

COUNTERING THE ISLAMIC STATE:

GRUELING EFFORT AHEAD



Stars and Stripes

Retraining Iraq's fractured army: Will it work this time?

By HEATH DRUZIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — As American troops prepared to leave Iraq in December 2011, the former head of the military training mission there, Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, had this to say about the Iraqi Security Forces:

"My gut tells me they will be capable to do this — they are doing it today," Helmick said. "Yet to

ANALYSIS

be determined, longer term."

Helmick's doubts were validated this summer as a stunned world watched several hundred Islamic State militants and their allies send divisions of Iraqi soldiers into full retreat.

An eight-year, \$25 billion effort to reorganize, train and equip Iraq's military now seems all for naught — undermined by corruption and sectarian divisions.

SEE RETRAINING ON PAGE 7

Sgt. William Winstead watches Iraqi soldiers participate in training exercises at Camp Fallujah, Iraq, in 2010.

Defeating militants may be much harder than Iraq, Afghan wars

By RAJIV CHANDRASEKARAN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's strategy to beat back the spread of Islamic State militants across Iraq and Syria will depend on far more than U.S. bombs and missiles hitting their intended targets.

In Iraq, dissolved elements of the army will have to regroup and fight with conviction. Political leaders will have to reach compromises on the allocation of power and money in ways that have eluded them for years. Disenfranchised Sunni tribesmen will have to muster the will to join the government's battle. European and Arab allies

will have to hang together, Washington will have to tolerate the resurgence of Iranian-backed Shiite militias it once fought, and U.S. commanders will have to orchestrate an air war without ground-level guidance from American combat forces.

"Harder than anything we've tried to do thus far in Iraq or Afghanistan" is how one U.S. general involved in war planning described the challenges ahead on one side of the border that splits the so-called Islamic State.

SEE HARDER ON PAGE 6



President Barack Obama addresses the nation Wednesday.

AP

MILITARY

'Star Wars' craft spotted at former US base in England

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FACES

New Nicki Minaj makeover favors polish over pop

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NFL

Goodell, league taken to task over claim that tape of Rice surfaced in April

Back page

QUOTE
OF THE DAY

“Some people forget this is a cemetery. I would never go to the Holocaust museum and take a selfie.”

— Nancy Nee, whose firefighter brother, George Cain, was killed in the 9/11 attacks, on the change in tone near the attack site in New York City

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MILITARY

“Star Wars” spacecraft spotted at ex-base

By ADAM L. MATHIS
Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — Greenham Common, once home to some of the most destructive weapons in the U.S. arsenal, is now home to weapons from “a galaxy far, far away.”

Models of the Millennium Falcon and an X-Wing fighter, both prominent spacecraft in the original “Star Wars” movie trilogy, were spotted on the former military base by Matthew Myatt, an instructor with the Airbourne Aviation flying club.

Some media have speculated that the models are being used to shoot “Episode VII,” the next installment of the “Star Wars” movie series. Pinewood Studios, with headquarters near London, is the location for the movie’s principal photography, according to a studio news release.

Myatt was in an airplane flying over Greenham Common on Sept. 5 to take promotional photographs of Airbourne’s aircraft when something on the ground caught

his attention. Myatt said he took photos and then kept flying.

Later he examined the pictures and realized he had captured images of “Star Wars” spacecraft, he said. Myatt showed his son who like his father, is a “Star Wars” fan.

“He was, like me, absolutely over the moon and excited about it,” Myatt told Stars and Stripes via Skype.

Greenham Common was home to 96 U.S. nuclear cruise missiles for a period during the Cold War, leading a group of women activists to set up a “Peace Camp” nearby, which endured for years.

Under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty, which was signed in 1987 by the United States and the Soviet Union, all missiles were withdrawn from Greenham by 1991. The U.S. subsequently returned the base to the U.K., which later closed it.

“Star Wars: Episode VII” is scheduled for release in December 2015.

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MATTHEW MYATT/Airbourne Aviation

A photo taken over Greenham Common, England, on Sept. 5 shows what seems to be a model of the Millennium Falcon and an X-Wing, spacecraft featured in the “Star Wars” movies.

Generations of MOH recipients gather in Tenn.

By MATT LAKIN

The Knoxville (Tenn.) News-Sentinel

Kyle Carpenter doesn’t remember the moment he threw himself on a grenade four years ago to save a fellow Marine in Afghanistan.

“I don’t recall any of the events leading up to it,” he said Wednesday. “I woke up in the hospital five weeks later.”

Tom Kelley remembers the moment when a rocket-propelled grenade exploded 6 inches from his head 45 years ago as he led a naval rescue mission on the banks of a Vietnam canal.

“I threw me around the boat a little bit, but we were able to continue,” he said. “I was the guy in charge. I had to get all my guys out.”

Carpenter, then 21, and Kelley, then 30, each received the Medal of Honor for their actions. Each lost his right eye and nearly died. Kelley, now 75, is among the oldest living recipients; Carpenter,

who was presented the medal in June by President Barack Obama, so far is the youngest living recipient at 24.

They’re spending this week in Knoxville with dozens of other recipients of the nation’s highest military award at the annual convention of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

“There are only 78 of us living, so it’s a reunion for sure,” Kelley said. “Each of us did what we had to do under the circumstances. What I did wasn’t for a medal. It was for the guys with me.”

“I’m still the same person as before, but it’s enabled me to meet people I wouldn’t have met otherwise and help get the message out about patriotism, service to others and doing the right thing,” he said.

“Anybody can do what we did under the right circumstances — they just need a little extra something dangled in front of them.”

Kelley has attended various conventions of the society before;

this year is Carpenter’s first.

“It weighs heavy on me,” Carpenter said. “It represents a lot — history, sacrifice, the many who have gone before me. I just try to tell my story and the things I’ve lived and try to tell people there’s a light at the end of the tunnel.”

Carpenter and his comrade, Nicholas Eufrazio, were on duty atop a roof in Afghanistan’s Helmand province Nov. 21, 2010, when they came under attack. Hand grenades landed inside their post, and Carpenter threw himself on a grenade to save Eufrazio.

The shrapnel fractured Carpenter’s skull, punctured his lung and caused a host of other injuries so severe the medical evacuation team expected him to die. He woke up from a coma in the same hospital as Eufrazio.

“Neither one of us was able to get up out of bed,” he said. “We had to send each other messages written on a chalkboard.”

Now he’s finished with sur-

geries, retired from the Marine Corps and pursuing a degree in international studies at the University of South Carolina.

Kelley was a Navy lieutenant commanding a river assault division of eight boats on June 15, 1969, during a mission to rescue a company of Army infantrymen on the east bank of the Ong Muong canal in Vietnam’s Kien Hoa province when a boat broke down under enemy fire.

Kelley moved his boat into the line of fire to buy time for repairs, and a grenade barely missed his head and shattered a pipe instead, spraying him with shrapnel.

Kelley couldn’t stand up and could barely speak, but he kept command and got all 250 soldiers and sailors to safety.

“I still had two radios, one in each hand,” he said. “We spotted the ambush, and the boat got fixed.”

The convention lasts through the weekend.

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MIDEAST



In the Qasaba district of Kabul, Afghanistan, the proximity of residential housing to large compounds associated with the Afghan Defense and Interior ministries — prime targets for insurgents — means civilians are increasingly in the crossfire.

'This is new for us'

For middle-class Kabul district of Qasaba, the insurgency comes home

By ERIN CUNNINGHAM
The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan — Nestled at the base of the craggy mountaintops that loom over north Kabul, the middle-class neighborhood of Qasaba seems an unlikely place to be infiltrated by Afghanistan's Taliban-led insurgents.

It is ethnically diverse, in a country where bloody battles have been fought along ethnic lines, and its inhabitants hail from a generation of civil servants who worked for Afghanistan's communist government in the 1970s. But Qasaba — flanked to the south by Kabul International Airport, and home to sprawling security compounds housing Afghan and foreign troops — emerged as a key new location for insurgent attacks this summer.

Two brazen assaults here last month, including an hourslong siege of the airport launched from a residential building and a suicide attack targeting foreign advisers to the Afghan government, have residents worried they are now in the crosshairs of an insurgency that has long wreaked havoc in the rest of the country. As foreign troops pre-

'There have been suicide attacks in other parts of the city, but this is new for us. No attacks ever come as close as these.'

Abdel Qassim
Qasaba resident

pare to leave Afghanistan by the end of the year, this dusty district of small bazaars, pastel-colored mosques and Soviet-era housing blocs is bracing for stepped-up attacks on the major government centers in their midst.

"There have been suicide attacks in other parts of the city, but this is new for us," Qasaba resident Abdel Qassim, 28, said of the two attacks that took place here last month. Dozens of local children romped playfully by his side, while women hung back, coddling babies in the shaded gardens that line the residential street.

"No attacks have ever come as close as these," he said.

In the first assault, on July 16, bullets and shrapnel from the battle between

gunmen who laid siege to the airport and Afghan security forces careened into the modest apartments where Qassim and roughly 1,000 other families live. They emerged unscathed. But less than a week later and just blocks away, an explosion from a suicide bomber attacking a nearby foreign compound rippled through the early morning calm.

For residents of Qasaba in Kabul's northeastern reaches — where there are more watchtowers than trees and more armored cars than Afghanistan's famed, fragrant rose buses — theirs is a story of a once-quiet community now grappling with the encroaching violence.

People here attribute the rise in violence to a newly paved road that they

say allows militants to more easily slip in and out unnoticed, and to a large construction site that police said insurgents used to stage the airport attack after disguising themselves as workers.

"There are no police here, only at the juncture," complained Abdel Kamel, a young journalist, gesturing toward where the local bazaar selling bread, sweets, and petrol-filled jerry cans meets the main road.

Where the mountain slope reaches the paved highway several blocks away, the Afghan defense ministry's main supply base, a vast compound encircled by earth-filled barriers monopolizes the landscape.

At sunset on this summer day, a commercial airliner took off with a roar, making a sharp ascent over the rugged peaks. Microbuses trundled up the steep mountainsides to ferry laborers home from work, the men bringing home pink plastic bags brimming with cucumbers, carrots and okra for their evening meal.

"I grew up with war, but the children," Qassim said, trailing off. "We wish the bases would move."



PHOTOS BY HOLLY PICKETT/For The Washington Post

Shah Rahman stands outside his bakery in the Qasaba district of Kabul, Afghanistan, on July 24. Militants staged two attacks in a week from the neighborhood, including a pre-dawn raid on Kabul International Airport and a suicide bombing at a nearby unit of the Afghan Interior Ministry.

VETERANS

Seniors boost number of vets deemed unemployable

By ALAN ZAREMBO
Los Angeles Times

Jack Behunin received welcome news last year from the Department of Veterans Affairs: Due to war-related medical conditions, he was being declared unfit to work, boosting his tax-free monthly disability compensation from \$1,850 to \$3,000.

Not that he had any interest in a job. The World War II veteran in Burbank, Calif., is 90 years old.

His case is not an aberration. Senior citizens have helped make the benefit — known as individual unemployability — one of the fastest-growing expenditures in the VA disability system. The number of “unemployable” veterans has nearly tripled since 2000, to 321,451, with the majority at ages when most people have already stopped working.

Government data show that 56 percent of the beneficiaries are at least 65 years old. Eleven percent

are 80 or older.

Being classified as unemployable can add \$1,100 to \$1,900 to a veteran’s monthly disability pay, which often comes on top of Social Security.

At an annual cost of at least \$4 billion, the benefit is part of a rapidly expanding disability system expected to cost \$60 billion this year. Federal reports have singled out unemployability as an example of how a system operating under rules established decades ago has not kept pace with modern times.

“VA’s compensation program does not reflect the current state of science, technology, medicine and the labor market,” the Government Accountability Office concluded in a 2006 report.

GAO researchers are now examining the benefit to determine how many veterans classified as unemployable had left the labor force voluntarily.

When the VA created the unem-

ployability benefit in 1934, Social Security didn’t exist. The benefit was a safety net for veterans who couldn’t work because of health problems that began in the military and whose disability ratings.

In 1945, as disabled World War I veterans continued to fall out of the workforce, the VA adopted a regulation ensuring eligibility to veterans of any age. That decision underlies much of the current growth. More than half the 137,343 veterans approved since 2010 were 65 or older, including 13,684 who were at least 75, according to VA statistics.

“VA’s compensation program does not reflect the current state of science, technology, medicine and the labor market,” the Government Accountability Office concluded in a 2006 report.

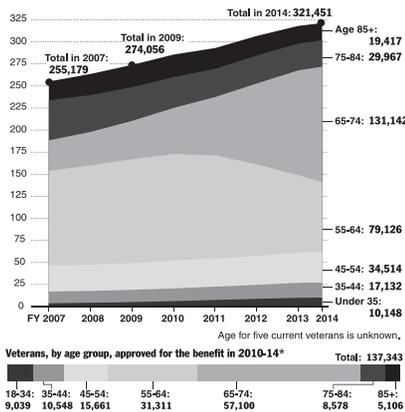
GAO researchers are now examining the benefit to determine how many veterans classified as unemployable had left the labor force voluntarily.

When the VA created the unem-

Unable to work

A rising number of veterans are being classified as unemployable. The designation boosts their disability pay to 100 percent, or about \$3,000 per month tax-free. More than half of those approved in recent years were already 65 or older.

Veterans, by age group, being paid for unemployability 2007-14*
In thousands



SOURCE: Department of Veterans Affairs

THOMAS SUI LAUDER, ALAN ZAREMBO/MCT

VA chief: ‘Tens of thousands’ more medical staff needed

By TOM PHILPOTT

The Department of Veterans Affairs needs “tens of thousands” more personnel working in VA hospitals and clinics to meet patient demand, new VA Secretary Robert McDonald told lawmakers Tuesday at a hearing of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

The size of the staff shortage, McDonald said, explains why VA has launched “a big recruiting effort” he kicked off recently with visits to Duke University and University of Pennsylvania medical schools to tell students there why “VA is where they want to work.”

Congress is pressing to clarify VA’s staff shortage as the department struggles to recover from a patient wait-time scandal, demand for care grows due to a force drawdown, and the nation at large copes with a shortage of health workers, particularly in mental health care.

McDonald got more specific than some senators expected, at one point estimating the VA staff shortage at 28,000 against current staffing of 300,000. McDonald attributed that figure to his deputy, Sloan Gibson, who was acting sec-

MILITARY UPDATE

retary after retired Army Gen. Eric Shinseki resigned in May.

When 28,000 elicited a “Wow” from Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., the committee chairman, McDonald added that it includes both “clinicians and other employees.”

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont. later challenged the figure, telling McDonald that VA can’t hold a reliable number on its medical staff shortage before it completes an ongoing study of staff productivity and patient demand.

“How can you make a determination that you need 28,000 medical staff,” Tester asked. “I mean, you’re a wonder worker, probably, but in fact that information still hasn’t been hammered out.”

McDonald conceded the point. “We are going through a process right now where we are, location by location, specialty by specialty, [trying] to understand how many people we really need,”

the secretary acknowledged.

Carolyn M. Clancy, a physician and interim under secretary for health at VA, is leading that process. She told Tester it is expected to be completed by year’s end and will show both the number of clinicians and support staff VA needs “to make them as efficient and productive as possible.”

A VA spokesperson later said the 28,000 estimate is rough, and reflects current staff vacancies as well as future need for more physicians, nurses, other care providers and administrative staff.

Tester asked what VA would do with more physicians, given how tight office space is at VA clinics and hospitals.

“Obviously you’re right,” McDonald said.

The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 enacted last month gives allow VA to open 27 more clinics. McDonald said he also favors leasing more space to deliver care “rather than building” facilities for a veteran population that tends to move over time.

McDonald listed VA action since May and during his first five weeks as secretary to try to

restore the confidence of veterans and nation in what has been a scandal-ridden VA health system. He praised the vast majority of employees dedicated to serving veterans and providing timely, quality care.

He vowed that those who don’t put veterans first won’t be tolerated, and whistleblowers will be protected and even urged to expose wrongdoing.

Sanders held the hearing to review the final report of VA Inspector General on abusive scheduling practices uncovered at the VA hospital in Phoenix. Those practices to hid staff shortages, impacted patient care and led the IG to open investigations at 93 other VA care facilities. Sanders called the behavior uncovered “inexcusable,” particularly that “so many executives and senior clinicians knew about manipulation of wait time data.

“The people who lied or manipulated data at Phoenix and elsewhere must be held accountable,” Sanders said.

Patient care suffered as a consequence, Acting VA Inspector General Richard J. Griffin testified. His office examined medi-

cal records and other information for 3,409 patients, which included 293 deaths. It identified 28 instances of “clinically significant delays in care,” tied to access or scheduling. Of these, six patients died. The IG found another 17 cases of care deficiencies unrelated to scheduling or access. Of these, 14 died.

However, the IG could not “conclusively assert that the absence of timely quality care” caused any deaths at Phoenix VA, Griffin testified.

That set Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.) who said 77 patients on waiting lists across VA since January 2012 committed suicide. Wouldn’t “a reasonable person” conclude wait-time manipulation contributed to some of those deaths?

Griffin said his staff is “not in the business of making odds on whether something did or didn’t cause a death, whether it’s likely or unlikely, 50 percent, 30 percent, 80 percent. That’s not our purpose.”

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA, 20120, email milupdate@aol.com or twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.



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MILITARY

Whistleblower: VA appeals board hid delays

By **TRAVIS J. TRITTEN**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Mirroring a scandal that engulfed its health care system, Veterans Affairs managers handling disability benefit appeals also manipulated records to hide overly long delays in deciding cases, an agency whistleblower testified Wednesday on Capitol Hill.

The chairman and head office staff of the Board of Veterans' Appeals shifted cases in a tracking system in 2012 to wipe evidence it had held some for months, and more than a year in at least one case, Kelli Kordich, an attorney with the board, told a House Veterans Affairs subcommittee.

The sworn testimony sparked concerns among lawmakers that the systematic practice of doc-

toring electronic records at hundreds of VA hospitals and clinics to disguise long wait times may have spread to other areas of the sprawling federal agency.

The Board of Veterans' Appeals, which now has 280,000 pending appeals cases, said the incidents happened two years ago and were quickly fixed.

Kordich said a VA union sent a letter to former VA Secretary Eric Shinseki in June 2012 notifying him that board staff was unnecessarily delaying appeals. Veteran cases ranged from 120 to 415 days old, including five cases held personally by the board's principal deputy vice chairman.

"Most of the cases involved decisions on appeals of waiting veterans that already had been prepared by board attorneys and

were simply awaiting the signature" of the head office staff, she said.

When the board became aware of the complaint to Shinseki, top staff members entered the electronic case tracking system and reassigned the old cases to new attorneys, Kordich said.

"This had the effect of resetting the calculation of how many days the appeal had languished in one location," Kordich said.

She also outlined what she called a "toxic" office atmosphere characterized by "unchecked mismanagement, corruption and blatant disregard for our nation's veterans," Kordich said all the managers involved in delaying the appeals received employee bonuses and were later promoted.

Rep. Beto O'Rourke, D-Texas,

said he has been hearing warnings and complaints from veterans in his district about problems with the appeals board and delays of up to two years in VA reaching decisions.

"I don't think we realized the crisis that was developing in the appeals process," he said.

VA Board Vice Chairman Laura Eskenazi, who Kordich claimed personally delayed five appeals cases in 2012, told lawmakers that some cases languished due to specific issues preventing a decision or because board attorneys were overloaded with work.

Eskenazi said she made changes that fixed the delays.

"I'm happy to report the measures I took are still in place today and we did not go back to that same bottleneck," she said.

Meanwhile, the board has fo-

cused for years on improving its workplace atmosphere, Eskenazi said.

"I've done countless things to address [workplace] climate and I think we made improvements, but we still have work to do," she said.

Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., said he did not accept Eskenazi's explanation for the delayed appeals decisions, including one that took more than 600 days to resolve.

"He was very busy and didn't have time — that is the lamest excuse I've ever heard in my life," Roe said.

He said veterans sometimes depend on an appeals decision to pay for utilities and other basic necessities, and board staff should have to explain the delays in person.

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Everett Naval Station leader investigated in sex assault case

The Associated Press

EVERETT, Wash. — The Navy says the commanding officer of Naval Station Everett has been reassigned during a military investigation of a sexual assault allegation.

Navy spokeswoman Sheila Murray said Monday that an Article 32 hearing, which is similar to a civilian grand jury proceeding, is planned for Capt. James Duke Jr.

The Daily Herald of Everett reported that the allegation was

initially reported to Lake Stevens, Wash., police in January. Lake Stevens police Cmdr. Dennis Taylor said a woman told police that the 48-year-old man sexually assaulted her after she turned down his request for sex.

Through his lawyer, Duke said Monday that he is innocent and is the "target of a malicious and false allegation." Everett lawyer Anna Goykhman said the accusation was made in retaliation for Duke's decision to end a relationship.

Taylor said Lake Stevens police worked closely with military investigators.

The case was forwarded to Snohomish County prosecutors, who told police in June they weren't going to file charges.



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WAR ON TERRORISM

Rivals say Obama will need ground troops

By Chris Carroll
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Conservatives pushed back Thursday against President Barack Obama's contention that the United States can stabilize Iraq without committing U.S. troops to a ground combat role in the country.

In a speech to the nation Wednesday night, Obama outlined a strategy that called for increased U.S. air attacks in support of Iraqi forces, coupled with increased training of the Iraqi military. The president said 475 additional troops would be sent to support the more than 1,000 others already on the ground in non-combat roles.

The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Buck McKeon, R-Calif., dismissed what he called Obama's

"minimalist" plan to the defeat Islamic State insurgents with the focus on air power. McKeon predicted that even in an advisory role, U.S. troops would likely end up in the thick of the fighting and would ultimately need to do more, including fighting alongside Iraqi units, helping them with logistics and communications, and aiding in holding ground taken from the Islamic State, a group also known by the acronyms ISIL and ISIS.

"American boots will be standing on sand. Americans will be shot at, and they will be shooting back," McKeon said in prepared remarks to an audience at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative Washington think tank. "There's simply no other way to do this."

He noted that U.S. reliance on air power alone in the NATO

campaign against the late Moammar Gadhafi had failed to bring stability once the Libyan leader was gone.

"We tried that in Libya, and it hasn't worked," he said.

Pentagon press secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby told reporters Thursday that the 475 advisers due to be sent to Iraq in coming days would embed with local troops at brigade level and higher headquarters, and would not engage in operations such as accompanying troops on combat operations or calling in airstrikes from the battlefield. James Carafano, a former Army officer and security scholar at the conservative Heritage Foundation, said Obama is right to avoid sending entire divisions back into Iraq. But the plan he has laid out is too stingy with troops, Carafano said.

"Conceptually, you look at the plan and you can live with that," he said. "But you have to look at what's underneath. With the president, you get the sense he's saying, 'I don't want to be accused of doing nothing, and I don't want to be accused of being Bush, and a neocoon.'"

The president is clearly avoiding "mission creep," Carafano said. But too few U.S. troops at the beginning of America's war to destroy ISIS actually creates a risk of mission creep, he said.

"This is reminiscent of how we got involved in Vietnam," he said. "[Ex-President Lyndon B.] Johnson didn't want to be accused of being soft on communism, and he didn't want to get in too deep. As the situation developed, he just kind of got progressively dragged in."

But national security analyst Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies argued against more U.S. ground troops, writing in a paper Thursday that whatever the tactical needs, the United States' hands are tied by a number of factors.

"The United States has no domestic political support for deploying its own ground combat units," Cordesman wrote. "It would take months to deploy and organize a major land force presence to cover the large areas involved, and U.S. ground troops would walk into Iraqi and Syrian civil wars where they would almost inevitably be seen as favoring one side and being seen as an enemy by the other."

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Harder: General says effort to be 'most complex' problem for US since 9/11

FROM FRONT PAGE

But defeating the group in neighboring Syria will be even more difficult, according to U.S. military and diplomatic officials. The strategy imagines weakening the Islamic State without indirectly strengthening the ruthless government led by Bashar Assad or a rival network of al-Qaida affiliated rebels — while simultaneously trying to build up a moderate Syrian opposition.

All that "makes Iraq seem easy," the general said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to share views on policy. "This is the most complex problem we've faced since 9/11. We don't have a precedent for this."

The Syria side of the campaign remains a work in progress at the Pentagon, the CIA and the White House. The development of an operational plan is further complicated by a lack of intelligence — U.S. drones have not been flying over Islamic State-controlled parts of the country for long — and the absence of allied local forces that can leverage U.S. airstrikes into territorial gains.

The consequence will be a military campaign unlike the opening days of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, when tens of thousands of U.S. troops charged into the country and toppled Saddam Hussein's government in three weeks. Nor will it resemble the troop surges in Baghdad and southern Afghanistan, when American forces sought to counter militants by protecting the civilian population. Closer analogues, Obama said Wednesday night, are the counterterrorism campaigns waged in Yemen and Somalia, in which the United States has relied on drone strikes and the occasional Special Operations raid to kill or capture high-level targets, but placed no American boots on the ground for extended periods. Day-to-day fighting has been left to Yemeni and Somali soldiers.

Those missions have met

with success — a U.S. airstrike killed the leader of Somalia's al-Shabab jihadist movement last week — but both campaigns have dragged on for years and involve smaller and less well-financed adversaries than the Islamic State. Although Obama promised a "steady, relentless effort" in a nationally televised address Wednesday night, he also said that "it will take time to eradicate a cancer like ISIL," using a common acronym for the Islamic State.

Such a mission was not the U.S. military's preferred option. Responding to a White House request for options to confront the Islamic State, Gen. Lloyd Austin, the top commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, said that his best military advice was to send a modest contingent of American troops, principally special operations forces, to advise and assist Iraqi army units in fighting the militants, according to two U.S. military officials. The recommendation, conveyed to the White House by Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was cast aside in favor of options that did not involve U.S. ground forces in a front-line role, a step adamantly opposed by the White House. Instead, Obama had decided to send an additional 475 U.S. troops to assist Iraqi and ethnic Kurdish forces with training, intelligence and equipment.

Recommitting ground combat forces to Iraq would have been highly controversial, and most likely would have been opposed by a substantial majority of Americans. But Austin's predecessor, retired Marine Gen. James Mattis, said the decision not to send ground troops poses serious risks to the mission.

"The American people will once again see us in a war that doesn't seem to be making progress," Mattis said. "You're giving the enemy the initiative for a longer period."

Supporters of the president's

approach say that the use of U.S. ground troops could easily send the wrong message to Iraqi soldiers, encouraging them to hang back and allow the Americans to fight, and it might discourage Iraq's new government from moving quickly in efforts to win over Sunnis estranged by the previous prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki. "We cannot do for Iraqis what they must do for themselves, nor can we take the place of Arab partners in securing their re-

gion," Obama said.

U.S. military and diplomatic officials, even those who favored a small number of ground troops, see a path, albeit rocky, to wresting terrain from the militants in Iraq. If the new government of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi acts inclusively — a key early test will be whom he selects for the still-unfilled posts of defense minister and interior minister — and his military leaders place competent generals in charge of

the reconstituted units dispatched to fight the militants, the Islamic State's territorial gains could be eroded.

It will almost certainly be a grueling fight. Once U.S. airstrikes intensify and the Iraqi army gets back into the fight, most likely augmented by Shiite militias, members of the Islamic State may go covert, blending in with the local population and conducting insurgent-style attacks on Iraqi troops.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Retraining: Current, former US officers have doubts over Iraqi army effort

FROM FRONT PAGE

Now, the U.S. is starting from scratch with a new mission to urgently revamp the Iraqi military in hopes it can roll back the militant group that calls itself the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL.

Many politicians and experts say the U.S. has little choice but to try to salvage the Iraqi military. Yet some current and former U.S. military officers involved in the effort to stand up an Iraqi force wonder whether the new effort will succeed where the first one failed.

One senior Army officer, who served as a battalion-level trainer for the Iraqi army, said fixing deep problems within the Iraqi army's leadership would take years and would do little to combat the Islamic State in the short term.

"We just left in December 2011, so it's not even three years later," said the officer, who asked to remain anonymous because he is still in the military and fears reprisals. "So if all this effort didn't even make them capable of standing and fighting, why do we think it's going to matter if we send a handful of advisers over now?"

A sectarian militia

Many involved in the last training mission blame former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki — who took power with U.S. backing — for turning the military into what many see as little more than a Shiite-dominated militia.

Al-Maliki's policies, which put many commanders into place more for their political loyalties than their military acumen, alienated the country's Sunni minority and helped set the stage for the Islamic State, a Sunni group, to take over towns populated by disaffected Sunnis with little resistance.

Retired Army Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, who oversaw training of the Iraqi forces in the early days of the Iraq War, said that after the U.S. invasion in 2003, American trainers tried to construct a military that was representative of the religious and ethnic makeup of a country where hostilities between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, as well as Kurds and Arabs, run deeply.

Eaton and others involved in that training program said al-Maliki, a Shiite hard-liner, started undoing the process as soon as U.S. troops withdrew from the country at the end of 2011.

"That process broke down with Maliki — it became a Shia-dominated army," Eaton said. "The army became illegitimate in the eyes of the people and illegitimate in the eyes of the soldiers themselves."

In order to address sectarian concerns, the U.S. plans to stand up National Guard units made up of Sunni tribesmen to operate in largely Sunni areas.

It's an idea with echoes of a similar program used to help bring Iraq out of a bloody civil war that engulfed the country between 2006 and 2008. That idea, known



Stars and Stripes

Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Notterman, right, with the 382nd Military Police Detachment from San Diego, supervises members of an Iraqi reconnaissance platoon during range training in Iraq in 2006.

as the Awakening movement, involved paying Sunni tribesmen to turn against insurgents.

Unlike the proposed National Guard, Awakening units were never integrated into the Iraqi military because al-Maliki didn't trust them.

"The Iraqi army can be a nationalizing force — although some units are predominantly Sunni and others are predominantly Shia, they all fight for Iraq," said retired U.S. Army Col. Peter Mansoor, a brigade commander during the Iraq War. "I think it's really critical to make sure that ethic is instituted in the Iraqi military, and any identity with militias or other groups is squeezed out."

Mansoor said that early on in the Iraq War, the U.S. did not always pick the best officers to lead training and did not instill enough of a meritocracy in the Iraqi ranks, mistakes he said the U.S. must avoid this time around.

"We need to provide our best soldiers and leaders to be advisers and not just the most available ones," he said. "The real dilemma was how to convince the Iraqi government to promote the most competent leaders and not the most politically loyal ones, and that's what we got wrong and what the Iraqi government got wrong."

With the Islamic State making advances and the Iraqi army so far unable to beat them back, experts say time is running out for increased foreign military help to make a difference.

"There's a window here where the new government can make some strides if it takes the central messages to heart and makes some real reforms," said Kathleen Hicks, the director of the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "If that window closes ... I think that's a real risk for us, because we can't

train and equip a sectarian force that doesn't have support from the population."

Deep misgivings

Some have deep misgivings about trying to repeat a program that offered little lasting benefit. Their fears have heightened after reports that government-aligned Shiite militia members have been

targeting Sunni villagers in Islamic State strongholds, even heading some in a grim adoption of Islamic State tactics.

Retired Army Col. Douglas Macgregor said any training-and-equipment mission will accomplish nothing as long as Sunni Muslim countries allied with the U.S. continue to surreptitiously fund the Islamic State.

"You've got recruiting stations

and cash outlets supporting ISIS inside Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar," he said. "As long as they exist, even if you kill 10,000 or 20,000 ISIS people inside Iraq and Syria ... and you ignore the recruiting and cash outlets in these countries, whatever you destroy will be rebuilt and return."

The other part of Obama's train-and-equip plan calls for increased aid to moderate Syrian rebels, who have been battling the forces of President Bashar Assad for more than three years. More recently, the so-called moderates have also been fighting the more hard-line rebel groups, including the Islamic State.

In his speech Wednesday night, President Barack Obama said moderate Syrian rebels can act as a "counterweight" to the Islamic State.

But moderate forces have been increasingly squeezed out. The so-called Free Syrian Army, on which the U.S. once pinned its hopes to oust Assad, barely exists anymore, said Daniel Seckman, co-founder of the SREO Research Organization, a Turkey-based group that studies the Syrian conflict.

Seckman questioned how much the U.S. can accomplish by sending more help to any rebel factions, noting that even once moderate factions have had to join with Islamists to survive.

"I don't think the United States has any 'friend' inside Syria anymore," he said.

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MIDEAST

What to expect from the 'core coalition'

BY JOHN VANDVER,
JENNIFER SVAN AND
MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

U.S. officials are working hard to build a broad, international coalition to combat Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq. What is unclear is whether the international effort will produce a coalition of consequence or one in name only.

At the NATO summit last week, the U.S. announced formation of a 10-nation "core coalition" that includes nine NATO members plus Australia. It has since grown.

In all, about 40 countries have expressed solidarity in the effort, according to the State Department, although some countries have not spelled out in detail what they are prepared to contribute. So far, most contributions from allies have centered on ferrying humanitarian aid into Iraq and limited arming of Kurdish forces in the north.

Major Arab states are all likely to play a role in the fight against the Islamic State, said Shashank Joshi, a senior research fellow with the Royal United Services Institute in London.

"The bigger question is what type of cooperation," he said.

Some Arab states may limit their contributions to allowing the U.S. to use their military facilities to launch airstrikes, Joshi said. But few will likely commit their forces with perhaps the exception of the United Arab Emirates, which is reported to have carried out airstrikes last month in Libya against Islamist-linked militia. The UAE has denied doing so. Jordan may also provide special forces, he said.

It will be difficult for the U.S. to persuade the mostly Sunni Muslim Arab rulers to play a more public role for various reasons, Joshi said. They include fears of Islamic State retaliation and inadvertently boosting the Syrian regime of Bashar Assad.

Arab countries in the Persian Gulf also risk domestic political problems due to public sympathy for the Islamic State, which some Sunnis believe are fighting for Sunni interests against Iran and its fellow Shiite allies in the region.

The U.S. has been urging Sunni allies such as Qatar and Kuwait to crack down on donations to the Islamic State by their citizens.

Not on the list of potential partners is Iran, though its interests coincide with those of the U.S. regarding the Islamic State's threat to the Shiite-led Baghdad government. Nevertheless, Joshi does not expect the U.S. will seek overt cooperation because of Iran's close ties to Assad and the delicate balancing act with Sunni Arab nations.

"At least publicly, a prominent Iranian role is not conducive to Arab participation," he said.

For President Barack Obama, the decision to go after Islamic State militants in Syria also creates a dilemma, as doing so could

The United States



On Aug. 8, the U.S. began a bombing campaign against Islamic State militants, hitting targets at strategic points in northern and western Iraq. So far, nearly 200 strikes have been carried out. In addition, President Obama announced on Wednesday that he would be sending 450 more U.S. troops into Iraq to work as advisers and to fly surveillance aircraft. That will bring the total number of military personnel in Iraq to 1,600. Obama has said the troops will not take part in ground operations against the Islamic State.

The United Kingdom



Britain has dropped humanitarian supplies into Iraq and provided arms to Kurdish fighters and carried out surveillance flights. Government officials have not ruled out participation in the U.S. air campaign. Iraq's new central government must first prove itself as inclusive, encompassing Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds before British forces get involved, government officials have said.

France



Paris has said it will send arms to Kurdish forces leading the fight against the Islamic State. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said Wednesday that France "will participate, if necessary, in military air action."

Germany



Berlin also has agreed to send weapons to semi-autonomous Kurdistan, marking a major shift for a country that has avoided foreign military entanglements since World War II. While it is unlikely Germany would participate in direct military action, it is conceivable that Berlin could take part in an advisory mission if Baghdad were to seek NATO training assistance.

Poland



Poland was named as one of the 10-core nations that are part of the U.S.-led coalition, but what it will contribute isn't yet clear. Poland possesses experienced, battle-tested troops who have spent the past decade fighting in Afghanistan. Warsaw could contribute some of those soldiers as advisers to Iraqi forces. Like many others in the coalition, Warsaw already has helped in the delivery of humanitarian supplies to Iraq.

Australia



Australian aircraft took part in the initial humanitarian intervention in northern Iraq last month, and Canberra is supplying weapons to forces countering the Islamic State. Australian officials haven't ruled out joining the U.S. in future airstrikes.

Canada



Canada has provided aircraft to help deliver humanitarian supplies into northern Iraq and has delivered weapons to Kurdish fighters. The Canadian government is also considering sending a small team of military advisers into Iraq.

Jordan



The kingdom routinely hosts U.S. troops for training, but, despite speaking out against "transnational terrorists," hasn't committed to action in Syria.

help Assad, who Obama has said needs to relinquish power.

"Whilst it's true that attacks will serve Syrian ends, it will also serve the ends of Syrian opposition groups, whom Obama has committed to supporting," Joshi said. The Islamic State may be

weakened, "but the opposition will also be getting stronger and that's bad news for Assad."

Here is a look at some of the key players and how they are contributing or may contribute to the international coalition or support U.S. operations.

Italy



The NATO ally took part in initial humanitarian relief efforts in northern Iraq in August. At NATO's recent summit in Wales, Italy also said it would join the U.S.-led coalition in the effort to counter the Islamic State. It remains unclear whether that support will involve airstrikes or sending in trainers to work with Iraqi security forces.

Denmark



Danish aircraft have delivered both humanitarian supplies and weapons into northern Iraq. Though Denmark is one of NATO's smallest members, it often is a part of alliance-led military action, including sending forces into Afghanistan and taking part in the Libya intervention in 2011.

Turkey



The NATO member is among the "core coalition," but its role remains murky. Allies have been pressuring Turkey to tighten controls along its border with Syria, which has functioned as a main transit route for those fighting the regime of Bashar Assad. Islamic State militants have been among the fighters moving through Turkish territory. U.S. plans to strike at Islamic State targets in Syria could undermine Turkey's main objective in the region, Assad's removal from power. Meanwhile, the Islamic State is holding about 40 Turkish government officials and aid workers hostage, which also could limit Istanbul's willingness to play a prominent role in fighting the militants.

Saudi Arabia



U.S. officials say the kingdom on Wednesday agreed to host a program to train and equip moderate Syrian rebels fighting Islamic State militants and the Syrian regime.

Kuwait



The U.S. already maintains a handful of bases in the country, including an air base, a large desert ground maneuver training facility and a forward headquarters for the three-star Army logistics hub for the Iraq War. It also donated \$10 million to help with the growing humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

United Arab Emirates



The U.S. maintains an air base and has access to ports here. The UAE recently carried out airstrikes against militants in Libya, iring the U.S.

Bahrain



The U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet is based here. The U.S. maintains an airfield here and has had access to a second to move heavy equipment used in the war in Afghanistan. Bahrain's prime minister on Thursday urged Muslim countries to strengthen cooperation to tackle regional threats, but did not mention Islamic State.

Arab League



The league of 22 Arab nations on Monday agreed to confront the Islamic State militarily and politically, but hasn't elaborated on how it would do so.

Qatar



The country hosts two major U.S. installations, one an air base used for bombing missions over Afghanistan and cargo movement through the Middle East, the other an Army base used by Central Command to stage military equipment and supplies. The Qataris have also sent planeloads of aid to help with the humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

MIDEAST

Syrian rebel group names new leaders after blast

By RYAN LUCAS
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — A Syrian rebel group named a new leader and military chief on Wednesday, less than 24 hours after an explosion killed a dozen of its senior figures in a devastating blow to one of the most powerful factions in the country's armed opposition.

The group, Ahrar al-Sham, has been among the steadiest and most effective forces fighting to oust President Bashar Assad in Syria's civil war. It has also been on the front lines of a nine-month battle in northern Syria against the extremist Islamic State group.

The deaths of so many of its leaders throws Ahrar al-Sham's future into question, while also laying bare the tangled dynamics of Syria's broader anti-Assad scene just as the United States is considering injecting itself into the country's conflict by going after the Islamic State group. Washington's efforts to crush the extremists could include ramping up support for Syria's rebels.

The U.S. has long looked askance at Ahrar al-Sham, considering the group too radical for Washington's tastes and too cozy with the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front. For that reason, the limited support Washington has provided so far to rebels was not directed

Ahrar al-Sham's way.

But the group managed to fuse its ultraconservative religious views with a more practical political position, allowing it to act as a bridge of sorts between the more moderate Western-backed rebel groups and hard-line factions. And although Washington had qualms about working with the group, Ahrar al-Sham has been a fierce enemy of the Islamic State group, and has lost thousands of men since January fighting the extremists.

Perhaps the most successful group to battle the militants is a battle-hardened Kurdish faction known by its local acronym, the YPK. However, the group is effectively the Syrian branch of a Turkish-Kurdish organization that NATO has designated as a terrorist organization.

Following the death of Ahrar al-Sham's leadership, it remains unclear whether the group could survive the loss of nearly all of its senior members, including leader Hassan Aboud. They were killed late Tuesday when an explosion struck a high-level meeting in the town of Ram Hamdan in Syria's Idlib province.

It was not immediately clear who was behind Tuesday's explosion, and there even were conflicting reports on the nature of the blast.

UN: Syrian rebels free 45 Fijian peacekeepers

By RYAN LUCAS
AND EDITH LEDERER
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — Al-Qaida-linked Syrian rebels on Thursday released all 45 Fijian peacekeepers they had held captive for two weeks, the United Nations said, bringing an end to a crisis that had pulled the U.N. monitoring force into the chaos of Syria's civil war.

Fighters from the Nusra Front captured the Fijian troops late last month in the Golan Heights, where a 1,200-strong U.N. force patrols the buffer zone between Syria and Israel. The area along the frontier has been engulfed in heavy clashes since then between the rebels and the Syrian military.

"We can confirm they have been released," U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said Thursday. He said they were freed at the Quneitra crossing point in the Syrian-controlled part of the Golan Heights.

The U.N. said in a separate

statement that all 45 of the Fijian troops "are in good condition" and will be taken for a quick medical assessment.

The Fijian hostages were captured Aug. 28, one day after rebels seized control of the Syrian side of the Quneitra crossing from President Bashar Assad's troops.

The same day the Fijians were taken captive, nearly 80 Filipino peacekeepers were trapped at two U.N. encampments, surrounded by rebel fighters who demanded they surrender. The Filipinos refused, and both groups of Philippine troops eventually escaped — one bursting out with the help of Irish colleagues who came to rescue them and the other by slipping away under the cover of darkness.

The Fijians' release comes just hours after the Nusra Front posted a video online in which the captive peacekeepers can be seen sitting cross-legged in the background as two men with long beards deliver short speeches in Arabic. Near the end of the video,

one of the Fijian soldiers addresses the camera in English. He says the date is Sept. 9 and it's a "very happy day."

"We've been informed that we will be released soon, and we are all very happy to be going home," he said, adding that all the soldiers are alive, safe and well.

"I would like to assure you that we have not been harmed in any way," he said, adding that they have been treated well by the Nusra Front, given that the group has limited resources.

In the video, the two men speaking in Arabic describe their version of events leading up to the Fijians capture on Aug. 28. They say one of them had given assurances the soldiers would not be harmed, and so they were honoring that.

The men say they wanted to complete a prisoner exchange and to have humanitarian aid delivered to besieged parts of Syria, but denied reports they had asked for the Nusra Front to be removed from the U.N. terrorist list.

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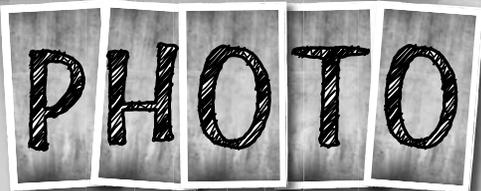
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NATION

9/11 marked by solemnity amid changes

By RACHELLE BLIDNER
AND JONATHAN LEMIRE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Americans marked the 13th anniversary Thursday of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks with a New York ceremony held amid new surroundings.

For the first time, the long-awaited National September 11 Museum — which includes gut-wrenching artifacts and graphic photos of the attacks — is open on the attacks' anniversary. Fences around the memorial plaza have come down, integrating the sacred site more fully with the streets of lower Manhattan while completely opening it up to the public and camera-wielding tourists.

The ceremony, begun just before 9 a.m. was familiar. A solemn reading of the names. Moments of silence to mark the precise times of tragedy. Stifled sobs of those still mourning.

Much has changed though since 2001. New York has a new mayor in office, Bill de Blasio, one far less linked to the attacks and their aftermath than his immediate predecessors. And, finally, a nearly completed One World Trade Center has risen 1,776 feet — the year of American independence — above ground zero and will be filled with office workers by this date in 2015, another sign that a page in the city's history may be turning.

On Thursday, New Yorkers went about their morning routines along sidewalks that were once cordoned off. Inside the plaza, families milled quietly before reading the names of the deceased, pausing the sad roll call only four times: to mark the times when the first plane struck the World Trade Center, when the second plane struck, when the first tower fell and when the second tower fell.

The memorial plaza will be closed to the public for most of the day and available only to family members. It will reopen at 6 p.m., at which point thousands of New Yorkers are expected to mark the anniversary at the twin reflecting pools where the towers once stood.

For some who lost loved ones in the at-



ROBERT SAO, THE DAILY NEWS/AP

Janice Lynch, of the Queens section of New York, mourns Patricia Massari at the North Pool during memorial observances Thursday on the 13th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

tacks, the increasing feel of a return to normalcy in the area threatens to obscure the tragedy that took place there and interfere with their grief.

"Instead of a quiet place of reflection, it's where kids are running around," said Nancy Nee, whose firefighter brother, George Cain, was killed in the attacks. "Some people forget this is a cemetery. I

would never go to the Holocaust museum and take a selfie."

For others, the changes are an important part of the healing process.

"When I first saw (One World Trade Center), it really made my heart sing," said Debra Burlingame, whose brother, Charles Burlingame, was piloting the plane before it crashed into the Pentagon. "It does every

time I see it because it's so symbolic of what the country went through.

"I want to see it busting," she said. "I want to see more housing down there; I want to see it alive and bursting with businesses."

In May, when the long-awaited museum opened in a ceremony attended by President Barack Obama, the fences that had surrounded the plaza for years disappeared, as did the need for visitors to obtain timed tickets. Now, thousands of people freely visit every day, from cellphone-toting travelers to workers on lunch breaks, and those crowds will only swell further this year when One World Trade Center finally opens.

"The memorial and museum is extremely important to those impacted on 9/11," said Mary Fetcher, whose son died in the attacks. "And surrounding that memorial, lower Manhattan has been revitalized."

The first ceremony at the site was held six months after the Twin Towers fell and was organized by then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his aides. Bloomberg, who took office just three months after the attacks, remained in charge, acting as the master of ceremonies for the next decade.

After other elected officials attempted to gain a larger role at the solemn event, in 2012 all politicians — including Bloomberg — were prohibited from speaking at the event.

Elected leaders were speaking in Washington, where Obama delivered brief remarks at the Pentagon's Sept. 11 memorial.

"Thirteen years after small and hateful minds conspired to break us, America stands tall and America stands proud," the president said, making no mention of the administration's new plan to intensify military and diplomatic action against the Islamic State militant group in Iraq and Syria. Instead, he chose to remind Americans that a war begun soon after the 2001 attacks was finally winding down, saying "three months from now, our combat mission in Afghanistan will come to an end."

FEMA wants at least \$5.8M in Sandy aid repaid

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
AND DAVID B. CARUSO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — After Superstorm Sandy hit the East Coast nearly two years ago, the federal government quickly sent out \$1.4 billion in emergency disaster aid to the hurricane's victims.

Now, thousands of people might have to pay back their share.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is scrutinizing about 4,500 households that it suspects received improper payments after the storm, according to program officials and data obtained by The Associated Press through a public records request. As of early September, FEMA had asked about 850 of those households to return a collective \$5.8 million. The other cases were still under review.

FEMA's campaign to recover overpayments, called "recoupment" in agency lingo, typically involves instances in which the

agency believes a household got more money than allowed under program rules, but not necessarily because of an intentional attempt to cheat the system. Fraud cases are handled separately.

Many people asked to return money were deemed ineligible because their damaged properties were vacation houses or rental properties, not their primary residences. Others had double-dipped into the aid pool, with more than one household member getting payments. Some received FEMA money for things later covered by insurance.

As of July 30, the average demanded refund was \$6,987, a sum that could be difficult for many, given the modest annual incomes of most aid applicants. Roughly half of the households under scrutiny reported annual gross incomes of \$30,000 or less.

The larger pool of cases still under review as of that date involved \$53 million in aid payments — about 3.7 percent of the

total given out by FEMA through its individuals and households program — though any potential refunds would likely involve only a portion of that money.

"For most people, the money is long gone and long ago spent on storm recovery," said Ann Dibble, director of the New York Legal Assistance Group's storm response unit, which has been helping about a dozen families fight a FEMA clawback.

The list of people asked to return cash includes Gary Silberman, of Lindenhurst, N.Y., who got a letter last November demanding just under \$17,000. The agency said he was ineligible partly because he and his elderly father had both applied for disaster funds even though they were living together.

The Silbermans also were barred from getting some types of aid because they had failed to buy flood insurance after getting \$25,000 in FEMA aid for flood damage during Hurricane Irene

a year earlier.

Silberman said he should still qualify for the money because he was a rent-paying tenant in his father's house, not a dependent, but FEMA so far has rejected his appeals.

"I lost my home. I lost everything. I don't have \$17,000 to give back," Silberman said. Sandy was among the costliest hurricanes in U.S. history. More than 280 people died in the U.S. and the Caribbean. When the storm struck the New York and New Jersey coastlines, the surging ocean poured into densely populated seaside neighborhoods and turned entire communities into soggy, moldy wrecks.

About 179,000 households in New York and New Jersey received FEMA payments following the storm. The agency is also reviewing payments to some households in Connecticut, Maryland and Rhode Island.

FEMA mobilized for Sandy hoping to avoid problems that

plagued the aid distribution process following Hurricane Katrina's strike on the Gulf Coast in 2005. That destructive storm forced the overwhelmed agency to relax internal controls to speed relief efforts, which led to huge numbers of people getting money they shouldn't have received.

FEMA's attempts to recover hundreds of millions of dollars, often from people who couldn't afford to pay, led to a court fight and a procedural overhaul. By 2011, the agency had mailed out letters to at least 90,000 households asking for aid refunds. Congress authorized the agency to waive much of that debt.

The agency says it has since gotten better at making sure aid only goes to the right people, and in proper amounts.

"They have a lot more controls in place," said John Kelly, the Department of Homeland Security's assistant inspector general for emergency management oversight.

NATION



David Carson, Sr. Louis Post-Dispatch/AP

A protester is arrested during an attempt to shut down Interstate 70 in Berkeley, Mo., on Wednesday near the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson.

Highway shutdown attempt averted

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER
The Associated Press

BERKELEY, Mo. — A planned highway shutdown fell through Wednesday as a wall of officers in riot gear kept people who planned to protest the Ferguson police shooting from walking onto Interstate 70 during the late afternoon commute.

State troopers and St. Louis city and county officers warned the roughly 150 demonstrators who gathered in a nearby suburb to stay out of the road as they protested last month's shooting of Michael Brown, a black, unarmed 18-year-old, by a white officer. There were nearly as many officers as demonstrators.

Organizers said the protest in Berkeley was designed as an act of nonviolent civil disobedience similar to a 1999 demonstration in the same location. During that protest, hundreds of people shut down the interstate in a dispute over minority hiring for road construction projects.

Highway Patrol Sgt. Al Nothum said that 35 people were arrested, most on charges of unlawful assembly. Nothum said protesters threw rocks, concrete blocks,

“We’re out here to show support. We feel that an injustice has been done.”

Antoin Johnson
Ferguson, Mo., protester

bricks and bottles, leading to four charges of assault on a law enforcement officer.

A smaller group later went to the nearby Ferguson police station before a heavy, late afternoon thunderstorm dispersed most of the protesters.

The crowd included about 20 union workers who operate public transit buses and trains for the region's Metro system.

“We’re out here to show support,” said Antoin Johnson, 30. “We feel that an injustice has been done.”

About 120 miles away in Jefferson City, the killing of Brown briefly dominated a veto override session at the Missouri Capitol, where a state senator who represents parts of Ferguson called Gov. Jay Nixon a “coward” for his

initial response to Brown's death.

Democratic state Sen. Maria Chappelle-Nadal said the governor “stood by and did nothing until this became a global story.”

Nixon has come under heavy criticism for his perceived slowness in response to the shooting and its subsequent looting and unrest. Copies of Nixon's daily schedule provided upon the request of The Associated Press showed Nixon going about his routine business for several days after the shooting, splitting his attention between the unrest in Ferguson and items such as announcing grants to preschools and visiting the State Fair.

Nixon has said Brown's death didn't initially appear to be the sort of situation that a governor should inject himself into. Wednesday's protest near Ferguson followed a tense meeting of the city's elected leaders Tuesday night. The Ferguson City Council held its first meeting since Brown was killed, hoping to use the gathering to promote community healing. Instead council members were met with anger and warnings from constituents that they would be voted out of office.

Mo. enacts 3-day law for abortions

By DAVID A. LIEB
The Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Missouri women seeking abortions will face one of the nation's most stringent waiting periods, after state lawmakers overrode the governor's veto to enact a 72-hour delay that includes no exception for cases of rape or incest.

The new requirement will take effect 30 days after Wednesday's vote by the Republican-led Legislature, overruling the veto of Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon. He had denounced the measure as “extreme and disrespectful” toward women.

The abortion bill was one of the most prominent Republican victories in a record-setting September session, during which Missouri lawmakers also overrode 47 line-item budget vetoes and eight other bills, including one creating a training program for teachers to carry guns in schools.

Earlier this year, the Republican-led Legislature overrode Nixon's veto to enact the state's first income tax rate reduction in nearly a century.

About half the states, including Missouri, already have abortion waiting periods of 24 hours. Missouri's current one also lacks an exception for cases of rape or incest.

The new law will be the second-most stringent behind South Dakota's, where its 72-hour wait can sometimes extend even longer because weekends and holidays are not counted. Utah is the only other state with a 72-hour delay, but it grants exceptions for rape, incest and other circumstances.

Missouri lawmakers specifically rejected an amendment earlier this year that would have granted exceptions for rape and incest. Abortion opponents argued that it would have diminished the value of some lives depending on how they were conceived.

Supporters of the legislation describe it as a “reflection period” for women and their families.

If “you get a couple of more days to think about this pregnancy, think about where it's going, you may change your mind” about having an abortion, said Rep. Kathie Conroy, a Republican from St. Charles.

Abortion-rights advocates described the three-day wait as insulting to women who they said have likely already done “soul-searching” before going to an abortion clinic.

“It's designed to demean and shame a woman in an effort to change her mind,” said Rep. Judy Morgan, a Democrat from Kansas City.

Lawmakers expand gun rights in state's schools

The Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Lawmakers in Missouri expanded the potential for teachers to bring guns to schools and for residents to openly carry firearms in a vote Thursday that capped a two-year effort by the Republican-led legislature to expand gun rights over the objection of the Democratic governor.

The new law will allow specially trained school employees to carry concealed guns on campuses. It also allows anyone with a concealed weapons permit to carry

guns openly, even in cities or towns with bans against the open carrying of firearms.

The new law requires the state Department of Public Safety to establish training guidelines for schools wanting to designate a teacher or administrator as a “school protection officer” authorized to carry a concealed gun or self-defense spray.

The vote makes Missouri the 10th state to allow armed school employees since 20 children and six adults died during a shooting in Newtown, Conn. in 2012.

Records: Dad accused in killing of 5 children went through nasty divorce

The Associated Press

LEXINGTON, S.C. — Timothy Ray Jones Jr. earned his computer engineering degree, worked at a \$71,000-a-year job, had a wife of 10 years and several young children.

Then, a little more than two years ago, he discovered his wife was putting their children to bed in their South Carolina home and going to the neighbor's house and sleeping with the neighbor's 19-year-old son, according to divorce papers. Jones moved out with the children and seemed friendly

to his new neighbors, but began to withdraw to the point where the woman who lived next door thought he and his family had moved away.

Jones and his five children, ages 8, 7, 6, 2 and 1, disappeared two weeks ago, but no one called police for days. Authorities weren't convinced anything was wrong until they said an intoxicated, agitated Jones was stopped at a DUI checkpoint in Mississippi where officers found him alone, with blood and children's clothes in his SUV and

the stench of death in the air.

Jones, 32, would lead investigators to his children's bodies, wrapped in five trash bags on an isolated Alabama hilltop, but it's still not clear — and may never be — why he killed his children, authorities said. Authorities in South Carolina said he will face five charges of murder when he returns from Mississippi, perhaps as early as Thursday.

Jones' father, Timothy Jones Sr., stood outside his Amory, Miss., home a day after his grandchild-

ren's bodies were found, and asked for prayers for his family and for the son he referred to as Little Timmy and Little Tim.

“Let it be known that people will come to their own conclusions and as parents we can understand that decision based on the circumstances,” the father said in a statement. “But please remember that our Little Tim is a very loving father, brother and son.”

Lewis McCarty, the acting sheriff in Jones Jr.'s home of Lexington County, S.C., said the children

were likely killed shortly after they were last seen in school and day care on Aug. 28. He didn't say how they were killed, or where, except “it wasn't in their home.”

The court records also showed a troubled life, both for Jones and his children. The divorce included multiple allegations of adultery against Jones' wife Amber.

A therapist who saw Jones during the divorce described him as “highly intelligent” and responsible, yet emotionally devastated and angry over his wife's actions.

NATION

Brooke Montelone rides a wave in San Clemente, Calif. Brooke and two of her siblings have cystic fibrosis and began surfing for its health benefits.

PHOTOS BY CHRIS CARLSON/AP



From left, Michael, Brooke and Gavin Montelone do breathing treatments before heading into the surf.



Above: Michael rides a wave.



Below: Gavin gets help surfing from volunteer Bobby Friedman.

Breathing life

Cystic fibrosis patients surf for fun — and also to extend their lives

By KRISTA FAURA
The Associated Press

FOR THREE OF Rob and Paulette Montelone's five kids, spending the summer surfing is more than just a fun activity. It could also extend their lives.

The Montelone siblings are part of a growing number of people with cystic fibrosis who are taking advantage of the health benefits that come with surfing.

Since researchers realized that the salt water in the ocean helps clear out the thick mucus that builds up in patients' lungs, organizations have sprung up around the world that teach those with the disease how to "hang 10."

"We have found the silver lining to it all and that has been through surfing," Paulette Montelone said on a recent summer day while her five children were out in the water. "It's helping them breathe better ... but it's also helping us, as a family, enjoy something together."

The average lifespan for someone with cystic fibrosis is about 40, but many patients don't make it past their teens. The genetic condition, which must be inherited from both parents, affects 70,000 people worldwide.

There is no known cure, but about a decade ago, doctors in Australia noticed that patients who surfed seemed to breathe easier. Subsequent studies resulted in new saline treatments for patients in 2006 based on the salt water discovery.

The discovery also led to the development of organizations like the Maui Ola Foundation, which means "breath of life" in Hawaiian. The organization pairs patients with professional surfers.

The entire Montelone clan, who said they have no family history of the disease, found Maui Ola a year after three of the kids were diagnosed. They learned to surf — a natural treatment that helps lubricate the patients' airways.

"They're spitting up their mucus. I mean, I'm out there going, 'Hey, cough it up, man. No shame,'" said Josh Baxter, a world champion surfer who volunteers with Maui Ola and regularly surfs with the Montelones.

Known as the "Brady bunch" of the cystic fibrosis world, the Montelones have a

son named Michael, 12, and two sets of twins — Grace and Gavin, 8, and Brooke and Brian, 10.

In 2008, Gavin tested positive for the disease after being taken to a specialist for persistent sinus problems. After Gavin's diagnosis, the Montelones had all of their children tested and learned that Brooke and Michael also had it.

So the family treks from their inland home to the beach at least once a week every summer, often camping there for days at a time. They do their breathing treatments on the beach in between surfing sessions.

Gavin wears a T-shirt with the words "Breathe Life" emblazoned across it, a phrase the Montelones refer to as their family motto.

NATION

Student film takes on vaccine debate

Youngsters defend documentary, fight for its release amid criticism by skeptics

By ERYN BROWN
Los Angeles Times

CARLSBAD, Calif. — Every school day, students at Carlsbad High tune in their classroom televisions to a news show produced by its award-winning broadcast journalism program.

Airing from a well-appointed studio on campus, the report covers topics ranging from final exams to nearby wildfires, delivered by a teenage staff that typically goes around until the cameras roll and professionalism descends.

Carlsbad High has come to expect a lot from CHSTV, a "signature program," according to schools Superintendent Suzette Lovely.

But no one expected the kind of attention that has lately muzzled one of its most acclaimed works — a short documentary produced by an extracurricular offshoot of the program.

The movie, "Invisible Threat," bills itself as a report on "the science of disease and the risks facing a society that is under-vaccinated."

As the students and their advisers prepared to debut it, they found themselves cast as foot soldiers in a long-running immunization war between a small group of activists who argue that vaccines cause autism and the vast majority of physicians and scientists who say they don't.

The anti-vaccine groups — whose work has contributed to the recent decline in immunization rates in some parts of the country, medical authorities believe — charged that the Carlsbad students had been duped by deceitful advisers who had been paid off by the pharmaceutical companies that make vaccines.

The criticism surfaced before the movie was finished and wore on for more than a year.

It delayed the launch of the movie for months and became heated enough in May that Carlsbad's parent-teacher association canceled an on-campus screening for fear that grumbling activists would show up, as they had when the film was shown at Cal State San Marcos.

"We didn't want to put the kids who worked on this into a position where people could get on campus and harass them," said Kym Szalkiewicz, president of the parent-teacher group.

The students of CHSTVfilms, as the extracurricular program is called, said they were blindsided by the reaction.

"We're an extracurricular film club," said Mark Huckaby, the graduating senior who narrated the film. "It's just not cool."

They deny being pawns of anyone. The idea for "Invisible Threat" came from a group of silver-haired Rotary Club volunteers who had been working for 20 years to promote immunization in San Diego County.

But the young people and their advisers thought the Rotary proposal — to make a 20-minute educational film explaining how the immune system and immunization work — seemed boring, they said. And they bristled when the Rotarians told them how the movie should be made, added Bradley Streicher, one of the students who worked on it.

"We said, if we do this, we have to do this on our terms," he said. "We wanted to explore this from both sides."

In the end, the club officials agreed — "We took a flier," said Ben Yehuda — and started raising \$60,000 to cover production and buy equipment that would also be used by CHSTV.

Then the student team dived in, said Lisa Posard, a parent adviser who served as the film's producer and whose then-student daughter wrote the film's script.



PHOTOS BY BOB CHAMBERLIN, LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

Above: Student filmmaker Gabriel Retzer, 17, addresses an audience June 4 at the San Diego County Health Department after showing the film "Invisible Threat" in Carlsbad, Calif. The students produced the documentary about the risks of not having children vaccinated, which riled anti-vaccination activists. Below: Camerawoman Lauren Chavez checks a monitor while students in the broadcast journalism class at Carlsbad High School produce their daily campus news program.



“We said, if we do this, we have to do this on our terms. We wanted to explore this from both sides.”

Bradley Streicher
Carlsbad High School student filmmaker

net comments directed at CHSTV, Posard said.

The final version of "Invisible Threat," completed in spring 2013 but shown only to select audiences, took a strong pro-vaccine position.

Critics, who said they hadn't been allowed to see the movie, leaped back into action about a year later when the film was set to be screened on Capitol Hill.

Focus Autism and AutismOne organizations complained about the movie's Rotary Club backing and about the involvement of Dr. Paul Offit, a University of Pennsylvania pediatrician and immunization proponent. They argued that "Invisible Threat" was "scripted with industry talking points" and that the movie seemed to be the work of adults operating under false pretenses, not students.

They read studies. They talked to medical experts who praised vaccines. And they interviewed parents who distrusted vaccines, as well as a local osteopath who treats autistic children.

Some of the students initially believed vaccines and autism were linked, they said, but changed their minds as they researched.

"It was all social controversy. There was no science controversy," said Allison DeGour, who will be a senior this fall.

Complaints began to arise when a local newspaper reported that the students were tackling "the issue of immunizations."

A blogger who saw the article contended that the movie, still a work in progress, was sure to be "propaganda." That led to a flurry of frightening phone calls and Inter-

CHSTV teacher Douglas Green, a former PBS Television teacher adviser and current president of the national Student Television Network who is credited as the director of "Invisible Threat," disputed that account. "I would never encourage students to deceive anybody," he said.

Streicher, who this fall will be a sophomore in USC's Annenberg School of Communications' broadcast journalism program, called the controversy "disheartening."

"I really took pride in the work we did as students," he said. "It's sad to see that people would call it into question."



From left, Gabriel Retzer, Allison DeGour and Lauren Streicher, all 17, talk before they air their documentary "Invisible Threat" in Carlsbad on June 4.

NATION



Hollywood talent agent Sid Levin listens as actress Stephanie Sanchez, who was an officer in the U.S. Navy serving with the Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan, talks about her experience in Levin's Los Angeles office in June.

In a town where seemingly everyone wants to be a star, but few look like James Franco or Scarlett Johansson, Sid Levin is the talent agent who represents the people who look like the rest of us. Some play tough guys because they once were. Or hard-core military types because they were that.



Above: Levin, right, shakes hands in June with actor Mike Dalager, who is serving in the U.S. Coast Guard, in his office in Los Angeles. Dalager has played a cop, a soldier and a member of the crew of the Enterprise in "Star Trek: Into Darkness."

Right: Levin in his office in Los Angeles.

PHOTOS BY JAE C. HONG/AP

A real character

By JOHN ROGERS
The Associated Press

YOU couldn't miss Hollywood talent agent Sid Levin's office in the old days: It wasn't much bigger than a closet and it was sometimes filled with burglars, bank robbers and gang members, all trying to break into the movies.

These days you'll find everyone from Gulf War veterans to a 15-time world arm-wrestling champion here, and Levin didn't bring them in for protection. They're looking to be movie stars, too.

In a town where seemingly everyone wants to be a star, but few look like James Franco or Scarlett Johansson, Levin is the talent agent who represents the people who look like the rest of us. Some play tough guys because they once were. Or hard-core military types because they were that.

"I am kind of the strange guy here in Hollywood," says Levin from behind the desk of his office, which is actually just down the road in adjacent Beverly Hills. "I rep a lot of talented people, but people who are kind of the underdog. But that's OK. I'm the underdog, too."

One of his breakout underdogs is the arm-wrestling champion and former juvenile hall guard Dot-Marie Jones. She's been nominated for three consecutive Emmys since landing the role of Coach Beiste on "Glee." Although she missed out on a nomination at last month's awards show, he says, he's confident she'll get one eventually — because she's that good.

On his desk, meanwhile, is an old-fashioned Rolodex with a list of more than 100 names, many of people you've likely never heard of but realize you sort of recognize from somewhere.

There's Abdoulaye N'gom, for example. The Senegalese-born actor who came to Los Angeles 35 years ago with the unlikely dream of becoming a movie star, although he spoke little English and what he did came out in a thick accent reflecting the years he'd spent in Senegal and France.

"But Sid said, 'There's just some-

thing about you. I know you're going to work,'" recalled the actor who after years of small parts in films like "George of the Jungle" recently played the kindly hotel manager in the Drew Barrymore-Adam Sandler comedy "Blended."

Likewise, when Levin saw the square-jawed, no-nonsense-looking Coast Guard Petty Officer Mike Dalager, he said, he knew just what roles to send him after: Dalager's been a cop, a soldier and a member of the crew of the Enterprise in "Star Trek: Into Darkness." Not that he always plays the good guy. He was also a Taliban militiaman in "Eagle Eye."

"It's definitely a what-you-look-like industry," said Dalager, adding Levin seems to know that better than anyone.

Levin, 56, himself looks like he could have walked out of a movie about an old-time agent in the mold of "Broadway Danny Rose." He's short, paunchy and, on this day, dressed in slacks and a pull-over blue shirt with a gold medalion hanging around his neck.

Thirty years ago, the former stand-up comic and singing-telegram salesman put up a shingle in a tiny office at the faded but then-faded intersection of Hollywood and Vine. "People told me I had to

move because nobody would go there after dark," he recalled of Hollywood's rougher days.

Kids from the even rougher streets of South Los Angeles would, however, especially after Levin got seven of them roles in director John Singleton's breakthrough movie "Boyz n the Hood" in 1991. They had been sent to him by a Compton acting coach named Anthony Bean who was trying to get them away from street gangs.

"Don't ask me why and how I found Sid. I don't even recall," said Bean, who has since returned to his native New Orleans to run an acting school for inner-city youth. But in a business that can be cut-throat, Bean said he just got a feeling the fast-talking agent wouldn't rip off naive street kids.

The next break came when a tough looking Latino actor from one of L.A.'s roughest barrios came through the door. When Danny Trejo started to work regularly, Levin recalls, he volunteered at prisoner workshops and began sending his students to him. "Excuses that were bank robbers and what have you started showing up, and that was kind of dicey," he recalled, chuckling.

Still, he might have kept representing ex-cons, gang members and their associates if tragedy hadn't struck.

Dedrik Gobert, one of the South Los Angeles kids he'd gotten into "Boyz n the Hood," seemed headed for stardom. He was making money and spending it restoring old cars.

Unfortunately, he raced one day against a gang member, they argued afterward and he was shot to death. "I still think about him a lot," Levin said softly. "It was just so senseless."

As most of the kids from L.A.'s mean streets drifted away from acting, and some like Trejo who became big stars moved on to other, more prominent representation, Levin began to focus more on military and law enforcement people.



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WORLD

EU agrees to new set of sanctions on Russia

By JÜRGEN BAETZ

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union has decided to slap Russia with new economic sanctions over its actions in Ukraine, diplomats said Thursday.

The sanctions will further curb access to European capital markets for Russian firms and banks, limit exports of certain high-technology goods and target several officials with travel bans and asset freezes, diplomats told The

Associated Press in Brussels.

The sanctions will take effect Friday following their publication in the EU's official journal but will be reversible if the situation in eastern Ukraine improves, four diplomats said independently. They spoke on condition of anonymity pending the official announcement.

A summit of EU leaders almost two weeks ago called for the new sanctions to be finalized, but they were then twice postponed to assess the impact of a cease-fire

in eastern Ukraine. The United States previously said it was also considering new sanctions once the EU moves forward, and could now take that step as early as Thursday.

The new sanctions are expected to deepen earlier penalties targeting Russia's oil and arms sectors, including a further tightening of access to international capital markets. The current ban on credits and loans to Russian entities with a maturity of more than 90 days will be reduced to 30

days, two diplomats said. Curbing access to western capital markets could weigh down Russia's already-flagging economic growth.

More individuals, including Russian government officials and people close to Russian President Vladimir Putin, are also expected to be sanctioned.

Russia's benchmark MICEX, which was rising on Thursday morning and early afternoon, declined 0.7 percent on the news. The Russian ruble fell to an all-

time low of 37.51 rubles against the U.S. dollar.

Brussels has been more reluctant than Washington to sanction Russia because of its broad economic ties. Moscow is an important gas supplier for many EU nations and it is the bloc's third-largest trading partner overall. The EU's sanctions, however, have more impact than those imposed by the U.S. since the EU is Russia's largest trading partner by far.

Human rights group accuses Israel of war crimes in Gaza

By TIA GOLDENBERG

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — A leading international rights group on Thursday alleged that Israel committed war crimes during this summer's Gaza war, saying it reached that conclusion after investigating three attacks on or near United Nations-run schools housing displaced Palestinians.

Human Rights Watch said it investigated the strikes at the schools in three separate locations in the war-battered Gaza Strip, attacks in which at least 45 people were killed.

According to its investigation, based on field research and interviews with witnesses, the New York-based group said no military targets were apparent in the area of the schools and that some of the attacks were indiscriminate.

"The Israeli military carried out attacks on or near three well-marked schools where it knew hundreds of people were taking shelter, killing and wounding scores of civilians," Fred Abrahams, special adviser at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

"Israel has offered no convincing explanation for these attacks on schools where people had gone for protection and the resulting carnage."

Israel argues that the heavy civilian death toll during the 50-day summer war was Hamas' fault, accusing the Islamic militant group of launching rockets and drawing retaliation — from schoolyards, residential areas and mosques.

On Wednesday, the Israeli military announced it had launched its own probe into cases involving Palestinian civilian casualties during the war, including the shelling of a U.N. school.

The announcement was apparently meant to send a signal that Israel can police itself as it faces the specter of international war crimes probes.

The brutal Gaza war left more than 2,100 Palestinians dead, the majority of them civilians, according to Palestinian and U.N. officials. Israel says the number of militants killed was much higher and accuses Hamas of using civilians as human shields. On the Israeli side, 66 soldiers and six civilians were killed.

About a quarter of a million Palestinians displaced by the violence were seeking shelter in U.N.-run schools.

In one instance, in an attack on a school in Beit Hanoun on July 24, Israel said it had fired mortars toward Hamas fighters operating near the school in response to anti-tank fire directed at them. The military said one mortar landed in the school courtyard which, according to video footage it released claiming to show the strike, was empty. Human Rights Watch said that seven Palestinian witnesses in the territory ruled by the Hamas militants disputed the claim.

On a strike on July 30, the military said it was again responding to Hamas fire from nearby. Human Rights Watch said Israel provided no evidence for the claim.



SCOTT HEPPELL/AP

Yes signs are displayed Monday in Eyemouth, Scotland, signifying support for secession from the U.K.

Yes camp winning ad battle in Scotland

By PAUL KELBIE

The Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland — When the campaign to keep Scotland in the United Kingdom launched a recent TV ad, the spot went viral — but for all the wrong reasons.

In a kitchen, a woman complains that while her husband can't stop talking about the independence referendum, she doesn't have time to think about voting because she's too busy with housework.

Within hours, spoof videos appeared online, mocking the perceived sexist tone. "The tone of the whole video was completely outdated, sexist and insulting to women," said Sandra Geddes, 33, an office worker who said she plans to vote no on independence even though she was angered by the commercial.

In the battle of the ads in Scotland's independence debate, the Yes camp is scoring the most points — and that may be a fac-

tor in the surge that has given it a chance of winning on Sept. 18 after months trailing far behind. While the "Better Together" campaign has been derided for old-fashioned, even patronizing ads, the breakthrough side has engaged voters with a slick, humorous campaign that presents a dynamic picture of Scotland.

The pro-independence camp recently won hearts with a poster of a baby's hand in the tender grip of a parent with the slogan "Scotland's future in Scotland's hands." While it appealed to a sense of family, it didn't smack of conservative "family values" as some of the No campaign's ads are seen as doing. Critics claim pro-unity posters bearing messages such as "we love our kids, we're saying no thanks" are offensive for implying Yes campaign supporters don't love their families.

The Yes camp has also effectively targeted younger voters shown in surveys to lean toward independence — with an innova-

tive ad called "My Generation" that portrays a vote for independence as a bold, decisive step.

"Most of the wit has come from the Yes side," said graphic designer and cartoonist Greg Moodie. "I haven't seen much from the No camp; I think it's because 'Better Together' is really the voice of the establishment and it's been pretty stuffy and pompous."

As the battle to decide the future of Scotland and the U.K. enters its final week, both sides have launched some of the largest ad campaigns in Scottish political history. Millions of pounds have been spent to produce countless TV commercials and advertising posters.

But the battle has moved beyond traditional paid media advertisements, with an explosion of uncoordinated social media activity. The pro-independence campaign is seen as being faster and more adept at creating buzz online.

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FAITH



PHOTOS BY JAE C. HONG/AP

Jose Cortez, 4, sits in a laundry basket while waiting for his mother to finish their laundry during a Laundry Love event Aug. 13 in Huntington Beach, Calif.

Laundry Love

Struggling people find free suds, faith at California laundromat

By KRISTA FAURIA
The Associated Press

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. — During the long months that Victoria Mitchell lived in her car with her infant daughter, there was one bright spot in her life: doing laundry.

Every month, Mitchell would trek to a local laundromat and take advantage of Laundry Love, a growing, faith-driven movement that helps those who are homeless or financially struggling by washing their dirty clothes for free.

Amid the comforting routine of fluffing and folding, volunteers befriend their patrons and often find ways to help that go beyond free soap and quarters.

Mitchell, for example, now has a job and a place to live after the Laundry Love volunteers pooled their money to help her family rent a starter apartment. They also have watched her daughter, Jessica, grow from a newborn to a curly-haired toddler.

"You're not just checking a box to give a donation. You're spending the whole evening with these people and getting your hands dirty and it's intimate — you're doing people's laundry," said LuzAnna Figueroa, who volunteers at the group's Huntington Beach chapter and has grown close to Mitchell and her daughter.

Richard Flory, a religion expert from the University of Southern California who has studied Laundry Love extensively, said Mitchell is just one example of how the organization can profoundly affect people through something as simple as washing their clothes.

"It's an opportunity for people to live out their faith in a concrete way, in a frankly

elegantly simple model where you do something that's necessary for people who don't have the means to do it for themselves," Flory said.

The movement began about 10 years ago with a small Christian church in Ventura, Calif., and has since spread to more than 100 locations throughout the country to people from all faiths.

Christian Kassoff started the Huntington Beach chapter two years ago with his wife, Shannon. On a recent warm, summer night, Kassoff glanced around the laundro-

mat and smiled at the dozens of people who depend on him and the other volunteers for clean laundry each month.

Classic hits from David Bowie and The Clash blasted through speakers as patrons pushed around wheeled metal baskets full of laundry and stuffed loads of dirty clothes — some not washed for weeks — into industrial-sized machines.

Those doing their laundry also lined up outside to eat their fill of tacos as volunteers prayed inside before starting the night's washing.

David Clarke, who has been coming to the laundromat for four months after losing his job as an aerospace machinist, estimates he's saved \$200 on laundry in that time, but said he gets a lot more from the washing sessions than savings.

"These people are wonderful people. They want to know what's going on in your life," he said. "They really care about you and how you're doing."

Kassoff, his arms laced with tattoos, recalled a time in his life just over 10 years ago when he was in a similar situation to many of those who come — addicted to heroin and living in his car. At his lowest point, he said, he started attending services at his local Episcopal church.

His newfound faith, he said, saved his life and motivated him to help others in need.

"I'm not wealthy, but I have the gift of time and a heart for it, so this fits," Kassoff said.

Flory said that's why the movement has taken off — the simplicity and necessity of washing clothes. The Huntington Beach chapter began as an Episcopal outreach, but now welcomes volunteers of any faith, including members of a local mosque who started showing up recently.

Juan Montes was reluctant to attend Laundry Love several months ago after a friend invited him to volunteer. He now goes every month and looks forward to the conversations he will have, even though his friend has stopped going.

"It's changed me in the way that now when I see people who are homeless, I don't see them like an object. Now their stories come to mind, names come to mind because I've had conversations with them," he said.



People sift through donated food before doing their laundry for free at a laundromat during a Laundry Love event in Huntington Beach. Laundry Love is a growing, faith-driven movement that helps people change their lives by letting them change into clean clothes.

FACES

Nicki Minaj

Her changed look stems from confidence

BY MESFIN FEKADU
The Associated Press

Nicki Minaj, who has recently dropped her colorful and oddball style for a more natural and sophisticated look, says it's because she's more comfortable in her skin.

"I kind of feel now that I look more like my regular old self, like what I look like when I'm at home," she said in an interview Tuesday. "I think there's just a little bit more confidence, and so I'm like, 'It is what it is. I am who I am. I look like what I look like.' I don't really have to change much of it anymore."

Minaj's new look includes her natural black hair color versus the wild and bright wigs she's worn that helped establish her name in pop culture. At the Fashion Rocks concert Tuesday in Brooklyn, N.Y., where the rapper performed, she wore a blazer and skirt

that came off like a little black dress.

"I just thought it was really, really sexy, but without being tight," she said. "I thought it was different for me."

Onstage, Minaj wore less when performing, her rump-shaking hit "Anaconda," which has peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Her other single, "Bang Bang," with Ariana Grande and Jessie J, is another massive hit, giving the performer two songs in the current Top 5.

The songs appear on her third album, "The Pinkprint," to be released Nov. 24.

"The album is going to be my best body of work," she said. "It's diverse, but it's not trying too hard."



Nicki Minaj attended the Fashion Rocks concert on Tuesday at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y. She will release a new album — "The Pinkprint" — on Nov. 24.

CHARLES SYKES, INVISION/AP



Richard Kiel, left, who played the cable-chomping henchman who tussled with James Bond (Roger Moore, right) in "The Spy Who Loved Me" and "Moonraker," has died. He was 74.

Actor best known for role as Bond villain Jaws dies

Richard Kiel, the towering actor best known for portraying steel-toothed villain Jaws in a pair of James Bond films, has died. He was 74.

Kelley Sanchez, director of communications at Saint Agnes Medical Center in Fresno, Calif., confirmed Wednesday that Kiel was a patient at the hospital and died. Kiel's agent, Steven Stevens, also confirmed his death. Both declined to provide further details.

The 7-foot, 2-inch performer famously played the cable-chomping henchman who tussled with Roger Moore's Bond in 1977's "The Spy Who Loved Me" and 1979's "Moonraker." Bond quipped of the silent baddie: "His name's Jaws. He kills people."

Despite appearing in several other films and TV shows, such as "The Man from U.N.C.L.E." and "The Longest Yard," the role of Jaws was an iconic one Kiel could never escape. "To this day, I go out in sunglasses and a hat because people will shout 'Hey, Jaws!' at me from across the street," he told The Daily Mail earlier this year. "The only way I can explain it is that he's like the Road Runner, which Coyote keeps trying to blow up, but he keeps going."

Born in Detroit, Kiel began appearing in TV shows and films in the 1960s. He published an autobiography in 2002 titled "Making It Big in the Movies."

Other news

■ Showtime announced Wednesday that the comedy "Nurse Jackie," starring Edie Falco, will end its run after an upcoming seventh season. The show wrapped up its sixth season in June and has just begun production on the final season.

■ Florida George Line, who arrived on the scene two years ago with the record "Here's to the Good Times," will host the American Country Countdown Awards on Dec. 15 live from Nashville. The awards show is based on the syndicated radio program "American Country Countdown With Kix Brooks" on Cumulus Media stations.

■ Carrie Underwood, who recently announced she is pregnant, got emotional during an acceptance speech at the annual ACM Honors event after thanking family and friends. Underwood, 31, received the Gene Weed Special Achievement Award on Tuesday in Nashville. When she accepted the award, she said that she was misty-eyed at the performances that evening.

■ Sean Christopher Haire, known to professional wrestling fans as Sean O'Haire, has been found dead in his South Carolina home. Spartanburg County Coroner Rusty Clevenger said the body of the 43-year-old Haire was found on Tuesday. Clevenger said Wednesday that his office is conducting a joint investigation with the Spartanburg Police Department. He said the cause of death is still under investigation.

From The Associated Press

Country singer Merle Haggard still on the road

BY KRISTEN M. HALL
The Associated Press

Even Merle Haggard gets nervous about stepping onto a stage when the audience is filled with songwriters, record label executives and fellow artists.

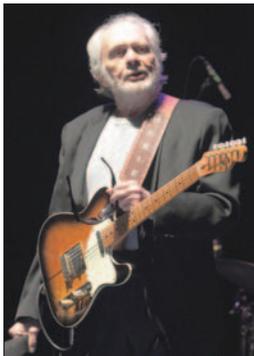
"Well, it's glorious but it's also tough because all the pressure is on you," Haggard said after recently playing two sold-out nights at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. "You've got all those people out there that call you a legend and an icon and all that stuff. You kinda gotta prove it."

But judging from the cheering and ovations, Haggard — who helped create the twang electrified Bakersfield Sound in country music — still knows how to impress a crowd.

At 77, he tours the country about two weeks each month and recently bought a new tour bus, a sign that he's not interested in retirement from the road. His band, the Strangers, now includes his wife, Theresa, and 21-year-old son Ben, as well as band leader Norman Hamlet, who has been with Haggard since the 1960s.

"It's real tempting to let it all go, but it's taken many years to get to where I am at," Haggard said. "To divorce myself of it earlier than I have to is really not something I want to do."

Haggard had lung surgery after a cancer diagnosis in 2008, and he said an early, but incorrect, diagnosis had him thinking



OWEN SWEENEY, INVISION/AP

Merle Haggard, 77, is still touring the U.S. about two weeks each month and recently bought a new tour bus. His wife, Theresa, as well as his son Ben, 21, are part of Haggard's band, the Strangers.

he had only a short time to live.

"And then they told me, 'No, we're wrong. It's only just a little benign condition that

we can get rid of,'" Haggard said. "It was sort of a disappointment. I was ready to go."

But Haggard said he hasn't had any recurring symptoms, so he's not dwelling on past health problems.

Born outside of Bakersfield, Calif., in 1937, Haggard, the son of Oklahoma migrants, was raised in a converted railway boxcar, the only home his family could afford.

Famous for his prison stint in San Quentin, Haggard said music was his only opportunity out of poverty.

"My decisions have been easy," he said. "It was either back in the cotton patch or go to work in the oil fields. ... They didn't compare with music. I was able to make more money in a beer joint when I first started than I was digging ditches."

The gruff, baritone-voiced singer became known for his classic tunes about drifters, convicts and blue-collar workers, including "Okie From Muskogee," "Mama Tried" and "Workin' Man Blues." But he said that after writing some 700 songs, it's hard to find a subject he hasn't written about yet.

Haggard even took a playful poke at a common topic for current country music: romance blossoming in the back of a pickup truck.

"There seems to be love songs written about mechanical items," Haggard said with a smile. "I never thought about using a tractor as some way of getting laid."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Co-founder of elephant refuge found trampled

ME PORTLAND — Two elephants at a Maine rehabilitation center are being sent back to a sanctuary in Oklahoma in the wake of the crushing death of their caretaker.

Police said veterinarian James Laurita, 56, died Tuesday in the animals' barn in Hope, Maine, when one of animals apparently stepped on him. They ruled his death an accident.

Hope Elephants' board of directors said in a statement Wednesday that the center's two elephants, Rosie and Opal, will return to the elephant care facility where they came from. The Asian elephants came to Hope Elephants from Endangered Ark Foundation in Hugo, Oklahoma, in 2012 after retiring from circus work.

The board statement said Hope Elephants will continue operations in Laurita's honor.

Students back teacher who talks about faith

GA CANTON — Students at a public high school outside Atlanta are rallying behind a teacher who says he's standing up for his Christian beliefs and what he views as his right to talk about Jesus in the classroom.

Hundreds of students poured into hallways at Sequoyah High School Tuesday, holding signs and chanting in support of history teacher John Osborne.

Osborne said he didn't feel supported by administrators, so he decided to take a few days off, he told WXIA-TV. He said he's talked about God at school for years.

Students mistakenly thought the teacher had been terminated, and staged the protest, Cherokee County Schools officials said in a statement. They said he remains employed.

Deputies: Intruder bit woman in 'zombie game'

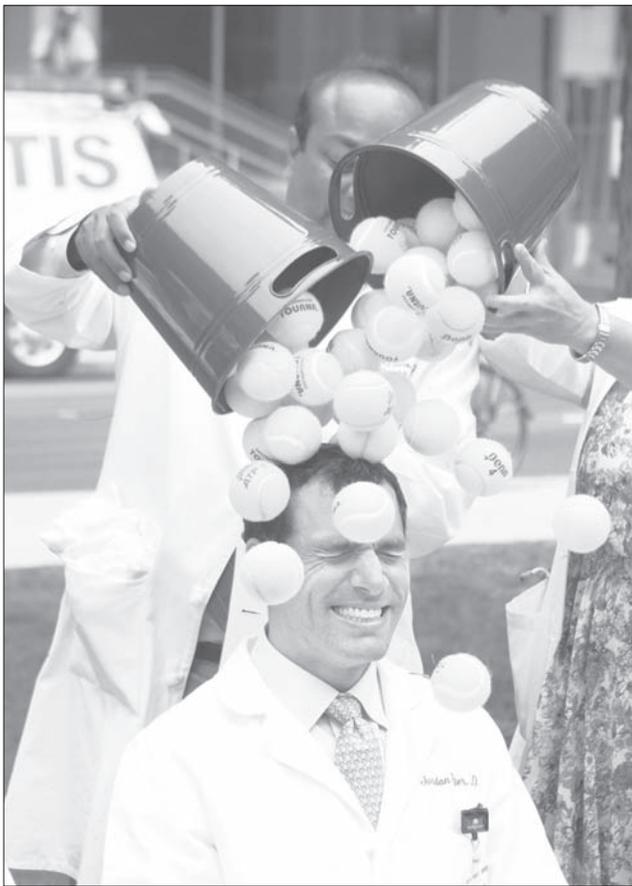
OR COOS BAY — Authorities in Oregon said a woman was arrested after breaking into a house, pushing a woman down the stairs, pulling her hair, biting her on the face and telling her victim she was playing "the zombie game."

Coos County sheriff's Sgt. Pat Downing said Jessica Rocha is accused of breaking into the home in coastal city of Lakeside early Monday. He said she was drunk and likely high.

Downing said there is no definite explanation for the zombie reference. He said Rocha had property with a sticker that referenced a video game featuring zombies. Deputies also speculate she may have been influenced by a scarecrow contest in the area.

Town resolves 'sticky' ice cream truck issue

MS OCEAN SPRINGS — Summer might be drawing to a close, but it's finally time to buy a sweet treat from an ice cream truck on Ocean



CHARLES FOX, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/AP

Warming to a challenge

Physicians at Thomas Jefferson University and Hospital in Philadelphia kicked off the "Bucket of Tennis Balls Challenge" this week — a spoof of the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge but with an equally serious purpose. Dr. Harish Lavi, top, does the honors for Dr. Jordan Vetter, associate professor of surgery. The event will benefit pancreatic cancer research and honor Joe Strub, an avid Philadelphia-area tennis player who died four years ago from the cancer.

Springs.

It took research by two city department heads to compile an ordinance that won approval from city leaders. The Sun Herald reported.

Ocean Springs now allows ice cream trucks, and Mrs. T's Tasty Treats has the first license.

"This should take care of all those rogue ice cream truck drivers," Alderman Matt McDonnell said. "I'm glad we have resolved this sticky situation."

Bicycle rider hit by truck, shot by driver

WA SPOKANE — A pickup truck driver who collided with a bicycle rider in

Spokane is accused of shooting him in the arm.

Witnesses said Gary J. Courtney argued with the cyclist after the Saturday night accident and pulled out a pistol and shot him as he pedaled away.

Court records filed Tuesday say witnesses helped identify the 56-year-old who was booked into jail over the weekend.

Barking puppy alerts family to house fire

NH NEW IPSWICH — A family said a barking puppy saved their lives in alerting them to a fire at their home in New Ipswich.

WMUR-TV reported a father,

mother and their two sons, ages 19 and 11, were home at the time and but were unharmed early Monday.

Firefighters said the puppy, another dog and a cat died in the fire.

Teenager charged with desecrating Jesus statue

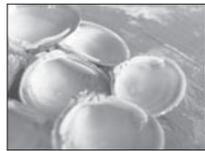
PA EVERETT — A 14-year-old western Pennsylvania boy has been charged with desecrating a statue of Jesus by standing in front of it and mimicking a sex act, and then posting pictures of it on the Internet.

Bedford County officials said the court papers against the boy are sealed, because they're filed

THE CENSUS

3,000

The number of traditional New England clam bake dinners served on the University of Massachusetts' Amherst campus to celebrate the start of the new school year. Chefs also prepared more than 3,000 lobsters, 6,000 little neck clams, 3,000 steamers, more than 6,000 ears of corn and 1,500 pounds of potatoes for students and staff. There was no previous record for largest New England clam bake, but Guinness World Record officials had set a minimum bar at 1,500 meals in eight hours. UMass reached that mark in about an hour.



in juvenile court.

The Altoona Mirror reported the boy is charged under a rarely used 1972 law that makes it a crime to desecrate a venerated object.

A King's College student was prosecuted under the same law when he urinated on a nativity scene in Wilkes-Barre in January 2010. The student apologized and was accepted into a probation program for first-time offenders.

College students return station's stolen statue

WI STEVENS POINT — The Stevens Point Fire Department has its stolen Boy with the Boot statue back.

Capt. Charles Skibba told WSAW-TV that two University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point students returned the statue to Station One on Saturday morning. He said they admitted to taking it as part of a bet and keeping it in their dorm room.

The two students were issued citations. Skibba said they'll likely face misdemeanor charges and will have to pay restitution to fix the damage.

Crackdown on dress code forces cover-ups

NY NEW YORK — Dozens of Staten Island high school students are fuming over a dress code crackdown that forced them to cover up on a steamy day.

The Staten Island Advance reported that Friday's crackdown at Tottenville High School affected at least 100 students, mostly girls. The students had to either cover up or wait in the school auditorium until a parent arrived with appropriate attire.

The school's dress code prohibits tank tops, low-cut blouses and halter tops.

Shorts and skirts are supposed to be at "relaxed hand level."

From wire reports

Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



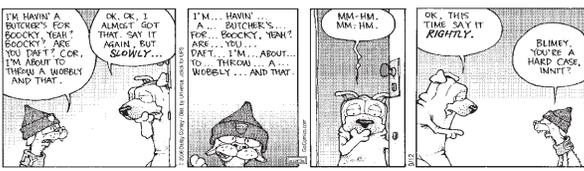
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12			13				14				
15			16				17				
18						19	20				
		21				22			23	24	25
26	27	28			29				30		
31				32			33				
34				35			36				
37			38				39				
		40				41			42	43	44
45	46	47			48	49					
50					51				52		
53					54						

ACROSS

- 1 Selfie, e.g.
- 4 Grit
- 8 Arrived
- 12 Big bother
- 13 Entreaty
- 14 Friend of Dorothy
- 15 Small hatchet
- 17 Heidi's home
- 18 Czech or Polish
- 19 Kimono closer
- 21 Squid squirt
- 22 Hayden
- 26 Take it easy
- 29 Levy
- 30 — out a living
- 31 Object of worship
- 32 Urban transport
- 33 Gilbert of "The Talk"
- 34 Discoverer's cry
- 35 Curse
- 36 Oil of roses
- 37 Ketchup base
- 39 "CSI" evidence
- 40 Petrol
- 41 Exit
- 45 Persia, now
- 48 Annie's song
- 50 Olympic sled
- 51 Satanic
- 52 Masseur's workplace
- 53 Recognized
- 54 — -tat-tat
- 55 Biblical possessive

DOWN

- 1 Butter servings
- 2 Pedestal occupant
- 3 Formal sleep
- 4 Egyptian landmark
- 5 "Oh, woe!"
- 6 Just out
- 7 Stately chud?
- 8 Assertion
- 9 Have a bug
- 10 Broom closet item
- 11 Dash lengths
- 12 Birdlike
- 13 Canto
- 14 Tempo
- 15 Creole veggie
- 16 Once around the sun
- 26 Laugh-a-minute
- 27 Canyon phenomenon
- 28 Weaver's need
- 29 Formal outfit
- 32 Supplementary vaccine
- 33 "Yellow Submarine" singer
- 35 Sch. org.
- 36 Luanda's land
- 38 Vesp before Ford
- 39 Resign
- 42 Formerly, formerly
- 43 Former frosh
- 44 Vacillate
- 45 Sport
- 46 Scoot
- 47 Mellow
- 49 Eggs

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	T	A	T	B	A	B	A	B	O	Y
A	R	I	A	A	K	I	N	A	B	A
W	O	R	L	D	B	A	N	K	N	O
S	T	Y	M	I	E	C	L	I	K	E
			U	P		C	L	E	A	R
B	I	R	D	W	O	O	M	O	R	N
A	D	O	H	U	G	L	I	E		
Y	O	L	K	E	N	S	B	L	O	W
			L	E	A	N	T	H	I	
M	A	C	Y	S		A	I	S	L	E
U	S	A		C	A	L	L	S	H	E
G	E	L		A	G	E	S	O	G	L
S	A	L		P	O	G	O	P	O	S

9-12

CRYPTOQUIP

H W J N R H Z K O E Q J N B R K F T M D
 H J Q H W N A W N Z Z B W Q O F Q Z I A N W I
 T M E R W D Z C I W M O E J E W :
 "N J C T X Z Q M T J D Q T C C O."
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I WON'T GUESS HOW MUCH IT COSTS TO RUN A NATIONAL SPACE PROGRAM, BUT IT MUST BE ASTRONOMICAL.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals N

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OPINION

Enacting a plan for who would lead US in worst-case scenario is a must

By NORMAN ORNSTEIN

Thirteen years ago, the United States was changed in a profound way. A major attack on our homeland by a nonstate foreign actor had never happened before, and the consequences — thousands of deaths, landmarks destroyed and damaged — were terrifying. The policy repercussions, from the Patriot Act to the Guantanamo Bay prison to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to airport security measures to creation of the Department of Homeland Security to reorganization of the intelligence agencies, were even more far-reaching.

In part as a result of these changes, the United States has gone for 13 years without another devastating terrorist attack. But as the rise of the Islamic State underscores, the threat has not disappeared. As time passes, the access of terrorist groups to powerful weapons, and their sophistication at probing our defenses and recruiting potential attackers, continues to increase.

While the United States has taken many steps to stay one step ahead of terrorists, there is one area in which multiple efforts to protect us have been sidestepped, ignored or abandoned. That area is in continuity of government — ensuring that our fundamental institutions, including Congress, the presidency and the judiciary, are able to immediately reconstitute themselves if shattered by a terrorist attack.

The danger has been apparent since Sept. 11, 2001. United Airlines Flight 93, the plane that crashed in rural Pennsylvania because of the actions of its brave passengers, was likely heading for the Capitol. If it had not been delayed on takeoff from Newark, N.J., by 45 minutes, the passengers would not have known they were on a suicide mission, and the plane probably would have hit the Capitol around the same time American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon — causing massive damage and potentially leaving Congress without the constitutionally mandated quorum of half its members required to do business.

Coincidentally, that same morning the Judicial Conference of the United States

The need to preserve and protect continuity in our constitutional institutions is critical.

was meeting at the Supreme Court, a stone's throw from the Capitol. The core of the federal judiciary was there, with Chief Justice William Rehnquist presiding. Conceivably, a direct hit on the cast-iron Capitol dome could have created devastating damage to the court building, decimating the judiciary.

When it became clear that the devastation was indeed a terrorist attack, Air Force One took off from Sarasota, Fla., with the president on board, and headed west to heavily protected Air Force bases, while the vice president was hustled into an underground bunker at the White House to safeguard the line of presidential succession. But in the aftermath of the attacks, it became clear that the Presidential Succession Act of 1947 never contemplated an attack carried out with no notice (unlike during the Cold War, when there would be crucial time after nuclear missiles were launched from Siberia) while large numbers of those at the top of the three branches of government were in close proximity. An attack with a suitcase nuclear bomb at a presidential inauguration would be particularly damaging without better rules for government succession in place.

Weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks, I joined with Tom Mann, of the Brookings Institution, to create a Continuity of Government Commission, co-chaired by former White House counsel Lloyd Cutler and former Sen. Alan Simpson, with distinguished scholars, former lawmakers and Cabinet officers as members. We issued three reports — one each on Congress, the presidency and the Supreme Court. We recommended a constitutional amendment to allow emergency interim members of Congress to replace those dead, incapacitated or missing after a massive attack, until the incapaci-

tated could recover and the dead could be replaced in meaningful special elections. This would enable Congress to get up and running legitimately within days after an attack, preventing the need for martial law at the worst possible time.

We recommended a thorough revamping of the Presidential Succession Act to bring it up to date and erase a set of unintended anomalies. We also recommended creation of an interim Emergency Court of Appeals, consisting of the chief judges of the various circuit courts of appeals and the remaining justices of the Supreme Court, in case an attack reduced the Supreme Court below its statutory quorum requirement of six. Having a functioning court of last resort would be critical to settle any questions about the legitimacy of actions by a damaged Congress or about presidential succession.

We had allies across party lines in both houses. But little of consequence happened. There was active opposition to serious action from House Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., and House Rules Committee Chairman David Dreier, R-Calif., on the grounds that there should never be an appointed member of the House, no matter the circumstance. But the bigger problems were human nature and lethargy. Creating temporary members of Congress to replace the dead meant requiring members to contemplate their own demise. Congressional leaders of both parties always found other, more immediate problems to deal with.

This was nothing new in U.S. history. Previous revisions of presidential succession, for example, took multiple disasters of presidential assassination to precipitate action. But that is no excuse.

Thirteen years later, the threat is, if anything, greater than it was after Sept. 11. The need to preserve and protect continuity in our constitutional institutions is critical. We are way past time for leaders of both parties to do their duty.

Norman Ornstein is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

Lawmakers lack courage on immigration reform

Sacramento (Calif) Bee editorial

It seems there's always a perfectly good reason not to fix our broken immigration system. Another election fast may be swung if voters are motivated by whatever action is taken, a party majority that might be won or lost.

This fear of taking action, even the right action, has doomed any attempt at immigration reform in recent years. And, sadly, President Barack Obama has succumbed to the same scaremongering, reversing his plan for action by the end of the summer in an evident appeasement to Senate Democrats worried about losing seats on Nov. 4.

Although the Senate passed a pretty decent comprehensive immigration reform bill last year, with both more money for border security and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants already living here, the House has adamantly refused to take it up.

Inaction on important topics is nothing new for Congress, but when the stories about thousands of unaccompanied minors from Central America showing up at the U.S. border seeking asylum exploded this summer, suddenly the pressure to reform

was back on.

Obama, it seemed, was finally going to make it happen. He said that he would break the reform logjam by using his executive action to make changes to the federal immigration policies, Congress be damned. Sure, it might be reversed when he left office, but a lot of good can be accomplished in two years.

Last week, though, he said he wouldn't do anything big until after the election.

"I'm going to act because it's the right thing for country, but it's more sustainable and more effective if the public knows what the facts are," Obama said on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday.

With all due respect to the country's commander in chief, horsefeathers.

What facts might change the minds of people who have already decided that a path to citizenship equals amnesty?

How about the fact, reported last week by the Pew Research Center, that 62 percent of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. have done 21 or more for more than a decade and about 21 percent for more than two decades? Or the fact that about 4 million of the 10.4 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. have U.S.-born

children?

If the president is waiting until facts change minds, he will be waiting forever.

But there is one fact that hasn't changed. Public opinion polls have consistently found that most Americans recognize that the country's immigration system needs to be fixed. What they can't agree on — and probably never will — is how it ought to be done. Another survey by the Pew Research Center in late August found a slight shift downward of the people who think that reform should include both border security and a path to citizenship — about 41 percent of those responding, down from nearly half of the people asked the year before.

Though Obama protested that the election was the reason for the delay, he did acknowledge that the "politics did shift midsummer" by the influx of immigrant minors and the resulting demonstrations at immigration processing centers.

"I want to make sure we get it right," Obama said Sunday.

Getting it done is getting it right. And maybe, just maybe, the polls would be kind to a president who took courageous action no matter how many reasons there were not to do so.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editors have provided a brief Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

WHO losing battle with Ebola (Memphis Commercial Appeal)

Were it not for horribly misguided Islamic religious fanatics in northern Nigeria and tribal Pakistan, the World Health Organization might have been able to eradicate polio this year. And in fact the organization and its health care allies have succeeded in eliminating rinderpest, a disease affecting cattle that is deadly serious if you live in rural parts of the world where your existence depends on cattle.

Thus, in a world grown comfortable with the World Health Organization's track record of containing infectious diseases, the widespread assumption was that it would quickly be on top of the spreading Ebola outbreak. But because of severe budget cuts, First World complacency and Third World inability to implement World Health Organization guidelines, the Ebola outbreak in Africa has spread out of control and reached epidemic status.

The New York Times, in a story on a diminished organization's inability to cope, asked, "If WHO, the main United Nations health agency, could not quickly muster an army of experts and health workers to combat an outbreak overtaking some of the world's poorest countries, what role can it play in the world today?"

The immediate answer is that there is none, the heroic efforts of aid organizations such as Doctors Without Borders and the Carter Center notwithstanding. The World Health Organization has been so hollowed out by a relatively prosperous country, once the Chinese government owned up to the existence of the deadly pneumonia known as SARS, the disease was contained within a year thanks to hundreds of millions donated by wealthy individuals concerned about the welfare of their workforces. But as Dr. Jim Yong Kim, head of the World Bank and former head of the World Health Organization, told the Times, as soon as SARS burned out, "Those guys disappeared, and we forgot very quickly."

Ebola is a reminder of why "those guys" and the rest of us should not forget. Having occurred in a relatively prosperous country, once the Chinese government owned up to the existence of the deadly pneumonia known as SARS, the disease was contained within a year thanks to hundreds of millions donated by wealthy individuals concerned about the welfare of their workforces. But as Dr. Jim Yong Kim, head of the World Bank and former head of the World Health Organization, told the Times, as soon as SARS burned out, "Those guys disappeared, and we forgot very quickly."

Ebola is a reminder of why "those guys" and the rest of us should not forget. Having occurred in a relatively prosperous country, once the Chinese government owned up to the existence of the deadly pneumonia known as SARS, the disease was contained within a year thanks to hundreds of millions donated by wealthy individuals concerned about the welfare of their workforces. But as Dr. Jim Yong Kim, head of the World Bank and former head of the World Health Organization, told the Times, as soon as SARS burned out, "Those guys disappeared, and we forgot very quickly."

Immigration reform on hold (Miami Herald)

On June 30, President Barack Obama ordered Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and Attorney General Eric Holder to recommend actions he could take "within my existing legal authorities" to fix immigration. The president's commission was set to expire before the end of summer and I intend to adopt those recommendations without further delay," he said.

No mincing words there. But over the weekend Obama said, in effect, "Never mind." The bold deadline he proclaimed earlier in the summer — that the president could have time to explain his plans to the American people. Politics, he solemnly declared, had nothing to do with it.

That strains credulity. With control of the Senate in the balance, the pleas of Democrats in hotly contested races to postpone unilateral action on immigration until after



ABRAS DULLEN/AP

Health workers in protective gear leave after carrying the body of a woman that they suspect died from the Ebola virus in Monrovia, Liberia. A surge in Ebola infections is driving a spiraling outbreak in West Africa that is increasingly putting health workers at risk as they struggle to treat an overwhelming number of patients.

the November election probably played a big role in the president's decision. Political calculation apparently trumped Obama's earlier boldness.

His caution may be understandable, up to a point. Losing the Senate to Republicans would further cripple his ability to govern. But he should never have set a deadline unless he was prepared to follow through. Obama's paralyzing second thoughts following bold pronouncements is becoming a habit that disappoints supporters and lends credence to critics who call him weak. In this case, it once again disheartens Latino voters.

They have reason to be discouraged. Credited with providing a critical edge for the winner of the last two presidential elections, they have time and again been disappointed by the president's failure to deliver on promises of immigration reform.

Obama said the executive actions he would contemplate must fall "within my existing legal authorities." Critics deliberately choose to ignore his words and claim he plans to go beyond what the law allows. But there is plenty Obama can do to ease the immigration crisis.

Presidents have wide latitude in this area. That includes giving relief to immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, exercising more discretion in deciding who gets a waiver for deportations — and halting all or most deportations of non-criminals for the time being, the boldest step of all. Sooner or later, Obama must act. Advocates of reform who have relied on his promises have been disappointed one time too many.

NFL needs to fire Goodell (Kansas City Star)

National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell wrote his own pink slip with his inexcusable handling of the Ray Rice domestic violence case.

NFL owners should fire Goodell for how poorly he served their multibillion-dollar industry. His actions betrayed the faith that NFL fans — especially women — have in the league and in Goodell's running of it.

A stunning series of events on Monday made it clear that Goodell, who drew a \$44 million paycheck in 2012, has no credibility left when it comes to violence against women by the league's players.

Goodell's own video posted shocking video that showed Rice last February knocking out his future wife in an elevator. The Baltimore Ravens terminated his contract Monday afternoon, and the NFL indefinitely suspended him.

The Ravens and NFL acted correctly, but far too late. And that's largely Goodell's fault.

He already had been assailed, and properly so, by women's groups and others for handing out only a two-game suspension to Rice after the February incident. At the time, the available videotape showed Rice dragging the woman out of the elevator.

contritence.

It's troubling that the Ravens as well as many NFL teams' executives did not challenge Goodell's decision. Of course, in the cash-centered world of the NFL, they all understood it was aimed at getting a star player back on the field.

In August, months later, Goodell apologized for his stance on the Rice suspension and announced tougher penalties in domestic violence cases.

However, as security tape from the elevator emerged, that ramped up especially troubling questions about Goodell's character and his job performance regarding the Rice case.

Goodell has helped build the NFL into an economic juggernaut. The good-old-boy owners will be tempted to keep the reins in his hands.

Instead, they must show America that the league means business when it says domestic violence and other assaults by players will not be tolerated. Those who don't fully embrace that message — including the commissioner — should not be part of the NFL.

Ebola a costly, crucial battle (Los Angeles Times)

The United Nations warns that the intensive global medical effort needed to contain the Ebola virus sweeping through parts of West Africa could cost as much as \$600 million. Ebola has killed 1,900 people so far — about half of those who have become infected — and has recently crossed from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone into two more nations. U.N. officials estimate that 20,000 people could die in the next six months, and that the situation could worsen after that without a prompt and generous international response of money, equipment and skilled personnel.

But deep budget cuts have crippled the ability of the World Health Organization, the U.N. agency that should be leading the response to the outbreak, to handle these kinds of emergencies. As the Montreal-based Center for Research on Globalization reported last week, "Since the financial collapse of 2008, the WHO budget has been slashed by at least \$1 billion, leading to layoffs of veteran medical staff and a 35% reduction of the agency's emergency response staff."

A undermining of WHO's ability to be the first responder in global medical crises, the United Nations should have quickly figured out a new scenario — perhaps one under which nations agreed to apportion donations of staff, medicines and other resources, while WHO's role was limited to organizing the international response. If it did not do so, The respected nonprofit Doctors Without Borders also has been swamped by the crisis. The director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said last week that the epidemic was "spiraling out of control."

The United States has moved swiftly and generously to help. The Obama adminis-

tration has asked Congress to allocate \$58 million toward research and production of an experimental drug that was used on two U.S. missionaries who were infected in Africa. They survived, but it's not known whether the medication, ZMapp, was the reason. The money also would be used for testing two promising experimental vaccines. In addition, the U.S. Agency for International Development has committed to spending nearly \$100 million on protective suits for medical personnel, beds for patients and food aid; the U.S. will also recruit U.S. medical staff and employ the military to help on the ground.

At this point in U.S. appears to be in a better position to organize and lead the international response than WHO, perhaps in coordination with that agency. But the U.S. shouldn't have to pick up most of the \$600 million tab itself. Doctors Without Borders last week criticized what it perceived to be a lackluster global response and called on governments around the world to mobilize military and civilian biological disaster teams. Developed nations should be answering the call, right away. And once WHO has been helped through this humanitarian crisis, the United Nations must determine a way to clarify WHO's role in future international medical disasters.

Rice, NFL: Too little, too late (Toronto Star)

The video is sickening. Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice knocks his fiancée — now wife — out cold in an Atlantic City hotel elevator, drags her into the hall, and steps aside.

He doesn't reach down to see if Janay Palmer is OK after the full-out punch to the head, or attend to her. It takes others who come upon the appalling scene — her crumpled on the floor, unconscious, her skirt up — to show concern.

When the video was released Monday by TMZ Sports, generating a rip tide of public disgust, it soon galvanized the National Football League and the Baltimore Ravens into action. The NFL suspended Rice indefinitely (as did the Canadian Football League) and the Ravens fired him.

But too late. The damage was done. This sorry episode has shamed the Ravens, the NFL and the authorities who handled the case. Because there is nothing in the video that the team, league and police didn't know before its public release. But they were clearly more eager to explain away Rice's violence, and to get a sports icon back into the \$10 billion game, than to make an example of him.

The assault happened in February when the Ravens knew from the police summons that Rice had caused "bodily injury to Janay Palmer, specifically by striking her with his hand, rendering her unconscious." She could have suffered far worse. That was the NFL's heavy sanctions were never imposed. But they failed to take it as seriously as it warranted.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell decided in his wisdom that a mere two-game suspension and a fine — for Rice who still stands on the \$5.4 million a year salary — was sufficiently strong message on domestic violence to send out, even as the league promotes the game to female viewers. This from a league that suspends players for a year for puffing dope. The Ravens, meanwhile, were content to parade a contrite Rice before the public. At a time that is soet in gender thought a "diversion" program was punishment enough for a man initially indicted for aggravated assault, which could have put him in prison for years.

What are the 1.3 million women in the U.S. who will face domestic violence this year? What is that society that is soet in gender thought? That celebrity violence gets a pass, unless it can't be ignored?

Rice himself has said his actions were "inexcusable." Yet the league had to be shamed by a display of his raw brutality and callous indifference into treating his violence seriously. The United States has moved swiftly and generously to help. The Obama adminis-

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

S. Carolina preps for Georgia battle

By PETE IACOBELLI
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — It wasn't that long ago No. 24 South Carolina was the trendy pick to win the Southeastern Conference's Eastern Division, a role that flipped to No. 6 Georgia after college football's opening weekend.

"So a lot can change, as we all know, in two or three weeks," Gamecocks coach Steve Spurrier said.

Spurrier and the Gamecocks (1-1, 0-1 SEC) hope to flip the script one more time and regain the favorite's role early in the season when they face the Bulldogs on Saturday.

Georgia (1-0, 0-0) has not played since it's statement-making opening game two weeks ago when Todd Gurley ran for a 198 yards and scored four touchdowns, including one on a kickoff return, to down No. 23 Clemson 45-21.

That was just two days after South Carolina's 52-28 loss to No. 7 Texas A&M after entering as a double-digit favorite. The Gamecocks know that few expect them to come out on top in this one.

"We were favorites against A&M and we lost, so I don't listen to what they say," Gamecocks quarterback Dylan Thompson said.

South Carolina seemed in free fall after losing to the Aggies, its highly regarded offensive line unable to open holes and its rebuilt defensive front — the Gamecocks lost three of our line starters including No. 1 NFL Draft pick Jadeveon Clowney — couldn't generate any pressure.



No. 6 Georgia (1-0, 0-0)
at No. 24 S. Carolina (1-1, 0-1)
AFN-Sports
9:30 p.m. Saturday CET
4:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

Things changed last week in a 33-23 victory over East Carolina, a contest where the Gamecocks rallied from a 13-7 deficit. Their offensive line held firm and opened enough holes for star runner Mike Davis to gain 101 yards and two touchdowns.

The defense staved itself after a bad start, giving up 195 yards to the Pirates the first 18 minutes and just 258 yards the rest of the way. The Gamecocks got a blocked field goal, their first in three years, and two interceptions.

The offense showed its strength at the end, chewing up nearly 11 of the game's final 12 minutes on its final drive with East Carolina's offense waiting for the chance to get back on the field that came too late.

Spurrier was encouraged by the performance and believes it's a critical step toward getting to the level where championship hopes abide.

"We're coaching as hard as we can, offense, defense, special teams, and hopefully it will start coming together," he said.



STEPHEN B. MORTON/AP

South Carolina running back Mike Davis celebrates with fans after Saturday's 33-23 win over East Carolina in Columbia, S.C.



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

UCLA running back Paul Perkins, right, celebrates his touchdown with quarterback Brett Hundley, left, and offensive lineman Caleb Benenoch during the first half of Saturday's win over Memphis.

No. 12 UCLA keeps winning, but still sliding in the polls

By DAN GREENSPAN
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Like so many once-trendy Hollywood nightclubs a short drive from campus, No. 12 UCLA has found out how quickly you can go from hot to not so cool.

The Bruins have dropped five spots in The Associated Press Top 25 over the last two weeks, with voters clearly less than impressed by closer-than-expected wins over Virginia and Memphis. UCLA was heavily favored in both games, a product of high expectations from the Bruins' first two seasons under coach Jim Mora.

Now that poll voters have begun recalibrating their feelings about the Bruins, Mora hopes his players will follow suit as they prepare for Saturday's trip to Texas.

"I don't want expectations to become a burden," Mora said Tuesday, adding that the Bruins will be "getting back to the roots of who we are. We're an underdog. That's who we are. We like it when people doubt us. That helps inspire us. I'm not saying it should, but it does. I just think we were tight. I think that we let the outside expectations become a little bit of a



No. 12 UCLA (2-0) at Texas (1-1)
AFN-Xtra
2 a.m. Sunday CET
9 a.m. Sunday JKT

Brett Hundley and the offense. Against the Tigers, the offense was picking up the slack for the UCLA defense in the 42-35 win.

UCLA gave up 469 yards of total offense, allowing Memphis quarterback Paxton Lynch to throw for a career-high 305 yards. A highly regarded front seven led by Jack finally produced its first sack of the season, but allowed 4.2 yards per rushing attempt.

And the Tigers' final drive, which ended at the Bruins 41 when time expired, was determined more by questionable clock management than any particular defensive adjustment or standout play by UCLA.

That doesn't exactly bode well for Pac-12 play, with games against high-powered Arizona State, Utah and Oregon to open the conference schedule, following the trip to the struggling Longhorns at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

"We can't wait to get things fixed," Mora said. "We have to fix things now. ... (Older) guys like us, we understand how fast life goes, and I don't think these guys always understand it, so it's a matter of making them understand it's important right now."

burden for us."

For linebacker Myles Jack, there are more pressing concerns than where UCLA sits in the rankings. "As long as we keep winning our games, that stuff will take care of itself," Jack said. "We have to take care of internally what is going on in that locker room."

What is going on right now is trying to figure out how to come up with a complete performance on both sides of the ball.

The Bruins' defense was opportunistic in the 28-20 win over the Cavaliers, returning two interceptions and one fumble for touchdowns to prop up a subpar performance from quarterback

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Stoops, Oklahoma ready for another shot at SEC

By Cliff Brunt
The Associated Press

BNORMAN, Okla. — Bob Stoops toned it down, at least for a day.

Oklahoma's coach knew questions about his vocal disdain for the Southeastern Conference's perceived superiority were coming Monday as his fourth-ranked Sooners prepared for SEC member Tennessee. He shook most of them off, but when asked about the SEC's supposed belief that its athletes are a cut above, Stoops delivered the closest thing to a quip he would offer.

"I don't know," he said. "That hasn't been the case in our experience. Whoever we've played, that hasn't been much of a difference."

Oklahoma linebacker Geno Grissom was more direct about his coach's thoughts.

"We all know coach Stoops' feelings about the SEC," Grissom said. "As his guys, we're 100 percent behind him. We're going to make sure we help him out there and make a statement in that aspect."

Stoops has criticized the SEC as far back as the spring of 2013, when he called some of the stories about the league's supremacy "propaganda." He had little to go on because his Sooners had lost three straight against SEC opponents and had just

'We all know coach Stoops' feelings about the SEC. As his guys, we're 100 percent behind him.'

Geno Grissom
University of Oklahoma linebacker

been routed by Johnny Manziel and SEC member Texas A&M 41-13 in the Cotton Bowl.

Stoops got some ammunition when Oklahoma stunned Alabama 45-31 in the Sugar Bowl and took significant momentum into the off-season. This past summer, Stoops took exception to Alabama coach Nick Saban's comment that the Sugar Bowl was a consolation game. On Oklahoma's media day, when asked about his initial response to Saban, he replied: "Oh, get over it. Again, where am I lying?"

Even in weeks the Sooners don't play SEC teams, Stoops gets questions about the conference. A week ago, when asked if Alabama's close call against West Virginia was another example of the SEC struggling to stop a Big 12 spread offense, he wouldn't get into it.

"I'm not gonna sit here and talk about that," he said. "You guys are more than capable of doing that without me. I cause enough where I cause waves."

While Stoops isn't necessarily a fan of the SEC's hype, he's fine with Tennessee and coach Butch Jones.

"We've got respect for the program," Stoops said. "The coach is getting in their second season now. They're a better football team than they were a year ago. They've recruited really well in the last couple of years. They're 2-0 and they've looked really good to this point."

The players know that the game is important because of the matchup of the conferences, but they also say they need to focus on themselves to be at their best so they can make the right impression.

"These are the games that most people are going to sit down and watch," Grissom said.

Tennessee (2-0)
at No. 4 Oklahoma (2-0)
AFN-Atlantic
2 a.m. Sunday CET
9 a.m. Sunday JKT



Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops doesn't believe the Southeastern Conference is head and shoulders above the other Power 5 conferences.

SUE OGOROCK/AP



Power matchups give Big 12 bigger tests

By Stephen Hawkins
The Associated Press

Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops takes the approach that his fourth-ranked Sooners are getting ready to play a 10th conference game.

While Saturday's home date with Tennessee of the SEC won't count in the Big 12 standings, such games against the other power conferences surely will impact the perceptions of others — including the committee that will chose the four teams that will take part in the new College Football Playoff at the end of the season.

That makes this weekend an especially big one for the Big 12. Seven of the nine games are against teams from the other major leagues (SEC, ACC, Big Ten and Pac-12), with the opponents having a combined 13 record.

"Everybody's paying attention to your strength of schedule and things like that, so sure, it's always important that your league

'I think this is a league game for us. ... They're very capable of winning games and having success in the Big 12 Conference, and that's really what we expect.'

Mike Gundy
Oklahoma State coach on this week's foe, Texas-San Antonio

plays well," Stoops said Monday during the Big 12 coaches weekly teleconference.

No. 19 Kansas State, the only Big 12 team not playing this week, is preparing for a home game against defending SEC champion Auburn the following Thursday.



Texas, coming off a 41-7 home loss to BYU, plays Saturday night against No. 12 UCLA in Arlington, Texas, the site of the first CFP national championship game in January and where Oklahoma State had a hard-fought 37-31 loss in its season opener against defending

national champion Florida State.

"It's going to be a challenge," Texas coach Charlie Strong said. "Can we get this team and bounce them back from a humiliating, disappointing loss and get them to prevail and go play?"

Texas Tech is home against Arkansas, another SEC team, while Kansas plays at Duke, and West Virginia goes to Maryland a year after a 37-0 loss to the Terrapins.

Iowa State and TCU both play teams from the Big Ten, the league that took a hit with some resounding losses last weekend. The Cyclones play rival Iowa, and TCU is home against Minnesota.

"That's how the whole game goes, and that's the chances you take," TCU coach Gary Patterson said before referencing Michigan State's 46-27 loss at Oregon after the Spartans led by 12.

"If either one of those teams wins that game, it really springs-loads them into national championship-type situations, being part

of the four playoff teams, because that's a big win out of conference," Patterson said. "There's positives and negatives that come with all of it."

Kansas State's game at Auburn on Sept. 18 will be the last for the Big 12 against the other power leagues.

The Cowboys are home Saturday against Texas-San Antonio, the Larry Coker-coached team coming off a 26-23 loss to Pac-12 team Arizona.

"I think this is a league game for us," Cowboys coach Mike Gundy said Monday. "I told our team that, and mentioned to the press that we're in league play. They're very capable of winning games and having success in the Big 12 conference, and that's really what we expect. They very well could have won the game against Arizona. They missed a field goal late in the game, and had every opportunity to win the game, and the talent level was very similar."

SPORTS BRIEFS

Pistorius won't be found guilty of murder

Judge hints of culpable homicide, saying double-amputee was negligent in shooting

By Gerald Inray and
Christopher Torchia
The Associated Press

PRETORIA, South Africa — The judge in Oscar Pistorius' trial ruled out a murder conviction for the double-amputee Olympian Thursday in the shooting death of his girlfriend but said he was negligent, raising the possibility he'll be convicted of culpable homicide.

The verdict in the case that has riveted much of South Africa and the world is expected on Friday when Judge Thokozile Masipa reconvenes the judgment phase, climaxing the trial that began in March.

If Pistorius is acquitted of murder, he could still be sent to jail for a maximum of 15 years if convicted of culpable homicide, which is the killing of someone through reckless or negligent behavior, although five years in prison is a guideline when a firearm is used.

The red-robed Masipa, sitting in the dais and looking down at Pistorius and the packed courtroom, said she felt Pistorius acted negligently when he fired four times through a toilet door in his home in the pre-dawn hours of Valentine's Day last year. In a moment of high-drama, Masipa then stopped reading out her verdict in the six-month-long trial and adjourned until Friday.

Because there is no trial by jury in South Africa, Masipa is expected to explain exactly why she and her two legal aides came to the decision they have before the judge issues the verdict.

"I am of the view that the accused acted too hastily and with excessive force," Masipa said of Pistorius' actions on the fatal night.

She said the prosecution had not proven beyond a reasonable doubt that Pistorius committed premeditated murder. She also



THEMBA HADEBE/AP

Oscar Pistorius, right, accompanied by a relative, leaves the high court in Pretoria, South Africa, on Thursday. Presiding Judge Thokozile Masipa is expected to announce her verdict in Pistorius' murder trial after scrutinizing evidence Thursday and Friday given by 37 witnesses.

ruled out a lesser murder charge. As she spoke, Pistorius began sobbing quietly on the wooden bench, his shoulders shaking.

Murder is an illegal, intentional killing. A premeditated, or planned, murder would carry a heavier sentence in the event of a conviction.

The world-famous athlete has acknowledged firing the shots through the toilet door in his home, hitting Steenkamp in the head, arm and hip area with hollow-point bullets from his 9 mm pistol. He said he mistook her for an intruder and denied murder, but the judge said Pistorius still could have taken other action,

like calling the police or security at his housing estate.

"Did the accused fail to take steps he should have taken? Yes," Masipa said. "He failed to take any steps to avoid the death."

The prosecution alleged that the athlete intentionally killed his girlfriend, a model and budding reality TV star, after a loud nighttime argument heard by neighbors. Masipa said there were "just not enough facts" to support the finding of premeditated murder or the lesser murder without pre-planning.

"The accused cannot be found guilty of murder," the judge said.

At the start of the judgment

hearing, Masipa told Pistorius, 27, that he should remain seated on the bench while she read her findings out and until she asked him to stand for the verdict.

In her hours-long assessment of witness evidence, she called Pistorius a "very poor witness" who had lost his composure on the stand and was at times "evasive." But Masipa emphasized that did not mean he was guilty of murder.

The 66-year-old judge also cast doubt on witness accounts of hearing a woman's screams, a key part of the prosecution's case. The defense had argued that it was Pistorius who was scream-

ing in a high-pitched voice after discovering he had fatally shot Steenkamp.

Masipa also cited testimony of an acoustics expert called by the defense, saying it cast "serious doubt" on whether witnesses who were hundreds of yards away in their homes — as some state witnesses were — could have differentiated between the screams of a man or a woman.

At one point, Masipa said: "I continue to explain why most witnesses got their facts wrong."

Masipa also said she was disregarding text messages between Steenkamp and Pistorius that had been entered as evidence. Prosecutors had submitted text messages that showed tension between them while the defense submitted messages that indicated mutual affection. That evidence, the judge said, doesn't prove anything.

"Normal relationships are dynamic and unpredictable most of the time, while human beings are fickle," she said.

Pistorius faced 25 years to life in prison if convicted of premeditated murder. He also faced a minimum of 15 years in jail if found guilty of murder without pre-planning.

Pistorius is charged with murder, two counts of unlawfully firing a gun in a public place in unrelated incidents and one count of illegal possession of ammunition.

Before Thursday's session began, Pistorius hugged his brother Carl, who was seated in a wheelchair because of leg injuries suffered in a recent car crash. The parents of Steenkamp were also in the packed gallery. Other members of Pistorius' family, including his father Henke, sat behind him.

If Pistorius is convicted on any charge, the case will be postponed until a later sentencing hearing.

Briefly

Kim has four-shot lead at Evian major; Wie withdraws

The Associated Press

EVIAN-LES-BAINS, France — South Korean teen Hyo-Joo Kim posted a faultless 10-under 61 to take a four-shot lead over veteran Karrie Webb after the first round of the Evian Championship on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Michelle Wie's bid for a second major ended early.

Tied for fourth place here two years ago, the last year before Evian became a major, the 19-year-old Kim had 10 birdies in a perfectly symmetrical round with five each on the front and back nine. The 39-year-old Webb had eight birdies but was undone by two bogeys.

Wie retired after just 13 holes

— by which time she had two double bogeys and was 5 over. The U.S. Women's Open champion was returning after five weeks out nursing a right index finger injury and was clearly in pain.

Rams DE Long needs left ankle surgery

ST. LOUIS — St. Louis Rams defensive end Chris Long will undergo surgery and is expected to miss most of the season after injuring his left ankle in the opening loss to the Vikings.

Coach Jeff Fisher said Wednesday he'd not been optimistic about Long, who was hurt tackling Vikings running back Adrian Peterson in the third quarter.

Apparently, Long was stepped on from behind.

Long, the second overall pick in 2008, has never missed a game and has started 85 of 97 in his career. He had 8½ sacks last season and 11½ in 2013 and gave no sign of a serious injury while meeting with media after the opener.

In other NFL news:

■ Nick Hardwick's 11th NFL season ended after only 15 plays.

His career might be over, too, after the San Diego Chargers put the veteran center on injured reserve Wednesday with a recurring neck stinger.

Hardwick will be replaced by Rich Ohrnberger, who's in his sixth NFL season and second with the Chargers.

■ Washington Redskins coach Jay Gruden says tight end Jordan Reed has "very little" chance of playing Sunday against the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Reed pulled his left hamstring on a 4-yard reception late in the first quarter of the season-opening loss to the Houston Texans.

Ex-soccer player sues Clemson over hazing

COLUMBIA, S.C. — An ex-Clemson women's soccer player has sued coach Eddie Radwanski, his assistants and several former teammates for a 2011 hazing ritual in which she says she was blindfolded and ran into a brick wall at the team's playing field.

Hunt, 21, says in the complaint she was ordered to sprint while blindfolded and ran into the wall. Hunt says she suffered severe head trauma and had to eventually give up soccer.

In college football news:

■ Florida will be without cornerback J.C. Jackson for the rest of season because of a shoulder injury.

LSU coach Les Miles says leading receiver Travin Dural "will play" against Louisiana-Monroe on Saturday night despite injuries from a car accident last weekend.

Miles says Dural returned to practice Wednesday after missing the first couple practices of the week.

MLB

Royals back in tie for AL Central lead

By NOAH TRISTER
The Associated Press

DETROIT — James Shields was acquired two offseasons ago to pitch in games like this for Kansas City.

With the Royals trying to avoid a sweep in their biggest series in years, the 32-year-old right-hander delivered.

"You don't earn a nickname like 'Big Game James' for nothing," manager Ned Yost said. "Games don't come much bigger than this."

Shields allowed two hits over seven innings in another terrific performance, and Kansas City edged Detroit 3-0 on Wednesday night to take a one-game lead over the Tigers atop the AL Central. Detroit had won the first two games of the series to pull into a virtual tie for first in the division.

The teams have a three-game series in Kansas City that starts Sept. 19.

"It's definitely a game that we needed, for sure, but I think every game from here on out is pretty crucial," Shields said. "We took a couple tough losses there, the last couple days, but we're having fun right now and enjoying the moment."

Shields (14-7) gave up a single to Ian Kinsler leading off the first. Then he picked off Kinsler — and retired every other batter he faced until another Detroit single in the seventh. The Tigers put two on that inning, but Shields worked out of the jam.

Delvin Herrera pitched the eighth and Wade Davis finished for his third save.

Rick Porcello (15-11) pitched well for the Tigers, but Kansas City pushed across two runs in the fourth on RBI singles by Salvador Perez and Lorenzo Cain.

Aleides Escobar added a sacri-

fice fly in the ninth.

Shields was acquired in December 2012 in a trade that sent top prospect Wil Myers to Tampa Bay. Myers won Rookie of the Year honors last season, but now Shields has helped put the Royals in contention for their first post-season appearance since 1985.

"The only thing I've been telling guys is just stay relaxed and have fun," said Shields, who pitched in the postseason for Tampa Bay in 2008, 2010 and 2011. "This is why we play the game."

He came within two outs of a shutout in New York on Friday, and the Tigers didn't fare any better against him. Shields struck out eight and walked one on Wednesday, throwing 98 pitches.

Torii Hunter's come-backer hit Shields in the back of his right leg in the first, but the Kansas City starter was able to continue.

The game was delayed 42 minutes by rain at the start, and in the fourth it was raining hard enough to send fans toward the concourse, but there were no more delays.

In the seventh, Hunter managed a single and Miguel Cabrera walked, but Shields retired Victor Martinez on a deep fly and struck out J.D. Martinez.

"That's pretty typical of him. He goes out and he pitches like that for 200 innings every year. That's what he does," Kinsler said. "Rick threw the ball really well, but we didn't create any offense, and that's the game."

Porcello struck out four of the first five Kansas City batters. He allowed two runs and seven hits in 6½ innings, striking out seven without a walk.

He allowed consecutive singles to Josh Willingham, Eric Hosmer and Perez with one out in the fourth, and Cain's two-out single made it 2-0.



Washington Nationals' Asdrubal Cabrera (3) beats the throw to third as Atlanta Braves third baseman Chris Johnson waits for the throw in the second inning on Wednesday in Washington.

Nick Wass/AP

Roundup

Harang outduels Strasburg as Braves get by Nationals

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fredi Gonzalez — Fredi Gonzalez cannot explain why the Braves have done so well against Stephen Strasburg, The Atlanta manager is just glad his team beat the Washington ace once again.

Aaron Harang outdueled Strasburg, Justin Upton drove in three runs and the Braves avoided a series sweep with a 6-2 win over the Nationals on Wednesday at Nationals Park.

The Braves snapped a three-game losing streak as Harang (11-10) held the NL East leaders to one unearned run in seven innings. Upton's RBI single in the sixth broke a 1-all tie, and he added a two-run double during a three-run seventh.

"This is a big win," Gonzalez said. "This is a win that you look forward to maybe [tackling] on three or four more in a row and get us back on top of the wild-card mix."

Strasburg (11-11) allowed three runs and seven hits in six innings. Bryce Harper homered for Washington, which had won three straight.

Washington won the opening two games of the series. Atlanta trails by eight games in the division.

"If we came in here and got swept it's [going to] leave a sour note in everybody's mouth," Harang said. "We can't focus on the division as much as the wild card right now."

Success against Atlanta has been historically difficult for Washington and Strasburg.

The Nationals dropped to 6-10 this season against the Braves, though they had won five of the previous seven games. They have not swept Atlanta in Washington since 2008.

Strasburg has not earned a win against the Braves since Aug. 21, 2012. In four starts this season against Atlanta, the righty is 0-2 with a 7.18 ERA.

"It's one of those things you can't explain," Gonzalez stated. "You really can't. ...Trying to explain it wouldn't sound very smart."

Strasburg entered with a 3-0 record in his previous five starts. The NL strikeout leader fanned eight, but lost for the first time since August 8.

"I felt great out there," Strasburg said. "I felt like I was hitting my spots, and just a couple hits, just out of our reach, and that's the ballgame."

Harang struggled recently, going 0-3 with a 7.98 ERA in his past three starts. That version didn't show Wednesday. He struck out nine and surrendered six hits while improving to 2-0 with an 0.90 ERA versus Washington this season.

Kevin Frandsen had three singles for the Nationals.

Pirates 6, Phillies 3: Andrew McCutchen hit the first inside-the-park home run of his career and visiting Pittsburgh protected their lead in the NL wild-card race, beating Philadelphia.

Yankees 8, Rays 5: Mark Teixeira made up for a botched foul pop in the Rays' four-run first inning with a go-ahead triple in the fifth and Brian McCann homered and drove in three runs as host New York used its biggest comeback of the season to beat Tampa Bay.

Reds 4, Cardinals 2: Alfredo Simon shook off a rough start but lasted seven innings and drove in the go-ahead run with the second of his two doubles as host Cincinnati rallied for a win over St. Louis.

Mets 8, Rockies 0: Rafael Montero earned his first major league win, Eric Young Jr. went 3 for 3 with an RBI triple and suddenly surging New York beat visiting Colorado for its fourth consecutive victory.

Blue Jays 11, Cubs 1: Drew Hutchison matched his career-high with 10 strikeouts in 6½ innings, Dioner Navarro had two hits and two RBIs, and host Toronto completed a three-game sweep with a win over Chicago.

Orioles 10, Red Sox 6: Wei-Yin Chen pitched perfect ball into the sixth inning and Adam Jones helped provide an early cushion as Baltimore beat Boston for a three-game sweep at Fenway.

Angels 8, Rangers 1: Albert Pujols opened the scoring with his first triple in more than four years and rookie Matt Shoemaker had another strong start as visiting Los Angeles blasted Texas.

White Sox 2, Athletics 1: Avisail Garcia drove in two runs with a bases-loaded single in the eighth inning as host Chicago slipped past struggling Oakland.

Brewers 4, Marlins 1: Rookie Matt Clark hit his first career home run and Wily Peralta pitched into the seventh inning as host Milwaukee got by Miami.

Astros 5, Mariners 2: Jose Altuve had two hits and an RBI as visiting Houston dominated Seattle's post-season hopes.

Dodgers 4, Padres 0: Dan Haren tossed seven sharp innings to give the Dodgers four pitchers with 13 wins for the first time in 19 years as host Los Angeles beat San Diego.

Giants 5, Diamondbacks 0: Four pitchers combined on a two-hit shutout and Gregor Blanco had an RBI double as part of a four-run seventh inning that sent host San Francisco over Arizona.



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Pitcher James Shields allowed just two hits over seven innings to lead the Kansas City Royals to a 3-0 win over the Detroit Tigers on Wednesday at Comerica Park in Detroit. The win pushed the Royals back into a tie for first place in the AL Central with the Tigers.

NFL

NFL orders investigation

Move comes after source says tape was sent in April

By BARRY WILNER AND ROB MAADDI

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL called in a former FBI director to examine how it pursued and handled evidence in the Ray Rice domestic violence case as pressure increased for the league to be more transparent about its original investigation.

The move late Wednesday came hours after The Associated Press reported that a law enforcement officer said he sent an NFL executive video in April that showed Rice striking his then-fiancee at a casino. Goodell has maintained that no one in the NFL saw the video until it was released by TMZ Sports Monday.

Women's organizations, members of Congress and players have called for more detail about the NFL's handling of the Rice case. The criticism intensified after the law enforcement official's account.

Goodell turned to Robert S. Mueller III, who led the record of the FBI for a 12-year term, to lead the inquiry. The probe will be overseen by owners John Mara of the New York Giants and Art Rooney of the Pittsburgh Steelers, two of Goodell's strongest supporters. Both are members of key NFL committees and have

closely advised Goodell throughout his tenure.

The NFL called the probe independent, and did not discuss how the owners will work with Mueller. But there could be an appearance of conflict: Mara has already indicated he doesn't think Goodell's job should be in jeopardy.

"My understanding is that the league and the Ravens made repeated requests to obtain the video of the Ray Rice incident and they were denied each time," Mara said a few hours before the AP story broke. "The notion that the league should have gone around law enforcement to obtain the video is, in my opinion, misguided, as is the notion that the commissioner's job is now in jeopardy."

The law enforcement official who described sending the video to the NFL spoke on condition of anonymity because an investigation is ongoing. He said he sent the tape five months ago, and played a 12-second voicemail from an NFL office number on April 9 confirming the video arrived. A female voice expresses thanks and says: "You're right. It's terrible."

The official says he had no further communication with any NFL employee and can't confirm anyone watched the video. The person said he was unauthorized to release the video but shared it

unsolicited, because he wanted the NFL to have it before deciding on Rice's punishment.

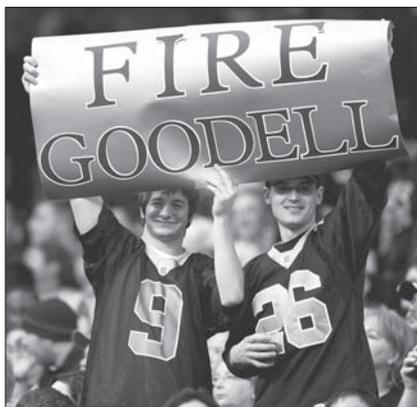
The NFL has said it asked for the video from law enforcement, but was denied.

The video shows Ravens running back Rice and Janay Palmer — now Janay Rice — shouting obscenities at each other, and she appears to spit at Rice right before he throws a brutal punch.

Rice had been charged with felony aggravated assault, but in May he was accepted into a pre-trial intervention program that allowed him to avoid jail time. That could lead to the charge being purged from his record. He was cut from the Ravens and suspended by the league indefinitely on Monday after TMZ posted video of the punch.

Saints quarterback Drew Brees, a former member of the players' union executive committee, questioned the league's accountability. Brees compared it to the Saints' bounty program in which players, coaches and the general manager were suspended and the organization was fined.

"We're all held accountable for our actions as players," he said. "Certainly every owner should be held accountable for their actions, the commissioner should be held accountable for his actions."



JEFF SIKER, CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/MCT

Saints fans express their opinion of NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell during a 2012 game. Goodell, now under scrutiny for his handling of the Ray Rice case, has already had his share of controversy — including the Saints' Bountygate scandal.

Scandal nothing new for Goodell

By BARRY WILNER

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Ray Rice story is not the first controversy Roger Goodell has faced during his eight-year tenure as NFL commissioner. Here's a look at some of them:

Ray Rice: Goodell suspended the Ravens running back for two games, then made it indefinite after video of Rice punching his then-fiancee (now wife) in an elevator was released Monday. Goodell said to his knowledge, no one at the league office had seen the video before Monday. But a law enforcement official told the AP he sent the video to the league five months ago, and played a voice mail from an NFL office number confirming it was received.

Saints bounties: A lengthy league investigation uncovered a three-year bounty program in which New Orleans Saints players were paid bonuses for "cart-offs" and "knockouts." Goodell suspended coach Sean Payton for a season; former defensive coordinator Gregg Williams — the overseer of the program — indefinitely; general manager Mickey Loomis for eight games; and assistant coach Joe Vitt six games. He also initially suspended defensive players Jon Vilma (for the season), Anthony Hargrove (8 games), Will Smith (4) and Scott Fujita (3). Goodell later reduced suspensions for Hargrove and Fujita, but all player suspensions were overturned by former Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, who was appointed to preside over appeals. The Saints also were fined \$500,000 and stripped of second-round picks in 2012 and 2013.

Patriots spy on Jets: New England's Bill Belichick was fined \$500,000 by Goodell, the largest for any coach, on Sept. 13, 2007 for spying on an opponent's defensive signals. A Patriots assistant coach had taken video of the New York Jets' sideline and

signals. Goodell also fined the franchise \$250,000 and a 2008 first-round draft pick.

Players: After offensive lineman Jonathan Martin left the Dolphins in October 2013 and complained about bullying tactics, Goodell commissioned an investigation at the behest of team owner Stephen Ross. Miami suspended Richie Incognito for the remainder of the 2013 season, a move supported by the league. Investigator Ted Wells concluded that offensive linemen John Jerry and Mike Pouncey joined Incognito in harassing Martin, and position coach Jim Turner participated in the taunting of a second player, Andrew McDonald, now with the Carolina Panthers.

Players locked out: The owners locked out the players in March 2011 because a new collective bargaining agreement had not been reached. Although the draft was staged during that time, no other offseason programs were held. Negotiations dragged into July before a 10-year CBA was reached. Many fans blamed "greedy owners" and Goodell for the lockout. The lockout cost the league only one preseason game being canceled.

Officials locked out: Before the 2012 season, the league again locked out employees, game officials. The replacements, with little pro football officiating experience, performed decently in preseason games, but struggled mightily during the regular season. In the Monday night game in Week 3, a last-gasp pass into the end zone appeared to be a clear interception, but instead was ruled a game-winning TD for Seattle over Green Bay. Three days later, the regular officials were back on the field. Since then, several executives under Goodell who dealt with officiating either left the NFL or moved to different jobs.

Protecting shield, or himself?

By JIM LITKE

The Associated Press

Roger Goodell likes to boast about "protecting the shield." For all the high-minded talk, let's see how good he is at covering his butt.

Sooner or later, the commissioner will have to explain how he missed a DVD copy of the inside-the-elevator video that The Associated Press reported had arrived at the NFL league offices five months ago. While he's at it, maybe Goodell can also tell the truth about why he went easy on Ray Rice the first time. After all, like the rest of us, he didn't need to see actual footage of the vicious punch Rice threw to figure out how Janay Palmer, then his fiancée, was thrown unconscious on the floor in the first video.

But when he was asked that question in an interview aired Tuesday on CBS This Morning, Goodell effectively doubled down on his "see-no-evil" — "or at least not enough of it" — defense to explain why he initially suspended Rice for just two games.

"When we met with Ray Rice and his representatives, it was an amazing moment about what actually happened," Goodell replied.

"But what was ambiguous," came the sharp follow-up, "about her laying unconscious on the floor, being dragged out by her feet?"

"There was nothing ambiguous about that," Goodell said, adding that they didn't know the details and couldn't get the elevator video.

In most instances, the NFL's security arm compiles dossiers so thorough they rival the work being done at the Department of Homeland Security. And the league promised yet another one, walking back it's "We will look into it" response to the AP story and announcing late Wednesday that former FBI director Robert Mueller will head an investigation into how the evidence in the Rice case was handled.

But even yet on when it will be completed, but we're certain of this much already: There's no way

Goodell watched the video of the punch before Monday. He's too smart to lie about that.

The real questions are why he didn't get his hands on the video, or learn the details of what went on inside the elevator, most of which was described accurately in a police report. He was either willfully ignorant or just plain incompetent, and neither bodes well for his future.

And while we're at it, one more thing. League higher-ups knew the AP was asking about a copy of the video being sent to an NFL executive. Yet Goodell went ahead with his appearance on CBS, repeated his tale of plausible deniability and didn't stop there.

"People expect a lot from the NFL. We accept that... We embrace that," he said. "That's our opportunity to make a difference, not just in the NFL, but in society in general."

That kind of arrogance is breathtaking. It's also a recurring theme with Goodell.

He's been great for business, but bad at transparency. He didn't get serious about concussions until improving science and a pack of lawyers forced his hand. He bungled the Saints' "Bountygate" fiasco so badly, the league had to turn to Paul Tagliabue, Goodell's predecessor, to bail him out. When the Patriots got caught stealing defensive signals from the Jets in 2007 in what became known as "Spygate," he handed out stiff penalties and then unilaterally ordered the evidence destroyed.

There's too much blood in the water this time, though, for Goodell to get away without a full review of the facts.

Goodell has taken plenty of the credit for the quality of the product the NFL puts on the field any given Sunday. Now he's got to answer a few tough questions about how some of it got there.

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at jlitke@ap.org

NFL



DAVE MARTIN/AP

Carolina defensive end Greg Hardy has been convicted of two counts of domestic violence and is playing while he appeals.

Two more under scrutiny

Hardy, McDonald also facing domestic violence issues

BY STEVE REED
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Carolina Panthers Pro Bowl defensive end Greg Hardy has been convicted on two counts of domestic violence and is still playing. Ray McDonald of the San Francisco 49ers also remains active while he is being investigated for abuse allegations.

The Panthers and 49ers have not publicly discussed details of their investigations, saying only that they are following the NFL's lead in waiting for the legal process to run its course.

‘I think the test for the NFL will be what they do with the other people who are charged now.’

Judy Harris Kluger
Sanctuary for Families

Press on condition anonymity that he sent a copy of the video to the league in April.

The NFL is under scrutiny for its wait-and-see approach in domestic violence cases like Hardy's.

Judy Harris Kluger, a former New York City judge and now executive director of Sanctuary for Families, is anxious to see how the league handles the two pending cases.

“I think the test for the NFL will be what they do with the other people who are

The cases have similarities to that of Ray Rice, who was released this week by the Baltimore Ravens and suspended indefinitely by the league after an explicit video surfaced of him hitting his then-fiancée.

A law enforcement official told

The Associated

press on condition

anonymity that he sent a copy of the video to the league in April.



LM OTERO/AP

San Francisco's Ray McDonald was arrested on suspicion of domestic violence but has been charged. The matter is being investigated by the San Jose police department.

charged now,” Kluger said. “And I don't imagine there's a videotape of that. What else did the NFL think happened in that elevator? So yes, it's a very graphic depiction, and they took the action they took now. But I think all of us will be looking to see what they and other organizations do going forward.”

While McDonald has not been charged, Hardy has been convicted on two counts of domestic violence. He has appealed and a hearing is scheduled for Nov. 17.

Hardy, one of the stalwarts on the Panthers' stout defense, is making \$13.1 million this season as the team's franchise player. He had four tackles and one sack in Carolina's season-opening victory.

Though he has already been found guilty, the league is sticking by its policy to wait until the appeal has been heard before making any decision on a possible suspension.

“The Hardy matter is under review,” league spokesman Greg Aiello said. “The case has not been resolved by the court.”

San Jose police are still actively investigating the Aug. 31 incident involving the 6-foot-3, 290-pound McDonald and detectives will turn over findings to the Santa Clara District Attorney's office for review, Sgt. Heather Kandol, a police spokeswoman said Wednesday.

McDonald is scheduled to appear in court on Sept. 15.

Chiefs' Charles goes MIA in opener

BY DAVE SKRETTA
The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — In the moments after a disheartening loss to Tennessee to open the season, Chiefs coach Andy Reid seemed at a loss for why All-Pro running back Jamaal Charles went virtually unused.

Charles carried the ball on the first two plays of the game, and then caught a 14-yard swing pass from quarterback Alex Smith for a first down. But during the rest of Sunday's game, Charles only got his hands on the ball eight times as the Kansas City offense sputtered and backfired.

“I want to see the ball more and coach knows that,” Charles said long after the game, when the locker room had largely cleared out of players and mostly equipment staff remained.

He finished with seven carries for 19 yards and four catches for 15 yards. Crunch the number and those final eight touches netted a whopping 11 yards from scrimmage.

Reid was willing to take the blame for it, too.

“Not giving 25 the ball more than seven times is negligence on my part,” he said Monday as the Chiefs prepared for this weekend's trip to Denver.

“We just failed,” Smith said, “failed to get him the ball. Absolutely. One of our biggest playmakers, if not the biggest playmaker. Certainly need to get him involved more. That's on all of us, though. For me, I'm kind of worried about executing and doing my job.”

Reid said that Tennessee's game plan had much to do with it.

“They primarily went with a cover-3 look or a cover-4 with a cheat safety, both of which are good run-stopping coverages,” he explained. “And then they played gaps — they were cheating gaps. It wasn't anything that should have kept us off the run game as much.”

The seven attempts were the fewest for Charles since Oct. 28, 2012, when he toted the ball five times in a game against Oakland.



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Kansas City running back Jamaal Charles had just seven carries for 19 yards and four catches for 15 yards in the season-opening loss to Tennessee.

SPORTS

DAMAGED GOODS



Goodell, league under pressure after claim tape was sent in April

Inside:

- Former FBI director Mueller to lead independent inquiry into league's handling of Rice case
- Law enforcement official says voice mail confirms video received in April
- Commentary: Commissioner has a lot to answer for in wake of multiple missteps following Rice's arrest
- Case not Goodell's first brush with controversy during tenure
- Two other players with domestic violence issues playing while awaiting legal resolutions



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