentiments, saying “No government worth its salt should allow its foreign policy to be dictated to under the threat of terrorism.” Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said it would be “the gravest SIPDIS possible error” to blame foreign policy for the threat of terrorism. “This is part of a distorted view of the world, a distorted view of life,” she said. “Let’s put the blame where it belongs: with people who wantonly want to take innocent lives.” Other ministers called the letter “fickle,” “dangerous,” and “foolish.”

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(U) HMG ANGRY

6. (U) Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly, along with ministers from her department and the Home Office, was scheduled to meet with representatives of various Muslim groups August 14. HMG has made clear that one message officials will deliver in these meetings is that Muslim leaders must do more to tackle extremism inside their community. Although the meetings also represent HMG’s stepped up efforts to engage with Muslims, Labour MP Sadiq Khan said the community feels “let down” by HMG efforts to date, particularly the “Preventing Extremism Together” task forces, which the Home Office created after the 7/7 attacks. Very few of the 64 measures recommended by Muslim leaders on the task force have been implemented, Khan said, creating an “air of despondency” and leading the community to believe that the entire exercise was just a publicity stunt. For its part, HMG is keen to show that a substantial action plan is already in place. Secretary Kelly has pointed to a new Commission on Integration and Cohesion to be launched later this month.

7. (U) Meanwhile, the media has quoted aides to PM Blair as saying that No. 10 Downing Street has made contingency plans for him to return to the UK from his vacation in Barbados if events warrant it. These aides have reportedly admitted that the PM would not have left for holiday if he had known that the police were about to arrest the alleged terrorist plotters.
8. (C) Also on August 14, law enforcement officials were scheduled to meet leaders from seven communities - Newham, Hackney, Barking, Dagenham, and Waltham Forest in London, plus Birmingham and High Wycombe - where they judged the possibility for unrest might lead to street violence. Lord Ahmed of Rotherham warned, “The police on the whole have acted professionally and satisfactorily, but they must produce some evidence soon.” Meanwhile, fire fighters took almost two hours to put out a fire at the Al-Birr mosque in the town of Basingstoke in southeast England on August 13, and UK officials tell Embassy London they are seriously considering that the blaze was a revenge arson attack against Muslims. Another mosque in Blacon in northwest England was attacked August 10. Leader of white supremacist British National Party Nick Griffin, at a rally August 12, called for all Muslims between 15 and 50 to be banned from flying, and said there was “no such thing as a moderate Muslim.”

9. (C) COMMENT: Since 7/7, HMG has invested considerable time and resources in engaging the British Muslim community. The current tensions demonstrate just how little progress has been made. At the same time, the Muslim community’s reaction to the arrests of 24 of its own sons - a knee-jerk reaction blaming HMG - shows that its leaders too have far to go. That said, the Muslim community is not the only element in Britain blaming HMG’s foreign policy for inciting radical elements; the left in particular but even the mainstream press has expressed the belief, reportedly widespread, that homegrown terrorism is an “inevitable” response to the UK’s involvement in Iraq and reluctance to call for an “immediate ceasefire” in the Middle East. HMG’s rather heated response to the letter is undoubtedly aimed at swaying broader opinion.

(U) FULL TEXT OF LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER BLAIR

10. (U) Begin text of letter:

Prime Minister, As British Muslims we urge you to do more to fight against all those who target civilians with violence, whenever and wherever that happens.

It is our view that current British government policy risks putting civilians at increased risk both in the UK and abroad.

To combat terror the government has focused extensively on domestic legislation. While some of this will have an impact, the government must not ignore the role of its foreign policy.

The debacle of Iraq and now the failure to do more to secure an immediate end to the attacks on civilians in the Middle East not only increases the risk to ordinary people in that region, it is also ammunition to extremists who threaten us all.

Attacking civilians is never justified. This message is a global one. We urge the Prime Minister to redouble his efforts to tackle terror and extremism and change our foreign policy to show the world that we value the lives of civilians wherever they live and whatever their religion.

Such a move would make us all safer.

(Signed) Sadiq Khan MP, Shahid Malik MP, Mohammed Sarwar MP, Lord Patel of Blackburn, Lord Ahmed of Rotherham, Baronness Uddin, Association of Muslim Schools, British Muslim Forum, Bolton Mosques Council for Community Care, Confederation of Sunni Mosques, Midlands Council of Nigerian Muslim Organizations, Council of Mosques - London and Southern Counties, Council of Mosques Tower Hamlets, Da’awtul Islam UK and Eire, Federation of Muslim Organizations (Leicestershire), Federation of Students Islamic Societies (FOSIS), Indian Muslim Federation, Islamic Forum Europe, Islam Society of Britain, Jama’at Ahle Sunnat UK, Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith UK, Jamiat-e-Ulema Britain, Lancashire Council of Mosques, Muslim Association of Britain, Muslim Council of Britain, Muslim Council of Wales, Muslim Doctors and Dentists Association, Muslim Parliament, Muslim Solidarity
Committee, Muslim Students Society UK and Eire, Muslim Welfare House (London), Muslim Women Society (MWS), Muslim Women’s Association, Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association (NIMFA), Sussex Muslim Society, The Council of European Jamaats, UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, UK Islamic Mission, UK Turkish Islamic Association, World Federation of KSIMC, World Islamic Mission, Young Muslim Organization UK, Young Muslim Sisters UK, Young Muslims UK.

End text of letter.

Visit London’s Classified Website: http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/london/index.cfm Tuttle
The State of Russia’s Prisons

A 2008 cable from the American Embassy in Moscow reports on the dismal state of Russian prisons nearly two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union -- but also reports that the male mortality rate is lower in prison than outside because alcohol is less available.

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1. (C) Summary: The Russian prison system combines the country's emblematic features - vast distances, harsh climate, and an uncaring bureaucracy - and fuses them into a massive instrument of punishment. Russia imprisons a greater portion of its population than almost any other country in the world (second only to the U.S.). In contrast to other Western countries, the system is foremost focused on punishment, not rehabilitation, and while statistics are difficult to compare, produces a lower rate of recidivism. Recent prison riots, new prisoner shock tactics, and smuggled videos of prison mistreatment have highlighted the cruelties and corruption in the system. Health conditions in Russian prisons are poor and infection rates for contagious diseases are much higher than in the general population, but surprisingly the mortality rate for men in these prisons is only one-third the rate on the outside - a statistic that says much more about the dangers of alcoholism and road safety than it does about healthy living behind bars. Reports of abuses in the prison system have been answered with calls for reform, most recently in the Human Rights Ombudsman's annual report and by the President's Human Rights Council. While NGO activists such as the embattled Lev Ponomarev praise the work of Lukin, the insurmountable challenges posed by the physical and cultural nature of the prison system mean that efforts to improve conditions or to alter the character of the system from punishment to rehabilitation are likely to produce only superficial improvements. End summary.

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Structure of the Prison System
2. (U) The Federal Service for the Execution of Punishments (FSIN), part of the Ministry of Justice, administers more than 700 Russian jails and prisons across the country (this cable does not address the military prison system operated by the Ministry of Defense). There are four levels of incarceration as prisoners move through the justice system: temporary police custody facilities for those held pending charges; pretrial detention facilities (SIZOs) for those charged with crimes; lower-security correctional labor colonies (ITKs); and high-security prisons for more dangerous prisoners and for those who violate the rules of ITKs. Convicted juveniles serve their sentences in "educational labor colonies" (VTKs) for juveniles, in almost all cases separate from adult prisoners.

3. (C) According to Lev Ponomarev, who recently established the NGO "For Prisoners' Rights," the authorities use a two-tier system of administration. The prison officials and the guards protect the perimeter of the facilities and provide the upper layer of security, but then they elevate select prisoners to act as internal enforcers among the other prisoners. These elite prisoners receive privileges and protections in return for enforcing a brutal form of order within the prisons. Ponomarev called this a "low-risk ghetto system" for the guards. "If one of their enforcers gets killed by another, they can just promote a new one. Maybe even the one that killed the last boss." Ponomarev told us that the prisoners have little choice, and cited an example of one member of the National Bolshevik Party who was sent into solitary confinement for one year for refusing to act as an enforcer.

4. (C) This system of using prisoners to enforce discipline and order was formally established by the Ministry of Justice in 2005. According to William Smirnov, a member of the President's Council on Human Rights, the MOJ formalized a system that had long existed. Smirnov defended the system, telling us that "It was not a bad idea, but it was poorly implemented."

5. (C) According to Viktoriya Sergeyeva of Prison Reform International (PRI) in Moscow, the source of the problems is the Ministry of Justice and the FSIN. The low pay and low prestige of prison administrators and guards, combined with a lack of oversight and accountability, have created an abusive system rife with cruelty and corruption. Guards use violence, threats of violence, or the lack of protection to extort prisoners. Other guards take bribes for allowing relatives to smuggle in goods to prisoners. Sergeyeva said that prison administrators knew what was occurring and probably received a cut from the guards.

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The Inmates

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6. (U) According to FSIN statistics, as of July, there were approximately 889,600 people in the custody of the criminal justice system, including 63,000 women and 12,100 juveniles. This rate of 630 prisoners per 100,000 citizens is second in the world only to the United States (702 per 100,000). The number of prisoners has increased in recent years. Compared to July 2005, the total number of prisoners has increased by 101,000 (13 percent), the number of women prisoners increased by 15,000 (31 percent), and the number of juvenile prisoners decreased by 2,400 (-17 percent). Not surprisingly, most prisoners are poorer and less educated that the general population; only 1.3 percent of male prisoners have university degrees, compared to 22.5 percent of the general population, and nearly 60 percent of convicts were unemployed prior to their arrests. Seventy percent are unmarried.

7. (C) During the last year, there have been scattered reports of uprisings in prisons, including a revolt and jailbreak at the youth prison in Togliatti (Samara Oblast). According to Ponomarev, this revolt was triggered by the transfer of a large number of 20 year-old prisoners to an adult prison. By law, he explained, convicts sentenced before they turn 18 are sent to youth prisons, where they may stay until they turn 21, at which time they are transferred to an adult prison. Other protest actions, such as hunger strikes, are still common, but Ponomarev described a new shock tactic whereby prisoners will en masse slice open a vein on their arms or neck in protest of mass beatings. While the poor conditions in the prisons have not further deteriorated in the past few years, the prisoners are becoming more organized. "Smuggled cell phones are enabling prisoners to communicate better and to coordinate mass action," said Ponomarev.
8. (U) The prison system incorporates Russia's vast distances and harsh climate into the system of punishment. Although the law states that prisoners should not be incarcerated outside the region where they lived or were convicted unless local prisons are overcrowded, this rule is routinely disregarded, according to Sergeyeva. Many prisons are located in isolated regions with harsh climates and use buildings that are not adequately heated, cooled, or ventilated. Often, the transfer of prisoners far from their homes is due to space concerns, but it is also used as a form of punishment for troublesome prisoners. The best known example of this treatment is Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who is imprisoned in Chita, nearly 3,000 miles from his native Moscow. His associate, Platon Lebedev is imprisoned nearly 1,200 miles from Moscow above the Arctic Circle. The Moscow-based Open Health Institute (OHI) reported that this physical isolation leads to personal isolation, and that between 50 and 80 percent of all prisoners had not received any visitors in the prior three months. This isolation from family and friends has negative repercussions on future rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

9. (U) Due to the nature of this federal (not regional) system, juveniles and women are more likely to be located far from their homes. For example, there are only three prisons in the country for the 1,000 girl prisoners - one in Tomsk for all of Siberia and the Far East, one in Ryazan, and one in Belgorod. This great distance makes it almost impossible for families to have regular contact with their children.

10. (U) Prison guards still rely heavily on traditional forms of violence and deprivation to maintain control. Solitary confinement for long periods (sometimes longer than one year) while illegal is reportedly used, and some isolation cells are too small for the inmate to fully stretch out lying down. In what Ponomarev called a typical incident, he showed us a video filmed by a guard and sent anonymously to For Prisoners' Rights. The video, since posted on YouTube, shows prison guards marching out prisoners in a Sverdlovsk Oblast prison past dogs. Some prisoners were then stripped to the waist, stretched out over tables, and then beaten with billy clubs by the guards. "This is routine behavior," said Ponomarev, "what is different is that it was recorded." REN-TV aired short segments of the video during an evening newscast. A recent news report from Kalmykiya claimed that after a new warden was appointed to a local SIZO, the Ministry of Justice's special forces visited the prison and beat up every detainee saying that it was a greeting from the new warden. Ponomarev said that such reports surfaced relatively rarely, and that prison administrators will continue to exploit their remote locations and be able to ward off scrutiny from the press, NGOs, or government watchdogs.

11. (U) According to Sergeyeva, the recidivism rate in Russia is only 36 percent (compared to more than 50 percent in the United States or the United Kingdom). She attributed this low number to a combination of factors, including the longer average Russian prison term which keeps men in jail and a genuine fear of returning to prison. (Note: It is difficult to evenly compare the U.S. and Russian statistics since U.S. conditions vary from state to state and from the federal prisons. End note.) "We still have the problem that when these prisoners return to society, they have no system of assistance. The federal budget finances the prisons and the punishment, but they leave it up to regional and local government to finance the rehabilitation and health costs. They break them, and then we own them."

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Health Conditions
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12. (U) Conditions in pre-detention facilities (SIZOs) are generally worse than in the prisons. The prison system does not have enough SIZOs to handle the large number of the accused, and overcrowding and squalid conditions are widespread. Many SIZOs lack toilets, and inmates use buckets. In a well-documented case at the European Court of Human Rights (Mayzit v. Russia, No. 63378/08), the court found Russia in violation of the Prohibition of Inhuman or Degrading Treatment by placing Yuriy Mayzit in severely overcrowded cells with less than two square meters
per person (the Russian legal minimum is four square meters/person, the European minimum is seven square meters/person). According to Human Rights activists and the Ombudsman Lukin, similar conditions (or worse) exist throughout the system.

13. (U) Health conditions in prisons are poor. Overcrowding is common, the infection rates of resistant TB and HIV/AIDS are much higher than in the general population, and even though the TB infection rate has greatly decreased since 1999, the active TB rate among prisoner is still five times higher than in the civilian population (Ref A). According to the Open Health Institute (OHI), there were 41,500 inmates with HIV/AIDS in 2006, approximately ten percent of the cases in the country. Prisoners with active TB are segregated from the regular prison population and are given rigorous medical treatment, but because the treatment of normal TB lasts up to 12 months and even longer for drug-resistant TB, many prisoners are released before they complete treatment and an estimated 40 percent fail to continue their treatment on the outside. A 2005 study by OHI revealed that former prisoners carry these infections back to the general population upon their release, and they account for an estimated 20 percent of new TB cases in the civilian population.

14. (U) OHI Deputy Director Aleksey Bobrik reported a counterintuitive statistic that even though the mortality rate from infectious diseases was greater in prisons than in the general population, the overall mortality rate for men in prison was only one-third that of the general population. Bobrik and the other OHI researchers attributed this to the absence of binge drinking, car accidents, and industrial accidents in prison. Long-term health for inmates, however, suffers greatly as the poor nutrition, stress, and disease manifest themselves later in life.

First-Hand Observations

15. (SBU) Embassy and Consulate employees have visited several jails and prisons across Russia and report that conditions are generally poor. In the Kholmsk pre-trial detention center on Sakhalin Island, the facilities are literally crumbling, it is dangerous to walk the hallways, and the dark living quarters lack every amenity. One American detainee was initially denied a bed, and his health deteriorated noticeably during the weeks he was held there.

16. (SBU) The facilities that consular staff see are generally better than the prevailing living conditions, according to prisoners. Consular officers generally will meet with prisoners in a waiting room, sometimes under a guard’s watch, but often alone in a room. We have the greatest access to the prison in Mordovia, which is used for foreign citizens, but we cannot say that it is typical of the system. An American citizen convicted of pedophilia used money and goods sent from the outside to buy the favor and protection of the prison commandant. He had no complaints about threats from other prisoners, which is not typical of Russian prisons where pedophiles are reportedly at the bottom of the prisoner caste system.

17. (SBU) At the women's prison in Mozhaisk (Moscow Oblast) the Embassy and a visiting DOJ delegation were given a tour of the prison housing facilities and clothing factory, and then treated to a bizarre fashion and talent show by the inmates. Eleven of the 43 women’s prisons in the Russian Federation allow inmates to have children under age three to live on the prison grounds, and women in the other prisons who become pregnant are transferred to prisons that allow children. Only two, Mozhaisk and Mordovia, allow mothers to live and sleep in the same rooms with their young children. At age three, the children are moved to family members on the outside or to orphanages. The facilities at Mozhaisk were clean, well kept, and the factory where prisoners produced uniforms for the military, police, and other government workers appeared to be safe, well lit, and well run.

Oversight and Efforts to Reform the System

18. (C) Human Rights Ombudsman Vladimir Lukin told the Ambassador in a February 7 meeting (Ref B)
that prison conditions were one of the most important issues for him, but that he had difficulty gaining unfettered access to the prisons and that prison authorities were the main obstacle he faced in addressing prisoners' human rights complaints. Lukin said that the FSIN was slowly improving conditions, and that new construction fixed many of the problems of sanitation and overcrowding.

19. (SBU) On February 14, Lukin issued his 2007 Human Rights report for Russia which reproached the FSIN for the deplorable conditions in the prison and for their lack of cooperation in addressing the abuses. Like the 2006 report, the 2007 report focuses heavily on abuse in the prison system, and Lukin noted that almost 20 percent of the total 15,000 complaints that his office received last year were reports of ill treatment in the prisons. Lukin wrote that his office had investigated approximately half of the prison complaints but that he was often stonewalled by prison authorities in getting evidence. According to Lukin, fewer than 150 of the 1,500 cases he had brought to the attention of prison officials resulted in any corrective action.

20. (SBU) Lukin proposes several reforms that would address problems in the system, foremost among them being the expansion of parole, which would ease the overcrowding of the system, and change the focus of the prison system from punishment to rehabilitation. He also proposes minor changes, such as moving the prison hospital system out of the Ministry of Justice and into the Ministry of Health. Lukin noted that Russia already had adequate legislation to address many of the abuses, such as keeping prisoners near their home region or providing them with proper medical care; the problem, however, is that the FSIN often disregards the law.

21. (C) Ponomarev and PRI's Alla Pokras both praised the work of Lukin and Ella Pamfilova, the Chair of the Presidential Council on Human Rights, but said that the problems in the system were too great and too severe for them to handle. Pamfilova told the Ambassador on February 11 that she had been thwarted in her reform efforts by the Ministry of Justice (Ref C). Ponomarev noted that Putin met with Pamfilova on January 11 to discuss problems in the prisons, but that he offered nothing substantive. Putin was quoted saying "The situation (in prisons) has been changing slowly but surely, largely through consistent and systematic efforts by human rights organizations." Although Ponomarev agreed that human rights groups were doing most of the work to reform the system, he disagreed that the situation was improving, or that human rights organizations could do this work by themselves. "We can shine a light on this situation, but the government runs the prisons -- neither we nor Lukin himself can even gain access to the 40 worst 'torture prisons.' How can he honestly expect that we could possibly change this system?"

22. (U) On February 22, a Moscow court acting on a complaint by FSIN Director Kalinin filed a suit against Ponomarev for defamation. The suit is based upon a November 2006 interview with Regnum.ru where Ponomarev called FSIN Director Kalinin the "author" of the system in which select prisoners enforce order and discipline on others. Ponomarev noted that Putin met with Pamfilova on January 11 to discuss problems in the prisons, but that he offered nothing substantive. Putin was quoted saying "The situation (in prisons) has been changing slowly but surely, largely through consistent and systematic efforts by human rights organizations." Although Ponomarev agreed that human rights groups were doing most of the work to reform the system, he disagreed that the situation was improving, or that human rights organizations could do this work by themselves. "We can shine a light on this situation, but the government runs the prisons -- neither we nor Lukin himself can even gain access to the 40 worst 'torture prisons.' How can he honestly expect that we could possibly change this system?"

Comment

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23. (C) A system as vast and entrenched as the Russian prison system will be difficult if not impossible to reform. The nature of the system, which has not substantively varied as it has evolved from tsarist prisons to the gulag to today's system, nurtures the spread of disease, abuse, and corruption. Observers agree that the combination of distance, isolation, corruption, and general indifference to the plight of convicts combine to create a system that is brutal and will resist attempts to reveal its inner workings, or to change it.
Russia Is Said to Have Offered Nuclear Weapons to Egypt

A lengthy 2009 report on nuclear counterproliferation efforts includes a claim from an Egyptian official on a shocking offer from Russia: Egypt, the official said, “had been offered nuclear scientists, materials and even weapons following the collapse of the Soviet Union, but Egypt had refused all such offers.”
4. (C) Responding to A/S Gottemoeller’s question regarding his assessment of the state of play in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Soares said that his impression was that the CD would adopt a program of work (POW) along the lines of the Algerian Ambassador’s proposal. Soares opined that he hadn’t heard of any opposition, and Pakistan, in particular, had agreed to it. He wasn’t sure about Iran, but felt they wouldn’t oppose as it wasn’t in their interest. A/S Gottemoeller noted that there was much work to be done in preparing for negotiations, but her impression was everyone could be ready to begin in January. She asked about support within the G 21, to which Soares replied that in their last meeting, none had spoken against the Algerian proposal. In an implied reference to linkages, Soares opined that it was important not to lose sight of the other issues on the CD’s agenda, and that it was indeed possible to work on more than one issue at a time. (SBU) Meeting with Australia’s Assistant Secretary for Arms Control and Counter-proliferation John Sullivan (7 May)

5. (C) A/S Sullivan began the meeting by congratulating the United States on a successful PrepCom and giving credit to the United States for the positive atmosphere. He noted that nearly all delegations seemed to be showing some “restraint” this year, and there weren’t as many personal attacks as in past PrepComs. He added that other delegations had commented to him that even Iran’s statements showed some constraint.

6. (C) A/S Sullivan asked when the P5 1 negotiations with Iran were scheduled to commence. A/S Gottemoeller said that Washington was still working out tactics and timing, but President Obama made it clear the Middle East (including Iran) was a priority for his Administration; the President’s selection of George Mitchell as the Middle East envoy showed his dedication to resolving the Iran issue quickly and diplomatically. A/S Gottemoeller said that the P5 should give credit to Arab League partners for “reining in” Iran, but had hopes that the United States could lead peaceful Middle East negotiations. He added that the new positive atmosphere of the NPT community could pave the way for a Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFWZ) at the 2010 Review Conference (RevCon). A/S Gottemoeller asked how the Australians foresee the 2010 RevCon unfolding: would it be all Middle East, all the time, or would we focus on other issues? A/S Sullivan said that he believed the Middle East issue must be resolved first before States Party can make headway anywhere else. He noted his experience as the Ambassador to Cyprus, and explained how he saw hatred passing down from generation to generation, and he believed the Middle East was the same way.

7. (C) A/S Gottemoeller raised the issue of Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) negotiations and asked what Australia’s views were on Ambassador Jazairy’s non-paper. She said she was impressed with his ability to get consensus within the NAM so quickly, although Israel must be brought on board before any real action could take place on FMCT negotiations. A/S Sullivan agreed with A/S Gottemoeller’s comments, but said that Australia was not clear on the US plans for a way forward. He asked whether the US plan was to move forward on negotiations without consensus, or was the plan to begin negotiations only after all States agreed to commence negotiations? He said Australia was hesitant to make a decision on a way forward until they had clarification from the United States. A/S Gottemoeller requested Gary Larson, Charge d’Affaires from the US Mission to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), speak to the FMCT issue. He said that the process was progressing but the United States was giving a lot of study on the best way forward. He noted that Australia was only one Presidency away from becoming President of the CD, and that that FMCT negotiations may not begin until their Presidency, because of sensitivities with Israel. A/S Sullivan agreed and noted that his government had meetings scheduled with Israel this week and that FMCT probably would be raised. A/S Sullivan asked whether the United States believed other parties would expect quid-pro-quo verification measures, and Mr. Larson said one challenge for the nuclear weapons states and three non-states Party to the NPT would be handling expectations, including on negative security assurances (NSAs). A/S Sullivan noted that Australia did not have a strong position on NSAs one way or another.

8. (C) A/S Sullivan raised the issue of US ratification of the CTBT and asked what the US position was on process and timelines. A/S Gottemoeller reiterated President Obama’s pledge to ratify at an early date, and noted that while the US goal was to gain the Senate’s advice and consent, we needed to do it carefully. A/S Sullivan asked how post-START negotiations would be affected by CTBT ratification. A/S Gottemoeller explained that START negotiations would commence earlier than CTBT, but that CTBT hearings would likely follow ratification of the post-START agreement. A/S Sullivan noted that he had been struck by the South Korean delegation’s remarks that US ratification of the CTBT would give the
9. (C) A/S Sullivan then raised the issue of the Russians and his experience with them as Chairman of the Australia Group. He noted that while the Russian mood on post-START was positive for now, the issue with NATO and Georgia could quickly sour negotiations, as it has in other fora. (SBU) Meeting with Canada,s Ambassador Marius Grinius (7 May)

10. (C) Ambassador Grinius noted his disapproval in the Russians trying to link CFE and START issues, and noted the problems with PAROS; he hoped that Russia would reconsider their plans for linking the two issues. A/S Gottemoeller asked Grinius about his take on the mood of the PrepCom. He cited a pleasant meeting he recently had with the Ambassador from Egypt, and compared it to a meeting before the PrepCom in which the Ambassador was “very aggressive.” He believed most countries have much higher expectations for a positive PrepCom following the positive remarks by A/S Gottemoeller and President Obama,s statement in the opening remarks. He noted that all States, Article VI obligations have become much more important and he believes there will be renewed effort from all States to encourage adherence to the Treaty. He also stated that he believed the United States had done a poor job highlighting their successes under Article VI and hoped that the new Administration would have a better public relations story than in the past.

11. (C) Grinius noted that during his trip to Washington last week, he met with John Wolfstahl at the National Security Council (NSC) to discuss CTBT and was encouraged by US plans to submit the Treaty to the Senate. A/S Gottemoeller discussed the recent STRATCOM conference on CTBT and stockpile reliability. She noted that the US voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing did not affect the confidence the United States has in its stockpiles and the overall consensus was that acceding to the CTBT probably would not put the reliability of the US stockpile at risk.

12. (C) Grinius fully supported US efforts to move quickly towards negotiations on FMCT and noted that it was time for the CD to “smoke out” Pakistan, Iran and Israel on their positions. He asked how the United States intended to use the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement to advance nonproliferation objectives. Adam Scheinman from the NSC said it was no longer considered the “US-India Deal” and that the United States was referring to it as the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) - India Cooperation. Grinius did not think this rebranding was fair, saying that most NSG members “gave up” and “joined the bandwagon” rather than fully supporting a nuclear agreement with India. He also noted that before India could enjoy open nuclear trade, it would have to do more in the form of export controls. A/S Gottemoeller agreed, stating that Washington will be much harder on India if they don,t strengthen export controls and nonproliferation measures.

13. (C) Grinius believed the Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone would be a dominant issue at the RevCon. He noted Canada,s pro-Israel policy and that his government was discussing ways to move forward on a NWFFZ before the RevCon. Grinius passed a copy of the Canadian paper on institutional reform, and highlighted its recommendation for a three person team, similar to the one in the BWC, consisting of the past, present, and subsequent PrepCom Chairs supported by the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs in Geneva. He noted that having a three person team would allow further consultations in the lead up to the 2010 RevCon and such a team could share the Chairperson,s responsibilities to better facilitate a Conference.

14. (C) A/S Gottemoeller then discussed Article X and asked for Canada,s position on DPRK withdrawal. Grinius said he raised the same question during a meeting on the margins of the UN First Committee, and everyone laughed. He believes that no country wants to address the question. He believes that States Parties need to address the issue in full Plenary because the DPRK fully believes that they are no longer party to the Treaty. He suggested the United States may be in a position to call for a meeting on the DPRK and noted Canada,s support for a formal discussion. A/S Gottemoeller asked whether he believed a smaller meeting with more like-minded states would be preferable, or if it should be a large scale meeting with all delegations. He noted his support for either, although he suggested that a smaller meeting would be easier to manage. Scheinman asked whether Canada believed withdrawal and compliance issues could adequately be dealt with in the NPT process, or if it needed to be elevated to the UN Security Council. Grinius said that Canada believes it should first be handled in the NPT channels and if no resolution is met, then it should be elevated. (SBU) Meeting with the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) Tibor Toth (7 May)

15. (C) Executive Secretary Toth opened the meeting by thanking the United States for its opening statement which was very supportive of the CTBTO. He then asked about the US strategy for gaining the Senate,s advice and consent for the CTBT. A/S Gottemoeller discussed the recent STRATCOM
16. (C) Toth then discussed the upcoming conference on verification, which will be held in Vienna from 10-12 June 2009. He explained that the intent of the meeting is to have technical level discussions on verification, and he believed it would be very helpful and fruitful if the United States strongly supported the meeting and sent several technical representatives from government and national laboratories to provide presentations and serve on discussion panels. Toth then asked whether the Secretary would be willing to provide brief remarks at the Article 14 Conference in New York, after the UNGA meeting this fall. He noted that the invitation would be going out soon, and A/S Gottemoeller said she would inquire once she returned to Washington.

17. (C) A/S Gottemoeller asked how the CTBTO was preparing for alleged future DPRK nuclear tests. Toth explained that the International Monitoring System (IMS) was monitoring the area regularly. Toth stated that the IMS performed well after the 2006 DPRK test, and he was confident the IMS would detect any future test. Toth further stated that the IMS was studying how to better prepare for the DPRK vis-a-vis Iran and other countries. He noted they were looking at additional site installations in the region and more active monitoring, but noted that the CTBTO has a small budget and could only make limited increases. Before concluding the meeting, Toth asked that the United States reconsider its $20M “red ink” policy towards the CTBTO, noting that the United States reconsiders its $20M “red ink” policy towards the CTBTO, noting that the Organization will face extensive financial trouble in FY2010. He said there was a $15-20M deficit in the regular budget, which will substantially affect the work of the Agency. A/S Gottemoeller asked if paying the U.S. arrears would solve the CTBTO’s financial problems or was their greater need. Toth replied that even after the U.S. paid in full, the CTBTO would still have a significant shortfall. A/S Gottemoeller said she would convey his concerns to Washington. (SBU)

Meeting with Egypt,s Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz (7 May)

18. (C) Abdelaziz began by praising President Obama’s recent speech in Prague and US/Russian efforts to negotiate a follow-on START agreement. He then proceeded to ask about the new Administration,s policy for the Middle East in the context of the NPT. A/S Gottemoeller said that policy still was evolving but that certain contours already should be clear: the President is serious about the Middle East peace process and has appointed a special envoy to that end; there is an evolving policy on Iran, which includes direct diplomacy; and the Administration is advocating the quick commencement of negotiations on a verifiable FMCT. All of these initiatives, she argued, contribute to the kind of atmosphere that will be required to make progress on the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Abdelaziz said he was encouraged the United States finally was taking the issue seriously. He acknowledged that the 1995 Resolution indeed was linked to the peace process, but he said this link cannot be abused. Egypt has tried for years to foster peace in the region, and will continue to do so, but it is unwilling to wait fifty more years to see progress in implementing the 1995 Resolution. He said a new approach to Iran would be good, and that Iran cannot be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons, but the Iranian nuclear issue also should not prevent progress on implementing the Resolution. The 1995 Resolution was supposed to foster security and stability in the region, and for Cairo the issue relates directly to national security; statements from Israeli,s Prime Minister that his state possesses nuclear weapons do not contribute to security or stability. Abdelaziz said Egypt,s President soon will visit Washington, and he expected all these issues to be raised with President Obama. Egypt needs agreement on the implementation of the 1995 Resolution at the 2010 RevCon, and suggests a package approach to the issue that would include Iran, Israel, and regional security. It further emphasized the need for definite timeframes for implementation. He said if the Middle East Resolution is solved, everything else would fall into place for Egypt, including CTBT and CWC. Abdelaziz acknowledged that the contours of policy elucidated by A/S Gottemoeller address “big picture” goals for the region and the world, but said Egypt would not sacrifice its regional security for global objectives. On FMCT he emphasized the need to deal with existing stocks of fissile material.

19. (C) A/S Gottemoeller asked about Egypt,s view of the interest in nuclear energy throughout the region. Abdelaziz said it was spreading throughout the region, but states were concerned about perceived attempts to impose restrictions on civil nuclear technology. He said the idea of responsible vs. irresponsible states is very dangerous, and the best way to handle the growing interest in this technology was to strengthen the IAEA. He respected A/S Gottemoeller,s point that NPT Parties have both rights and responsibilities, but warned against discriminatory approaches to civil nuclear technology.

20. (C) Abdelaziz said positive momentum toward the 2010 RevCon has been established, especially
with the decision to negotiate a follow-on START agreement, and the adoption of an agenda for the RevCon. He said the RevCon must produce a final document and progress must be made on the Middle East Resolution, which would help bring all non-parties into the Treaty. A/S Gottemoeller described the ways in which the US-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement had brought India further into the nonproliferation regime. Abdelaziz said if this were true, it would better his disposition toward the agreement. Finally, in an apparent attempt to portray Egypt as a responsible member of the international community, Abdelaziz claimed that Egypt had been offered nuclear scientists, materials and even weapons following the collapse of the Soviet Union, but Egypt had refused all such offers. A/S Gottemoeller asked him how he knew this to be true, to which Abdelaziz replied he was in Moscow at that time and had direct personal knowledge. (SBU)

Meeting with Philippines, Ambassador Libran Cabactulan: President-designate of the 2010 NPT Review Conference (7 May)

21. (C) Cabactulan said the speeches at this year,s PrepCom have been inspiring, but it remains to be seen what the ground truths are about states, goals for the RevCon. He said expectations were high, but cautioned memories are not short, and states will remember the disappointments of 2005. A couple concrete achievements before the RevCon could catapult the Conference to success. He said he was in a listening mode and was ready to “roll-up his sleeves and hit the road.” A/S Gottemoeller discussed the expected timetables for US progress on a follow-on START agreement, the nuclear posture review, CTBT, and FMCT. She said all of these new initiatives should set a positive atmosphere for the RevCon and convince the world that the United States is serious about its NPT Article VI commitments; however, she noted it would not only be the United States that had heavy lifting to do. All NPT Parties will have to work hard to make the 2010 RevCon a success. In particular she noted the importance of dealing with the difficult problems of Iran and North Korea.

22. (C) A/S Gottemoeller asked about the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and what role regional states like the United Arab Emirates might play to help achieve progress on the Resolution in 2010. Cabactulan said it was a very difficult subject that was affected by the peace process and other regional issues, but that progress must be made on the Resolution, or the RevCon could fall apart. He said progress on an FMCT and Israel,s consideration of the CTBT would increase the chances for progress on the Resolution. He was unclear whether a simple reaffirmation of the Resolution would satisfy Egypt, but this was something he would investigate.

23. (C) Cabactulan asked several basic questions on international fuel supply initiatives, expressing confusion about the many different proposals. He also asked how to mitigate concerns that such proposals reinterpret the NPT,s Article IV. A/S Gottemoeller and Director of Nonproliferation at the NSC Adam Scheinman explained that the diversity of proposals in fact provided greater assurance of fuel supply and that such proposals represented ways of fulfilling the NPT,s Article IV in proliferation-responsible ways. Cabactulan was interested in these responses, but thought more work would need to be done to explain to the international community the benefits of such initiatives.

24. (C) Finally, Cabactulan said his door would always be open for discussion, and suggested he could play a moderating role within the Non-Aligned Movement. (COMMENT: Cabactulan, though perhaps somewhat naive about the particular issues likely to confront him in his role as the President of the NPT Review Conference, clearly was pleased with his appointment and determined to make the RevCon a success. He appeared particularly receptive to consultations with the United States throughout the course of preparations for the RevCon. END COMMENT) (SBU) Meeting with Japan,s CD Ambassador Tarui Sumio (7 May)

25. (C) Ambassador Tarui opened the meeting by observing that everyone was saying this year,s Prepcom was much different. He said that Japan very much welcomed President Obama,s Prague speech, and that the world had high expectations. Tarui cautioned that progress could be achieved in a step-by-step manner, but the world was expecting drastic actions. Tarui worried that if something tangible couldn,t be done quickly, there would be great disappointment. He offered that if negotiations could begin on FMCT, that would constitute a great breakthrough, adding that France had expressed reservations on the Algerian POW, but told him they expected negotiations on FMCT to begin in January. Tarui highlighted FMCT, CTBT, and a follow-on to START as the three big issues that must be dealt with first. He added that A/S Gottemoeller,s speech was welcomed even by Cuba, and thus we must take advantage of the momentum it generated as soon as possible. Tarui acknowledged that the U.S. was prepared to accept the Algerian proposal, to which A/S Gottemoeller replied affirmatively. Tarui noted that the Pakistani Ambassador had told him very clearly that they were prepared to accept it as well.
26. (C) A/S Gottemoeller said that her list of priorities matched his and that progress on the three issues would constitute an important scene-setter for the RevCon. She noted that she had met with Ambassador Jazairy and told him she was impressed with his ability to get the NAM to agree to his proposal and prepared to work with him to get FMCT negotiations started in January. On START follow-on, she noted that the negotiations had begun with a goal of having the treaty completed by December. This was a challenging goal, but she and Anatoli Antonov agreed that fifteen years of experience implementing START provided a good foundation from which to work. While optimistic of reaching the deadline, should negotiations take longer, she hoped our colleagues in the RevCon would see our efforts as evidence of our sincerity. A/S Gottemoeller added that after this treaty was completed, work would begin on a subsequent treaty aimed at further reductions based on the conclusions of the Nuclear Posture Review. ON CTBT, A/S Gottemoeller said that there was hard work ahead, but ten years experience has shown much progress on verification. There were a large number of new Senators since the last time the Treaty was considered, and the Administration would work to educate them on the issues. By the time of the RevCon, we may have begun hearings, but the important thing was to ensure we have a successful vote.

27. (C) Tarui highlighted the recent speech of the Japanese Foreign Minister, noting that they sought to use it to express support for President Obama,s speech by enunciating concrete steps that could be taken to further nuclear disarmament. The steps were divided into three tiers: 1) measures by nuclear weapons states, 2) measures by the world community, and 3) measures to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. He ended by noting that non-nuclear weapons states share a responsibility for nuclear disarmament, and that it wasn,t fair to pin everything on the nuclear weapons states, adding that this was a golden opportunity for mankind. (SBU) Meeting with Conference on Disarmament President, Algeria,s Ambassador Idriss Jazairy (5 May)

28. (C) Jazairy opened the meeting expressing appreciation for the positive indications from Washington for his efforts in the CD. He noted his work with the current CD presidents builds upon CD/1840 and that his objective was to develop a formulation in his proposal to sustain both United States and NAM support. He provided the United States with a paper further explaining his proposal and noted that during his meeting with Gary Samore in Washington earlier that week, Mr. Samore agreed that if the document was not tampered with, the United States would support it. Jazairy was concerned that if states tampered with the document, the initiative to begin FMCT negotiations would unravel. A/S Gottemoeller indicated that the United States would take counsel in Washington on the matter. Jazairy noted that France did not like the language on NSAs but told him that it would consider the US position on the matter. He also noted that Samore was aware of the challenge presented by Israel. Jazairy added he would gladly make himself available to the Israelis as part of a P-6 presentation to CD members, during which he would address their concerns directly. A/S Gottemoeller indicated the United States would see what it could do concerning Israeli,s position. Jazairy briefly summarized some of the difficulties he experienced coordinating with the Australians.

29. (C) A/S Gottemoeller queried Jazairy,s views on potential impacts of the transition to the Argentine Presidency on sustaining support for his proposal and about Chinese views. Jazairy did not believe the transition would be a problem and was unaware of any Chinese concerns. A/S Gottemoeller noted that the US was impressed with Jazairy,s achievement to consolidate NAM support for the proposal and that the window of opportunity to launch FMCT negotiations was limited. (SBU) Meeting with the United Kingdom,s Ambassador John Duncan (5 May)

30. (C) Duncan raised three issues during the bilateral: NPT, FMCT, and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). On the NPT, Duncan noted that a vision was lacking for the 2010 RevCon and that articulating such a vision would not be achievable at this meeting. He noted the Acronym Institute,s paper as a useful beginning to start thinking about the matter (Comment: the AI is a UK-based NGO). Duncan noted that difficulty with the French on the Agenda was predictable behavior and that the United States could encourage a French response. He said that the United Kingdom was ambivalent on a P-5 media statement. The Russians indicated that they had ideas but did not believe excessive time should be expended trying to issue a statement as had been done at past PrepComs.

31. (C) On FMCT, Duncan noted that delegations were not staffed to support negotiation of an FMCT and that six months of preparation would be needed to prepare for negotiations. He noted that China is uncomfortable with the forward momentum and had been attempting to prod the Russians to press for more emphasis on PAROS in the program of work. He noted that the CD is the closest it has been to consensus in 4-5 years. A/S Gottemoeller noted that the United States realizes Israel will be key in getting a mandate and that the United States needs to engage Israel. She also concurred with the United Kingdom,s concern that tabling the Algerian Proposal before it was ready could undermine the effort. Both delegations agreed that closing the deal probably would come under the Argentine Presidency. Duncan noted the negotiations will be a long effort due to
verification, though the United Kingdom believes verification is possible. He also noted that the UK has scheduled a trident test for May 18, which has already been announced in accordance with the Hague Code of Conduct, and expressed the hope that the test does not undermine CD negotiations. He also shared the implied threat of the Chinese Ambassador that if the UK did not stop publicly criticizing China for its strategic modernization, that China would make a public issue of the Trident test.

32. (SBU) On the ATT, Duncan noted that the effort was based on modern diplomacy. ATT was neither an export control nor a disarmament mechanism. He noted that there currently was no framework for international arms controls and that standards needed to trickle into legislation. He emphasized that the goal of the ATT was not to stop all military sales, but to introduce “best practices” regarding export controls. A/S Gottemoeller has cleared this cable. Rice
American Official on Litvinenko Death

A cable sent from the American Embassy in Paris concerned a wide-ranging discussion on Dec. 7, 2006, between Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried and a French presidential adviser, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne. The talk turned to the death of a former K.G.B. officer in London the previous month and whether the leadership of Vladimir V. Putin, then Russia's president, had directly ordered the killing. The French official ascribed the killing to rogue elements. But Mr. Fried “questioned whether rogue security elements could operate, in the U.K. no less, without Putin’s knowledge.”

DATE 2006-12-12 13:05:00

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SIPDIS


Classified By: Ambassador Craig Stapleton for reasons 1.4 (B & D).

1. (S) SUMMARY: EUR A/S Dan Fried’s December 7 meeting with presidential diplomatic advisor Maurice Gourdault-Montagne (MGM) focused largely on Russia, with France in a defensive posture. MGM raised the aborted Putin-Chirac dinner on the margins of the NATO Riga Summit, saying it had been instigated by Russia, and portrayed France as having attempted to steer in a way compatible with Latvian interests. In contrast to French Political Director Araud (septel), he showed reluctance to see the Kremlin’s hand in the Litvinenko poisoning, preferring to ascribe it to rogue elements. MGM claimed to support Georgian independence while suggesting that NATO Article 5 obligations precluded Georgian NATO membership. On Kosovo, he reviewed France’s plans to persuade the EU to offer Serbia an SAA agreement not linked to fulfillment of its ICTY obligations but worried above all about Putin’s explicit threat to veto a UN Security Resolution mandating independence; there was a risk of instability and partition if the West did not exercise sufficient care in managing the Russians. Fried countered that the West needed to be prepared to proceed in extremis without the Russians, and warned against allowing the Russians to hold up a decision through the threat of a veto.

2. (C) SUMMARY CONT: On other issues, MGM reviewed the Franco-German proposal for a review of Turkey’s implementation of its Ankara Protocol commitments between 2007 and 2009, assured Fried that France wanted to avoid a train wreck, but insisted it was incumbent on the Turks to make a gesture. Fried reminded MGM of the strategic importance of keeping Turkey tied to EU; MGM agreed in principle but insisted Turkey had to play by the EU’s rules and noted the difficulties of managing domestically public sentiment against Turkey. Fried and MGM agreed that France and the U.S. had worked well together at the NATO Riga Summit. END SUMMARY.

3. (C) EUR A/S Daniel Fried, accompanied by the Ambassador and POL Deputy (notetaker), met December 7 with President Chirac’s diplomatic advisor (NSA-equivalent) Maurice Gourdault-Montagne (MGM) to discuss a number of European issues that revolved largely around Russia. MGM was joined by Presidency Middle East advisor Dominique Boche and strategic affairs advisor Laurent Bili.
Putin-Chirac at Riga
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4. (C) Noting at the outset that he had been directly involved in the aborted Putin-Chirac dinner on the margins of the NATO summit, MGM assured Fried that French actions had been above board. Kremlin advisor Pridhodko had originally proposed that Putin meet Chirac privately at a Paris airport November 29 in order to express his birthday wishes (MGM cited Putin’s meeting in Hannover with former Chancellor Schroeder as a precedent). France had agreed, while noting that the dates coincided with the Riga Summit. Pridhodko suggested Riga, which France dutifully vetted with the Latvians with the understanding that they would have to host such a dinner, and assuring the Latvians that France was prepared to say “no” to the Russians if a meeting would in any way cause them embarrassment. The Latvians were prepared to proceed, so long as the Russians also agreed to a bilateral meeting, which MGM conveyed to Pridhodko. Pridhodko had suggested that this could be “difficult” given negative Russian public opinion toward Latvia. The Latvians told MGM that the Russians had refused to meet at the official palace or residence, but were considering the Latvian cultural center. MGM said he had encouraged the Russians to accept the last offering, and they had proceeded as if it might be acceptable. Late Tuesday, however, they balked, apparently because the center was located about 200m from the Latvian museum of occupation.

5. (C) MGM concluded his presentation with the argument that such a meeting would have been positive for Russian-Latvian relations and would have helped to blur dividing lines between NATO and Russia. He complained over Latvia’s going “public” with the cancellation by querying NATO SYG Hoop de Scheffer as to whether “we are allowed to receive” the Russian president. He commented that, had they remained silent, the cancellation would have been a non-event. Fried countered that the Latvians had been right to inform NATO and thus avoid a surprise. He contrasted the Russians’ clumsiness in managing the dinner with the Latvians’ transparency, suggesting that it was time for the Russians to accept the independence of the Baltic states. He added pointedly that the U.S. would no longer accept putative Russian concerns about Latvian treatment of their citizens at a time when they were still rounding up Georgians on the basis of ethnicity. MGM commented meekly that the timing had not been right for the visit and agreed that the Latvian government no longer had a problem of non-citizen ethnic Russians.

Litvinenko Case
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6. (S) Fried commented that the short-term trend inside Russia was negative, noting increasing indications that the UK investigation into the murder of Litvinenko could well point to some sort of Russian involvement. MGM called attention to Chirac’s statement encouraging the Russians to cooperate in the investigation. He wondered aloud who might have given the order, but speculated the murder probably involved a settling of accounts between services rather than occurring under direct order from the Kremlin. Fried, noting Putin’s attention to detail, questioned whether rogue security elements could operate, in the UK no less, without Putin’s knowledge. Describing the current atmosphere as strange, he described the Russians as increasingly self-confident, to the point of arrogance.

Georgia-Russia
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7. (C) Fried, noting he had discussed Georgia the previous evening with MFA Political Director Gerard Araud (septel), said it was important to support Georgian sovereignty against Russian pressure for three reasons: the situation overall in Georgia was improving under Saakashvili’s leadership; violation of Georgian territorial integrity would set a dangerous precedent; and Germany and Central and Eastern Europe had a strong interest in ensuring that gas and oil pumped from Azerbaijan and Central Asia did not travel exclusively through pipelines owned or controlled by Russia. MGM responded that France supported Georgia’s independence but wondered how to accomplish this within existing structures. The heart of NATO was Article 5, and it was doubtful that NATO would declare war on Russia over Georgia; it was therefore important to bypass Article 5 and find a “specific way” that did not involve NATO membership. If Georgia joins, Armenia may follow. Even in the case of Turkey, was its Kurdish problem one for Europeans, MGM asked.

8. (C) Fried assured MGM that the U.S. was not seeking membership for Georgia soon, but it was important not to close the door in order to continue to promote Georgian reform and development. It was incumbent on the West to support Georgian sovereignty and maintain a united front against Russia, he argued. He related that he had urged Saakashvili not to seek crises with Russia, since crisis worked only for Russia, and time was on Georgia’s side so long as it moved quietly. In
five years, a burgeoning Georgian economy had the potential to dramatically change the politics of the region. MGM agreed in principle, but suggested one could differ on ways and means.

Serbia and Kosovo

9. (C) Fried explained that the U.S. had decided to offer PFP to Serbia as a means of supporting democratic forces in the upcoming elections; President Tadic had made a strong case for Serbia's Euro-Atlantic future. Similar considerations had prompted the U.S. to support Ahtisaari's recommendation to postpone tabling his proposals on Kosovo status. But it was critical to move quickly after January 21. Additional delay would encourage the Serbs and others into thinking the West felt intimidated; it was time to push onward to supervised independence. Fried said that while Russia could be expected to cause difficulties, in the end he believed it would abstain on a UNSCR, although he could not be certain. What was certain was that the Russians must not be allowed to believe that the threat of a veto will work, because they would exploit any opening. The West therefore had to send the signal that it was prepared to move without them if necessary, because no signal would be interpreted as tacit acquiescence in Russia's raising the bar. This was a terrible option, but paralysis was worse.

10. (C) MGM reviewed the history of French-Serbian relations (back to the Salonika Front of WWI, on which MGM's grandfather had served), judged PFP as a positive offer, and said Chirac had proposed to Merkel that the EU move to a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with Serbia, even in the event of insufficient ICTY cooperation. Merkel had initially responded negatively, citing Tadic's failure to request it, but France continued to believe that offering SAA could make a difference in the January elections. If the Germans were not on board by early January, France would move on its own to propose SAA. As for the Ahtisaari proposals, MGM said Putin had told the French "Russia will not hesitate to veto any solution that does not enjoy the agreement of all the stakeholders." MGM urged great caution in moving forward, citing Putin's purported concerns about the risks of a partition and a merging of the north with Serbia and the south with Albania, leading potentially to a radicalized Muslim state in the heart of Europe.

11. (C) Fried responded that the Serbs and Albanians had been told that Kosovo would be independent, and that it would be a mistake to turn back. Perhaps the Russians were bluffing, but even if they were not, wavering would lead to disaster, beginning with riots by Kosovars that risked turning KFOR into an occupying force and could lead to the very radicalization we had successfully avoided so far. MGM said France was not advocating further delay, but was nonetheless concerned that independence could have unintended consequences. Public opinion could change, and Russia might become yet more irrational in the run-up to legislative and presidential elections. Fried agreed on the desirability of negotiating a UN Security Council Resolution that would be acceptable to the Russians -- perhaps even leaving out the word "independence" -- but the West needed to be prepared in extremis to move forward without Russian support. Russia would seize on any paralysis to try to raise the bar. MGM agreed in principle, but urged again finding ways to "coddle" Russia.

Turkey-EU

12. (C) During a discussion cut short by a summons from President Chirac, Fried asked MGM how France planned to avoid a Turkey-EU train wreck. MGM said France supported Turkey, but Turkey needed to play by EU rules and fulfill its commitments. It was not the EU's fault that the UN Cyprus plan had not been approved by referendum, but this could not be used as an excuse for not implementing the Ankara Protocol. It was critical that Turkey "start to implement" the protocol through a gesture. MGM said that Chirac and Merkel had agreed (on the basis of the Commission proposal) not to open eight chapters and not to close any other chapters; but they had also agreed to insist on a review of Turkish implementation -- to serve as the basis for a further EU decision -- in the time frame between a 2007 Commission report and 2009 European parliamentary elections. Although Erdogan had told Merkel not to expect any further Turkish gestures, MGM nonetheless hoped the Turks would find a way, as they had so often in the past, to do something at the last minute.

13. (C) Fried described the U.S. approach of encouraging Turkey to respond constructively, expressed the hope that the EU would not be too one-sided in its judgment of the Ankara Protocol implementation, but reminded MGM that the EU also had not followed through on its promises (which MGM hotly denied). Fried continued that the U.S. wanted to be helpful but was avoiding taking a
public stance. He reiterated that the stakes were high, given Turkey’s strategic value.

14. (C) This message was cleared by A/S Fried.

Please visit Paris’ Classified Website at: http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm

STAPLETON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Cables Shed Light on Ex-K.G.B. Officer’s Death”
Did Russians Track Radioactive Material in London?

This cable from Paris recounts a meeting on Dec. 7, 2006, between an American ambassador at large, Henry Crumpton, and a Russian special presidential representative, Anatoly Safonov. The two men had an “amicable” dinner in Paris to discuss joint efforts by Russia and the United States to counter terrorism. The conversation touched on the radiation poisoning of a former K.G.B. agent, Alexander V. Litvinenko, in London that November. In the course of the conversation, Mr. Safonov made the “passing comment” that “Russian authorities” in London had been following people who were moving radioactive substances into the city “but were told by the British that they were under control before the poisoning took place.”
bilateral counterterrorism (CT) cooperation. Safonov opened the meeting by expressing his appreciation for U.S./Russian cooperative efforts thus far. He cited the recent events in London - specifically the murder of a former Russian spy by exposure to radioactive agents - as evidence of how great the threat remained and how much more there was to do on the cooperative front. (Comment: The implication was that the FOR was not involved, although Safonov did not offer any further explanation.) Safonov noted the daunting number of countries that posed particular terrorism threats, mentioning North Korea, Pakistan, South Africa, Libya, Iran, India, and Israel (sic?). He described a range of dangers, stressing the more immediate threats posed by nuclear and biological terrorism, but also acknowledging the risks of chemical terrorism. Safonov highlighted coverage of transit corridors as one of the most promising areas of U.S./Russian CT cooperation and commented that the U.S. and Russia should continue to refine this effort.

3. (S) Safonov was particularly enthusiastic about Crumpton’s proposal that their respective governments cooperatively engage the private sector in their CT efforts. Crumpton made specific reference to the Business Executives for National Security as one American group they might contact. Safonov applauded the idea’s potential for offering new CT perspectives and expressed the hope that such cooperation might enrich Russian private-sector business, which he said could learn a lot from its American counterpart. Crumpton also suggested the Russia/United States Business Council as a possible starting point for engaging the private sector. Safonov said he would meet with Ambassador Burns in Moscow to discuss next steps, and both men agreed to explore possible private sector contacts in their home countries.

4. (S) Safonov reiterated his belief that new perspectives and out-of-the-box thinking were critical to defeating terrorism and expressed his appreciation for scientific approaches, which he asserted were “broader and less conditioned by lived experience”. He cited one physicist’s conception of global terrorism as analogous to biological disease, i.e., the fever that serves as a warning for larger problems. Crumpton agreed with Safonov about the importance of scientific perspectives and suggested that they expand their cooperation with Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico, specifically that they jointly direct the scientists there to undertake terrorist scenario modeling. Crumpton noted that the Sandia Laboratories already had established relationships with Russian counterparts and had worked cooperatively with them on nuclear safety and biological weapons threats, which could also be a topics for ongoing cooperation. Safonov agreed, and asked for the names of the affiliated Russian research groups. In this context, the two also touched on the importance of continued bioterrorism cooperation including bilateral consultations; Safonov seemed keen to expand all avenues of joint action.

5. (S) Also on the topic of taking advantage of academic perspectives, Ambassador Crumpton offered to “loan” S/CT strategist Dr. Kilcullen to engage with Safonov’s team in Russia and to review the situation in Chechnya. Safonov seemed amenable, but the two did not discuss specifics.

6. (S) On Iraq, Crumpton stressed the paramount importance of preventing Al Qaida from establishing a safe operating haven in Iraq, which could serve as a staging area for the whole region. He also conveyed the USG’s intention to provide Russia with all available information on the terrorists responsible for the recent kidnapping and killing of Russian diplomats, noting that the CIA had already met all but one of the Russian information requests that had been made since June of 2006. On Iran, Crumpton relayed the USG’s intention to provide the Russian government with a formal intelligence report detailing the Iranian terrorist threat, including specific links to Hamas and other groups, Iran’s ongoing support of Iraqi Shia, and information on Iranian missile transfers to Hizballah.

7. (S) Crumpton asserted there was a pressing need for the G-8 to establish uniform criteria for designating terrorists and terrorist groups. Safonov agreed and noted that “We need to overcome this deadlock...Right now there are about twelve groups causing disagreement.” Crumpton concurred and pressed for the name of the Russian official in Washington who was authorized to continue to negotiate on establishing uniform criteria. In the only slightly evasive exchange during the entire three-hour conversation, Safonov resisted answering outright; after repeated questioning, he provided the name of Elmir Tagirov and the qualification that “there are two layers (to this issue).”

8. (S) Crumpton invited Russia to participate in a four-day experts conference sponsored by the Marshall Center to discuss how terrorists exploit Islam and the ideological threat of “Jihadism”. Safonov accepted the invitation immediately and expressed great interest in exploring how they might reverse the extremists, “hijacking” of Islam. Crumpton told Safonov that the conference -- to include NATO, Russia, and Turkey -- was planned for May in Istanbul and was tentatively divided into two days spent with subject matter experts and two days spent with policy makers.
9. (S) Safonov enthusiastically agreed to and elaborated on Crumpton’s ideas for publicly highlighting U.S./Russia CT cooperation. Safonov accepted Crumpton’s invitation to visit the United States as his guest and went on to suggest that they could publicize the visit with cross-directed press events wherein each of them would be interviewed by journalists from the other country. Crumpton pressed for a short timeline, inviting Safonov to come to New York in January 2007, then going on to Los Angeles together; Safonov suggested a March-April 2007 visit timeframe. Safonov accepted responsibility for arranging the next steps.

10. (S) In the course of their exchange, Safonov made the following passing statements:

--Safonov claimed that Russian authorities in London had known about and followed individuals moving radioactive substances into the city but were told by the British that they were under control before the poisoning took place.

--On Afghanistan, Safonov said that British and Canadian soldiers were well regarded, but Dutch soldiers were causing problems by posing “constant questions about governance”.

--On Lebanon, Safonov judged that the situation was probably “not yet at the bottom” and so there may not yet be enough incentive to find a solution. The key was to prevent any movement toward civil war. To that end, the Russian government planned to continue to work with Syria, which “is not the central cause of the conflict and in some ways is also a hostage of the situation”. In Safonov’s eyes, the conflict had no single cause, but rather was composed of many problems and many actors, though the present crisis likely would not have arisen if former Israeli PM Sharon had been in charge. He believed Sharon would not have made the error of attacking a nation when the enemy was Hizballah.

--In Iraq, coalition forces’ failure to restore order reminded Safonov of an exchange he had with a freedom fighter just after Russian forces had captured Grozny. The fighter told him, “Your real problems are only now beginning.”

11. (U) This message has been cleared by Ambassador Crumpton. Please visit Paris’ Classified Website at: http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm HOFMANN
NATO Agrees on Baltic Defense Plan

This January 2010 cable from the State Department reports that after months of discussions, NATO has agreed to expand its defense plan for Poland, Eagle Guardian, to cover Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well.

DATE 2010-01-26 20:29:00

SOURCE Secretary of State

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 007810

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/22/2020 TAGS: MARR, MCAP, NATO, PREL, EN, LG, LH, PL SUBJECT: EXPANSION OF EAGLE GUARDIAN TO INCLUDE BALTIC ALLIES

REF: A. USNATO 35 B. 09 STATE 127892

Classified By: EUR PDAS Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (U) This is an action cable. Please see paragraphs 3-4.

2. (S) Summary and Action Request. On January 22 NATO Allies agreed in the Military Committee to expand the NATO Contingency Plan for Poland, EAGLE GUARDIAN, to include the defense and reinforcement of the Baltic States. Posts in Allied capitals should be prepared to explain, as necessary, U.S. support for this approach and how it fits within our broader vision for NATO contingency planning, as well as how to respond to media inquiries on the matter. Posts are asked to draw on the points below, as necessary, in discussions on this issue. End Summary and Action Request.

3. (C) Posts need not engage host government officials proactively on NATO contingency planning at this time, but are encouraged to use the points below as the basis for discussions on the matter as needed.

(S/REL NATO) CONTINGENCY POINTS (FOR USE AT POSTS DISCRETION)

-- The United States believes that NATO - as a matter of course - should conduct appropriate contingency planning for the possible defense of Allied territory and populations.

-- As President Obama said in Prague: “We must work together as NATO members so that we have contingency plans in place to deal with new threats, wherever they may come from.”

-- The U.S. welcomes the decision to expand EAGLE GUARDIAN to include the defense of the Baltic states, and sees it as a logical military extension of the existing contingency plan that fits well within the existing scenario.

-- We see the expansion of EAGLE GUARDIAN as a step toward the possible expansion of NATO’s other existing country-specific contingency plans into regional plans. This is the first step in a multi-stage process to develop a complete set of appropriate contingency plans for the full range of possible threats - both regional and functional - as soon as possible. At the same time, we believe contingency planning is only one element of NATO’s Article 5 preparedness.
-- The United States believes strongly that such planning should not be discussed publicly. These military plans are classified at the NATO SECRET level.

-- The Alliance has many public diplomacy tools at its disposal. Contingency planning is not one of them. What we should do is explore other public steps for demonstrating the vitality of Article 5, such as exercises, defense investment, and partnerships.

-- Public discussion of contingency plans undermines their military value, giving insight into NATO’s planning processes. This weakens the security of all Allies.

-- A public discussion of contingency planning would also likely lead to an unnecessary increase in NATO-Russia tensions, something we should try to avoid as we work to improve practical cooperation in areas of common NATO-Russia interest.

-- We hope that we can count on your support in keeping discussions on NATO contingency planning out of the public domain.

-- We should work together to develop strategies - to include activities such as exercises, defense investment, and partnerships - for demonstrating to our publics that Article 5’s value ultimately lies in NATO’s capabilities and deterrence, rather than specific planning.

4. (C) Washington strongly believes that the details of NATO's contingency plans should remain in confidential channels. However, recent press coverage of NATO decisions regarding possible contingency planning options for the Baltic region may lead to additional media inquiries. If necessary, posts may use the points below in responding to public queries.

(U) PUBLIC/PRESS INQUIRIES -- IF ASKED:

-- NATO does not discuss specific plans.

-- As a matter of course, however, NATO engages in planning in order to be as prepared as possible for whatever situations might arise, particularly as relates to its ability to carrying out its Article 5 commitments.

-- Plans are not static. NATO is constantly reviewing and revising its plans.

-- NATO planning is an internal process designed to make the Alliance as prepared as possible for future contingencies. It is not “aimed” at any other country.

-- President Obama acknowledged this when he said at Prague that “We must work together as NATO members so that we have contingency plans in place to deal with new threats, wherever they may come from.” CLINTON

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“NATO Balanced Baltic and Russian Anxieties”
State Department Discourages Public Comment on Baltic Defense

In a December 2009 cable, the State Department urges no public discussion of plans to devise a defense plan for the Baltic republics, in part out of concern that Russia would take offense.

DATE 2009-12-15 09:10:00

SOURCE Secretary of State

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET STATE 127892

NOFORN

FOLLOWING STATE 127892 DATED 150910Z DEC 09 SENT ACTION RIGA, TALLINN, VILNIUS, USNATO INFO ALL NATO POST COLLECTIVE IS BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION. QUOTE:

SECRET STATE 127892

SIPDIS NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/03/2019 TAGS: NATO, MARR, MCAP, PREL, EN, LG, LH, PL SUBJECT: NATO CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR OUR BALTIC ALLIES

REFS: A) USNATO 561 B) USNATO 464 C) VILNIUS 569 D) RIGA 514

Classified By: ACTING EUR A/S NANCY MCELDOWNEY -FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

1. (U) This is an action cable. Please see paragraphs 2-3.

2. (S/NF) Summary and Action Request. The United States is developing a strategy for reaffirming both NATO and U.S. commitment to the core responsibility of the Alliance: collective defense. Examining NATO’s approach to contingency planning will be one element of that strategy. Moving from country-specific to regional contingency plans is one potential method. Expanding EAGLE GUARDIAN could be a first step in favor of regional planning. USNATO should engage NATO Secretary General Rasmussen to begin to build support for expanding Eagle Guardian. In early 2010, the U.S. Military Representative (MILREP) at NATO HQ should take the following actions: 1) meet jointly with the Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC), the German MILREP, and other MILREPs as appropriate to urge the CMC to task the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) to include the Baltic States in the revision of EAGLE GUARDIAN, and 2) approach the CMC and request that he task SACEUR to brief the Military Committee on each of NATO’s contingency plans with guidance that he identify any gaps in those plans. We will be better positioned to consider a broader regional approach after receiving SACEUR’s assessment.

USNATO and Action Embassies are asked to engage with appropriate Baltic and Polish officials before December 16 to outline the U.S. position, while stressing the need to keep details related to NATO’s military plans confidential. Contingency points are also provided at paragraph 4 for responding to public inquiries. End Summary and Action Request.

3. (S) Washington shares USNATO’s goal of a non-politicized process for moving forward. Washington believes that increased public attention on the issue could complicate our efforts to achieve that goal. We need to make that point clearly to our Baltic Allies and Poland, while also underscoring that we take their request for NATO contingency planning seriously and support steps to address their concerns. We understand Baltic and Polish leaders will meet on December 16 and
will discuss, among other topics, NATO contingency planning. It will be important to engage with Baltic and Polish officials in advance of that meeting to both outline our support for expanding EAGLE GUARDIAN, and our vision for a process that can deliver a successful result. In discussions with Baltic and Polish officials, Action Posts should draw upon the points below.

(S/REL NATO) Begin Talking Points:

FOR RIGA, TALLINN, AND VILNIUS

-- The United States has taken careful note of the repeated requests by all three Baltic states for NATO contingency planning for the defense of the Baltic region.

-- The United States believes that NATO - as a matter of course - should conduct appropriate contingency planning for the possible defense of Allied territory and populations. NATO’s Article 5 commitment requires no less.

-- As President Obama said in Prague: “We must work together as NATO members so that we have contingency plans in place to deal with new threats, wherever they may come from.”

-- After spending the last several months examining options on how to carry out NATO contingency planning for the Baltic states, the United States has decided that the best course of action would be to take advantage of the ongoing revision of the existing defense of Poland plan, EAGLE GUARDIAN. EAGLE GUARDIAN could be expanded to include the defense of the Baltic states. This expansion is a logical military extension of the existing contingency plan and fits well within the scenario posited by EAGLE GUARDIAN.

-- We would also like to make clear that we see the expansion of EAGLE GUARDIAN as a step toward the possible expansion of NATO’s other existing country-specific contingency plans into regional plans. This is the first step in a multi-stage process to develop a complete set of appropriate contingency plans for the full range of possible threats -- both regional and functional -- as soon as possible. At the same time, we believe contingency planning is only one element of NATO’s Article 5 preparedness.

-- The United States is prepared to work closely with NATO Military Authorities and with other Allies to forge a consensus in favor of expanding EAGLE GUARDIAN to include the defense of the Baltic states, starting immediately in the new year when NATO reopens following its winter break.

(S/REL NATO) FOR WARSAW

-- The United States has taken careful note of the repeated requests by all three Baltic states for NATO contingency planning for the defense of the Baltic region.

-- The United States believes that NATO - as a matter of course - should conduct appropriate contingency planning for the possible defense of Allied territory and populations. NATO’s Article 5 commitment requires no less.

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-- After spending the last several months examining options for how to carry out NATO contingency planning for the Baltic states, the United States has decided that the best course of action would be to take advantage of the ongoing revision of the existing defense of Poland plan, EAGLE GUARDIAN. EAGLE GUARDIAN could be expanded to include the defense of the Baltic states. In fact, defending Poland necessarily entails defending the Baltic states, as well.

-- We would also like to make clear that we see the expansion of EAGLE GUARDIAN as a step toward the possible expansion of NATO’s other existing country-specific contingency plans into regional plans. This is the first step in a multi-stage process to develop a complete set of appropriate
contingency plans for the full range of possible threats - both regional and functional - as soon as possible. At the same time, we believe contingency planning is only one element of NATO’s Article 5 preparedness.

-- The United States is prepared to work closely with NATO Military Authorities and with other Allies to forge a consensus in favor of expanding EAGLE GUARDIAN to include the defense of the Baltic states, starting immediately in the new year when NATO reopens following its winter break.

-- We do not believe that this will result in any significant delays for concluding the EAGLE GUARDIAN revision. Nor do we believe that this in any way endangers planning for the defense of Poland. In fact, we believe that the planning for the defense of Poland will be much more robust with the inclusion of the Baltics.

(S/REL NATO) POINTS ABOUT PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF PLANS (FOR USE AT POST’S DISCRETION)

-- The United States believes strongly that such planning should not be discussed publicly. These military plans are classified at the NATO SECRET level.

-- The Alliance has many public diplomacy tools at its disposal. Contingency planning is not one of them. What we should do is explore other public steps for demonstrating the vitality of Article 5, such as exercises, defense investment, and partnerships.

-- Public discussion of contingency plans undermines their military value, giving insight into NATO’s planning processes. This weakens the security of all Allies.

-- Public discussion of the plan would also make it politically much more difficult for some Allies to support the EAGLE GUARDIAN revision, creating divisions within the Alliance and throwing the whole project into doubt.

-- A public discussion of contingency planning would also likely lead to an unnecessary increase in NATO-Russia tensions, something we should try to avoid as we work to improve practical cooperation in areas of common NATO-Russia interest.

-- We believe that the proposed revision of EAGLE GUARDIAN is achievable and will represent a significant response to the Baltic request for contingency planning.

-- We hope that we can count on your support in these efforts, including on keeping discussions on NATO contingency planning out of the public domain.

-- We should work together on using exercises, defense investment, and partnerships to demonstrate to our publics that Article 5’s value ultimately lies in NATO’s capabilities and deterrence, rather than specific planning.

(C) FOR ALL ACTION POSTS -- IF ASKED

Q: Why wait until the new year? Why not start now? A: NATO Headquarters is heading into its winter break, when only a skeletal staff is in place. Our ability to achieve success in this matter will be substantially improved once senior Allied personnel have returned to work early in the new year. We pledge to take the matter up expeditiously at that time.

Q: Will waiting until the new year give NATO Military Authorities sufficient time to complete the revision of the EAGLE GUARDIAN?

A: According to our conversations with NATO’s senior military authorities, beginning the process of incorporating the Baltic states into EAGLE GUARDIAN in early January still gives them sufficient time to complete the revision by February as originally planned.

4. (C) Washington strongly prefers that discussion of NATO’s contingency plans in general, and the possible expansion of EAGLE GUARDIAN in particular, remain in confidential channels. However,
posts may use the points below if necessary in responding to public queries about these issues.

(U) PUBLIC/PRESS INQUIRIES -- IF ASKED:

-- NATO does not discuss specific plans.

-- As a matter of course, however, NATO does planning in order to be as prepared as possible for whatever situations might arise, particularly as relates to its ability to carrying out its Article 5 commitments.

-- Plans are not static. NATO is constantly reviewing and revising its plans.

-- NATO planning, however, is an internal process designed to make the Alliance as prepared as possible for future contingencies. It is not “aimed” at any other country.

-- President Obama acknowledged this when he said at Prague that “We must work together as NATO members so that we have contingency plans in place to deal with new threats, wherever they may come from.” CLINTON UNQUOTE CLINTON

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“NATO Balanced Baltic and Russian Anxieties”
This October 2009 cable signed by the American ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, notes the pressure from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for a NATO defense plan and the awkwardness of the issue as NATO tries to improve relations with Russia.

DATE 2009-10-20 16:58:00

SOURCE Mission USNATO

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000464

NOFORN SIPDIS


REF: A. VILNIUS 533 B. VILNIUS 527 C. TALLIN 309 D. RIGA 514 E. SECRETARY (SECTO) 007

Classified By: Ambassador Ivo Daalder. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) This is an action request. See paragraph 10.

2. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Leaders in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are pressing hard for NATO Article 5 contingency planning for the defense of the Baltics. At the same time, however, NATO internal processes and politics make it difficult to openly carry out such planning, particularly if it would require specifying Russia as a potential threat. Nevertheless, there are possible ways to meet the substance of Baltic demands. The existing contingency plan for Poland, for example, might be modified to include the Baltics or generic plans for the use of the NATO Response Force could be exercised and certified in a manner consistent with Baltic defense. We request high-level interagency discussion of the issue to develop the substance and NATO tactics of Baltic planning and exercises. END SUMMARY

Why Baltic Contingency Planning?

3. (S/NF) As reported in refs A-D, leaders in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are pressing hard for NATO Article 5 contingency planning for the defense of the Baltics. The Administration at the highest levels is on record supporting such efforts. President Obama told NATO Secretary General Rasmussen this during the latter’s September 28-29 trip to Washington. Furthermore, Secretary Clinton told her colleagues at the September 22 “Trans-Atlantic Dinner” in New York that the U.S. wants more work on Article 5 contingency plans (ref E).

The Difficulties

4. (S/NF) At the same time, the internal processes and politics of the Alliance make it unlikely that a Baltic-only Article 5 contingency plan could be developed. NATO contingency plans are designed for possible future security risks that are consistent with NATO’s General Intelligence Estimate (MC 161) and NATO Ministerial Guidance. While Admiral Stavridis, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), does have the authority to generate, review and revise contingency plans based on changes in the strategic security environment, those changes to the security environment would need to be reflected in MC 161. Without a change to MC 161, SACEUR does not have the authority to develop new Article 5 contingency plans. Moreover, changes to MC 161 are
not made by SACEUR. They must be agreed by the NAC.

5. (S/NF) In this case, the Baltic states clearly believe that the Russian Federation represents a future security risk and desire a contingency plan to address that risk. And therein lies the problem. While the exact content of MC 161 cannot be discussed in this message, post-Cold War NATO has consistently said that it no longer views Russia as a threat. Allies, for example, agreed to language in the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act that “NATO and Russia do not consider each other as adversaries.” As we saw during the debates over the Russia-Georgia war, many Allies will take great pains to avoid even the suggestion that the Alliance and Russia are on course toward a new Cold War. Countries such as Germany are unlikely to agree changes to MC 161 that explicitly define Russia as a potential threat, preferring instead to argue that the Alliance needs to find a way to work cooperatively with Moscow.

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But Hard is Not “Too Hard”
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6. (S/NF) Despite these difficulties, however, there are steps that can be taken to meet the substance of the Baltic demands and demonstrate the Allied commitment to their defense. As a start, SACEUR did begin conducting informal “prudent planning” efforts within his own Headquarters in the wake of the Russian-Georgian war. These efforts should continue. Furthermore, the existing NATO contingency plan for Poland is up for revision. We could explore the possibility of revising this plan to include the reinforcement/defense of the Baltics as an element of the reinforcement/defense of Poland. Indeed, this idea was first raised by the German PermRep in conversation with Ambassador Daalder. NATO also has a number of agreed generic contingency plans for the NATO Response Force (NRF), including for relatively high-end “initial entry operations.” Perhaps these generic NRF plans can be exercised/certified in a manner that would be consistent with the defense of the Baltics. Finally, we could pursue a generic Article 5 Alliance-wide contingency plan which would be applicable to multiple threats.

Necessary for NATO-Russia; Expeditionary Forces
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7. (S/NF) Baltic reassurance can not be seen in isolation. Our ability to move forward with other U.S. priorities at NATO will be affected by our ability to reassure the Baltic states. For example, our ability to maintain an Allied consensus on re-engagement with Moscow will depend on it. Furthermore, the Baltic states have made clear that if they do not feel they can trust Allies to defend them, they will have to consider developing a force structure focused on territorial defense rather than on expeditionary capabilities.

U.S. Reassurance Does Not Equal NATO Reassurance
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8. (S/NF) The U.S. has taken a number of bilateral steps to reassure the Baltics, including tasking the U.S. European Command (which ADM Stavridis heads under his U.S.-only hat) to develop a plan for supporting NATO deterrence and defense in the Baltic region. While these efforts can be useful in supporting NATO contingency planning and reassurance efforts, if done on their own they could actually undermine our efforts to reassure the Baltic states that all NATO Allies will carry out their Article 5 commitments. Defense of the Baltics must remain a NATO Article 5 commitment, not solely a U.S. bilateral one. Unless consensus can be achieved within the Alliance to take positive steps in this direction, the Baltic states will continue to lose faith in the Alliance, undercutting a key U.S. strategic objective. Washington should not allow U.S. bilateral reassurance efforts to become an easy substitute for NATO-wide efforts.

Recommended Way Ahead
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9. (S/NF) Ambassador Daalder has been having quiet conversations with some Allies, as well as with SACEUR, to see what might be possible. We believe that a key aspect of any approach would be to socialize the NAC on the issue through briefings by SACEUR on current plans and the extent to which they satisfy the requirement to defend Allied territory. In addition to further consideration of the ideas in para 6 above, Mission proposes the following as an initial way ahead on this issue that we should seek to set in train:
-- The Military Committee should task NATO Military Authorities to review the current family of contingency plans to determine if they are sufficient to meet NATO’s Article 5 commitments;

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-- The North Atlantic Council should ask SACEUR to brief PermReps on the status of these plans and on their ability to provide for the defense/protection of Allied territory, populations, and Alliance interests;

-- SHAPE should request that each Ally assess its own national plans and national contributions in support of these plans;

-- Strategic communications/public messaging regarding NATO contingency planning would allow the Alliance to highlight its efforts to provide for the protection of Alliance territory from the range of threats;

-- Ongoing Strategic Concept discussion and seminars should be used to identify new security threats and ways to meet those threats. This process could help build consensus for new contingency planning efforts;

-- The U.S. should consider the possibility/suitability of adapting the upcoming USEUCOM bilateral exercise, “Baltic Host 2010,” into a NATO deterrence and defense of the Baltic states exercise; and

-- As NATO contingency plans are developed, task the development of supporting USEUCOM contingency plans.

10. (S/NF) Mission requests that a NATO IPC be scheduled in the near future to discuss this issue further, with a view to developing a coherent interagency-agreed strategy on how to take forward the President’s vision of contingency planning in NATO. DAALDER

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“NATO Balanced Baltic and Russian Anxieties”
Russia-Georgia Clash Worries Baltic States

A cable in August 2008 from the American Embassy in Riga, Latvia, reports that Latvians are intensely focused on the military clash between Georgia and Russia and fearful about what it might mean for the three Baltic republics.

DATE 2008-08-15 10:13:00

SOURCE Embassy Riga

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03 RIGA 000496

NOFORN SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/15/2023 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, MARR, PHUM, NATO, EUN, RS, GG, LG SUBJECT: TFGG01: WHAT GEORGIA MEANS TO LATVIA

REF: A) RIGA 478 B) RIGA 472 C) RIGA 492

Classified By: A/DCM Tamir G. Waser. Reason: 1.4 (d)

1. (C) Summary: Events in Georgia have dominated the news and discussion here like few other events in recent memory. Latvians, at least ethnic Latvians, look at Georgia and think that this could easily be them. As the EU and NATO have been unable to respond forcefully to Russia -- and many members advocate for a balanced approach -- Latvians are beginning to worry if membership in these two organizations provides them the assurances of their security that they had hoped for when they joined. So far, the US willingness to take a tough line in opposition to Russian actions and in support of Georgia has been well received here, but some key figures are asking if the west is fully prepared to deal with a resurgent Russia. We expect that the Latvians will make additional requests for tangible signs of our commitment to their security in coming weeks and months. A wild card in Latvian thinking is how the personal economic ties many key players have with Russia will influence their thinking - and whether they continue to believe that they can separate politics and business with Russia.

2. (C) Summary, cont’d. Also influencing events is the fact that roughly one third of the country is ethnic Russian, who receive much of their information from Moscow based or affiliated news sources. Their perceptions of the crisis in Georgia and our role are diametrically opposed to those above and are a reminder of the serious ethnic divide in Latvia. Unfortunately, while these events have highlighted the need for greater integration in Latvia, the resulting political tensions have made integration that much more difficult to achieve. End summary.

3. (C) Georgia dominates here at the moment. Most any conversation includes some discussion of the situation, newscasts and newspapers are covering little else, and internet discussions are lively and have wide participation. Among Latvians, at least ethnic Latvians, what you hear is a sense that this could have been us. Recalling their own history with Russia, Latvians have been visibly demonstrating their support for and solidarity with Georgia. An August 11 march, advertised only through mentions on newscasts and online posts, drew over 1,000 people in support of Georgia. Candle lightings outside the Georgian Embassy are well attended and Georgian flags can be seen around Riga. Anecdotal evidence suggests that sales of Georgian wine and mineral water have increased.

4. (C) In discussing events in Georgia, most Latvians we talk to say that they feel the value of NATO and EU membership and believe that the possibility that the same thing could happen to them is greatly reduced. At the same time, the divisions in both organizations over how to deal with Russia worry Latvians. Comments by Russian Ambassador to Latvia Veshnyakov that the Baltics and Poland should not “rush to judgment” lest they encounter “unforeseen consequences” did not put
any nerves at ease. We reported on MFA views on a full re-evaluation of relations with Russia and frustration with NATO and EU positions (Ref A), but it is also worth noting some of the public comments of key opinion leaders here. Former President Vike-Freiberga said she was “surprised and disappointed” that an emergency GAERC was not convened until August 13 and that the EU “failed to come out with a common, coordinated and condemning stance,” in contrast to the joint statement by the Baltic and Polish Presidents. Alivars Ozolins, perhaps the country’s most influential columnist, wrote that the crisis has exposed “serious divisions” in the west on relations with Russia and argued that Latvia must demand clear plans from NATO to defend its territory. He concluded one recent column with the line, “We are in a new cold war and Latvia is on the front line.”

5. (C) The question of what Latvia does in response is also vexing to key figures. PM Godmanis was widely praised for his visit to Georgia with Baltic, Polish and Ukrainian leaders, and for delivering a strong message of support (and President Zatlers has been criticized for not cutting short his visit to the Olympics in China). The parliament adopted a tough resolution critical of Russia and calling on the EU and NATO to reconsider their approach to Moscow. Latvia has reaffirmed its strong support for MAP for both Georgia and Ukraine. But Latvians are frustrated that they cannot do more to influence the situation directly. They want to be an active voice in debates at both headquarters in Brussels, but feel lost between the big powers. They see their best hopes as getting the Nordics on board with the Baltics, Poland and Czech Republic and are heartened by what they view as realistic comments on a “changed situation with Russia” coming out of Stockholm and Helsinki in particular. Former FM Pabriks told the Ambassador that “Now it is important that Latvia works to convince the EU that there is no business as usual with Russia.”

6. (S/NF) In this, though, Latvia will face its own internal challenges. Many people in Latvia, including key political figures, have very lucrative business relationships with Russia that they fear losing. It was telling that FM Riekstins, asked about the future of bilateral relations, remarked that “business is business.” (Ref B) Leaders of the People’s Party, to which Riekstins belongs, have many business deals with Russia, notably in the energy sector. Transport minister Ainars Slesers, who has made a fortune off real estate and transit deals that rely heavily on Russia, stated at the parliamentary debate on Georgia that “although Russia clearly crossed a line a in its response, we need to at least consider whether Saakashvili does not bear some blame for provoking this crisis.” From sensitive sources, we understand that immediately after the crisis broke out, the Russian Ambassador to Latvia called Slesers and former PM (and People’s Party founder) Andris Skele to explain Russia’s position. We think it is no accident that he called two of Latvia’s three oligarchs (and while he didn’t call Aivars Lembergs directly, he also called the parliamentary leader of the party closest to Lembergs) to try to play the business card to build political support for Russia. As the days move on, key figures in Latvia will likely find that they face much tougher choices on relations with Russia than just whether to cease NATO military cooperation with Russia or end EU negotiations on visa facilitation. The one exception to this may be PM Godmanis. As reported in other channels, he immediately recognized the possibility for Russian retaliation through the energy sector and ordered contingency plans drawn up. Unfortunately, we expect that the first instincts of many of the other political players will be to do everything they can to preserve their personal business deals, clinging to their naive idea that business and politics with Russia can be separated.

7. (C) One area where we do expect to see concrete actions by the Latvians is to increase their military preparedness. PM Godmanis was clear with the Ambassador that this needed to be done, even knowing the costs involved. (Ref C) The Defense Minister has stated publicly that Latvia needs to review its own defense posture and privately told us that he will look for US assistance in this project. We can expect further political calls for a comprehensive NATO plan to defend the Baltics. Former FM Pabriks suggested to us that Latvia needs to look at increasing the size of its military forces, noting that Georgia, less than twice as large as Latvia, had 2,000 troops in Iraq when Latvia had a hard time finding even 100 to deploy.

8. (C) The aspect of the Georgia crisis that has ethnic Latvian especially nervous is the Russian claim that they went in to Georgia to protect Russian citizens. Latvia’s population is nearly one-third ethnic Russian and half of those, more than 420,000 people, are not citizens of Latvia. While only a small number (estimated at roughly 20,000) have Russian citizenship, Russia has been taking steps to increase ties with these “compatriots” through steps such as waiving visa requirements to enter Russia and providing access to educational and social benefits in Russia. This population gets its information from a completely separate media space that relies heavily on Moscow sources for its foreign news. As a result, Russian language media here is talking of
Georgian ‘genocide’ in South Ossetia, suggesting that the US endorsed Saakashvili’s move on Tsinkvali in advance, and drawing parallels to Kosovo. (septel will report on this in greater detail)

9. (C) Some Latvians recognize that the lesson of Georgia is that Latvia needs to do more to integrate its ethnic Russian population and have them view themselves as Latvian (or at least European Union) citizens first and Russians second. Political scientist Peteris Vinkelis, himself married to a Russian, ended a television interview on events in Georgia with a plea for the two communities to work together and find common ground so as not to become like Georgia. Other senior officials have told us that they would also like to see progress on this front.

10. (C) All of those good ideas, though, go out the window the minute politics is injected and there are few issues as politically divisive here as integration of the Russian speaking population. With a crowded political field among the ethnic Latvian based parties, none of them are willing to risk the firestorm that would ensue from advocating any change to the citizenship process. In fact, more likely is that they will take steps to, for example, increase the number of jobs for which certification of Latvian language skills are required. Logical steps on integration, such as allowing everyone born in Latvia automatic citizenship, are rejected because they are what Moscow has been pushing for years and ethnic Latvians are unwilling, as they see it, to “reward Russia’s aggression in Georgia” by easing the requirements for citizenship. Meanwhile, ethnic Russians are unlikely to respond to events by seeking Latvian citizenship and some of the more radical elements will hope that Russia might decide to make acquisition of Russian citizenship easier for this group.

11. (C) The challenge for the United States policy in Latvia given events in Georgia is to consider ways that we can bolster our relationship to both assure Latvians of our continued commitment to their security and helps them develop the tools needed for coping with changed relations with Russia, including in their domestic situation. We will be putting our heads together here and sending in some thoughts in coming days. LARSON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“NATO Balanced Baltic and Russian Anxieties”
Speculation on Putin-Berlusconi Ties

In January 2009, the American Embassy in Rome analyzed Italian-Russian relations, which are shaped by the close personal and perhaps financial relationship between Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian prime minister, and Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime minister.

DATE 2009-01-26 11:48:00

SOURCE Embassy Rome

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 05 ROME 000097

NOFORN SIPDIS

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REF: A) 08 STATE 134366 B) ROME 451

Classified By: Ronald P. Spogli, Ambassador, for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

1. (U) This is a joint Political and Economic Section cable.

2. (C/NF) Summary. Italy’s relationship with Russia is complex, encompassing historical ideological sympathies, geostrategic calculations, commercial pressure, energy dependence, and personal relationships between top leaders. The combination of these factors creates a strong tendency for Italy’s foreign policy to be highly receptive to Russian efforts to gain greater political influence in the EU and to support Russia’s efforts to dilute American security interests in Europe. In its relationship with Russia, energy is the most important bilateral issue and the quest for stable energy supplies from Russia frequently forces Italy to compromise on security and political issues. A not insignificant concomitant factor is PM Berlusconi’s desire to be seen as an important European player on foreign policy, leading him to go where others dare not. End summary.

Roots of Italian Russophilia: Ideology on the Left, a Long-Standing Market Opportunity on the Right

3. (C/NF) Until the 2008 parliamentary elections, the Italian Communist party and various leftist splinter groups were a permanent fixture of the Italian political scene. Throughout the Cold War members of the Italian communist movement maintained close ties with the Soviet Union, other communist countries, and many communist revolutionary movements. Unlike many other communist parties around the world, the Italian communist movement remained unapologetic in its continued belief in Marxism-Leninism as a viable economic alternative to capitalism. While many European leftist intellectuals recognize that -- aside from an authoritarian approach to governing -- Putin’s Russia bears little resemblance to Communist ideals, this fact has not deterred Italian communists and other radical left politicians from being openly pro-Russia on the basis of ideological solidarity. This, combined with the advanced average age of most high-level Italian politicians (65-70), prevents many in the far left of Italy’s political spectrum from moving beyond a worldview developed (and apparently frozen) during the Cold War.
4. (C/NF) Throughout the Cold War, Italian business interests frequently skirted the line of what was appropriate in their pursuit of the Soviet market. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the explosion of consumer wealth in Russia created massive demand for high-end and luxury Italian exports. From 1998 to 2007 Italian exports to Russia grew by 230 percent, from 2.7 billion Euros to 9.5 Billion. Many of Italy’s leading businessmen began to see Russia as a limitless market that could substitute for loss of export revenue from other parts of the world. These businessmen maintain strong ties to the pro-business, free-market-oriented politicians on the right, including the most visible patron of Italy’s business elite: PM Silvio Berlusconi.

Putin Most Influential Figure in Italy’s Russia Policy

5. (C/NF) While Italy’s political parties, the MFA and ENI exert some influence on Italy’s Russia policy, by far the most important factor is the personal attention Putin devotes to the relationship. By our reckoning, Putin has held more bilateral meetings with sitting Italian PMs in the recent past than any other world leader. He was the first world leader to meet with Berlusconi after the 2008 elections, arriving in Sardegna to visit the PM designate before the latter had even been sworn in. Berlusconi believes that Putin is his close and personal friend and continues to have more contact with Putin than with any other world leader. During the Georgia crisis, Berlusconi spoke to Putin on a daily basis for a period of almost a week. The basis of the friendship is hard to determine, but many interlocutors have told us that Berlusconi believes that Putin, a fellow ‘tycoon’, trusts Berlusconi more than other European leader. (A contact in the PM’s office told us that their frequent meetings are accompanied by exchanges of lavish gifts). Berlusconi admires Putin’s macho, decisive, and authoritarian governing style, which the Italian PM believes matches his own. From the Russian side, it appears that Putin has devoted much energy to developing Berlusconi’s trust.

6. (S/NF) Contacts in both the opposition center-left PD party and Berlusconi’s own PdL party, however, have hinted at a more nefarious connection. They believe that Berlusconi and his cronies are profiting personally and handsomely from many of the energy deals between Italy and Russia. The Georgian ambassador in Rome has told us that the GOG believes Putin has promised Berlusconi a percentage of profits from any pipelines developed by Gazprom in coordination with ENI. Whenever we raise the issue of Russia and the P with our contacts in PdL, Berlusconi’s own party, they have usually pointed us to Valentino Valentini, a member of parliament and somewhat shadowy figure who operates as Berlusconi’s key man on Russia, albeit with no staff or even a secretary. Valentini, a Russian-speaker who travels to Russia several times per month, frequently appears at Berlusconi’s side when he meets other world leaders. What he does in Moscow during his frequent visits is unclear but he is widely rumored to be looking after Berlusconi’s business interests in Russia. Our contacts uniformly deem Valentini, a multilingual former interpreter, close to Berlusconi with regard to Russia, but not a polici person.

7. (C/NF) All of our interlocutors - in the MFA, PM’s office, PdL party, and even ENI - report that Berlusconi determines Italy’s policy on Russia single-handedly, neither seeking nor accepting counsel. Virtually all are reluctant to confront the PM even when he is at his worst on Russia. In November 2008, after a disastrous press conference in which, inter alia, the PM described NATO expansion, recognition of Kosovo’s independence, and missile defense as “U.S. provocations” of Russia, GOI officials did a classic duck- and-cover. In response to our objections, MFA and PM staff sheepishly directed us to the PM himself, rather than deliver the unpleasant news to him that he had angered not only the Americans but other members of the Contact Group for the Balkans, not to mention the Czechs and Poles. Even FM Frattini admits to wielding no influence on Berlusconi on Russia. During an early September visit to Italy, former VP Cheney confronted Frattini on Italy’s very public and unhelpful stance on the Georgia conflict. A subdued Frattini noted that, while he had strong opinions on the issue, he nevertheless received his marching orders from the PM.

8. (C/NF) Distressingly, Berlusconi treats Russia policy as he does his domestic political affairs - tactically and day-to-day. His overwhelming desire is to remain in Putin’s good graces, and he has frequently voiced opinions and declarations that have been passed to him directly by Putin. One such example: in the aftermath of the Georgia crisis, Berlusconi began (and continues) to insist that Georgia was the aggressor and that the GOG was responsible for several hundred civilian deaths in South Ossetia.
9. (C/NF) Trying to determine who might have some influence on Berlusconi’s Russia policy is not an easy task. One thing is certain, however - it is not the foreign policy institutions of the GOI. FM Frattini is widely seen as only the messenger for PM Berlusconi’s Russia policy - indeed he termed himself as much to VP Cheney during the latter’s September 2008 visit to Rome. Within the professional ranks, resources and expertise are scant. Italy’s MFA contains only one full-time diplomat assigned to cover Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union: the Office Director. The Deputy Office Director position and single Desk Officer position assigned to cover all the countries of the FSU are vacant. Italy’s dire budget situation is likely to prevent the hiring of additional staff at the MFA for at least two years, according to one FM source. The Office Director’s direct supervisor - the A/S equivalent - is also responsible for the Balkans and the rest of Europe, but she, like Frattini, appears to have little or no input to GOI Russia policy. The PM’s staff does not fare much better. The Office of the Diplomatic Advisor is thinly staffed - with only one officer assigned to each geographic region. The position covering Russia is staffed by a midlevel diplomat who is in the process of being transferred. No replacement is likely to be named. As a result, the officer covering the Middle East (also the deputy for the office) will be forced to take on those duties in addition to his already overwhelming portfolio and management duties.

10. (C/NF) In 2008 the MFA undertook an effort to produce a long-term foreign policy strategy for the GOI. In a paper entitled “Rapporto 2020” the MFA outlined its strategic vision for the next decade and a half. The document notes that geostrategic realities have created the need for Italy to adapt its foreign policy with regard to Russia and calls for Italy to seek ‘a privileged relationship’ with Moscow in order to press its overwhelmingly preeminent bilateral concern: energy.

11. (C/NF) With virtually no domestic energy reserves, no domestic nuclear power, and an ambitious parastatal energy company, Italy’s key bilateral concern with Russia has become the quest for long-term guarantees of energy supplies. The GOI has supported ENI and other energy giants’ efforts to create a unique partnership with Russia and Gazprom for long-term cooperation. ENI, Italy’s most prominent energy parastatal, wields immense political power; its business strategy has focused on complicated geopolitical environments generally perceived as overly risky by many of its international competitors. ENI’s lobbying efforts vis-à-vis the GOI are better funded than most government offices. It hosts one diplomatic advisor assigned from the MFA. Going by press reports alone, we would judge that PM Berlusconi grants its director, Paolo Scaroni, as much access as he does his own FM. ENI’s director of government affair recently admitted to us that he meets with Gianni Letta, NSA-equivalent and Berlusconi confidant, on a weekly basis. Members of political parties on both sides of the aisle have told us that ENI is one of the leading financial contributors to Italy’s many think-tanks - many of which produce public diplomacy discussions and events on the importance of Italy-Russia relations. At one such event in 2007, a conference on Central Asia, representatives from ENI and Edison were given 30 minutes each to speak, while the four Foreign Ministers and Deputy Foreign Minister of five Central Asian former Soviet states were all crammed into a single hour. There is even suspicion that ENI maintains journalists on its payroll.

12. (C/NF) Members of political parties from both sides of the aisle have told us that ENI does not limit its dialogue with the government to energy issues. One member of the opposition center-left PD party told poloffs that ENI’s presence in Russia exceeds that of Italy’s understaffed embassy. While it is unclear how much policy coordination occurs between ENI and the Russian political structure, the same PD party members noted that ENI had as much contact with Russian political and economic leaders as the embassy, if not more, and political messages were frequently passed through such commercial/economic channels. Back in Rome, ENI maintains strong contacts with members of the Italian parliament - something the MFA does not do (apart from requested briefings to members of the foreign affairs committees).

13. (C/NF) ENI and other energy giants have managed to press their case quite effectively within
the highest ranks of the GOI. Italian leaders on both sides of the aisle seem strangely unconcerned about dependence on Russian energy. They point out that Italy depended on Russian coal during the darkest days of the Cold War with a dire consequence. Italians are also lulled into complacency by the fact that geographic proximity to North African resources means that they are far less dependent on Russia than are the Germans or the former Eastern bloc countries.

14. (C/NF) During a March 2008 visit to ENI Headquarters embassy staff were given a briefing on ENI’s Russian energy operations (available on Embassy Rome’s Classified web site). ENI’s view of the European energy situation was disturbingly similar to that of GAZPROM and the Kremlin, and at times laced with rhetorical flourishes reminiscent of Soviet-era double-speak: according to ENI, the real threat to Western Europe’s energy security is not Russia -- it is Ukraine. The real solution to Europe’s energy insecurity, according to ENI, lies in more direct pipeline connections to Russian gas fields and a need for pipelines that do not go through Ukraine - the rationale for the South Stream and Nord Stream pipelines (ref b). ENI’s engineering arm hopes to construct both pipelines using experience gained in the construction of the Blue Stream pipeline that connects Russia and Turkey under the Eastern portion of the Black Sea. Additionally, ENI seeks full partnership with Russia on the South Stream project. GOI and ENI contacts have reported that the company was having trouble getting a firm Russian commitment to this South Stream partnership. The plummeting price of hydrocarbons may have reduced the economic incentives for this project, but many analysts believe that Russian geo-strategic concerns will trump business considerations on this project. The most recent Russia- Ukraine gas dispute seems to have revived interest in the Nord Stream and South Stream projects, especially among those who see Ukraine as the problem.

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15. (C/NF) Italy is not totally blind to the dangers of its dependence on Russia, however, and it is taking some steps that may prevent an increase in the percentage of their energy that they get from Russia. Upon returning to power, Berlusconi announced that he would return the country to nuclear power. While the GOI seems serious, this project will require eye-popping expenditures, long-term commitment, and the resolution of thorny environmental problems. Some fear that the nuclear project was launched in response to an oil price of $140 per barrel, and wonder if the Italian commitment to nuclear power will recede if oil prices stay low. Italy is also increasing its use of Liquid Natural Gas and is finishing work on a new terminal in the Northern Adriatic. While less-than-enthusiastic about the EU’s complex Nabucco pipeline, the GOI seems to be supporting the smaller-scale Turkey-Greece-Italy pipeline project designed to bring Caspian gas to Western Europe. Edison, a French company with Italian roots, is trying to determine if it should commit to this project. While Azeri gas supplies and Turkey’s willingness to allow the gas to flow West are unresolved issues, Edison believes its project has a chance of succeeding because unlike Nabucco, it is small enough -- it believes -- not to provoke opposition from Russia. The GOI - especially powerful Minister for Economic Development Scajola - supports the TGI project (in fact GOI officials complain if the U.S. sometimes seems to imply that Nabucco should have priority). There is fear that a successful launch of South Stream would -- by promising to meet demand -- doom both South Stream and Nabucco.

A Foreign Policy Designed to Deny Russia Nothing

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16. (C/NF) The combination of historical ideological sympathy, energy dependence, lack of institutional influence, and a close personal relationship between Berlusconi and Putin serve to provide Russia with an apparently trusted ally, overtly willing to work overtime within the EU on Moscow’s behalf. Russia can count on Italy to support its efforts to remove irritants in its relations with the West, including:

- pressure on/within OSCE to overlook Russia’s lack of compliance with its legally binding Istanbul commitments on frozen conflicts, - weak support or even opposition to NATO efforts to build closer ties to Georgia and Ukraine, - weak initial support for international efforts to recognize Kosovo’s independence, - unhelpful comments on U.S. bilateral Missile Defense plans with Poland and Czech Republic, - support for Russian President Medvedev’s plans to redefine European security architecture to undermine OSCE and NATO. - support for Russian efforts to undermine EU and US energy security initiatives for Europe.

17. (C/NF) In the past, Berlusconi’s highly-prized personal relationship with U.S. President Bush was an important counterweight to Russian influence, but many pro-U.S. Italian party officials on both sides of the aisle have worried to us that Bush’s departure could tempt Berlusconi to move closer to Russia. For his part, Berlusconi has publicly stated that he would like to become a
bridge between the U.S. and Russia and to “educate a young and inexperienced new American
president” on how to deal with the Russians. If the past is any guide, this will likely mean an
intensified effort to press the Russian agenda with the U.S.

Mitigating the Problem: Pushing Back on a Corrosive Influence

18. (C/NF) To tackle the problem head-on, Post has deployed a robust diplomatic and public
affairs strategy targeting key figures inside and outside government. Our aim is two-fold:
educate our interlocutors more profoundly on Russian activities and thus the context for U.S.
policy, as well as build a counter-weight of dissenting opinion on Russia policy, especially
within Berlusconi’s political party. Since the beginning of the summer, with Berlusconi’s return
to power and the Georgia crisis, we have been engaging with GOI leaders aggressively at all
levels. Pol, PA and Econoffs have engaged party members, GOI contacts, think tanks and even presses to
provide an alternative narrative to the Berlusconi insistence that Russia is a democratic and
stable country that has been provoked by the West. The effort seems to be paying off. The
opposition has begun taking jabs at Berlusconi by portraying him as choosing the wrong side of
the debate. Some in the PdL have begun to approach us privately to say that they would like
greater dialogue with us on the Russia issue, and have indicated their

ROME 0000097 005 OF 005

interest in challenging Berlusconi’s giddiness about Putin. While we have a long way to go in
changing the narrative, unfortunately, we have help - in the form of a PM who appears
increasingly to be the mouthpiece of Putin.

Comment
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19. (C/NF) The bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Italy is excellent and encompasses
tremendous cooperation on many levels and on many fronts. Unfortunately, Berlusconi efforts to
“repair” the relationship between the West and Russia (which as he told the Ambassador in their
farewell meeting on February 23, “sticks in my gut as a large undigested mass”) are threatening
his credibility and becoming a real irritant in our relationship. We can help get him back on the
right track by sending him a clear signal that the U.S. does not need an interlocutor for its
important bilateral relationship with Russia and that his insistence on undermining existin
structures and channels based on common interests and shared values within the alliance in
exchange for short term stability is not a strategy Washington wishes to pursue.

SPOGLI

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Below Surface, U.S. Has Dim View of Putin and Russia”
Close Putin-Berlusconi Relationship

A brief cable describing the extraordinary personal connection between Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy and Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. In the cable, an Italian diplomat expresses frustration that the two prime ministers talk directly, excluding the Italian diplomats, whose work is “just for show.”

DATE 2010-02-05 10:39:00

SOURCE Embassy Moscow

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 000266

SIPDIS NOFORN

DEPT FOR EUR/RUS, EEB/ESC/IEC GALLOGLY AND GREENSTEIN, S/EEE MORNINGSTAR, EUR/WE, INR DOE FOR HEBBURG, EKIMOFF DOC FOR JBRIOUGHER NSC FOR MMCFAUL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2035 TAGS: EPET, ENRG, ECON, PREL, PINR, RS, IT SUBJECT: (C/NF) XXXXXXXXXX DIPLOMAT ON ENERGY INTERESTS, PUTIN-BERLUSCONI LINK (C-RE9-02730)

REF: A. STATE 8676 B. 09 MOSCOW 1273

Classified By: Econ MC Matthias Mitman for Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

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PUTIN-BERLUSCONI DIRECT LINK
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1. (C/NF) XXXXXXXXXX (protect) told us during a February 4 lunch that his Embassy and his Foreign Ministry often only learn of conversations between PM Berlusconi and PM Putin after the fact, and with little detail or background. He expressed frustration about the PMs’ “direct line,” which sometimes leaves the Embassy in the dark. He said if there is action to be taken, the cabinet secretary will instruct the Foreign Ministry or the Embassy without providing any background, and only note that Berlusconi and Putin had agreed on whatever the action item is. XXXXXXXXXX explained that while the close relationship is not ideal from the bureaucracy’s perspective and more detrimental than beneficial, it can be useful at times. He cited the case of the sale to Gazprom by Italian energy giant ENI of its 20% share in Gazprom’s oil subsidiary Gazpromneft. He said Gazprom had insisted on paying far below the market price, but that it ultimately paid the market price after Berlusconi weighed in with Putin.

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ENI AND ENEL
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2. (C/NF) In response to our comment that ENI’s Moscow Representative, Ernesto Ferlenghi, won’t meet with us, XXXXXXXXXX said Ferlenghi “for some reason” doesn’t like to meet with foreign diplomats. (Note: We had a very open and friendly meeting with Ferlenghi about two years ago, but ever since, he has deflected our requests for a meeting. See also ref B. End note.) XXXXXXXXXX said he believes Ferlenghi may have a directive from ENI headquarters to refer foreign governments to ENI’s Rome-based international governmental affairs director. While XXXXXXXXXX was noting that he talks to Ferlenghi daily, his cell phone rang -- it was Ferlenghi. XXXXXXXXXX explained that although major projects such as the proposed South Stream gas pipeline gain the most attention, ENI’s main business in Russia is “buying gas.”
3. (C/NF) XXXXXXXXXX said the Italian Embassy is organizing a visit by a trade and investment delegation to Novy Urengoi, the Yamal region city that is a project site of Severenergia, an upstream joint-venture between Gazprom, ENI, and Italy’s Enel. Gazprom bought a controlling stake in Severenergia from ENI and Enel, which had set up Severenergia to purchase some of the assets of the former Yukos oil company at its bankruptcy auction. XXXXXXXXXX said that in addition to its investment in Severenergia, Enel also has approximately $6 billion invested in the Russian electricity sector and may raise its investment in that sector to $9 billion.

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SOUTH STREAM AND SAMSUN-CEYHAN
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4. (C/NF) XXXXXXXXXX also noted that ENI CEO Paolo Scaroni and “we” (presumably the Italian government) have regular contact with Russian DPM and “Energy Czar” Igor Sechin. XXXXXXXXXX said that lately the discussions relate to an explicit business link between South Stream and the proposed Samsun-Ceyhan Turkish oil pipeline, of which ENI is the operating partner. He explained that ENI, and its Turkish partner (which he said is Turkish PM Erdogan’s son-in-law) need Russian oil to make Samsun-Ceyhan a reality, while Gazprom needs Turkish cooperation to move ahead on South Stream.

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COMMENT
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5. (C/NF) On major issues, it seems that Russian-Italian economic relations are directed by PMs who have a direct line to each other as well as control over some of the largest assets of their respective economies. To whatever end they direct those assets, it is likely they are not doing so based solely on commercial or rate-of-return calculations. As our contact himself acknowledged -- “it seems that everything that happens at the lower levels is just for show.” Beyrle
Russia Upset Over Polish Remarks

In a sign of lingering post-cold-war distrust between the Kremlin and the former Soviet bloc nations in Europe, American diplomats in Moscow relay the Russian government’s irritation at the Polish prime minister’s remarks characterizing Russia as a threat. They also discuss the possibility that a Polish diplomat’s phone line or office was bugged.
“Below Surface, U.S. Has Dim View of Putin and Russia”
Russian Corruption

A frank and bleak cable about the extent and nature of official corruption in Russia, which leaves little hope for improvement.

DATE  2009-11-19 15:07:00

SOURCE Embassy Moscow

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONSIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 002823

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/RUS, EEB NSC FOR MCAFAL


REF: A. 08 MOSCOW 3775 B. 08 MOSCOW 3363 C. MOSCOW 1450

Classified By: Econ MC Matthias Mitman for reasons 1.4 (b. and d.)

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Summary
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1. (C) In a nod to President Medvedev’s 2008 anti-corruption legislation, Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Russia at 146, up one spot from its 2008 147th ranking. This general lack of progress confirms what analysts have told us. Corruption in Russia remains a serious problem, despite Medvedev’s public denouncements and efforts to reduce it. This presents a quandary for the GOR as it decides how to proceed. Dramatic steps might threaten the status quo, yet gradual steps so far have been ineffective. End Summary.

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Russia’s Corruption Rankings Stagnate
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2. (SBU) Transparency International released its 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index on 17 November. Russia was ranked at 146 (it was ranked at 147 in 2008), which Transparency International said reflected a “mildly positive” response to Medvedev’s 2008 anti-corruption legislation. Russia’s 2009 rank, however, is still below its 2007 rank (143) and far below its 2006 rank (121). These results echo the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators, with Russia’s rankings on “control of corruption” showing a steady annual decline since 2005.

3. (SBU) President Medvedev has repeatedly stated that corruption is endemic to Russia and has made fighting it a signature issue for his presidency. He has highlighted consistently the damage corruption has done to Russia, most recently in both his high-profile “Forward Russia” article in September and his 12 November address to the Federal Assembly. Beyond the anti-corruption legislation promulgated last year, however, few practical steps have been implemented.

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Elite Losing Control
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4. (C) Furthermore, there is growing consensus among analysts that even if the power elite wants to tackle corruption, the economic crisis has exacerbated tendencies towards unmanageability of corruption within the power vertical. XXXXXXXXXX, told us that the GOR may have waited too long. XXXXXXXXXX said that a few years ago, when only millions had been “stolen” from the Russian people (as opposed to today’s billions), the GOR could have acted and not sparked public outrage. XXXXXXXXXX said that the crisis had made the GOR’s task more difficult and the scope of corruption has become unmanageable. As the crisis reduced the size of the pot and the anti-corruption rhetoric increased, some Russians felt that they had best grab as much as they could while the going was good. XXXXXXXXXX, noted that the tendency of corruption to evade control by the GOR was not new. In 2006 -- at the height of Putin’s control in a booming economy -- it was rumored within the Presidential Administration that as many as 60 percent of his orders were not being followed.

Do Changes At Interior Ministry Signal Progress?

5. (C) XXXXXXXXX noted that Minister of Interior Rashid Nurgaliev had recently fired or brought charges against a number of relatively low-ranking law enforcement officials for corruption. XXXXXXXXX stated though, that it was too soon to judge whether this activity reflected real change. XXXXXXXXX, argued that Nurgaliev’s actions were not meaningful. He stated that action was required from higher up the power vertical and needed to affect the strata that average Russians would consider “untouchable”.

Can Russia’s Trajectory Be Changed?

6. (C) XXXXXXXXX, said that only a “revolution” could change Russia’s current trajectory. He argued that the system had become too sclerotic and too beneficial for too many to allow for change. XXXXXXXXX noted that corruption had even become a positive factor for a substantial portion of society. By taking merit out of the equation for success, it was simply easier to pay for entrance to a university, for a contract, etc. XXXXXXXXX, who has made a fortune in Russia’s casino business, told us forthrightly that the “levels of corruption in business were worse than we could imagine” and that, after working here for over 15 years and witnessing first-hand the behavior of GOR officials at all levels, he could not imagine the system changing.

Comment

7. (C) Corruption in Russia remains pervasive and deep-rooted. While Medvedev’s anti-corruption rhetoric is a step in the right direction, we have yet to see significant implementation of new measures. Russians appear to accept current levels of corruption and seem inclined to pay up or emigrate, rather than protest. Neither have Russians reacted to the sight of the connected few continuing to indulge in luxurious lifestyles as the economic recession continues to leave most Russians worse off than they were two to three years ago. Nonetheless, the commentary on the GOR’s increasing inability to manage the scope of corruption bodes ill for its stated effort to enhance corporate governance and investor confidence. Beyrie
A Moscow Mayor and Corruption

This cable offers vivid descriptions and analysis of Yuri Luzhkov, then the mayor of Moscow, and the veritable carnival of corruption and extortion around him. It includes candid assessments of the balancing act the Kremlin and ruling party engaged in over the Luzhkov machine, which delivered votes and public support for Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin and President Dmitri A. Medvedev while simultaneously fueling public anger, or even disgust.

DATE 2010-02-12 15:39:00

SOURCE Embassy Moscow

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 000317

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/11/2020 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PHUM, PINR, ECON, KDEM, KCOR, RS SUBJECT: THE LUZHKOV DILEMMA

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Beyrle. Reason: 1.4 (b), (d).

1. (C) Summary: Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov remains a loyal member of United Russia, with a reputation for ensuring that the city has the resources it needs to function smoothly. Questions increasingly arise regarding Luzhkov’s connections to the criminal world and the impact of these ties on governance. Luzhkov remains in a solid position due to his value as a consistent deliverer of votes for the ruling party. Unfortunately, the shadowy world of corrupt business practices under Luzhkov continues in Moscow, with corrupt officials requiring bribes from businesses attempting to operate in the city. End Summary.

Overview: The Kremlin's Luzhkov Dilemma

2. (C) Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov is the embodiment of political dilemma for the Kremlin. A loyal, founding member of United Russia and a trusted deliverer of votes and influence for the ruling party and its leader, Prime Minister Putin, Luzhkov's connections to Moscow’s business community -- the big and legitimate as well as the marginal and corrupt -- has enabled him to call for support when he needs it, to deliver votes for United Russia, or to ensure that the city has the resources it needs to function smoothly. Luzhkov’s national reputation as the man who governs the ungovernable, who cleans the streets, keeps the Metro running and maintains order in Europe’s largest metropolis of almost 11 million people, earns him a certain amount of slack from government and party leaders. He oversaw what even United Russia insiders acknowledge was a dirty, compromised election for the Moscow City Duma in October, and yet received only a slap on the wrist from President Medvedev.

3. (C) Muscovites are increasingly questioning the standard operating procedures of their chief executive, a man who, as of 2007, they no longer directly elect. Luzhkov’s connections to the criminal world and the impact that these ties have had on governance and development in Moscow are increasingly a matter of public discussion. Although Luzhkov was successful in winning court-ordered damages from opposition leader Boris Nemtsov for his recent publication “Luzhkov: An Accounting,” Nemtsov and his Solidarity-movement allies were heartened by the fact that the judge did not award damages on the basis of the corruption accusations themselves, but rather on a libel technicality.
4. (C) Few believe that Luzhkov will voluntarily relinquish his post prior to 2012, when the Moscow City Duma must submit a list of mayoral candidates to Medvedev for his selection. United Russia will probably call on Luzhkov’s political machine and his genuine public support to deliver votes for them in the 2011 State Duma elections, as well as the 2012 Presidential contest. With no apparent successor in line, and with no ambitions beyond remaining mayor, Luzhkov is in a solid position. The evidence of his involvement -- or at least association -- with corruption remains significant. This cable presents that side of Luzhkov -- one that bears not only on Luzhkov and his handling of local politics, but on Putin and Medvedev as they move toward the 2012 elections.

Background on Moscow’s Criminal World
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5. (C) The Moscow city government’s direct links to criminality have led some to call it “dysfunctional,” and to assert that the government operates more as a kleptocracy than a government. Criminal elements enjoy a “krysha” (a term from the criminal/mafia world literally meaning “roof” or protection) that runs through the police, the Federal Security Service (FSB), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), and the prosecutor’s office, as well as throughout the Moscow city government bureaucracy. Analysts identify a three-tiered structure in Moscow’s criminal world. Luzhkov is at the top. The FSB, MVD, and militia are at the second level. Finally, ordinary criminals and corrupt inspectors are at the lowest level. This is an inefficient system in which criminal groups fill a void in some areas because the city is not providing some services.

6. (C) XXXXXXXXXXX, told us that Moscow’s ethnic criminal groups do business and give paybacks. It is the federal headquarters of the parties, not the criminal groups, who decide who will participate in politics. XXXXXXXXXXX argued that the political parties are the ones with the political clout; therefore, they have some power over these criminal groups.

Crime groups work with municipal bureaucrats, but at a low level. For example, the Armenians and Georgians were formerly heavily involved in the gambling business before city officials closed the gambling facilities. These ethnic groups needed protection from law enforcement crackdowns, so they sought cooperation with the municipal bureaucrats. In such scenarios, crime groups paid the Moscow police for protection.

Luzhkov’s Links to Criminal Figures
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7. (S) XXXXXXXXXXX, told us that Luzhkov’s wife, Yelena Baturina, definitely has links to the criminal world, and particularly to the Solntsevo criminal group (widely regarded by Russian law enforcement as one of the most powerful organized crime groups in Russia). According to the Internet article, “On the Moscow Group,” Vladimir Yevtushenko, the head of the company Sistema, is married to Natalya Yevtushenko, Baturina’s sister. Sistema was created with Moscow city government-owned shares, and Sistema initially focused on privatizing the capital’s real estate and gas. Sistema’s president, Yevgeny Novitsky, controlled the Solntsevo criminal gang. Today, Sistema has spun off into various companies, which implement projects that typically include 50 percent funding from the Moscow city government.

8. (S) According to XXXXXXXXXXX, Luzhkov used criminal money to support his rise to power and has been involved with bribes and deals regarding lucrative construction contracts throughout Moscow. XXXXXXXXXXX told us that Luzhkov’s friends and associates (including recently deceased crime boss Vyacheslav Ivankov and reputedly corrupt Duma Deputy Joseph Kobzon) are “bandits.” He told us that he knew this because he formerly had contacts in these criminal groups, but many of his contacts have since been killed. XXXXXXXXXXX said that the Moscow government has links to many different criminal groups and it regularly takes cash bribes from businesses. The people under Luzhkov maintain these criminal connections. Recently, ultranationalist LDPR opposition party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy strongly criticized Luzhkov and called for him to step down, claiming that Luzhkov’s government was the “most criminal” in Russian history. This remarkable denunciation, carried on state TV flagship Channel One, was widely seen as an indirect Kremlin rebuke of Luzhkov.

9. (S) XXXXXXXXXXX told us everyone knows that Russia’s laws do not work. The Moscow system is based on officials making money. The government bureaucrats, FSB, MVD, police, and prosecutor’s
offices all accept bribes. XXXXXXXXXX stated that everything depends on the Kremlin and he thought that Luzhkov, as well as many mayors and governors, pay off key insiders in the Kremlin. XXXXXXXXXX argued that the vertical works because people are paying bribes all the way to the top. He told us that people often witness officials going into the Kremlin with large suitcases and bodyguards, and he speculated that the suitcases are full of money. The governors collect money based on bribes, almost resembling a tax system, throughout their regions. XXXXXXXXXX described how there are parallel structures in the regions in which people are able to pay their leaders. For instance, the FSB, MVD, and militia all have distinct money collection systems.

Further, XXXXXXXXXX told us that deputies generally have to buy their seats in the government. They need money to get to the top, but once they are there, their positions become quite lucrative money making opportunities. Bureaucrats in Moscow are notorious for doing all kinds of illegal business to get extra money.

10. (S) According to XXXXXXXXXX, Luzhkov is following orders from the Kremlin to not go after Moscow’s criminal groups. For example, XXXXXXXXXX argued that it was only a public relations stunt from Putin to close gambling. In contrast to XXXXXXXXXX said he did not see the sense in suitcases of money going into the Kremlin since it would be easier to open a secret account in Cyprus. He speculated that the Moscow police heads have a secret war chest of money. XXXXXXXXXX said that this money is likely used to solve problems that the Kremlin decides, such as rigging elections. It can be accessed as a resource for when orders come from above, for example, for bribes or to pay off people when necessary. XXXXXXXXXX postulated that the Kremlin might say to a governor that he can rule a certain territory but in exchange he must do what the Kremlin says.

11. (C) Notwithstanding Luzhkov’s solid position, some of our contacts believe that cracks have appeared in his armor, due to his corrupt activities. XXXXXXXXXX told us that Luzhkov has many enemies because his wife has the most lucrative business deals in Moscow and many people think Luzhkov has received too much money. The son of the head of the interior police, Vladimir Kolokotsev, told XXXXXXXXXX that Kolokotsev’s number one job is to get Luzhkov out within a year. Kolokotsev was credited with removing long-standing Governor Yegor Stroyev from Orel. XXXXXXXXXX asserted that Luzhkov is “on his way out,” although he acknowledged that the Kremlin has not identified a suitable replacement yet. Issues such as corruption and traffic congestion have, to a certain degree, eroded Luzhkov’s popularity. Putin, XXXXXXXXXX said, will likely pick the quietest and least expected person to replace Luzhkov.

In Moscow, Everyone Needs a “Krysha”
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12. (C) According to many observers, the lawless criminal climate in Russia makes it difficult for businesses to survive without being defended by some type of protection. XXXXXXXXXX explained how bribes work in Moscow: a cafe owner pays the local police chief via cash through a courier. He needs to pay a certain negotiated amount over a certain profit. The high prices of goods in Moscow cover these hidden costs. Sometimes people receive “bad protection” in the sense that the “krysha” extorts an excessive amount of money. As a result, they cannot make enough of a profit to maintain their businesses. If people attempt to forego protection, they will instantly be shut down. For example, officials from the fire or sanitation service will appear at the business and invent a violation. According to XXXXXXXXXX, everyone has bought into the idea of protection in Moscow, so it has become a norm. In general, Muscovites have little freedom to speak out against corrupt activities and are afraid of their leaders.

13. (C) XXXXXXXXXX explained that Moscow business owners understand that it is best to get protection from the MVD and FSB (rather than organized crime groups) since they not only have more guns, resources, and power than criminal groups, but they are also protected by the law. For this reason, protection from criminal gangs is no longer so high in demand. Police and MVD collect money from small businesses while the FSB collects from big businesses. According to XXXXXXXXXX, the FSB “krysha” is allegedly the best protection. He told us that, while the MVD and FSB both have close links to Solntsevo, the FSB is the real “krysha” for Solntsevo. This system is not an incentive for smaller businesses and nobody is immune; even rich people who think they are protected get arrested. According to Transparency International’s 2009 survey, bribery costs Russia USD 300 billion a year, or about 18 percent of its gross domestic product. XXXXXXXXXX argued that the “krysha” system has led to an erosion of police internal discipline. For instance, young police officers spend their money buying luxury vehicles that a normal worker could never afford.
Comment
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14. (S) Despite Medvedev’s stated anti-corruption campaign, the extent of corruption in Moscow remains pervasive with Mayor Luzhkov at the top of the pyramid. Luzhkov oversees a system in which it appears that almost everyone at every level is involved in some form of corruption or criminal behavior. Putin and Medvedev’s dilemma is deciding when Luzhkov becomes a bigger liability than asset. While public sentiment against Luzhkov has grown since the “tainted” elections in October 2009, United Russia’s leadership knows that he has been a loyal supporter who can deliver voter support. Ousting Luzhkov before he is ready to go could create major difficulties because he could link others in the government to the corruption. While reforming Luzhkov’s questionable activities might seem like the right thing to do, for now keeping him in place, efficiently running the city, is United Russia’s best option. Ultimately, the tandem will put Luzhkov out to pasture, like it has done with fellow long-term regional leaders like Sverdlovsk oblast governor Edward Rossel and Tatarstan President Mintimir Shaymiyev.
Scant Russia-U.S. Military Cooperation

Grim assessment of the Russian military’s general unwillingness to engage in meaningful cooperation with the United States. In spite of the Russian leader’s public declarations about a desire to cooperate, the embassy notes that collaboration has been ritualistic and mostly unchanged since the cold war.

1. (SBU) The USG and GOR have four existing, formal mechanisms for conducting security dialogues with the Russian Federation; all four are scheduled yearly.

1) Joint Staff Talks (JSTs): This event is hosted annually by U.S. Joint Staff J-5 or the GOR Chief of the Main OPS Directorate on a rotational basis. The agenda is dynamic, but is typically focused on international military/security issues, mil-to-mil (M2M) cooperation, and transparency as nominated by the respective sides.

2) Bilateral Defense Consultations (BDCs): Hosted by ASD/ISA and the Director of International Relations, Russian MoD on a rotational basis. Agenda is more policy and pol-mil oriented, but it is subject to items nominated by the respective sides.

3) General Officer/Flag Officer Discussions (GO/FO): Alternatively hosted by EUCOM J5 and GOR MoD equivalent; agenda is more narrowly focused on AOR issues and developing direction for construction of the bilateral workplan (WP).

4) US-GOR Colonels Working Group (CWG): Objective is to discuss and nominate events for the following year’s WP. In practice, they meet more than once per year, alternating sites between Stuttgart and Moscow.

2. (SBU) In addition, as a result of the Presidential summit in Moscow in July, the Presidents directed their respective senior military officers to establish a military-to-military working group under the auspices of the Bilateral Presidential Commission. The primary objective of this group will be to enhance military cooperation consistent with the Presidents’ broader cooperative agenda.

3. (SBU) In practice, CJSC and CHOD will conduct 2-3 day counterpart visits every other year, with discussion agendas and visit venues to be determined by the respective sides. Ad hoc engagements vary, based upon interests of the respective sides. In the past these have included:
4. (SBU) We believe dialogue was first established by mutual consent in the late 1980s. The frequency of these meetings has been determined by informal understanding.

5. (SBU) The most recent CJCS-CHOD security dialogue meeting came when the CJCS came to Moscow July 6-9. No set schedule determines the frequency of such meetings, but the event is placed on the WP and dates are left to respective sides to negotiate. The next scheduled meetings are:

--JSTs: December 14-18;

--BDCs: Although featured as an event on the 2009 WP, they will probably not be executed this year due to ongoing military reforms and personnel shifts within GOR MoD;

--GO/FO Consultations: TBD;

--CWG: November 17-19;

--INCSEA/Main Navy Staff Talks: December 10-11 in Moscow.

6. (SBU) The USG and GOR expect officers to meet with their rank/position equivalents.

7. (C/NF) While useful and meaningful exchanges do take place during the contacts discussed above, a number of challenges in effecting real, substantive and ongoing Military-to-Military (M2M) dialogues exist. These challenges include:

1) Lack of Russian transparency and reciprocity: The GOR MoD has not changed its modus operandi for information exchange nor routine dialoguing since the end of the Cold War. For example, Russian delegations routinely refuse to share their briefing materials with us, even when presented with formal requests for these materials. Representatives of the GOR MoD are closely monitored by their Military Intelligence (GRU) handlers, and are loath to engage in any dialogues outside of tightly controlled statements recited from prepared texts. While U.S. hosts will often invite Russian MoD delegations to different bases for tours and exchanges, U.S. delegations are rarely afforded visits anywhere but dedicated conference facilities at MoD HQ in Moscow. Access to Russian academic institutions is particularly problematic. Visiting U.S. delegations from Senior Service Schools are afforded, at best, a one-hour visit at MoD HQ to meet with a single representative of the GOR MoD External Liaison Division. Despite deliberate U.S. transparency regarding its actions in Russia’s “near abroad,” the Russian MoD is loath to provide information about its activities. A recent example occurred over the last six months: while the US provided information to Russia concerning our limited training activities with the Georgian Armed Forces, Russia provided no information regarding a series of Collective Security Treaty Organization exercises occurring in Belarus and Kazakhstan involving some 12,000 Russian troops.

2) Coordinating DoD Relations with Russia: Russia was integrated into the EUCOM AOR as a result
of the publication of the 2002 Unified Command Plan (UCP). Russia, however, resents the "delegation" of its relations to a "regional command" and refuses to interact with EUCOM on a continuing, formal basis. DoD efforts to date have managed to gain some recognition by Russia of EUCOM's role in the M2M relationship. For example, Russia has not accepted initiatives to conduct a COM EUCOM-CHOD exchange. Efforts need to continue along these lines to formalize the relationship.

3) Lack of Continuity/Followup: While exchanges with the Russians have been executed according to the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Workplan (WP), they have suffered from a lack of continuity. This is often characterized by a lack of formally acknowledged minute and action items. In many ways, every meeting therefore is similar to a "restart" of a new forum, rather than a continuation of an established venue with review of previous business, followup actions, etc. Beyrle

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Below Surface, U.S. Has Dim View of Putin and Russia”
Intel Lobbies the Kremlin

A description of high-level lobbying in the Kremlin by executives from the Intel Corporation as they sought, and then received, a waiver to import encrypted equipment to their offices in Russia. The cable, which shows how access can equal results in a centralized state, also notes that in spite of Russian assurances otherwise, the Russian bureaucracy has not loosened import restrictions.

DATE 2009-11-03 13:56:00
SOURCE Embassy Moscow
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 002723

SIPDIS

WHITE HOUSE ALSO FOR USTR: WILSON, HAFNER GENEVA FOR WTO REPS COMMERCE FOR MEDWARDS


 Classified By: Ambassador John Beyrle, Reasons 1.4 b&d.

1. (C) Summary: Intel representatives recently briefed us on the waiver it received to import 1,000 encrypted platforms for the development of software. Intel was able to by-pass the cumbersome licensing process by engaging in high-level lobbying and capitalizing on Russia’s desire to become a “knowledge-based” economy. Contrary to recent Russian statements, this waiver does not appear to represent a breakthrough in the importation of commercial products with cryptographic content. Russia continues to operate under the old regulations; proposed new regulations do not meet the terms of the 2006 U.S.-Russia side agreement on cryptography. End Summary.

2. (C) On October 28 Emboffs met with XXXXXXXXXX to discuss Intel’s recent waiver on importing cryptographic goods. Intel believes this breakthrough is one that other IT companies could piggy-back on. XXXXXXXXXX stated that the waiver allows Intel to import 1,000 development kits containing encrypted platforms necessary to design and develop software. The waiver allows the importation without the required laboratory analysis and approval by the Federal Security Bureau (FSB). However, the waiver allows only 1,000 units to be imported; if Intel needs to import more, they need to request a new waiver. The waiver applies to only one specific customs code (item), with no variations. As well, these cryptographic items can only be used in R&D; they cannot appear on the commercial market. Once Intel is finished with the platforms they must be submitted to a designated state-run industrial waste disposal company for their destruction.

Background

3. (C) In 2006 Russia signed a side agreement to its WTO bilateral Working Party Agreement with the U.S. in which Russia agreed to streamline and simplify its procedures for the importation of items containing cryptographic information. Nearly three years later, progress in meeting the terms of this agreement has been slow and its results minimal. Russia’s proposed new regulations do not meet the terms laid out in the side agreement or in WTO regulations. To date, companies still must follow the existing cumbersome rules in applying for permission to import items containing any level of cryptographic information, including cell phones. This permission request usually involves submitting samples of the item to an FSB approved laboratory for analysis, raising concerns about the violation of intellectual property through reverse engineering. So
far, U.S. firms have not voiced major concern over this last issue; rather, their focus has been on the time consuming process for the importation of crypto-related products. Current procedures take six months to complete and must be done for each shipment.

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What It Took to Get the Waiver
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4. (C) In order to get the waiver, Intel capitalized on the GOR’s desire to develop Russia as a knowledge-based economy. Several high-level Intel officers, including CEO Craig Barrett, and other officials, such as American Chamber of Commerce President Andrew Somers, highlighted to their GOR interlocutors, including President Medvedev, the role Intel plays in employing over 1,000 Russian engineers. Intel’s advocates emphasized that if Intel could not quickly import these development kits, there would be no programming work available and Intel would have to lay off over 200 engineers. In addition, R&D work in Russia would have to move to India or China. This high-level lobbying secured Intel a meeting with key FSB officials to explain its needs. Intel was able to demonstrate the reasonableness of its request and, as a result, by-passed the current extensive licensing requirement.

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But It Does Not Solve the Crypto Problem
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5. (C) highlighted however, that this breakthrough does not apply to Intel’s commercial products. He stated that Intel is currently evaluating options for approaching

MOSCOW 00002723 002 OF 002

the GOR on how to expedite importation of cryptographic commercial products, a significant source of Intel’s sales revenue. The procedures that Russia agreed to change in 2006 remain in place three years later. Recently proposed new regulations do not appear to significantly reduce the need to apply for permission for each shipment of goods with cryptographic components.

6. (C) During a July visit, USTR Russia and Eurasia Director Elizabeth Hafner raised concerns with the FSB and the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), that the proposed new regulations, if implemented without revision, would set up Russia to be in violation of WTO regulations from the moment of its accession. MED understood the situation, but felt that it might be more effective to implement the new procedures, see where there are problems and fix them as they appear. To date, we have not seen a more recent version of the proposed new regulations for the importation of cryptographic goods to see if the FSB took USG comments under advisement.

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Comment
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7. (C) During several recent high-level meetings between U.S. and Russian interlocutors, the Russians have highlighted the Intel waiver as a major breakthrough in Russia’s trade regime dealing with cryptographic goods, and thus a step forward on their WTO to-do list. The information from Intel, however, indicates this is a specific, limited waiver only for use in R&D. While this does demonstrate some limited flexibility on the part of the FSB - and thus a step forward - whether other U.S. companies can receive similar waivers remains to be seen. Additional GOR actions will be required to streamline Russia’s procedures for the importation of cryptographic goods for commercial sale. Russia continues to lag in the timetables and provisions it agreed to in the 2006 side-agreement on cryptology. Embassy will follow-up with the FSB and MED officials, to urge implementation of the 2006 side-agreement, especially with regard to commercial goods. Beyrle

RETURN TO ARTICLE
"Below Surface, U.S. Has Dim View of Putin and Russia"
Putin Disengaged?

A cable that forthrightly questions Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin’s work habits in 2009, and seeks the causes of what seems to be the disengagement of Russia’ most important and powerful man.

DATE 2009-03-04 14:54:00

SOURCE Embassy Moscow

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL MOSCOW 000532

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/04/2019 TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PINR, RS, SOCI SUBJECT: QUESTIONING PUTIN’S WORK


1. (C) Summary. Rumors about Prime Minister Putin’s disengagement from his duties have proliferated in Moscow, suggesting that he has lost his “edge” in making critical decisions on measures linked to the economic crisis. Putin has reportedly been “working from home” on many issues, leaving much of the running of the government to his deputies, particularly First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov. While some here see Putin’s withdrawal as increasing the odds that he might step down from office, most continue to emphasize his centrality in the political constellation, with his hands-off behavior reflecting the lack of an acceptable compromise amongst the Kremlin elite on difficult economic issues. End Summary.

2. (C) There are consistent reports that Putin resents or resists the workload he carries as Prime Minister to galvanize the Russian bureaucracy. Well-connected XXXXXXXXXXX told us that Putin is said to be “distracted” and “disinterested,” leaving day-to-day management of the GOR to Shuvalov. XXXXXXXXXXX, who was a member of XXXXXXXXXXX, said that only Putin has the authority to lead the GOR and, in his absence, economic policy responses to the crisis have been entirely ad hoc. XXXXXXXXXXX saw the ongoing budget revision process as further evidence of Putin’s fatigue; in more resolute times, Putin would have ended the fiscal haggling quickly. Instead, it has dragged on for two months during the worst financial crisis in a decade. Prominent XXXXXXXXXXX agreed about Putin’s isolation, saying that the PM is increasingly isolated and has regular contact only with Shuvalov and Kudrin.

3. (C) Similarly, XXXXXXXXXXX told us that Putin has not been on a regular schedule at the Russian White House, preferring to leave the day-to-day operations of government in the hands of the “actual Prime Minister” Shuvalov, an assessment shared by XXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXX alleged that there are a number of documents waiting for Putin’s signature, several of which are linked to the government’s anti-crisis package, that are creating backups in the implementation of important projects. XXXXXXXXXXX told us it is well known that Putin did not like coming to the Russian White House, where he was confronted with stacks of papers on issues of minuscule importance, on which he did not want to expend his energy. The problem, XXXXXXXXXXX noted, was that the Russian system was geared to top-down decisions and paralysis was often the result of Putin’s inaction.

4. (C) The rise of rumors such as these suggest that Putin may be losing some of his Teflon persona under the pressures of Russia’s economic woes, at least among the elite. However, recent Levada surveys reinforce that most Russians continue to see Putin as “running” the country (87 percent of respondents saw him holding his power, up from 74 percent a year ago). While some speculate that Putin’s disengagement may presage a readiness to step down from office, most continue to stress his centrality in the ruling structure and his personal sense as the “savior” of Russia. Indeed, his disengagement reflects his long-standing predilection to prevaricate on
difficult issues and his recognition that a sharp reduction in resources limits his ability to
find workable compromises among the Kremlin elite. BEYRLE

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Below Surface, U.S. Has Dim View of Putin and Russia”
Concerns on French Ship Sales to Russia

The American Embassy in Georgia expresses concern that France’s sale of amphibious assault ships to Russia would destabilize the Black Sea region.

DATE 2009-11-19 12:35:00

SOURCE Embassy Tbilisi

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 002025

SIPDIS


REF: PARIS 1529

Classification By: Ambassador John R. Bass for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary and comment. On November 13 and 16 Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze voiced serious concerns about the potentially destabilizing influence of France’s possible sale of Mistral-class helicopter carrier ships to Russia (ref tel) to DAS Tina Kaidanow and the Ambassador. As the broker of the August 2008 ceasefire agreement with which Russia has still not complied, France would not only provide Russia with arms that its own officers admit would have helped them in the war against Georgia, but would send a powerful signal that NATO and the west are no longer concerned about Russia’s intentions. At a time when Georgia faces a “silent embargo” on arms shipments, other countries -- notably Spain and the Netherlands -- await such a signal to begin their own sales to Russia. Such an opening of the floodgates could render an already out-of-balance military confrontation even more lopsided, allowing the Russians to assert themselves with impunity -- and delivering the implicit message that the west will not interfere. Vashadze requested that the United States push back against this sale and said President Saakashvili would make the same request at more senior levels. We recommend doing so, in both Paris and Brussels -- or at the very least seeking a commitment from Russia that these ships will not be deployed in the Black Sea. End summary and comment.

VASHADZE’S CONCERNS

2. (C) Foreign Minister Vashadze raised his concerns with us about the sale twice, during a November 16 meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary Kaidanow and in a November 13 dinner with the Ambassador. He registered several specific objections. First, the fact that it is France considering the sale carries significant symbolic weight. President Sarkozy, representing the French presidency of the EU, brokered the August 12, 2008 ceasefire agreement between Georgia and Russia and effectively pledged the EU as the guarantor of that agreement. Point 5 of the agreement requires Russia to withdraw its forces to those positions held previous to the war -- a provision that Russia has not complied with. In fact, Russia has done the opposite, increasing its military presence in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and expanding its positions beyond their August 6, 2008 positions. Thus, if France were to approve the sale of any significant military equipment to Russia, it would implicitly intimate that the broker of the ceasefire agreement was satisfied either that Russia had complied with those commitments, or that the commitments were no longer binding.

3. (C) Second, Vashadze noted that the specific ship in question represents a direct threat not only to Georgia, but to the entire Black Sea region. Third, the sale is being contemplated in the context of what Vashadze called a “silent embargo” against Georgia, making Georgia’s attempts to rethink its physical security even more difficult. Russia would improve substantially its ability to project military power across the Black Sea littoral. Finally, Vashadze said that other
countries -- notably Spain and the Netherlands -- were waiting for just such a sale from a major NATO ally to open the door to their own arms sales to Russia. A Mistral sale would thereby open the floodgates to new procurements for Russia -- procurements that could lead to even more destabilizing steps in the Black Sea region.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

4. (U) The newspaper 24 Saati (24 Hours) published a front-page article November 18, written by an American analyst based in Tbilisi, that registers strong protest against the proposed sale. Calling the sale potentially the “biggest ever NATO country military supply to Russia,” the article notes that quotes Russian Navy Commander Admiral Vladimir Vysotskiy as saying in September that “In the conflict in August last year a ship like that would have allowed the Black Sea Fleet to accomplish its mission in 40 minutes, not 26 hours, which is how long it took us.”

COMMENT: THE WRONG SHIP FROM THE WRONG COUNTRY AT THE WRONG TIME

5. (C) Despite reassuring its people that Russia is not likely to undertake further military action in the near future, the Georgian Government privately is concerned by the steady stream of aggressive Russian rhetoric. The symbolism of France, the broker of the ceasefire and a major NATO ally,

TBILISI 00002025 002 OF 002

taking this particular opportunity to make one of NATO’s biggest sales ever to Russia will not be missed in Moscow or in Tbilisi. Not only on the symbolic level is the sale problematic; this type of ship will give Russia a new capability to enforce, or threaten to enforce, its will in the Black Sea. This sale would render the already difficult task of getting Russia to comply with its ceasefire commitments nearly impossible, and it would potentially increase the militarization of, and instability in, the Black Sea region. Although Georgia, despite the introduction of vastly increased Russian military forces into its territory, has so far refrained from actively rearming itself, the acquisition by Russia of such a ship could exacerbate public fears and virtually force Georgia to seek ways to prepare to respond. The United States should take steps to discourage this sale, in Paris and Brussels, or at the very least impose appropriate conditions on the sale -- such as firm commitments from Russia that the ships will not be deployed in the Black Sea -- that would put any Russian assertions about overall capabilities, versus their intentions in this region, to the test. BASS

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“France, Turning to a New Partner, Dismays an Old One Over a Ship”
“U.S. Strains to Stop Arms Flow”
U.S. Concerns About French Warship Sale to Russia

Pentagon and State Department officials raise their concerns over the sale of a ship to Russia. The French insist that the Russians have been exaggerating the ship’s capabilities.

DATE 2010-02-22 14:31:00

SOURCE Embassy Paris

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 000207

NOFORN SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/11/2020 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, RS, GG, SR, BK, AF, IR, AM, FR SUBJECT: FRENCH MFA ON RUSSIA, BALKANS, AFGHANISTAN, IRAN, CAUCASUS

PARIS 00000207 001.2 OF 004

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew R. Young, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: During separate discussions with OSD Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Alexander Vershbow and EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Spencer Boyer in early February, Roland Galharague, MFA A/S-equivalent for Continental Europe, adopted a defensive posture about the potential sale of Mistral class ships to Russia; expressed skepticism about the depth and durability of Russia’s support for sanctions against Iran; acknowledged Putin’s dominance in Russia while proposing, as a means to strengthen Medvedev, that we respond positively to his proposals for reforming European security and holding an OSCE summit; asserted that Serbia cannot win back Kosovo and also win entry into the EU; expressed pessimism about the future of Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations and about the impact of instability in Iran on Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Armenia; and claimed that Bosnia and Afghanistan could become difficult issues for trans-Atlantic relations this year because of the USG’s alleged disengagement from Bosnia and its alleged failure to consult adequately with European NATO allies on strategy in Afghanistan. END SUMMARY.

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MISTRAL: FRENCH ADOPT A DEFENSIVE POSTURE
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2. (C/NF) When asked about the potential sale of Mistral class ships to Russia, Galharague inquired as to why the USG seems to be singling out France for criticism on this issue. “I recently spoke to my Dutch counterpart,” he reported, “and he said you have not approached him on this subject” despite recent Dutch (and Spanish) efforts to make similar sales. Furthermore, the Mistral is not “top end” military equipment, Galharague argued, describing it instead as a combination between “a truck and an oil ship” with some helpful navigation tools. It will not contribute significantly to Russian military capabilities. Russian leaders have been over-selling the military significance of the Mistral in order to quell domestic opposition to its purchase from abroad. Some Russians consider the sale a harbinger of the end of shipbuilding in their country, and claim the ship could be built at home but would simply take longer. The production and sale of armaments is a major industry in Russia, possibly second only to oil and gas. In his February 10 press conference, the Chairman of Russia’s National Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, seemed “very reticent” about the possible sale, according to Galharague.

4. (C/NF) Asked about Georgia’s reaction to the possible sale, Galharague insisted that France has maintained “very good” relations with Tbilisi. The GOF “strategy” for Georgia to recover its lost territory is to persuade the Tbilisi government to engage with the leaders of the secessionist territories and to continue on their path toward EU accession. The demands of accession -- such as internal democratic reforms and good relations with their neighbors -- will
serve Georgia and the region well. Nonetheless, Galharague acknowledged that Tbilisi has good reason to fear Russia, given their recent history. This ship will not, however, affect their strategic situation, Galharague argued: “The Russians have already invaded Georgia without the ship.”

5. (C/NF) While acknowledging that Georgia and the Baltic countries feel threatened by Russia -- with reason -- Galharague concluded that Russia is not a threat to us and there is no reason we should not sell equipment to them which does not fall into the realm of restricted armaments. The Mistral class ship does not contain high end or sensitive technology, he insisted.

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RUSSIA’S COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN
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6. (C/NF) The Russians are currently benefiting from their helpful statements on Iran while realizing full well that China will water down any sanctions proposals, Galharague asserted. When praising Russia’s new stance, he argued, we should be cognizant of their complicated relationship with Iran. Russians have an interest in strong ties with Tehran, especially because Iran is still a primary market for Russian arms sales. On the other hand, were Iran to normalize its relations with western governments, it could develop into a major Russian rival for gas sales to the European market. To balance various and competing elements of its relationship with Iran, Russia has an interest in serving as a “go-between” in the conflict between Iran and the west. In fact, Galharague claimed, Russian leaders were furious when Turkey recently started to seize that mantel.

PARIS 00000207 002.2 OF 004
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MEDVEDEV VERSUS PUTIN
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7. (C/NF) When discussing the comparative influence of President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin, Galharague claimed that Medvedev, whose initial gut reactions to events clearly differ from those of Putin, is trying to assemble his own power bases independent of the former President. In the meantime, “power still rests with Putin,” Galharague assessed. Putin, not Medvedev, constantly juggles and balances competing domestic interests in Russia. As a case in point, Galharague cited the Russian government’s reaction to the financial crisis. After the government painstakingly established a mechanism for determining how to divide stimulus funds among various economic sectors and private interests, Putin simply decided unilaterally who would receive state support. In general, Galharague observed, Putin much prefers to focus on domestic issues rather than foreign policy. Putin prefers cutting deals in the murky Russian business world to delving into the complexities of international politics.

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STRENGTHEN MEDVEDEV BY RESPONDING TO HIS SECURITY PROPOSAL
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8. (C/NF) Galharague described the long-standing French effort to strengthen Medvedev by respecting his official role as president of Russia, regardless of Putin’s competing power and influence. “We treat Medvedev as president and address presidential issues with him.” They also seek to validate Medvedev’s initiatives, regardless of the substantive content, in order to reward his efforts to put new ideas forward. As an important example, Galharague mentioned Medvedev’s proposal for revamping European security architecture. Medvedev invested a lot of political capital in this effort, Galharague argued, and we should provide a positive response, even if we do not accept the proposals. For this reason, President Sarkozy sent Medvedev a letter of acknowledgment after receiving the proposal. Tying this approach to USG policy toward Russia, Galharague several times asked how the USG plans to measure the success of the “reset” with Russia? The French, he said, would like to know whether the USG has established benchmarks for progress, and they wonder how START negotiations might fit into this equation.

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EUROPEAN SECURITY: GOF SUPPORTS OSCE SUMMIT
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9. (C/NF) Galharague stated that the French largely agree with us about how to address questions of European security, except in one area: they support the idea of an OSCE summit. While Paris concurs with the USG analysis that the Russian proposals for reforming Europe’s security institutions contain a number of “unacceptable” elements, he argued that we must understand that “we’re playing a game of judo -- we do not want to give the Russians a pretext to claim they’re being ignored.” He added that the Russians are adept at manipulation. “We constantly feel like we have a better hand but they’re playing a better game -- it’s the same in business and economic arenas.” Claims of disrespect by western nations resonate in Russian domestic politics, to our detriment, he warned. Therefore, we must emphasize the positive elements of the Russian proposal and communicate a sincere willingness to engage. An OSCE summit can help with these aims, Galharague argued, and at the same time support the Corfu process. A summit would need to involve at least a minimum number of substantive issues, such as regional conflicts or the status of conventional forces in Europe, but by agreeing to move ahead with the summit we would put the onus back on Russia.

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BALKANS: SERBS CAN’T WIN IN BOTH KOSOVO AND THE EU
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10. (C/NF) Galharague asked that the USG work together with the EU to discourage the Serbians from proposing a new U.N. resolution on Kosovo, stating that Serbian Foreign Minister Jeremic “seems to believe Serbia can win on Kosovo and win EU entry. We need to let him know this is not true.” Right now, Galharague reported, “the Serbs are furious with us (the French)” in response to the demarche the GOF delivered in Belgrade in early February (ref tel) about Serbia’s possible plans for a U.N. resolution. “We delivered the message in very forceful terms.” In fact, the Serbs interpreted the demarche as a major change in position, Galharague reported.

PARIS 00000207 003.2 OF 004

The EU had thus far maintained the position that the issues of Kosovo and Serbian entry into the EU were not formally linked. “There was no formal conditionality,” Galharague said, adding that the Serbs now understand that to be a member of the EU they must eventually recognize Kosovo. “We told them we do not want another Cyprus,” he explained, referring to Cyprus’ controversial EU accession in 2004 as a divided island where EU legislation remains partly “suspended” in the northern part of the island which is outside of the government in Nicosia’s control. Nonetheless, Galharague predicted the Serbs will likely go ahead with the U.N. resolution in any case, and the USG and the EU will be forced to oppose it.

11. (C/NF) Furthermore, Galharague asserted, before the Serbs join the EU, they will need to resolve key issues with Kosovo in the fields of justice, police, customs, transport, agriculture, and also any differences over names and terminology. The best way for Serbia to address issues related to Kosovo is by working with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). “At the end of the day, though,” he reiterated, “Serbia must recognize Kosovo if it wants to join the EU.”

PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE CAUCASUS

12. (C/NF) The Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations appear to be at a “dead end,” Galharague averred, adding that “Minsk (The Minsk Group) is going nowhere fast.” He noted that the French government is not in a position to push the Armenians at the moment because French citizens of Armenian origin “represent about 500,000 votes” and French regional elections will take place in March. Other factors may soon impact the Caucasus region, he warned, such as instability in Iran. Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkmenistan all have important trade and energy ties with Iran and they could be immediately affected by the Iran sanctions bill currently making its way through the U.S. Congress. At the same time, the effort to impose harsher U.N. sanctions may offer us an opportunity to further engage with those three countries about their approach to Iran.

FUTURE USG-EU FLASHPOINTS: BOSNIA AND AFGHANISTAN

13. (C/NF) When assessing potential issue areas where the USG and EU may differ during 2010, Galharague focused first on Bosnia. He said the French are disappointed that the USG appears to
have put all plans and actions on hold pending the elections in October. Indeed, he implied that U.S. and EU officials have differing assessments of the need for continual engagement with the conflicting parties in Bosnia. Bosnian parties will not make progress without unity between the U.S. and the EU. When the Americans disengage, even temporarily, Galharague claimed the Bosnians perceive it immediately and react accordingly: “The Americans are giving up, so why should we do this (make compromises)?” The USG, the Spanish EU presidency, and High Representative Ashton should lead the charge in engaging this year -- “we need U.S. backing now,” he urged. As a lever to press the Bosnians forward on constitutional issues, the EU may be able to use the ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, which declared that the Bosnian Constitution does not conform with European human rights standards.

14. (C/NF) Galharague described Afghanistan as the second potential trans-Atlantic flashpoint in 2010: “There is an emerging feeling the war is not jointly owned and managed.” President Obama waited eight months to make a decision and, during that period, at no point did European opinion factor into his deliberations, according to Galharague. DAS Boyer firmly disagreed, citing USG consultations and discussions with French officials in Paris and in Washington, DC. Galharague acknowledged these discussions took place, but claimed the question Americans posed to their European NATO allies was not “What do you think?” but “How many troops can you put on the ground?” More recently, he said, the USG has begun contemplating engagement with elements of the Taliban without consulting European NATO allies. The French would like to know, for instance, what this engagement might mean for our future relations with Pakistan and India.

15. (C/NF) In purely political terms, Galharague explained that Afghanistan has developed into a difficult issue, especially in France. With the French death toll in Afghanistan having reached 40, he noted, local politicians have found themselves increasingly faced with grieving families, to whom they must explain the purpose of the war.

PARIS 00006267 004.2 OF 004

“The perception is that we’re there because the Americans are there,” he said. “We’re not sure where we’re going and we’re not being asked or consulted.” Initially, the majority of Europeans supported the war in Afghanistan, invoking Article Five of the NATO Charter and committing a “fairly high” amount of troops and resources. But now “no one knows the purpose” of the war. “Perhaps the French government should have made a better show of the consultations” that did take place, Galharague admitted, “but to display them you have to have them.”

16. (C/NF) EMBASSY COMMENT: Galharague is not ultimately responsible for the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, which is handled by a separate cell within the MFA, so his comments may not reflect the views of those who regularly engage with the USG on this issue. Notably, when discussing public and official perceptions of the war in Afghanistan, he made no mention of SRAP Holbrooke’s two visits to Paris in the last three months, or post’s constant exchanges about Afghanistan with French officials at the senior and working levels. Galharague focused on a perception of minimal consultation, which he admitted could persist regardless of reality. END COMMENT.

17. (U) ASD Vershbow and DAS Boyer have cleared this cable. RIVKIN

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“France, Turning to a New Partner, Dismays an Old One Over a Ship”
Lithuania Questions French Ship Sale to Russia

Lithuania raised questions about the French proposal to sell a Mistral-class ship to Russia at a closed-door NATO meeting.

DATE 2010-02-12 10:05:00

SOURCE Mission USNATO

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL USNATO 000067

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2019 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, MARR, NATO, FR, RS SUBJECT: FRENCH MISTRAL SALE TO RUSSIA RAISED AT NATO

Classified By: Ambassador Ivo Daalder for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

1. (C) Lithuania's NATO PermRep Linkevicius raised France's potential sale to Russia of a Mistral class ship during a February 9 PermReps' lunch, noting that the sale was not simply a national issue but a subject for discussion within the Alliance. French PermRep Andreani did not respond. However, the following day, the February 10 NAC meeting, Andreani made a point of highlighting France’s commitment to Baltic security by reporting that France had been participating since January 4 in Baltic air policing. She cited this as evidence of France’s commitment to the collective defense of the Baltics. The French Political Counselor told us afterward that he was waiting for guidance from Paris on the Mistral sale as the French Mission here had not previously been involved in this issue. On February 11, Estonian PermRep Luik complained about the sale over lunch with Ambassador Daalder, noting that inclusion of Allied equipment could trigger third county transfer rules - in particular the case of Canadian technology.

2. (U) NATO Spokesman James Appathurai was asked about the sale during a February 10 press conference, in light of Russia's newly released military doctrine that identifies NATO enlargement as a key threat. Appathurai noted that, while Secretary-General Rasmussen recognized the concerns of some Allies over the sale were real and understandable for historic and geographic reasons, Rasmussen had told Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov that he did not view Russia as a threat and hoped Russians did not see NATO as a threat.

3. (C) Comment: The Mistral sale had not been a topic of debate at NATO prior to the Lithuanian-French exchange. Several Allies have been reluctant to raise an Ally's bilateral arms sales at NATO, even if they preferred that France not sell the ship to Russia. In the past, discussion of bilateral arms sales have traditionally not been seen as an appropriate topic at NATO. Given the significance of the potential Mistral sale and broader discussions on reassurance and NATO’s relations with Russia, the Mistral may be viewed as an exception in light of some Allies’ concerns regarding Russia’s military capabilities and intentions, and possible third party transfer rules. End Comment. DAALDER

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“France, Turning to a New Partner, Dismays an Old One Over a Ship”
Gates Objects to French Ship Sale to Russia

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates objects to France’s sale of a Mistral-class ship to Russia.

DATE 2010-02-12 13:49:00

SOURCE Embassy Paris

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 000170

NOFORN SIPDIS

E.O. 12598 DECL: 02/12/20 TAGS: PREL, MOPS, MAR, FR, IR, AF, NATO SUBJECT: SECDIF GATES’S MEETING WITH FRENCH MINISTER OF DEFENSE HERVE MORIN, FEBRUARY 8, 2010.

PARIS 00000170 001.2 OF 004

Classified By: Alexander Vershbow, ASD/ISA. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Ref: USNATO 56

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (SecDef) was hosted by French Minister of Defense Herve Morin for a working lunch during an official bilateral visit to Paris on February 8, 2010. SecDef and Morin agreed on the basic themes to be included in NATO’s revised Strategic Concept. On Missile Defense, SecDef refuted Morin’s contention that a European Missile Defense system is both unwise and unnecessary but pledged to give France and other Allies better information on the costs and command and control structure of the U.S. proposal. Both Morin and Gates agreed that Iran’s rejection of an engagement track meant that the time for pressure had arrived, but both noted concern over China’s opposition to a new UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR). On Afghanistan, SecDef praised French contributions and highlighted ongoing trainer shortfalls. SecDef raised U.S. concerns over the sale of a Mistral-class helicopter carrier to Russia as sending a mixed signal to both Russia and our Central and East European Allies. Morin refuted this idea, arguing that the sale was a way to send a message of partnership to Russia at a critical time. Morin requested that the upcoming U.S. Air Force Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new in-flight refueling tanker aircraft be unbiased. SecDef told Morin that he had full confidence that the RFP would be as fair as possible. END SUMMARY.

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NATO Strategic Concept
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2. (S/NF) Morin welcomed SecDef to France and asked about U.S positions regarding the revised NATO Strategic Concept. Morin noted France’s interest in a document that would inject new ideas, be adopted with great momentum, and define NATO’s roles and missions. It should not just be a restatement of the conventional wisdom.

3. (S/NF) SecDef told Morin he favored a short document that was perhaps three to five pages in length. The Strategic Concept should move NATO from a traditional defensive alliance to a security alliance that can address a wide range of global threats. SecDef said that the Strategic Concept must better align resources with NATO’s level of ambition; it must lay out a comprehensive approach to civil-military cooperation and enhance partnerships with the EU, UN and other international organizations. SecDef concluded that, above all, financial and broader structural reform must be pursued -- either as part of the Strategic Concept or in parallel.
4. (S/NF) Morin agreed on length and the need for NATO to take on new missions, but he wondered what types of missions members had in mind. Cyber attacks? Terrorism? Proliferation? Missile Defense? Morin also stated his belief that NATO needed to bring some clarity to its area of operation so that NATO did not end up extending to the Pacific. He added that, in his view, extending the Alliance to Georgia would weaken Article 5. SecDef stated his preference for NATO to focus its efforts in the Euro-Atlantic area, perhaps extending into the Mediterranean. He concurred with Morin that a bigger Alliance posed challenges.

5. (S/NF) Morin told SecDef that the UK MoD had proposed drafting a joint French-UK proposal on NATO reform to then present to the U.S. Noting that the objective was to overcome blockages from those countries that had underwhelming General Staffs, Morin asked whether SecDef thought it would be better for Europe to build consensus at home and work its own ideas, or for Europe and the United States to develop joint proposals. SecDef replied that he thought it best not to have two proposals, but that he would consult with SecState. He also said he hoped that the Senior Officials Group would come up with some concrete and viable ideas for reform.

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Missile Defense
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6. (S/NF) Morin, having expressed strong reservations to new U.S. and NATO missile defense (MD) plans at the NATO ministerial in Istanbul (reftel), said he wanted to explain how France sees MD and raise some questions. First, he believes that the shift from Theater Missile Defense (TMD) to defense of populations and territory will give publics a false sense of security, since the sword was ultimately stronger than the shield. For France, security came from strong defense and deterrence. Second, Morin asked what threat the system aims to counter. Nuclear states or rogue states? Third, Morin asked about funding and how European countries would participate in command and control (C2) decisions. Morin summarized his own personal opposition to MD by asserting that the U.S. and Europe have differing mentalities on defense spending. He said the U.S. has true resiliency with "infinite" means, while in Europe defense spending has collapsed in every country but the UK and France. As a result, any development needing common funding will dilute the already weak European defenses. Morin concluded by stating that it was folly to assume that MD would give us added security.

7. (S/NF) SecDef refuted Morin’s arguments, pointing out that MD contributes to deterrence. SecDef explained to Morin that the system was aimed at nations with a handful of nuclear weapons and a limited but growing missile capability to launch them. Noting Iran fits that profile, SecDef said that MD provides a good deterrent against limited attacks.

8. (S/NF) SecDef agreed with MoD Morin that the U.S. owed NATO answers on C2, costs, and the role of common funding. He pledged to provide more details on these issues, as well as on how ALTBM and the U.S. Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA) fit together. However, SecDef said it was important to move ahead with the MD study that was endorsed at the 2009 NATO summit, since it would provide some of the answers France was seeking. SecDef reminded Morin that POTUS will want to obtain a decision affirming the Alliance role in MD at the Lisbon summit in late 2010.

9. (S/NF) Responding to SecDef’s discussion of MD, Morin asked why there was a need to shift from theater to population defense. SecDef said the systems the U.S. was deploying have broader applications. For example the THAAD system, which the U.S. had deployed to Hawaii as a measure against North Korean threat, protects both the theater and the population. Gates offered the Aegis ship-borne SM-3, which was used to shoot down a defunct satellite, as a second example of a system that could also have broader applications and deter Iran from holding us hostage by threatening missile launches.

10. (S/NF) Recalling that Russian Prime Minister Putin once told him Iran was Russia’s greatest threat, SecDef noted that Russia could plug into the new system. SecDef highlighted two Russian objections to the former system: first, the radar in the Czech Republic would have been so powerful that it could see into Russia; second, Russia believed that the three-stage Ground-Based Interceptor could have been converted easily to an offensive weapon. The SM-3 missiles in the new approach can only be defensive in nature, however. For these reasons, the U.S. believed partnering with Russia is once again potentially possible. (NOTE: Following the meetings, Morin’s
critical comments on Missile Defense were disavowed by senior officials at the MoD and the MFA, who said that his views were his own and that the U.S. should essentially "erase" what he had just said. END NOTE.)

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Iran
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11. (S/NF) Shifting from Missile Defense to Iran, SecDef noted that Russia is now of a different mind on Iran because of Tehran’s persistent rejection of international proposals for negotiated solutions and its concealment of the Qom facility. SecDef believed Russia would be supportive of a new UNSCR, although it may have different views on the severity of sanctions, but he expressed concern about China. SecDef said that Russia could perhaps help on China, but that securing the support of other non-permanent Security Council members was also an issue. In this regard, SecDef told Morin he had been blunt with Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, telling him that if Iran developed nuclear weapons, we were facing two scenarios: nuclear proliferation in the Middle East or a regional war (or perhaps both).

12. (S/NF) Morin asked SecDef if he believed Israel had the capability to strike Iran without U.S. support. SecDef responded that he didn’t know if they would be successful, but that Israel could carry out the operation. SecDef told Morin that he believed a conventional strike by any nation would only delay Iranian plans by one to three years, while unifying the Iranian people to be forever embittered against the attacker.

13. (S/NF) MoD Morin agreed that China could be problematic on the UNSCR and queried SecDef how the U.S. believed we could ensure their vote, especially in light of the upcoming Dalai Lama visit and the U.S. weapons sale to Taiwan. SecDef told Morin that because of Congressionally mandated rules, the U.S. was required to provide defensive weapons for Taiwan. He observed that every time the U.S. makes the sales to Taiwan, the Chinese suspend military-to-military relations, but only for the short term.

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Pakistan
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14. (S/NF) Morin expressed doubt about the willingness of the Pakistani government to fight extremists at home. He noted that Karzai had told the French that if the Pakistan-Afghanistan border were closed, it would largely solve issues in Afghanistan. SecDef replied that he had told the Pakistani government two weeks earlier that Al Qaeda was helping the Pakistan Taliban to destabilize Pakistan. SecDef highlighted the dramatic changes in Pakistan over the past 18 months, especially in Swat and Bajaur provinces, which offered some hope of progress. SecDef said that there was increasing coordination between U.S. and Pakistani forces across the border.

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Afghanistan
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15. (S/NF) Turning to Afghanistan, MoD Morin began by stating that although he had announced an additional 80 trainers, France had also sent a non-official contribution as well. (NOTE: Morin was referring to a classified deployment of French Special Forces that have a limited mission to find two kidnapped French journalists. END NOTE.) France had also sent an additional deployment of engineers to work exclusively on the Counter-IED mission. Morin underscored that France had significantly increased its contributions in Afghanistan in the past 18 months from 2700 troops to nearly 4600.

16. (S/NF) SecDef said the U.S. understood the domestic situation and that he would not have pressed France publicly for more forces until after the March elections. However SecDef requested that France strongly consider substantially increasing military and police trainers. SecDef said that while he would publicly praise French troops, which U.S. troops consider terrific fighters, he was fine with keeping these discussions close hold.
17. (S/NF) Shifting topics, Morin questioned the decision to specifically name mid-2011 as the start of a withdrawal, which Morin thought would simply make the Taliban wait it out. SecDef noted that whether to set a date for transition had led to one of the most protracted debates in Washington in recent months. SecDef had come to the conclusion, however, that the Afghans needed to be put on notice that they would need to take responsibility for their own security. He pointed out that there is no end date for U.S. involvement; July 2011 is just the beginning of a process. POTUS was very clear that the transition would be conditions-based. Morin agreed with this and urged that clear benchmarks be set that could reassure public opinion. SecDef concurred and observed that the U.S. public will not tolerate a prolonged stalemate.

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Russia/Mistral
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18. (S/NF) SecDef expressed U.S. concerns about the Mistral sale to Russia. He told Morin that because of Sarkozy’s involvement in brokering a ceasefire in Georgia, which Russia was not fully honoring, the sale would send the wrong message to Russia and to our Allies in Central and East Europe.

19. (S/NF) Morin told SecDef pointedly that he had pushed hard for the sale. He conceded that it was indeed a warship for power projection. But Morin asked rhetorically how we can tell Russia we desire partnership but then not trust them. Morin told SecDef that he understood the U.S. position on considering Central and East European Allies’ concerns about the perceived threat from Russia. Morin argued, however, that this single ship would not make any difference with respect to Russian capabilities, as Russia’s naval production ability was severely degraded.

20. (S/NF) SecDef replied that U.S. concerns were not about military capacity but about messaging. Some allies, because of their past experiences, are still very concerned with Russia and are not sure how much to trust the West. SecDef observed that Russian democracy has disappeared and the government was an oligarchy run by the security services. President Medvedev has a more pragmatic vision for Russia than PM Putin, but there has been little real change.

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KC-X Tanker RFP
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21. (S/NF) Morin told SecDef he had one final, but major, topic to raise, the U.S. contract tender for a new tanker plane. He asked that the RFP be issued so that competition was equal for both companies and there was no bias. Morin stressed that it was important for our market economy to be a two-way street. He told SecDef that if the terms of competition are unequal, EADS would not submit a bid.

22. (S/NF) SecDef stated his belief that the RFP would be fair. He told Morin that the Air Force had established the requirements. He noted that since the previous competition, he had fired both the civilian and military leaders of the Air Force and that there was a new person in charge of the Pentagon’s acquisition policy. SecDef said that it would be disappointing if EADS did not submit a proposal.

23. (U) SecDef has cleared this cable. Drafted by OSD Staff.

RIVKIN

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“France, Turning to a New Partner, Dismays an Old One Over a Ship”
U.S. Diplomatic Initiatives

A Turkish Astronaut for a Boeing Sale

Commercial airline deals are supposed to be about quality and price. But political considerations often seem to intervene. Here, in attempting to persuade authorities in Turkey to buy Boeing commercial planes for Turkish Airlines -- which is part owned by the government -- the State Department fielded requests from Turkey to help it build its own space program, including perhaps putting a Turkish astronaut on a NASA flight. Authorities in Turkey also asked for help from the Federal Aviation Administration, to improve flight safety there. American authorities said they could not offer the space flight, but agreed to try to help out in other ways, evidence of the role the United States plays in helping Boeing sell its jets.

DATE 2010-01-19 05:39:00

SOURCE Embassy Ankara

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL ANKARA 000074

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EEB/FO, EEB/CBA, EEB/TRA/OTP, EUR/SE PARIS FOR FAA TRICIA STACEY COMMERCE FOR ITA/MAC CHERIE RUSNAK AND KRISTIN NAJDIN NSC FOR BRIDGET BRINK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/14/2020 TAGS: BEXP, ETRD, EAIR, PREL, TSPA, TU SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES BOEING SALE WITH TRANSPORTATION MINISTER

REF: ISTANBUL 17

1. (C) Summary. Minister of Transportation Binali Yildirim confirmed to Ambassador Jeffrey that price is now the main sticking point in the prospective purchase of Boeing aircraft by Turkish Airlines (THY). Yildirim stressed, however, that price is not the only consideration and that THY is looking at the (vague) associated conditions for evidence of a long-term partnership and commitment. He added that the GOT is also hoping for a heightened level of civil aviation cooperation with the FAA, and that progress on that front would improve the environment for Boeing as well. Finally, he repeated President Gul’s request to President Obama for assistance in sending a Turkish astronaut into space, and hinted that this was tied into Turkey’s consideration of commercial deals. The Ambassador highlighted Boeing’s long history of cooperation with and investment in Turkey, not only through partnerships with local firms but also via direct investment in the community through its corporate social responsibility programs. He also promised to discuss the possibilities for cooperation with FAA and investigate whether NASA could help facilitate the Turkish space program. End summary.

2. (SBU) Ambassador Jeffrey, accompanied by Commercial Counselor and Econoff, met with Minister of Transportation Binali Yildirim on January 14 to advocate on behalf of Boeing in the ongoing procurement of new airplanes for the THY fleet. THY recently announced that it would be purchasing 20 Airbus single-aisle aircraft with an option for 10 more. Negotiations with Boeing for a similar number of 737s are ongoing (see reftel). The value of this deal is approximately
USD 3.4 billion.

3. (C) The Ambassador, alluding to the discussions between President Obama and Prime Minister Erdogan, noted his understanding that the main sticking point in the negotiations now seems to be on price (as was expressed by THY CEO to CG Wiener in reftel). Yildirim confirmed that price is the most important outstanding issue and observed that haggling over price is a normal part of any business negotiation. He went on to say, however, that price is not the only consideration, and that THY and the GOT are looking at the offer carefully with an eye toward after-sale service and long-term partnership. Ambassador Jeffrey highlighted Boeing’s longstanding commitment to Turkey, its history of cooperative production with local manufacturers, its world-class corporate social responsibility programs, and the superior quality of its products.

4. (C) Yildirim added that the GOT is evaluating the Boeing offer in the context of Turkey’s overall civil aviation cooperation with the United States, especially in terms of cooperation between the Ministry and the FAA. He noted that Turkey needs to strengthen both its technical infrastructure and its human capacity to meet the growing demand for aviation services, and expressed hope that the FAA could provide assistance on all these fronts. Cooperation in this area will create the right environment for commercial deals, he said, without going into specifics on what type of assistance is necessary. A frustrated Ambassador observed that FAA has a solid history of collaboration with the Civil Aviation Directorate General and promised to investigate how the USG might best lend assistance.

5. (C) In addition to FAA assistance, Yildirim hinted obliquely that Turkey’s desire to send an astronaut into space -- expressed in a letter from President Gul to President Obama -- is also tied into its consideration of commercial deals, and that NASA assistance to help stand up Turkey’s nascent space program would be viewed positively. Ambassador Jeffrey noted that scheduling a Turkish astronaut on an upcoming mission would be extremely difficult, but that other technical assistance from NASA in establishing Turkey’s space program might be a possibility.

6. (C) Comment: Yildirim’s conflation of USG-GOT interactions and what is ostensibly a commercial sale between private firms suggests an unwelcome, but unsurprising, degree of political influence in this transaction. His comments may also explain the confusing mention of offsets by Prime

Minister Erdogan in his meeting with the President - if the GOT is truly evaluating the sale as a “U.S.” offer rather a Boeing offer, then the desired “offsets” may have been from the USG rather than Boeing. While there should not be a link between this deal and FAA/NASA assistance in developing Turkey’s aviation and aerospace agencies, such assistance in and of itself could be mutually beneficial and merits further study. We probably cannot put a Turkish astronaut in orbit, but there are programs we could undertake to strengthen Turkey’s capacity in this area that would meet our own goals for improved aviation safety in the region. In any case, we must/must show some response to the Minister’s vague requests if we want to maximize chances for the sale. End comment.

Jeffrey


RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Diplomats Help Push Sales of Jetliners on the Global Market”
Pressure on Boeing to Hire an Agent in Turkey

Around the world, Boeing is on occasion pressured to hire agents or intermediaries to help it win commercial airplane sales. In this May 2004 cable, for example, a senior State Department official stationed in Turkey discusses concerns over pressure on Boeing to hire an agent to gain access to leaders in Turkey’s government. Officials at the Turkish embassy in Washington did not respond to several requests to discuss the allegations, which suggest that Turkey’s finance minister at the time might have been involved in the apparent shakedown.

DATE 2004-05-12 12:22:00

SOURCE Embassy Ankara

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

SECRET ANKARA 002680

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE, E, EB COMMERCE FOR MAC ASSISTANT SECRETARY WILLIAM LASH COMMERCE FOR ITA/EUR/RD/SLetten/McOSTA COMMERCE FOR ITA/THE ADVOCACY CENTER/NEWMAN NSC FOR MBRYZ/TMCKIBBEN COMMERCE FOR MAC/EUR/DEFALCO/PDASCHER ISTANBUL FOR ECON AND FCS AMEMBASSIES FOR ECON AND FCS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/01/2010 TAGS: BEXP, ECON, ETRD, TU SUBJECT: BOEING FEELS PRESSURE IN THE TURKISH MARKET

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch; Reasons 1.4 b and d.

1. (C) Summary: Boeing representatives continue to be concerned over attempts by a senior official of the AKP cabinet to pressure the company into hiring one of his associates as Boeing’s representative in Turkey. Boeing is currently competing with EADS-Airbus for the potential sale of 19 narrow and wide body aircraft to expand the fleet of Turkish Airlines (THY). In addition to purchasing 19 aircraft and extending lease options for eight B737-400 aircraft, THY anticipates a need for 35 additional planes to meet future demand. End Summary.

2. (C) Earlier this week, Boeing representatives met with Embassy officials to discuss issues of concern to Boeing in the Turkish market. Boeing is concerned over attempts by a senior member of the AKP cabinet to pressure Boeing into hiring one of his associates as Boeing’s representative in Turkey. The state-owned Turkish flag carrier, THY, is currently interested in purchasing nineteen planes to expand its fleet. In addition to this fleet expansion, THY is also looking to lengthen its lease on eight Boeing 737-400s, which expire in 2006. THY expects a need for 35 additional planes to meet future flight demand. This project, valued at more than USD 2.9 billion (approximately 85 percent U.S. export content), is one of the largest projects in Turkey in the past several years. The German Chancellor and the French President have raised the upcoming THY acquisitions, on Airbus’ behalf, with Prime Minister Erdogan in previous discussions.

3. (S) According to our Boeing contacts, XXXXXXXXXX approached Boeing in March 2004 and introduced Boeing to a Turkish businessman named XXXXXXXXXX. Mr. XXXXXXXXXX advised Boeing that the Turkish Finance Minister was interested in meeting with Boeing to discuss THY’s acquisition, and volunteered to arrange the meeting with the Finance Minister. (Comment: Senior THY management reports to the Finance Minister. End Comment).

4. (C) During Boeing’s meeting with the Finance Minister, the Minister told Boeing that Mr. XXXXXXXXXX understands the airline business well and is fully aware of THY’s requirements.
Immediately following the meeting with the Finance Minister, Mr. XXXXXXXXX asked Boeing to retain him as their consultant in Turkey to ensure Boeing’s success in this market. Boeing declined XXXXXXXXX’s request.

5. (C) Comment: Post remains concerned about extensive lobbying by senior EU officials and the heads of state of Germany and France on behalf of Airbus. The Finance Minister is scheduled to meet with Airbus in Paris later this week. Post recommends that Washington agencies use all available opportunities to impress their GOT interlocutors on the importance we attach to transparency in THYs acquisition. Post will continue its active advocacy on behalf of Boeing. End Comment.

EDELMAN
Special Request From the Saudi King

In late 2006, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia asked the United States government and then President George W. Bush for approval to put the same high-tech equipment onto his personal plane as is used on Air Force One. If the United States agreed to this request, he hinted he would make a big order with Boeing for other planes that fly the royal family, as well as for Saudi Arabian Airlines. That order did come through, and State Department officials confirmed that the American government authorized security upgrades to King Abdullah’s plane, although they would not discuss the specifics.
3. (C) The King received the letter and after briefly reading it, responded by saying his own personal preference is to fly on Boeing. When he was ready to upgrade his current aircraft, he was offered two (2) brand new planes by Airbus. However, he does not want anything to do with Airbus planes.

4. (C) He has selected a plane from Saudia,s current fleet a 747 with minimal hours on the engines, as his new plane. This plane will be the new Head of State plane, and the King has recently approved new layout for the inside, which will be carried out in the United States.

5. (C) The King then turned to the A/S Hernandez and said politely “I am instructing you” to speak to the President and all the concerned authorities to make available all the latest technology for his plane. He wanted to have all the technology that his friend President Bush has on Air Force One. The A/S said he will relay the message to the White House.

King Ties Boeing Deal to Technology for Royal Plane

6. (C) The King went on to say that after he receives his plane, then he will convene a meeting with the concerned authorities within the Saudi Government and to evaluate Boeing,s bid. “God Willing” he will make a decision that will “please you very much”. The King then thanked the A/S for delivering the letter and asked him to convey his personal greetings to the President.

7. (C) Comment: The King was in extremely good spirits that evening, as was evident by the time he spent with the A/S. However, he was quite specific on what he wanted for his personal safety on his plane. His rejection of two brand new Airbus planes for a slightly used Boeing 747 clearly demonstrates his personal preference. He expressly wants his plane to have the technology available on Air Force One. This seemingly will play a positive role in the decision he makes for the upgrade of Saudia and the Royal fleet. OBERWETTER

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Diplomats Help Push Sales of Jetliners on the Global Market”
Airbus Wins Deal, Until U.S. Intervenes

In December 2007, Gulf Air, the government-owned airline of Bahrain, the small but wealthy island country in the Persian Gulf, announced that it intended to buy a new fleet of Airbus planes. Boeing officials alerted the State Department, which then intervened up to the highest levels of the government, urging them to buy American. The crown prince and king of Bahrain, preparing for the first visit by a sitting United States president, agreed to reverse the decision, ordering Gulf Air to reopen negotiations with Boeing, which ended up winning the deal, which was signed while then President Bush was visiting Bahrain.

DATE 2008-01-27 12:25:00

SOURCE Embassy Manama

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 MANAMA 000047

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

COMMERCE FOR 4520/ITA/MAC/ONE/HOFFMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/27/2018 TAGS: EAIR, EINV, ETRD, ECON, BA SUBJECT: EMBASSY ADVOCACY HELPS WIN $6 BILLION BOEING DEAL

REF: A. 07 MANAMA 408
B. 07 MANAMA 338

Classified By: Ambassador Adam Ereli, reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

SUMMARY

Following months of heavy lobbying by the Ambassador, the Crown Prince and King rejected a Gulf Air proposal to buy Airbus and directed the airline to make a deal with Boeing. Gulf Air signed an agreement valued at $6 billion with Boeing on January 13, in time to coincide with a POTUS visit. The agreement represents a significant Embassy commercial advocacy success. A last-minute French government push for Airbus included discussion of a visit to Bahrain by President Sarkozy. End Summary.

SMOOTH LANDING

Post commercial advocacy efforts paid off handsomely on January 13 when Gulf Air signed a deal to buy 16 787s, valued at $3.4 billion, with options for an additional 8, valued at $2.6 billion. At a press conference following the signing, Gulf Air Board Chairman Mahmoud Kooheji
said it was virtually assured that Gulf Air would exercise its options on all 8 additional
planes. Boeing’s stock opened sharply higher January 14, following the weekend announcement.

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BUMPY RIDE
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3. (C) Boeing first requested USG assistance in May 2006, when then Gulf Air president James
Hogan announced plans to replace the carrier’s aging fleet with a mix of medium-range and long-
range aircraft. Under Hogan’s business plan, Boeing would have supplied up to 25 787s and as many
as 22 737s. Gulf Air was then still jointly owned by the Governments of Bahrain and Oman and
Embassies Manama and Muscat each lobbied their respective host governments on Boeing’s behalf.
However, Hogan’s managerial differences with Gulf Air’s board subsequently led to his departure
from Gulf Air and his ambitious plan was scrapped.

4. (C) With the Government of Oman’s announced withdrawal from Gulf Air in May 2007, Minister of
Finance Shaikh Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa took personal oversight of Gulf Air’s management
with a view toward stemming Gulf Air’s losses, which stood in excess of USD 1 million per day.
Shaikh Ahmed stated that either the Airbus 320 or the Boeing 737 would fit Gulf Air’s developing
need for high-frequency regional traffic. “The long-term emphasis for the carrier is narrow-body
instead of wide-body.” Andre Dose, Shaikh Ahmed’s pick to replace James Hogan as Gulf Air CEO,
soon confirmed to Emboffs that Gulf Air would downsize to an Airbus fleet (reflets).

5. (C) However, Dose’s aggressive downsizing drive, which also led to cuts in routes and
personnel, brought him into conflict with the Gulf Air board. In July 2007, after just four
months on the job, he resigned his post, leaving Deputy CEO Bjorn Naff to succeed him.

6. (C) The Gulf Air board, now controlled entirely by the GOB, made clear to Naff its vision for
Gulf Air as a robust, revitalized national carrier. The airline needed to grow rather than
shrink. In October 2007, Gulf Air signed an MOU to purchase Boeing Dreamliners. However, the
board reversed itself shortly thereafter, citing concern over being able to justify a decision
for Boeing to the parliament in the face of a steeply discounted airbus quotation; the Airbus
package was reportedly $400 million cheaper.

7. (C) On December 12 Gulf Air delivered bad news to Boeing - the board had selected the Airbus
package. Signaling that Boeing’s prospects were finished, Gulf Air asked Boeing to return its
deposit. Boeing executives promptly informed the Ambassador and Econoff that the deal was lost
and Airbus had won. But from Post’s perspective the contest remained far from over. Gulf Air’s
selection still needed to be endorsed by the government. The Ambassador directly queried senior

MANAMA 00000047 002 OF 003

GOB officials and learned that no formal decision had yet been reached. Accordingly, he advised
Boeing of his recommendation - it was too soon to walk away.

8. (C) Boeing renewed its request for advocacy. The Ambassador and Econoff persisted in lobbying
Gulf Air management, board members, government officials and representatives of parliament. The
Ambassador made the case repeatedly that Airbus, lower up-front costs would be eclipsed by
Boeing’s lower operating costs and product reliability. He made much of the fact that the Airbus
A-350 alternative was still on the drawing board.

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COURSE CORRECTION
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9. (C) Kooheji urgently requested a meeting with the Ambassador on December 30 to advise him that
the Crown Prince and King had rejected Gulf Air’s proposal to buy Airbus, and directed him to
make a deal with Boeing in time to coincide with the January 12-13 POTUS visit. Kooheji said he
would accordingly seek to come to terms with Boeing. However, if Boeing were to respond that its
best deal was already on the table, Kooheji would be unable to justify a revised board
recommendation. Boeing would need to show willingness to make some concession(s) that Kooheji
could point to as equation-altering.
10. (C) The Ambassador notified Boeing that its representatives would need to return to Bahrain quickly and be ready to finalize an agreement. Somewhat skeptical, Boeing executives initially responded that their obligations precluded a return to Bahrain before January 14. The Ambassador pointed out that this would be too late. Boeing subsequently returned to Bahrain and called on the Ambassador January 3rd. The Ambassador shared that he had spoken directly to the Crown Prince on Boeing’s behalf. The Crown Prince had assured him of the Government’s sincerity in seeking a deal. This was not merely a last-minute maneuver to wring concessions from Airbus.

11. (C) Encouraged by such a high-level assurance of good faith, Boeing responded by shaving an additional five percent off its proposed sale price. This concession proved decisive in providing Kooheji with the justification he sought to advocate a board decision for Boeing.

12. (U) On January 13, Gulf Air and Boeing signed the $6 billion Boeing deal. Dreamliner delivery will start in 2016. In the meantime, Kooheji said Gulf Air will seek to meet its needs via the leasing market. The purchase will be supported via a blend of commercial and ExIm Bank financing with the sovereign backing of the GOB.

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LAST-MINUTE FRENCH RECLAMA
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13. (C) GOB officials tell Emboffs that French President Sarkozy, who was visiting the region at the time, made a last-minute call to King Hamad. Sarkozy reportedly said he would add Bahrain to his itinerary during the week of January 13 on the condition that he could sign a contract for 21 Airbus planes. French officials reportedly canceled the visit on news of the Boeing deal. Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid told Ambassador that he would be calling in the local French Ambassador to tell her “we don’t appreciate being dealt with this way.”

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COMMENT
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14. (C) Although Gulf Air has just completed a major long-range aircraft purchase, it is not finished shopping. Kooheji has said Gulf Air still needs to replace eight of its mid-range aircraft. Gulf Air has already signed an MOU with Airbus for those planes, but Kooheji notes that bidding remains open. It seems likely that Gulf Air will choose to replace eight of its Airbus A-320s with newer planes from that manufacturer. But as Boeing’s recent win illustrates, Airbus is in no position take Gulf Air’s business for granted. Post will certainly continue to hail the advantages of a Boeing solution.

MANAMA 00000047 003 OF 003

15. (C) The Embassy’s role in Boeing’s success is noteworthy for advancing well beyond every-day advocacy. Gulf Air relied on the Embassy to not only communicate with Boeing, but to get the best possible deal; Boeing turned to us for an understanding of the true facts on the ground (which at times belied appearances) and as a force multiplier, conveying the Boeing advantage at all levels. These efforts resulted in a win-win solution. In a letter of thanks to the Ambassador Boeing stated, “Your continued effort to touch the right leaders and remain a strong advocate for Boeing in this process made an enormous difference in the final outcome. The working together activity between you, your team, and Boeing is a model that we should really aspire to replicate in other countries.” End Comment.

Visit Embassy Manama’s Classified Website: http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/manama/
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ERELI
Special Services for Turkmenistan

Boeing’s sales team, to try to cement a relationship with Turkmenistan, the former Soviet republic, provided the leaders of the country with many free services, including fixing the entertainment system on the president’s plane, after it overheated. Boeing approached the State Department in 2008 after it grew concerned that Airbus was moving in and trying to get a piece of the Turkmenistan market, with Boeing asking that the State Department to try to re-establish its inside track to sales there.

DATE 2008-08-18 13:11:00

SOURCE Embassy Ashgabat

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 001079

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EEB COMMERCE FOR STARKS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2018 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, EAIR, EIND, TX SUBJECT: BOEING FACING CHALLENGES FROM BOMBARDIER AND AIRBUS IN TURKMENISTAN

REF: ASHGABAT 886

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sylvia Reed Curran for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: In promoting its business relationship with the Government of Turkmenistan since independence, Boeing Corporation has provided many services -- some free of charge -- in order to help Turkmenistan and to promote customer loyalty. Until recently, this strategy worked well. However, a Turkish broker introduced Airbus to Turkmenistan Airlines executives and brokered the recent deal for two Bombardier Challenger executive jets. Boeing is at a loss as to why its previously very secure relationship with Turkmenistan is heading south and asked post to intervene. One of Boeing’s top sales executives came to Ashgabat for meetings and finally met with the deputy chairman of Turkmenistan Airlines late on Friday, after waiting several days for an appointment. Meanwhile, on every other visit, he met with the chairman. A Turkmenistan that is increasing open to the world is also increasingly open to multiple business partners. Post will raise Boeing’s plight with authorities. END SUMMARY.

BOEING WORKED HARD FOR LOYALTY IN TURKMENISTAN

2. (C) A top Boeing Corporation sales executive (please protect) told the Charge on August 15 that, up to now, Boeing has easily completed transactions with Turkmenistan because of the government’s loyalty to the company. Boeing has provided many services to Turkmenistan’s aviation industry since independence in 1992 -- many more than anywhere else in the world -- and this helped to strengthen the relationship. In return, Turkmenistan exempted Boeing from taxes and gave the company other privileges.

3. (C) Boeing works closely with Gore Design, a company that provides executive interior design for most of Central Asia’s presidential airplanes. Gore has also provided excellent service to Turkmenistan, including repairing an entertainment system inadvertently left on in the heat in one of President Berdimuhamedov’s planes.

TURKISH BROKER BROUGHT IN AIRBUS AND BOMBARDIER
4. (C) However, a Turkish broker named Baysal recently introduced Airbus executives to Turkmenistan Airlines and also brokered the deal for two Bombardier Challenger (a Canadian company) executive jets that Neytralniy Turkmenistan reported on August 15. Also according to the executive, Air France has initiated a feasibility study on aviation technology, although Boeing already completed this study. The executive was concerned about what this meant in terms of Boeing’s relationship with Turkmenistan Airlines and asked post to intervene. The executive said that he had always been able to meet with the chairman of Turkmenistan Airlines, but had not yet met with the chairman at the time of this meeting. He also said that an engineer who recently came to Turkmenistan had also failed to meet with the chairman, and viewed this as a negative sign. The executive said that he told a Turkmenistan Airlines official that he didn’t know what Boeing had done wrong, if anything, but wanted to know if there were problems so that the company could resolve them.

ALLEGATIONS OF SAFETY HAZARDS DUE TO PROBLEMS AT CUSTOMS, OTHER INEFFECTIVENESS

5. (C) This executive said that he would not fly on Turkmenistan Airlines because some planes are flying past the usual inspection due date, calling into question the structural integrity of the aircraft. He echoed previous reports from local Boeing employees that spare parts sit in customs for many months. He also lamented the fact that registration of contracts is significantly more difficult, which other foreign companies have said is the case as well (reftel). Current procedures stipulate that 18 entities -- as opposed to five or six that were required previously -- must now authorize contracts, in Russian, Turkmen, and English.

ASMABAT 08001079 002 OF 002

6. (C) COMMENT: Boeing was favored for many years because the company initiated a relationship with former president Niyazov soon after independence, and because Niyazov liked Boeing. Various companies have alleged that Berdimuhamedov does not have or take the time Niyazov did for business contracts, and many companies now find themselves waiting interminably long periods for the government to approve contracts. A Turkmenistan that is increasingly open to the world is also open to other business partners, and this is creating increased competition. The most visible of Niyazov’s old favorites, Group Chalik, lost most of its favor, and there are rumors that the government will get rid of French construction company Bouygues as soon as it can, as well. Post will raise Boeing’s plight with authorities. END COMMENT. CURRAN

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Diplomats Help Push Sales of Jetliners on the Global Market”
Tanzania and the Fight to Stop an Airbus Sale

Boeing executives, at times, are pressed by foreign government officials and airline executives to hire “agents” or other intermediaries to help deliver a sale. Typically, these agents ask for some kind of a commission to make introductions to officials running the competition. Boeing faced such a request in Tanzania in 2007, as it was bidding on a relatively small contract to modernize the Air Tanzania fleet. It was already concerned, as the bidding began, that AirBus had an inside track. Boeing officials refused to hire the agent and reported the request to the State Department. Air Tanzania was shut down by aviation safety authorities about a year after this exchange.

DATE 2007-09-13 11:25:00
SOURCE Embassy Dar Es Salaam
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

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1. (C) As Air Tanzania shops for new airplanes for its aging fleet, we remain troubled by separate press reports, quoting Air Tanzania leadership and most recently the Minister of Infrastructure, that a decision has been made in favor of Airbus. This decision would have been made without any serious negotiations with Boeing. We have actively engaged at the highest reaches of this government, and for the moment halted the rush to Airbus and opened a window that Boeing intends to exploit. Air Tanzania now seems to be seriously evaluating the leasing and sale options offered by Boeing. But we do not believe we are out of the woods, in view of early efforts to pressure Boeing to hire an “agent,” and subsequent rumors that China is tying aid to purchase of Airbuses in order to give business to the joint manufacturing facility being built in China. Ambassador Green raised MCC, the importance of transparency to the investment climate, and a level playing field for Boeing in his presentation of credentials to President Kikwete on September 12. Earlier the DCM had called on the Infrastructure Minister and spoken with a close advisor to the President underscoring the same points. We will continue to press hard not only on behalf of Boeing, but the importance of transparency and a level playing field to the positive investment climate Kikwete is working to create. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) Air Tanzania plans to replace its aging fleet with newer, more efficient aircraft, and has solicited proposals from Boeing and Airbus. In June 2007, Boeing submitted a request for advocacy through the Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration, and Ambassador Retzer, the DCM, and EconCouns met with Rob Faye, Regional Director of Sales for Boeing
Commercial Airplanes, on several occasions. Boeing’s early dealings with top officials of the airline beginning in June suggested to Post that the company’s fear of outside influence or corruption might be legitimate (ref tel).

3. (C) Subsequent to meetings with Faye, the DCM raised the issue of Air Tanzania’s dealings with Boeing and Airbus in conversations with a close advisor to President Jakaya Kikwete. The DCM specifically noted Air Tanzania Managing Director and CEO, David Mattaka’s unusual “suggestion” that Faye should contact a wealthy South Asian hotelier, who subsequently suggested to Faye that he would need his services to open the right doors in government. Faye flatly refused, responding that Boeing does not use “agents” in Tanzania or elsewhere. (Comment: “Agents” and steep “commissions” have been at the heart of several corruption scandals here, including a BAE radar deal in which the GOT paid a 31 percent commission to a Tanzanian agent, much of which ended up in Swiss bank accounts, according to a UK Parliamentary investigation. Despite the fact that the UK shared this evidence with Tanzania’s corruption board, no evident action has been taken. End Comment.) The presidential advisor later got back to the DCM, telling him that President Kikwete was “incensed” upon learning that senior Air Tanzania officials might be intending to profit personally from the deal.

4. (SBU) On August 9, Boeing’s Faye met with Maua Daftari, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, and Dr. Bartholomew Rufunjo, Director of Transport and Communications in the Ministry of Infrastructure (the Ministry that makes all financial decisions regarding Air Tanzania). Faye reported his meetings with both Daftari and Rufunjo were promising. Both officials mentioned more than once the importance of a fair and level acquisition process for Air Tanzania’s development. David Mattaka, CEO of Air Tanzania, went out of his way to tell Faye on August 10 that Air Tanzania did not use agents. Mattaka repeated this statement during a meeting between Faye and the Air Tanzania board of directors. Faye reported that it was apparent that there had been some communication with the Ministry, presumably from State House, to ensure there would be no “go-betweens” in Air Tanzania’s dealings with Boeing. On the sidelines, Mattaka mentioned to Faye that he thought the pressure was originating with the U.S. Embassy.

5. (U) Ambassador Retzer forcefully raised the issue of combating corruption in his last public speech before departing Post on August 31. On September 2, forty-eight hours after Retzer departed country, the Tanzanian press reported for the second time that Air Tanzania was in the process of procuring eight Airbus planes, and extensively quoted Tanzanian Minister of Infrastructure, Andrew Chenge. We did not view the timing of the second announcement -- on the heels of Retzer’s departure and before Ambassador Green had arrived and been credentialed -- as a coincidence.

6. (C) On September 7, the DCM and EconOff met with Minister Chenge. The DCM began by raising President Kikwete’s upcoming trip to the United States and his plan to take a large business delegation. Kikwete would be marketing Tanzania as a prime location to trade and invest. It was important, therefore, that a major U.S. corporation like Boeing compete on a level playing field with Airbus, so its message to the U.S. business community would echo Kikwete’s message. The DCM said Boeing and the Embassy had been confused by recent press reports regarding Air Tanzania’s acquisition of new aircraft, and asked Chenge to clarify the status of negotiations.

7. (C) Chenge said contrary to his purported statements to the Tanzanian press, no final decision had been made on whether Air Tanzania would acquire Airbus or Boeing airplanes. The first decision was what type of airplanes to buy, and Boeing was the obvious choice since Air Tanzania already owned and maintained several Boeing airplanes. However, the issue of financing was also a primary concern due to a lack of government funding for the new aircraft. He stated that he could say “with certainty” that no decision has been made, but his Ministry was “very cautious on how to proceed because (they) don’t have the money.” He said he understood Boeing could help open doors to financing possibilities, but “certain deadlines” needed to be met. The DCM stressed that regardless of the outcome, the Embassy wants to see that Air Tanzania is engaged in fair and transparent negotiations. He pointed out that Tanzania would benefit from giving Boeing the chance to underbid Airbus.

8. (C) The DCM ended the meeting by mentioning the upcoming vote on the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact for Tanzania, and the importance of transparency to sustaining any Compact that eventually would be signed. On the way out, Chenge’s staffer told the DCM that he was aware that Chenge had “misspoken” and been “misquoted” in the press, and that his office had already received several calls for clarification. (Comment: We think one of the calls to Chenge’s office may have come from State House. End Comment)
Comment
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9. (C) Although Air Tanzania is a small airline, looking to expand its fleet of two Boeing 737’s to a fleet of about 10 planes, this deal has the potential to result in USD 537 million in sales for Boeing. Boeing is ready to offer Air Tanzania a number of capacity-building services to enable the airline to better serve the Tanzanian public. More broadly, if done right, the deal can reinforce the impression that Tanzania is a promising place to invest. Done wrongly, it can reinforce impressions that have been building here for the past 18 months that this is a government without the political will to tackle senior-level corruption. To us, reinforcing the view that Tanzania is a positive place to invest is almost as important as ensuring one of America’s premier private sector “champions” is accorded the transparency and level playing field it is due. We remain concerned, however, in part due to rumors that the Chinese have tied aid to buying Airbus. We will continue to monitor this case closely, intervening decisively with the government when necessary. GREEN

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Diplomats Help Push Sales of Jetliners on the Global Market”
Sanctions Against Syria, and Blocking an Airbus deal

Sanctions the United States imposed on Syria in 2004, based on Syria’s support for terrorist groups in the Middle East, have made it impossible for the country to buy new Boeing jets to modernize its fleet of commercial jets. American officials have also moved to prevent Syria from leasing Airbus planes, as a way to enforce the sanctions. This cable shows how officials in Syria reacted after the United States blocked the lease of the Airbus planes.

DATE 2009-06-22 12:07:00

SOURCE Embassy Damascus

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET DAMASCUS 000429

NOFORN

DEPT FOR NEA/ELA, COMMERCE FOR CHRISTINO/SONDERMAN/JUST, NSC FOR SHAPIRO, PARIS FOR WALLER, LONDON FOR TSOU/SREEBNY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/21/2019 TAGS: EAIR, ECON, PREL, SY SUBJECT: CIVIL AVIATION: SYRIAN PEARL, SARG RATCHET UP CAMPAIGN AGAINST SANCTIONS

REF: A. MADRID 489 B. DAMASCUS 345 C. STATE 49690 D. STATE 47933 E. MADRID 439 F. DAMASCUS 286 G. DAMASCUS 279 H. 08 DAMASCUS 661

Classified By: Charge d’Affaires Maura Connelly, for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. The demise of the Syrian Pearl-Orion Air deal, due primarily to USG enforcement of sanctions, has been elevated to the highest levels in the SARG, with Syrian President Bashar al-Asad briefly raising the issue directly with SE Mitchell during their June 13 meeting, as outlined in official SARG press reports. The Spanish Ambassador in Damascus has been “called in” to discuss the issue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. EU interlocutors are asking why the USG chose enforcement against Syrian Pearl while ostensibly looking the other way when Cham Wings charter airline began operating with an MD-80 aircraft in 2008. The SARG reportedly detained the one aircraft that Spanish company Orion Air had delivered to Syrian Pearl under the original contract, and it also briefly detained its Spanish flight crew. Meanwhile, all sides are taking their story to the press, with Syrian Pearl running a full-page advertisement in four major newspapers blaming the U.S. “embargo” for interruptions in service, and vowing to lease new aircraft from “international” partners. In interviews with the Spanish press, Orion Air claimed the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism had advised the lease “breaks no international trade law,” and -- though having suspended its Syrian contract -- the company maintained that the lease arrangement does not constitute an export transaction. Separately, Syrian press reports indicate representatives of Airbus may have met with the Syrian Minister of Transportation in Paris recently, and Airbus may be preparing a formal request to Commerce for a license to sell aircraft to Syria. END SUMMARY.

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ASAD RAISES SYRIAN PEARL WITH SE MITCHELL
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2. (S/NF) During the June 13 meeting between Asad and SE Mitchell, the Syrian President briefly raised the issue of the U.S. Department of Commerce’s action against Orion Air of Spain which culminated in the termination of Orion’s contract with the start-up private airline, Syrian Pearl
3. (S/NF) Asad’s compliant, as outlined by official Syrian news reports after the meeting, has echoed loudly on the Damascus social circuit, where diplomats and Syrian business contacts have sought clarification and additional details regarding the U.S. action against Orion. One Syrian lawyer reportedly representing Syrian Pearl cornered Emboff at a chance encounter and complained bitterly about U.S. interference in Syrian affairs. Told the matter was simply a case of the U.S. government enforcing a law that had been on the books since 2004, the lawyer replied, “This shows you’re not really for establishing normal relations.” He added, “Obama can talk all he wants about engagement, but his policies are not different from (those of) Bush.”

SYRIAN PEARL LAUNCHES MEDIA CAMPAIGN

4. (SBU) Syrian Pearl Airlines hit the press this week, taking out a full-page advertisement in Al Watan, Al Baath, Tishreen and Al Thawra newspapers to apologize to its customers for the temporary suspension of flights “due to issues pertaining to the American embargo against Syria.” The ad reassures the Syrian public that the company “will continue to set up operation plans and programs” through “ongoing contacts with international companies to procure new replacement aircraft.” A separate article on the Syria Steps website calls on the SARG to re-examine the possibility of buying Russian aircraft, given that “the U.S. didn’t grant its approval to the Europeans to sell Airbus to Syria “despite the American and European détente with Syria.”

LOOKING FOR AIRCRAFT

5. (S/NF) EU contacts tell us that at least one European airline has been approached by Syrian Pearl to supply aircraft. Separately, we have heard reports that the Syrian Minister for Transport met in Paris recently with representatives of Airbus, and that the company may be readying a request to Commerce for a license to sell aircraft to either Syrian Air, Syrian Pearl, or both. Presumably, these anticipated deals are the fruit of the MOUs signed during French President Sarkozy’s September 2009 visit to Damascus.

ORION: CONTRACT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN EXPORT

6. (SBU) The Spanish company Orion is taking its side of the story to the media, as well. On June 17, Spanish news agency Efe reported that the SARG continued to detain the first aircraft delivered under the original Orion contract. The article quoted an Orion spokesman as saying that, though the U.S. Embassy in Madrid had warned the company that its contract with the SARG would violate U.S. sanctions law, Orion had decided to deliver the first of two planes to Syria on the advice of the Spanish Industry, Tourism and Trade Ministry, which had determined that the “sovereignty and territory” of the plane were Spanish, and that Orion would be “breaking no international law.” The Orion spokesman maintained the company had sought only to provide services to a Syrian airline, and that the contract with Syrian Pearl did not constitute a sale or export transaction “as the U.S. alleges.” (Note: Nevertheless, Orion suspended its contract with Syrian Pearl and has asked for the return of the aircraft. End note.) As an interesting aside, we have also heard that there may have been commercial tensions between Orion and Syrian Pearl in addition to the sanctions issue that made Orion want to back out.

EU: WHY PURSUE SYRIAN PEARL AND NOT CHAM WINGS?

7. (S/NF) Meanwhile, our EU interlocutors in Damascus have asked for background information on the ill-fated Syrian Pearl-Orion Air deal. They claim that the Spanish did not inform the EU of the ongoing situation, and that the EU Mission in Damascus only became aware of it last week when the SARG briefly detained the Spanish flight crew at Damascus International Airport. (According to the EU, the seven-person team has since been allowed to leave Syria -- albeit without their aircraft.)
8. (S/NF) Our EU contacts have inquired pointedly as to why the USG chose to pursue Syrian Pearl while ostensibly looking the other way in the earlier case of Cham Wings, a charter air company that uses an MD-80 to fly intermittently to various locations both in and outside of Syria. (Note: Post exchanged emails with the Department and with Commerce on the emergence of Cham Wings in 2008. End note.) Our interlocutors suggest Rami Makhlouf’s part ownership of Syrian Pearl could have motivated the USG to act, or that Cham Wings had somehow found a way to effectively use their Kuwaiti partner as a screen for their operations. We assured them the Syrian Pearl-Orion deal was pursued because the Department of Commerce considered the “wet” lease constituted an export of an aircraft with more than 10 percent American content, and that Cham Wings could be subject to the same enforcement in the future. We were also careful to point out that the Syrian Pearl issue is not/not a safety of flight issue, and therefore there is presently no waiver available for the export of this aircraft under the SAA.

SPANISH AMBASSADOR CALLED IN BY SARG

9. (S/NF) Lastly, the Spanish Ambassador in Damascus informed Pol/Econ Chief on July 16 that he was being “called in” by the SARG over the Syrian Pearl-Orion Air debacle. Post does not yet have a read-out on the meeting.

10. (S/NF) COMMENT: The Syrian Pearl issue remains very much in the headlines, and very much on the minds of SARG interlocutors, high-level business contacts and the general public. Confusion over the provisions of the SAA (including safety of flight exemptions), the (perhaps unrealistic) prospect of a new Presidential waiver for civil aviation exports, and lack of USG enforcement against earlier, high-profile aviation imports (Cham Wings) has contributed to misconceptions on all sides. The demise of the Syrian Pearl-Orion deal has potential to remain a major irritant in the U.S.-Syrian relationship in the medium term. In the short term, we continue to experience fallout from our EU (particularly Spanish) counterparts in Damascus, who are being raked over the coals by a very unhappy SARG. Separately, Washington may wish to prepare for a possible forthcoming request by Airbus to export aircraft to Syria. As Washington moves forward, it may be useful to know that Boeing is also reportedly interested in the Syrian market.

CONNELLY

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Diplomats Help Push Sales of Jetliners on the Global Market”
Blocking a Sale in Nepal That Was Headed to Airbus

American officials, for months in 2009, had been monitoring negotiations by Boeing to sell commercial jets to Nepal, and frequently expressed concern that Airbus had the advantage, because Airbus had submitted a much lower price for its two-airplane package. American officials, determined not to let Boeing lose the sale, identified individual officials in Nepal who were known to support the Boeing purchase, and then lobbied senior government officials to block the financing for the Airbus purchase. They argued that the long-term cost for the Boeing plane would be lower, because of its cheaper operating costs. The Nepal Finance Secretary, after the intervention by the State Department, agreed in February 2010 to block the financing, stalling the purchase of any Airbus planes and opening a chance for Boeing to win the deal. This is the final cable in a long string of exchanges, announcing that decision.

DATE 2010-02-24 12:46:00
SOURCE Embassy Kathmandu
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000163

SIPDIS SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2020 TAGS: PGOV, ECON, EAIR, PREL, NP SUBJECT: NEPAL: AIRBUS DEAL IN TROUBLE, EU LOBBIES HARD

REF: 09 KATHMANDU 1046 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge d' Affairs, a.i., Donald A. Camp. Reasons 1.4 (b /d).

1. (C) Summary. The Government of Nepal is unlikely to guarantee the Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) loan to purchase two Airbus aircraft, according to Finance Secretary Khanal, essentially killing the deal and reviving Boeing’s hopes to sell its aircraft to the NAC. The European Union continues to lobby aggressively for Airbus, most recently by sending a strongly-worded letter to the Prime Minister urging him to complete the Airbus purchase immediately (full text in para 8).

End Summary.

Finance Ministry Against Deal
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2. (C) During a February 22 meeting with Charge, Finance Secretary Rameshwor Khanal said the internal Finance Ministry committee reviewing the Nepal Airlines Corporation decision to purchase two Airbus aircraft -- a narrow- and wide-body -- had completed its work. While the committee report is not public, Khanal told Charge it concluded that the purchase of the Airbus aircraft, particularly the wide-body, “cannot be justified at the proposed price” (approximately USD 134 million).

3. (C) Khanal said that the Ministry of Finance decision would likely become public within ten days, after the committee makes some technical corrections in the report data. Based on this report, the Ministry of Finance would recommend against providing a sovereign loan guarantee for the Airbus purchase. (Note: Because of the NAC’s poor financial condition, it is unlikely to be able to raise sufficient funds privately to purchase the planes. End note.) The Ministry of Finance would instruct the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation to cancel the Nepal Airlines
Corporation procurement, and reopen the bidding, most likely for two narrow-body planes, which independent analysts believe are better suited for the NAC’s current and planned routes and financial situation. Noting that the NAC fleet currently has two Boeing 757 aircraft, Khanal said buying new Boeing planes is logical since the NAC could use its spare parts inventory and would not have to retrain the crews on new equipment.

4. (C) Charge thanked the Finance Secretary for the Ministry’s careful review of the NAC purchase and reiterated U.S. support for a transparent and fair procurement process. He noted Boeing is ready to provide new bids quickly if the NAC reopens bidding and does not believe the new procurement process will unnecessarily delay the delivery of new aircraft.

5. (C) Charge also raised the Nepal Airlines procurement with ForMin Sujata Koirala, who confined her response to the need for new planes quickly, which we read as support for Airbus.

EU Not Giving Up
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6. (C) In the face of growing concerns about the Airbus deal, the European Union sent a strongly-worded letter to Prime Minister Nepal on February 11, which was leaked to the press, urging the PM to complete the deal on schedule and to resist “undue pressure being used by opposing vested interest groups.” (Note: Post received a copy of the letter from a source in the PM’s office. End note.) The letter makes inaccurate statements, including the claim that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report does not challenge the “core” of the deal (whereas the PAC recommends against the purchase of the wide-body plane). It also claims that canceling the Airbus deal would undermine the confidence of foreign investors (whereas the suspected corruption surrounding the Airbus deal raises serious questions about Nepal’s foreign investment climate).

Comment
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7. (C) The Finance Secretary’s comments on the Airbus deal is very positive news for Boeing, but Post remains cautious. Powerful political forces, including Deputy Prime Minister B.K. Gachchhadar, strongly support the Airbus deal. A close Embassy contact on the PAC recently alleged that Gachchhadar offered him a bribe to support the deal, and even threatened the PM that he would pull his party (MPRF-D) out of government if the Airbus deal did not go through. Post will continue to reach out to key contacts to press for a transparent and fair process.

Text of EU Letter
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8. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT OF EU LETTER:

Regarding the acquisition process of two new aircraft by Nepal Airlines (NA)

The Heads of Mission of France, Great Britain, and the European Union delegation would like to draw the kind attention of the Honorable Prime Minister, Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal, and the Government of Nepal on the following points regarding the acquisition process of two new aircraft from Airbus by Nepal Airlines.

Airbus Industries has won an international open tender by sealed bid for the purchases of one narrow body and one wide body aircraft by Nepal Airlines.

Nepal urgently needs new aircraft and better access to the European market. In this context, the choice of a wide-body aircraft makes perfect sense and will be both instrumental and indispensable to stop the loss of market share of Nepal Airlines on international routes. The rationale for buying one narrow body and one wide body aircraft have been examined by Nepal’s best trained professional minds.

The irregularities listed by the Public Account Committee (PAC) do not concern the core of the deal. The PAC has indeed not been able to list precise irregularities, which implies that no serious infringement has been found. Moreover, the PAC has actually recommended proceeding immediately with the acquisition of new aircraft: “After taking into accounts all the study till
to date and after discussion with entire stakeholders, it is recommended to proceed immediately for purchasing new aircraft for NA taking into account the need and capacity.”

The Envoys would welcome legal action against the guilty parties as warranted by law if irregularities are confirmed, but to jeopardize the acquisition of this basis is out of proportion. It is also self damaging for Nepal where having a secure business operating environment to give confidence to foreign investors is of great importance.

The tendering process has been exemplary so far. Airbus has clearly and convincingly won with the best possible offer for Nepal as it also has in so many other countries.

The Envoys have been made aware that undue pressure is being used by opposing vested interests groups and strongly urge the Government not to give in to pressure and to complete this deal as planned in accordance with the signed contract.

Kathmandu, 11 February 2010
Political Fights Over Fighter Jets in Brazil

Sales of fighter jets and other military planes to foreign nations always involve the United States, and more often than not, there is a political element to these transactions too. Brazil, for the last several years, has been preparing to make one of the world’s largest purchases of new fighter jets, considering offers from Boeing and its F-18 Super Hornet fighter, Saab’s Gripen, made in Sweden, and Dassault’s Rafale, made in France. The deal would be worth several billion dollars, with the order ranging from 36 to as many as 100 jets. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, then president of Brazil, made clear his preference for the French offer even before the formal technical evaluation was complete, following a visit to Brazil by the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy. A final decision has now been put off until a new president arrives in office in Brazil.

DATE 2010-01-05 19:40:00

SOURCE Embassy Brasilia

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL BRASILIA 000003

SIPDIS STATE FOR T, PM AND WHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/05 TAGS: PREL, ETTC, MASS, BR SUBJECT: FX2 at the End of 2009

REF: BRASILIA 1124; IIR 6 809 0156 10

CLASSIFIED BY: Lisa Kubiske, Charge d'Affaires a.i.; REASON: 1.4(D)

1. (C) As 2009 comes to end, Brazil’s FX2 competition remains undecided. It had been expected that President Lula would make a decision before the end of the year, so as to be able to complete the sale during his tenure. Practically speaking, however, even if a Presidential decision were to be made immediately, the time needed for contract negotiation and appropriation of funds means that the final decision to buy the planes will fall to the next President in 2011. Embassy contacts in the Ministry of External Relations and Ministry of Defense believe that Defense Minister Jobim will meet with Lula later in January to try to make a decision.

SEPTEMBER: RAFALE PREFERRED

2. (C) Lula has made no secret of his preference for the Dassault Rafale, announcing during President Sarkozy’s September 7 visit (ref a) that he planned to negotiate the purchase with France, before even reading the Brazilian Air Force’s (BRAF) technical evaluation. During the following three months, it was clear that Lula had instructed his government, including Jobim, to focus on making the deal with France work. In September, Lula told the Brazilian press that negotiations with France would focus on attaining a price for the aircraft similar to what Boeing and Saab were asking. (Reportedly, Dassault’s best offer was 40% higher.) Despite another Sarkozy visit to Brazil in November and Jobim’s later stop in Paris, the French were not able to meet Brazilian requests for a lower price, but their lack of responsiveness (ref b) did not seem to affect the Brazilian preference. Initial statements in September from Lula and FM Amorim attempted to portray the French as somehow offering a superior level of technology transfer as justification for the higher price, but as details emerged from the technical evaluation process, it became clear that all three competitors were generally meeting BRAF tech transfer requirements.
3. (C) During October and November, contacts by Embassy officials and Boeing representatives were received politely, but with little real interest as the focus remained on the French. In recent weeks, however, there has been a notable change from the Minister of Defense. Beginning with A/S Valenzuela’s December 14 meeting with Jobim (reported septel), there has been renewed interest in the USG/Boeing proposal. While Jobim repeated concerns about “bad precedents” for policies regarding transfer of U.S.-origin technology (in reality complaints about export licensing procedures), he said he understood that the USG had a new approach and was interested in Boeing’s industrial cooperation offer. Boeing has strengthened its case by promoting its new “Global Super Hornet” initiative, which would transfer important elements of production of all F/A 18 aircraft (including those for the U.S. military) to Brazil. By globalizing Super Hornet production and including Brazil in the process, Boeing not only is in position to create and maintain more jobs in Brazil, but can assuage Brazilian paranoia about theoretical USG cutoffs of fighter supply by pointing out that any such cutoff would affect the U.S. Navy as well. In a recent interview with the newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo, Jobim was careful not to commit, mentioning the “strategic alliance” with France but also noting that cost, technology transfer and overall aircraft capability were important.

4. (C) Along with the revival of Boeing’s hopes, the Swedish Gripen remains a strong competitor. As noted in ref b, many Brazilians perceive it to be an attractive alternative to the Rafale because it has the lowest sticker price. Saab’s plan to co-develop the new generation Gripen with Brazil has also garnered support in Brazil’s aviation industry among those who believe that such development will increase local aircraft design capabilities.

Jobim, however, has been openly dismissive of the Swedes on the basis of the Gripen’s lesser capability and because the “New Generation” variant offered to Brazil does not yet exist. A recent story in Isto C magazine with sourcing to the BRAF pointed out that military aircraft development programs normally run over deadlines and budgets, negating the Gripen’s purported price advantage.

5. (C) COMMENT. While the Rafale’s high price and doubts about the Gripen’s development would seem to make the Super Hornet the obvious choice, the fact remains that Lula is reluctant to buy an American aircraft. It is possible that the renewed interest in the USG offer is merely a ploy to gain leverage on the French or that the delay in the decision is intended to allow Dassault to find a way to lower its price. In Mission’s view, the chance to win the FX2 competition is real. We know that the Super Hornet received the most favorable technical evaluation from the BRAF and is the choice of the operators. We have also been successful in answering most of the doubts raised about USG technology transfer policies, particularly with the technical evaluation team. There remains, however, the formidable obstacle of convincing Lula. Our goal now should be to make sure that Jobim has as strong a case as possible to take to Lula in January. Mission recommends the following steps:

B7 Continue to underline full USG support in all high-level contacts with Brazil. As Mission has pointed out previously, repeated assurances from President Obama to Lula in the course of their normal contacts are the single most effective means of making our case.

B7 Use Ambassador-Designate Shannon’s initial contacts with the Brazilian leadership to make the point that we have worked hard to ensure we have the best offer.

B7 Maintain our public affairs campaign to highlight that not only has the USG completed its approval of tech transfer, but Boeing is confident enough in the offer to be prepared to shift part of production (including hundreds of jobs) to Brazil.

B7 Coordinate with Boeing to ensure the advantages of the Global Super Hornet program are made known to the Brazilian Congress and media. KUBISKE
Lobbying Plan for Fighter Jet Contest in Brazil

Boeing had submitted its final offer as of June 2009 for the fighter jet contract in Brazil, but officials in the Obama administration realized that they still needed to play their part. In this cable, the State Department discusses a plan for various members of Mr. Obama’s cabinet to lobby for the sale, which still has not been awarded.

DATE 2009-06-22 16:27:00

SOURCE Embassy Brasilia

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL BRASILIA 000795

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA AND PM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/22/2019 TAGS: MASS, PREL, BR SUBJECT: INFLUENCING BRAZIL’S LEADERS TO BUY U.S. FIGHTERS

REF: A. BRASILIA 634 B. BRASILIA 730 C. BRASILIA 659

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CLIFFORD SOBEL. REASON 1.4(d)

1. (C) With the June 10 submission of Boeing’s best and final offer for Brazil’s four billion dollar FX2 fighter competition, it is now up to Brazil’s government to decide on an aircraft. A decision from the National Defense Council (President Lula and key Ministers) is expected at the beginning of August. Based on feedback received from Air Force sources, Boeing believes that it leads in terms of technical evaluations and is working with the U.S. Congress on a solution to Brazil’s financing concerns (ref c). Once the Brazilian Air Force completes its technical evaluation of the proposals, its recommendation will be forwarded to the political leadership by July 12, where intensive high-level lobbying from Boeing’s competitors have left the Super Hornet at a disadvantage. To counter this and remove any lingering doubts about USG backing for Boeing’s proposal, post recommends the following urgent steps:

-- The single most important action to maximize the chances success will be for President Obama to raise the sale with President Lula at the G8/G5 Summit in Italy. Lula will have the final decision, and the President’s strong relationship with him could prove decisive.

-- Secretary Clinton could call Foreign Minister Amorim to highlight the importance of the sale for strengthening our partnership with Brazil and the long term benefits to both economies.

-- Secretary Gates could call Defense Minister Jobim to underline the importance of the sale and the benefits for Brazil’s defense industry to a partnership with Boeing. This call should take place before Jobim departs to spend most of July on vacation in France.

-- There is still doubt within the Air Force that the State Department wil ultimately agree to the transfer of technology as proposed by Boeing. Under Secretary Burns gave verbal assurances of this to visiting Brazilian legislators June 2, but these have not reached the Air Force, whose commander, Brig. Saito has asked for such written assurances previously. A letter from Burns restating these points would remove any remaining doubts.

2. (C) While these efforts are underway, post also recommends that the advocacy letter currently
being developed be completed and forwarded to Brazil to complement the above steps. Given the
importance of personal contacts to Brazilians, the letter by itself is not enough, but it will
give substantial evidence of USG support for the sale.

3. (C) There has been an intense, coordinated French government lobbying effort. President
Sarkozy has raised the sale several times with Lula. The French Minister of Defense and
Presidential Military Advisor have established a direct line of communications (without going
through the French Embassy) with Jobim. Jobim was recently wined and dined extensively at the
Paris Air Show and has accepted an invitation to be an official guest of the French MOD at
Bastille Day. SOBEL

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Diplomats Help Push Sales of Jetliners on the Global Market”
Orchestrating a Boeing Sale to Jordan

In November 2004, as Jordan considered modernizing its fleet of commercial jets, King Abdullah II made clear that he had a “political” preference for buying American -- meaning Boeing jets. In this cable, Boeing officials alongside officials from the State Department met with King Abdullah to pitch the Boeing planes. Boeing’s sales team includes Thomas R. Pickering, the long-time former State Department diplomat and United States ambassador to the United Nations, who in 2000 became the head of Boeing’s international relations effort. The king made clear that while he had a political preference for Boeing, it was in the “strategic” interest of Jordan -- meaning its relations with Europe -- to also order at least some Airbus planes. Royal Jordan has announced plans to add 11 Boeing 787 Dreamliners to its fleet, including three announced this year, a major order for Boeing.

DATE 2004-11-09 12:17:00

SOURCE Embassy Amman

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL AMMAN 009085

SIPDIS

USDOC FOR 4520/ITA/MAC/ONE/PTHANOS DEPT FOR EB FOR WAYNE/MERMOUD


REF: AMMAN 07528

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with visiting Boeing officials, King Abdullah reiterated his political commitment to buy Boeing aircraft and his strategic interest in a mixed fleet of Boeing and Airbus aircraft. The possible options include a purchase of four 737s by merging transition start-up costs with those of Iraqi Airways, if Iraq buys Boeing; in a second alternative, Jordan might purchase two to four 717s targeting tourist travelers. A third scenario includes possible purchase of 7E7s in 2007/2008. Financing remains a challenge. Although the details of some of these proposals remain sketchy, the King’s visit to the U.S. in early December provides a golden opportunity for top-level advocacy for Boeing. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On November 1, visiting Boeing officials Tom Pickering, Lee Munson, and John Craig, accompanied by Charge, called on King Abdullah to discuss the latest on possible purchases of Boeings. Royal Court Minister Samir Rifai was also present and Prince Feisal joined the meeting in progress.

3. (C) The King showed he was very absorbed by the ideas offered by Boeing and reiterated both a political commitment to a Boeing purchase and his own strategic interest in a mixed fleet. By the end of the meeting, there were three possibilities on the table for further discussion.

4. (C) Under the first proposal, Royal Jordanian would buy four 737s and share the start-up and
transition costs with Iraq Airways, assuming Iraq goes with Boeing. A key element would have Iraq purchasing a flight simulator and putting it in Jordan, so its pilots could be brought to Amman for training, and the Jordanians could train for free. By sharing these costs, Boeing estimated that Jordan’s start-up costs could be cut from $25 million to $10 million. The King was very interested in this possibility, particularly in trilateral cooperation with Iraq. (Pickering later conveyed to Charge that Allawi confirmed to him an Iraqi intent to purchase Boeing and agreement in principle to include Jordan in the deal. Pickering did not discuss financing issues for a theoretical Iraq deal with Charge.)

5. (C) However, Prince Feisal interjected that the Airbus deal was already done (although admittedly not finally signed). He was loath to back out at the last minute, after all the ups and downs of the negotiations. He reminded Boeing that the King had very much wanted to sign with Boeing, but the inability to close the financing gap—which Pickering confirmed still existed—had made Jordan turn back to Airbus after the deadline set by Boeing for the deal had passed.

6. (C) Although Feisal did not identify a market need for both 737s and Airbus, the King seemed intrigued. If Jordan’s overall market share expanded because of growth in the tourist sector, the market could evolve and make a 737 purchase worthwhile. In the end, the King and Feisal agreed they would be happy to look at any proposal for the 737s, but preferably before the Airbus deal was to be signed. Prince Feisal and Royal Court Minister Samir Rifai are to be the follow-up points of contact.

7. (C) Both the King and Prince Feisal emphasized that their immediate interest with Boeing was to purchase two to four 717s, as part of their strategy to promote tourism from areas within the 1500 to 1800 nautical mile range. Russia and Eastern Europe were particular targets.

8. (C) There was a general discussion of a purchase of 7E7s for 2007/2008, but there were no specifics.

9. (C) COMMENT: After the meeting, the Boeing representatives concluded that they saw no immediate need for USG advocacy beyond what has already been done, but they promised to keep the Charge informed. Embassy will continue to follow up with the Jordanians at the ministerial level. The King will be visiting Washington in early December and that will provide the U.S. with another opportunity to promote Boeing. Prior to the visit, we will need to know from Boeing what exactly it has in mind for us to advocate. In any case, further flexibility on financing on Boeing’s part would probably open the door a bit wider on this deal, if indeed the door is actually ajar.

11. (U) Baghdad minimize considered. HALE
Starting Off the Sales Pitch in Jordan

Airbus had submitted an offer that was much less expensive than Boeing’s. But these conversations in February 2004 show how directly linked commercial jet sales and political considerations can become, as King Abdullah II of Jordan looks for ways to justify the purchase of the Boeing jets despite the higher costs and American officials intensify their lobbying efforts, including enlisting members of Congress, to get the sale completed.

DATE 2004-02-26 12:24:00

SOURCE Embassy Amman

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CO N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 001471

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN STATE ALSO FOR EB/CBA - F. MERMOUD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/26/2014 TAGS: EAIR, BEXP, ETRD, PREL, JO SUBJECT: UPDATE ON BOEING

REF: 02/24/04 FAX FROM NEA/ARN

Classified By: AMBASSADOR EDWARD W. GNEHM. REASONS 1.5 (B,D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: In several conversations during the past 10 days, King Abdullah told the Ambassador that, even though the latest Airbus offer was better than Boeing’s, he intended to make a “political” decision to have Royal Jordanian buy Boeing aircraft. Several recent developments, including a message from the King through a senior and reliable messenger, imply some vacillation in the King’s resolve. RJ Board on February 22 after lengthy debate decided that RJ should lease rather than purchase new aircraft. Influential brother of the King, Prince Faisal, reportedly believes Airbus’s offer is so good that it deserves serious consideration. And finally, the date for a decision -- originally according to the King to be in February -- is now unlikely before his return to Jordan March 8. Unfortunately, he spends the week before that in London, Paris, Berlin, and Dublin where we can assume he will come under intense pressure to decide in favor of Airbus. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) Only two board members voted against a recommendation by the board on February 22 to go only with a lease arrangement, according to reliable sources. They were reportedly under pressure to make the fiscally conservative decision. The Boeing deal was considered to be beyond the GOJ’s resources. Prince Faisal, who has previously leaned toward Boeing, reportedly also is now thinking that the latest Airbus offer is too good to pass up.

3. (C) The King, in multiple conversations with the Ambassador in the past 10 days, was clearly leaning in favor of the Boeing sale. He referred to difficult conversations with the British in which he told them directly that the UK did not provide Jordan with USD 700 million when they were in need. “That counted for something.” The King has continued to ask for additional U.S. efforts to cover the “gap”, or the difference between their cost estimates of an Airbus and a Boeing purchase. Both he and Prince Faisal were saying 10 days ago that the GOJ’s budget would be used to cover the gap if that was necessary. This issue continues to be raised, most recently by Finance Minister Abu Hammour with Treasury U/S Taylor earlier this week. Subsequently, the King used a trusted interlocutor to convey to the Embassy, after he departed for Asia, that he remained under intense pressure to buy Airbus and the “gap” remained a large concern. Incredibly, the interlocutor suggested that we approach the Saudis or Libyans to make a financial
contribution toward this sale.

4. (C) Ref letter in support of Boeing from influential members of Congress just arrived. We believe it will have a favorable impact in support of the Boeing offer. Embassy has forwarded the letter to the King’s delegation, now traveling in Malaysia.

5. (C) COMMENT: In our estimation, the King is vacillating in his resolve to go with Boeing. This will only get worse with his travel to Europe this coming week. We believe the letter from Congress will be meaningful but not sufficient to counter the European pressure the King will soon encounter. As to our recommendation on what should be done, in truth the King needs to receive a high-level phone call from Washington reinforcing the President’s previously expressed desire -- repeated in the Secretary’s letter -- urging the King to buy Boeing. GNEHM

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Diplomats Help Push Sales of Jetliners on the Global Market”
A Close Call With “Fahrenheit 9/11”

Under the Bush administration in 2004, American diplomats reported what they called a “potential fiasco”: that New Zealand’s environment minister might host a showing of Michael Moore’s anti-Bush documentary, “Fahrenheit 9/11.”

DATE 2004-07-30 05:53:00

SOURCE Embassy Wellington

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL WELLINGTON 000647

SIPDIS

NSC FOR MGREEN

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/ANP

EO 12958 DECL: 07/30/2014

TAGS PREL, PGOV, NZ

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND MINISTER HOSTS MIKE MOORE’S

“FAHRENHEIT 9/11” FUNDRAISER (ALMOST)

Classified By: DCM David R. Burnett

1. (SBU) Embassy Wellington learned July 30 that GNZ Cabinet Minister for the Environment Marian Hobbs was reportedly hosting a special screening of Michael Moore’s controversial movie “Fahrenheit 9/11” as a local Labour Party fundraising event. DCM contacted the Prime Minister’s office to ask whether it could shed some light on the matter and was told by PM office staff that they were not aware of the issue but would look into it. DCM then contacted Minister Hobbs’ office but the Minister’s office declined to make her available to discuss the matter. Hobbs’ staff later informed Embassy that Hobbs would not be hosting the fundraiser. However, she would be attending the event.

2. (C) COMMENT: There’s a reason this particular Minister is nicknamed “Boo Boo” Hobbs. That said, it is probable that this potential fiasco may only have been averted because of our phone calls - it is apparent to us that neither the Minister nor anyone else in the Labour government seems to have thought there was anything wrong with a senior Minister hosting such an event. Ambassador will use a scheduled meeting with the Prime Minister to tell Clark of the near instantaneous press queries for USG comment in this matter and remind her that we would really rather not get dragged into internal NZ political issues, such as Ministerial fundraising events for Clark’s Labour Party. Swindells
Threats and Hazards to Americans Abroad

A sample issue of a classified internal State Department publication, the Diplomatic Security Daily, that reports on hazards and threats facing diplomats and other Americans around the world.

DATE 2009-06-29 16:59:00

SOURCE Secretary of State

CLASSIFICATION SECRET//NOFORN

SECRET STATE 067105

NOFORN


Classified By: Derived from Multiple Sources

SECRET//FGI//NOFORN

Declassify on: Source marked 25X1-human, Date of source: June 27, 2009


2. (U) Iraq - Paragraphs 7-11

3. (U) Significant Events - Paragraphs 12-23

4. (U) Key Concerns - Paragraphs 24-43

5. (U) Cyber Threats - Paragraphs 44-57

6. (U) Suspicious Activity Incidents - Paragraphs 58-64

7. (U) Iraq

8. (S//NF) Alleged plans by various insurgent groups to conduct attacks during anticipated U.S. military withdrawal from urban areas: According to recent multiple source reports, various insurgent groups and militias intend on attacking multiple venues throughout Iraq in anticipation of U.S. military forces withdrawal from urban areas. Specific targets mentioned included the International Zone (IZ), Victory Base Complex, joint security stations, and various forward operating bases in Baghdad and in Maysan Province (southern Iraq). Allegedly, insurgent groups also are prepared to target key infrastructure, such as bridges and major supply routes used by Coalition forces (CF) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) convoys. According to one source, an unidentified group had access to a large tank of chlorine, 16 V-8 rockets, and three torpedoes which were supposedly recovered by the CF and ISF. The reports mentioned the attacks would commence on or about July 1. The Government of Iraq is anticipating the offensive and has placed ISF units on alert and cancelled all leave effective June 28.

9. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA would like to note the series of reports are consistent with other recent threat reporting indicating the possibility of insurgent groups and militias preparing to increase attacks in anticipation of troop withdrawal from urban areas. It is possible that
extremist-affiliated groups would seek to target the IZ and the Victory Base Complex, as the venues are symbolic of the U.S. diplomatic and military presence in Iraq. It is also plausible the groups may surmise that a large attack against CF troops in these areas would be ideal, as it would serve as propaganda for them, allowing them to take credit for driving out “occupying forces.”

10. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA would also highlight the allegation of the existence of the weapons cache, as the materials could possibly be used as components for improvised rocket-assisted munitions or an improvised explosive device (IED). According to the Multi-National Forces in Iraq Combined Intelligence Operations Cell, the first documented chlorine attack occurred in al-Anbar Province (western Iraq) on October 21, 2006, and the first documented chlorine vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) in the Baghdad area occurred in Taji on February 28, 2007. Despite the claims by insurgent groups and militias of chlorine-related attacks, their incident rates remain low and inconsistent. While DS/TIA/ITA cannot corroborate the veracity of the recent threat reporting, overall, there is nothing to suggest that the intention to attack the U.S. presence in Iraq will subside once a military troop withdrawal is completed. (Appendix sources 1-7)

11. (SBU) Indirect fire (IDF) of unknown size was launched against the IZ in Baghdad at 9:22 p.m. on June 24. The IDF impacted in the river approximately 250 meters south of the U.S. Embassy compound. No injuries or damages were reported. (RSO TOC Baghdad Spot Report)

12. (U) Significant Events

13. (C) WHA Honduras - Honduran military forces arrested President Manuel Zelaya June 28 according to orders issued by the National Congress and the Supreme Court of Honduras. Zelaya was taken to a local air force base and flown to Costa Rica. Emergency Action Committee (EAC) Tegucigalpa subsequently met to discuss the ramifications of the seizure of the president by host-cost country military forces. The RSO noted the general climate in the capital was calm; however, a standfast order was issued, and additional security measures were implemented. The Embassy released a Warden Message regarding the actions against Zelaya and urged AmCits to remain in the residences or hotels for the day.

14. (C) Later in the day, Congress officially named Roberto Micheletti interim president. The U.S. Ambassador gave a press conference outside the Embassy; he insisted that President Zelaya was the only democratically elected president of the country and urged that freedom of expression and circulation be restored. He also demanded the release of those government officials said to be in military custody. The EAC reconvened to assess the situation. Protest activity has centered around the presidential palace, some roads in the capital were blocked, and there were some troops on the street. However, traffic flow was reported normal in most of the city. Authorized Departure for family members was discussed, but not warranted at this time. Embassy personnel were advised to remain in their homes for the rest of the day and to limit their movements today, June 29. All Peace Corps volunteers have been accounted for and are on standfast. Post will be open today for emergency services only. The EAC will continue monitoring events in-country and provide updated information as available. (Tegucigalpa Spot Report; telcon; Warden Message; Appendix sources 8-10)

15. (SBU) EUR Germany - A Local Guard Force (LGF) member of U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt discovered two suspicious cases with protruding wires June 26 while on foot patrol in the clustered housing area. The guard notified his supervisor, and the area and two nearby apartment buildings were evacuated. Responding police requested canine and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) support. After the EOD team arrived, a local telecom technician, who had been working nearby, arrived at the scene and claimed the unattended cases; the technician had inadvertently left the cases. After further investigation and corroboration with the technician, police declare the area safe. (RSO Frankfurt Spot Report)

16. (SBU) AF Liberia - Two acts of vandalism were reported to U.S. Embassy Monrovia on the night of June 27. One took place at the residence of the chief of the DoD Office of Security Cooperation, approximately 2.5 miles from Post, where graffiti was spray painted on the perimeter wall stating, “COL THE WAR HAS JUST BEGAN.” The second incident occurred at the facility of a USAID-funded project, approximately 1.5 miles from the Embassy, where the messages “INTERCON MUST LEAVE NOW, TAKE INT” and “DANGER” were spray painted on the compound wall. The RSO assesses these incidents are consistent with the pattern of threats and intimidation used by dismissed Embassy guards to obtain a favorable settlement with their former employer through the Liberian Ministry of Labor. (RSO Monrovia Spot Report)

17. (SBU) Mauritania - U.S. Embassy Nouakchott received a credible threat June 27 regarding a
kidnapping against an American in the capital sometime during the night (NFI). The RSO considers the information credible and made notifications to staff to assure that all official Americans were accounted for. All residential LGF posts were manned, and radio checks were increased. Post also issued a Warden Message advising AmCits in-country of the threat. Please see the Key Concerns section for further information. (RSO Nouakchott Spot Report)

18. (C//NF) Mauritania - EAC Nouakchott met June 26 to discuss developments surrounding the murder of an unofficial American on June 23. Members were updated on the investigative progress of local authorities. The EAC reviewed the U.S. Embassy’s tripwires for consideration of Authorized Departure and/or drawdown and determined there was insufficient information at this time to recommend either action. EAC members were reminded of the importance of random arrival arrivals at Post (effective June 25) along with other augmented security measures.

19. (S//NF) The EAC reconvened June 28, and members were introduced to FBI assets assigned to investigate the AmCit’s murder with host-country law enforcement personnel. Members welcomed the team and support their efforts on the investigation while in-country. Members also discussed the credible kidnapping threat against an AmCit in-country and reviewed the enhanced security measures already in place. Post issued a Consular short message system alert to the American community advising of the threat. The EAC will continue to review all threat information as it becomes available, while supporting the ongoing murder investigation, and the EAC will reconvene as needed. (Appendix sources 11-12)

20. (SBU) Sudan Update - On June 24, verdicts were issued in the trial of the five Sudanese men charged with the January 1, 2008, murder of U.S. Embassy Khartoum employees John Granville and Abdelrahman Abbas. Four of the defendants were found of guilty of intentional killing and sentenced to death by hanging. The fifth defendant was found guilty on weapons charges and sentenced to two years in prison, including credit for time served since his January 2008 arrest. (Khartoum 0790)

21. (SBU) The Gambia - EAC Banjul met June 23 for its monthly meeting. It was determined that the recent activity in Tehran, Iran, should not present any additional danger for U.S. personnel or citizens in-country; however, the EAC agreed U.S. Embassy staff must be more diligent in practicing common-sense security measures. EAC members deemed Post’s current security posture is sufficient. (Banjul 0190)

22. (S//NF) NEA Yemen - EAC Sana’a met June 28 to discuss a write-in threat concerning a VBIED attack against the U.S. Embassy planned for today, June 29. The threat was traced to Algeria, and, although such threats are considered relatively common, Post officials are taking the threat seriously. Members agreed that Post’s current security upgrades were sufficient to deter and, if need be, withstand an attack; however, members deemed it would be prudent to request additional security from the Republic of Yemen Government at Post’s perimeter, in light of the approaching July 4 holiday. Please see the Key Concerns section for further details. (Appendix source 13)

23. (C) SCA Bangladesh - U.S. Embassy Dhaka officials met with the secretary of Home Affairs to discuss concerns over an uptick in crimes directed against foreigners in Dhaka’s Diplomatic Enclave. The secretary stated the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) had increased the police presence in the enclave May 7, when threat letters were sent to several diplomatic missions. Post officials will continue to monitor the situation and keep pressure on the GoB to provide adequate security to the U.S. Mission. (Appendix source 14)

24. (U) Key Concerns

25. (S//NF) AF Mauritania - AQIM threat to kidnap American citizen: According to the Spanish National Intelligence Service (CNI), an unidentified source for the CNI service center stated al-Qa’ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) planned to kidnap an unidentified AmCit in Nouakchott during the evening of June 27. According to the report’s context statement, a CNI official provided the information during the course of a routine liaison meeting. There are no additional details on this information, and the report’s originators are unable to assess the reliability of the ultimate source(s) of the information. In addition, it is not known what, if any, vetting or validation procedures the Spanish service may use to evaluate its sources. In separate reporting, AQIM, as of late June, had sent three unidentified members to Mauritania from northern Mali to conduct operations against government interests in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, according to the Mauritanian External Intelligence Service. It was unknown, according to the Mauritanian service, whether AQIM intended to attack Mauritanian and/or foreign government facilities in those cities. Separately, AQIM Tariq Ibn Ziyad battalion leader ‘Abd al-Hamid (Abu Zaid), as of late June, had delayed an order for four men to travel to Nouakchott to conduct
unspecified operations, according to the Mauritanian service. DS/TIA/ITA notes the latest threat information follows last week’s killing of an American in Nouakchott and the possible involvement of AQIM. (Appendix sources 15-16)

26. (S//NF) Nigeria - Extremists believed to be planning a massive terrorist attack: (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) Tearline states, “Unspecified extremist groups, suspected to be operating in concert with Nigerian Shi’ites, Salafiya, or Muhammad Yusuf’s Nigerian Taliban are reportedly planning to launch a massive surprise attack on some piece of critical infrastructure or against high-profile targets within Nigeria. Probable targets of this attack include top Nigerian Government officials or security agents. Members of the general public, who might be opposed to the attackers’ doctrines, were also believed to be possible targets. This planned attack is reportedly aimed at sparking sectarian clashes across Nigeria.”

27. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA cannot immediately corroborate the current threat with additional intelligence. While no connection can be made between this threat and previous reports, DS/TIA/ITA is concerned about recent activity surrounding extremists associated with the Nigerian Taliban.

28. (S//NF) A well-trained veteran Chadian extremist, Abu-Mahjin (Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) number 24356378), who has limited ties to al-Qa’ida associates, recently traveled to Nigeria. He may be planning to conduct or facilitate a terrorist operation. Indeed, tearline from May 1 claimed, “An Islamic extremist named Abu-Muhjin has recently been in northeast Nigeria. It is likely that he will be joined by other Islamic extremists in the coming weeks.” More recent tearline stated, “Nigerian-based probable Chadian extremist Abu-Mahjin is keen to obtain more funds in connection with some sort of nefarious activity (possibly terrorism related) he is engaged in. However, it is not clear when he will receive this additional finance.” Little more is known about Abu-Mahjin’s apparent efforts to organize a near-term operation.

29. (S//NF) Though neither the Nigerian Taliban nor its more militant subset -- Tanzim al-Qa’ida group -- has ever attacked Western interests, they have discussed targeting foreign embassies in the past. In 2007, they reportedly plotted to attack the U.S., British, and Israeli embassies in Abuja, according to a single source that remains unsubstantiated. (Appendix sources 17-19)

30. (C//NF) NEA Algeria/Yemen - Unsubstantiated threat claiming suicide bombing against U.S. embassies: On June 26, a write-in to a USG website provided a message involving an unsubstantiated threat to U.S. embassies in Algiers, Algeria, and Sana’a, Yemen. The message was posted in Arabic and appeared to originate in Algeria. The writer warned of a “big attack against your embassies in Algeria and Yaman by suicide car on 29/06/2009” and claimed to be an agent of the Algerian Intelligence Service. The writer provided an apparent telephone number for confirming his information and warned, “The second attack what you will see it is in Hassi Messaud in Sahara by a big number of terrorists.” The report’s originators note that they have no further information to corroborate the information, and the source may have intended to annoy, mislead, or disrupt rather than to provide legitimate information. The originators further note that the vast majority of such information is not true, but, since volunteers have provided authentic leads on occasion, the information is provided for evaluation purely due to its threat content. (Appendix source 28)

31. (S//NF) Yemen - Al-Qa’ida possibly planning Embassy attacks: (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) According to tearline information, “Saudi authorities learned in late June that al-Qa’ida may be planning an attack on Western and Middle Eastern embassies in Yemen. There was no additional information on the timing or exact location of the planned attack.”

32. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA notes this report is likely related to recent information provided by a Yemeni security official in late June regarding possible unspecified al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) attacks against the embassies of the U.S, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and unnamed European nations in Sana’a. No further information was provided on this general threat report.

33. (S//NF) DS/TIA/ITA also notes the continuing AQAP threat to Western and host-nation interests both in Sana’a and throughout Yemen. Previous AQAP attacks illustrate a willingness and capability to target Western citizens and diplomatic facilities, highlighted by the brazen attack against U.S. Embassy Sana’a in mid-September 2008. The lack of host-nation political will to combat AQAP contributes to an extremely permissive operating environment for extremist elements, suggesting threat reporting against U.S. and other foreign interests in Yemen will continue in both the near and medium term. (Appendix sources 21-22)
34. (S//NF) SCA Afghanistan - Threat to unspecified American in Kandahar: As of late June, Kandahar Taliban members Sadiq, Mullah Hamdullah, and Qari Yousef intended to kidnap an unspecified American who travels from Kandahar Airfield to work in Kandahar city to hold for ransom. The kidnappers planned to use a local Afghan who the American trusted to place a substance in his food to render him unconscious. Hamdullah, a.k.a. Bari Alai, worked under the command of Mullah Faizel who was currently in detention at Guantanamo Bay.

35. (S//NF) While the Taliban operatives named in this report are indeed active in and around Kandahar city to include involvement in kidnapping plots, DS/TIA/ITA questions the source’s access to operational plans by the Taliban. In past reporting, the source has reported primarily on Taliban member atmospherics and movements in southern Afghanistan and only occasionally on threats. DS/TIA/ITA assesses information provided by the source regarding the January 2008 kidnapping of an American non-governmental organization (NGO) worker to be inaccurate.

36. (S//NF) That said, periodic reporting indicates extremists remain keen to abduct another Westerner in Kandahar city, possibly while traveling to/from Kandahar Airfield. Tearline states, “Taliban insurgents reportedly planned in late January to kidnap a U.S. national as he traveled between Kandahar Airfield and Shur Andam Pass, Kandahar Province.” Reporting from November 2008 alleged the Taliban planned to kidnap two foreign women possibly from their residence in northeast Kandahar city or at the Rang Rezano market they frequented.

37. (S//NF) Mullah Faizel (variants: Faisal, Fazilfazul; TIDE number 72569) was being held at Guantanamo Bay as of early April 2008. Mullah Hamdullah (possible TIDE number 75483) is characterized in late-2008 sensitive reporting as a group commander of a large number of Taliban in Helmand Province. The same report noted Sadiq, the brother of the Taliban’s second-in-command Mullah Berader (TIDE number 76541), worked at an unnamed U.S. NGO and was involved in planning an unspecified kidnapping. (Appendix sources 23-30)

38. (S//FGI//NF) Pakistan - Militants may be planning to abduct U.S. and UK citizens from NGOs and consulates; dual-citizens in Peshawar: Tearline intelligence reports, “Militants attached to Pakistan’s Mumtaz Group may be planning to kidnap U.S. and UK citizens working in NGOs and consulates, as well as dual-citizen Pakistanis who are either visiting or residing in Peshawar, as of June 26. Peshawar’s University Town could be the likely venue for such an operation. Further, the following individuals who probably reside in (the) Peshawar area could be supporters of the Mumtaz Group: Fahim, son of Ihsanullah; Ayaz; Abdul Rehman Khan (Awami National Party) and his son, Yunas Khan, residents of Kafir Dheri, Peshawar; Garib Shah Badshah; and Muazzam Badshah, son of Shah Badshah.”

39. (S//FGI//NF) DS/TIA/ITA assesses the Mumtaz Group may be a reference to operations linked to al-Qa’ida leader Hamza al-Jawfi (a.k.a. Mumtaz; TIDE number 70390) who died in a late-February explosion in North Waziristan. Mumtaz is an oft-used alias by senior al-Qa’ida leaders that is arguably inauspicious. The now-deceased Hamzah Rabi and Abu Khabab al-Masri both used this alias as well. Worryingly, the other operatives DS/TIA/ITA suspects belong to this group are linked to ongoing, credible planning against Peshawar cantonment as well as American personnel and convoys belonging to U.S. Consulate Peshawar.

40. (S//FGI//NF) Although al-Jawfi is dead, it is possible the operations referenced can be linked to al-Jawfi’s former courier and Imran (TIDE number 14399906), who collaborates closely with Mohmand Agency-based Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander Hakimullah Mahsud. Early-April reporting from Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) links Imran -- described as an Uzbeki militant responsible for the November 12, 2008, murder of a USAID contractor and the August 26, 2008, ambush of the principal officer’s (PO’s) vehicle in Peshawar -- to TTP operative Faruq’s ongoing planning for an attack on Peshawar’s cantonment using multiple suicide operatives. Faruq is also likely involved in conducting al-Qa’ida-linked operational surveillance against the PO of U.S. Consulate Peshawar, a four-vehicle SUV protective convoy, and a vehicle workshop also affiliated with Post. Of note, however, ISI reported the capture of an individual named Imran in mid-June; although, it cannot be confirmed if this is the same Uzbeki Imran mentioned in earlier reporting. (Appendix sources 31-38)

41. (S//FGI//NF) Pakistan - Threats against Punjab and Islamabad: Reporting continues to circulate detailing ongoing plans by Pakistani extremists to launch suicide operations in Punjab Province and Islamabad. In Islamabad, threats specify the targeting of embassies located in the F-6/2 sector, police post Aabpara in Islamabad, the Imam Bargah in G-6/2, Senator Tariq Azim, and Barri Imam Shrine. In Lahore and greater Punjab Province, suicide operatives may seek to strike against foreigners in crowded areas or the Barbar Data Sahib Shrine. Although it remains unclear
if these named targets are an accurate reflection of extremists’ operational plans, it is of note
late-June reporting also mentions the cultivation and use of sympathetic madrassas and extremists
located in targeted cities to carry out future attacks.

42. (S//NF) As of late June, TTP reportedly tasked Abdul Malik Mujahid to launch suicide attacks
against unspecified foreigners in crowded places in Punjab, with Mujahid considering the use of
sympathetic madrassas as shelter prior to conducting an attack. Madrassas under consideration
included the Jami Ashrafia and Jamiat ul-Manzur ul-Islami in Lahore. Separately, tearline from
late June reports, "Militant commander Khan Bahadur, son of Sher Bahadur, is the local militant
commander in the Watkai area. Bahadur currently may be residing in Islamabad, while reorganizing
his group to operate in difference parts of Pakistan, as of June 25." Although there is limited
information regarding the identity of Khan Bahadur (possible TIDE number 238258), earlier
sensitive intelligence suggests he has served as an interlocutor in urban areas for Waziristancolded
militants since 2007. According to late-January 2008 tearline, "... A Khan Bahadur (or
Bahadur) in Lahore was involved in efforts to arrange talks and perhaps a government announcement
for a cease-fire and helping coordinate a separate announcement from the Mujahidin, hopefully by
October 13...."

43. (S//FGI//NF) As underscored by the events during and following the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque)
confrontation in Islamabad in July 2007, the continued existence of networks in Islamabad that
can organize and facilitate protests and terrorist activity in the vicinity of the capital is
indeed troubling. Notably, a body of intelligence reporting preceding the Lal Masjid
confrontation suggests Pakistan-based extremists viewed the brewing tension between the madrassas
and Islamabad one part of a larger comprehensive effort to re-energize and expand their jihadi
operations from their strongholds in the tribal areas and Northwest Frontier Province.
Interestingly, reporting from May 2007 citing a commander 10 corps lieutenant also noted 70
mosques in and around Islamabad would likely support extremist activity associated with the now-
infamous Lal Masjid, which was also an unauthorized mosque. Of concern, since 2008 attacks in
Pakistan have repeatedly targeted Westerners, coinciding with an unprecedented number of attacks
in both Lahore and Islamabad. (Appendix sources 39-47)

44. (U) Cyber Threats

45. (U) EUR CTAD comment: The latest version of the National Security Strategy released by the UK
Government includes a public cyber security strategy. The report calls for the establishment of
two new offices with cyber security responsibilities and approves the use of offensive operations
as a countermeasure to attacks against British systems. The Office of Cyber Security, falling
under the Cabinet Office, will be the central body charged with coordinating with industry and
developing strategy. The Cyber Security Operations Centre based at Government Communications
Headquarters, the UK’s primary signals intelligence agency, will be responsible for conducting
offensive operations. According to press reports, the UK Government has hired several former
hackers to staff the centre.

46. (S//NF) NEA CTAD comment: DoD reporting indicates as of mid-May, several Persian-language
hacker forums are sharing information pertaining to a variety of hacking codes, tools, and video
tutorials. One of the more notable findings was a PHP-based “simattacker code” -- a backdoor
Trojan horse program that allows for remote exploitation of an affected system and can provide
denial-of-service capabilities. This particular malicious code is reportedly similar to a tool
used against Georgian systems in 2008 (NFI).

47. (SBU) EAP CTAD comment: According to South Korean press reporting, the Republic of Korea’s
(Rok’s) Defense Security Command (DSC) has declared intrusion attempts against the Rok’s military
computer networks have increased 20 percent in 2009, compared to those detected in 2008. The DSC
further stated that 89 percent of the attempts are unsophisticated efforts to hack into servers
and Internet homepages, whereas the remaining 11 percent appear to be more advanced attempts to
obtain intelligence information. Of note, in an effort to deal with the increasing cyber threat,
the Rok’s National Intelligence Service has recommended President Lee Myung-bak appoint an aide
to assist with the country’s cyber security issues.

48. (S//NF) SCA CTAD comment: According to Defense Intelligence Agency reporting, the Government
of India (GoI) continues efforts to advance its computer security programs -- particularly in
light of increased concerns over Chinese computer network exploitation efforts -- but progress is
hampered by significant disagreements within its departments. The key GoI organizations involved
in developing and implementing security policies are identified as the Ministry of
Telecommunications and the Research and Analysis Wing. Although the Indian Army is primarily
responsible for the security of military networks, Indian officials acknowledge Army
representatives have been largely left out of discussions. Additionally, some other key groups, such as the National Technical Reconnaissance Organization and the Indian Defense Intelligence Agency, have reportedly failed to offer significant contributions. Private security companies are also concerned that the lack of input from the private sector may lead to unfair regulations regarding telecommunications monitoring.

49. (SBU) Domestic CTAD comment: On June 22, Websense Security Labs issued an alert after discovering the official website of the Embassy of Ethiopia in Washington, DC, had been subverted with obfuscated JavaScript code hidden in an inline frame (IFrame) with the goal of infecting visitors to the site with malicious software (malware). The code redirected users to sites where malware, including Trojan downloaders, were installed without explicit user action. According to the alert, the site that hosted the malicious JavaScript is currently down. On March 28, security company Sophos discovered a similar IFrame infection on the same website. At the time, researchers at Sophos noted it resembled the attack on the Washington, DC, Embassy of Azerbaijan website that occurred in early March. The researchers also indicated the redirected sites had been used by Russian cyber criminals in previous malware infections. (Appendix sources 48-50)

50. (C) EAP China - Beijing TOPSEC founder indicates PRC investment:

51. (S//NF) Key highlights: o Founder of TOPSEC and iTrusChina notes PRC funding and directive in media interview. o TOPSEC is China’s largest provider of information security products and services. o TOPSEC provides services and training for the PLA and has recruited hackers in the past. o Potential linkages of China’s top companies with the PRC illustrate the government’s use of its “private sector” in support of information warfare objectives.

52. (SBU) Source paragraph: “During an interview with journalists from China News Network, chairman of both Beijing TOPSEC and iTrusChina, He Weidong, spoke about the two companies, to include investment and contract from the Chinese Government (People’s Republic of China (PRC)) .... Tianrongxin’s capital came from two parts. The Chinese Government share one part of the investment, and the management department (of Tianrongxin) share the other part. He further stated that Tianrongxin was not really a company but a research institute; in 1995, the company took contracts from the government’s research and development tasks.”

53. (S//NF) CTAD comment: In November 1995, He Weidong founded the security company Tianrongxin, a.k.a. Beijing TOPSEC Network Security Technology Company, Ltd. TOPSEC is a China Information Technology Security Center (CNITSEC) enterprise and has grown to become China’s largest provider of information security products and services. TOPSEC is credited with launching China’s first indigenous firewall in 1996, as well as other information technology (IT) security products to China’s market, to include virtual private networks, intrusion detection systems, filtering gateways, and security auditing and management systems. Additionally, in September 2000, Weidong founded the company Tianweichengxin, a.k.a. iTrusChina, which became the first experimental enterprise to develop business Public Key Infrastructure/Certification Authority services approved by China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

54. (SBU) CTAD comment: During an interview with China News Network, Weidong stated that half of TOPSEC’s start-up capital came from the PRC, with the other half coming from the company’s management department. Additionally, he pointed out that TOPSEC began not as a company, but as a small research institute that took contracts from the government’s research and development tasks (NFI). The turning point for TOPSEC came in 1996 when the company won a significant contract bid from the Chinese State Statistics Bureau. Since winning the bid, TOPSEC maintained a 100-percent sales growth in the following years. Weidong noted the company started out with 30,000 RMB (approximately $4,400) in 1995, and by 2002, had earnings of 3 billion RMB (approximately $440,000,000). Interestingly, shareholders did not receive bonuses, as all earnings went for future investment. Weidong also stated a bank loan was never used.

55. (S//NF) CTAD comment: Of note, the CNITSEC is responsible for overseeing the PRC’s Information Technology (IT) security certification program. It operates and maintains the National Evaluation and Certification Scheme for IT security and performs tests for information security products. In 2003, the CNITSEC signed a Government Security Program (GSP) international agreement with Microsoft that allowed select companies such as TOPSEC access to Microsoft source code in order to secure the Windows platform. XXXXXXXXXXX

56. (S//NF) CTAD comment: Additionally, CNITSEC enterprises has recruited Chinese hackers in support of nationally-funded “network attack scientific research projects.” From June 2002 to March 2003, TOPSEC employed a known Chinese hacker, Lin Yong (a.k.a. Lion and owner of the Honker Union of China), as senior security service engineer to manage security service and training.
Venus Tech, another CNITSEC enterprise privy to the GSP, is also known to affiliate with XFocuss, one of the few Chinese hacker groups known to develop exploits to new vulnerabilities in a short period of time, as evidenced in the 2003 release of Blaster Worm (See CTAD Daily Read File (DRF) April 4, 2008). 57. (S//NF) CTAD comment: While links between top Chinese companies and the PRC are not uncommon, it illustrates the PRC’s use of its “private sector” in support of governmental information warfare objectives, especially in its ability to gather, process, and exploit information. As evidenced with TOPSEC, there is a strong possibility the PRC is harvesting the talents of its private sector in order to bolster offensive and defensive computer network operations capabilities. (Appendix sources 51-52)

58. (U) Suspicious Activity Incidents

59. (SBU) EUR Iceland - A man and a woman photographed in the area north of U.S. Embassy Reykjavik June 25. They then walked toward the backside of the Post, where they took additional photographs before departing on foot. The man was seen photographing in the neighborhood for an additional 3 hours. The Surveillance Detection Team found it unusual the subjects photographed sites other than tourist attractions. (SIMAS Event: Reykjavik-00257-2009)

60. (SBU) AF Guinea - Two young men were photographed U.S. Embassy Conakry June 25. A gendarme stopped the pair and took them to a nearby security booth where they were interviewed by Post’s foreign security national investigator. Their photos of the Embassy were deleted, and the subjects were released with a warning.


62. (SBU) NEA Tunisia - A man sat at Marsaoul Caf in Tunis focusing on the road leading to the U.S. Ambassador’s residence June 4. After 30 minutes, the subject got into his car and departed the area. The man was previously seen at the caf on May 15 for approximately 1 hour.

63. (SBU) RSO Action/Assessment: The caf is located at the foot of the hill near the Ambassador’s residence (the residence is located at the end of the road, approximately one-quarter to one-half mile away). This is the second time the individual and vehicle were spotted. However, Tunisian police do not share information concerning routine traffic stops or suspicious persons questioned/seen near the Embassy or Ambassador’s residence. If the vehicle is seen again, the RSO will attempt to retrieve information on the owner.

64. (SBU) Record Check/Investigation: Vehicle: Gray Volkswagen; License plate: 8828TU97. (SIMAS Event: Tunis-02054-2009)

SECRET//FGI//NOFORN

Full Appendix with sourcing available upon request. CLINTON

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“State Dept. Daily Is Window on a Jittery Planet”
A Threatening World

An issue of The Diplomatic Security Daily from November 2008 details a jolting array of threats, including a plot to bomb an American convoy in Beirut, Lebanon, and a computer hacking operation with Chinese links called Byzantine Candor.


2. (U) Significant Events ) Paragraphs 7-13

3. (U) Key Concerns ) Paragraphs 14-18

4. (U) Threats & Analysis ) Paragraphs 19-31

5. (U) Cyber Threats ) Paragraphs 32-45

6. (U) Suspicious Activity Incidents ) Paragraphs 46-49

7. (U) Significant Events

8. (SBU) EUR - Ireland - Emergency Action Committee (EAC) Belfast met October 31 to discuss the armed forces homecoming parade scheduled for November 2 and the planned simultaneous counter-demonstrations by Sinn Fein and the dissident republican group Eirigi. Discussions centered on the parade route and the possibility of confrontations and violence in different areas, as well as the presence of AmCits along the parade and demonstration routes. The EAC decided the U.S. Consulate General should release a Warden Message to warn AmCits in Belfast. (Belfast 0137)

9. (SBU) Sweden - Approximately 12 to 15 protesters, carrying banners and flags requesting fair treatment for the Cuban Five in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, made an unscheduled appearance at U.S. Embassy Stockholm November 1. The group emerged from the nearby German Embassy and stopped briefly in front of Post. The RSO monitored the group; they did not attempt to contact Embassy officials, but appeared more interested in photographing the front of Post. The protesters departed within a few minutes before Embassy police could respond. No damages or injuries were reported. (RSO Stockholm Spot Report)

10. (S//NF) NEA - Egypt - EAC Cairo convened October 20 to review recent threat reporting and access any threats specific to the planned visit by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on November 8 and 9. The EAC agreed there is no new, specific, and/or credible threat to U.S.
interests in Egypt, but also assessed that Egypt remains a very tempting target for both indigenous and transnational terrorist elements. EAC members also agreed to enhance security measures at the American Presence Post in Alexandria. The EAC continues to assess the Government of Egypt’s (GoE) counterterrorism efforts as effective, and Post has a close relationship with the GoE on security matters. (Appendix 1)

11. (S//NF) Kuwait - EAC Kuwait City convened November 2 to discuss the security impact of recent threat reporting, Embassy Kuwait election coverage, U.S. Marine Corps Birthday Ball, and the upcoming visit of the former U.S. President William J. Clinton. The EAC was briefed on the recent reporting of possible terrorist surveillance of housing areas within Kuwait City. Post is coordinating the release of this information to the Kuwait Security Service for further action. The RSO stated the Local Guard Force (LGF) Mobile Patrol unit will increase coverage in the housing occupied by Chief of Mission personnel within the named areas, defensive counterintelligence training will be given to locally employed staff, and a Security Notice reminding personnel to remain vigilant in their personal security procedures will be released. The EAC concluded that Post’s current security posture is appropriate for the planned events. (Appendix 2)

12. (S//NF) EAP - Indonesia - EAC Jakarta convened October 30 to discuss the security implications of the anticipated execution of the Bali bombers. The Government of Indonesia (GoI) recently announced they would be executed during the first week of November. Rumors are circulating around Jakarta that retaliatory attacks and demonstrations by those who support the bombers are possible. However, there is no specific or credible information regarding the planning of these types of attacks. One report mentioned possible suicide bomber attacks on shopping malls in Jakarta, specifically the Kelapa Gading mall in northern Jakarta, but without details. The U.S. Embassy assesses the likelihood of a terrorist attack conducted against U.S. or other Western interests in direct response to the executions is low. (Appendix source 3)

13. (SBU) SCA - Pakistan - A motorcade carrying Pakistani Deputy Inspector General of Police Syed Akhtar Ali Shah was targeted by a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (IED) attack in Marden Province on October 31 at around 2:30 p.m. Ali Shah and 20 others were wounded, and nine police officers were killed in the attack. On November 1, at approximately 2:33 a.m., an explosion occurred at a police substation approximately 2,000 meters from the U.S. Consulate Peshawar residential area and official annexes. One police officer was killed and several other individuals were badly wounded. It is undetermined at this time whether the explosion was from a rocket or an explosion charge placed at the structure. The RSO will monitor these attacks. (RSO Peshawar Spot Report)

14. (U) Key Concerns

15. (S//FGI//NF) NEA - Lebanon - Al-Qaeda affiliate to attack U.S. Embassy motorcade: According to a source of the Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate, as of mid-October, al-Qaeda-affiliated elements in the Ayn al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp plan to attack a U.S. Embassy motorcade in Beirut. The men planning the operation had already collected an unspecified amount of explosives and a white 1983 Mercedes, which was currently inside the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp. The Mercedes was to be rigged with the explosives. (Appendix source 4)

16. (S//FGI//NF) SCA - Maldives - Continued monitoring of al-Qaeda associates: The Maldives Police Service continued to investigate and monitor the activities of Maldives-based al-Qaeda associates Yoosuf Izadhyy, Easa Ali, and Hasnain Abdullah Hameed (a.k.a. Hameed). Izadhyy was reportedly in contact with a militant group in Waziristan, which allegedly maintained unspecified links to al-Qaeda. Izadhyy was clandestinely working to recruit others into his organization, specifically seeking individuals who had undergone basic terrorism training in Pakistan. Izadhyy planned to create a terrorist group in the Maldives with the assistance of the Waziristan-based group. Izadhyy planned to send his members to Waziristan for training. Hameed was in close contact with a number of individuals who had undergone training in Pakistan, including individuals who were members of Jamaat-ul Muslimeen and completed basic and advanced training by Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT) in Pakistan. They followed the ideology of Abu Easa.

17. (S//FGI//NF) DS/TIA/ITA notes, while the operational aspirations of Yoosuf Izadhyy (Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) number 17312232), Easa Ali (TIDE number 17312652), and Hasnain Abdullah Hameed (TIDE number 20686145) are unclear; past reporting suggests Maldivian extremists have demonstrated interest in actively participating in global jihadi activities by attempting to arrange travel and terrorist training in Pakistan. While many Maldivian participants of extremist online forums aimed to ultimately fight Coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, mid-October 2007 debrief information following the September 29 bombing in Male that
targeted tourists indicates at least two of the operatives participated in the attack in exchange for travel from the islands after the operation and arranged study at a madrassa in Pakistan.

18. (S//NF) Specific links to al-Qa,ida remain unclear; although, reporting from May detailed recruitment activity by Maldivian national Ahmed Zaki of Maldivians into the Kashmiri extremist group LT madrassas and training camps in Pakistan. A variety of reports from 2006 details linkages between Maldivians belonging to a group known as Jama-ah-tul-Muslimeen (JTM) and individuals participating in an anti-American Islamic extremist online forum called Tibyan Publications. JTM is an extremist group based in the UK that follows an extremist ideology known as Takfir that actively encourages violent jihad and supports criminality against apostate states. (Appendix sources 5-18)

19. (U) Threats & Analysis

20. (S//NF) WHA - Mexico - Violence spikes again in Tijuana: According to a mid-level Baja California state police official, a turf war between the Arellano Felix Organization (AFO) and the Sinaloa Cartel has caused another increase in violence in Tijuana. The Mexican Government,s counter narcotics efforts -- in the form of 3,300 military and police assets patrolling the area under Operation Tijuana -- have severely weakened the AFO,s operations. The Sinaloa Cartel, hoping to capitalize on the AFO,s weaknesses, is battling for control of Tijuana,s drug plaza. While the AFO assassins are skilled, Sinaloa Cartel hit men are poorly trained and have no aversion to public shootings; however, if the Sinaloa Cartel successfully ousts the AFO from Tijuana, DS/TIA/ITA notes the levels of violence should decrease. While residents and visitors are not being targeted, the likelihood of being in the wrong place at the wrong time is of increasing concern. Cartel targets are being killed during daytime hours in public areas of Tijuana, including restaurants, shopping centers, and near school buildings. The DoS, Travel Alert for Mexico was extended for six months on October 14 to reflect the current and widely reported crime and violence occurring throughout Mexico. (Open sources; Appendix sources 19-20)

21. (U) AF - Cameroon - An examination of the background, goals, and tactics of the Niger Delta Defense and Security Council and the Bakassi Freedom Fighters: (S//NF) The October 31 kidnapping of approximately 10 hostages off the shores of the Bakassi Peninsula has magnified the role of two groups -- the Bakassi Freedom Fighters (BFF) and the Niger Delta Defense and Security Council (NDDSC) -- in the increasing insecurity in the Bakassi. The kidnappings, an overview of the NDDSC,s and BFF,s background, and an examination of their past operations, highlight the groups, possible intent to use novel, deadly, and unprecedented tactics to achieve their goals.

22. (SBU) In the early morning of October 31, a group of armed men in three boats attacked a French Total vessel named Bourbon Sagita, which was located off the Cameroonian shore between Bakassi and Limbe. Although no Americans were directly impacted, at least seven French citizens, one Tunisian, one Senegalese, and several Cameroonian nationals were kidnapped; five remaining oil workers were left on the boat. Nobody was injured in the attack.

23. (SBU) According to unconfirmed media reports, shortly after the raid, the BFF, part of a larger and shadowy alliance of the NDDSC, claimed responsibility for the attacks and threatened to kill the hostages, stating, The 10 are in our hands. If you,dont tell the government of Cameroon to come here and discuss with us, we will kill them all in three days. On November 1, the NDDSC/BFF withdrew the threat, but stated it would hold the hostages until the government opened negotiations with them.

24. (S//NF) The NDDSC/BFF is likely referring to discussions over the status of the Bakassi Peninsula in its statement. The region was transferred from Nigeria to Cameroon on August 14, per an International Court of Justice ruling. According to e-mails it sent to media outlets, the NDDSC/BFF merged into an official alliance at the end of July in an attempt to forestall the hand over. Led by Commander Ebi Dari and General A.G. Dasuo, who claim they are fighting for self-determination and freedom of the Bakassi Peninsula which contains a majority of Nigerian citizens. They are also demanding that two of their fighters captured in July be released and that Nigerians on the Bakassi Peninsula be compensated.

25. (S//NF) An intelligence and open media search of the BFF provided negligible results. Meanwhile, although little background information is known about the NDDSC, it claims to have approximately 1,050 fighters. It has been in existence since at least 2002 and previously conducted low-level attacks against Cameroonian troops on the Bakassi. It can also be linked to three deadly operations prior to the hand over of the controversial region. In the most macabre raid, on June 9, the NDDSC allegedly killed and mutilated six members of a Cameroonian delegation visiting the Peninsula, including the deputy subregional commander. It also claimed
responsibility for a November 2007 raid on a Cameroonian military outpost which killed 21 soldiers; this claim remains unconfirmed. (Please see the July 26 DS Daily for further information on the pre-hand over security incidents in the Bakassi.)

26. (S//NF) Although the post-hand over period has been defined by a series of attacks, the NDDSC/BFF has released statements denying culpability in some of those operations. These include a September 28 bank robbery in Limbe and a September 13 attack against a trawler off the Bakassi Peninsula. The NDDSC/BFF may be responsible for some post-hand over operations, while others may have been conducted by different militants in the region, including in the Niger Delta. Despite similar tactics in all these operations, including the use of speedboats carrying heavily armed masked men, at this time, there are no clear indications the NDDSC/BFF has a defined relationship with the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) or any other prominent Niger Delta group.

27. (S//NF) Instead, the series of raids by the NDDSC/BFF may possibly signify new tactics being pursued in the Bakassi region. In its early raids, the NDDSC/BFF primarily used deadly and brutal force against the Cameroonian military, but often spared expatriates and civilians. Two recent attacks, however -- the June 9 attack and the October 31 hostage-taking operation -- have demonstrated its desire to expand its targets. In the June 6 raid, the NDDSC targeted a political delegation and mutilated a deputy subregional commander, the equivalent of a governor. It is unclear if the NDDSC was directly targeting the governor; but, nevertheless, the group demonstrated its desire to also kill politicians. For its part, the October 31 attacks was the first kidnapping of expatriates off the coast of Cameroon.

28. (S//NF) Also of concern is the NDDSC/BFF,s intent to hold hostages indefinitely after initially threatening to kill them. Whereas MEND and other Delta groups kidnapped hostages primarily to garner ransom money or to force oil companies to scale back operations, they had seldom directly harmed or threatened to kill hostages. They also often released hostages shortly after their capture. Moreover, given its intent to hold the hostages for a political objective, the NDDSC/BFF may find it convenient to continue operations against expatriates in the region to pressure the Cameroonian Government and to ensure that its political demands are met. (Open sources; Yaoundé 1071; 0754; 0706; Appendix sources 21-28)

29. (S//FGI//NF) SCA - Bangladesh - Rejection of IDP to register for December elections: As of late October, the Bangladeshi Election Commission was set to reject the Islamic Democratic Party,s (IDP,s) attempt to register for the December parliamentary elections. The IDP is a nascent political party formed by senior members of the Islamic terrorist group Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B). Bangladesh,s Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) supported the formation of the IDP as a way to bring HUJI-B into the mainstream and reported it tightly monitored the group,s activities; although, HUJI-B has never renounced the use of violence to implement its vision of transforming Bangladesh into a Muslim theocracy. According to U.S. Embassy Dhaka, which strongly opposed the creation of the IDP, the party and its leadership will likely be angered by the decision and may respond with violence possibly against the commission or the U.S. Mission or interests.

30. (S//NF) Arrests and monitoring have undoubtedly hindered HUJI-B,s capabilities in recent years, and it is entirely plausible the group is pursuing the creation of a political wing to improve its ability to support and carry out terrorist activity. A late-September assessment from Bangladesh,s National Security Intelligence Organization (NSI) voiced concern that the party,s creation would free extremists to pursue extremist activity under the cover of a moderate front organization. Indeed, there are no indications IDP would garner a significant number of votes. Analysis from the DoS, Office of Research noted the majority of Bangladeshis want Awami League and Bangladesh National Party leaders Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia to participate in the December elections. Interestingly, 80 percent stated they would ignore a call by either party to boycott the vote. One-third further stated they would join street protests in the face of a cancellation of elections.

31. (S//FGI//NF) Although there is little information available regarding HUJI-B,s current capabilities, its membership likely does retain the ability to manufacture and use explosives and has previously favored targeting high-profile individuals for attack. While there is no specific reporting at the present time detailing plots against U.S. interests in Bangladesh, the group has publicly articulated its anti-Western and -Indian stance, including signing Usama Bin Ladin,s 1998 fatwa against the West. In regards to HUJI-B,s capabilities, DGFI,s, Rapid Action Battalion,s (RAB,s), and NSI,s assessments vary significantly. Following the early-March U.S. designation of HUJI-B as a foreign terrorist organization, RAB assessed HUJI-B would not respond with violence due to the severe degradation of the group,s capability and leadership structure from arrests and active surveillance. Some member who wanted to independently attack Western
interests, however, remained technically capable of carrying out low-level attacks using small arms, grenades, and IEDs. DGFI likewise reported HUJI-B was an organization on the run and that it did not pose a threat to U.S. interests in Bangladesh. NSI conversely assessed HUJI-B would react violently to the designation and would attempt to conduct an attack against the U.S. official presence in Dhaka; although, there was no information available detailing such an operation. Thus far, HUJI-B has not carried out an attack against American interests in Bangladesh, but the group has been linked to assassination attempts on intellectuals, journalists, and politicians, including two thwarted attempts on the life of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during public addresses and a grenade attack that injured the British high commissioner in May 2004. (Bangladeshis have high hopes for national elections, DoS Office of Research; Appendix sources 29-40)

32. (U) Cyber Threats

33. (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) WHA - CTAD comment: On October 16, at least one e-mail account within the Government of Canada received a Trojanized message from a Yahoo account claiming to represent a U.S. embassy. The bogus subject line was an invitation for a private meeting with a named DoS employee. The attached Microsoft Word document was a malicious invitation file that, when opened, attempts to beacon and create a connection to jing1.cable.nu via port 8080. The cable.nu domain remains one of concern, as it has historically been associated with activity from Chinese hacker organizations.

34. (U) EUR - CTAD comment: The European Commission (EC) this week proposed legislation to establish a Critical Infrastructure Warning Information Network (CIWIN) to improve information sharing among European Union (EU) member nations. The proposed legislation would enable the EC to launch and manage the CIWIN, a secure information technology (IT) system aimed at sharing knowledge on threats, vulnerabilities, and protection of critical infrastructures. The CIWIN would be a voluntary tool for transmitting sensitive information and would also include a rapid alert system for critical infrastructure, allowing EU nations to post alerts on immediate threats.

35. (U) AF - CTAD comment: Sudanese law enforcement recently reported the arrest of three hackers who have allegedly attacked more than 300 government and public websites during the last few months. Among the hacked sites was that of the National Telecommunication Corporation, which is responsible for oversight of telecommunication service providers as well as many other aspects of Sudanese IT and network stability. The three highly skilled hackers, all of whom are Sudanese, reportedly caused significant damage to their targets, but their motivation for the attacks and any potential group affiliations are yet undetermined.

36. (C) NEA - CTAD comment: On October 21, officials from the Kuwaiti Central Agency for Information (CAIT) and the National Security Bureau (NSB) expressed concerns for foreign and domestic threats to Kuwaiti information systems. According to these organizations, some of the issues plaguing Government of Kuwait (GoK) networks are suspected attacks from Iranian hackers, insider corruption and misuse of resources, and a lack of sufficient interagency coordination and guidance for monitoring users, activities and investigating incidents. For example, the groups, inability to adequately examine malicious software (malware) injections or internal abuse of system access continues to hinder the GoK's capacity to ensure the protection of sensitive information. Therefore, the CAIT and NSB are interested in learning more about U.S. cyber security programs as well as receiving additional training and support.

37. (S//NF) EAP - CTAD comment: Between September 29 and October 2, a conference was held by the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV). During this conference, the BfV delivered a briefing on its analysis of the cyber threat posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC), which appears to mirror conclusions drawn by the U.S. Intelligence Community. The BfV surmises the intention of PRC actors is espionage, and the primary attack vector used in their malicious activity is socially engineered e-mail messages containing malware attachments and/or embedded links to hostile websites. According to reporting, from October 2006 to October 2007, 500 such e-mail operations were conducted against a wide range of German organizations, and the attacks appear to be increasing in scope and sophistication. The socially engineered e-mail messages delivered to German computer systems were spoofed to appear to come from trusted sources and contain information targeted specifically to the recipient's interests, duties, or current events. This malicious activity has targeted a wide variety of German organizational levels to include German military, economic, science and technology, commercial, diplomatic, research and development, as well as high-level government (ministry and chancellery) systems. In addition, German intelligence reporting indicates an increase in activity was detected immediately preceding events such as German Government, or commercial, negotiations involving Chinese interests.
38. (U) SCA - CTAD comment: The National Science Foundation and the Pakistan Higher Education Commission recently announced the establishment of a Pakistan extension to an international high-speed network already connecting U.S. and EC systems. The new portion of the network links Pakistani scientists and students to facilities in the U.S. through additional connections to Singapore and Japan. This project emerged from February 2007 discussions of the U.S.-Pakistan Joint Committee on Science and Technology that sought to promote cooperation and innovation among education and business sectors. (Open sources; Appendix sources 41-43)

39. (S//NF) Worldwide - BC conducting CNE on USG systems:

40. (S//NF) Key highlights: BC actively targets USG and other organizations via socially engineered e-mail messages. BC actors recently compromised the systems of a U.S. ISP to carry out CNE on a USG network. Additional IP addresses were identified this month as compromised and used for BC activity. BC has targeted DoS networks in the past and may again in the future via spoofed e-mail.

41. (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) Source paragraph: Byzantine Candor (BC) actors have compromised multiple systems located at a U.S. Internet service provider (ISP) and have used the systems as part of BC's U.S.-based attack infrastructure since at least March, targeting multiple victims including at least one USG agency.

42. (S//NF) CTAD comment: Since late 2002, USG organizations have been targeted with social-engineering online attacks by BC actors. BC, an intrusion subset of Byzantine Hades activity, is a series of related computer network intrusions affecting U.S. and foreign systems and is believed to originate from the PRC. BC intruders have relied on techniques including exploiting Windows system vulnerabilities and stealing login credentials to gain access to hundreds of USG and cleared defense contractor systems over the years. In the U.S., the majority of the systems BC actors have targeted belong to the U.S. Army, but targets also include other DoD services as well as DoS, Department of Energy, additional USG entities, and commercial systems and networks. BC actors typically gain initial access with the use of highly targeted socially engineered e-mail messages, which fool recipients into inadvertently compromising their systems. The intruders then install malware such as customized keystroke-logging software and command-and-control (C&C) utilities onto the compromised systems and exfiltrate massive amounts of sensitive data from the networks. This month, BC actors attempted to compromise the network of a U.S. political organization via socially engineered e-mail messages (see CTAD Daily Read File dated October 16).

43. (S//REL TO USA, ACGU) CTAD comment: Also discovered this month by USG analysts was the compromise of several computer systems located at a commercial ISP within the United States. According to Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) reporting, hackers based in Shanghai and linked to the PRC's People's Liberation Army (PLA) Third Department have been using these compromised systems as part of the larger BC attack infrastructure to facilitate computer network exploitation (CNE) of U.S. and foreign information systems. Since March, the responsible actors have used at least three separate systems at the unnamed ISP in multiple network intrusions and have exfiltrated data via these systems, including data from at least one USG agency. AFOSI reporting indicates, on March 11, BC actors gained access to one system at the ISP, onto which the actors transferred multiple files, including several C&C tools. From here, the intruders used the tools to obtain a list of usernames and password hashes for the system. Next, on April 22, BC actors accessed a second system at the ISP, where they transferred additional software tools. From April through October 13, the BC actors used this computer system to conduct CNE on multiple victims. During this time period, the actors exfiltrated at least 50 megabytes of e-mail messages and attached documents, as well as a complete list of usernames and passwords from an unspecified USG agency. Additionally, multiple files were transferred to the compromised ISP system from other BC-associated systems that have been previously identified collecting e-mail messages from additional victims. The third system at the U.S. ISP was identified as compromised on August 14, when BC actors transferred a malicious file onto it named salaryincrease-surveyandforecast.zip. According to AFOSI analysis, BC actors use this system to host multiple webpages that allow other BC-compromised systems to download malicious files or be redirected to BC C&C servers.

44. (S//REL TO USA, FVEY) CTAD comment: Additional DoD reporting this month indicates BC actors have used multiple other systems to conduct CNE against U.S. and foreign systems from February through September. A October 23 DoD cable states Shanghai-based hackers associated with BC activity and linked to the PLA have successfully targeted multiple U.S. entities during this time period. The cable details dozens of identified Internet Protocol (IP) addresses associated with BC activity as well as the dates of their activity. All of the IP addresses listed resolve to the
CNC Group Shanghai Province Network in Shanghai, and all the host names of the addresses contained Asian keyboard settings as well as China time zone settings. Most of these IP addresses were identified as responsible for direct CNE of U.S. entities, including unspecified USG organizations, systems and networks. Interestingly, although the actors using each IP address practiced some degree of operational security to obfuscate their identities, one particular actor was identified as lacking in these security measures. On June 7, the BC actor, using an identified IP address, was observed using a Taiwan-based online bulletin board service for personal use.

45. (S//NF) CTAD comment: BC actors have targeted the DoS in the past on multiple occasions with socially engineered e-mail messages containing malicious attached files and have successfully exfiltrated sensitive information from DoS unclassified networks. As such, it is possible these actors will attempt to compromise DoS networks in the future. As BC activity continues across the DoD and U.S., DoS personnel should practice conscientious Internet and e-mail use and should remain informed on BH activity. (Appendix sources 44-46)

46. (U) Suspicious Activity Incidents

47. (SBU) EUR - Azerbaijan - A vehicle with Iranian license plates was parked adjacent to U.S. Embassy Baku October 29. The driver was the only occupant in the car. Another subject appeared and got into the car, which then took off. The police have been asked to check the vehicle registration. Post is awaiting the results. (SIMAS Event: Baku-00507-2008)

48. (SBU) EAP - Taiwan - An Asian male with a professional video camera stood across the street from the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) October 29. He filmed a number of buildings in the area and possibly the AIT. After a few minutes, the subject departed the area on a motor scooter. (SIMAS Event: Taipei-00194-2008)

49. (SBU) Taiwan - An Asian male stood in front of the Bank of Taiwan and photographed various buildings -- including the AIT -- on October 31. An LGF member stopped and questioned the man, who refused to show identification or the pictures he took. He left the area on foot shortly afterward. (SIMAS Event: Taipei-00195-2008)

SECRET//FGI//NOFORN//MR Full Appendix with sourcing available upon request. RICE

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“State Dept. Daily Is Window on a Jittery Planet”
Diplomats Helping American Spies

A directive to American diplomats last year laid out the many ways in which they could collect information to pass on to the intelligence agencies, including foreign associates’ credit card and frequent flyer numbers that could be used to track a person’s movements.

1. (S/NF) This cable provides the full text of the new National HUMINT Collection Directive (NHCD) on the United Nations (paragraph 3-end) as well as a request for continued DOS reporting of biographic information relating to the United Nations (paragraph 2).

A. (S/NF) The NHCD below supercedes the 2004 NHCD and reflects the results of a recent Washington review of reporting and collection needs focused on the United Nations. The review produced a comprehensive list of strategic priorities (paragraph 3) and reporting and collection needs (paragraph 4) intended to guide participating USG agencies as they allocate resources and update plans to collect information on the United Nations. The priorities should also serve as a useful tool to help the Embassy manage reporting and collection, including formulation of Mission Strategic Plans (MSPs).

B. (S/NF) This NHCD is compliant with the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF), which was established in response to NSPD-26 of February 24, 2003. If needed, GRPO can provide further background on the NIPF and the use of NIPF abbreviations (shown in parentheses following each sub-issue below) in NHCDs.

C. (S/NF) Important information often is available to non-State members of the Country Team whose agencies participated in the review of this National HUMINT Collection Directive. COMs, DCMs, and State reporting officers can assist by coordinating with other Country Team members to encourage relevant reporting through their own or State Department channels.

2. (S/NF) State biographic reporting:

A. (S/NF) The intelligence community relies on State reporting officers for much of the biographical information collected worldwide. Informal biographic reporting via email and other means is vital to the community’s collection efforts and can be sent to the INR/B (Biographic) office for dissemination to the IC.

B. (S/NF) Reporting officers should include as much of the following information as possible when they have information relating to persons linked to: office and
organizational titles; names, position titles and other information on business cards; numbers of telephones, cell phones, pagers and faxes; compendia of contact information, such as telephone directories (in compact disc or electronic format if available) and e-mail listings; internet and intranet “handles”, internet e-mail addresses, web site identification-URLs; credit card account numbers; frequent flyer account numbers; work schedules, and other relevant biographical information.

3. (S/NF) Priority issues and issues outline:

A. Key Near-Term Issues 1) Darfur/Sudan (FPOL-1) 2) Afghanistan/Pakistan (FPOL-1) 3) Somalia (FPOL-1) 4) Iran (FPOL-1) 5) North Korea (FPOL-1)

B. Key Continuing Issues 1) UN Security Council Reform (FPOL-1) 2) Iraq (FPOL-1) 3) Middle East Peace Process (FPOL-1) 4) Human Rights and War Crimes (HRWC-3) 5) UN Humanitarian and Complex Emergency Response (HREL-3) 6) Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDN-5H) 7) Terrorist Threat to UN Operations (TERR-5H) 8) Burma (FPOL-1)

C. UN Peace and Peacebuilding Operations 1) Africa (FPOL-1) 2) Outside Africa (FPOL-1) 3) Policy Issues (FPOL-1)

D. UN Security Council 1) Procedures and Dynamics (FPOL-1) 2) Sanctions (FPOL-1)

E. UN Management 1) UN Leadership Dynamics (FPOL-1) 2) Budget and Management Reform (FPOL-1)

F. UN General Assembly Tactics and Voting Blocs (FPOL-1)

G. Other Substantive Issues 1) Food Security (FOOD-3) 2) Climate Change, Energy, and Environment (ENVR-4) 3) Transnational Economic Issues (ECFS-4H) 4) Arms Control and Treaty Monitoring (ACTM-4) 5) Health Issues (HLTH-4) 6) Terrorism (TERR-5H) 7) Trafficking, Social, and Women’s Issues (DEPS-5H)

H. Intelligence and Security Topics 1) GRPO can provide text of this issue. 2) GRPO can provide text of this issue. 3) Foreign Nongovernmental Organizations (FPOL-1) 4) Telecommunications Infrastructure and Information Systems (INFR-5H)

15. Collection requirements and tasking

(Agriculture is the Department of Agriculture; Commerce is the Department of Commerce; DHS is the Department of Homeland Security; DIA/DH is Defense Intelligence Agency/Defense HUMINT; Energy is the Department of Energy; DNI/OSC is the Open Source Center of the Director of National Intelligence; FBI is the Federal Bureau of Investigation; HHS is the Department of Health and Human Services; Navy is the Navy HUMINT element; NCS/CS is the CIA’s Clandestine Service; OSC/MSC is the Map Services Center of OSC; State is the Department of State; TAREX (Target Exploitation) collects information using HUMINT Methods in support of NSA’s requirements; Treasury is the Department of Treasury; USAID is the U.S. Agency for International Development; USSS is the U.S. Secret Service; USTR is the U.S. Trade Representative; WINPAC is the Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation, and Arms Control Center.)

A. Key Near-Term Issues

1) Darfur/Sudan (FPOL-1). -- Views of United Nations (UN) member states on contributing troops and air transportation equipment, such as helicopters, to the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and the African Union (AU)-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). -- Details of deployments of troop contributor countries to UNMIS/UNAMID. -- Details on actions and views of UN personnel deployed in UNMIS/UNAMID. -- Views of UNSC members on the success or failure of UNMIS/UNAMID. -- Operational plans of UNMIS/UNAMID from both the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York, and UNMIS/UNAMID in Sudan. -- Details of diplomatic engagement between UNMIS/UNAMID Special
Envoys for the Darfur Peace Process in Sudan, and the Sudanese government or Darfur rebel groups.
-- Views of member states on UN activities in Sudan (including Darfur). -- Divisions between UN and Secretariat assessments of the situation on the ground as it affects UN action.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Rwanda, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda,

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Vietnam International Organizations: AU, European Union (EU), UN

2) Afghanistan/Pakistan (FPOL-1). -- Plans and intentions of key UN leaders and member states regarding the ongoing operations of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), including force protection in Afghanistan. -- Information on plans and intentions of UN leadership or member states affecting elections in Afghanistan. -- Reactions to and assessments of security threats directed at the UN or aid personnel attempting to render humanitarian assistance. -- Plans and intentions of key member states and Secretariat leadership concerning Afghan political and economic reconstruction, including efforts to combat warlords and drug trafficking. -- Afghan, Pakistani and Iranian intentions or reluctance to secure and safeguard UN and nongovernmental organization (NGO) personnel (international as well as locally-hired staff).

Countries: Afghanistan, Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Iran, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
Terrorist Groups: Taliban
International Organizations: EU, UN, World Bank

3) Somalia (FPOL-1). -- UN plans and potential to expand, reinforce, or replace the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) and African Union (AU) Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). -- Plans and intentions of UN leadership, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and member states to deploy a UN-led maritime force to monitor piracy off the coast of Somalia. -- Willingness of member states to pledge troops or air transport to a possible UN or multinational force in Somalia. -- Views of Somali population on the deployment of a UN or multinational peacekeeping force in Somalia. -- Details of diplomatic engagement between UN envoys and Somali government or Somali opposition officials. -- Information on World Food Program activities in Somalia. -- Details of UN Development Program (UNDP)-Somalia training Transitional Federal Government police officers and Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia officials in the Joint Security Force.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ethiopia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Somalia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: AU, EU, NATO, UN

4) Iran (FPOL-1). -- Plans and intentions of the UN Secretary General (SG),

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Secretariat staff, or member states to address efforts by Iran to develop, test, or proliferate nuclear weapons. -- Positions and responses of member states to future International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) Director General reports on Iran,s Implementation of Safeguards and relevant provisions of UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. -- Specific plans and activities of the UK, France, Germany (EU-3), and Russia with respect to IAEA policy toward Iran. -- Plans and intentions of key UN leaders and member states, especially Russia and China, regarding human rights in Iran, sanctions on Iran, Iran,s arming of HAMAS and Hizballah, and Iran,s candidacy for UNSC leadership positions. -- Plans and intentions of Perm 5, other key member states, coalition partners, and key Secretariat officials concerning sanctions against Iran. -- Member support/opposition/subversion of US positions regarding Iranian sanctions. -- Iranian diplomatic efforts with the IAEA and UN member states to avoid passage of additional sanctions and effective implementation of existing sanctions, as well as its efforts to end UNSC involvement in Iran,s nuclear program by returning Iran,s nuclear file to the IAEA. -- Information on Iran,s activities as chair of the UNDP and within the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). -- Development and democratization activities of the UNDP in Iran; details about the UNDP Resident Coordinator,s relationship with Iranian officials.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: EU, IAEA, UN Non-State Entities: West Bank and Gaza Strip
5) North Korea (FPOL-1). -- Plans and intentions of UNSC members, especially the P-5, to consider additional resolutions against North Korea and/or sanctions under existing resolutions. -- Information on the plans and actions of UNSC members to address efforts by North Korea to develop, test, or proliferate nuclear weapons. -- UN views on food aid to North Korea, designating it as a nation in famine, and misuse of aid. -- North Korean delegation views and activities; instructions/plans of delegation officials on North Korean WMD-related issues. -- Development and democratization activities of the UNDP in North Korea. -- Details about the UNDP Resident Coordinator's relationship with North Korean officials. -- Biographic and biometric information on ranking North Korean diplomats.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, Burma, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, North Korea, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: EU, IAEA, UN

B. Key Continuing Issues

1) UN Security Council Reform (FPOL-1). -- Positions, attitudes, and divisions among member states on UN Security Council (UNSC) reform. -- Views, plans and intentions of Perm 5 and other member states on the issue of UNSC enlargement, revision of UNSC procedures or limitation of Perm 5 privileges. -- International deliberations regarding UNSC expansion among key groups of countries: self-appointed frontrunners for permanent UNSC membership Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan (the Group of Four or G-4); the Uniting for Consensus group (especially Mexico, Italy, and Pakistan) that opposes additional permanent UNSC seats; the African Group; and the EU, as well as key UN officials within the Secretariat and the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Presidency. -- Willingness of member states to implement proposed reforms. -- Reactions of UN senior leadership towards member recommendations for UNSC reform.

Countries: Austria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: AU, EU, UN

2) Iraq (FPOL-1). -- Plans and intentions of the Perm 5, other key member states, coalition partners, and key Secretariat officials concerning Iraqi political and economic reconstruction, the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), and internal Iraqi boundaries. -- Plans and intentions of the International Organization for Migration to assist with the reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugees. -- Extent to which member states will support or subvert US positions regarding Iraqi objectives, including reconstruction efforts. -- Information on plans and intentions of the SYG, Secretariat staff, or member states affecting elections in Iraq. -- Iraqi actions to convert UNAMI to a Chapter 6 mission. -- Iraqi attitudes toward the UN. -- Reactions to and assessments of security threats directed at the UN or aid personnel attempting to render humanitarian assistance.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Iraq, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam

3) Middle East Peace Process (FPOL-1). -- Details on views, plans and intentions of key Secretariat decision-makers, member states and influential blocs and coalitions on UN engagement and role in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), including implementation of the roadmap. -- Indications that a UNGA special session on the Middle East might be reconvened. -- Developments within the UN system that would further the Arab-Israeli peace process. -- Details about Quartet (EU, UN, US, and Russia) MEPP plans and efforts, including private objectives behind proposals and envoy negotiating strategies. -- Strategy and plans of SYG special envoy regarding US positions, Quartet plans, and other (EU, Russia, UK) special envoys. -- Indications member states or donor countries might scale back UN peacekeeping presence in or aid donations to the Middle East. -- Plans of the SYG or member states to pressure the US on the MEPP. -- Views, plans and tactics of the Palestinian Authority, including its representative to the UN, to gain support in the UNSC, UNGA, or UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for its strategies and positions on

Terrorist Groups: Insurgents in Iraq, Iraqi Shia Militants International Organizations: EU, UN, World Bank
Palestinian-Israeli issues, including from Russia and EU countries, especially France, Germany, and UK. -- Views of Secretary General’s Special Envoy and UNSC on possible settlement of the Shab’a Farms dispute to include Syria/Lebanon border demarcation. -- Secretariat views regarding water management as part of the Middle East Peace Process, including domestic and regional competition for allocation. -- Quartet views on Syria’s policies and approach toward Israel and Palestinians and on Syrian motives behind and efforts to subvert or support Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. -- UN efforts to influence negotiating positions on territorial boundaries, water resources and management, and right of return. -- Views, plans and tactics of HAMAS to gain support in the UNSC or UNGA for its strategies and positions on HAMAS-Israeli issues, and on HAMAS-Palestinian Authority issues, including from Russia, China, Iran, and EU countries, especially France, Germany, and the UK. -- Information on UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) activities in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank, and its relations with HAMAS/Hizballah. -- Plans and intentions of member states to support/oppose US priority to reduce the number of Middle East resolutions.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica,

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Croatia, Egypt, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mexico, Spain, Syria, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam Terrorist Groups: HAMAS, Hizballah (Lebanese)
International Organizations: EU, UN Non-State Entities: Palestinian Authority, West Bank and Gaza Strip

4) Human Rights and War Crimes (HRWC-3). -- Plans and policies of UN leaders, member states, and foreign NGOs to promote human rights. -- Plans and intentions of member states toward the International Criminal Court (ICC), International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and other UN-related courts and tribunals dealing with human rights issues. -- Plans and intentions of UNHRC members to support or oppose US policies in the UNHRC. -- Views of UNSC and other member states on Zimbabwe’s government policies on human rights, humanitarian assistance, democracy, and candidacy for any UNSC leadership positions. -- Plans and intentions of UNSC, UN human rights entities, and members regarding Sri Lankan government policies on human rights and humanitarian assistance; UN views about appointing a Special Envoy for Sri Lanka. -- Plans and perceptions of member states toward establishment of new measures to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other systematic human rights abuses. -- Plans and intentions of member states toward proposals and resolutions supported by the US or like-minded states, including those advancing democracy; women’s rights, particularly implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1820; those pertaining to children in armed conflict; or those condemning human rights abuses in individual countries. -- Information on reactions of member states to resolutions designed to promote democracy, human rights and reforms in the Muslim world. -- Perceived success or failure of abilities and priorities of the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), and efforts by member states to undermine OHCHR independence. -- Views, intentions and tactics of UNHRC members regarding reform and the role of the US. -- Member state support for/opposition to objectives of human rights, refugee, development, and emergency relief agencies. -- Plans and intentions of member states or UN Special Rapporteurs to press for resolutions or investigations into US counterterrorism strategies and treatment of detainees in Iraq, Afghanistan or Guantanamo. -- Degree of coordination by and among human rights agencies, especially between the UN Human Rights Council, the OHCHR,

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the UNGA Third Committee, the UN Economic and Social Council, and the International Labor Organization. -- Plans and agenda for upcoming UNGA Third Committee and UNHRC sessions and world human rights conferences, particularly plans by developing countries to stymie criticism of their human rights records through procedural motions or influencing votes. -- Plans of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to sponsor resolutions or conventions in the UN restricting freedom of speech under the rubric of criminalizing “defamation of religion.” -- Details of UNHRC and OHCHR budget shortfalls.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Chad, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, France, Georgia, Iraq, Japan, Lebanon, Libya, Mexico, North Korea, Russia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam, Zimbabwe International Organizations: AU, EU, Human Rights Entities and War Crimes Courts, ICC, OIC, UN
5) UN Humanitarian and Complex Emergency Response (HREL-3). -- Information on the planning and execution of responses to humanitarian emergencies by UN member states and Secretariat; indications US assistance may be requested. -- Efforts of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), World Food Program (WFP), UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), and other UN entities to respond to and to coordinate activities in humanitarian or refugee crises, including environmental disasters. -- Views of UN Secretariat, UNSC members, and key member states on UNRWA. -- Details on effectiveness of UNHCR and OCHA leadership. -- Information on ability of UN to gain/not gain humanitarian access to troubled areas, especially in light of security concerns. -- Location of humanitarian facilities, including GPS coordinates, and number of personnel. -- Details of friction between UNHCR, OCHA and UN Security Coordinator Headquarters and field offices. -- Level of cooperation and coordination or lack thereof between UN aid agencies and non-UN aid programs. -- Interoperability and willingness to work with US coalitions in humanitarian assistance operations; willingness to provide support despite security threats. -- Indications of donor fatigue. -- Status of and member support for/opposition to efforts by UNHCR to refocus organization’s work and to redistribute programs to other agencies. -- Details on UNHCR funding shortfalls. -- Perceived ability of the UNDP to coordinate an effective UN presence in each country and to promote democratic governance. -- Plans and ability to care for and protect internally displaced persons. -- Communications and logistics problems.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: Economic-Societal Entities, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN, World Health Organization

6) Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDN-5H). -- Plans and intentions of member states to address threats to international security from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. -- Views of member states on tactical and substantive aspects of resolutions pertaining to missile proliferation, missile defense, nuclear disarmament, the IAEA, and Israel’s nuclear program. -- Information from key Secretariat decision-makers, key IAEA Secretariat staff, member states, or influential blocs or groups, such as the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), the OIC, or the Group of 77 (G-77), on the role of the UN on nuclear proliferation or addressing the expansion of capabilities to produce or use weapons of mass destruction.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, Burma, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: EU, IAEA, International Arms Control Organizations, OIC, UN

7) Terrorist Threat to UN Operations (TERR-5H). -- Plans and intentions of Secretariat and member states to respond to individuals affiliated with terrorist groups or state sponsors of terrorism threatening the safety or security of domestic and overseas UN personnel, facilities, protectees, or installations. -- Evidence of relationship or funding between UN personnel and/or missions and terrorist organizations. -- Debate in Secretariat, UNSC counterterrorism bodies (subcommittees), UN agencies and among member states about measures for funding of security for UN domestic and overseas facilities, operations, and personnel. -- Host-country intentions to secure and safeguard UN and NGO personnel. -- Reactions to and assessments of terrorist acts directed at the UN, UN personnel, UN protectees, or domestic and overseas UN installations, including foreign UN missions in New York. -- Details of UN efforts to acquire, collect, assess and disseminate threat information within the US and overseas. -- Plans of UN security offices to upgrade security at UN domestic and overseas UN facilities.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: UN

8) Burma (FPOL-1). -- Views of UNSC and member states on Burma,s policies and actions on human rights, humanitarian assistance, democracy, and attempts to play a larger UN role. -- Plans and intentions of the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General on Burma regarding future interaction with Burma and engagement with UN member states. -- Plans and intentions of the SYG.
on Burma; level of trust in his Special Adviser. -- Views of Burmese officials on the SYG, on his Special Adviser on Burma, and on key countries in the UN. -- Role of the UN in Burmese elections. -- Development and democratization activities of UNDP in Burma; details about the UNDP Resident Coordinator,s relationship with Burmese officials.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, Burma, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: EU, UN

C. UN Peace and Peacebuilding Operations.

1) Africa (FPOL-1). -- Plans and intentions of UN leaders and member states regarding peace operations, especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Chad/Central African Republic, Burundi, Cote d,Ivoire, and Liberia. -- UN peacekeeping plans and intentions regarding military operations against rebels based in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. -- Early warning information available to the Secretariat on potential threats to peace and security. -- UN views on the role of AFRICOM in African conflict resolution and post-conflict capacity building. -- UN expectations of US military involvement in African peacekeeping missions and how this may influence UN willingness to establish, curb, or end missions. -- Extent to which UN peace operations in Africa are straining the resources of the UN and member states; impact of current operations on future operations and readiness. -- UN views on peacekeeping mission creep and pressures to expand the UN role in African conflict zones, either in the form of more comprehensive “peacemaking” mission mandates or in areas where security threats demand more aggressive and timely UN-led multilateral intervention. -- Details on views of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations on operational plans, including the ability of the UN and its member states to build capacity in Africa, including by working with the AU or other regional organizations and NGOs. -- Efforts by China, France, Iran, and others to gain influence in Africa via UN peace operations. -- Information on extent of support and capabilities for peace operations by the AU and the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS). -- Official stance on deploying HIV positive troops and actual practice. -- Degree to which official peacekeeping reporting matches unofficial communications of events; views on those discrepancies. -- Views of African states that host peacekeepers regarding UN peacekeeping troops and troop contributing countries. -- Attitudes and intentions of Ghana and Rwanda concerning UN peace operations in Africa and perception of their relative ability to contribute to such efforts. -- Attitudes of other African States to Ghana/Rwanda participation and leadership.

Countries: Austria, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Congo, Cote d,Ivoire, Democratic Republic, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, India, Japan, Jordan, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay, Vietnam, Zimbabwe
International Organizations: AU, EU, ICC, NATO, UN Non-State Entities: Lord,s Resistance Army

2) Outside Africa (FPOL-1). -- Plans and intentions of UN leaders and member states regarding ongoing peace operations outside Africa. -- Willingness of UN leaders and member states to support UN peacekeeping efforts and utilize preventive diplomacy in areas of potential conflict. -- Views of member states on and plans to respond to the US-backed G-8 plan to expand global peace operations capabilities. -- Views and positions of key member states and Secretariat toward proposed resolutions, mandates, peacekeeping issues, and US-sponsored initiatives. -- Information on whether member states will utilize references to the ICC to condition support for peace operations. -- Information on deployment benchmarks, pre-deployment screening, and supply and logistic shortfalls in peace operations. -- Ability to obtain pledges and deploy capable military forces, including surge capabilities. -- Views of UNSC members, the Secretariat, and key member states on Haiti,s government policies and actions on human rights, humanitarian assistance, and democracy.

Countries: Austria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Georgia, Haiti,
3) Policy Issues (FPOL-1). -- UN member views, plans, and intentions concerning the capability of the UN to organize, lead, and carry out new, complex military operations and civilian police operations. -- Information on Secretariat or member views on or initiatives for peace operations reform. -- Information on the appointment of SYG special representatives for new peace or political operations. -- Scope, objectives, command structures, rules of engagement, and threat environment for proposed peacekeeping activities, including transportation and communications infrastructures and any available maps. -- Types, number, and capabilities of troops, equipment, and materiel that countries are willing to contribute. -- Information on interoperability of equipment and material available for logistic support. -- Information on the appointment of SYG special representatives for new peace or political operations. -- Scope, objectives, command structures, rules of engagement, and threat environment for proposed peacekeeping activities, including transportation and communications infrastructures and any available maps. -- Types, number, and capabilities of troops, equipment, and materiel that countries are willing to contribute. -- Information on interoperability of equipment and material available for logistic support. -- Information on turf battles between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support, and Department of Political Affairs over control of peace operations. -- Information on turf battles between logistic and military sides of peace operations. -- UN member views on reform of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. -- Information on troop contributing countries’ tendency to follow orders given by troop contributing country commanders vice UN field commanders. -- Influence of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on including human rights and refugee concerns within peace operations mandates. -- Host government views and concerns about UN policies toward that country. -- Influence of UN security coordinator on operational planning; field personnel reaction to UN security directives. -- Capability/plans for Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) deployments. -- Details on peacekeeper abuse of women and children; national and UN responses. -- Changes in ability of member states, especially member states of EU, AU and ECOWAS, to contribute troops to peace operations, including for economic, social, and operational reasons. -- Details on contributions of member states (in kind, personnel, or financial).

Countries: Austria, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Libya, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay, Vietnam

D. UN Security Council

1) Procedures and Dynamics (FPOL-1). -- Plans, intentions, and agendas of UNSC members and Secretariat on issues that come before the UNSC, especially voting intentions of UNSC members and priorities or frictions among the Perm 5. -- Plans and intentions of UNSC members to support or oppose US policies in the UNSC. -- Specific views and positions of key member states on US-sponsored initiatives, initiatives with implications for the US, and other proposed resolutions and mandates. -- Plans, intentions, views, positions, lobbying, and tactics of regional groups, blocs, or coalitions on issues before the UNSC, especially those that do not include the US (particularly the Africa Group, AU, EU, NAM, G-77, Rio Group, Arab League, the OIC, and the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). -- Differences in the positions of member states, differences between UN missions and their capitals, internal procedures for determining voting instructions, and voting instructions to delegations. -- Priorities, plans, and intentions of new member states joining the UNSC, and influences on them by regional groups, blocs, or coalitions on issues before the UNSC, especially those that do not include the US (particularly AU, EU, NAM, G-77, Rio Group, Arab League, and the OIC). -- Plans and intentions of member states of regional groups regarding UNSC candidacy. -- Biographic and biometric information on UNSC Permanent Representatives, information on their relationships with their capitals.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam

2) Sanctions (FPOL-1). -- UNSC member plans, intentions, and views toward sanctions issues, especially during negotiations of sanctions resolutions. -- Willingness of and efforts by UN member states to violate sanctions. -- Perceived and actual impact of sanctions on target
governments, individuals, entities, as well as on civil population. -- Plans, intentions, and agendas of UNSC sanctions committee members. -- Plans, intentions, and agendas of UNSC sanctions committee expert groups and their ability to support sanctions monitoring. -- Pressure to limit scope and length of new sanctions, especially from coalitions and regional groups. -- Views and actions of the Secretariat or member states with regard to sanctions, including to bolster UN ability to support sanctions implementation and to address violations. -- Views of target government on sanctions imposed on it.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam International Organizations: EU, UN

E. UN Management

1) UN Leadership Dynamics (FPOL-1). -- SYG’s management and decision-making style, and his influence on the Secretariat. -- Plans, measures and efforts undertaken by the SYG and subordinates on US political and bureaucratic objectives for UN management. -- Role and influence of Secretariat and other key officials with SYG and other UN system agencies. -- Views of and brokering by key officials on major issues. -- Changes in and appointment and selection process for key officials of Secretariat, specialized agency, committee, commission, and program offices in New York, Geneva, Vienna, and other UN system cities, to include special assistants and chiefs of staff. -- Personalities, biographic and biometric information, roles, effectiveness, management styles, and influence of key UN officials, to include under secretaries, heads of specialized agencies and their chief advisers, top SYG aides, heads of peace operations and political field missions, including force commanders. -- Relations between key UN officials and member states. -- Views of member states on the next SYG race, to include preferred candidates and candidates lacking UN member support. -- Views of UNSC members and other member states on Cuban, Iranian, or Syrian candidacy for any UN leadership positions.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam International Organizations: UN

2) Budget and Management Reform (FPOL-1). -- Plans, measures and efforts undertaken by the SYG and subordinates on US political and bureaucratic objectives for UN management. -- Perceptions of member states of the effectiveness of the Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to combat waste, fraud, mismanagement, and corruption. -- Effectiveness of the OIOS, in light of the review of the OIOS mandate. -- Plans and moves to implement OIOS recommendations. -- SYG’s view of the role of the OIOS. -- Secretariat attitudes toward and evidence of corruption in UN agencies and programs, and willingness to implement measures to reduce corruption. -- Plans and intentions of UN member states or the Secretariat to address corruption issues at the UN and UN agencies. -- Plans and intentions of UNDP Executive Board members to push for or block management reform proposals. -- Plans and intentions of UNDP Executive Board members or senior UNDP managers to address potential or actual cases of corruption or mismanagement by field missions, including efforts to cover up waste, fraud, or abuse. -- Internal complaints by UNDP staff about waste, fraud, or abuse and efforts by UNDP management to respond to them. -- Plans and intentions of Board members, such as Iran, to push for increased UNDP funding for programs in their own countries or those of their friends. -- Degree of independence from UN headquarters of UNDP Resident Coordinators in the field and perceptions of field staff on UN aid consolidation reforms under the “One UN” Program. -- Efforts by the G-77 Board members to develop common group platforms, especially on budget and management reform issues. -- Developments in the implementation of the performance based personnel system and contractor reform. -- Plans, intentions, and agendas of UN specialized agency executive committees. -- Impact and effectiveness of whistle-blowing provisions on the UN reform process. -- Attitudes of UN staff and member states towards extending a common whistle-blower protection program to all UN funds and programs. -- Indications of pressure by member states or groups to increase or control growth in the budget. -- Secretariat and member attitudes towards changes in the scale of assessments. -- Options under consideration to resolve financial problems. -- SYG views on and plans for responding to Government Accountability Office reports calling on the UN to more effectively implement results-based budgeting, and make further progress on management reform. -- Secretariat and member attitudes and plans to improve the UN budget process. -- Status and use of advanced information systems to
streamline UN processes.

Countries: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Egypt, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam International Organizations: UN

F. UN General Assembly Tactics and Voting Blocs (FPOL-1). -- Plans, intentions, views, positions, lobbying, and tactics of regional groups, blocs, or coalitions on issues before the General Assembly, especially those that do not include the US, i.e., the Africa Group, AU, EU, NAM, G-77, Rio Group, Arab League, the OIC, and the GRULAC. -- Details of bargaining on votes or candidacies and attempts to marginalize or undermine proposed or planned US positions or policy initiatives. -- Information on the EU agenda in the UNGA, especially as it relates to US priorities in the First, Third, and Fifth Committees. -- Information on efforts by the EU or other member states to secure additional voting rights in the UN and its specialized agencies. -- Lobbying by member states for committee membership assignments or vice presidencies. -- Information on current and likely future leadership of regional groups, blocs, and coalitions. -- Differences over positions between UN missions and their respective capitals. -- Voting instructions to delegations on key resolutions. -- Plans, intentions, and agendas of key committee chairs; member views of issues that come before these committees. -- Efforts of Third World countries to moderate, via NAM and G-77, Third World positions on development, defamation of religion, or human rights issues. -- Intentions of UN members to use non-UN bodies and working groups to bypass perceived UN bureaucracy. -- Perceptions of member states of the viability and potential impact of the US-backed Democracy Caucus. -- Biographical and biometric information on key NAM/G-77/OIC Permanent Representatives, particularly China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Senegal, and Syria; information on their relationships with their capitals.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Japan, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam International Organizations: AU, EU, OIC, UN

G. Other Substantive Issues

1) Food Security (FOOD-3). -- Status and proposals related to the UN Comprehensive Framework for Action to address the global food crisis. -- WFP activities and proposals related to reforming donor food aid policies and establishing a new standing global fund to address regularly occurring food crises. -- WFP and FAO plans and proposals regarding the impact on food prices and food security of the growing use of ethanol and biofuels. -- Internal UN responses to international calls for reform of FAO and WFP.

Countries: Afghanistan, Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ethiopia, France, Haiti, Iraq, Japan, Libya, Mexico, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam, Zimbabwe International Organizations: FAO, UN, World Animal Health Organization Non-State Entities: Palestinian Authority, West Bank and Gaza Strip

2) Climate Change, Energy, and Environment (ENVR-4). -- Country preparations for the December 2009 Copenhagen UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Meeting. -- Developments related to other UNFCCC meetings and discussions on a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. -- Perceptions of key negotiators on US positions in environmental negotiations. -- Developments on the Montreal Protocol, including reactions to US efforts to limit hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). -- Indications that member states working through the UN and its specialized agencies are not fostering environmental cooperation, partnerships and capacity building between and among member states and regional and sub-regional organizations. -- Monitoring of and compliance with UN-sponsored environmental treaties; evidence of treaty circumvention. -- Information on adherence to member states' own national environmental programs, including protection, monitoring, and cleanup efforts. -- Efforts by treaty secretariats to influence treaty negotiations or compliance. -- Information on the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly on access, benefit sharing and bio-safety. -- Information on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, including potential efforts to modify or amend its provisions. -- Information on excessive maritime claims, including those relating to ridges. -- Information on efforts to develop a
mechanism to add chemicals to the list of persistent organic pollutants. -- Information and perceptions on the strategic approach to international chemicals management, especially efforts of the EU's management program. -- Information on participation in and compliance with the UN Basel Convention. -- Status of efforts to set standards to promote

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environmental protection, including protection of forests, desertification, and invasive or endangered species. -- Efforts within the UN to protect water resources, and to promote development of alternative sources of energy.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam

International Organizations: EU, UN

3) Transnational Economic Issues (ECFS-4H). -- Information on efforts by UN member states or organizations to promote or obstruct regulatory reform, including banking and financial reforms, transparency, international law, trade, development, and foreign direct investment to reflect the Monterrey and other outcomes of the 2000 World Summit. -- Plans, intentions, and tactics of the UNGA President regarding international financial problems; views of member states regarding these plans. -- Plans and intentions of member states to support US priorities related to economic freedom and promotion of democracy. -- Secretariat or member plans to develop multilateral economic, trade, or development agreements impinging on US interests. -- Efforts by member states and the Secretariat to reconcile international differences over globalization, especially the perceived impact of globalization on human rights, labor, and environmental issues. -- Member positions on UN decisions, plans, and activities concerning environmentally sustainable economic growth through market economies, free trade, private investment, and efficient multilateral development assistance. -- Efforts to expand the global compact involving corporations committed to observing human rights, environmental, and labor standards. -- SYG's views and statements on trade issues and efforts to influence future World Trade Organization rounds. -- Plans and intentions of UN member states that may impact freedom of navigation.

Information on international taxation initiatives.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam

International Organizations: EU, FAO, International Financial Institutions and Infrastructures, UN, World Bank, World Trade Organization

4) Arms Control and Treaty Monitoring (ACTM-4). -- Plans, tactics, timetables, and draft proposals for the Eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and especially

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information related to the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and a Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone initiative, from interested individual member states (especially China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, and South Africa) and like-minded groups such as the NAM and the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden). -- Member state views of the major problems facing the NPT; whether or under what conditions states would consider withdrawing from the NPT. -- Member views on and responses to US plans and policies on missile defense and positions on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, particularly those of Russia, China, and Pakistan. -- Information on IAEA plans for safeguards, international fuel banks, or other nuclear fuel supply arrangements, and meetings of the Board of Governors at the IAEA. -- Member views on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); prospects for country ratifications and entry into force. -- Member plans for plenary meetings of the Nuclear Suppliers Group; views of the US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative. -- Readiness of member states to reform the agenda of the UN General Assembly's First Committee; proposals prepared by member states for the First Committee. -- Views of key delegations on US proposals on land mines. -- Tactical and substantive information regarding periodic arms control meetings in New York, Geneva, Vienna and elsewhere, including the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review process, UN experts group on missiles, and meetings on conventional arms.

Plans and intentions of member states to introduce new arms control or proliferation prevention measures or make significant changes to existing agreements. -- Member or Secretariat plans to address WMD proliferation, safeguards, arms control and disarmament, or other threat reduction efforts. -- Foreign attitudes on UN-sanctioned arms control negotiations. -- Biographic and biometric data on, and positions of key UN arms control interlocutors, especially candidates for the position of Director General of the IAEA, and the heads of other international institutions.
5) Health Issues (HLTH-4). -- UN, WHO, and other international organizations,

forecasts, expected impacts, plans, proposals, key studies, and reactions to major health crises and other health-related issues, including efforts on disease eradication, improving health standards and access to care and medicine, and programs to monitor and respond to emerging infectious disease outbreaks and other disasters or emergencies. -- Information on deliberations in the UN and other international health organizations on health issues and the policy positions and objectives of member states and key figures, including compromises, insertions, and items omitted in published declarations and studies. -- Information on international health organizations and relationships with countries and other organizations, including relationships with regional offices or subsidiaries. -- Details on limits and restrictions placed on international organizations to investigate reports of diseases that pose an international threat, including restrictions placed on the nationality of members of investigation teams. -- Details on disease transparency, particularly indications about inconsistent reporting of outbreaks to appropriate international organizations and delivery of specimens to WHO- and FAO-affiliated laboratories, and including discussions or agreements impacting the publicly disclosed occurrence of diseases. -- Details of discussions related to the accessibility of HIV/AIDS drugs (antiretroviral drugs or ARVs). -- Details related to the availability, accessibility, and regulation of health care, particularly medications, vaccines, and counterfeits. -- Member state attitudes toward maintenance of smallpox stocks. -- Information on global counterfeit medications to include surveillance, countermeasures, and research and development issues. -- Details on efforts to implement health-related Millennium Development Goals. -- Details on corruption in international health organizations or the corrupt use of goods and services provided for health issues by bilateral and multilateral donors and international health organizations, including WHO, UNAIDS, FAO, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. -- Details on irregularities in Global Fund fundraising, spending, and treatment of whistle blowers. -- Personalities, biographic and biometric information, roles, effectiveness, management styles, and influence of key health officials, to include the Director General of the WHO, head of UNAIDS, the Pan American Health Organization, under Secretaries, heads of specialized agencies and their chief advisers, and top aides.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey,

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6) Terrorism (TERR-5H). -- Information on plans and intentions of UN bodies and member states to respond to or address within UN fora the worldwide terrorist threat. -- Structure, plans and key figures of UN counterterrorism strategy. -- Information on plans and activities of UNSC’s four counterterrorism sub-bodies. -- Plans and intentions of member states to address terrorism by implementing anti-terrorism legislation as called for under resolutions, particularly as they relate to financial transactions. -- Views of member states on US policy toward terrorism. -- Efforts of member states to support or oppose activities undertaken by UN specialized agencies such as the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization to improve maritime and airline security. -- Information on UN support for technical assistance to member states to combat terrorism, particularly in Africa. -- Views of member states about inclusion or exclusion of terrorism against Israel in counterterrorism efforts and definition of terrorism. -- (For further requirements, see the WMCD on Terrorism Threats to US Interests at Home and Abroad, July 13, 2005.)

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam International Organizations: UN

7) Trafficking, Social, and Women’s Issues (DEPS-5H). -- Plans and intentions of member states to
support or oppose US priority to combat trafficking and exploitation of men, women, and children. -- Member state perceptions of ability of UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to follow through on strategies to support women and children through UN specialized bodies. -- Information on member efforts to combat organized crime, narcotics trafficking, and trafficking in persons. -- Plans and intentions of member states to address reproductive issues, including the aims of the EU vis-a-vis the US, GRULAC, Arab, and OIC nations. -- Member state perceptions or plans regarding efforts to reconcile religious differences worldwide. -- Information on reforms undertaken within the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and future plans of the organization. -- Member views on education initiatives.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: EU, OIC, UN

H. Intelligence and Security Topics

1) GRPO can provide text of this issue and related requirements.

2) GRPO can provide text of this issue and related requirements.

3) Foreign Nongovernmental Organizations (FPOL-1). -- Influence of key UN-affiliated foreign NGOs on UN decision-making. -- Efforts of foreign NGOs to undermine US policy initiatives. -- Foreign NGO role in, views toward, and influence on UN policies and activities on globalization, justice, human rights, the environment, and family/women/children/reproductive issues. -- Ability and capacity of foreign NGOs to assist refugees, displaced persons, and victims of disasters through the UNHCR and WFP. -- Ability and capacity of foreign NGOs to support the UN Environmental Program or national efforts with environmental protection, pollution monitoring, and cleanup efforts. -- Contacts between foreign NGOs and Secretariat staff that could involve sharing of confidential data. -- Foreign efforts to strip US or foreign NGOs of UN affiliation and to block US or foreign NGOs seeking UN affiliation. -- Efforts by member states--particularly China, Cuba, Israel, Russia, and Islamic countries--to obtain NGO affiliation for organizations supporting their policies. -- Efforts by organizations affiliated with terrorist organizations or foreign intelligence organizations to obtain NGO affiliation with the UN. -- Efforts by the EU through the Arhus convention to place NGOs on UN bureaus; reactions of member states to those efforts. -- Role of NGOs at the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (OHCHR), OHCHR, and UNHRC in the Third Committee of the UNGA.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: EU, OIC, UN

4) Telecommunications Infrastructure and Information Systems (INFR-5H). -- Current technical specifications, physical layout, and planned upgrades to telecommunications infrastructure and information systems, networks, and technologies used by top officials and their support staffs. -- Details on commercial and private VIP networks used for official communications, to include upgrades, security measures, passwords, personal encryption keys, and types of V P N versions used. -- Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of key officials, as well as limited distribution telephone numbers/directories and public switched networks (PSTN) telephone directories; dialing numbers for voice, datalink, video teleconferencing, wireless communications systems, cellular systems, personal communications systems, and wireless facsimiles. -- Information on hacking or other security incidents involving UN networks. -- Key personnel and functions of UN entity that maintains UN communications and computer networks. -- Indications of IO/IW operations directed against the UN. -- Information about current and future use of communications systems and technologies by officials or organizations, including cellular phone networks, mobile satellite phones, very small aperture terminals (VSAT), trunked and mobile radios, pagers, prepaid calling cards, firewalls, encryption, international connectivity, use of electronic data interchange, Voice-over-Internet protocol (VoIP), Worldwide interoperability for microwave access (Wi-Max), and cable and fiber networks.

Countries: Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam
International Organizations: UN CLINTON
Appendix B: War Logs

An archive of classified military documents offers an unvarnished view of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some names and details have been redacted (xxxxxxxxxxxxx) by The Times to conceal suspects’ identities, or because they might put people in danger or reveal key tactical military capabilities. Click on underlined military terms for definitions.

AFGHAN WAR LOGS:
- Taliban Tactics
- Secret War
- Use of Drones
- Pakistan ISI
- Outpost Attacked

IRAQ WAR LOGS:
- Country in Chaos
- Casualties
- Prisoner Abuse
- Iran
- Contractors
- Kurds and Ethnic Tensions

GLOSSARY
Afghan War Logs
Taliban Tactics

Threatening Calls

A Taliban mullah calls and threatens a new Afghan National Army brigade commander working in southern Afghanistan. The report illustrates how the Taliban both threatens and tests its enemies with such tactics as intimidating phone calls.

DATE 2/19/08

TITLE Intelligence Summary: Threat Against Afghan Army General

ANA MAJOR THREATENED BY TB

Organization(s) Involved: AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY, TALIBAN SOUTH

19 FEB 2008, TFZ INTSUM 568, GCTF

(SECRET//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO) ANA BDE CDR is Threatened by TB: On 17FEB2008 at 2240L, the 205th ANA BDE Commander MG Jamaladin received a call from Taliban Commander Mullah Ezat. Mullah Ezat told the ANA CDR to surrender and offered him $100,000(US) to quit working for the Afghan Army. Ezat also stated that he knows where the ANA CDR is from and knows his family. The BDE CDR called the number that Mullah Ezat had called from but there was no answer (Source Comment- this phone call has instilled fear into the new ANA BDE commander and made him much more cautious. It is unlikely that the TB will follow through with their threats; they are likely testing the new CDR).
Recruiting Civilians

Mullah Juma Khan, an insurgent leader actively fighting the Americans, attended the memorial of a dead insurgent fighter. With 40 fighters by his side, the mullah spoke to the crowd. He tried to incite anger at the coalition forces for causing the death of the fighter and invited the crowd to join the fight. He cried as he spoke generally of the death of a woman and child and said that more than 30 local people had been killed. The report reveals a powerful Taliban tactic: to use emotional speeches to persuade civilians to join the fight.

DATE 5/9/09

TITLE Convincing Civilians to Join the Fight

MULLAH JUMA KHANS ACTIVITY IN GHAZIABAD

Organization(s) Involved: OPPOSING MILITANT FORCES

09 MAY 2009, TF DUKE INTSUM 285, NSIGCTF

(S//REL TO USA, GCTF, ISAF, NATO) Insurgent Leader Mullah Juma Khan Went To The House Of XXXXXXXXXX In XXXXXXXXXX, Ghaziabad District, To Pay Respects To A Dead Insurgent Fighter. Mullah Juma Khan Spoke About Current Events In Helgal Valley, Ghaziabad District And Recruited People At The Memorial To Become Insurgent Fighters (08MAY09). On 05 May 2009, Mullah ((Juma)) Khan went to the house of XXXXXXXXXX/XXX/XXX// in XXXXXXXXXX/XXX/XXX//, Ghaziabad District, Konar Province, Afghanistan. (Field Comment-For more information and overhead imagery of XXXXXXXXXX house refer to XXXXXXXXXX dated 28 December 2008.) Juma traveled to XXXXXXXXXX, Ghaziabad District from Helgal //MGRS: 42SYD112962//, Ghaziabad District. Juma made this visit to pay respects for a dead insurgent fighter. The dead insurgent was XXXXXXXXXX. On 03 May 2009, XXXXXXXXXX was killed by a mortar during the attack against the Tsunel Vehicle Patrol Base (VPB) East Observation Post (OP), Ghaziabad District. (Field Comment-For more information on this attack REFER to Task Force (TF) Raider INTSUM 291 dated 03 May 2009.) XXXXXXXXXX was skilled with using mortar tubes and rocket propelled grenade launchers. Juma brought with him 40 insurgent fighters carrying weapons. The weapons included three //Zekuwak// heavy machine guns, one DSHK heavy machine gun and one mortar tube. (Comment-The weapons were bundled in blankets to make backpacks. Juma said this is what was in them.) The fighting group traveled with Juma to prevent themselves and their weapons from being destroyed or captured by Coalition Forces (CF) and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) operating in Helgal Valley, Ghaziabad District. (Field Comment-Helgal Valley is the valley from Abragal //XXXXXXXXXXXXX//, Ghaziabad District to Helgal, Ghaziabad District.) Also present at XXXXXXXXXX House was XXXXXXXXXX and 40 other unknown guests from the Gojer Tribe to pay respect to XXXXXXXXXX. Juma gave a speech to motivate the people to continue fighting against CF and ANSF.

(S//REL TO USA, GCTF, ISAF, NATO) Juma first promised he will give orders to the village elders of Helgal, Ghaziabad District to release the prisoners to CF. (Field Comment-Report is referring to the prisoners taken in the 01 May 2009 attack on OP Bari Alai. For more information refer to TF Raider INTSUM 289 dated 01 May 2009.) The residents of Helgal Valley, Ghaziabad District asked Juma to have the prisoners released so CF would stop hunting for the prisoners in Helgal Valley. From 01 May 2009 to 05 May 2009, more than 30 residents of Helgal Valley, Ghaziabad District were killed. According to Juma those killed included insurgent leaders Hajji ((Said)), Hajji ((Daim)) and Hajji ((Khwashah)). (Comment-The Taliban are trying to keep the actual number quiet. There was a lot of new unmarked graves in Helgal when I traveled through there.) Juma cried while telling the people an unnamed woman and her baby were killed while the woman was nursing the baby. (Comment-He did not say exactly how, when or where.) Juma then told the people they needed to be angry at CF and ANSF for causing this tragedy.

(S//REL TO USA, GCTF, ISAF, NATO) Juma plans to destroy the Tsunel VPB. Juma invited everyone who wants to fight to join the fighters who traveled with him. On the evening of 05 May 2009,
planned to lead these fighters to / /, Ghaziabad District. Juma stated he is in communication with the insurgent leaders in / /, Ghaziabad District; Arzigal / /, Naray District, Konar Province; and / /, Naray District. Juma and the other insurgent leaders are planning an attack against the Tsunel VPB from the north and south sides of the Konar River, Ghaziabad District. (Comment-He did not talk about the exact plan or when the fight will occur.) On 05 May 2009, 25 members of the Gojer Tribe present at the memorial decided to fight with and agreed to travel with him.

(S//REL TO USA, GCTF, ISAF, NATO) There is one fighter named in who keeps trying to attack the VPB East OP by himself. On 04 May 2009, the unnamed brother of was killed while trying to recover their unnamed cousins body from the mountain the VPB East OP, Ghaziabad District is built on. (Comment-Someone at the memorial said he activated a mine.) On 03 May 2009, the unnamed cousin was killed during the attack on the VPB East OP, Ghaziabad District. Juma said not to be like who will be killed without getting his revenge because he fights by himself. (Comment-He meant he was the Taliban leader in Ghaziabad District and not to fight without his order.) has a FPK rifle. The other remaining fighters from previous attacks against VPB East OP, Ghaziabad District are in , Ghaziabad District taking shelter in the forest waiting for orders.
Kidnapping and Murder

A man and his nephew were kidnapped by insurgents -- just one of the methods they use to sow fear among the local population. The man was killed, and his body left in a village.

DATE 3/6/08

TITLE Report of Kidnapping and Murder of an Afghan Police Officer's Brother

On or about 06 MAR 08, INS kidnapped XXXXXXXXXX and his Nephew XXXXXXXXXX from their home in Tutakhel, Zormat District. On the night of 08 MAR 08, XXXXXXXXXX was killed. XXXXXXXXXX was blindfolded and he was shot in the chest approximately 16 times with an AK-47. The body along with AK-47 shells were dumped in the village of Chawni to make it look like XXXXXXXXXX was executed there. ANP assessed that the execution did not take place in Chawni because they interviewed all the personnel living in the area where the body was dumped and no one claimed to hear any gunfire. XXXXXXXXXX's nephew XXXXXXXXXX is still being held hostage by insurgents. No new information exists to XXXXXXXXXX's whereabouts and no ransom has been demanded by INS. XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXX were reportedly kidnapped because XXXXXXXXXX's older brother, XXXXXXXXXX, is an AUP patrolman.NFTR.
Suicide Truck Bombs

The Taliban stole four Afghan National Army trucks, which the report says they planned to use for suicide bombings. The report provides an example of how the Taliban employ trickery as an effective weapon against a more technologically advanced foe.

DATE 11/20/06

TITLE Report of Use of Afghan National Army Trucks as Suicide Bombs

TB TO USE ANA TRUCKS AS SVBIEDS

Organization(s) Involved: TALIBAN

20061210-CJ2X INTSUM -(N/I C)

RC CAPITAL - TALIBAN captured Four ANA trucks to be used as SVBIEDs in KABUL City, KABUL Province. (B72)

DOI: 20 Nov 06; OHR: CIINTREP-ADET-IX-480-06

(N/I C) 1. The TALIBAN has transported four captured ANA pick-up trucks to KABUL District, KABUL Province for use as SVBIEDs. They intend to use the pick-up trucks to target ANA compounds, ISAF and GOA convos, as well as high-ranking GOA and ISAF officials. The four pick-up trucks are described as standard sand-coloured ANA FORD RANGER pick-up trucks; license plates are unknown. The four trucks were also accompanied by an unknown quantity of ANA uniforms to facilitate carrying out the attacks.

2. The four trucks were captured during an attack on an ANA convoy in SHAJOY District (GRID NOT AVAILABLE), ZABUL Province. The attack took place sometime during the week of 20 to 26 Nov 06, resulting in the deaths of two TALIBAN fighters. However, the remaining TALIBAN elements were able to capture a total of six ANA FORD RANGER pick-up trucks and some uniforms prior to fleeing. Four of the pick-ups were sent to KABUL District while the remaining two were sent to PARWAN, KAPISA, or GHAZNI Province, no further information.

3. The Afghan Ministry of Defence (MOD) is aware of the vehicles capture and plate numbers. However, they are keeping all information related to the six vehicles quiet, while MOD and Afghan National Police (ANP) search for them. The four pick-ups supposedly entered KABUL District. This is not yet confirmed; however, the MOD and ANP are aggressively searching for them in KABUL City area.

4. In addition, on approximately 28 Nov 06, ANP forces seized 20 BM-1 rockets in the MOSAHI District (GRID NOT AVAILABLE), KABUL Province. The 20 rockets were set up and positioned to be fired at KABUL City; however, no one was found in the area, NFI. The area in which the rockets were found has been used in the past by HIG Commander DERVISH to conduct rocket attacks on KABUL City. It is possible that these rockets belonged to DERVISH, but this has not been confirmed.

This information MUST NOT be disseminated to AFG authorities.
Attacks on Afghan Drivers

Armed men in Afghan Army uniforms ambushed three Afghan trucks departing a nearby base after delivering supplies. The drivers were allowed to live. As the wreckage of their trucks blazed and smoldered on the road, the drivers turned up at an outpost, an incident report said. One had been wounded by shrapnel. Insurgents had sliced off the others’ ears.

DATE 3/17/07

TITLE Attacks on Afghan Army Drivers

170855Z LN trucks leaving the Kamu Combat Outpost (heading East, returning to Naray after delivering Cl I supplies) were ambushed by an enemy element at an illegal check point (being reported by the LN truck drivers as approximately 50x enemy pax), approximately 1km east of the Kamu Combat Outpost. Once the LN vehicles were disabled, the LN drivers were attacked individually by the enemy pax (2 of the driver's ears were cut off, and 1x driver had shrapnel in his thigh from the initial attack). TF Titan sent a US/ANA QRF element to the location of the attack, and received SAF as they were approaching the ambush site. TF Titan returned SAF, and CAS and CCA were diverted to support. The enemy broke contact, and TF Titan moved to the LN trucks and their drivers. The 3x LN wounded walked themselves to the Kamu Outpost, and TF Titan continued to provide medical assistance. At 1130Z TF Titan updates there is a suspicious compound near the ambush site, with 3x pax in BDU uniforms around the compound. One of the LN drivers that was wounded indicated the men who attacked them were located at the same suspicious compound prior to the attack, and were also wearing BDU's. TF Titan did not take any action on the compound at this time, but have taken 6x road workers back to the Kamu Combat outpost who were witnesses to the attack. All elements are RTB at the kamu COP, and TF Titan is continuing to develop a COA to remove the 3x trucks that were attacked (and are currently burning and blocking the road). NFTR ATT ISAF 03-361

1419Z All 3 Casualties currently at Camp Keating, 2 Adults with severed ears, 1 with minor Shrapnal injury to right leg. all 3 are stable. All thee casualties are being evaluated by medical personnel. The 2 LN’s with missing ears are refusing higher medical care att

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“View Is Bleaker Than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan”
Secret War

Botched Raid

Five American rockets destroyed a compound in Paktika Province in an attempt to kill a top commander of Al Qaeda. Task Force 373, a classified Special Operations unit of Army Delta Force operatives and members of the Navy Seals, was sent to finish the job. They did not find the commander. But they did find that seven children had been killed in the strike. While American military officials tried to explain that there had been no indications that women and children were in the compound, anger spread across the region.

DATE 6/17/07

TITLE Botched Night Raid

NOTE: The following information (TF-373 and HIMARS) is Classified Secret / NOFORN. The knowledge that TF-373 conducted a HIMARS strike must be kept protected. All other information below is classified Secret / REL ISAF.

(S) Mission: O/O SOTF conducts kinetic strike followed with HAF raid to kill/capture ABU LAYTH AL LIBI on NAI 2.

(S)Target: Abu Layth Al Libi is a senior al-Qaida military commander, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) leader. He is based in Mir Ali, Pakistan and runs training camps throughout North Waziristan. Collection over the past week indicates a concentration of Arabs IVO objective area.

Result: 6 x EKIA; 7 x NC KIA, 7 x detainees

(S) Summary: HAF departed for Orgun-E to conduct link-up and posture to the objective immediately after pre-assault fires. On order, 5 rockets were launched and destroyed structures on the objective (NAI 2). The HAF quickly inserted the assault force into the HLZ. ISR reported multiple UIMs leaving the objective area. The assault force quickly conducted dismounted movement to the target area and established containment on the south side of the objective. During the initial assault, dedicated air assets engaged multiple MAMs squirting off the objective area. GFC assessed 3 x EKIA squirters north and 3 x EKIA squirters south of the compound were neutralized from air asset fires. The assault force quickly maneuvered with a SQD element on the remaining squirters. The squirter element detained 12 x MAMs and returned to the objective area. GFC passed initial assessment of 7 x NC KIA (children). During initial questioning, it was assessed that the children were not allowed out of the building, due to UIMs presence within the compound. The assault force was able to uncover 1 x NC child from the rubble. The MED TM immediately cleared debris form the mouth and performed CPR to revive the child for 20 minutes. Due to time restrictions, TF CDR launched QRF element to action a follow-on target (NAI 5). They quickly contained the objective and initiated the assault. The objective was secured and the assault force will continue SSE. The local governor was notified of the current situation and requests for assistance were made to cordon the AO with support from ANP and local coalition forces in search of HVI. A PRT is enroute to AO.

1) Target was an AQ Senior Leader

2) Patterns of life were conducted on XXXXXXXXXXXX from XXXXXXXXXXXX(strike time) with no indications of women or children on the objective

3) The Mosque was not targeted nor was it struck initial reports state there is no damage to the Mosque
4) An elder who was at the Mosque stated that the children were held against their will and were intentionally kept inside.

UPDATE: 18 0850Z June 07

- Governor Khapalwak has had no success yet in reaching President Karzai (due to the Presidents busy schedule today) but expects to reach him within the hour (PoA reached later in the afternoon - 1400Z)

- The Governor conducted a Shura this morning, in attendance were locals from both the Yahya Yosof Khail &amp; Khail Districts

- He pressed the Talking Points given to him and added a few of his own that followed in line with our current story

- The atmospherics of the local populous is that they are in shock, but understand it was caused ultimately by the presence of hoodlums

- the people think it is good that bad men were killed

- the people regret the loss of life among the children

- The Governor echoed the tragedy of children being killed, but stressed this couldve been prevented had the people exposed the presence of insurgents in the area

- The Governor promised another Shura in a few days and that the families would be compensated for their loss

- The Governor was asked what the mood of the people was and he stated that "the operation was a good thing, and the people believe what we have told them"

- Additionally, the people accused the Yahya Khail Chief of Police and his officers of corruption and collusion with TB in the area

- The Governor and the Provincial NDS Chief relieved the CofP and his officers, disarmed them, and they are currently detained and enroute to Sharana at this time unknown as to total numbers detained (MTF on this incident)
Outnumbered

A small group of Army Special Forces troops and Afghan soldiers were on a mission on a remote snowy hilltop to capture senior members of a militant group. They soon discovered that they were outnumbered, and reinforcements were hours away.

DATE 4/6/08

TITLE Bushmaster

At 0258Z, TF Bushmaster reported receiving small arms fire from an unknown number of AAF at 42S XE 248 042. (Conducting offensive operation Commando Wrath.) Elements in heavy contact on objective, with casualties, decided medevac on station as part of assault package. At 0337Z, TF Bushmaster requested an urgent and priority MEDEVAC for 2x US MIL WIA. 1x patient has gunshot wound to ankle and leg, 2x patient has gunshot wound to the arm. Total BDA at this time is 2x US MIL WIA and 1x LN Terp KIA. At 0348Z, TF Bushmaster requested additional CCA. At 0347Z, TF Bushmaster reported PIO 2x insurgents moving toward OBJ Patriot, friendly forces engaged them and no further contact. Also a lot of VHF COMMS coming from the back side of the ridge to the west of Kendal. At 0356Z, TF Bushmaster reported an additional 2x US MIL WIA. At 0358Z, TF Bushmaster reported receiving small arms fire from high ground around their LOC. At 0417Z, TF Bushmaster reports effective sniper fire from a building roof north of their position at this time. At 0616Z, PROFET 72 reports ARF inserted at XXXXXXXXXXXX, unable to pick up any casualties ATT. At 0633Z, TF Bushmaster reported CDO is preparing to clear MQS and buildings, the rest of OBJ Panther is securing at 0435Z. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, PROFET 72 reports ARF is engaged with INS, SAF and sniper fire from buildings, working CAS at this time. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, Hawg-51 is rotating off station, Hawg-53 coming on station at this time. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported possible grid for MEDEVAC as 42S XE 285 008. At 0503Z, TF Bushmaster reports they are pinned down by sniper fire north of their position. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reports they are combat ineffective and request reinforcement at this time. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reports they are going to break COMMS at this time and relay COMMS through ARF. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported MEDEVAC HLZ 42S XE 2858 0050; 6 x WIA located there; precedence and Type unknown ATT; HLZ is not secure AT. At 0513, TF Bushmaster reported that there are 50-100 insurgents moving to reinforce against Bushmaster elements from the SW. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster requested MEDEVACs for 4x US MIL WIA, and 2x ANA WIA. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported they have established a defensive position in a small building. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported HLZ is clear to receive MEDEVAC at this time. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, INTEL reports TF Bushmaster has correct compound for Ghafoor at this time and are continuing to clear at XXXXXXXXXXXX. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported consolidating forces at north end of Wadi, assessing number of casualties ATT and reporting insurgents on high ground all around their location, requesting CAS to engage insurgents location. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported that there are 9 total casualties; status of 3 new ones unknown ATT. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, Dustoff-34 reports receiving fire. At 0609Z, TF Bushmaster reports SSE continuing, found multiple weapons, mortars and small arms. At 0616Z, TF Bushmaster reported receiving fire from all around their position ATT. Working to link up with GR 10 and 12 and move to initial HLZ at XXXXXXXXXXXX. At 0618Z, TF Bushmaster reports using CAS at this time to engage insurgents and need more suppression from CAS ATT. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bayonet MEDOPS reports tracking 6 WIA were picked up from HLZ/POI, and are enroute to JAF AT. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported remaining CDOS at JAF are consolidating to PZ posture ATT. Prepping to L/U and reinforce, staging at PRT Kalagush. Number of available CDOS at JAF are 5x PAX now available. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reports 6 casualties at their location, and requesting a MEDEVAC at this time. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported their consolidated location as 42S XE 2855 0070. At 0639Z, TF Bushmaster reported their consolidated location as 42S XE 2855 0070. At 0639Z, TF Bushmaster reported 1x US MIL WIA with gunshot wound to the pelvis and arm, 1x ANA with broken femur and assessing the 4x remaining ANA WIA. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported 8 detainees for Exfil. At XXXXXXXXXXXX, TF Bushmaster reported slash on 2 targets with GBUs. BDA 4x US MIL WIA, 5x ANA WIA, 1x ANA KIA, and 1x LN TERP KIA. ISAF Tracking # 04-149.
**Plea for Guns and Boots**

In a long briefing with American military leaders, the head of Afghanistan’s spy agency, the National Directorate of Security, provided a detailed description of the pressing security concerns facing the country. But at the end of the meeting, he laid out what may be his biggest problem: the Central Intelligence Agency would no longer be bankrolling his spies, so he could be facing a 30 percent budget cut. He asked if the Americans could provide any weapons and boots.

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**DATE** 3/8/08

**TITLE** A Langley Subsidiary

**ATTENDEES:**

Amrullah Saleh Director General, National Directorate of Security

Major General David Rodriguez Commander, Regional Command-East, ISAF

Mr. Hasas Director of Intelligence, National Directorate of Security

Robert Maggi Foreign Policy Advisor, Regional Command-East, ISAF

XXXXXXXXXXXX Command Linguist, Regional Command-East, ISAF

Captain XXXXXXXXXXX Recorder, Regional Command-East, ISAF

Sergeant XXXXXXXXXXX CJ2 Analyst, Regional Command-East, ISAF

**SUMMARY:**

**Security in Afghanistan**

- The greatest concern for Director Saleh is security along the highways, particularly in Ghazni and Zabul, where he believes government officials cannot travel without security. He believes that the shift in Taliban focus from attacks on district centers to attacks along the highways is attracting recruits who are not actually Taliban but use the name to gain legitimacy, increasing the perception of the size, scope and strength of the insurgency and demonstrating GIRoA weakness.

- Saleh believes that there has been noticeable progress in Wardak, but it will be temporary unless it is extended to Ghazni and Zabul, as well as other areas.

- Director Saleh's second major concern is for attacks in the major population centers of Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, and Masar-e-Sharif.

- MG Rodriguez reported that there have been over 100 small drug labs destroyed in Nangarhar, primarily in Achin, with no complaint from the locals, and that the 101st brought an additional helicopter battalion that would assist with efforts there.

- Saleh reported that the #1 priority for the Afghan government is to fix the Ministry of Interior, indicating that the leadership was involved in considerable corruption. He remarked that it would be up to the US to fix it. He said he proposed to the British that they provide
management classes.

Tag Ab

o Director Saleh says that BG Razaq will serve well over Tagab and is a good commander. At the suggestion of putting an ANA force in Tagab, MG Rodriguez acknowledged the possibility of using the XXXXXXXXXXXX.

o Saleh acknowledged that the XXXXXXXXXXXX Governor is active HiG, indicating concern.

o Saleh noted that XXXXXXXXXXXX were all previously HiG who have turned Taliban, are not reconciliable, and must be "taken out". MG Rodriguez noted that there would be a meeting with the XXXXXXXXXXXX NDS to determine how to approach this issue.

Pakistan

o Saleh believes that Hekmatyar is a reemerging figure being pushed to become more politically active, and expects he will be more influential in 2008 and 2009. Saleh believes that it is in the best interest of Afghanistan for Hekmatyar to remain in his current position, and that his capture or reconcilliation would destabilize Afghanistan, based on his influence in Wardak and parts of Kapisa. They gave Hekmatyar's last known address to ISI, but they did not action it and Saleh expects them to facilitate Hekmatyar's move to another location.

o Saleh observed several actions by the Pakistan Military indicating their lack of will to commit to security operations in the FATA:

They have forces stationed at the port, where there is no immediate threat forces that could better serve along the border.

Following an ambush on a PAKMIL unit crossing the tunnel into North Waziristan about six weeks ago, the commander called Maulawi Ahmadjan to broker a peace with the insurgent force.

They lost control of Alizai last month and are not attempting to retake it because it is not in their interest, even though it is in their country.

They have asked the US to allow them time to clear each insurgent group, one by one, hoping that they will be allowed unlimited time in which the insurgents' focus will turn away from Pakistan and toward Afghanistan.

They know where XXXXXXXXXXX(travel to Miram Shah and Peshawar) and XXXXXXXXXXX are, but will not go after them.

o Saleh assessed that Pakistan ISI and the Army will work to ensure that a weak Prime Minister is installed to preclude conflict with Musharraf. He described the wide-ranging control that the Army had throughout the government and industry, leaving little under the responsibility of the civilian government. He noted that there would be little change until a civilian government had real control.

Saleh predicts that General Kiyani will take a more active leading role as he realizes the breadth of his power.

o Saleh sees potential for the Quetta Shura to weaken and noted that the Miram Shah shura has turned toward criminality.

"Enemies of Afghanistan" flip-book

MG Rodriguez provided the prototype "Enemies of Afghanistan" targets booklet to Director Saleh, describing that it would be provided to ANP and that it could be updated in the future. When asked if it should only include higher tier targets or all targets, Saleh said that it would be
Secure Communication

- Saleh reported that he has discussed the XXXXXXXXXX with GEN McNeill and MG Champoux and that ISAF is supposed work on it next week.

Logar NDS Chief

- MG Rodriguez reported that the new Logar NDS chief is working well with coalition and working to build trust with the ANA and ANP.

Release Requests

- Director Saleh reported that the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Justice had confirmed that XXXXXXXXXX, who had been in US custody for 4 years and was reported to have been recently turned over to the ANDF, was not in Afghan custody, implying that he must still be in US custody. MG Rodriguez said we would figure it out.

- MG Rodriguez reported that XXXXXXXXXX would remain in US custody for further questioning. Saleh had little reaction and did not seem concerned.

- Director Saleh asked that XXXXXXXXXX be released to the NDS in Kabul, rather than in Nangarhar, and said that he would personally take responsibility.

Request for Support

- Director Saleh reported that the Afghan government has taken responsibility for the NDS budget, previously handled by the CIA, which would likely result in a 30% cut in the coming year. Saleh asked that, if possibly, RC-East provide AK, 9mm, and PKM ammunition; any other supplies, such as boots; and construction materials. He said that if this was possible, he would send officers from the NDS logistics office to facilitate.

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“View Is Bleaker Than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan”
Use of Drones

Hammer vs. Fly

An Air Force Predator drone spotted a group of insurgents suspected of planting roadside bombs and within minutes unleashed a Hellfire missile. When ground troops reached the crater caused by the $60,000 missile, all that was left was a shovel and a crowbar. This report captures the strange nature of the drone war in Afghanistan: missile-firing robots killing shovel-wielding insurgents in a remote-controlled war against a low-tech but resilient insurgency.

DATE 12/9/08

TITLE Hammer and Fly

ISAF # 12-0374

At 1850Z, TF 2-2 using PREDATOR (UAV) PID insurgents emplacing IEDs at 41R PR 9243 8202, 2.7km NW of FOB Hutal, Kandahar. TF 2-2 using PREDATOR engaged with 1x Hellfire missile resulting in 1x INS KIA and 1x INS WIA. ISAF tracking #12-374

UPDATE 100127D:

TF 2-2 DEPLOYED TO COMPOUND THAT THE WOUNDED INS FLED TO. FF HAVE CAPTURED THE INJ INS AND ARE CURRENTLY PURSUING OTHER INS THAT FLED THE COMPOUND.

UPDATE 100300D: TF 2-2 DETAINED A TOTAL OF 8X PAX TO INCLUDE THE 1X WOUNDED INS FROM EARLIER PREDATOR HELLFIRE STRIKE.

UPDATE 100402D:

A SECOND QRF TEAM IS NOW EXPLOITING THE IMPACT SITE. 5X DETAINNEES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO FOB HUTAL AND 3X HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO THE DC.

UPDATE 100512D:

FF EXPLOITED THE IMPACT POINT AND FOUND 1X SHOVEL AND 1X PRYBAR. ALL FF ARE RTR.

BDA: 1X KILLED INS

1X WOUNDED INS

7X DETAINED LNs/POSS INS

EVENT CLOSED AT 0049Z
Lost Reaper Drone

A Reaper drone, equipped with advanced radar and Hellfire missiles, lost its satellite link to a pilot who was steering it remotely from a base in the United States. Ordered by commanders, an Air Force F-15E fighter jet shot down the $13 million aircraft before it soared unguided into neighboring Tajikistan. Before the drone reached the ground, the satellite link was restored and controllers steered it into a remote mountainside. While reports reveal that the military in Afghanistan lost many of the tiny five-pound surveillance drones, losing an armed Reaper, with its 66-foot wingspan and advanced technology, presented greater dangers.

DATE 9/13/09
TITLE Lost Drone

An F15 was ordered to shoot down a REAPER UAV that had lost its control link in the south of Afghanistan. All efforts were made to re-establish the link before a decision was made to shoot the UAV down prior it crossing into TAJIKISTAN. The CAOC selected an unpopulated area over which to down the aircraft. An F15 fired on the REAPER and it destroyed its engine, however the link was re-established and the controller was able to guide it into a mountain in RAGH District. The GRID of the downed REAPER is Lat XXXXXXXXXXX Long XXXXXXXXXXX// Keypad: XXXXXXXXXXX. There were no sensitive items on board the REAPER but it did go down with its ordnance (Hellfire and GBU-12). NFTR.

***Event closed at 140210D*

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“View Is Bleaker Than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan”
Pakistan ISI

Working Two Sides

Gen. Hamid Gul served as the head of the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence from 1987 to 1989 when the United States and Pakistan worked together running a network of insurgents, then called the mujahedeen, against the Soviet Union. Now, the documents suggest, General Gul works against American interests by supporting the Afghan Taliban and providing them strategic advice. This threat report says General Gul was present at a meeting in Wana, the capital of South Waziristan, in January 2009. There, several older Arab men, presumably from Al Qaeda, and Afghan Taliban commanders discussed with Mr. Gul an attack with suicide bombers in Afghanistan to avenge the death of a leading member of Al Qaeda, Osama al-Kini, in an American drone attack.

DATE 1/5/09

TITLE Former Pakistani Spy Master

INS MEET TO PLAN AN SVBIED ATTACK

Organization(s) Involved: FOREIGN FIGHTERS, INTER-SERVICES INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE, OPPOSING MILITANT FORCES

14 JAN 2009, TF CASTLE INTSUM 4311, NSI

(SECRET//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO) AAF MOVE BLUE JINGLE TRUCK SVBIED TO SAROBI DISTRICT

ON 5 JANUARY 2009, FROM 2100 TO 2300 HOURS LOCAL TIME, AAF COMMANDERS ((NAZIR)), ((HALLIMULLAH)), ((MALANG)) BASED IN WANAA, SOUTH WAZIRISTAN AGENCY (SWA), FEDERALLY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS (FATA), PAKISTAN, HELD A MEETING TO DISCUSS THEIR PLANS TO Avenge THE DEATH OF ZAMARAI. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED AT THE RESIDENCE OF XXXXXXXXXX IN WANA. ALSO IN ATTENDANCE WERE THREE UNIDENTIFIED OLDER ARAB MALES, WHO WERE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT. (SOURCE COMMENT: THE ARABS WERE BELIEVED TO BE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY HAD A LARGE SECURITY CONTINGENT WITH THEM.) AT LEAST ONE OF THE THREE UNIDENTIFIED ARABS IN ATTENDANCE WAS PROFICIENT IN THE PASHTUN LANGUAGE AND THE ARABS WERE ACCOMPANIED BY APPROXIMATELY 20 ARAB BODYGUARDS. ((HAMID GUL)), A FORMER MEMBER OF PAKISTAN'S INTER-SERVICES INTELLIGENCE (ISI), WAS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING ALSO. HAMID GUL WAS DESCRIBED AS AN OLDER MAN AND A VERY IMPORTANT PERSON FROM ISI. (COMMENT: HAMID GUL WAS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ISI FROM 1987-1989 AND, ACCORDING TO ISI, HAS NOT BEEN AN OFFICIAL WITH ISI SINCE THAT TIME. IT WAS NOT KNOWN WHETHER HAMID GUL WAS ACTING WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT OF ISI, OR WHETHER ANY PORTIONS OF ISI WERE AWARE OF HIS ACTIVITIES.)

THE MEETING ATTENDEES WERE SADDAENNED BY THE NEWS OF ZAMARAI'S DEATH AND DISCUSSED PLANS TO COMPLETE ZAMARAI'S LAST MISSION BY FACILITATING THE MOVEMENT OF A SUICIDE VEHICLE-BORNE IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE (SVBIED) FROM PAKISTAN TO AFGHANISTAN THROUGH THE KHAN PASS, VARIANT: KHAN PASS. (COMMENT: THE KHAN PASS IS LOCATED IN SWA AND HAS BEEN FREQUENTLY USED BY AAF AND ARAB FORCES IN THE PAST.) THE SVBIED WAS DESCRIBED AS A DARK BLUE MAZDA JINGA TRUCK WITH A GRAYISH WHITE HOOD. AS OF 3 JANUARY, THE SVBIED WAS LOCATED IN AZAM WARSAK, SWA. DURING THE MEETING, THE ATTENDEES FORMULATED THE PLAN TO MOVE THE SVBIED, DRIVEN BY AN UNIDENTIFIED ARAB, ON 10 JANUARY 2009 THROUGH THE KHAN PASS. THE MILITANTS PLANNED TO TARGET SAROBI, AFGHANISTAN, WITH THE SVBIED. (COMMENT: SAROBI IS LIKELY A REFERENCE TO SAROBI DISTRICT, PAKTIKA PROVINCE.) HAMID GUL ENCOURAGED THE AAF LEADERS TO FOCUS THEIR OPERATION INSIDE OF AFGHANISTAN IN EXCHANGE FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN'S SECURITY FORCES TURNING A BLIND EYE TO THE PRESENCE OF AAF COMMANDERS AND FIGHTERS IN PAKISTAN (NFI). ADDITIONALLY, THE AAF LEADERS APPROVED A PLAN TO SEND 50 ARAB AND 50 WAZIRI FIGHTERS TO GHAZNI PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN IN EARLY FEBRUARY 2009. ACCORDING TO HAMID GUL, THE AERIAL THREATS IN THE AREA WERE CONTROLLED FROM THE AIRPORT IN WANA.
Suicide Training

This report suggests that a member of the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence is in charge of suicide bombing operations in Kabul, and that he is a graduate of the Haqqania madrasa near Peshawar. The report outlines the general process of preparing a suicide attack.

DATE 12/19/06

TITLE The Suicide Training Process

POSSIBLE IED ATTACKS IN KABUL

Organization(s) Involved:

24 DEC 2006, ISAF CJ2X INTSUM 06100, NIS

(XXXXXXXXXXXX) RC CAPITAL - Possible suicide attack in KABUL. (C?3)

DOI: 18 Dec 06; OHR: RO FHT/1929.

(XXXXXXXXXXXX) A network of both Afghani and Pakistani terrorists has been planning and executing suicide attacks in KABUL City starting with unknown date. They are carrying out these sorts of operations in present. The entire process runs cyclically.

The process includes: training of suicide attackers, reconnaissance of operation area, operation planning, transport and hosting of suicide attackers and the execution of the attacks.

Generally responsible (but in an unknown manner) for suicide operations in KABUL City is XXXXXXXXXX/ PAKISTAN. He is an ISI member in XXXXXXXXXX( Intelligence Service XXXXXXXXXX) office in XXXXXXXXXX and part of his job is XXXXXXXXXX. (OPR COMMENT: Source was unable to further specify this job function. ENDS.) He graduated DAR AL ULOM-E HAQQANIA (religious school) having XXXXXXXXXX as one of his teachers.

Training: The suicide attackers are trained in GHALANI CAMP MOHMAND GHAR and MAULANA Jalaluddin HAQQANI’S camp located in northern WALERISTAN.

Reconnaissance, planning and transportation: Responsible for reconnaissance of the area, planning and transporting the suicide attackers from PAKISTAN to AFGHANISTAN is XXXXXXXXXX. First, before bringing the attackers, XXXXXXXXXX travelled to KABUL in order to check the local situation and to get specific information from XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXX, two police officers working in XXXXXXXXXX branch of KABUL City Police. After getting the necessary information, he returned to PAKISTAN and started making plans supervised by AL ZAWHIRI, XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXX. Presently he lives in XXXXXXXXXX.

Hosting: At the completion of the planning process, XXXXXXXXXX started bringing the suicide attackers to KABUL and delivering them to XXXXXXXXXX locals. These XXXXXXXXXX are: XXXXXXXXXX are involved in weapons and drug smuggling. They have links with PD XXXXXXXXXX police and PD XXXXXXXXXX and PD XXXXXXXXXX NDS and Anti-terrorism Department of MOI. These XXXXXXXXXX people harbour the suicide attackers inside their houses.

Execution: After arriving to KABUL, the suicide attackers reconnoitred the area in order to find a suitable place for their attacks. Once a suitable place is found the attackers perform their attacks.

This information MUST NOT be disseminated to the GoA.
Festival of Sacrifices

Two religious schools in Pakistan, known as madrasas, and located in Khyber Pakhutnwa Province close to the border with Afghanistan, are cited in the documents as major providers of young boys to be used as suicide bombers. Gen. Hamid Gul, a former head of the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, is said to visit one of the schools monthly. In this document, a suicide bomber, 22 to 24 years old, comes from the Hashimiye madrasa and is taken over the border into Afghanistan to prepare for an attack in Kabul. The target is described as the Muslim Festival of Sacrifices in the first week of January 2007.

DATE 12/20/06

TITLE Muslim Festival of Sacrifices

PLANNED ATTACKS AGAINST NATO

Organization(s) Involved: HEZB E ISLAMI GULBUDDIN

23 DEC 2006, XXXXXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXXXXX/XXXXXXXXXXX

It is reported that; XXXXXXXXXXX (loyal to HIG and Kashmir KHAN, NFI) took the delivery of one suicide attacker from "Madrasa of Hashimiye" which is a training school for suicide attackers and located in Peshawer district of Pakistan, by the orders of Kashmir KHAN (HIG Commander) and Abu IHLAS (AQ Commander). After that, XXXXXXXXXXX went to Jalalabad district of NANGARHAR with the suicide attacker and bought a car to prepare it as a SVBIED. SVBIED is a Toyota Corolla SW, in light yellow color, 1996 model, and its license plate number is Jalalabad XXXXXXXXXXX.

After preparing the Toyota Corolla as a SVBIED, they intruded into Pol-e Charki region of KABUL on the night of 20 Dec 2006. The name of the suicide attacker is XXXXXXXXXXX. He is 22-24 years old and one of the Pashtuns of Pakistan.

He is planning to conduct SVBIED attack against US and ISAF/NATO vehicles on Route White and Route Violet in KABUL until the Muslim Festival of Sacrifices (between 31 Dec 06 and 03 Jan 07). (NFDK).

CTC Comment: 95% of the suicide attackers are trained in the "Madrasa of Hashimiye" which is located in Peshawer district of Pakistan. Monthly, the former Chief of ISI - General Hamid GUL is visiting this madrasa.

FHT Comment: NIL.

COMMENTS

1. This report is in response to RCC PIR 1A.

2. CTC re-contactable.

G2X COMMENT

There are some reasons to consider this info as a real threat warning:
- info is covering the essential XXXXXXXXXXX:

- XXXXXXXXXXX

- the mentioned timing of the attack - Muslim Festival of Sacrifice make us think the threat is more likely;

- insurgent's plan could be to take advantage of season's feast IOT obtain a magnified media impact.
Embassy Attack

Polish intelligence warns in this report of an attack against the Indian Embassy in Kabul a week before a suicide bomber drove his car through the main gate of the embassy building during the morning rush hour. The assault unfolded differently than outlined in the report. Forty-one people were killed, including four Indian officials and many Afghan civilians waiting outside the embassy for visas. The deputy director of the C.I.A., Stephen R. Kappes, flew to Islamabad, Pakistan, after the assault on the Indian Embassy to confront the Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence with evidence that it had helped organize the attack.

DATE 7/1/08

TITLE Attack Planned on Indian Embassy

TB THREAT TO INDIAN EMBASSY

Organization(s) Involved: TALIBAN CENTER

01 JUL 2008, XXXXXXXXXXXX

FROM: XXXXXXXXXXXX

TO: ISAF HQ CJ2 CJOC REP

SOURCE: XXXXXXXXXXXX

DATE OF INFORMATION: 30JUN08

DATE OF REPORT: 01JUL08

NUMBER OF REPORT: 75010708

TOPIC: Security situation in KABUL

Taliban are planning to carry out an attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul. TB designated an engineer XXXXXXXXXXXX to take this action. He intends to use stolen ANA/ANP car, and wears stolen uniform. He speaks Dari with distinct Iranian accent. Allegedly, he is the owner of a XXXXXXXXXXXX company.

INS are planning to divide into two groups: first will attack Indian embassy building, whilst the second group will engage security posts in front of MOI, IOT give possibility to escape attackers from the first group.

Budget for this action is about 120 000 USD. The main goal of this operation is to show TB's abilities to carry out attack on every object in Kabul /IO/. /NFI/

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“Pakistan Aids Insurgency in Afghanistan, Reports Assert”
Outpost Attacked

Fighters Breach Outpost Keating

Eight Americans were killed and 23 were wounded when 175 to 200 insurgents outnumbered and attacked this isolated command outpost in Nuristan Province. While attack helicopters eventually provided support, they were a 40-minute flight away. The Americans evacuated and the post was bombed by American warplanes with hopes of destroying lethal munitions left behind. This report shows how insurgents were successfully able to cut off small, isolated outposts like Keating and exposes the weakness of an early American strategy to set up these centers near the border of Pakistan.

DATE 10/3/09

TITLE Enemy Fighters Overtake Outpost Keating

Tier Level 1

***** SALTUR FOLLOWS *****

SIZE: 175-200aaf

ACTIVITY: B-10 SAF

L:F: YE: 1143 2254 KEATING L:E:YE 104 225

TIME: 0130z

UNIT: B TROOP 3-61 CAV

RESPONSE: RETURNING WITH 120MM AND SAF

***** END REPORT *****

WHY: Conducting Normal COP and OP operations

[01:33] <BlackKnight_TOC> FRI AND KEA IN HEAVY CONTACT

[01:33] <BlackKnight_TOC> Requesting Air Tic Be opened

01:32] <Keating2OPS> we need it now we have mortars pinned down and fire coming form everywhere

01:33] <Keating2OPS> fritsche is taking heavy machine gun fire as well

[01:33] <BlackKnight_TOC> we need something

[01:37] <TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> [01:33] <BlackKnight_TOC> fri and kea still taking heavy contact
[01:33] <BlackKnight_TOC> fri and kea still taking heavy contact

[01:40] <Keating2OPS> we are taking contact from diving board, switchbacks, putting green and b-10 position

[01:40] <Keating2OPS> we are taking heavy saf and rpgs

[01:40] <Keating2OPS> rpgs from the north face

[01:35] <BlackKnight_TOC> still taking IDF

[01:35] <BlackKnight_TOC> need something our mortors cant get upo

[01:35] <BlackKnight_TOC> we are taking casiltys

[01:35] <BlackKnight_TOC> GET SOMETHING UP!

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX] <TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> BK DUDE 25 enroute No eta yet

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX] <TF_PALEHORSE_BTL_CPT> NEGATIVE, AH ARE BEING ALERTED TIME NOW

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX] < TF_PALEHORSE_BTL_CPT> ITS A 40 MINUTE FLIGHT

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX] <Keating2OPS> whats the status of air

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX] <TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> CAS 5 minutes

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX] <Keating2OPS> we are taking fire from inside urmul village

[01:48] <Keating2OPS> our mortars are still pinned down unable to fire

[01:50] <Keating2OPS> we need cas

[01:50] <Keating2OPS> still taking heavy rpgs and machine gun fire

[01:51] <Keating2OPS> at both locations fritsche and keating taking heavy contact

[01:52] <Keating2OPS> the switchbacks from urmul the diving board and north face

[01:52] <Keating2OPS> at keating and fritsche is surrounded as wel

[01:53] <Keating2OPS> multiple enemies running through the anp station and fire coming from the mosque in urmu

[01:54] <Keating2OPS> priority is switchback and putting green

[01:54] <Keating2OPS> asg is attacking gp fritsche att

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX] <Keating2OPS> we are still taking effective rpgs at keating from the anp station everyone at the police station is shooting at us
<Keating2OPS> asg has given up there op at fritsche enemy is 50 meters from the wire on the high ground

<Keating2OPS> asg has given up there op at fritsche enemy is 50 meters from the wire

<BlackKnight_TOC> we just lost sac com is we lose mirc we are blacked out!!

<Keating2OPS> jsut took another casualty

<TF DESTROYER_BTL_NCO> right now

<TF DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> What type of injury

<Voodoo_7> need injury type when possible

<Keating2OPS> they are taking them to the aid station and we will get the updatesd

<TF PH RTO> KAMDESH TIC RESPONSE XXXXXXXXXXXX W/U JAF XXXXXXXXXXXX

<DestroyerS2OPS> Be advised that Keating and Fritsche are in heavy contact att, previous reporting stated that AAF were planning major coordinated attacks against Keating, Lowell, and possibly Mace IOT allow FOM of fighters moving on Barge Matai

DUDE 25/26 on station darkknight 34 sending 9 line for bomb drop

<TF PH RTO> MM(E)10-03A FL08(970) D025(944) W/U JAF XXXXXXXXXXXX

<Keating2OPS> thats the biggest spot right now ANP Station

<Keating2OPS> they are locked onto the trucks with rpgs

02:11 <Keating2OPS> op fritsche is about to pop claymores at op fritsche

02:11 <Keating2OPS> they are that close to the wire

02:12 <Keating2OPS> we still cant get cas up on cag

02:14 <Keating2OPS> thats up at fritsche and they are almost in the wire there i dont think they are monitoring that but jam freq XXXXXXXXXXXX

02:15 <Keating2OPS> our mortars are still pinned down

02:16 <OP MACE> AAFACTIVLEY TALKING ABOUT BREECHING WIRE FREQ XXXXXXXXXXXX

02:18 <Keating2OPS> we need aaf is attempting to breech ana side of keating

02:19 <Keating2OPS> aaf took one of the ana

02:19 <Keating2OPS> according to the ana commander

0218z Fritsche is 100% equipment and personnel

02:19 <Keating2OPS> enemy in the wire at keating
[02:20] <BlackKnight_TOC> ENEMY IN THE WIRE ENEMY IN THE WIRE!!!

[02:21] <Keating2OPS> how long until cca

[02:21] <Keating2OPS> we need support

[02:22] <Keating2OPS> we have enemy on the cop

0223z Enemy in the wire at COP Keating they breached from the ANA side of the COP to the West

XXXXXXXXXXXXX Dude Dropping 2X GBU 38

XXXXXXXXXXXXX Lost Blackknight on MIRC.

TACSAT only means of communication

XXXXXXXXXXXXX COP Keating is at their last fighting position they are getting over run and need cas as much as possible.

XXXXXXXXXXXXX Fritsche reports they are shooting 120MM mortors at COP Keating they are no longer taking contact from the south they are supporting keatings last battle position

[XXXXXXXXXXXXX] <Mace_LIVI> Gist: Keep in contact with your guys up there. I cant reach them from down here. There are 3 injured and one killed.

[XXXXXXXXXXXXX] <Mace_LIVI> OP Comments:

XXXXXXXXXXXXX destroyer main puts all COPs OP"S and FOB at 100% Force pro defensive positions

XXXXXXXXXXXXX Blackknight Xray wants to engage everything from West ECP to their TOC

XXXXXXXXXXXXX blackknight Xray reports that anything outside the wire is hostile and needs to be engaged

XXXXXXXXXXXXX there is another Weapons team and medevac bird enroute from BAF will be waiting when birds go to FARP they will take off to provide overwatch

[XXXXXXXXXXXXX] <TF_PH_RTO> KAMDESH TIC RESPONSE WN20(221) WN16(194) ON STATION KEA/FRI AT XXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXX OP Fritsche is no longer taking contact from south they are monitoring the south and getting Javalins out

XXXXXXXXXXXXX SITREP from Blackknight 7.

2 US KIA, 1 US WIA URGENT, 6 ANA WIA at COP KEATING>

[XXXXXXXXXXXXX] <Destroyer_EWO> EWO on station jamming ICOMs in Keating XXXXXXXXXXXX and anything else active

XXXXXXXXXXXXX AH 64s are giving dismounts cover to get to the Mortor PIT to get their Guns operational.

XXXXXXXXXXXXX OP Fritsche reports that they have an RPG stuck in a hesco that didnt explode
request that EOD is informed for when they do The retrograde

reporting sitrep on Casualties is 2 US KIA 3 US WIA 6x ANA WIA at COP KEATING.

at OP FRITSCHE

COP Keating recieving SAF RPG, HAF from Mosque at YE 1121 2248.

Dude drops 2 x GBU 38 on grid YE 1134 2217.

0332: OP Fritsche reports negative contact. Support COP Keating with mortars.

0336 Red 1 rpts the OMLT and ANA are working to clear ANA compound. Are working on taking the maint building. Believe that is last postions of aaf within keating

AWT W/D BOSTICK FOR FARP.

OP FRI rpts sporadic fire returning saf and still spting Keating with 120mm

AWT FARP COMPLETE, W/U BOSTICK ANROUTE TO KEATING.

OP FRI rpts neg contact att still spting KEA with 120mm

OP FRI rpts saf from south att returning with .50 cal

OP FRI Reports neg contact ATT.

Keating rpts ANA compound a total loss, burned to ground. Unable to retake att. AWT is clearing outer perimeter. Still have no contact with security towers, working on retaking cop.

Keating rpts one AWT was hit by safire and is turning to Bostick, WN 13 to Keating to replace other wn

Keating rpts more WIA coming in at least 12 more from minor shrapnel

OP FRI rpts all wounded at FRI are superficial and do not require medevac att. all minor grazing wounds.

Keating rpts have retaken another bldg, cant' push any further due to lack of manpower.

Keating rpts heavy effective fire from the village outside cop vic grid YE 11197 22430.

Keting rpts 2 add heros and one more wia with gsw to chest,

RR rpts icom traffic of aaf wanting to overrun keating. working with cas to drop on aaf positions

Bostick has recieved intel that aaf will try to hit hlz woth all the a/c

update to KIA only 3 Heros att

Keating still taking fire and working with cas on aaf positions.

also getting llvi traffic on mtr attack for bostick,
0638 FRI neg contact att, keating is taking sporadic fire att, cf is reconsolidating have 5 total heros att, with about 8 WIA

Keating rpts neg reinforcing postions, COP still split att. QRF is w/u att to ftitsche

ICOM traffic states aaf are adjusting idf on bostick, 1 rnd impacted 300 m west of FOB.

W/U qrf bos to fri

QRF w/d fri

l/u wiht chosin

w/d bos

Keating rpts trying to secure cop with cas and wpns. mvmnt dificult, every move draws enemy fire.

Keating rpts more sporadic contact still trying to get acc of all personnel

Keating rpts locating one more missing US, Hero att.

0839 BK 6 rpts that most of the contacts are between fri and keating. Working bomb drops along route for movmnt to Keating. AWT rpted DSHKA site vic grid YE 1185 2178, working with Bone to drop on site.

[6 X GBU-38 YE 11850 21780 ONE AT THAT GRID THE OTHER 5 WERE DROP WITHIN A HUNDRED METERS IN A CIRCULAR FORMATION AROUND THAT GRID. @ 1325L]

Keating rpts sporadic saf from south. working with Bone to drop on susp aaf pos.

Bone Winchestered and is rtb, dropped on swithbacks. Currently working with Hawg to suppress positions north of Keating

BK reports TOC is on fire and moving to alt cp

qrf lift 3 w/u turn 1

qrf w/d fri

qrf w/d b bost

BK6 (XXX) pax)w/ qrf flt YE 112 215

1033 Keating rpts still taking sporadic fire, only one building left that is not on fire. Have consolidated all casualties at that location.

qrf lift 2 w/u bos to fri

qrf lift 2 w/d fri
qrf w/u fri
qrf w/d bos
flt for bk6 ye 116 217
Keating rpts neg contact att. Holding in last remaing bldg. Bk 6 is still moving in from the south att flt YE 116 218
qrf w/u bostic to fri
1145 keating rpts recieving b-10 fire from vic ye 1257 2184, moving sijan to look in that area, also the urgent cas is deteriorating
qrf w/d fri
1158 flt for bk6 ye 114 218
1200 Combat 16 flt ye 118 215 had an rpg shot at them landed 200m from them continueing msn
1227 BK 6 in contact at vic grid ye 113 219 near ambush, saf and rpg, bk 6 rpts 2 EKIA att, no friendly cas
1231 FLT for Combat 16 YE 1157 2182
1236 Keating rpts neg contact , still holding alt cp not in danger of burning att, cas are holding up
1309 FLT BK642SYE 11200 21900 and FLT for C16 42SYE 11300 21900
1344 flt for bk6 and c16 is ye 113 222
1404 BK6 is continueing down mnt, has eyes on keating and is has fm coms with elements on keating. BK7 is still consolidating pos waiting on relief ptrl
1408 BK6 is in a SBF ye 114 224 near keating while C16 is moving down att. workign in a bounding overwatch mvmnt.
1432z BK6 and C16have reached btm of mtn and are entering keating from the south att.
1452 BK6 is in keating and conducting clearing ops att, nothing to rpt att
0532 keating rpts founding lost US, is hero. Loading critical casualties att.
DustOff is W/D at Keating HLZ loading the 3 litre Patients
Dustoff w/u Enroute to Bostick
Dustoff is w/d at FOB Bostick with patients
[15:54] <BOS_HLZ_OIC> DESTROYER 6 MOVE AND MEDEVAC EXFIL FL08(07z0) FL77(069) W/U BOS
[TF_PH_RTO] KEA AREA SECURITY WN14(185) WN15(191) W/U JAF XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXX LZ security is set walking wounded are making thier way out to the HLZ

XXXXXXXXXXX UH 60s are w/d at keating downloading pax and picking up WIA

XXXXXXXXXXX Birds W/U keating enroute to FOB Bostick With 6 WIA

XXXXXXXXXXX2nd UH 60 W/D keating uploading Pax WIA and KIA

[16:19] <TF_MTN_WARRIOR_MDEVAC> 0 TF_MTN_WARRIOR_MEDOPS : tf mtn wr approves F msn. ROF: XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXX2nd UH 60 W/U enroute to bostick with hero's still have 5 ANA wounded to move

XXXXXXXXXXX Medevac Exfill inbound 3 HEROS and WIA

XXXXXXXXXXX FL 77 w/d keating picking up hero's need another turn to keating

XXXXXXXXXXX w/u Keating with 4 heros

XXXXXXXXXXX dustoff 23 w/u patient transfer

XXXXXXXXXXX FL 74 W/U Bostick to keating with Speedballs backhaul 5 ANA Walking wounded

XXXXXXXXXXX FL 74 W/D Keating picking up 5 ana walking wounded and dropping off speedballs

XXXXXXXXXXX FL 74 w/u with 5 ana walking wounded and 1 Hero not sure if he is US or ANA

XXXXXXXXXXX FL 74 W/D Bostick with 5 ANA W/W and 1 Hero

[18:06] <ABAD_TOC> MM(E)10-03F DO23(928) PH45(001) PH47(561) transitioning north att

XXXXXXXXXXX BT52(706) AND BT53(010) W/U JAF ISO TF DESTROYER

XXXXXXXXXXX OD44(181) AND OD45(193) W/U JAF ISO TF DESTROYER

XXXXXXXXXXX DESTROYER PAX MOVEMENT FX50(025) FX65(704) OD45(193) W/U JAF XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXX DESTROYER PAX MOVEMENT BT52(706) BT53(010) OD44(181) W/D BOS XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXX DESTROYER PAX MOVEMENT BT52(706) BT53(010) W/D BOSTICK XXXXXXXXXX

[TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT] PAX COUNT BT XXXXXXXXXX PAX/ BT XXXXXXXXXX PAX/ FX XXXXXXXXXX PAX/ FX XXXXXXXXXX PAX/ BT XXXXXXXXXX PAX/ FX XXXXXXXXXX PAX/ W/U enroute to OP Fritsche.

[TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT] FX50(025) FX65(704) XXXXXXXXXX OP Fritsche XXXXXXXXXX

[BF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT] DESTROYER PAX MOVEMENT BT52(706) BT53(010) W/D OP Fritsche

[BF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT] DESTROYER PAX MOVEMENT BT52(706) BT53(010) W/U OP Fritsche

[BF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT] <BOS_HLZ_OIC> BT52(706) BT53(010) W/U BOS XXXXXXXXXX RTB W/ HEROS
[[:<[:XX]]<BOS_HLZ_OIC> FX50/65 W//U BOS XXXXXXXXXX RTB with 1xANA HERO.

[[:<[:XX]]<BOS_HLZ_OIC> FL77 W//U BOS XXXXXXXXXX TO KEA

[[:<[:XX]]<TF_LIFT_BFT> DESTROYER PAX MOVEMENT BT52(706) BT53(010) OD44(181) W/D BAF MC

[[:<[:XX]]<TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> FL 77 dropping sling COP Keating

[[:<[:XX]]<TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> OD 44/45 FL 77 W/D Bostick

XXXOOOOOOOO OD 44/45 W/U enroute to OP Fritsche

03:05] <TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> OD 44/45 Off station OP Fritsche trans South att

[03:06] <TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> Commandos started movement from OP Fritsche

[03:10] <TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> ANA/ASG moving 350m East of COP Keating

0542 had two medevacs for WIA from yesterday, 2 ASG, from keating, and on ANA from fri. Neg contact att

0601 ANA/ASG ptt is back at keating att, neg contact continueing to observe

0818 During the ANA ptt they recovered the two ASG WIA as well as two additional ANA KIA, have id numbers and passing to OMLT at bostick att

1021 Knight xray rpts neg contact, holding defensive postions around Keating while prepping for backhaul, RR is rpting icom traffic that the aaf are possibly prepping for another attack this afternoon. Info passed to Keating

*******SALTUR*******

S: 5-10 AAF

A: SAF

L: F: 42S YE 11632 21011

E: YE 12083 20397

T: 1029

U: 3/B/3-61

R: SAF/IDF

*******SALTUR*******

WHY OP OPs

1030 Guns Hot FRI
1031 FRI rpts contact with DSHKA from the south

!!!!! FIRE MISSION!!!!!

TIME: 1030

FU LOC: 120mm / YE 118 209 / OP FRITSCHIE

OBS LOC: RED 1F

TGT LOC: KE 4572

MAX ORD: 15000 FT MSL

GTL AZ: 2120 MILS 120 DEG

TOF: 32 SEC

CAN DROP: N/A

MISSION TYPE: IMM SUP

TGT DESC: TIC

ROZ: BATTLEKING

!!!!! FIRE MISSION!!!!!

1033 fri rpts contact with mtr s and rpg. working with jtac at keating for bomb drop.

1035 fri rpts all friendlies in the wire att

XXXXXXXXXXXXX FRI rpts neg contact att, working with dude to drop on dshka

1101 FRI obs pax moving north and south of op, neg PID att, working with DUDE to observe

1110 Recieved LLVT traffic from OP Mace states the aaf intent to take keating. Have passed intel to FRI and KEA att.

1129 FRI rpts neg contact att. continuing to obsv.

1151 FRI rpts neg contact. CCA engaging historical POO sites att.

1153 FRI rpts CCA recieved saf, A10's conducting gun runs att.

1230 FRI rpts neg enemy contact att, still working with cas att

1302: COP KEATING Reports SAE VIC the YE 109 224. Returning with mortars and direct fire.

1320: Cop Keating Reports NEG enemy contact ATT. Continuing to observe.

[XXXXXXXXXXXXX] <TF_DESTROYER_BTL_CPT> NQRF PRE-POSITION AT BOS: WN13(191) WN16(194) W/D JAF

XXXXXXXXXXXXX
Keating rpts neg enemy contact. Exfilled 16 ANA and one OMLT to JAF last night as well as 2 ANA KIA.

Keating rpts neg contact att. FRI rpts village elders from Kandish are going to move down to Kea to collect the two ASG Heros. Have passed info to Kea and coordinating instructions for the approach of village elders.

Destroyer 6 rpts neg contact att. Had local security ptl to Urmul to clear village. Located several AAF KIA but no wpns. AAF collected wpns and exfilled.

Keating rpts neg contact att. Still prepping for exfill.

kEATING RPTS NEG CONTACT ATT, conducting calibration msn with 155 in prep for exfil

Keating rpts neg contact att. Had 9LN and 9ASG evacuated last night from Keating. Commo pck was dropped at Keating and FRI to further supplement the COP and OP. As rpted by D6 they will try and start the demo of three 1151s in prep for exfil.

FRI rpts Commandos will conduct ptls to the north and south to clear historical aaf pos. Also, compiling accurate list of WIA, Keating rpts they have 14 WIA with superficial wounds due to the attack on 2 OCT. List has been passed to D7 and S-1 for formal notification of families

FRI rpts commandos found 2 EKIA vic YE 1134 XXXXXXXXXX during ptling probably same aaf engaged by BK 6 during intial QRF push from FRI. Also have eyes on 8 pax vic grid YE 09087 29233 as well as DUDE rpting pos aaf vic grid YE 08710 19988. Working with DUDE and FRI mtrs to possibly engage.

FRI Reports that one of the earlier Commando patrols Reported finding a small cache at grid YE 11832 21555. containing US CLASS I.

Keating backhaul and closure complete, with demo accomplished with CAS. All Soldiers accounted for at Bostick att. AH 10,13,14 remain at FRI and conduct security operations ISO of FRI.

event closed. It is now listed as a child of OP Mountain Descent

*************************

SUMMARY:

Complex attack on COP Keating and OP Fritsche with HAF, SAF, IDF, RPG.

8x US KIA

23x US WIA

3x ANA KIA

10x ANA WIA
2 x ASG

2 EKIA

1X US SOLDIER was deemed non injured is at FOB Bostick 5X US WIA superficial wounds at OP Fritche does not need IMMEDIATE MEDEVAC ATT.

GSW

11 x GBU 31

26 x GBU 38

1 x Hellfire

3 x 20mm strafing runs.

19x 105 (AC-130)

“Strategic Plans Spawned Bitter End for a Lonely Outpost”
Iraq War Logs
Country in Chaos

Sectarian Killing

As early as 2005, sectarian killings began to increase, reaching a fever pitch in December 2006. This report raises the suspicion that an Iraqi may have been killed for working for the Americans, a major reason for killings in 2005.

DATE 1/14/05

TITLE SEVERED HEAD THROWN FROM VEH IV0 BAQUBAH: 1 CIV KILLED

AT 1637C, A SEVERED HEAD WAS THROWN FROM AN OPEL OMEGA AT THE MUFREK TRAFFIC CIRCLE. THE HEAD HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED BUT IT IS UNKNOWN IF THE PERSON WORKKED FOR COALTION.
28 Corpses Found

The documents show that by the end of 2006, Iraq had descended into near chaos. This report, dated Dec. 20, 2006, provides details about 28 corpses found throughout Baghdad on a single day, each shot in the head. The report was one of many filed on a day during which at least 168 bodies were found throughout Iraq.

DATE 12/20/06

TITLE (CRIMINAL EVENT) MURDER RPT BY NOT PROVIDED IVO BAGHDAD (ZONE 1) (ROUTE UNKNOWN): 1 ISF KIA 27 CIV KIA

28X CORPSES WERE FOUND THROUGHOUT BAGHDAD:

2X HANDCUFFED, BLINDFOLDED, AND SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL JIHAD (MB393859, MAHALAH #887, 1136 HRS, HY ALAMIL PS)

2X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL HURRIYA (MB367918, 1340 HRS, AL HURIYA PS)

1X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL ALAMIL (MB374824, 1400 HRS, HY ALAMIL PS)

1X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL JIHAD (MB332816, MAHALAH #895, 1245 HRS, HY ALAMIL PS)

1X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN SADR CITY (MB502242, 1500 HRS, AL RAFIDIAN PS)

6X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN SHEIKH MAARUF (MB425880, MAHALAH #212, 1620 HRS, AL JAAIFER PS)

1X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN HY ALAMIL (MB384821, 1650 HRS, HY ALAMIL PS)

1X IP OFFICER IDENTIFIED AS XXXXXXXXXX FOUND SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL SHAABE (MB448973, 1510 HRS, AL SHAABE PS)

1X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN A SAIDIYA (MB405794, 1600 HRS, AL BAYAA PS)

2X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL GHAZALIA (MB313911, MAHALAH #671, 1600 HRS, AL GHAZALIA PS)

4X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN SHEIKH MAARUF (MB423889, MAHALAH #212, 1620 HRS, AL JAAIFER PS)

1X IDENTIFIED AS XXXXXXXXXX SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL ALAWEE (MB427871, 1630 HRS, AL JAAIFER PS)

1X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL HABIBIYA (MB519916, MAHALAH #746, 1700 HRS, AL HABIBIYA PS)

1X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL ADHAMIYA (MB405927, 1630 HRS, AL ADHAMIYA PS)

1X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL WAZIRIYA (MB430915, MAHALAH #301, ST #8, 1630 HRS, AL ADHAMIYA PS)

2X SHOT IN THE HEAD IN AL SHULLA (MB430915, 1700 HRS, AL SHULLA PS)

NFI.
Unchecked Torture

Another instance of prisoner abuse by the Iraqi police. In this case, American troops found evidence of “unchecked torture,” including a wooden pallet and a rubber hose, implements that were often used to beat detainees on their backs and the soles of their feet. Unlike in other cases, in this case Americans officers took action, including ordering a soldier to spend the night in the prison to prevent further abuses.

DATE 6/26/06

TITLE SUSPECTED DETAINEE ABUSE BY IP IN HUSAYBAH: 0 INJ/DAMAGE

THERE IS EVIDENCE OF TORTURE IN A HOLDING CELL AT THE IRAQI POLICE STATION IN HUSAYBAH

//MGRS: 37S FU 829 075/,, IZ. THE FOLLOWING ITEMS AND PHYSICAL EVIDENCE WERE NOTED TO BE IN A HOLDING CELL AND ARE CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ARE OCCURRING.

EVIDENCE OF UNCHECKED TORTURE WAS NOTED IN THE IRAQI POLICE STATION IN HUSAYBAH, IZ. LARGE AMOUNTS OF BLOOD ON THE CELL FLOOR, A WIRE USED FOR ELECTRIC SHOCK AND A RUBBER HOSE WERE LOCATED IN THE HOLDING CELL. ENCLOSURES.

ELECTRICAL WIRES THAT HAVE BEEN SPLIT AT THE ENDS AND FIXED WITH MEDICAL TAPE WHERE NOTED ON THE FLOOR OF THE CELL. THE TAPED ENDS HAD THE PRESENCE OF BLOOD. AN UNHINGED METAL CELL DOOR WAS POSITIONED AGAINST THE BACK WALL OF THE CELL NEAR THE WIRES. LARGE AMOUNTS OF SPATTERED BLOOD WHERE NOTED ON THE FLOOR AND ON A WOODEN PALLET ALSO LOCATED IN THE CELL. A RUBBER HOSE WAS ALSO FOUND NEAR THE STATED ITEMS.

THE POLICE TRANSITION TEAM (PTT) AT CAMP AL QAIM, WHICH IS WORKING WITH THE IPS STATIONED AT THE IP-DHQ IN HUSAYBAH IS FULLY AWARE OF THIS MATTER HAVING REPORTED THE EVIDENCE AND IS TAKING THE APPROPRIATE MEASURES WITH THE IP LEADERSHIP TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PREVENT SUCH INCIDENTS FROM OCCURRING IN THE FUTURE.

THE PTT BELIEVES THAT MUCH OF THE BLOOD IS POTENTIALLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SUICIDE VEST BOMBING THAT OCCURRED IN MAY AND AN INDIVIDUAL THAT WAS DRAGGED INTO THAT HOLDING CELL IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INCIDENT. THE CELL DOOR HAS BEEN FIXED AND THE PTT HAS BEEN SLEEPING OVERNIGHT DURING EVERY PRISONER RELEASE TO ENSURE THAT EVERY PRISONER IS APPROPRIATELY RELEASED.

THE PITT TEAM IS CONDUCTING UNANNOUNCED VISITS TO THE IP-DHQ, AND THE DETENTION CELLS HAVE BEEN CHECKED DURING EVERY SUBSEQUENT VISIT AND THE LOGBOOK ENTRIES ON EVERY PRISONER HELD ARE BEING DEMANDED. THE DETENTION CELL OFFICERS HAVE BEEN COUNSELED ON THE SEVERE NEGATIVE RAMIFICATIONS TO RELATIONS WITH THE COALITION FORCES IF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT RESPECTED. THE HUMAN RIGHTS COURSE FROM THE POLICE ESSENTIAL TASK LIST (PETL) FROM CPATT IS ALSO BEING GIVEN TO THE IP OFFICERS THROUGHOUT AL QAIM. ADDITIONALLY, THE TASK FORCE MP DETENTION CELLS INSPECTION TEAM HAS PAID THE STATION A VISIT AND INSPECTED THE CELLS AND SPOKEN TO THE IP LEADERSHIP ON THE SUBJECT OF THEIR DETENTION CELLS OPERATIONS.
Sectarian Abuse

The prisons were also a site of sectarian violence. In this case, a group of Iraqis used false documents to take 12 detainees from an Iraqi prison on the same day that one of Iraq’s most revered Shiite shrines, the Golden Mosque in Samarra, was bombed. The bombing set off sectarian fury across the country. The prisoners in this report, all Sunnis, were later found dead or critically wounded.

DATE 2/22/06

TITLE MURDER OF SUNNI PRISONERS IN BASRAH; 9 CIV KILLED, 3 CIV INJ, 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE

AT 222335C FEB 06, IT WAS CONFIRMED BY PJOC THAT 12 PRISONERS HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM AL MAQIL POLICE STATION.

AT 2130CFEB, PJOC REPORTED THAT 11 MEX ARRIVED AT AL MINA POLICE STATION IN VEHICLES. THEY CLAIMED TO BE MEMBERS OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND SECURED 12 PRISONERS RELEASE, BY THE USE OF FALSE MOI DOCUMENTS. ALL PRISONERS WERE HELD IN CELL 9. PJOC HAVE SENT THROUGH THE NAMES OF THE PRISONERS AND RECORDS THOSE WHO ARE PREVIOUSLY KNOWN TO MNF. PRISONERS ARE NOW DEAD AND 3 PRISONERS CRITICALLY INJURED. 8 DEAD AND 2 CASUALTIES FOUND BETWEEN GREEN 10 GREEN 7 AND 1 DEAD AND 2 CASUALTIES FOUND BETWEEN BLUE 6 AND RED 18. ALL PRISONERS ARE OF SUNNI RELIGION. IPS ARE CHECKING WHO IS DEAD AND WHO IS IN HOSPITAL. THE PERSONNEL THAT TOOK THE PRISONERS FROM AL MINA POLICE STATION HAD MOI IDENTIFICATION.

AT 2340C BROADSWORD TASKED TO INVESTIGATE. NO OTHER MNF INVOLVEMENT.

EXACT GRID REFERENCES OF DEAD/CASUALTY FINDS ARE: GRID 38R QU 649 788, QU677743, QU691799, QU703808.

NAMES OF PRISONERS: XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX.
False Checkpoints

A number of reports indicate that militants set up false checkpoints as a way of carrying out sectarian attacks. This report states that seven Iraqi civilians, including a 12-year-old boy, were found dead near one such checkpoint.

DATE 1/30/06

TITLE MURDER RPTD BY A 2/3POB IN BAGHDAD (ZONE 69): 7 CIV KIA, 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE

AT1210C, SPECIAL POLICE SPTT REPORTED THAT SPECIAL POLICE FORCES G2 REPORTS THAT A CO FROM THE 2/3 POB MOVED TO THE AL NAHRAWAN AREA TO LOOK INTO REPORTS OF FALSE CHECKPOINTS BEING ERECTED BY TERRORISTS IN THAT AREA. THEY FOUND A TOTAL OF 7 CORPSES AT GRID LOCATION 38S MB 575825 (NOTE: CLOSE PROXIMITY TO FOB RUSTIMAYAH) IN THE COURSE OF THEIR INVESTIGATION. 1 OF THE 7 CORPSES FOUND WAS THAT OF A 12-YEAR-OLD BOY. NFTR CLOSED OUT

SUMMARY:

7 X LN MURDERED. BDA NO CF INJ/DAMAGE
Eyes Cut Out

In this case, 12 civilians were found dead with their eyes cut out. The 12 had apparently been detained earlier by an Iraqi commando unit.

DATE 7/13/05

TITLE CIVS KILLED IN BAGHDAD (ZONE 19): 12 CIV KILLED, 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE

AT 1000D, COL XXXXXXXXXXXX OF 1/2/6 IAD WAS INFORMED THAT ON 11 JUL, 12 WAHABI CIVS WERE DETAINED BY AN IA OR IP COMMANDO UNIT IN AL RABI, ZONE 51, MUHALLAH 332. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF US FORCE INVOLVEMENT. ON 12 JULY, THE 12 CIVS WERE DELIVERED TO THE MEDICAL CITY MORGUE WITH THEIR EYES CUT OUT. AT 1000D TO 1500D, A FUNERAL WAS HELD AT MB405945 FOR THE 12 CIVS WITHOUT INCIDENT. 1/2/6 IAD PROVIDED SECURITY FOR THE FUNERAL WITH TCPs TO INTERDICT POSSIBLE AIF INTERFERENCE. 2D POB AND 2D SPECIAL COMMANDO BDE REPORT NEGATIVE INVOLVEMENT OR MISSIONS CONDUCTED IN ADAMIYAH BETWEEN 11 JUL AND 13 JUL. AN INVESTIGATION IS ONGOING AT THIS TIME. 12 CIVS DEAD, 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE
Casualties

Helicopter Attack

This report describes an episode during which an Apache helicopter is supporting troops on the ground who are taking fire from insurgents. The helicopter fires at them, and as many as 12 militants and 14 civilians are said to have been killed, though it was not clear from the report whether the bodies were counted twice.

**DATE** 7/16/07

**TITLE** SMALL UNIT ACTIONS BY 2-2ID, 1-504 PIR IVO BAGHDAD (ZONE 15): 14 CIV KIA 10 AIF WIA 12 AIF KIA

UNIT: 2-2ID, 1-504 PIR

EVENT: COMPLEX ATTACK: (SAF, RPG)

WHO: A CO, 1-504 PIR

WHAT: SAF

WHEN: 161407JUL07

WHERE: GRID 38SMB 43060 89800

WHY: AIF ENGAGEMENT

TIMELINE:

1356: WHILE ON DISMOUNTED PATROL; A11 RECEIVED SMALL ARMS FIRE. A36 WAS ENGAGED BY 2 TO 3 AIF AT VIC GRID MB 4306 8979

XXXXXXXXXXXXX: A36 CLEARS BUILDING AT VIC GRID MB 4306 8979(ISLAMIC BANK BUILDING) THEN RECIEVES FIRE FROM MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY BUILDING.

XXXXXXXXXXXXX: RECEIVED REPORT FROM A71; A11 DISMOUNT PATROL STILL RECEIVING SAF & RPG FIRE ON ONE OF THEIR OPS, VIC GRID FROM APPROX GRID 10 X AIF

XXXXXXXXXXXXX: STRIKE 6D REPORTED BEING IN THE VIC OF THE SAF AND IS OFFERING ASSISTANCE TO A11, ASSISTANCE WILL NOT BE NEEDED

XXXXXXXXXXXXX: CRAZYHORSE 20 ELEMENT IS ON STATION WITH A71

XXXXXXXXXXXXX: JTAC REQUESTS CAS IOT SUPPORT TROOPS IN CONTACT

XXXXXXXXXXXXX: A71 REPORTS CRAZYHORSE ELEMENTS 20 & 21 ARE ENGAGING THE AIF ELEMENTS AT THIS TIME

XXXXXXXXXXXXX: JTAC REPORTS 2 X F16s ON STATION, PANTHER 31 & PANTHER 32

XXXXXXXXXXXXX: CRAZYHORSE 20 REPORTS - ENGANGING 2 X AIF ON THE GROUND, CRAZYHORSE IS ALSO BEING
ENGAGED AT THIS TIME

XXXXXXXXXXX: A71 REPORTS - MAVERICK MITT, LOCATED AT OLD MOD IS ON STANDBY WITH 1 X IA COMPANY, IOT SUPPORT ALPHA COMPANY TIC

XXXXXXXXXXX: A71 REPORTS - A MOSQUE IN THE VIC OF THE TIC IS CALLING INSURGENTS TO GATHER ON RTE WILD IOT ATTACK CF

XXXXXXXXXXX: CRAZYHORSE REPORTING POSSIBLE AIF GATHERING VIC GRID MB 4334 8985

XXXXXXXXXXX: CRAZYHORSE REPORTS - MOSQUE LOCATED VIC GRID MB 4334 8985

XXXXXXXXXXX: BDE CHOPS REPORTS - UAV IS BEING DIVERTED IOT SUPPORT TIC AT THIS TIME

XXXXXXXXXXX: CRAZYHORSE 21 CONDUCTS FINAL GUN RUN IVO FADIL

XXXXXXXXXXX: JTAC REPORTING 50 TO 60 POSSIBLE AIF GATHERING VIC GRID MB 4334 8985

XXXXXXXXXXX: JTAC REPORTS 2 X F16s ON STATION LOCO 25 & 26 TO REPLACE PANTHER 31 & PANTHER 32

XXXXXXXXXXX: A71 REPORTS SAF HAS STOPPED, NO SAF RECEIVED IN APPROX 15 MINUTES

XXXXXXXXXXX: FALCON 3 REPORTS - 4 X BRADLEYS, 1X M1151 IN ZONE 17 ON STANDBY IF NEEDED IOT SUPPORT TIC

XXXXXXXXXXX: MONITORED ON THE UAV - GROUP OF PEOPLE EXITED THE MOSQUE BEING MONITORED, THE GROUP DISBURSED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, NO WEAPONS WERE SEEN

XXXXXXXXXXX: CCA BREAKS STATION

XXXXXXXXXXX: A6 REPORTS - HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY SAF IN THE LAST 40 MINUTES, THEY WILL REMAIN IN OVERWATCH POSITION UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

XXXXXXXXXXX: A36 AND A11 WITHDRAW FROM RTE WILD AND BACK TO BAB AL MOUADAM JSS

XXXXXXXXXXX: UAV MONITORS 1 X INDIVIDUAL ON STRETCHER BEING TAKEN INTO A BLDG VIC GRID MB 4307 9011, SHORTLY AFTER, 3 X IA HMMWs AND 1 X UPARMORED VEHICLE RECOVERED THE INDIVIDUAL ON THE STRETCHER AND DEPARTED THE AREA

UNCONFIRMED REPORTS ARE:

12 X AIF KIA (REPORTED BY XXXXXXXXXX THRU 2/4/1 IA MITT)

8-10 X AIF WIA (REPORTED BY CRAZY HORSE 20 AFTER GUN RUNS VIA FM TO A6)

14 X LN KIA (REPORTED BY XXXXXXXXXX TO XXXXXXXXXX, 1-504 TERP, VIA CELL PHONE)

SUMMARY:

1 X COMPLEX ATTACK (SAF RPG)

0 X INJ

0 X DMG
Attempted Surrender

This report states that two men believed to have been firing mortars tried to surrender to an Apache helicopter crew. A military lawyer says they are not allowed to surrender to an aircraft. The helicopter fires a missile at the two men, killing them.

DATE 2/22/07

TITLE SMALL UNIT ACTIONS BY 1-7 CAV IVO AT TAJI: 2 AIF KIA

WHO: 1-7 CAV

2 X AIF KIA

0 X WIA

1 X AIF TRUCK AND 1X MORTAR TUBE, MULTIPLE MORTAR RDS DESTROYED.

221131FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 SENT TO CHECK ON RDA OF COUNTER MORTAR FIRE VIC 38S 24720 11500.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 GAINED CONTACT WITH 1X BONGO TRUCK LEAVING POO SITE AND HAS PID A TRIPOD AND MORTAR TUBE.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 CLEARED TO ENGAGE WITH 30MM.

221201FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 REPORTS TRUCK WITH MORTAR TUBE DESTROYED, 2 AIF LEFT AREA PRIOR TO APACHE FIRING.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 REPORTS THE TRUCK WITH MORTAR RDS STILL COOKING OFF MORTAR ROUNDS.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 REPORTS AIF GOT INTO A DUMPTRUCK HEADED NORTH, ENGAGED AND THEN THEY CAME OUT WANTING TO SURRENDER.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 REPORTS THEY GOT BACK INTO TRUCK AND ARE HEADING NORTH.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 CLEARED TO ENGAGE DUMPTRUCK. 1/227 LAWYER STATES THEY CAN NOT SURRENDER TO AIRCRAFT AND ARE STILL VALID TARGETS.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 REPORTS THEY MISSED WITH HELLFIRE AND INDIVIDUALS HAVE RAN INTO ANOTHER SHACK.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: IH6 APPROVES CRAZYHORSE 18 TO ENGAGE SHACK.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 REPORTS ENGAGED AND DESTROYED SHACK WITH 2X AIF. RDA IS SHACK / DUMP TRUCK DESTROYED.

22XXXXXXXXXXXX FEB07: CRAZYHORSE 18 CONTINUED TO OBSERVE FOR APPROX XXXXXXXXXXX MINUTES WITH NFT. CRAZYHORSE 18 IS OFF STATION TO REFUEL AND REARM AT.

SUMMARY:

1X ENGAGEMENT WITH 30MM
2X AIF KIA

1 X MORTAR SYSTEM DESTROYED

1 X BONGO TRUCK DESTROYED WITH MANY SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS.

1 X DUMPTUCK DESTROYED

1 X SHACK DESTROYED

-CLOSED-
Checkpoint Shootings

Confused encounters at checkpoints were often lethal for Iraqis. This report recounts a case in which an Iraqi family driving near a checkpoint kept moving even after Marines fired a flare, prompting the Marines to shoot. The mother was killed, and the father and three daughters were wounded.

DATE 7/22/05

TITLE ESCALATION OF FORCE BY 3/8 NE FALLUJAH: 1 CIV KIA, 4 CIV WIA, 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE

Interpreter Killed

If the war was dangerous for Americans, it was far worse for the Iraqis who worked for them. One Iraqi interpreter was killed by an American sniper from his own unit, who mistook him for a militant when the Iraqi became separated from his platoon.

DATE 2/20/06

TITLE BLUE ON WHITE BY 1ST RECON S OF NASSER WA AL SALEM: 1 CIV KILLED, 0 CF INJ/ĐAMA

AT 200100C FEB 06, A 1ST RECON SNIPER TEAM WHILE CONDUCTING CLANDESTINE SNIPER OPERATIONS IVQ HAJI RD IN THE ZAIDON ENGAGED (1) MAAM WITH (4) 5.56MM ROUNDS IVQ (38S MB 09971 79804) 4KM S OF NASSER WA AL SALEM. THE MAAM WAS PID W/ AK-47 CREEPING UP BEHIND THEIR SNIPER POSITION AND WAS SHOT IN THE CHEST W/ (2) 5.56MM ROUNDS AT 15M. QRF WAS LAUNCHED TO EXTRACT THE SNIPER TEAM. THE MAAM WAS SEARCHED BY TEAM AND RECOVERED (1) AK-47, (2) MAGAZINES OF 7.62MM, DOUBLE TAPE, (1) LARGE KNIFE, (1) ID CARD WITH "XXXXXXXXXXXX" WRITTEN ON CARD. MAAM WAS ALSO NOTED TO BE WEARING A TRACKSUIT AND SEVERAL WARMING LAYERS TO INCLUDE (2) PAIRS OF SOCKS. THE BODY WAS LEFT BEHIND AT (38S MB 09971 79804) UPON EXTRACT OF THE SST. PIONEER OBSERVING ON SITE W/ NSIF.

UPDATE: UPON FURTHER INVESTIGATION THE KIA TURNED OUT TO BE THE PLATOON'S INTERPRETER THAT WAS SEPARATED FROM UNIT. THE BODY WAS RECOVERED AND IS CURRENTLY LOCATED AT FALLUJAH SURGICAL. THIS ACTION IS NOW CONSIDERED A BLUE ON GREEN. IT RESULTED IN (1) IZ KIA (IRAQI INTERPRETER EMPLOYED BY TITAN.

RETURN TO ARTICLE
“A Grim Portrait of Civilian Deaths in Iraq”
Prisoner Abuse

Detainee Abuse

The documents in the archive provide extensive accounts of Iraqi security forces abusing Iraqi prisoners. In this account, an American sergeant documented a case of prisoner abuse in a statement and reported it. It was not clear whether it was followed up. The report follows the standard script in stating that no investigation was started.

DATE 8/17/06

TITLE "ALLEGED DETAINEE ABUSE BY IRAQI POLICE IN RAMADI ON 17 AUG 2006"

SUSPECTED DETAINEE ABUSE RPTD AT 171100D AUG 06

1. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT/SUSPECTED VIOLATION (WHO REPORTED INCIDENT AND WHAT HAPPENED):

SGT XXXXXXXXXXXX, 300TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY, REPORTED IRAQI POLICE COMMITTING DETAINEE ABUSE AT AN IRAQI POLICE STATION IN RAMADI. SGT XXXXXXXXXXXX WITNESSED 1LT XXXXXXXXXXXX WHIP A DETAINEE ACROSS HIS BACK WITH A PR-24 STRAIGHT SIDE HANDLED BATON AND 1LT XXXXXXXXXXXX KICKING A SECOND DETAINEE. THAT NIGHT SGT XXXXXXXXXXXX HEARD WHIPPING NOISES WALKING THROUGH THE HALLWAY, AND OPENED A DOOR TO FIND 1LT XXXXXXXXXXXX WITH A 4 GAUGE ELECTRICAL CABLE, WHIPPING THE BOTTOM OF A DETAINEE*S FEET. LATER THAT NIGHT, SGT XXXXXXXXXXXX CAUGHT 1LT XXXXXXXXXXXX WHIPPING A DETAINEE ACROSS HIS BACK WITH AN ELECTRICAL CABLE. SGT XXXXXXXXXXXX DOCUMENTED EACH EVENT ON A SWORN STATEMENT FORM AND REPORTED THE INCIDENTS.

2. LOCATION (GRID COORDINATES OR OTHER REFERENCE): 38S LB 37142 99770

3. TIME OF OCCURRENCE AND TIME OF DISCOVERY: REPORTED 17 1100 AUG 06

4. WHO CAUSED (IF KNOWN) OR IDENTITY OF FRIENDLY AND ENEMY UNITS OPERATING IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA (IF KNOWN):

IRAQI POLICE FROM THE AL HURYIA IRAQI POLICE STATION

5. NAME OF WITNESSES (W/UNIT OR ADDRESS): SGT XXXXXXXXXXXX, 300TH MP COMPANY, MP PIT TEAM

6. UNIT POINT OF CONTACT: CPT XXXXXXXXXXXX AT DNVT 551-2044 OR XXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXX@XXXXXXX.XXXXXX.ARMY.SMIL.MIL

7. EVIDENCE GATHERED AND ITS DISPOSITION: SWORN STATEMENTS AND PICTURES ARE ATTACHED

8. WEAPONS/EQUIPMENT INVOLVED: 4 GAUGE ELECTRICAL CABLE, PR-24 BATON

9. DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE OR INJURIES TO GOVERNMENT/CIVILIAN PROPERTY AND PERSONNEL: CIRCULAR WHIP MARKS, BLEEDING ON BACK, DARK RED BRUISING ON BACK

10. CURRENT LOCATION OF SUSPECTS AND VICTIMS (JAIL, HOSPITAL, AT SCENE, ETC.) BOTH ARE STILL AT AL HURYIA POLICE STATION

11. HOW IS THE SITE BEING SECURED? N/A

12. INVESTIGATING OFFICER. STATUS OF INVESTIGATION: NO INVESTIGATION INITIATED AT THIS POINT.
U.S. Intervention

At times, American forces were able to intervene to stop the abuse of prisoners. In this case, from May 2005, a detainee reports that “when the Marines finally took him, he was treated very well and he was thankful and happy to see them.”

**DATE** 5/14/05

**TITLE:** DETAINEE ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

**MNCI FFIR #8**

DETAINEE CF4473 (XXXXXXXXXXXX) REPORTED INCIDENT TO HET-11 AT RDF CAMP FALLUJAH. HE CLAIMED THAT HE WAS PHYSICALLY ABUSED BY THE 1ST POB (IRAQI POLICE) ON OR ABOUT 02 MAY 2005 AT 1530. HE MADE HIS ALLEGATION ON 05 MAY 2005 AT 0900. SND STATES THAT HE WAS TAKEN FROM HIS HOME AND WAS KEPT FOR FOUR DAYS BY THE IRAQI POLICE. HE STATES THAT HE WAS BEATEN WITH A CABLE MOSTLY BY AN IRAQI CAPTAIN. ALL INJURIES WERE DOCUMENTED IN HIS MEDICAL JACKET AND PHOTOS WERE TAKEN AND ARE AVAILABLE AT RDF CAMP FALLUJAH. SND REMAINS IN CUSTODY AT RDF CAMP FALLUJAH.

DETAINEE CF4472 (XXXXXXXXXXXX) REPORTED INCIDENT TO HET-11 AT RDF CAMP FALLUJAH. SND CLAIMED THAT HE WAS PHYSICALLY ABUSED BY THE 1ST POB (IRAQI POLICE). XXXXXXXXX HAD DIME-SIZE AND SHAPE MARK ON RIGHT THIGH AND ABRASIONS OR MINOR SCRAPES FROM FLEXI CUFFS. SND CLAIMS THAT NO COALITION FORCES WERE PRESENT FOR ANY OF THIS BUT WHEN THE MARINES FINALLY TOOK HIM, HE WAS TREATED VERY WELL AND HE WAS THANKFUL AND HAPPY TO SEE THEM. ALL INJURIES WERE DOCUMENTED IN HIS MEDICAL JACKET AND PHOTOS WERE TAKEN AND ARE AVAILABLE AT RDF CAMP FALLUJAH. SND REMAINS IN CUSTODY AT RDF CAMP FALLUJAH.

DETAINEE # 0458 (XXXXXXXXXXXX) HAD CONTUSIONS TO HIS LEFT BACK DELT OID, UPPER BACK, AND NECK. DET # 0458 WAS PREVIOUSLY DETAINED AT FOB KALSU RDF AND WAS TRANSFERRED TO HILLA S.W.A.T ON THE 6TH OF MAY 2005. APPARENTLY, THIS DETAINEE HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AS WANTED FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION ON A TARGET LIST THROUGH THE NATIONAL GROUND INTELLIGENCE CENTER. THIS INFORMATION WAS PASSED TO THE RDF WHO CONTACTED HILLA S.W.A.T AND HAD THEM BRING THE DETAINEE BACK FOR TRANSFER TO ABU GHARIB. DURING THE MEDICAL IN-PROCESSING, HN XXXXXXXXXX OBSERVED THE CONTUSIONS ON SND. SND MADE A STATEMENT, ALLEGING THAT THE IRAQI POLICE BEAT HIM WITH A CABLE. CORRECTIONS SNCO
Detainees Beaten

The archive disclosed by WikiLeaks documents hundreds of cases in which Iraqi police officers or soldiers were involved in prisoner abuse. In this case, American soldiers found 173 Iraqis detained by the police, many bearing bruises, sores and burns from cigarettes.

DATE 11/13/05

TITLE DETAINEE ABUSE RPTD BY 2 BCT IN BAGHDAD (ZONE 10): 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE

AT 1600C, 2BCT REPORTS, 173 MOI DETAINES BEING HELD AT AN MOI INTERMNMENT FACILITY NEXT OF THE KARADA DAC HALL. MANY OF THEM BEAR MARKS OF ABUSE TO INCLUDE CIGARETTE BURNS, BRUISING CONSISTENT WITH BEATINGS AND OPEN SORES. MANY OF THE DETAINES ARE COUGHING AND ARE BEING DESCRIBED AS WALKING WOUNDED. APPROX 95 X DETAINES WERE BEING HELD IN 1 X ROOM AND WERE SITTING CROSS-LEGGED WITH BLIND FOLDS, ALL FACING THE SAME DIRECTION. ACCORDING TO ONE OF THE DETAINES QUESTIONED ON SITE, 12 X DETAINES HAVE DIED OF DISEASE IN RECENT WEEKS.

MARNE 66 RESPONDED AND IS ON SITE. D/4-64 AR IS RESPONDING TO ASSIST WITH SECURITY AND TO FACILITATE THE RELEASE AND TREATMENT OF DETAINES FROM THE FACILITY. A STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE AND IRAQI JUDGE ARE ALSO RESPONDING. 4-64 AR IS BRINGING MEDICAL ASSETS, HA MEALS AND WATER. THE SJA AND IRAQI JUDGE WILL REVIEW DETAINEE FILES TO DECIPHER WHICH DETAINES WILL REMAIN IN CUSTODY. THE 4-64 AR SURGEON WILL BE ASSESSING THE MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE DETAINES AND WILL CASEVAC ACCORDINGLY. 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE
Uninvestigated

Though the documents show clear evidence of prisoner abuse by Iraqis, they also show that such cases were often uninvestigated. In this case, the report explains that because no coalition forces are involved, “no further investigation is necessary.”

DATE 1/2/07

TITLE 0 TEREVENT REP BY IP IVO AL FALLUJA: 0 INJ/DAM

For information, the attachment documents an alleged IP on LOAC violation (detainee abuse) as reported by 3/7 MiTT. As Coalition Forces were not involved in the alleged abuse, no further investigation is necessary. A summary of the alleged incidents is as follows:

On 2 Jan 07 after their apprehension, unknown IP took XXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXX to a gymnasium and then to an abandoned house in Husaybah where the IP beat them. XXXXXXXX died as a result of the abuse.

This is an MNC-I reportable incident it will be reported through operational channels as required.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Detainees Fared Worse in Iraqi Hands, Logs Say”
Iran

Kidnapping Plot

This document described a plot by Azhar al-Dulaimi, an Iraqi Shiite militia commander, to kidnap American soldiers in Baghdad. The report asserts that he was chosen for this mission because of his training in Iran. The next month, an abortive effort to kidnap American troops in Karbala resulted in the deaths of the four soldiers who were seized. An American spokesman said that Mr. Dulaimi’s fingerprints were found on the getaway car.

DATE 12/22/06

TITLE KIDNAPPING THREAT REP BY JAM IVO BAGHDAD (ZONE 15) (ROUTE UNKNOWN): 0 INJ/DAM

REF: BAGSTAT

DOI: 22 DEC 06

TITLE: ALLEGED JAYSH AL-MAHDI PLANS TO KIDNAP U.S. SOLDIERS IN BAGHDAD, IRAQ

As of early December 2006, Jaysh al-Mahdi allegedly planned to attack U.S. Humvees traveling in two to three car convoys with the intent to kidnap U.S. soldiers in Baghdad, Iraq. Jaysh al-Mahdi allegedly planned to conduct the kidnappings sometime around the New Year, 30 December 2006 to early January 2007. A senior Jaysh al-Mahdi commander, Hasan (Salim), ordered a subordinate, Shaykh Azhar al-((Dulaymi)), to plan and execute the attack. Dulaymi planned to target U.S. convoys consisting of two to three Humvees as they traveled into underground tunnels in Al-Qanat area of Baghdad. Dulaymi specifically planned to use the following areas to stage his attacks including Al-Baladiyat and Zayuna Streets, Sadr City and Palestine Street, the area of Al-Sha’ab which was located north east of Sadr City and Al-Sulaykh. Dulaymi planned to use fake road blocks in the tunnels to stop the Humvees and then attack them with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and small arms fire to render the vehicles immobile. Once the vehicles were incapacitated, Dulaymi reportedly planned to try to kill as few U.S. soldiers as possible in an effort to take a greater number of hostages. Dulaymi was ordered to take any captives to Sadr City. Dulaymi was previously a Sunni but converted to Shi’a while studying in an Najaf, Iraq in 1995.

Salim chose Dulaymi because he allegedly trained in Iran on how to conduct precision, military style kidnappings (NFI). Dulaymi reportedly obtained his training from Hizballah operatives near Qum, Iran, who were under the supervision of Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF) officers in July 2006. Salim reportedly wanted to kidnap U.S. soldiers in an effort to send a message to the United States that they should not encroach upon Sadr City.

Dulaymi was allegedly responsible for the kidnapping of the Ministry of Higher Education in late November 2006. Salim reportedly ordered Dulaymi to conduct mass high profile kidnappings in Baghdad to promote instability. The alleged purpose behind the kidnappings was to prevent Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-((Maliki)) from implementing his reconciliation plan.
Assassination Plot

This report asserts that Iranian agents were encouraging attacks against Iraqi officials during the American military buildup in Baghdad in 2007.

DATE 3/27/07

TITLE ATTACK THREAT REP BY IRANIAN-INFLUENCED IVO (ZONE 36): 0 INJ/DAM

1 IRANIAN INTELLIGENCE AGENTS WITHIN THE BADR CORPS AND JAYSH AL-MAHDI, HAVE RECENTLY BEEN INFLUENCING ATTACKS ON MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN IRAQ. THE NEXT TARGET MARKED FOR ATTACK IS THE ASSISTANT TO THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY.


A. XXXXXXXXXX IS A MEMBER OF JAYSH AL-MAHDI AND RESIDES IN HOUSE (XXXXXXX), STREET XXXXXXXXXX,

XXXXXXX, HAY AL-JIHAD, BAGHDAD, IRAQ (IZ).

B. XXXXXXXXXX HAS BEEN ATTACKING THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND SYSTEMATICALLY MURDERING THE BODYGUARDS FOR THE PEOPLE BELONGING TO THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AS WELL AS THE PEOPLE WHO GUARD THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY BUILDING. SO FAR, XXXXXXXXXX HAS KILLED THREE OF THE BODYGUARDS AND WOUNDED TWO. XXXXXXXXXX TOOK THE CELLULAR PHONE FROM THE LAST GUARD HE MURDERED AND IS USING IT FOR HIS VARIOUS OPERATIONS. THE CELL PHONE NUMBER IS XXXXXXXXXX-XXXXXXX.

C. WHEN THE MAIN ATTACK AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY'S OFFICIALS TAKES PLACE, XXXXXXXXXX AND THE PEOPLE WHO HE IS IN COMMAND OF, WILL BE WEARING IRAQI ARMY COMMANDO UNIFORMS, USING WEAPONS THEY GOT FROM AN UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL XXXXXXXXXX KNOWS INSIDE THE AL-JIHAD, IRAQI POLICE. THE UNIFORMS AND WEAPONS THAT WILL BE USED IN THE ATTACK ARE BEING KEPT IN THE XXXXXXXXXX STORE //CNA// ON XXXXXXXXXX//CNA//, XXXXXXXXXX, BAGHDAD, IZ.

3. THE DESIRED EFFECT OF THESE ATTACKS IS NOT TO SIMPLY KILL THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY OFFICIALS, BUT AS A MEDIA CAMPAIGN DESIGNED BY IRANIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS, TO SHOW THE WORLD, AND ESPECIALLY THE ARAB WORLD, THAT THE BAGHDAD SECURITY PLAN HAS FAILED TO BRING STABILITY TO BAGHDAD.
Weapons Smuggling from Iran to Iraq

This document recounts the seizure of some explosively formed penetrators, the most deadly type of roadside bomb, that were being smuggled from Iran into Iraq, which was a chronic problem.

**DATE** 11/22/05

**TITLE** INTEL REPORT: INVESTIGATION INTO **DBE** FIND ON 10 NOV 05 NEAR IRANIAN BORDER (LTIO

**SERIAL NUMBER:** HQ MND(SE) 202.1.2

AFTER AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ZIC **DBE** REGION 4 (**XXXXX**) **XXXXX** COMD **DBE** BORDER POLICE BASRA (**XXXXX**) IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MOVEMENT OF EXPLOSIVES AND BOMB-MAKING EQUIPMENT WAS TAKING PLACE FROM IRAN INTO IRAQ ON THE NIGHT OF 9/10 NOV 05 IN NORTHERN BASRA PROVINCE. AN ANTI-SMUGGLING OPERATION MOUNTED BY THE **DBE** BORDER POLICE IN BASRA DISRUPTED THE MOVEMENT AND RECOVERED A QUANTITY OF BOMB-MAKING EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING EXPLOSIVELY FORMED PROJECTILES (EFPS). FURTHER DETAILS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THIS EVENT APPEAR BELOW.

BRIG **XXXXX** WAS ALERTED BY A SOURCE AT **XXXXX** HRS ON **XXXXX** NOV 05 THAT INSURGENT SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES WERE LIKELY IN THE AREA OF THE IRANIAN BORDER (GRID **XXXXX**) JUST SOUTH OF THE BASRA/ MAYSAN PROVINCE BOUNDARY THAT NIGHT. THE SOURCE REPORTED THAT THE SMUGGLERS WOULD MOVE EXPLOSIVES FROM IRAN INTO IRAQ BY BOAT AND THAT THERE WERE LIKELY TO BE 30 TO 35 MEN INVOLVED. **XXXXX** HAD NO INFORMATION FROM HIS SOURCE ABOUT INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED OR LOCATIONS WITHIN IRAN THAT THE EXPLOSIVES MAY HAVE COME FROM. **XXXXX** REPORTED THIS INFORMATION DIRECTLY TO **XXXXX**(**XXXXX**), WHO AUTHORISED AN OPERATION TO DISRUPT THE SMUGGLERS. **XXXXX** BORDER POLICE AND **XXXXX** CIVILIANS FROM 「XXXXX」'S OWN TRIBE, **XXXXX**, AND **XXXXX** HIMSELF WERE DEPLOYED TO THE AREA ARRIVING AT **XXXXX** HRS ON **XXXXX** NOV 05. **XXXXX** REPORTED THAT HE USED HIS OWN TRIBE IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF HIS FORCE AND THAT HIS TRIBE COULD ALSO DEPLOY RPGS AND PKCS. DURING THIS DEPLOYMENT THERE WAS A SMALL BLUE ON BLUE INCIDENT WITH THE **FPS** WHERE THE **DBE** OPENED FIRE BELIEVING THE VEHICLES AHEAD TO BE INSURGENTS, NO CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED AND THE INCIDENT WAS CLOSED, THE **FPS** REPORTED THIS INCIDENT TO THEIR HQ.

THE **DBE** SET THEMSELVES UP ON A DRY PATCH OF LAND NEXT TO T
Sniper Training

The field reports assert that Iran trained Iraqi militants in the use of explosive and as snipers.

DATE 10/5/08

TITLE (FRIENDLY ACTION) CONFISCATION RPT 2/B/2-30 IN : 0 INJ/DAM

MND-B EVENT 2

UNIT: 4-10 MTN

WHO: 2/B/2-30 IN

WHAT: WEAPONS CONFISCATION

WHEN: 05 0408 OCT 08

WHERE: MB5790 9898

SECT RESPONSIBILITY ASSESSMENT: (UNK)

TIMELINE:

0408: 2/B/2-30 REPORTS IN BUILDING 7, CONFISCATED 1 X DRAGANOV WITH SCOPE ON OBJ LILLY DURING BOAR COWBOYS.

0445: B CO REPORTS 2/B/2-30 CONFISCATES 2 X AK47 CONDUCTING TQ OF 2 INDIVIDUAL.

COMPLETE ROLL UP OF ITEMS FOUND ON OBJ LILLY.

15 X AK47

1 X DRAGANOV WITH 14 POWER SCOPE

1 X BOLT ACTION RIFLE

2 X PISTOL

S2 ASSESSMENT: THESE WEAPONS WERE CONFISCATED IAW IRAQI LAW. RECENT INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT THERE ARE THREE ACF PERSONNEL THAT WERE TRAINED IN IRAN AS SNIPERS AND SPECIALISTS IN EXPLOSIVES LIVING IN THE HAY AL-NASSIR REGION. THEY ARE XXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXX, AND XXXXXXXXXX. ALL 3 OF THEM ARE EXPERTS IN KILLING AND KIDNAPPING IN THE AREA. IT IS ASSESSED THAT THE CONFISCATED SNIPER RIFLE MAY HAVE BEEN IN TEMPORARY STORAGE, AWAITING TRANSPORTATION TO THE AFFORMENTIONED PERSONNEL TO BE USED IN FUTURE ACF ACTIVITIES.

SUMMARY:

1 X WEAPONS CONFISCATION

0 X INJ
0 X DMG

CLOSED 05/10/08
Militants’s Diaries

Diaries recovered from hidden weapons caches offer details about the training received by Iraqi militants in Iran.

DATE 12/27/08

TITLE (FRIENDLY ACTION) CACHE FOUND/CLEARED RPT 2-505TH (2-8-2 NP) : 0 INJ/DAM

MND-B EVENT 12

UNIT: 3-82 ABN

WHO: 2-505TH (2-8-2 NP)

WHAT: FOUND CACHE (EFP)

WHEN: 271715DEC08

WHERE: 38SMB 55325 95289

TIMELINE

1715: IA INFORMS B/2505 OF SUSPECTED CACHE SITE IN MUHALLA 774

2030: IA COMPLETES RAID, RETURNS TO FOB HOPE

2035: IA CONDUCT TQ OF LNS AT JSS HOPE

2040: B/2505 ENTERS LNS INTO BATS/HIDES

ROLLUP OF CACHE:

2 X POSSIBLE JAM MEMBERS IN IA CUSTODY

1 X 60 MM MORTAR ROUND

1 X EFP WITH 2 WIRES ATTACHED TO IT (ABOUT 4-5 INCHES WIDE X 10-12 INCHES TALL)

1 X UNKNOWN ROUND/ POSSIBLE EFP ENCLOSURE

3 X AK-47 MAGAZINES

6 X 5.56MM ROUNDS

40 X 7.62MM ROUNDS

1 X .50 CAL ROUND

1 X 60MM MORTAR SIGHT
1 X **ICOM BATTERY**

2 X LARGE BATTERIES, AMERICAN

3 X FLEX CUFFS

MULTIPLE WHITE, BLUE AND YELLOW LATEX GLOVES.

DIARY CONTAINING INFORMATION ON WHY DETAINEE JOINED JAM AND HOW THEY TRAFFIC MATERIALS FROM IRAN.

PICTURES OF POSSIBLE CELL LEADER.

**EOD** ASSESSMENT: 2 DIARIES CONTAIN INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY AND TRAVEL OF A POSSIBLE BOMBER THROUGH IRAQ, IRAN, AND JORDAN. THE DIARIES REPORTEDLY CONTAIN BOMB MAKING INFORMATION.

**S2** ASSESSMENT:

THE EFP WOULD HAVE BEEN BATTERY INITIATED, XXXXXXXX. THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE SUCCESSFUL ATTACKS AGAINST CF MORE FREQUENT. THE MATERIALS MOST LIKELY CAME FROM IRAN. THIS CAN BE ASSESSED NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE DIARY FOUND IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MATERIALS, BUT THE SKILL AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO MAKE THEM.

**SUMMARY:**

1 X WEAPONS CACHE FOUND

0 X **WIA**

0 X DMG

CLOSED/301208
Attacks Continue in Obama Administration’s First Year

Mortar and rocket attacks against the Green Zone continued during the first year of the Obama administration. These are ascribed to the Baghdad branch of Kataib Hezbollah, an Iraqi Shiite militant organization backed by Iran.

DATE 12/31/09

TITLE (ENEMY ACTION) INDIRECT FIRE RPT (Rocket) JASG-C, JDOC : 0 INJ/DAM

MND-B EVENT

WHO: 32 JASG-C (IZ)

WHAT: CONFIRMED EXPLOSION IN THE IZ

WHEN: 312132DEC09

WHERE: XXXXXXXXXXX

HOW: IZ POLICE WERE DISPATCHED TO THE ITALIAN EMBASSY (XXXXXXXXXXXX) WHO REPORT A DETONATED MORTAR ROUND WITH NO INJURIES AND NO DAMAGE. DOD EOD WAS OFFERED AND DECLINED.


EOD ASSESSMENT: N/A

0 x DET

0 x KIA

0 x WIA

0 x DMG

///CLOSED///

USD-C SIGACT #XXXXXXXXXXXX

USD-C EVENT:
UNIT: 2/10 MTN

WHO: 2-14 IN

WHAT: ROCKET ATTACK AGAINST INTERNATIONAL ZONE

WHEN: 312130DEC09

WHERE: XXXXXXXXXX

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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX/XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX(XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX): XXXXXXXXXX

CP NUMBER: XXXXXXXXXX

UNIT: XXXXXXXXXX

GRID LOCATION: XXXXXXXXXX

DISTANCE AND DIRECTION: XXXXXXXXXX/XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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TIMELINE:

XXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXX/XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXX,

XXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXX.

NFI

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S2 ASSESSMENT: AFTER FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE ROCKET ATTACKS THAT OCCURRED ON THE EVENING OF 31DEC09, WE BELIEVE THE ATTACKS WERE CONDUCTED BY BKH. BKH TYPICALLY TARGETS THE GREEN ZONE WITH ROCKETS ATTACKS AND ONLY THEY POSSESS THEIR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND TRAINING TO CONDUCT 107MM ROCKETS LAUNCHES FROM NEW PODS AND STILL MAINTAIN ACCURACY WITH THEIR ATTACKS. EACH OF THE ROCKETS WERE FIRED AT THEIR MAX RANGES TO TARGET THE GREEN ZONE, SOMETHING AN INEXPERIENCED PERSON WOULD UNLIKELY BE ABLE TO DO. XXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXX.

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G2 ASSESSMENT: REPORTING INDICATED THAT XXXXXXXXXX, A KH TECHNICAL EXPERT, HAD A MEETING WITH XXXXXXXXXX, WHO IS WEAPONS FACILITATOR AND WAREHOUSE MANAGER, O/A MID-DECEMBER FOR UNKNOWN REASONS.

FOLLOWING THIS, XXXXXXXXXX REPORTEDLY TRAVELED TO IRAN, POSSIBLY TO FACILITATE THE ATTACKS ON 31 DEC. OTHER REPORTING SEEMED TO SPECIFY THE USE OF 107MM ROCKETS.

ALSO, PREVIOUS REPORTING INDICATED THAT KH INTENDED TO CONDUCT ATTACKS TARGETING THE EMBASSY BY THE END OF THE YEAR.
THE COORDINATION OF THESE ATTACKS FROM AT LEAST FOUR DIFFERENT POINTS OF ORIGIN AROUND BAGHDAD, WITH FAIRLY GOOD ACCURACY AND EXECUTION, ARE SIMILAR IN TTPS TO THE IDF ATTACKS IN MID-SEPTEMBER, WHICH WERE CONFIRMED TO HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED BY KH. IN ADDITION, THE COORDINATION OF THESE ATTACKS, AND THE TIMING, INDICATES THAT THEY HAD AT LEAST THREE DIFFERENT IDF CELS COORDINATED TO CONDUCT THE ATTACKS ON 31DEC09. IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THEY WILL CONDUCT MORE ATTACKS WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS (AS OF 1 JAN 10), SIMILAR TO THE PERIOD OF APPROXIMATELY FOUR DAYS IN SEPTEMBER THAT THEY TARGETED THE IZ ON CONSECUTIVE DAYS (15-18 SEP).

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SUMMARY: ROCKET ATTACK

1 X RKT ATK
0 X INJ
0 X DMG

/////CLOSED///// 030226
Capture of Iranian Suspects

The report indicates that American and Iraqi raids against people suspected of being Iranian agents continued during the Obama administration. This raid was carried out by an Iraqi SWAT police unit in Basra with the help of American Special Operations forces.

DATE 12/19/09

TITLE (FRIENDLY ACTION) CORDON/SEARCH RPT BAS088/ BASRAH SWAT : 1 UE DET

MISSION: On 19 0051C DEC 09, BASRAH SWAT, advised by USSOF, conducted a cordon and knock IVO 38R QU 67434 78975 in Basrah, IOT detain XXXXXXXXXX, to disrupt Etal'at activities in the Basrah Province, and to promote the rule of law and the legitimacy of the Iraqi government in Basrah.

SIGNIFICANCE: XXXXXXXXXX is an Etal'at officer who also supports JAM operations. XXXXXXXXXX is suspected of collecting information on CF and passing them to Iranian Intelligence agents. XXXXXXXXXX has facilitated the movement of sticky bombs into Iraq and met with leaders of JAM SG, PDB, and Etala'at.

NUMBER OF DETAINEES WITH TAG NUMBERS ACCEPTED INTO U.S. OR ISF DETENTION FACILITIES AND THE NAME AND LOCATION OF THE DETENTION FACILITY: 1 x

NUMBER OF ISF PERSONNEL KILLED BY ISF/USSF/NSWTG: NONE

NUMBER OF ISF PERSONNEL WOUNDED BY ISF/USSF/NSWTG: NONE

NUMBER OF WEAPONS CAPTURED: 1x AK-47, 1x Glock pistol (SN F04829-80),

1x Submachine gun

NUMBER AND TYPE OF OTHER MATERIAL CAPTURED: 1x cell phone (TD),

7x identification card (JP), 1x laptop, DOCEX

REPORT CLOSED 19 1745C DEC 09
Firefight on the Iranian Border

This document describes a firefight between American and Iranian forces near Iraq’s border with Iran. An American platoon accompanied Iraqi soldiers on a search for infiltration routes. The Americans soldiers were instructed to stay at least one kilometer away from the border. The report asserts that an Iranian with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher threatened the American troops, prompting an American soldier to shoot him with a .50-caliber machine gun.
(A TITAN LOCAL NATIONAL HIRED FROM FOB CALDWELL) TO GO FORWARD TO TELL THE IA THAT THEY ALL NEEDED TO DEPART. THE INTERPRETER DID SO, BUT RETURNED TO CF LT ********* TO SAY THAT EVERYTHING WAS OK AND THE IRANIANS WANTED TO HAVE A MEETING TO TALK ABOUT THE BORDER. CF LT ********* MOVED FORWARD FAR ENOUGH TO SEE THE IA ALL OFF THEIR TRUCK, GUN UNMANNED, WITH THEIR GEAR OFF, SHOWING PICTURES TO IRANIAN SOLDIERS AND HAVING TEA WITH THE IRANIANS.

CF LT ********* HAD THE INTERPRETER ONCE AGAIN TELL THE IA THAT THEY MUST LOAD UP AND GO. TWO MORE IRANIAN TRUCKS APPEARED AND 8 SOLDIERS EACH (16 TOTAL) DISMOUNTED AND TACTICALLY MANEUVERED INTO TACTICAL POSITIONS FURTHER SOUTH ON THE DIRECT EAST AND WEST SIDES OF CF LT ********* PLATOON COLUMN. WEAPONS CARRIED WERE AK47S, RPKS AND RPGS. THE IRANIANS WERE CLEARLY INTENT UPON ENCIRCLING THE PATROL.

CF LT ********* HAD HIS PLT START TO SLOWLY BACK THEIR TRUCKS UP (SOUTH). AT THIS POINT, XXXXXXXXX (INTERPRETER) WENT RUNNING BACK FROM THE LEAD POSITION TELLING CF LT ********* NOT TO MOVE OR THE IRANIANS WOULD ENGAGE THE COLUMN. CF LT ********* HELD HIS GUYS AND THEN MOVED FORWARD TO TRY AND MOTION THE IA TO GET IN THEIR TRUCK AND GO. HE THEN HAD XXXXXXXXXX GO ALL THE WAY FORWARD TO TELL THE IA THAT HE WAS LOW ON GAS AND MUST RETURN. XXXXXXXXXX RETURNED AND SAID THAT EVERYTHING WAS OK - THE IRANIANS SAID THEY WOULD GIVE THEM GAS AND WANTED TO CONTINUE THE MEETING. CF LT ********* THEN TOLD HIS GUYS THEY WERE LEAVING.

THE IRANIANS TO THE NORTHWEST OF THE COLUMN STARTED TO ENGAGE THE PATROL BEFORE CF LT ********* TRUCKS MOVED. CF LT ********* GAVE THE COMMAND TO RETURN FIRE AND RETROGRADE BACK TO THE CHECK POINT 14 (VIC NC 627243). THE ENTIRE COLUMN WAS UNDER FIRE AND RETURNED FIRE AS THEY CONDUCTED U-TURNS TO LEAVE THE AREA. AN RPG GUNNER WHO HAD MOVED TO THE SOUTHERN END OF THE COLUMN AND WAS ON THE ROAD TRYING TO ENGAGE CF LT ********* PLT WAS ENGAGED AND KILLED BY A .50 CAL GUNNER. WHILE BREAKING CONTACT AND RETURNING TO CP14, THE PLT RECEIVED RPG AND INDIRECT FIRE ALL THE WAY BACK TO CP 14 - WELL INSIDE IRAQI TERRITORY AND WEST OF THE BORDER CASTLE. THE ENTIRE ENGAGEMENT LASTED 1:30 TO 2:00 MINUTES. AS THE PLT BROKE CONTACT - IRANIAN INDIRECT FIRE LANDED AROUND THEM FOR APPROX 5:00 MINUTES. TOTAL NUMBER OF IRANIAN CASUALTIES IS UNKNOWN, MINUS THE RPG GUNNER WHO WAS KILLED IN THE .50 CAL ENGAGEMENT.

UPON ARRIVAL AT CP14, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE IA SOLDIERS HAD NOT FOLLOWED. WE ARE NOT SURE IF THE IA ATTEMPTED TO REMOUNT THEIR VEHICLE OR NOT. PROBABLY NOT THOUGH, AS THE IRANIANS APPEAR TO HAVE DELIBERATELY SEPARATED THEM FROM THEIR VEHICLE. THROUGHOUT THE DAY WE CONTINUED TO TRY TO REESTABLISH OBSERVATION OF THE IA SOLDIERS, VIA GROUND SURVEILLANCE, SHADOW UAV AND GLOBAL HAWK, TO NO AVAIL.

COL ********* CDR 3/4ID, RECEIVED WORD THIS EVENING FROM THE MANDALI POE JCC THAT THE IRANIANS HAVE INFORMED THEM THEY HAVE 4 IA SOLDIERS AND A DBE LT IN DETENTION. THEY DID NOT MENTION THE INTERPRETER, NOR A FIFTH IA SOLDIER. WE HAVE SUBMITTED AN RTQ TO THE CORPS PAO, AND RECOMMEND RELEASING TO TRY GETTING OUT AHEAD OF ANY IRANIAN CLAIMS OF CROSSING THE BORDER (EXASPERATED BY US KILLING ONE OF THEIR SOLDIERS).

AS OF 081800D: MNC-I STILL CONSIDERS THE 7 PERSONNEL DUSTWUN UNTIL WE HAVE PROOF OF THEIR STATUS. THERE WERE 10 US SOLDIERS (1 OFFICER AND 18 ENLISTED) PRESENT IN THE PATROL IN 4 UAH’S. ALL WERE FROM 5-73 CAV. CLOSED 171916JSEPT06

UPDATE: 041200C2006< 5 IA AND 1 BP RELEASED FROM IRANIAN CUSTODY, INTERPRETER TO BE RELEASED WITH IN NEXT 48 HOURS.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Leaked Reports Detail Iran’s Aid for Iraqi Militias”
Contractors

Killing Their Own

Contractors in Iraq were faced with threats from many quarters. In this case, an employee of Armor Group is reported to have shot and killed two co-workers as a result of an altercation. After a wild attempt to escape, a coalition soldier tackled him.

DATE 8/9/09

TITLE (CRIMINAL EVENT) MURDER RPT JASG-C ADMIN : 2 CF KIA 1 CIV WIA

MND-B EVENT: 20090809034738SMB44808480

WHO: JASG-C Admin

WHAT: CRIMINAL EVENT- MURDER

WHERE: 38S MB 44808480 (RTI COMPOUND)

WHEN: 090347AUG09

HOW: 3 PERSONNEL FOR ARMOR GROUP WERE SHOT IN THE IZ. 1 X LN, 1 X BRITISH, 1 X AUSTRALIAN, ALL Employed BY ARMOR GROUP (DOD CONTRACTOR). ALL PERSONNEL WERE TRANSPORTED TO 10TH CSH BY THE CONTRACTOR. THE BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN ARE BOTH DECEASED, THE LN IS IN STABLE CONDITION. 1 PAX APPREHENDED BY THE 1/7 QRF. THE PERSON IS A BRIT WORKING WITH ARMOR GROUP. THE IZ POLICE IN COORDINATION WITH IRAQI POLICE, ARE CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION. ALL OF THE IZ ECP'S LOCKED DOWN AT 0429 AND HAVE BEEN REOPEN AT 0545.

DETAILS AS WE KNOW THEM AT THIS TIME. 1 X BRITISH PSD CONTRACTOR HAD ALTERCATIONS WITH 1 X AUSTRALIAN AND 1 X BRITISH CO-WORKERS. ALTERCATION ESCALATED WHEN WEAPON WAS UTILIZED TO KILL CO-WORKERS. SUSPECT THEN FLED SCENE AND RAN THROUGH A INTERNAL CHECKPOINT OF RTI COMPOUND (MANNED BY US: 1-7TH FA SOLDIERS) AND SMASHED WINDOW OF GUARD SHACK. SUSPECT THEN CONTINUE ON AROUND THE CORNER AND ENCOUNTERED A LN WHICH HE PROCEEDED TO SHOOT WHILE RUNNING BY. HE CONTINUED ON TRYING TO FLEE AND THAT IS WHEN HE RAN INTO A ROVING PATROL (1-7TH FA SOLDIERS) WHICH ESCALATED FORCE AND HAD SUSPECT DROP HIS WEAPON. 1-7TH FA SOLDIERS HELD SUSPECT UNTIL IZ POLICE ARRIVED AND PUT HIM INTO CUSTODY. CURRENTLY SUSPECT IS HELD BY US IZ POLICE UNTIL FURTHER DETAILS CAN BE OBTAINED.

UPDATED INFORMATION AS OF 1100 HOURS:

3 Armor Group PSD workers started incident in UNAMI or Tamimi compound area. 2 Armor Group PSD were shot at starting location. Suspect fled area running on foot in a westerly direction when he crossed path of LN guard for Armor Group. Suspect proceeded to fire upon and wounded LN Guard (in Leg). That is when 1-7th Guards, SSG XXXXXXXXXXX and SPC XXXXXXXXXXXX heard shots and SSG XXXXXXXXXXXXX existed post to try and gain situational awareness of SAF. At this time he observed a individual running which quickly turned behind a T-wall. SSG XXXXXXXXXXXX immediately ran to vicinity of SAF audibles and found LN bleeding profusely from gunshot wound. He immediately preformed life saving (CLS field training) steps and administered tourniquet and yelled out for assistance in getting transportation for injured LN.

At the same time the suspect fled toward Guard shack C in which they were just receiving word from Guard shack B of a shooting. Suspect was told to halt and he began to pound on windows and then threw a rock, demanding to be let into the shack.

SGT XXXXXXXXXXXX and PVT XXXXXXXXXXXX could not confirm if suspect still had his weapon at this
time and instructed him to get down on the ground.

Suspect then tried to flee in the direction of the UN SRSG residence and SGT XXXXXXXXX and PVT XXXXXXXXX immediately acted and tackled suspect. Suspect continued to resist arrest.

SGT XXXXXXXXX's quickly shot a directed-aimed warning shot into sand bags which immediately stopped resistance from suspect so that he could be brought under control. Suspect was completely out of control until this time and after initial questioning, suspect stated that he had thrown his weapon into bushes between Guard shack B and Guard shack C along T-wall.

Individual was detained before continuing on towards residence of UN SRSG. Unknown if suspect was going to harm UN SRG or was just looking for an escape route.

Suspect was taken by IZ Police in conjunction with Iraqi Police to 10th CSH for blood alcohol tests and for injuries sustained while fleeing and while being detained.

Upon release from CSH suspect will be taken to IP station and IZ Police will be assisting them in action forward on suspect.

Decisive actions by 1-7th soldiers SSG XXXXXXXXX and SPC XXXXXXXXX quite possibly saved the life of the LN guard and the quick thinking actions from SGT XXXXXXXXX and PVT XXXXXXXXX at Guard shack C possible saved others and maybe the UN SRG from further harm.

S2 ASSESSMENT: UNKNOWN CAUSE. STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION

SUMMARY:

1 X ARREST
0 X DETAINEES
2 X KIA
1 X WIA
0 X DMG
/// OPEN ///
Friendly Fire

The archive shows many incidents in which contractors drew friendly fire from American troops or the Iraqi Army. In this case, the driver of an unmarked BMW, later identified as a contractor, was shot in a friendly fire incident.

DATE 12/16/04

TITLE WARNING SHOT BY 630MP CO IV0 BAGHDAD (ZONE 37N): 2 NEU INJ, 1 NEU VEH DAMAGED

Creating Chaos

The reports in the archive clearly document the ways in which contractors’ actions contributed to scenes of chaos and violence. This report describes how a driver from Triple Canopy tried to bump a civilian’s car out of its lane, creating a chain of events that resulted in the contractors’ throwing a grenade at one of their own vehicles, possibly to prevent it from being used by insurgents.

DATE 6/2/06

TITLE CIV PSD VEH ACCIDENT IN JAMJAMAH (ZONE 515): 1 CIV INJ, 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE

AT 1000J: LONESTAR 6 HAS RETURNED TO THE REO. HIS FINAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION AS FOLLOWS.


//CLOSED//

SUMMARY:

1 X US CONTRACTOR VEHICLE EXPLOSION

1 X LN INJURED(GRAZING WOUND TO LOWER LEFT CALF)
Shooting Civilians

Many documents show that contractors shot with little discrimination at unarmed civilians. In May 2006, witnesses said that an Iraqi ambulance driver was killed by “uncontrolled small arms firing” after a vehicle owned by the Blackwater security company was hit by an improvised explosive device.

DATE 5/2/06

TITLE *BLUE (BLACKWATER) ON WHITE IN BAGHDAD (ZONE 25): 1 CIV KILLED, 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE

JCC REPORTS THAT IP REPORTED THE IED STRIKE ON CF CIV VIC MB 4265 9065. IP CLAIM THAT 1X LN AMBULANCE DRIVER WAS KILLED BY UNCONTROLLED SMALL ARMS FIRING BY THE CF CIV CONVOY AFTER THE IED STRIKE (SEE ASSOCIATIONS FOR DETAILS OF IED STRIKE). JCC NOTIFIED 4/101AA AND REQUESTED THAT THE CF PATROL AT THE SITE INVESTIGATE.

UPDATE: BDE MiTT REPORTS THAT IA FORCES ARRIVED ON LOCATION AND THE ONLY THING ON SCENE WAS THE WHITE SUBURBAN THAT HAD STRUCK THE IED. FURTHER INVESTIGATION IS BEING CONDUCTED AS TO WHERE THE AMBULANCE DRIVER WAS TAKEN AND IF THE AMBULANCE DRIVER WAS A FIRST RESPONDER.

UPDATE 1013: BDE MiTT REPORTS THE IA ON SITE TALKED TO LOCAL NATIONALS ON THE GROUND AND THE LN*s ARE SAYING THAT THE AMBULANCE DRIVER WAS SHOT BY BLACKWATER. BDE MiTT CONTACTED BLACKWATER TOC TO TRY TO CONFIRM DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT AND BLACKWATER TOC WOULD NOT CONFIRM OR DENY AT THIS TIME. THE AMBULANCE DRIVER WAS NOT A FIRST RESPONDER HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO WORK AT MEDICAL CITY. IT HAS NOT YET BEEN CONFIRMED WHETHER HE WAS DRIVING AN AMBULANCE OR NOT.

UPDATE 1036: BDE MiTT REPORTS THAT THE AMBULANCE DRIVER NAME IS XXXXXXXXXXX AND HE WAS TAKEN TO MEDICAL CITY. HE WAS DRIVING AN AMBULANCE (LIC # MOH 4019) THAT WAS ALSO TAKEN TO MEDICAL CITY.
Iraqi Protests

Improper actions by contractors were seldom disciplined by American officials. In this case, killings of two civilians by Blackwater employees prompted immediate demonstrations by local Iraqis.

DATE 2/7/06

TITLE ESCALATION OF FORCE CONDUCTED BY BWS IVO KIRKUK: 2 CIV KILLED, 0 CF INJ/DAMAGE

Kurds and Ethnic Tensions

Ethnic Tensions

This report notes that American military and civilian officials played an important behind the scenes role in heading off a confrontation between the Sunni Arab governor of Nineveh Province and Kurdish forces. The episode began when the governor announced plans to attend a sports festival in a heavily Kurdish area. Episodes like these raise the question of what will happen when American forces are withdrawn from Iraq.

DATE 5/8/09

TITLE (THREAT REPORT) ASSASSINATION THREAT RPT PESHMERGA AND NINEWAH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT : 0 INJ/DAM

3/1 05:070

WHO: Peshmerga and Ninewah Provincial Government

WHEN: 081131MAY09

WHERE: 38SLF 39917 29100

WHAT: Standoff at Peshmerga Checkpoint

HOW: On 7 May 2009, the Provincial Governor (PGOV) of Ninewa (Athiel al-Najafi) publically announced his intent to visit a sports event in the vicinity of Bashiqa NE of Mosul (vic LF 52 35). KRG perceive this action to be a challenge to the Kurdish Government. At 081131MAY09, KRG LNO to CP-North informed the DCG-S of MND-N (BG XXXXXXXXXXXX) that if the PGOV traveled into Kurdish controlled area, there would be a potential incident. MNC-I KRG LNO (XXXXXXXXXXXXX) received this report from KDP Assayish: if Najafi travels into Kurdish territory, the Peshmerga will stop him with force if necessary, Ninewa PRT (XXXXXXXXXXXXX) contacted Najafi via phone to warn him of possible danger, but Najafi insisted on going anyway. 3/1 CAV moved forces to the Farmhouse Checkpoint (the first Peshmerga checkpoint on the road to Bashiqa) to monitor the situation. The Peshmerga at the checkpoint reported that they are ordered to shoot Najafi if he attempts to pass through the CP. IA (at the mirror CP) reported that they are ordered to fire on Peshmerga if they fire on Najafi. The Ninewah Operations Center reported that PM Maliki ordered the NOC not to assist in securing PGOVs movement. IPs secured his movement anyway, under orders of MOI Ayden. Before Najafi arrived at the CP, the sports event in Bashiqa was cancelled. GOV Najafi moves to Hamdaniya instead, supposedly after hearing the event was cancelled.

S2 Assessment: Recent reporting illustrates increased potential for ethnic tensions within Ninewa as a direct result of Provincial Governor Athil Najafi's actions. On 08 May, Najafi attempted to visit Bartella, a largely Christian town with a KRG office in the disputed sub-district of Ba'sheqa, Hamdaniyah district; the area is considered Kurd controlled, and there are Peshmerga checkpoints along the periphery of area. When Najafi arrived in the area with his entourage, Peshmerga elements were reinforced from Irbil in preparation for potential confrontation. It is highly likely that Najafi was aware of the contention that such a visit would bring, and it is assessed that this visit was likely intentionally staged to make a statement of governmental ownership of the region.

IO Assessment: Increasing tensions between the Arabs and Kurds have been expected and this may be the first incident to elevate this tension to a higher level. PSYOP Detachment 1280 has been informed and aggressively pursuing viable products to prepare for future incidents. We will continue to monitor local media as well as task IQATF to monitor populace atmospherics, "word on the street" and Mosque prayers for possible rise in Arab-Kurd rhetoric. In addition 3-1 CAV IO will work with DIV IO to develop assessment and preparations for possible Talking Points.
RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Tensions High Along Kurdish-Arab Line”
GLOSSARY

9-LINE — Standard format for requesting air support
A/C — Aircraft or AC-130 gunship
AAF — Anti-Afghanistan forces
AB — Air base
AC — Air Cavalry, also AC-130 attack airplane
AFG — Afghanistan
AH-64 — Apache attack helicopter
AIF — Anti-Iraqi forces (insurgents)
ANA — Afghan National Army
ANP — Afghan National Police
AQ — Al Qaeda
ASG — Afghan security guard
ATT — At this time
AUF — Afghan uniformed police
AWT — Aerial Weapons Team
BAF — Bagram Airfield
BDA — Battle damage assessment
BDE — Brigade
BG — Brigadier General
Blue on Blue — Friendly fire
Bone — A call sign used by a B-1 bomber squadron
CA — Coordinating authority or combat aircraft
CAS — Close air support
CAV — Cavalry
CCA — Close combat attack
CDR — Commander
CF — Coalition forces
Chosin Company — A company of the 503 Airborne Infantry Regiment, (73 Airborne Brigade)
CIV — Civilian
CJOC — Combined Joint Operations Center
COP — Combat outpost
CP — Command post
DAM — Damage
DBE — Department of Border Enforcement
DET — Detained or detainee
Dismounts — Troops on foot
DOW — Died of wounds
DSHKA — A heavy antiaircraft machine gun
DTG — Date/Time group
DUDE 25 — Call sign used by F-15 jet squadron
ECP — Entry control point (the gate)
EKIA — Enemy killed in action
EOD — Explosive ordnance disposal
EOF — Escalation of force
ETT — Embedded Training Team
EWO — Electronic warfare officer
FARP — Forward air refueling point
FOB — Forward operating base
FPS — Facility Protection Service
GBU 31 — A GPS-guided 2,000-pound bomb
GBU 38 — A GPS-guided 500-pound bomb
GBU-12 — A laser-guided 500-pound bomb
GCTF — Global counterterrorism forces
GIRoA — Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GoA — Government of Afghanistan
GR — Grid
GSW — Gunshot wound
HAWG — Call sign used by A-10 Warthog squadron
HELLFIRE — American-made air-to-surface missile
HERO — A U.S. or allied soldier killed in action
HESCO — A prefabricated barrier for blast protection
HIG — Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin, an Afghan Islamist faction
HIMARS — High-mobility rocket system
HLZ — Helicopter landing zone
HMG — Heavy machine gun
HNSF — Host nation security forces
IA — Iraqi Army
ICOM — Term for a type of radio
IDF — Indirect fire
IED — Improvised explosive device
IMM SUP — Immediate suppression
INS — Insurgents
INTSUM — Intelligence summary
IOT — In order to
IP — Iraqi Police
ISAF — International Security Assistance Force
ISF — Iraq Security Forces
ISO — In support of
IVO — In the vicinity of
IZ — International Zone, also known as the Green Zone
JAF — Jalalabad Airfield
JAM — Jaish al-Mahdi, also known as the Mahdi Army
JINGLE TRUCK — Slang for Afghan civilian cargo trucks
JTAC — Joint Terminal Attack Controller
KIA — Killed in action
LLVI — Low-level voice intercept
LN — Local national
LRAS — Long-range advanced scout surveillance system
MAM — Military-aged male
MEDEVAC BIRD — Medical evacuation aircraft
MGRS — Military Grid Reference System
MIRC — A secure chat room used for coordination among units
MNF — Multinational forces
MOI — Ministry of Interior
MSR — Main supply route
NC — Noncombatant
NDS — Afghan National Directorate of Security
NFI — No further information
NOFORN — Do not share with foreign governments
NSTR — Nothing significant to report
OCCP — Operations Coordination Center (Provincial)
OFF STATION — No longer able to provide support
OMLT — Operating Mentoring Liaison Team
ON STATION — In position to support
OP — Observation post (often followed by a number or name)
OPs — Operations
PAKMIL — Pakistani military forces
PAX — People
PID — Positive identification
PJOC — Provincial Joint Operations Center
PKM — A machine gun
POI — Point of impact
POLAD — Political liaisons from the State Department
POO — Point of operation
PRT — Provincial Reconstruction Team
QRF — Quick Reaction Force
RC — Regional command
REL — Releasable
RPGS — Rocket-propelled grenades
RPT — Report
RTB — Returned to base
SAF — Small-arms fire
SAFIRE — Surface-to-air fire
SALTUR — Size / Activity / Location / Time / Unit / Response report
SITREP — Situation report
Squirter — Term for someone trying to escape
SVBIED — A car or truck bomb
TB — Taliban
TF — Task force
TGT — Target
TIC — Troops in contact (troops in firefight with enemy forces)
TM — Team
TOC — Tactical Operations Center
UAD — Unmanned aerial device
UAV — Unmanned aerial vehicle
VBIED — A car or truck bomb (**Note: they use both SVBIED and VBIED)
W/D — Wheels down, aircraft has landed
W/U — Wheels up, aircraft has taken off
WIA — Wounded in action
Appendix C
Additional Images
Dozens of detainees at an American-Iraqi jail in 2006 were held for months because of administrative and judicial delays.
Demonstrators in Baghdad in 2005 claimed that a special unit of Iraq’s Interior Ministry was torturing detainees.
Suspects detained by an Iraqi police commando unit in Baghdad in 2005.
The detention center at a military base in Baghdad in 2007.
In a 2005 episode, Iraqi policemen in Baghdad said Iraqi government commandos beat them until Americans intervened.
Two detainees showing signs of sleep and water deprivation waited to be interrogated at a Baghdad prison in August 2007.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Detainees Fared Worse in Iraqi Hands, Logs Say”
American soldiers killed the parents of five siblings when the Iraqis’ car failed to stop in Tal Afar in 2005.
More than 950 Shiite pilgrims were killed in 2005 during a stampede in Baghdad. Victims' shoes were tossed in a pile.
Workers in Najaf, Iraq, dug graves for local victims of the 2005 stampede in Baghdad.
Relatives of an Iraqi National Guard member reacted to his death in a car bombing in Baquba in 2004.
A 3-year-old boy was shot and killed while playing near his Baghdad home in 2008.
Fighting between Marines and insurgents in Haditha, Iraq, in 2005 also killed many Iraqi civilians.
The Iraqi mother of two slain police officers covered her face with their blood in Baquba in 2006.
Shiites in Baghdad protested the bombing of a holy Shiite shrine in Samarra in 2006.
A car bomb killed 115 people and wounded 137 at a Baghdad market in April 2007.
A civilian tried to identify bodies found in Baghdad in 2006.
An American civil affairs team visited Iraqis to pay compensation for damages or deaths caused by soldiers.
A member of Concerned Local Citizens, an Iraqi group working with the American military against insurgents in 2008.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Mix of Trust and Despair Helped Turn Tide in Iraq”
Iraqis killed four American contractors and tied at least two of the bodies to a Falluja bridge in 2004.
Private security contractors killed an Iraqi in an ambulance when it approached the contractors’ disabled vehicle in Baghdad in 2006.
Employees of the Blackwater security company flew over Baghdad in 2005.
Col. Michael W. Butler, a retired Air Force officer, was killed in 2007 while in Iraq as a private contractor.
A car destroyed in 2007 when employees of the Blackwater security company opened fire in Baghdad, killing 17 civilians.
The remains of a car in which two women were killed in 2007 by private guards riding in a convoy.

RETURN TO ARTICLE

“Use of Contractors Added to War’s Chaos in Iraq”
Appendix D
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Ellen Barry is a correspondent with the Moscow bureau of The New York Times.
Jo Becker is an investigative reporter with The New York Times.
William J. Broad is a science reporter and senior reporter for The New York Times.
Elisabeth Bumiller is a correspondent with the Washington, D.C. bureau of The New York Times.
Jackie Calmes is a correspondent with the Washington, D.C. bureau of The New York Times.
David Carr is a media columnist and culture reporter for The New York Times.
C. J. Chivers is a foreign correspondent for The New York Times.
Noam Cohen writes the Link by Link column for the business section of The New York Times.
Helene Cooper is a correspondent with the Washington, D.C. bureau of The New York Times.
Rachel Donadio is the Rome bureau chief of The New York Times.
Celia Dugger is co-bureau chief of the Johannesburg bureau of The New York Times.
Dexter Filkins, a staff writer for The New Yorker, covered Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq for The New York Times.
Carlotta Gall is a senior correspondent for The New York Times, covering both Afghanistan and Pakistan.
Jeffrey Gettleman is the East Africa bureau chief of The New York Times.
James Glanz is an investigative reporter with The New York Times.
Jack Healy is a correspondent with the Baghdad bureau of The New York Times.
Mark Landler is a correspondent with the Washington, D.C. bureau of The New York Times.
Andrew W. Lehren is a reporter on the computer-assisted reporting desk of The New York Times.
John Leland is a correspondent with the Baghdad bureau of The New York Times.
Eric Lipton is a correspondent with the Washington, D.C. bureau of The New York Times.
Elisabeth Malkin reports for the Mexico bureau of The New York Times.
Mark Mazzetti is a correspondent with the Washington, D.C. bureau of The New York Times.
Jane Perlez is a bureau chief for the Pakistan bureau of The New York Times.
Scott Shane is a correspondent with the Washington, D.C. bureau of The New York Times.
Michael Slackman is the Berlin bureau chief of The New York Times.
Sabrina Tavernese, who covered Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan for The New York Times, is a national correspondent.
Ginger Thompson is a correspondent with the Washington, D.C. bureau of The New York Times.
Michael Wines is the Beijing bureau chief of The New York Times.
Appendix E
Acknowledgments

“Open Secrets” could not have been published without the vital contributions of many people, including Joshua Tallent and Chris Casey of eBook Architects, who transformed the manuscript into an eBook; James Dunn and Marnee Muskal, who enabled it to reach readers; Archie Tse, David Furst, Scott Shane, Bill Horn, Jake Doherty, Tom Gaffney, Angela Rutherford, Steve Kenny and Julia Cohn, who provided invaluable editorial support; and Gerald Marzorati, Jim Schachter, MZ Goodman, Alex Ward and John MacLeod, who oversaw its creation.
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