



Weekly News Update

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The RAPID Weekly News Update is a weekly collection of unclassified media and news bulletins focused on noteworthy improvised explosive attacks and trends in the EOD/C-IED community. To subscribe to this weekly publication and/or to receive additional IED-related reports, please request a RAPID login at <https://rapid.a-tsolutions.com> using your government (.mil or .gov) email account.



Iraqi soldiers inspected the site of a car bombing in Ramadi on Thursday as a sandstorm enveloped the city. (Agence France-Presse — Getty Images)
[See [Dozens Killed In Wave Of Attacks Across Iraq](#)]

AFPAK	4
1. [Attack, Afghanistan] Taliban Massive Attacks In Kabul Kill Eight, Wounds 46	4
2. [Trend, Afghanistan] Karzai Says NATO Failed As 18-Hr Kabul Attack Ends	5
3. [Trend, Afghanistan] Kabul Attack Could Spark US-Pakistan Tension	8
4. [Attack, Afghanistan] Afghan Defense Ministry Says 32 Insurgents Killed In Attacks	11
5. [Security, Afghanistan] Afghan Taliban Says Rehearsed Attack For Two Months	12
6. [Trend, Afghanistan] Afghan Leader Challenges Taliban "Brothers" Over Attacks	14
7. [Attack, Afghanistan] Taliban Bomb Afghan Capital, Three Other Cities	16
8. [Special Interest, Afghanistan] Al Qaeda Bomb Making Expert Publishes Magazine	19
9. [Attack, Pakistan] Militants Target ANP MPA's School In Swabi	20
10. [Special Interest, Afghanistan] US, Nato Ready Plan To Hand Off Afghanistan Combat	21
AFRICOM	24
11. [Security, Guinea-Bissau] Bissau Shuts Air And Sea Space, Uncertainty Grows	24
12. [Attack, Somalia] Suicide Bomber Kills Soldier In Somalia's Baidoa	26
13. [Attack, South Sudan] Bombs Hit Disputed Sudanese Oil Town, Official Says	28
14. [Attack, South Sudan] Sudanese Warplanes Bomb U.N. Camp In South Sudan	30
15. [Attack, Nigeria] Bomb Injures Three In North Nigeria City Hit By Attack	32
16. [Special Interest, Somalia] Al-Shabaab Execute Al-Amriki	33
17. [Security, Kenya] Kenya Captures Al Shabaab Recruit	34
18. [Attack, Nigeria] Four Sect Members Killed In Nigeria Raid	36
19. [Attack, Somalia] Bomb Explosion Wounds Three People In Mogadishu	37
20. [Security, Nigeria] Boko Haram Plans Attacks On Nigerian Capital	38
21. [Security, Somalia] Suspected Somalia Pirate Base Hit By War Planes	39
22. [Security, Somalia] Puntland Militia Run Amok In Protest	41
23. [Security, Nigeria] Nigerian Police Raid 'Boko Haram' Bomb Factory In Northeast	43
24. [Attack, South Sudan] Sudan Launches Four Attacks On South Sudan	44
25. [Law Enforcement, Mali] Arrests Prompted By Weapons Caches	46
26. [Attack, Nigeria] Maiduguri Bakers Shot By 'Suspected Islamists'	47
CENTCOM	48
27. [Attack, Iraq] Bomb Kills One, Wounds 14 In Iraq	48
28. [Attack, Yemen] Bomb Kills Three Children In Yemen	49
29. [Security, Yemen] US Drones Kill 21 AQAP Fighters In Separate Strikes In Southern Yemen	50
30. [Law Enforcement, Turkey] Police Detain 18 For Suspected Links To Buried Explosives	52
31. [Attack, Iraq] Dozens Killed In Wave Of Attacks Across Iraq	54
32. [Attack, Iraq] Al-Qaida Claims Iraq's Worst Violence In A Month	56
EUCOM	58
33. [Attack, Russia] Bomb Attack Injures Senior FSB Officer	58
34. [Attack, Russia] Bombs Kill Militant, Wound FSB Agent In Russia's Caucasus	59

UNCLASSIFIED

35. [Attack, Northern Ireland] Bombers Target North Irish Policeman's Parents For Second Time	60
36. [Attack, Northern Ireland] Fuse Was Lit On Bomb Under Car	61
37. [Security, Northern Ireland] Iraq-Style Bomb 'Found For First Time In NI'	62
38. [Attack, Syria] Syria's News Agency Says Roadside Bomb Kills 10 Soldiers	63
39. [Attack, United Kingdom] Police Investigate As Explosives Detonate Outside SEM Offices	64
40. [Attack, Syria] Gunfire' As UN Team Visits Damascus Suburb	65
41. [Law Enforcement, Belgium] Russia Slams NATO Withdrawal From Afghanistan	67
PACOM	69
42. [Security, Philippines] U.S., Philippines Start Drills Amid Territorial Spat With China	69
43. [Security, North Korea] N. Korea Abandons Agreement With U.S.	71
44. [Trend, India] Maoists Plan Peoples' Court To Decide Fate Of Hikaka	72
45. [Trend, India] Assam New Hotbed Of Naxal Groups	73
46. [Security, India] India Tests Missile That Can Reach China	74
47. [Security, South Korea] South Korea Says New Missile Can Hit Any Target In North	76
48. [Attack, Thailand] Bomb Explodes In Narathiwat; School Set Ablaze	78
49. [Attack, India] IED Blast At Heirok	79
NORTHCOM	80
50. [Security, United States] Rooftop Bomb Showers Glass And Debris In Tarpon Springs, Injuring Two	80
SOUTHCOM	82
51. [Attack, Colombia] Car Bomb Damages Home In Southwestern Colombia	82
52. [Security, Chile] Couple Arrested With Parts To Make Bomb In Santiago	83
53. [Security, Colombia] Eight Suspected Collaborators Of The Farc's 30th Front Captured	84
54. [Security, Peru] Peru Troops Free Shining Path Hostages	84

AFPAK

1. [Attack, Afghanistan] Taliban Massive Attacks In Kabul Kill Eight, Wounds 46

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/international/16-Apr-2012/taliban-massive-attacks-in-kabul-kill-8-wounds-46-police>

Taliban multi-pronged attacks in Afghan capital Kabul which began on Sunday and over on Monday had claimed the lives of eight people and injured 46 others, head of Crime Investigation department of Kabul police said.

"In the counter offensive against terrorists in Kabul, eight security personnel were martyred and 46 others sustained injuries. Out of these five are civilians and the remaining are security personnel," Mohammad Zahir told newsmen at the site of gun battle in downtown Kabul.

However, he could not say the number of attackers who were killed during the operations, saying all the attackers have been killed and the total number will be made public after the investigation.

Taliban militants fighting Afghan and NATO-led forces launched the ever-biggest coordinated attacks in three parts of the capital city Kabul and Jalalabad city 120 km east of Kabul, Gerdez 100 km south and Logar 60 km south of capital Kabul on Sunday as part of spring offensive.

[Back to top](#)

2. [Trend, Afghanistan] Karzai Says NATO Failed As 18-Hr Kabul Attack Ends

Monday, 16 April 2012

http://news.yahoo.com/heavy-fighting-continues-kabul-streets-013701776.html; ylt=AhoAKnh5_oJ9ppq92Tjf8UNvaA8F; ylu=X3oDMTNycDtdWNsBG1pdANKdW1ib3Ryb24gV29ybGRTRgRwa2cDOTRhYWRhM2QtNDA1My0zNGM0LWFjMWMtZjRIZWM1MWE1MDImBHBvcwMxBHNIYwNqdW1ib3Ryb24EdmVyAzC4N2YzZTY0LTg3YjktMTFIMS1iNmM3LTQxMzNjZTEzMGJmOA--; ylg=X3oDMTFrM25vcXFyBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAMEcHQDc2VjdGlvbNMEdGVzdAM-; ylv=3

Afghan President Hamid Karzai said on Monday that a coordinated Taliban attack showed a "failure" by Afghan intelligence and especially by NATO, as heavy street fighting between insurgents and security forces came to an end after 18 hours.

Battles which broke out at midday on Sunday gripped the city's central districts through the night, with large explosions and gunfire lighting up alleys and streets.

"The fact terrorists were able to enter Kabul and other provinces was an intelligence failure for us and especially for NATO," Karzai's office said in a statement, which also strongly condemned the attack.

Though the death toll was relatively low considering the scale of the assault, it highlighted the ability of militants to strike at high-profile targets in the heart of the city even after more than 10 years of war.

Karzai echoed his Western backers by praising Afghan security forces, saying they had proven their ability to defend their country - a task which will increasingly fall to them as foreign armies reduce their troop numbers in Afghanistan.

His office said 36 insurgents were killed in the attacks which paralyzed Kabul's government district, and which targeted three other provinces in what the Taliban called the start of a spring offensive. One fighter was captured.

Eleven members of the Afghan security forces and four civilians were killed in the well-planned attacks in Kabul and the eastern Nangarhar, Logar and Paktia provinces, it said.

"In only a short time we managed to cut short their devilish plans," said Defense Ministry Chief of Operations Afzal Aman. "They carried suicide vests, but managed to do nothing except be killed."

The attacks were also another election-year setback in Afghanistan for U.S. President Barack Obama, who wants to present the campaign against the Taliban as a success before the departure of most foreign combat troops by the end of 2014.

Insurgents were killed attacking the Afghan parliament, and in a multi-storey building under construction that they had occupied to fire rocket-propelled grenades and rifles down on the heavily fortified diplomatic enclave.

More were killed in Kabul's east, and while attacking a NATO base in the eastern city of Jalalabad.

Fighting in the capital only ended with special forces assaults which were mounted as dawn broke.

Assisting physically for the first time in the attack, NATO helicopters launched strafing attacks on gunmen in the building site, which overlooked the NATO headquarters and several embassies, including the British and German missions.

Elite Afghan soldiers scaled scaffolding to outflank the insurgents, who took up defensive positions on the upper floor of the half-built structure. Bullets ricocheted off walls, sending up puffs of brick dust.

"I could not sleep because of all this gunfire. It's been the whole night," said resident Hamdullah.

The assault, which began with attacks on embassies, a supermarket, a hotel and the parliament, was one of the most serious on the capital since U.S.-backed Afghan forces removed the Taliban from power in 2001.

STRIKE ON THE DIPLOMATIC ZONE

The Taliban claimed responsibility, but some officials said the Haqqanis, a network of ethnic Pashtun tribal militants allied with the Taliban, who live along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, were likely involved.

"My guess, based on previous experience here, is this is a set of Haqqani network operations out of North Waziristan and the Pakistani tribal areas," American Ambassador Ryan Crocker told CNN.

North Waziristan, in Pakistan, is a notorious militant hub.

"Frankly I don't think the Taliban is good enough," Crocker said.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the assaults in Kabul and three eastern provinces marked the beginning of a new warm-weather fighting season.

"These attacks are the beginning of the spring offensive and we had planned them for months," Mujahid told Reuters.

He said the onslaught was revenge for a series of incidents involving U.S. troops in Afghanistan - including the burning of copies of the Koran at a NATO base, and the massacre of 17 civilians by a U.S. soldier - and vowed there would be more.

The Taliban said on Sunday the main targets were the German and British embassies and the headquarters of the NATO-led force. Several Afghan members of parliament joined security forces in repelling attackers from a roof near parliament.

The attacks came a month before a NATO summit at which the United States and its allies want to put the finishing touches to plans for the transition to Afghan security control, and days before a meeting of defense and foreign ministers in Brussels to prepare for the alliance summit in Chicago.

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Western combat troops are due to leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014, under a plan to hand over responsibilities to Afghan forces.

But those forces are plagued by poor discipline, and they have apparently failed to learn lessons from a similar assault in Kabul last September, when insurgents took up a position in a tall building under construction to attack embassies and NATO offices below.

Hours before the Kabul attack, in neighboring Pakistan dozens of Islamist militants stormed a prison in the dead of night and freed nearly 400 inmates, including one on death row for trying to assassinate former President Pervez Musharraf.

[Back to top](#)

3. [Trend, Afghanistan] Kabul Attack Could Spark US-Pakistan Tension

Monday, 16 April 2012

http://news.yahoo.com/kabul-attack-could-spark-us-pakistan-tension-104031630.html;_ylt=AjRyfZ.Qrme8Elpolbj4JAqs0NUE;_ylu=X3oDMTNsMTdtYTI4BG1pdANUb3BTdG9yeSBGUARwa2cDMTJmM2YwYjYtY2VhOC0zYWQ1LTgyODktNmE1ZTZmMTBkMzJmBHBvcwM1BHNIYwNOB3Bfc3RvcnkEdmVyA2JlZmNhZGQwLTg3YjAtMTFIMS1iYmZmLTRhZDk3MGJjOGIxZA--;_ylg=X3oDMTFrM25vcXFyBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAMEcHQDc2VjdGlvbnMEdGVzdAM-;_ylv=3

A brazen, 18-hour attack allegedly carried out by Pakistan-based militants on targets in the Afghan capital, including the U.S. Embassy, could spark fresh tension between Washington and Islamabad just as they seemed to be patching up their vital but troubled relationship.

The attack, which ended early Monday, will likely re-ignite anger in Washington over Pakistan's unwillingness to crack down on militants using its territory as a base to target neighboring Afghanistan. But the Obama administration must weigh the impact any public criticism of Pakistan may have on the country's cooperation with it in other areas, including getting supplies to troops in Afghanistan and negotiating peace with insurgents there.

The potential flashpoint comes days after Pakistan's parliament finally approved new guidelines for the country in its relationship with the U.S., a decision that Washington hopes will pave the way for the reopening of supply lines to NATO troops in Afghanistan.

Pakistan closed its border crossings to NATO supplies in November in retaliation for American airstrikes that accidentally killed 24 Pakistani soldiers. It has taken the government months to navigate the delicate path of resuscitating ties with the U.S., a difficult process in a country where anti-American sentiment is rampant.

Afghan officials on Monday said a gunman arrested in the attacks told authorities the simultaneous strikes in Kabul and three other cities were carried out by the Haqqani network, a militant group allegedly linked to Pakistan's spy agency. The attacks killed 11 people — eight members of the Afghan security forces and three civilians. Thirty-six insurgents were also killed.

The attacks were the most widespread in Kabul since an assault on the U.S. Embassy and NATO headquarters last September also blamed on the Haqqani network. U.S. officials accused Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency, or ISI, of helping with that attack, sparking outrage in Islamabad.

An ISI official said Monday that claims the Haqqani network was behind the latest attacks were "nothing but accusations."

"We have no idea who carried out these attacks," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media. "Whenever something happens, blame is always laid on our doorstep."

If the role of the Haqqani network is confirmed, it could place the Obama administration in a tricky position. It could face pressure from Congress and Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney to criticize Pakistan. But the U.S. wants Islamabad to reopen the NATO supply lines, and the country's help is seen as key to negotiating a peace agreement with the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The relationship is further complicated by Pakistani opposition to U.S. drone strikes targeting the Haqqani network and other militants along the border. Pakistan's parliament has demanded the attacks stop, but the U.S. has refused to comply.

Pakistan's army, which is considered the most powerful player in the country, has its own incentive to patch up ties: getting American military aid flowing to the country again. The U.S. has given Pakistan billions of dollars in military aid over the past decade, but flows have largely been frozen since the middle of last year after Osama bin Laden was found hiding in a Pakistani garrison town.

The U.S. has not found evidence that senior Pakistani officials knew the whereabouts of the slain al-Qaida chief, but his discovery fueled anger over Pakistan's alleged ties to Islamist militants.

Washington has long demanded that Pakistan target Taliban militants and their allies in the Haqqani network who are using Pakistani territory to launch cross-border attacks against American troops in Afghanistan.

Islamabad has refused, claiming its forces are stretched too thin fighting domestic militants seeking to topple the Pakistani government. But most analysts believe Pakistan is reluctant to crack down on groups with which it has long-standing ties because they could serve as key allies in Afghanistan after foreign troops withdraw, especially to counter the influence of its archenemy India.

The top U.S. military official at the time of last September's attack in Kabul, now-retired Adm. Mike Mullen, said the Haqqani network "acts as a veritable arm" of Pakistan's spy agency. The former chairman of the Joint Chiefs accused Pakistan of supporting and encouraging the attack, which killed 16 Afghans, as well as a massive truck bombing that also occurred in September at a military base in Wardak, Afghanistan, that wounded 77 American soldiers.

Islamabad angrily denied the accusations.

The Pakistani government's ties to the Haqqani network date back to the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Pakistani and U.S. spy agencies supported the group's founder, Jalaluddin Haqqani, in his fight against the Soviets. His group has since become the most feared militant faction battling U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

One of the militants arrested during the latest attacks in Kabul and three other cities has told authorities that the Haqqani network was behind the assaults, Afghan Interior Minister Besmillah Mohammadi said Monday.

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Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid had previously claimed responsibility for the attacks, a common practice for assaults believed to be carried out by the Haqqani network. The groups are closely linked, and Haqqani militants pledge allegiance to Taliban chief Mullah Omar.

A spokesman for NATO forces in Afghanistan, Lt. Col. Jimmie Cummings, said they were still trying to determine who carried out the attacks.

"A Haqqani connection is a possibility, but still too early to determine for sure," Cummings said.

[Back to top](#)

4. [Attack, Afghanistan] Afghan Defense Ministry Says 32 Insurgents Killed In Attacks

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/16/us-afghan-defence-idUSBRE83F05Z20120416>

Afghan security forces killed 32 insurgents and arrested one more in operations to stop coordinated attacks by Taliban insurgents that hit the capital of Kabul and three other provinces, the defense ministry said on Monday.

Three Afghan soldiers were killed and ten others wounded in fighting in Kabul that began around midday on Sunday and ended on Monday morning, defense ministry officials said.

[Back to top](#)

5. [Security, Afghanistan] Afghan Taliban Says Rehearsed Attack For Two Months

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/17/us-afghan-taliban-plan-idUSBRE83FOLX20120417>

The insurgents who mounted weekend attacks in central Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan carefully rehearsed for months, even building small military-style models and pre-positioning weapons, a Taliban spokesman said on Monday.

Zabihullah Mujahid provided Reuters with a rare insight into how the group plans strategic high-profile attacks designed to deal a psychological blow to U.S.-led NATO forces and their allies in the Afghan security forces.

In the latest, a 30-member suicide squad was dispatched to launch simultaneous assaults on parliament, NATO bases and Western embassies after two months of painstaking discussions on tactics.

"Our military experts sketched maps of the targets and also created a mock-up of them where fighters carried out practice before carrying out the large-scale operations in four provinces," Mujahid said in a phone interview.

"The fighters also learned how to enter their targets and hold them."

His account could not be independently verified.

Heavy street fighting between militants and security forces in the centre of the Afghan capital ended on Monday after 18 hours of gunfire, rocket attacks and explosions that bore strong similarities with an operation last year.

In both assaults, insurgents occupied high-rise construction sites to use as firebases after smuggling weapons into central Kabul past police checkpoints.

The battles that broke out at midday on Sunday gripped the city's central districts into the evening and through the night, with blasts and gunfire lighting up alleys and streets before Afghan special forces soldiers backed by NATO helicopter gunships killed the insurgents.

Mujahid said the insurgents, who were mostly all killed by security forces, had been selected from among the estimated 50,000 fighters battling NATO and Afghan troops and given special training.

"Ordinary fighters can't obviously carry out these important missions," he said. "The fighters who were assigned for this mission received special training on how to use heavy machine guns, suicide bomb vests and other tactics."

Mujahid said heavy machine guns, rocket grenades and ammunition had been put in place well before the assault with inside help from Afghan security forces, but did not elaborate.

A witness to the attack in Kabul's diplomatic quarter saw insurgents in a dark blue Prado SUV opening fire on a policeman before entering a building that he had been guarding.

"One Taliban opened fire toward a security guard from a window of the vehicle and another went to a security checkpoint and wounded the man inside, occupying his position," said Ahmad Zeya Azami, 29, a car mechanic, who worked next door.

"Five Taliban ran into the building."

Azami said one insurgent targeted the multi-storey Kabul Star Hotel with a rocket-propelled grenade, while another opened fire on the nearby diplomatic quarter.

"I closed our shop and escaped from the area without any wounds. But now everybody is living in fear and losing hope about the future," he said.

Ahmad Farhad, 19, another shopkeeper, said the insurgents had appeared calm and very well prepared.

"One went to the police checkpoint and others went into the building in an organized way, like they had seen the area before," Farhad said. "All were wearing traditional clothes, black or grey, and all looked to be aged about 30."

Farhad said the men had been armed with rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles, and some had carried bags as they climbed out of a black four-wheel-drive.

Afghan and U.S. officials have blamed the attacks on the al Qaeda-linked Haqqani network, based along the porous Afghan-Pakistan mountain border.

Mujahid denied any involvement by the insurgent group, one of the most feared in Afghanistan. The United States has long pressed Pakistan to go after the Haqqani network, which analysts say Islamabad regards as a strategic asset.

Any Haqqani role in the weekend assault would likely further strain relations between Washington and Islamabad.

"The attacks were very successful for us and were a remarkable achievement, dealing a psychological and political blow to foreigners and the government," Mujahid said.

"Although the Haqqanis are part of the Taliban, we did not ask for any help, guidance or support. This is a baseless plot from the West, who wants to show that we are separate."

[Back to top](#)

6. [Trend, Afghanistan] Afghan Leader Challenges Taliban "Brothers" Over Attacks

Tuesday, 17 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/17/us-afghanistan-karzai-idUSBRE83G0EU20120417>

President Hamid Karzai called the Taliban "brothers" on Tuesday and reached out to them to do more for the good of the country after the insurgents carried out multiple attacks in Kabul and elsewhere at the weekend

The deadly strikes on parliament, Kabul's diplomatic quarter and three provinces, had only prolonged the foreign presence in Afghanistan reviled by the Taliban, and hurt economic and security confidence, Karzai said.

"You did nothing for Islam, you did not work for Afghanistan's independence and you did not work for its people, freedom and development," he said in a speech commemorating almost 150 years since the birth of an Afghan reformer, but aimed squarely at the insurgency.

"You worked to prolong a foreign presence, you gave foreigners an excuse to stay," Karzai said.

Clashes raged for 18 hours before Afghan security forces backed by NATO killed the insurgents in a dawn raid. Thirty-five insurgents were killed along with 11 members of the Afghan security forces and four civilians.

But in an effort to keep alive reconciliation with the Taliban and hopes of a peace deal before most foreign combat troops leave the country in 2014, Karzai said he would not stop calling the Taliban "brothers".

"Some criticize me in the Afghan government and media for saying the Taliban are brothers, but I won't give up," he said to loud applause from officials and university students.

The Taliban in March said they were suspending peace talks with the United States and a plan to open an office in the Gulf state of Qatar to smooth negotiations, accusing Washington of double-dealing over confidence-building measures including the release of insurgents from a U.S. military prison in Cuba.

Karzai has laid most of the blame for the Taliban assault on NATO and his government's Western backers for the failure of intelligence agents to prevent it.

"Washington is calm and quiet and their people are safe. London is the same ... But Afghans were panicking and suffered religiously and economically," he said in veiled criticism of the West, whose continued presence many Afghans now blame for the country's ongoing troubles.

But NATO defended intelligence efforts and said it was not possible to block every insurgent attack in the conflict-wracked country, where the war has entered its 11th year. NATO is expected to complete its combat drawdown by the end of 2014.

"You will never be able to, in a counterinsurgency, stop every attempt of determined insurgents to infiltrate into a city of three million," Brigadier General Carsten Jacobson, spokesman for NATO forces in Afghanistan, told Reuters.

AUSTRALIAN DEPARTURE

The assault also raised questions about Afghanistan's prospects just as foreign forces are making plans to leave.

Australia, the largest non-NATO troop contributor, said on Tuesday it would start withdrawing its soldiers this year and expected all international forces to be playing a supporting role for Afghan forces by mid-2013.



Prime Minister Julia Gillard said she would take her timetable to a NATO conference on Afghanistan in Chicago in late May, before which the U.S. government is aiming to sign a strategic agreement on a future presence in the country after NATO's 2014 combat force withdrawal.

Karzai challenged the United States to do more in the agreement to fund infrastructure and improvements that would be of benefit to all Afghans.

"We would like to help them save their money and give some of it back to us," Karzai said of the United States, adding he wanted at least \$2 billion a year from Washington after 2014.

Comparing today to the time 90 years ago of celebrated reformer and Afghan journalism founder Mahmud Tarzi, Karzai said the country is struggling yet again to progress in education and develop socially.

Last week hopes for a peaceful settlement were boosted when the government appointed the son of slain statesman and northern Afghan leader Barhanuddin Rabbani to replace his father and lead the High Peace Council, charged with reaching out to insurgents.

However analysts on Tuesday raised doubts that Salahuddin Rabbani's appointment would move forward stalled efforts.

"Politicization of the peace process looks likely, and the president's desire to secure a young political ally in the North ahead of expected political conflicts will probably once again weaken an already dysfunctional High Peace Council," wrote Gran Hewad at the respected Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN).

[Back to top](#)

7. [Attack, Afghanistan] Taliban Bomb Afghan Capital, Three Other Cities

Sunday, 15 April 2012

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2112035,00.html?xid=gonewsedit>

The Taliban launched a series of coordinated attacks on at least seven sites across the Afghan capital on Sunday, targeting NATO headquarters, the parliament and diplomatic residences. Militants also launched near-simultaneous assaults in three other eastern cities.

At least two attackers were killed and five people wounded in the Kabul attacks, which were still under way hours after they began.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed responsibility, saying in a statement that scores of suicide bombers were assaulting Kabul and three other provinces. The attacks in the capital began with bombings in the central neighborhood of Wazir Akbar Khan, where a NATO base as well as a number of embassies, including that of the U.S., are located. Gunfire erupted soon after the blasts, forcing people caught out in the street to scramble for cover.

More than 10 explosions in all rocked the capital, and heavy gunfire shook the city for two hours after the initial blast. Smoke rose over the skyline from a few spots as sirens wailed.

In an e-mailed statement, Mujahid said the attacks were targeting NATO headquarters, the British and German Embassies, the Afghan parliament building, the Serena and Kabul Star hotels, and sites along Darulaman road, where the Russian Embassy is located.

At the same time, Taliban fighters launched assaults on Afghan and NATO installations in the capital cities of Nangarhar, Logar and Paktia provinces, he said. "In all these attacks, tens of mujahedeen fighters equipped with light and heavy weapons, suicide vests, RPGs, rockets, heavy machine guns and hand grenades are attacking their targets," Mujahid said in an email. "Our initial reports indicate that a large number of foreign forces, Afghan police and army are killed and wounded." The Taliban regularly exaggerate casualty figures.

The American Embassy said in a statement saying that there were attacks "in the vicinity of the U.S. Embassy." The German Foreign Ministry said there was some damage in the grounds of the German Embassy, but it did not appear that anyone had been hurt.

Militants holed up in a tall building were firing rockets in different directions, according to an Associated Press reporter at the scene. It was not immediately clear what they were targeting, but shots appeared to be focusing on the nearby British Embassy.

Britain's Foreign Office could not provide details of the attack. "We can confirm that there is an ongoing incident in the diplomatic area of Kabul," a spokeswoman said on condition of anonymity in line with government policy. "We are in close contact with embassy staff."

Across town, residents reported a blast near the parliament building.

An official at the parliament, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said an attacker entered a nearby building and opened fire on parliament and the Afghan Commerce Ministry. The official reported hearing a large blast coming from the building. After that, the gunfire subsided.

Militants also fired mortars at the area around a NATO base on Jalalabad road on Kabul's outskirts, according to an AP reporter at the scene. A Greek-Turkish base came under heavy fire and forces were responding with heavy-caliber machine gun fire.

A police officer said a suicide bomber had occupied a building near the bases and was shooting toward the Kabul Military Training Center there. The officer spoke anonymously because he was not an authorized spokesman.

At least five people were wounded in the violence across the city, said Kabir Amir, head of Kabul hospitals. Sediq Sediqi, a spokesman for the Interior Ministry, said two suicide attackers have been killed — one who was firing from a building under construction behind the Kabul Star Hotel and one in a building under construction near the parliament.

The coordinated assaults showed a sophistication that is reminiscent of the last sustained attack in the heavily guarded capital in September 2011.

In that strike, six fighters with heavy weapons took over an unfinished high-rise and fired on the U.S. Embassy and NATO headquarters about 300 meters (yards) away. They then held out against a 20-hour barrage by hundreds of Afghan and foreign forces.

By the time the fighting ended, insurgents had killed 16 Afghans — five police officers and 11 civilians, more than half of them children. Six or seven rockets hit inside the embassy compound, but no embassy or NATO staff members were hurt. Fighting was also continuing Sunday in the provincial assaults in Jalalabad city, Logar province and Paktia. "In Jalalabad city, four attackers were killed," the Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Sediqi said. "In Logar province, the attack is still going on and the area is surrounded by police. In Paktia, the area has been surrounded by police, but a gun battle continues."

In the city of Pul-e-Alam in Logar province, police chief Ghulam Shakhi said militants had entered a building that belongs to the education department, which is near a building used by the Afghan intelligence service, and a gunbattle was under way.

In Paktia province, militants were shooting sporadically from a building across from a university in the city of Gardez, said the deputy provincial police chief Mohammad Zaman. He said Afghan security forces have surrounded the building. The deputy governor, Abdul Rahman Mangal, said they believe two or three suicide bombers are involved in the attack.

In Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, would-be suicide bombers launched separate attacks on the military airfield used by NATO and Afghan forces and a smaller NATO base nearby. Four attackers wearing suicide vests tried to storm the entrance to the airfield in a vehicle, but were fought off by

NATO forces there. Three were killed and one escaped, said Amir Khan Lewal, deputy provincial police chief.

At the nearby base, two attackers were shot dead before they could breach the bases defenses, but there was also an explosion inside the base, Lewal said. It was not immediately possible to reconcile his figures with those of the Interior Ministry.

NATO said it was aware of reports of an explosion in the proximity of a coalition installation near Jalalabad but could provide no details about the blast.

[Back to top](#)

8. [Special Interest, Afghanistan] Al Qaeda Bomb Making Expert Publishes Magazine

Tuesday, 17 April 2012

<http://www.examiner.com/law-enforcement-in-national/al-qaeda-bomb-making-expert-publishes-magazine#ixzz1sOHj1jv2>

A top al-Qaeda bomb-making expert this week has joined his fellow terrorists in publishing information on the World Wide Web, but this time its an Internet magazine instructing readers on how to build bombs and other deadly devices.

"The webmaster of death" is veteran Islamist and explosives maven Abdullah Dhu al-Bajadin, who is considered al-Qaeda's most feared weapons creator. In fact, law enforcement officials have told the Law Enforcement Examiner that al-Bajadin can go into any modern kitchen and within minutes create some type of offensive device.

For example, al-Bajadin describes the chemistry and recipe for making poisonous anesthetic chloroform, according to SITE Intelligence Group.

"We chose that because the beginner mujahid can prepare it at home using materials that are available in grocery stores and supermarkets," the author wrote in Arabic, according to SITE .

"Al-Bajadin wrote a sort of 'Bomb-Making for Dummies' on the Internet to replace his having to answer online questions about bomb-making from people like lone-wolf terrorists in the U.S. and Europe," said former NYPD bomb squad member, Detective Paul Pirrotta.

In the past, al-Qaeda shared bomb-making information in its Arab affiliate's English-language web site Inspire. The e-zine folded when a U.S. drone attack in Yemen killed publisher and former New Yorker Samir Khan, along with the infamous American Jihadi, Imam Anwar al-Awlaki.

House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King (R-NY), said the new Internet bomb-making web site "underscores the growing threat from radicalization within the Muslim-American community and 'lone wolf' terrorism, which I have repeatedly argued pose one of the gravest threats to U.S. national security."

Showing articles he uploaded on Wikipedia Arabic for groups including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Haqqani Network, and individuals such as Attiya Allah and Abu Musab al-Suri, several terrorist organizations are said to be promoting a kind of Wikipedia for terrorists called "Jihadwiki."

[Back to top](#)

9. [Attack, Pakistan] Militants Target ANP MPA's School In Swabi

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/366371/bomb-attack-militants-target-anp-mpas-school-in-swabi/>

A school belonging to Awami National Party (ANP) Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Irfan Sikander was partially damaged on the Swabi-Jehangira road when unidentified militants placed a bomb near the main gate.

The explosion took place at around 3am on Tuesday morning, when a bomb weighing approximately 5kg went off near the main gate of the Pakistan International Public School, said police officials.

The main gate and the outer walls were partially damaged, Irfan Sikander told The Express Tribune.

Mr. Subhanullah, the director of the school, confirmed that an FIR against unknown men has been registered. He further confirmed that since the explosive device was placed outside the school the damage was comparatively less.

A number of government and private educational institutes have been targeted by militants in the district of Swabi, however, the police have been unable to trace the bombings or apprehend the culprits involved.

[Back to top](#)

10. [Special Interest, Afghanistan] US, Nato Ready Plan To Hand Off Afghanistan Combat

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

http://news.yahoo.com/us-nato-ready-plan-hand-off-afghanistan-combat-091303961.html; ylt=AsXIYzNgqCiqVVv6N_7Ok5Cs0NUE; ylu=X3oDMTNsaG5zdmxpBG1pdANUb3BTdG9yeSBGUARwa2cDOTA1NDg2Y2QtOGRiYi0zNDczLWJIMTYtYWU3NmE2MDE5NjNmBHBvcwMyBHNIYwN0b3Bfc3RvcnkEdmVyAzEyNmJkNzUwLTg5NGQtMTFIMS1iZjNmLTgyODMwNDkyOTZmMw--; ylg=X3oDMTFrM25vcXFyBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAMEcHQDc2VjdGlvbnMEdGVzdAM-; ylv=3

The United States and its NATO allies are readying plans to pull away from the front lines in Afghanistan next year as President Barack Obama and fellow leaders try to show that the unpopular war is ending.

NATO allies insisted they are not pulling the plug early on the Afghanistan war as top military and diplomatic officials from the U.S. and NATO allies met Wednesday. The allies are finalizing a plan to shift primary responsibility for combat to Afghan forces and firming up a strategy for world support to the weak Afghan government and fledgling military after 2014.

That year is the deadline to the NATO-led war to end, although it is clear that many nations will have long since stopped any active front-line combat and some will have pulled out completely.

At the same time, the nations that have prosecuted a 10-year war against a Taliban-led insurgency are reassuring nervous Afghans they will not be left to fend for themselves.

"There is no change whatsoever in the timeline," NATO chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen insisted Wednesday.

The messages aimed at different audiences are both challenged by current events in Afghanistan, where insurgents staged an impressive, coordinated attack last weekend that struck at the heart of the U.S.-backed government and international enclave in Kabul. Meanwhile, Taliban leaders are boycotting peace talks the U.S. sees as the key to a safe exit.

Fogh Rasmussen said the alliance expects a bill of about \$4 billion annually to sustain the Afghan fighting forces after international troops leave, which he called a "good deal" since it is cheaper than the cost of war.

But it is not clear that several European governments have the budget or the will to keep paying. A major NATO summit in Chicago next month is expected to include a broad commitment to long-term support for the Afghan forces but no specific pledges.

The United States expects to pay much of the cost but U.S. officials say Washington cannot foot the bill alone. The United States wants nations outside NATO, such as China and Russia, to chip in, arguing that everyone has a stake in ensuring Afghanistan does not slide into chaos.

The United States acknowledges that despite progress the U.S. is not meeting its goal of drawing \$1.3 billion annually from other nations to fund the Afghan armed forces.

This week's sessions are meant to stitch together U.S. and NATO agreements on the pace of U.S. and allied combat withdrawal next year. U.S. and Afghan officials have already said they expect a shift to an Afghan military lead in combat operations by the middle of 2013, although the U.S. stresses that it will still have a large number of forces in Afghanistan as backup.

Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said Wednesday that the Afghans are on track to take the lead in securing the country by the end of 2013. Azimi said the Afghan Army has already reached its target number of 195,000 troops. Including police and other forces, Afghan security forces now number about 330,000.

The combat shift parallels the withdrawal in Iraq, where U.S. forces pulled back from lead roles but remained in harm's way for months before a scheduled end to the war. U.S. military leaders have not submitted final proposals for how to ease nearly 70,000 troops into the back seat next year but are working against a firm deadline to end the current combat mission by 2015.

The two-day gathering is intended to clear any obstacles ahead of the conference of NATO leaders in Chicago on May 20-21. Ministers also will address the international bill for sustaining the Afghan army and police after NATO's planned withdrawal at the end of 2014 — one of the top items on the summit agenda.

The stated goal of U.S. involvement is to deter the al-Qaida terror network from again using Afghanistan as a base, but the day-to-day fighting is against some 25,000 Taliban and other mostly home-grown insurgents.

Obama also hopes to showcase a long-term security pact with Afghanistan in Chicago. U.S. and Afghan officials said they would like to sign the agreement ahead of the summit, with more specific military agreements to follow.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai raised another condition Tuesday for that long-awaited deal. He said the accord must spell out the yearly U.S. commitment to pay billions of dollars for the cash-strapped Afghan security forces.

The demand threatens to further delay the key bilateral pact and suggests that Karzai is worried that the U.S. commitment to his country is wavering.

Coalition forces, whose numbers reached a peak of over 140,000 troops last year, have already started a drawdown. The U.S., which had about 100,000 service members in Afghanistan, has begun a withdrawal which will remove about a third of them by September.

Other major contributors to the coalition — including Canada, the Netherlands and France — have already pulled their forces out of combat or accelerated their withdrawals. Australia on Tuesday became the latest to announce withdrawal plans.

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Nearly 3,000 NATO troops have died since the U.S. invaded in 2001 to evict the then-ruling Taliban, about two-thirds of them Americans.

In the U.S., 6 out of 10 of those surveyed saw the war as not worth its costs, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll released last month. Opposition to the war is bipartisan, the poll showed.

[Back to top](#)

AFRICOM

11. [Security, Guinea-Bissau] Bissau Shuts Air And Sea Space, Uncertainty Grows

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/16/us-bissau-idUSBRE83FOWU20120416>

Frightened residents fled the capital of Guinea-Bissau on Monday and some stockpiled supplies after military chiefs shut the country's air and sea space following their coup four days ago.

As uncertainty in the small impoverished West African state grew, former colonial power Portugal denounced what it called an "absolutely illegitimate military coup" and said it had dispatched a military force in case it became necessary to evacuate its citizens.

The prospect of Portuguese planes and warships appearing off the coast prompted Guinea-Bissau's military chiefs to shut the country's air and sea space to all unauthorized traffic. "Non-observance of this measure will imply a military response," a communiqué announcing the move said.

Ordinary people appeared to be bracing themselves for the worst as it became clear that last week's coup - in which soldiers seized the country's civilian leaders and cut short a presidential election - had created an unpredictable power vacuum.

With Guinea-Bissau's army leaders appealing for calm, banks and government offices shut down in the dilapidated coastal capital Bissau and travelers - loaded with luggage and children - packed the bus station seeking transport to what they believed would be safer locations in the interior.

"I'm worried there's going to be a war. So I'm going to my village, at Sao Domingos, I'm leaving with my five children," Djenabou Bari, a housewife in her 40s, told Reuters.

Foreign governments and organizations from around the world have roundly condemned the latest putsch by the country's notoriously unruly military, which has a history of revolts and uprisings. It has more recently been accused of involvement in drug-smuggling.

A high-level delegation from the West African regional grouping ECOWAS was due to fly into Bissau to tell military leaders their actions were "unacceptable". Military sources said the ECOWAS delegation would be authorized to enter the country.

Since soldiers arrested interim President Raimundo Pereira and former prime minister and presidential front-runner Carlos Gomes Junior in an overnight putsch on Thursday, Guinea-Bissau's military chiefs have been struggling to put a credible administration in place to run the country.

Gomes Junior was unpopular with military chiefs because he backed an initiative to downsize the bloated Guinea-Bissau army.

SECOND COUP TO ROIL THE REGION

On Sunday, the military said it had formed a "national transition council" with some of the country's political parties, though the main PAIGC party refused to participate in what it called the army's "unconstitutional" initiatives.

The military has asked the political parties to organize a transition to fresh elections.

In a sign of protest, workers stayed away from government offices on Monday. "The government doesn't exist and in such a situation we have no bosses," Estevao Gomes, secretary-general of the main UNTG union said.

It was the second coup in West Africa in a month following a military takeover by military officers in Mali on March 22 that dealt a setback to efforts to consolidate democracy in a region still rent by ethnic and religious faultlines. Mali's coup leaders have now handed back power to a civilian president.

It remains unclear whether the armed forces in Guinea-Bissau - who have studiously avoided presenting individual leadership "faces" in public - could effectively run a country whose main export is cashew nuts and where most citizens live on less than \$2 a day.

"What will they be running? They're holding a whole country hostage," one Bissau-based diplomat said.

"It's them against the world," another diplomat said.

At the weekend, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), which counts Guinea-Bissau among its members, backed the idea of a U.N.-mandated intervention force for Guinea-Bissau to be formed with the cooperation of the African Union and the European Union.



[Back to top](#)

12. [Attack, Somalia] Suicide Bomber Kills Soldier In Somalia's Baidoa

Tuesday, 17 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/17/us-somalia-conflict-idUSBRE83G0HB20120417>

A suicide bomber killed at least one soldier in Baidoa, a former rebel stronghold captured by Somali and Ethiopian soldiers during an offensive in February, a government official said.

The al Qaeda-backed militants were forced to surrender the strategic city after columns of Ethiopian troops backed by tanks rolled through their bases in Baidoa, since when the militants have resorted to guerilla strikes.

Earlier this month, 100 Ugandan troops from the African Union's AMISOM force in Somalia went to Baidoa, the first AMISOM deployment outside the capital Mogadishu. A total of 2,500 are due to go to Baidoa, so Ethiopian soldiers there can withdraw from Somalia.

"One of our anti-terrorist forces died and others were injured after a suicide bomber stormed a cafe in front of the United Nations compound," Abdifatah Mohamed Ibrahim, governor for the Bay region in the anarchic country, told Reuters.

"Our anti-terrorist soldier went towards the man for (screening) and immediately he blew himself up," he said.

Al Qaeda-linked rebel group al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack, but said its bomber killed five Somali government soldiers and three Ethiopian troops.

The militants tend to exaggerate the number of casualties in their strikes, just as the government sometimes downplays the number of victims following such attacks.

"A mujahid suicide bomber blew up himself in a government station in Baidoa. We killed five government security forces and three Ethiopian troops," Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab, the spokesman for al Shabaab's military operation, told Reuters.

"We fulfilled the target. He had an explosive jacket. The place is opposite the United Nation's office," he said.

A bomb planted in a market in Baidoa killed at least 12 people last week.

After capturing the town, Ethiopian soldiers set up bases at the former government headquarters and at the city's airstrip, as well as checkpoints on the road leading southeast to the capital Mogadishu on the Indian Ocean coast.

Addis Ababa sent troops across the border into Somalia in November to open up another front against the militants after Kenyan troops moved on rebel strongholds in southern Somalia in pursuit of the insurgents it accused of cross-border raids.

A weakened al Shabaab had already suffering financial constraints and internal divisions, but still has a stronghold in the port city of Kismayu, its main outpost, which provides money out of port earnings for the militant group.

[Back to top](#)

13. [Attack, South Sudan] Bombs Hit Disputed Sudanese Oil Town, Official Says

Saturday, 14 April 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/bombs-kill-5-in-south-sudan-doctor-says-as-jets-bomb-strategic-targets/2012/04/14/gIQABxu3GT_story.html

Sudanese planes bombarded a disputed oil town near South Sudan's border on Saturday, a southern military official said, and a doctor said bombs aimed at strategic sites in South Sudan's Unity State killed five people.

Col. Philip Aguer said Saturday that villages near the disputed oil town of Heglig fell under heavy aerial bombardment and that he expected ground fighting to resume "anytime" soon.

Troops from South Sudan on Wednesday captured the oil-rich border town that is claimed by Sudan.

Aguer said southern forces did not plan to give up the town, which lies along the ill-defined border between the two Sudans.

"As we speak now, the SPLA is still in full control of Heglig," Aguer said, using the acronym for the southern army.

"There are many villages that are being bombed," Aguer said. "The Sudanese Armed Forces are conducting indiscriminate air bombardment by Antonov jetfighters, indiscriminate bombing of Heglig, bombing of oil installments. They are bombing SPLA positions by long-range artillery," Aguer said.

Aguer could not say how many soldiers had been killed on either side. He said at least 19 South Sudanese soldiers and 240 Sudanese troops had been killed since the recent resumption of hostilities.

Heglig has been the focal point of more than two weeks of clashes between the two nations. Both sides claim the area, but Sudan operates Heglig's oil facilities, which account for nearly half of the country's daily production. The town is 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of the disputed region of Abyei, whose fate was left unresolved when South Sudan split last year from Sudan.

The U.N. Security Council demanded the withdrawal of South Sudan's military forces from Heglig and an end to aerial bombing by Sudan of South Sudan. It also urged Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Kiir to hold a summit to resolve their conflicts.

In Unity State, Bentiu Hospital medical director Peter Gatkuoth said bombs killed four civilians and a soldier Saturday. Jets released six bombs. They targeted a bridge that links Bentiu to a road into Sudan.

Fighting erupted in between Sudan and South Sudan May of last year, just months before South Sudan formally declared independence from Sudan.

The region was to hold a referendum in January to decide whether it stays with Sudan or joins a newly independent South. But the vote was postponed indefinitely amid disagreements over who would be eligible to vote.

The fighting has displaced more than 100,000 people, most of whom are still waiting to return.

The continued clashes have dimmed hopes for a resolution between the two countries on a host of issues left over from their July split, including oil-sharing, citizenship issues and the demarcation of the border.

[Back to top](#)

14. [Attack, South Sudan] Sudanese Warplanes Bomb U.N. Camp In South Sudan

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Apr-16/170359-sudanese-warplanes-bomb-un-camp-in-south-sudan.ashx#axzz1sJaJTGfj>

Sudanese warplanes bombed a U.N. peacekeepers' base, damaging it but causing no casualties in the first such attack since a recent escalation of fighting with South Sudan, officials said Monday.

Bombing raids on Sunday also killed nine civilians elsewhere in South Sudan's Unity border state, said the area's information minister, Gideon Gatpan.

"They launched another bombardment here yesterday," Gatpan said, adding that bombs were dropped near the oil-producing state's capital Bentiu, as well as in the village of Mayom, some 60 kilometers (40 miles) to the west.

"In Mayom... it killed seven civilians and wounded 14, two bombs fell inside the UN camp in Mayom and destroyed a generator and a radio," Gatpan said.

"Two fighter jets released eight bombs east of Bentiu," he added. "Others fell in villages around Bentiu, where two people were killed, including a pregnant woman, and eight people were wounded."

UN peacekeeping mission spokesman Kouider Zerrouk confirmed the attack on the small base, but said "there were no casualties, no one was wounded".

Fighting broke out between the rival armies of Khartoum and Juba last month, but escalated last week as Southern troops seized the contested Heglig oil field and Sudan launched counter-attacks and waves of air strikes across the border.

The hostilities are the worst since South Sudan's independence from Sudan in July, and world powers have condemned the fighting, as fears grow of a wider escalation of the conflict.

The most intense fighting has been centered on Heglig, which contributed about half of Sudan's total oil production.

But South Sudan's army accused Khartoum on Sunday of trying to open a second front in the northeast of its territory, an area so far spared the fierce border clashes of recent days.

The South said its forces had repulsed fresh attacks launched by Khartoum's army early Sunday near the border village of Kuek in Upper Nile state, a widening of the fighting outside Heglig.

Talks are stalled between the foes, but Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohammed Kamel Amr arrived in Juba after talks Sunday in Khartoum, where he met Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir.

"We have come to explore ideas and ways to try to reach a peaceful resolution between the two nations," Amr told reporters. "We don't have a specific proposal yet."

Khartoum's official SUNA news agency said Sunday that Bashir welcomed Egypt's role, but he told Amr that Sudan refuses to negotiate with the South unless it withdraws from Heglig.

South Sudan has said it will not withdraw unless Khartoum pulls out of the neighboring contested Abyei region, which Sudanese troops seized last May, forcing some 110,00 people to flee southward.

Southern Information Minister Barnaba Marial Benjamin welcomed Amr to Juba, saying the role of Sudan's former colonial ruler was "crucial".

Last July, South Sudan separated after an overwhelming "yes" vote under a peace deal that ended Sudan's 1983-2005 civil war.

The African Union has for months been mediating unresolved issues over oil, border demarcation and citizenship between the two states.

The latest fighting prompted Khartoum to pull out of those talks, and analysts said any type of negotiations in the current climate were unlikely.

Some two million people died in Sudan's civil war, one of Africa's longest, before the peace deal that opened the way to South Sudan's independence.

When the South separated, Khartoum lost about 75 percent of its oil production and billions of dollars in revenue, leaving the Heglig area as its main oil center.

[Back to top](#)

15. [Attack, Nigeria] Bomb Injures Three In North Nigeria City Hit By Attack

Monday, 16 April 2012

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-501710_162-57414499/bomb-injures-3-in-north-nigeria-city-hit-by-attack/

Witnesses say three people were injured following a bomb attack in a north Nigeria city that was the scene of a massive assault by a radical Islamist sect in January.

The attack happened Sunday night in a Christian neighborhood of Kano, the largest city in Nigeria's Muslim north.

A military spokesman said the attack caused no injuries, but local witnesses said three people were wounded.

The bomb apparently was hidden inside of a drinking can. A January attack by members of the Boko Haram sect saw gunmen throw similar explosives.

That January attack killed at least 185 people.

Boko Haram is waging an increasingly bloody fight against Nigeria's weak central government in its effort to enact strict Shariah law across the multiethnic nation of more than 160 million people and free its imprisoned members.

[Back to top](#)

16. [Special Interest, Somalia] Al-Shabaab Execute Al-Amriki

Tuesday, 17 April 2012

<http://somalilandsun.com/index.php/somalia/535-al-shabaab-execute-al-amriki>

The al-Qaeda-allied group al-Shabaab executed US-born jihadist Omar Hammami on April 5th, according to unconfirmed Somali media reports.

Hammami, known as Abu Mansour al-Amriki, said he feared for his life from other al-Shabaab leaders because of strategic and ideological differences in a statement released last month.

According to Somalia's Gedo Online, Hammami was the only one absent from a recent meeting attended by top al-Shabaab leaders in Baraawe.

Al-Shabaab reportedly hunted down Hammami after he left Marka in the Lower Shabelle region. He was reportedly beheaded on the spot and buried somewhere between Marka and Baraawe.

According to the report, the alleged execution angered some al-Shabaab leaders, who accused al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdi Godane of ordering the execution.

A group of foreign fighters and other top al-Shabaab members, including Fuad Mohamed Khalaf, also known as Fuad Shongoole, reportedly fled to the Galgala Mountains following the news of the execution.

Other leaders who left upon hearing the news include Hassan Dahir Aweys and Mukhtar Robow, Gedo Online reported.

Aweys recently accused other al-Shabaab leaders, including Godane, of shedding the blood of Muslims and murdering innocent civilians in the name of Islam. He described the actions of al-Shabaab's leaders as far removed from Islam.

Somali analysts say the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Shabaab group is on the verge of splintering due to deepening internal divisions exacerbated by recent military setbacks.

[Back to top](#)

17. [Security, Kenya] Kenya Captures Al Shabaab Recruit

Friday, 13 April 2012

<http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2012/04/kenya-captures-al-shabaab-recruit/>

Police said Friday they were interrogating a suspected terrorist who has confessed having traveled to Somalia to receive Al Shabaab training.

Abdullah Abdul Majid aka Abul was arrested on Thursday last week on suspicion of involvement in the grenade attacks at Nairobi's country bus station which killed nine people and wounded dozens others last month.

The 18-year-old has since told police he is a resident of Majengo, Mombasa. He was picked up from Nairobi's Eastleigh Section III by Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) detectives.

He has told police he was born in Saudi Arabia, but he has not been able to produce his passport.

During a series of interrogations, Majid has confessed to police that he had traveled to Somalia for training with other Mujahideen after listening to preaching sessions from various Sheikhs—including Shamir and Aboud Rogo.

Police Spokesman Eric Kiraithe said the suspect has so far told police how he crossed into Somalia in January 2011 with one of his Mombasa-based friends he identified as Dhulkarner who is currently in Somalia.

“On arrival in Somalia at Doble, he was met by Al Shabaab members who inducted him into Mujahideen. He stayed in Doble for two weeks while arrangements were being made for his transfer to Baidoa,” the suspect told police.

Later, together with other foreigners, they were taken for training at Abadajira, a prison camp for former President Siad Barre, just outside Baidoa.

“At Abadajira, we were trained on how to use grenades, pistols and AK47 rifles. It was a three month course attended by 300 trainees,” the suspect adds in his statement to the police.

After graduation, the suspect told police they were divided into two groups; one remained in Mogadishu and another near the Kenya-Ethiopia border.

Majid was in the group that remained in Mogadishu.

He claims he traveled back to Kenya to see his mother, police believe he is not genuine because even after returning back to Kenya he has never traveled to Majengo, Mombasa to greet his mother.

Police said they had been able to independently verify Majid's statement and that he had indeed traveled to Somalia where he received terrorism training.

Police believe he was deployed to Kenya by the Al Shabaab command to act as a local spy. He is still being held by the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) who are still interrogating him.

“The investigation on his this man is still going on, appropriate action will be taken,” Kiraithe said.

[Back to top](#)

18. [Attack, Nigeria] Four Sect Members Killed In Nigeria Raid

Tuesday, 17 April 2012

<http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Military-4-sect-members-killed-in-Nigeria-raid-3488344.php>

Nigeria's military says separate operations to stop a radical Islamist sect saw four suspected members killed and 13 others arrested.

Lt. Col. Sagir Musa said Tuesday that the raids happened in Maiduguri, the city where the Boko Haram sect once had its main mosque.

Musa said the operations came after residents tipped off authorities about the sect's movements.

Boko Haram is waging an increasingly bloody fight against Nigeria's weak central government in its effort to enact strict Shariah law across the multiethnic nation of more than 160 million people and free its imprisoned members. The sect is blamed for killing more than 430 people this year alone, according to an Associated Press count.

[Back to top](#)

19. [Attack, Somalia] Bomb Explosion Wounds Three People In Mogadishu

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://www.raxanreeb.com/2012/04/somalia-bomb-explosion-wounds-3-people-in-mogadishu/>

Roadside bomb blast has wounded three people including two civilians at the frontgate of Madina hospital in Mogadishu on Wednesday, RBC Radio reports.

An eyewitness who was in the hospital told RBC Radio that the bomb exploded near the front gate of the Madina hospital which is the biggest health centre treating war wounded people in Somalia capital. A woman passing the road and a man was among the wounded.

A third person believed to be the carrier of the bomb was also wounded, the eyewitness said.

Madina hospital which is now receiving hundreds of patients with among them those wounded in the recently bombed National Theater is close to the main military command in Mogadishu, but the exact target was not immediately clear.

The hospital officials however confirmed the blast, but said that there was no any influence on the hospital operation.



[Back to top](#)

20. [Security, Nigeria] Boko Haram Plans Attacks On Nigerian Capital

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/18/us-nigeria-warning-idUSBRE83H0EF20120418>

The United States has warned its citizens living in Nigeria that Islamist sect Boko Haram is planning attacks on the capital Abuja, including major hotels there.

"The U.S. Embassy has received information that Boko Haram may be planning attacks in Abuja, Nigeria, including against hotels frequently visited by Westerners," an emergency message on its website said.

Boko Haram has killed hundreds in gun and bomb attacks this year. Its strikes usually target police, authority figures and churches in the mostly Muslim north, although there have been a handful of deadly strikes in and around the capital.

[Back to top](#)

21. [Security, Somalia] Suspected Somalia Pirate Base Hit By War Planes

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://mg.co.za/article/2012-04-18-somalia-pirate-base-hit-by-suspected-war-planes/>

War planes fired several missiles at a suspected Somali pirate base in the north of the war-torn country, wounding two civilians, a coastguard official said on Tuesday.

"Unknown military jets fired several missiles near the village of Gumah, elders told us at least two civilians were injured," said Mohamed Abdirahman, a coastguard.

Witnesses said the aircraft struck the north-east coastal village, which lies about 220km east of Bossaso, the main port of Somalia's breakaway Puntland state.

"Two aircraft attacked the village, which is between Hafun and Bargal towns ... it came from the sea, and I think they were targeting pirates," said Muse Jama, an elder.

Several other witnesses confirmed the bombardment, but could not give further details of the planes.

"Officials in the area are investigating the incident," Abdirahman added, speaking from Bossaso.

'Not involved whatsoever'

Kalashnikov-wielding pirates prowl far out across the Indian Ocean from their bases in northern Somalia, seizing foreign ships which they hold for several months demanding multi-million dollar ransoms.

Last month the European Union authorised its navies to strike Somali pirate equipment on land, with a mandate for warships or helicopters to fire at fuel barrels, boats, trucks or other equipment stowed away on beaches.

But it was not possible to establish which nation the aircraft belonged to, and the EU force have not yet said they have ever launched such an attack.

A spokesperson for Operation Atalanta, the EU anti-piracy mission, said it was "not involved whatsoever" and declined comment on who might be behind the strike.

The United States also operates unmanned drones flying over the Horn of Africa nation, and have reportedly struck suspected al-Qaeda allied fighters in southern Somalia.

Flourishing piracy

Piracy has flourished off war-torn Somalia, outwitting international efforts -- including constant patrols by warships and tough sentencing of the pirates they capture.

The EU's anti-piracy patrol has deployed between five and 10 warships off the Somali coast since 2008 to escort humanitarian aid shipments and thwart pirate raids on commercial vessels using vital shipping lanes.

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Several other nations, including Russia and China, also provide protection for their ships as they pass through the busy shipping route through the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

The pirates are believed to be holding dozens of ships and hundreds of sailors for ransom, and have also branched out into land based kidnapping.

In January, a daring US-led commando raid rescued two aid workers -- an American woman and a Danish man -- held hostage in central Somalia.

[Back to top](#)

22. [Security, Somalia] Puntland Militia Run Amok In Protest

Tuesday, 17 April 2012

<http://somalilandsun.com/index.php/somalia/548-puntland-militia-run-amok-in-protest>

The Bosaso port city of the tribal enclave of Puntland was rocked by armed militias who were firing large bursts of bullets from their heavy armament.

The rampaging militias in their hundreds frightened citizens after they started shooting all types of guns in what they said was a protest against several months of non-salary payment by the enclave authorities in Garowe.

Apart from shooting live bullets in all directions the angry militia men also stopped motorists and pedestrians and confiscated any valuables found on them thus making the port city a ghost town for a number of hours after everybody went indoors.

The militiamen say they were posted to eastern areas of Somaliland three months ago in order to support militias aligned to the Khatuumo secessionist with training and logistics during confrontations with government troops in Buhodle and Las-anod

According to an officer who requested anonymity the militiamen attached to the Darwish battalion were dispatched to some areas of Sool region in Somaliland in order to train tribal militias of the purported Khatuumo government. Said he, "since going there a couple of months ago the government in Garowe has neither paid our salaries nor provided food, luckily tribesmen in our areas of operations have been feeding us until they told us to leave"

The officer urged enclave government officials in Garowe to immediately pay the outstanding salaries of the militiamen and supply them with their rations before things get out of hand.

The rioting militias say they are mostly aggrieved because the government forgot their welfare after sending them to ferment mischief in a neighbouring country. They vowed never again to be utilized for service in any part of Somaliland.

In reaction to the protests by militiamen government authorities in Garowe told members of the press that immediate action will be taken to address the issue.

According to the enclaves Puntland's minister of fisheries and marine resources Eng. Mohamed Farah Aden the government was grateful to the militiamen for their part in the Buhodle clashes between Khatuumoist and national army therefore immediate action will be taken to address their grievances.

Eng. Mohamed Farah said that Puntland authorities fully support the secession of Khatuumo and will provide all necessary assistance to the secessionists thus wrestle control of the area from Somaliland.

Said he, "Our remaining forces in areas near Buhodle are not only on high alert but continue to train new recruits of the Khatuumo militias"

Mr. Aden who hails from Sool region told reporters in Garowe town, the base of Puntland that a delegation of senior leaders from Garowe are in Sool region as part of the tribal enclave's official support to the recruitment of new militias thus strengthen them after they were devastated by government troops in the last skirmishes that took place in Buhodle and Las-anod.

The fisheries minister revealed that delegation of senior officials currently in Sool with full blessings of Puntland officials is led by Hussein Yasin Haji Diriye, the deputy speaker of the region's unelected parliament. The mission of the group from Garowe is related to recruiting new militiamen thus continue confrontations with government forces based in the area

The team led by Mr Hussein Yasin Haji Diriye who hails from Sool region and a known trouble maker involved in several attempts to disturb prevalent peace and security in Somaliland is in the area purportedly on a militia recruitment drive

The militias need for new recruits is geared towards assembling a force similar to the one that was recently disseminated by units of the national army in Buhodle and Las-anod town. The latest skirmishes which disseminated the militias also saw a number of high ranking officials including a Khatuumo designate minister captured.

[Back to top](#)

23. [Security, Nigeria] Nigerian Police Raid 'Boko Haram' Bomb Factory In Northeast

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://news.yahoo.com/nigerian-police-raid-boko-haram-bomb-factory-northeast-173607030.html>

Nigerian authorities have discovered a house allegedly being used by Islamist group Boko Haram to manufacture bombs in the country's northeast, an official said Wednesday.

The raid in Adamawa state led to the recovery of explosives and bomb-making materials, according to Gbenga Jayeoba, head of secret police in the state.

"We located a house in Wuuojabbe district in Jimeta where IEDs and other forms of explosives are manufactured," Jayeoba said of the Monday night raid.

Items recovered from the house included 30 pieces of electronic detonators, 19 improvised explosive devices, 50 kilogrammes of ammonium nitrate, fuses and 20 kilogrammes of phosphorous.

The owner of the house, allegedly a Boko Haram member, was not there at the time of the raid.

His wife told authorities he had not been there for about three days. She was not arrested as she was apparently unaware of the alleged bomb-making activities.

The US embassy in Nigeria warned on Wednesday that Boko Haram may be planning attacks against hotels or other areas in the Nigerian capital Abuja.

The Islamist sect has carried out scores of attacks, mainly in Nigeria's predominately Muslim north, that have killed more than 1,000 people since mid-2009.

[Back to top](#)

24. [Attack, South Sudan] Sudan Launches Four Attacks On South Sudan

Thursday, 19 April 2012

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fgw-sudan-20120420,0,2420371.story>

South Sudan repulsed four attacks from Sudan over a 24-hour period as fighting on the border showed no signs of slowing, a military official said Thursday.

In a further escalation of rhetoric, Sudan President Omar al-Bashir said South Sudan's recent military maneuvers have revived the spirit of "jihad" in Sudan. Despite the threats and hostilities, a government spokesman said South Sudan was only defending its territory and considers Sudan a "friendly nation."

South Sudan military spokesman Col. Philip Aguer said three of the attacks were on Wednesday and one was on Thursday. He did not give a death toll.

South Sudan broke away from Sudan last year after a self-determination vote for independence. That vote was guaranteed in a mediated end to decades of civil war between the two sides. But the sides never fully agreed where their shared border lay, nor did they reach agreement on how to share oil wealth that is pumped from the border region.

Instead, the two countries have seen a sharp increase in violence in recent weeks, especially around the oil-producing town of Heglig. Both sides claim Heglig as their own. It lies in a region where the border was never clearly defined.

Aguer said southern troops repulsed one attack by Sudanese troops near Heglig on Wednesday and two attacks in Northern Bahr el Ghazal state. One was repulsed in Western Bahr el Ghazal state early Thursday, he said.

South Sudan government spokesman Barnaba Marial Benjamin said South Sudan does not consider itself at war with Sudan, but he said the south is defending territory it believes it owns based on borders outlined in 1956 by British colonialists.

"Up to now we have not crossed even an inch into Sudan," Benjamin said. He added: "The Republic of South Sudan considers the Republic of Sudan to be a neighbor and a friendly nation."

Benjamin said that southern forces would withdraw from Heglig if the African Union guarantees a cessation of hostilities, an agreement on border demarcation, and the withdrawal of Sudanese forces from the nearby border region of Abyei, with Ethiopian troops moving in as peacekeepers.

Sudan President Omar al-Bashir on Wednesday threatened to topple the South Sudan government after accusing the south of trying to take down his Khartoum-based government.

Al-Bashir continued his hardline rhetoric on Thursday in an address to a "popular defense" brigade headed to the Heglig area. The ceremony was held in al-Obeid, in northern Kordofan.

"Sudan will cut off the hand that harms it," said al-Bashir, a career army officer who fought against the southern army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army, during the 1983-2005 civil war. Al-Bashir seized power in a 1989 military coup.



The capture of Heglig by the South Sudanese "has revived the spirit of jihad and martyrdom among the Sudanese people," he told the brigade's 2,300 men, according to the official Sudan News Agency.

In Khartoum, the pro-government Sudanese Media Center said late Wednesday that fighting broke out between the two nations in the Al-Meram area in South Kordofan, with northern troops driving away what it called "remaining elements" of the SPLA. It said northern troops chased away SPLA fighters who fled across the border into South Sudan.

It said the fighting left an unspecified number of dead and wounded among the SPLA forces but gave no precise figures.

Benjamin said that al-Bashir is carrying out "genocide" against Sudanese people in the Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions of Sudan. He said al-Bashir's words Wednesday were a warning that he would like to do the same in South Sudan.

"Can they quote one war fought by the Republic of Sudan fought with any foreign country? They have always used their military artillery to kill the innocent people of Sudan as well as South Sudan," Benjamin said.

The International Crisis Group said in a new analysis on Thursday that Sudan and South Sudan are "teetering on the brink of all-out war from which neither would benefit." It said an immediate cease-fire is needed, then solutions to the unresolved post-referendum issues.

"Increasingly angry rhetoric, support for each other's rebels, poor command and control, and brinkmanship, risk escalating limited and contained conflict into a full-scale confrontation," the group said. "Diplomatic pressure to cease hostilities and return to negotiations must be exerted on both governments by the region and the United Nations Security Council, as well as such partners as the U.S., China and key Gulf states."

The U.S. played a large role in brokering the 2005 peace accord between the two sides. China is a big player in the two countries' oil industry.

[Back to top](#)

25. [Law Enforcement, Mali] Arrests Prompted By Weapons Caches

Thursday, 19 April 2012

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gw70sXGbp1psjbAgMD-1t79i3S1g?docId=1a1e6b1190ee4ae686fb147168198194>

A security official in Mali says 22 people have been arrested after stockpiles of weapons were found in various homes nearly a month after a military coup.

Col. Diamou Keita made the announcement on national television late Wednesday following criticism of this week's arrests, which included several high-ranking officials from the government overthrown in the coup.

Keita said the weapons found did not belong to Mali's military and that the country is facing "a new threat."

The European Union and United Nations have called on Mali's military junta to release the detainees.

The junta had agreed to hand over power to an interim civilian government, though some fear the latest arrests show the military has no intention of leaving politics.

[Back to top](#)

26. [Attack, Nigeria] Maiduguri Bakers Shot By 'Suspected Islamists'

Friday, 20 April 2012

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17783586>

Five bakers in Nigeria have been killed by gunmen in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri - a base of the Islamist Boko Haram sect, police have said.

Their deaths follow the assassination of a customs officer and water vendor on Wednesday by suspected militants.

The group has carried out a series of deadly attacks in northern Nigeria in the past 19 months - often targeting officials and security officers.

Boko Haram says it wants to establish Islamic law in Nigeria.

Correspondents say a security crackdown seems to have led to fewer attacks in recent weeks, but the uprising remains a huge challenge for the authorities.

Borno state police spokesman Samuel Tizhe said it was not clear why the gunmen had opened fire on the bakery on Thursday.

Boko Haram - whose means "Western education is forbidden" - has attacked churches and this year began to target schools.

The group first came to prominence in 2009 when hundreds of its followers were killed when they attacked police stations in Maiduguri.

Its founder, Mohammed Yusuf, was arrested but died in police custody.

In 2010 the group started to stage drive-by shootings on government targets in revenge for his killing.

Last year, it carried out suicide bombings on high-profile targets such as the headquarters of the UN and police in the capital, Abuja.

Their attacks, mostly in the north of the country, have killed hundreds of civilians, both Muslim and Christian.

[Back to top](#)

CENTCOM

27. [Attack, Iraq] Bomb Kills One, Wounds 14 In Iraq

Saturday, 14 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/14/us-iraq-violence-idUSBRE83D09B20120414>

At least one person was killed and 14 others wounded on Saturday when a sticky bomb exploded near a vegetable market in Iraq's mainly Sunni Salahuddin province, local security and hospital sources said.

The explosion occurred in the town of Baiji, home to Iraq's biggest oil refinery, 180 km (112 miles) north of Baghdad, the sources said.

A source in the Salahuddin operations command said the bomb had been attached to a vegetable cart belonging to a police officer who worked at the market when he was off duty.

Tensions within Iraq's fragile coalition government of Sunnis, Shi'ites and Kurds have been mounting since U.S. troops withdrew in December, raising fears of a return to the bloody sectarian violence that almost drove the country to the brink of civil war a few years ago.

Earlier on Saturday, two police officers were killed when a roadside bomb targeting their patrol blew up on the outskirts of Ramadi in the Sunni heartland Anbar province, police said.

In Mosul in the north, two gunmen were killed after exchanging fire with Iraqi army forces, while one civilian was seriously wounded in a separate incident in Mosul when armed men opened fire in front of his house, police sources said.

Bombings and killings remain a daily occurrence in Iraq though overall levels of violence have dropped from the height of sectarian fighting in 2006-7.

On Friday, seven Shi'ite pilgrims were killed by armed men while bombings targeting Shi'ite families killed five people on Wednesday.

[Back to top](#)

28. [Attack, Yemen] Bomb Kills Three Children In Yemen

Sunday, 15 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/15/us-yemen-violence-idUSBRE83E06520120415>

A roadside bomb targeting a Yemeni security patrol killed three children on their way to school in the southern province of Hadramout on Sunday, the Defense Ministry said.

Separately, the Interior Ministry said on its website security forces were on alert for a potential plot by al Qaeda targeting "vital and government installations" in the southern province of Dalea. It gave no further details but called on residents to report any "terrorist" activities.

The Defense Ministry, on its website, blamed al Qaeda insurgents for the children's deaths. A local official said the explosives were placed on a road in al-Qatn city in Hadramout.

Yemen's south is a turbulent region where secessionists are seeking to revive a southern state and where an active wing of al Qaeda has taken root.

The Islamists' footprint in the south expanded during a year of mass protest against former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. He gave way to his deputy in February under the terms of a deal crafted by Yemen's Gulf neighbors with U.S. and U.N. backing.

[Back to top](#)

29. [Security, Yemen] US Drones Kill 21 AQAP Fighters In Separate Strikes In Southern Yemen

Saturday, 14 April 2012

http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/04/us_drones_kill_21_aq.php

Unmanned US strike aircraft killed 21 al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula fighters in two separate strikes in southern Yemen over the past several days. One of the strikes took place in an area where Yemeni troops have been battling the terror group for nearly a week.

The Predators or the more heavily armed Reapers killed seven AQAP fighters as they traveled in a vehicle in the province of Baydah, according to The Associated Press. Yemeni officials claimed the AQAP fighters were traveling to the neighboring province of Abyan, where Yemeni troops have been fighting AQAP in the city of Lawdar for the past week.

In a separate strike on April 11, US drones killed 14 AQAP fighters in an attack on a convoy in Lawdar, according to Xinhua. "Foreign nationals," or AQAP fighters from outside of Yemen, were reported to have been killed in the strike.

Yemeni officials did not give the nationalities of those killed in today's strike, but Saudis, Somalis, and Pakistanis were reported to have been among those killed during fighting in Lawdar on April 11. Two "senior members" of AQAP, Dardish Ahmed Mohammed Taher and Imad al Manshaby, who was described as a "field leader," were among those killed, according to Saba Net.

Lawdar has been the scene of the latest major fighting in the widening AQAP insurgency in southern Yemen. The fighting in Lawdar began five days ago, when AQAP overran a military base and seized a "large quantity of heavy and medium weapons," according to the Yemen Post. Several tanks were said to have been seized, and at least one was destroyed in subsequent airstrikes.

The Yemeni military claims that more than 200 AQAP fighters have been killed in and around Lawdar over the past week. Dozens of Yemeni soldiers and tribesmen who back the government are also reported to have been killed.

US strikes in Yemen

The US has carried out at least three airstrikes in Yemen this month; the last strike took place on April 8 in Shabwa province. The US launched at least six strikes against AQAP in Yemen in March.

The CIA and the US military's Joint Special Operations Command are known to have carried out at least 26 air and missile strikes inside Yemen since December 2009, including yesterday's strike in Baydah. Other recent airstrikes are believed to have been carried out by the US also, but little evidence has emerged to directly link the attacks to the US. [For more information on the US airstrikes in Yemen, see LWJ report, Charting the data for US air strikes in Yemen, 2002 - 2012.]

Since the beginning of May 2011, the US is known to have carried out 20 airstrikes in Yemen. Ten of those strikes have taken place so far in 2012.

This year, the US appears to be targeting AQAP foot soldiers in an effort to support Yemeni military operations. Only one of this year's 10 strikes has killed a senior AQAP operative in Yemen. On Jan. 31, US drones killed Abdul Mun'im Salim al Fatahani near the city of Lawdar in Abyan province. Fatahani was involved in the October 2000 suicide attack on the USS Cole in the port of Aden that killed 17 US sailors, as well as the bombing that damaged the Limburg oil tanker in 2002. AQAP said that Fatahani had fought in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The pace of the US airstrikes has increased as AQAP and its political front, Ansar al Sharia, have taken control of vast areas of southern Yemen. AQAP controls the cities of Zinjibar, Al Koud, Ja'ar, and Shaqra in Abyan province. The terror group also controls Azzan in Shabwa province. AQAP seized control of Rada'a in Baydah in January but later withdrew after negotiating a peace agreement with the local government.

US intelligence officials believe that al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula poses a direct threat to the homeland. The terror group has plotted multiple attacks against targets in the US. A strike in Yemen last year killed Anwar al Awlaki, the radical, US-born cleric who plotted attacks against the US, and Samir Khan, another American who served as a senior AQAP propagandist. Abdul Rahman al Awlaki, Anwar's son, was killed in a separate strike in the country.

[Back to top](#)

30. [Law Enforcement, Turkey] Police Detain 18 For Suspected Links To Buried Explosives

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-277864-police-detain-18-for-suspected-links-to-buried-explosives.html>

İstanbul Police Chief Hüseyin Çapkin told the press on Wednesday that total of 18 people had been taken into custody in connection with the discovery of explosives in an İstanbul cemetery.

Teams from the İstanbul Police Department found 15 kilograms of explosives, thought to have been buried by the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), in Kozlu Cemetery in İstanbul's Zeytinburnu district. "We are currently working on suspects' connections to the buried explosives," said Çapkin.

The search was reportedly based on the testimony of 19 suspects detained during anti-PKK operations in İstanbul and Diyarbakır. The explosives were unearthed on Tuesday and were taken to the İstanbul Police Department on the same day for further examination.

Responding to questions from reporters in front of the İstanbul Police Department on Tuesday, Çapkin said the explosives found seem to be of two different types. He also said a hand grenade was also discovered during the search.

Çapkin stated that the explosives found in the graveyard are equal to 500 kilograms of hand grenades. He added that 15 people suspected of involvement have been detained.

In March of this year, İstanbul counterterrorism teams carried out excavations at two sites in İstanbul in search of explosives as part of a terrorism investigation and found 15 kilograms of plastic explosives at one of the sites. The searches were carried out as part of an investigation into the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), a political umbrella organization that includes the PKK.

Also in January, police discovered nearly five kilograms of explosives in the Başakşehir district of İstanbul after a dig at a site near the Atatürk Olympic Stadium that was carried out as part of the KCK investigation.

Meanwhile in another operation against the KCK, police detained four people in Van's Başkale district on Tuesday. The suspects are accused of membership in a terrorist organization and aiding and abetting a terrorist organization. In a written statement released on Tuesday, the Van Police Department said the detainees were working as couriers between PKK camps and were involved in smuggling to provide the organization with funds.

Police later searched the homes of the suspects, seizing several cell phones, SIM cards, laptops and documents. The suspects will be taken to the Van Specially Authorized Deputy Chief Public Prosecutor's Office after being interrogated by police.

The KCK investigation started in December 2009 and a large number of suspected KCK members, including several mayors from the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), have been detained. Prosecutors say the group controls the PKK and other affiliated groups.

The KCK suspects are accused of various crimes, including membership in a terrorist organization, aiding and abetting a terrorist organization and attempting to destroy the country's unity and integrity. BDP officials say the investigation is the government's way of suppressing BDP politicians, denying any links between the BDP deputies involved and terrorist organizations.



[Back to top](#)

31. [Attack, Iraq] Dozens Killed In Wave Of Attacks Across Iraq

Thursday, 19 April 2012

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/20/world/middleeast/iraq-attacks-kill-dozens.html>

A string of deadly explosions and other attacks shook Iraq on Thursday, with bombings in Baghdad and the northern city of Kirkuk resulting in the most fatalities. Over all, nearly three dozen people were killed and more than 100 wounded, according to security officials.

By the standards of Iraq — where attacks occur daily, although at a much diminished rate compared with the height of the war — the wave of violence on Thursday was not extraordinary, although it was a reminder, after weeks of relative calm, that an organized insurgency remained active.

The biggest attack appeared to be a series of explosions in the village of Al-Malhaar, on the outskirts of Kirkuk, that left 9 people dead and 24 wounded, according to an official in Kirkuk, a city divided among three ethnic groups often at odds with one another — Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen.

In Baghdad, nearly 15 people were killed in a handful of explosions, including one on Palestine Street aimed at the convoy of the minister of health, Majeed Hamad Amin. He was unharmed, but two bystanders were killed, an official said.

Some bombs targeted Shiite Muslims, who make up the majority of Iraq's population and are frequently the victims of what is left of country's Sunni insurgency and its main group, Al Qaeda in Iraq. A hotel in Khadamiya, a Baghdad neighborhood that is home to an important Shiite shrine, was struck by a car bomb. The attack killed two at the hotel, which often plays host to Shiite pilgrims from Iran.

In Samara, north of Baghdad, two car bombs hit a checkpoint guarded by members of a local Awakening group, the movement that is made up of former insurgents who were paid to switch sides under a program that was begun by the American military. In that attack, three were killed and six wounded.

Several attacks also occurred in Diyala Province, which is north of Baghdad and was the site of some of the worst carnage during Iraq's sectarian war in 2006 and 2007. A suicide bomber struck the home of a military official, killing one person and wounding five others. A checkpoint was also attacked, and two roadside bombs hit an army patrol.



Nearly four months have passed since the withdrawal of the American military, and despite the attacks on Thursday, security has not deteriorated, as many analysts had contended it would. By some Iraqi

government measures, which have been widely reported by the news media, March was one of the least violent months since 2003, when the American-led war began.

But according to statistics cited by the United Nations, violence has actually remained steady, and similar to the levels over the past three years. In March, according to those statistics, 294 people were killed in attacks, slightly higher than in February and comparable to many months last year.

[Back to top](#)

32. [Attack, Iraq] Al-Qaida Claims Iraq's Worst Violence In A Month

Friday, 20 April 2012

http://news.yahoo.com/al-qaida-claims-iraqs-worst-violence-month-065722035.html;_ylt=Agb71eHd4yNEu277E001Be6s0NUE;_ylu=X3oDMTNtZWF0ZzY3BG1pdANUb3BTdG9yeSBGUARwa2cDODdmYjIhMjYtMTVmNC0zN2UzLTgwYjUtMTNhZTA5MGQxODk4BHBvcwMxMwRzZWMDdG9wX3N0b3J5BHZlcmM3NmVIZGY3MC04YWRjLTExZTEtOWZmZC1hZjEzNmE5ZDBhMmU-;_ylg=X3oDMTFrM25vcXFyBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAMEcHQDc2VjdGlvbNMEdGVzdAM-;_ylv=3

The Iraqi branch of al-Qaida claimed responsibility Friday for bombings that killed at least 30 people in the capital and across the country the day before, the worst wave of violence in weeks.

A statement posted on a militant website said the rapid-fire attacks aimed to punish the Shiite-led government — and all those who cooperate with it — for injustices against Sunnis. The statement was signed by the Islamic State of Iraq, a Sunni militant group linked to al-Qaida.

The attacks targeted "government's security, military and administrative centers and leaders, and its followers of traitors who supported it in Baghdad and elsewhere, who were the cause in the spreading of Shiism in Sunni areas," the statement said.

"This foray is the beginning of what is waiting for them in the coming days, God willing, of a blessed series of attacks that has started and won't stop till God rules between us and the Shiite polytheist," the statement said.

The attacks came amid ongoing — and largely sectarian — tensions between Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shiite, and political opponents who demand more power in the government. Hours after the attacks, some Sunni and Kurdish lawmakers denounced the bloodshed as a tragic but inevitable result of the Shiite-led government's attempts to sideline them and dominate Iraqi politics.

Al-Qaida said the Thursday morning wave that struck 10 cities across Iraq, killing at least 30 and wounding 117, was just the beginning of a prolonged series of attacks. Six of the bombings struck at security forces and government officials, frequent targets for insurgents.

In Baghdad, 12 people were killed, most of them in Shiite neighborhoods. Other targets were in northern Iraqi cities, including Samarra, where a 2006 mosque bombing touched off the worst of the insurgency; the ethnically mixed city of Kirkuk, and deposed dictator Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

Iraq's political chasm has pitted al-Maliki against the Sunni-dominated Iraqiya coalition, which complains it is being shut out of power. The bloc briefly boycotted the government this year after an arrest warrant was issued against Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi on terrorism charges. Iraqiya and al-Hashemi called the charges an example of al-Maliki's misusing his authority for political gain.

Although the level of violence is nowhere near where it was five years ago, when Iraq threatened to descend into civil war, deadly attacks are again common nationwide.

Although political unrest appears to serve as a conduit for insurgents seeking to undermine al-Maliki's government, it's unlikely the bombers were motivated by a desire to create a new power-sharing agreement, said Juan R. I. Cole, a history professor and Middle East expert at the University of Michigan.

"Right now you have a small but significant number of people who are absolutely unreconciled to the idea of a new Iraq. And that is where you get terrorism," Cole said. "They don't believe in Iraq's parliament — they are trying to undermine it."

[Back to top](#)

EUCOM

33. [Attack, Russia] Bomb Attack Injures Senior FSB Officer

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

http://www.times.spb.ru/index.php?action_id=2&story_id=35476

A bomb attack Monday in Dagestan severely injured a senior officer of the local branch of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and killed his wife, Kommersant reported, citing local Investigative Committee sources.

The bomb went off under a Ford Focus belonging to Gasan Achilayev, head of the Khunzensky interdistrict branch of the FSB, about 9:20 a.m. in the regional capital of Makhachkala.

The explosion occurred right after Achilayev and his wife, Patimat, got into the car.

The blast killed Achilayev's wife and tore off one of his legs. He remained in emergency care Monday.

Investigators linked the attack to Achilayev's successful campaigns against regional rebels.

Investigators have opened a criminal case on charges of attempted assassination of a law enforcement officer, murder and illegal discharge of weapons and explosives.

Taken together, the charges carry a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Two bombs went off in Makhachkala in the 12 hours preceding the attack on Achilayev, killing a rebel and injuring two students, Interfax reported.

One of the bombs accidentally exploded inside an apartment building as a rebel, identified as Omargadzhi Ibragimov, tried to plant it.

The explosion killed Ibragimov and destroyed two flights of stairs.

The other bomb, equivalent to 200 grams of TNT, went off outside a men's clothing store Sunday evening, injuring two young women.

Elsewhere, a small homemade bomb exploded outside a store in Sochi on Sunday evening and injured a 22-year-old man, Interfax reported.

[Back to top](#)

34. [Attack, Russia] Bombs Kill Militant, Wound FSB Agent In Russia's Caucasus

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/16/us-russia-caucasus-bombs-idUSBRE83F0CZ20120416>

Bomb blasts killed a suspected Islamist militant and wounded a local Federal Security Service (FSB) officer and his wife on Monday in the capital of Russia's turbulent North Caucasus province of Dagestan, Russian news agencies reported.

An Islamist insurgency, business and political disputes and clan feuds result in daily violence in the mostly Muslim region on the Caspian Sea in southern Russia.

The suspected militant was killed when a bomb he was making exploded during the night in an apartment in provincial capital, Makhachkala, state-run Itar-Tass reported, citing local police.



Shortly after 9 a.m. (0500 GMT) a car bomb wounded a colonel in the local branch of Russia's FSB and his wife, Itar-Tass reported.

A separate bomb blast outside a shop in Makhachkala late on Sunday injured two female students, Interfax reported.

Police could not be reached by Reuters for comment, and police quoted in media reports did not identify any suspects or possible motives.

Russia is struggling to suppress an Islamist insurgency rooted in two post-Soviet wars against separatists in Chechnya, a North Caucasus province adjacent to Dagestan.

Three police officers were injured fighting gunmen 100 km (60 miles) north west of Makhachkala on Monday, Interfax said.

[Back to top](#)

35. [Attack, Northern Ireland] Bombers Target North Irish Policeman's Parents For Second Time

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/16/us-irish-bomb-idUSBRE83F0QZ20120416>

A bomb was found under the car of a policeman's parents in Northern Ireland overnight and disarmed by army officers, law enforcement sources said on Monday, the latest in a spate of attempted attacks on Catholic officers and their families.

The police officer does not live with his parents, who suffered a similar attempted attack in 2009 and who live in a Catholic area of Londonderry, the country's second biggest city.

The attack comes a year after Catholic policeman Ronan Kerr was killed when a bomb exploded under his car in what was the first police killing in the British-controlled province for two years.

Nationalist paramilitaries opposed to a 1998 peace deal with Britain have targeted Catholic police who after a recruitment drive make up 30 percent of the force in a province where police were once predominantly Protestant.

The peace agreement largely ended more than three decades of violence between mainly Catholic Irish nationalists opposed to British rule of Northern Ireland and predominantly Protestant unionists who wanted it to continue.

A "significant" bomb was found near the main Dublin-to-Belfast motorway earlier this month.

Police last week arrested six people in Londonderry after a group of Irish militant nationalists threatened renewed attacks on law enforcement officers during a ceremony attended by hundreds at a city graveyard.

[Back to top](#)

36. [Attack, Northern Ireland] Fuse Was Lit On Bomb Under Car

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALeqM5hZBFhXYpYCvpmEI48ILPQu5GhbTg?docId=N0331281334582992301A>

The fuse on an under-car pipe bomb which failed to explode at the family home of a Catholic police officer had been lit.

Dissident republican group the Real IRA is the chief suspect for planting the device which was discovered on Sunday night in a nationalist estate in Londonderry, the region's second largest city.

The bomb was under a vehicle that belonged to the policeman's parents. This is the second time they have been targeted but the elderly couple have vowed to stay at the house, Superintendent Chris Yates said.

Earlier this month the outlawed Real IRA vowed to try to kill more police officers during a rally in the city.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland's Mr Yates said: "This is the equivalent of a military hand grenade." He pledged to leave no stone unturned to try to identify those who planned the attack and appealed for information from the community.

The couple, from Drumleck Drive in Shantallow, are pensioners. Their home was attacked by the Real IRA in 2009 using a similar device but Mr Yates said they remained unbowed.

He said: "The device had been initiated; it had the fuse lit on it but it failed to fully explode. We are treating it as a terrorist investigation and as attempted murder because anyone next to this when it exploded would have been seriously injured and possibly killed."

Dissident republicans have targeted police several times. New constable Ronan Kerr was killed when a device blew up under his car in Omagh, Co Tyrone, last April.

Ministers and senior police have warned the threat level remains severe. Derry has been named UK Capital of Culture for 2013. In October the office established to organise the celebrations was targeted for the second time by dissident republicans.

On speaking to the police officer whose parents were targeted, Mr Yates said: "He is showing a remarkable resolve. He has no intention of changing his chosen profession."

[Back to top](#)

37. [Security, Northern Ireland] Iraq-Style Bomb 'Found For First Time In NI'

Tuesday, 17 April 2012

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-17741004>

A bomb similar to those used in Iraq and Afghanistan was found for the first time in Northern Ireland 'ready for use', the High Court has heard.

It was found in a hedgerow in County Tyrone on 22 April 2011 and was packed with Semtex, the court was told.

Patrick Carty, 32, of Springdale estate, Dungannon, denies possessing explosives with intent to endanger life or cause serious damage to property.

He was refused bail in court on Tuesday.

Robert Blackburn, prosecuting, said: "It was described as viable and in a state of readiness.

"It's the first time that this device has been discovered in Northern Ireland. But it has been used significantly in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Objecting to bail, he argued that police feared he could link up with people intent on acts of terrorism if released.

Defence, Eugene McKenna, argued that the entire case against Mr Carty was flawed.

He said the case rested on fingerprints on a bag "of a type that are blowing through the streets of Northern Ireland every day".

Refusing bail, Mr Justice McCloskey said the objections were of sufficient strength to warrant the refusal.

[Back to top](#)

38. [Attack, Syria] Syria's News Agency Says Roadside Bomb Kills 10 Soldiers

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://www.kristv.com/news/syria-s-news-agency-says-roadside-bomb-kills-10-soldiers/>

Syria's state-run news agency says two roadside bombs have killed at least 10 members of the security forces in the north of the country.

The SANA agency reported explosions in the Idlib province and the nearby Aleppo region.

A U.N.-brokered cease-fire formally took effect in Syria a week ago, but Syrian forces have continued attacks on opposition strongholds. Rebel fighters also kept up attacks, including bombings and shootings.

In the past, the regime justified its harsh crackdown on the 13-month uprising against President Bashar Assad by saying it is responding to provocations by "terrorists."

SANA says Wednesday's blast in the village of Mastouma killed six soldiers and wounded 11. It says a second blast in the Aleppo region killed four soldiers.

[Back to top](#)

39. [Attack, United Kingdom] Police Investigate As Explosives Detonate Outside SEM Offices

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://www.thisisguernsey.com/news/2012/04/18/police-investigate-as-explosives-detonate-outside-sem-offices/>

Explosive devices were set off outside Sark Estate Management's managing director Kevin Delaney's office at the weekend.

Now a £10,000 reward from an anonymous benefactor has been offered for information leading to the arrest of the culprits.

'There were small charges on a rope, which were set to go off at intervals,' Mr Delaney said.

A customer from the nearby Stumbles Restaurant reported the noises to the constables at about 2am on Sunday. They then searched the area during the early hours.

Mr Delaney, pictured, said they had found the device, which was hanging from a tree, only because one of the explosives had gone off while they were searching.

[Back to top](#)

40. [Attack, Syria] Gunfire' As UN Team Visits Damascus Suburb

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17753306>

Shooting has broken out during a visit to a Damascus suburb by an advance team of UN observers, activists say.

Videos posted online appear to show anti-government protesters ducking as snipers open fire in Arbeen. Crowds are shown surrounding the UN cars.

The UN team is overseeing a shaky ceasefire brokered by UN-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon is to ask the Security Council to expand the observer force from 30 to 250 members.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Syria was at a "crucial turning point".

Speaking in Brussels, she said President Bashar al-Assad faced tougher measures if he squandered his "last chance" by failing to implement Mr Annan's peace plan.

She said there was a need to "tighten pressure on the regime and on those who support the regime", adding: "Every country in Nato is watching the situation with concern."

A spokesman for Mr Annan confirmed that the observers had been in Arbeen on Wednesday.

Ahmad Fazwi said it would be "appalling" if it was confirmed that Syrian forces had opened fire in the area.

The team's head, Col Ahmet Himmiche, told Reuters news agency that the observers had not come under fire. He gave no further details.

One activist video from the suburb appears to show Col Himmiche telling the crowd through a loud hailer to move back and let the cars pass.

A protester is seen placing a banner on a UN car that reads: "The killer is doing his killing, the monitors are doing their monitoring and the people are doing their revolution."

The footage cannot be verified.

Activist group the Local Co-ordination Committees said that 32 people had been killed in violence across Syria on Wednesday, despite the ceasefire that began nearly a week ago.

Activists said government forces were continuing to shell areas of Homs. Several districts remain outside government control despite a major offensive that began in February.

Mr Annan's six-point peace plan calls for Syrian forces to withdraw from residential areas; the release of political prisoners; the permitting of peaceful demonstrations; greater access for the media and the start a democratic political transition.

The BBC's Ian Pannell reports on the plight of Syrian children in Idlib province as the ceasefire appears to falter

Syria's state news agency Sana reported on Wednesday that at least six members of the security forces had been killed by a bomb blast in Idlib province. A second blast in the Aleppo region killed four soldiers, it added.

The advance UN team arrived in Syria on Sunday.

Mr Ban is preparing to brief the UN Security Council on his proposals for a larger UN observer mission, supported by planes and helicopters from the EU.

He has said that a 250-strong mission - as proposed by Mr Annan - might not be big enough.

The UN says about 9,000 people have died since pro-democracy protests began in March 2011. In February, the Syrian government put the death toll at 3,838 - 2,493 civilians and 1,345 security forces personnel.

In other developments, Turkish authorities are due to search a ship in the port of Iskenderun following claims that it is carrying arms bound for Syria.

Both the EU and Turkey have imposed an arms embargo on Syria.

Meanwhile, the wives of the German and UK ambassadors to the UN have posted a video on YouTube urging President Assad's wife, Asma, to help end the bloodshed in her country.

They ask Mrs Assad to urge her husband to stop violent repression.

[Back to top](#)

41. [Law Enforcement, Belgium] Russia Slams NATO Withdrawal From Afghanistan

Thursday, 19 April 2012

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/04/19/russia-slams-nato-withdrawal-from-afghanistan/>

Russia's foreign minister sharply criticized NATO's plan to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan by 2014, saying Thursday that coalition troops should remain in the country until Afghan government forces are capable of ensuring security.

"As long as Afghanistan is not able to ensure by itself the security in the country, the artificial timelines of withdrawal are not correct and they should not be set," Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

NATO plans to hand over lead responsibility for the war against the Taliban to the Afghan army and police by the middle of next year, then withdraw its troops by the end of 2014. The alliance already has started drawing down its forces, which reached a peak of about 140,000 last year.

NATO leaders say that Afghan forces are improving rapidly and will be able to counter Taliban guerrillas after 2014. But critics have pointed to widespread drug use and the high desertion rate among government forces as signs that it remains unprepared to handle the insurgents.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the alliance's secretary general, responded to Lavrov's criticism by saying the Afghan government has agreed with the withdrawal schedule, and that it is "definitely not artificial." He also urged Russia, China and other non-NATO countries to help fund the post-2014 Afghan armed forces.

Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak said that initially he also was worried about the drawdown. "Fortunately enough flexibility has been built into the plan ... so there will not be so much of an impact as many people were thinking," he said.

The Afghan army and police are scheduled to expand to more than 350,000 members in the next several months. NATO has already handed over to them responsibility for security over half of the country's population, and the transition is set to continue.

Lavrov, who attended a meeting of NATO defense and foreign ministers in Brussels, said China and other countries in Asia also are worried about the withdrawal schedule.

Moscow views NATO's military effort in Afghanistan as crucial for its own security, including helping to prevent instability from spreading into ex-Soviet Central Asia.

Russia, which is not a NATO member, has provided the alliance with air corridors and railway routes for carrying supplies to and from landlocked Afghanistan. The link has become particularly important since Pakistan blocked NATO supplies from crossing its territory following an alliance airstrike that killed 24 Pakistani border troops in November.

On Thursday, Lavrov and NATO ministers discussed a plan to give the alliance a new logistics facility on Russian territory to transfer military cargo to and from Afghanistan.

The proposal, now being considered by Russian lawmakers, would for the first time allow alliance members to set up a logistics facility in Ulyanovsk, Russia, for troops and cargo.

Officials said there were "no differences" between the two sides on the use of the air base in Ulyanovsk.

"We expect to expand the transit options offered to us by Russia ... to Afghanistan," NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said after the meeting. "We appreciate very highly Russia's contribution, which is based on our shared interests and contributes to our shared security."

The former Cold War rivals remain sharply at odds, however, over a U.S.-led NATO missile defense plan in Europe that Washington says is aimed at deflecting a potential Iranian threat. Moscow fears it will eventually become powerful enough to undermine Russia's nuclear deterrent

Despite those differences, Russia has also cooperated with the alliance in suppressing piracy off the Somali coastline and in such areas as anti-terrorism, counter-narcotics and search-and-rescues at sea.

[Back to top](#)

PACOM

42. [Security, Philippines] U.S., Philippines Start Drills Amid Territorial Spat With China

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/16/us-philippines-china-usa-idUSBRE83FOCP20120416>

American and Filipino troops launched two weeks of annual naval drills on Monday amid a territorial stand-off between China and the Philippines as the United States seeks to reinforce its influence across the Asia-Pacific.

The most recent dispute between China and the Philippines entered its second week, with a Philippine coast guard ship and two Chinese maritime surveillance vessels faced off near the Scarborough shoal, west of a former U.S. navy base at Subic Bay, once the biggest outside the United States.

Chinese fishermen refused Manila's request to hand over their haul, highlighting Manila's powerlessness to confront its giant neighbour and its need to keep its main ally, the United States, sweet.

China has territorial disputes with several countries in the South China Sea, which is believed to be rich in oil and gas and is crossed by important shipping lanes.

China has sought to resolve the disputes one-on-one but there is concern among its neighbours over what some see as its growing assertiveness in staking its claims over the sea and various islands, reefs and shoals.

Philippine officials hope the war games, in which nearly 7,000 American and Filipino troops will simulate assaults for the first time in an area near the South China Sea, will become more frequent.

"We need the U.S. to bring stability and security," said an army major-general who declined to be named because he was not authorised to speak to the press.

Before the Philippines voted to remove U.S. bases in 1992, Chinese fishing boats kept clear of waters near the Scarborough shoal, the general said.

"After the Americans went, China erected structures in Mischief Reef and Chinese fishermen became more bold and active in Scarborough," he said. "I don't want to wake up one day seeing new Chinese structures there."

SURVEILLANCE

After Manila failed to arrest the Chinese fishermen last week, Chinese surveillance ships stood their ground near the shoal and Chinese planes were seen circling on Saturday and Sunday.

"We hope the relevant countries can do more to contribute to regional peace and stability, and do more to enhance mutual trust," Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Weimin told reporters.

Richard Jacobson, of security consultancy Pacific Strategies and Assessments, said China's only accomplishment in the dispute was to reinforce its image as a bully.

"I guess you can argue that it was an embarrassment for the Philippines," Jacobson said. "It really underscores their lack of capacity to enforce their maritime enforcement issues."

Aileen Baviera, of the Asian Centre at the University of the Philippines, said China's actions were being shaped by the active U.S. interest in the region and the close Philippine-U.S. maritime security cooperation.

Twenty years after voting to remove the American bases, the Philippines wants to give U.S. troops more access to its ports and airfields to deter China's growing assertiveness.

The defence and foreign secretaries of the two nations will hold a rare "two-plus-two" strategic dialogue in Washington on April 30, working to broaden relations.

U.S. President Barack Obama has sought to reassure Asian allies that the United States will stay a key player in the area, and the Pentagon has said it will "rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region".

China has repeatedly warned the United States over its arms sales to Taiwan, the self-ruled island that Beijing calls an illegitimate breakaway from mainland sovereignty.

And China's naval reach has extended as tensions over territorial claims have grown. China has advertised its long-term ambitions with shows of new hardware, including its first test flight of a stealth fighter jet and its launch of a fledgling aircraft carrier -- both trials of technologies that remain years from deployment.

In this year's "Balikatan" (shoulder-to-shoulder) war games, U.S. commandos will supervise Filipino counterparts in a mock assault to re-take an oil platform from a terrorist group on Palawan.

The western island faces disputed areas of the South China Sea.



[Back to top](#)

43. [Security, North Korea] N. Korea Abandons Agreement With U.S.

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/apr/18/tp-n-korea-abandons-agreement-with-us/>

North Korea said Tuesday that it was abandoning an agreement it made in February with the United States in which it promised to suspend uranium enrichment, nuclear tests and long-range missile tests.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry said that it “resolutely and totally” rejected the U.N. Security Council’s condemnation of its failed rocket launching last week and that it would continue to launch rockets to try to place satellites into orbit.

The ministry’s statement hinted, but did not make clear, that the North may now conduct a long-range missile or nuclear test.

No longer bound by the deal, “we have thus become able to take necessary retaliatory measures,” the ministry said in the statement, which was carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency. “The U.S. will be held wholly accountable for all the ensuing consequences.”

The U.S. had already suspended its side of the deal because of the rocket launching, including 240,000 tons of food aid the U.S. had promised to the North.

The collapse of the deal cost the U.S. and the International Atomic Energy Agency a chance to send inspectors into the isolated country for the first time in three years. And analysts said it made further North Korean provocations more likely.

North Korea argued Tuesday that Washington was the first to renege on the February deal, by suspending the promised food aid and pressing the Security Council to condemn the rocket launch.

[Back to top](#)

44. [Trend, India] Maoists Plan Peoples' Court To Decide Fate Of Hikaka

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/maoists-plan-peoples-court-to-decide-fate-of-hikaka-lead_100612316.html

Maoists Wednesday accused the Odisha government of not taking steps on their demands and announced they would decide the fate of legislator Jhina Hikaka, who is in their captivity since the past over three weeks, in a peoples' court.

The deadline the rebels had given for the government to decide on their demands ended Wednesday evening.

"We don't have any faith on the government," a rebel leader, who identified herself as Aruna, said in an audio message which was received by some reporters here and aired by some television channels.

"There is no point in extending deadline. The fate of Jhina Hikaka will be decided in a praja court (people's court), people will decide on him," she said without specifying any date when and where the praja court will be held. Hikaka was kidnapped by the Andhra-Odisha border special zonal committee of the Communist Party of India-Maoist in his home district of Koraput March 24.

The Maoists have sought the release of 29 prisoners, mostly members of the Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangh (CMAS), which works mainly in the southern parts of the state, including Malkangiri and Koraput districts, on tribal-related issues. The government Tuesday said it will seriously consider the withdrawal of prosecution (against the detainees) in suitable cases only after the rebels released Hikaka unharmed. The state announced to facilitate the release of about 25 people of those demanded by the Maoists. However, the Maoists said the government was not sincere in releasing the innocent villagers.

In the meanwhile, the state home secretary U.N. Behera said in the evening that the government was not aware of the latest audio tape issued by the Maoists.

Behera appealed to the rebels to release the hostage saying that the government has now decided to release 13 prisoners following due process of the law.

He said seven detainees have already filed their bail petitions and two of them have already got bail from courts. He added that two more detainees are also likely to be released soon.

[Back to top](#)

45. [Trend, India] Assam New Hotbed Of Naxal Groups

Tuesday, 17 April 2012

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/assam-new-hotbed-of-naxal-groups-pc/937683/0>

Home Minister P Chidambaram on Monday said Assam was slowly becoming a new hotbed for Naxal groups, which were developing links with many insurgent organisations in the neighbouring states.

Left Wing Extremist activities have so far been known to be confined in the eight or nine states in the central and eastern parts of the country, though there have been reports in the past of their links with Northeast militant organisations, mainly for supplies of arms and money. Speaking at the Chief Ministers' Conference on Internal Security, Chidambaram said while the overall number of casualties in Naxal violence had declined, it was not the "true picture".

"Two states are very badly affected, four states are affected and three states are within the arc of influence of CPI (Maoist). Assam has emerged as the new theatre of Maoist activity. There are also inputs about the links of CPI (Maoist) with insurgent groups in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh," he said.

Chidambaram's statement was corroborated by Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi who said some districts of his state had "definite Maoist presence" and that a few members had already been arrested by the state police.

Chidambaram said there was a broad agreement to continue the two-pronged strategy to deal with Naxal violence — mixing police action with development work. "...but, I am afraid, our capacity to execute the plans is not commensurate with the nature of the challenge," he said.

Chidambaram said a third angle to the anti-Naxal strategy was to neutralise the propaganda unleashed by the Naxal groups.

He then referred to another sort of public campaign — one that appears in support of anyone who is arrested or detained in any security-related case and is guided by little more than religious affiliations.

The Union Home Minister also requested the chief ministers to cooperate in creating a security architecture that is a must for India in the coming areas, some elements of which were getting delayed.

[Back to top](#)

46. [Security, India] India Tests Missile That Can Reach China

Thursday, 19 April 2012

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/terrorism-security/2012/0419/India-tests-missile-that-can-reach-China>

India staged a successful test launch today of a nuclear-capable missile that can reach key Chinese cities, adding a new calculation to the region's complex web of rivalries and giving it a new level of deterrence against regional powerhouse China.

The Agni-V missile can travel 3,100 miles, putting Beijing and Shanghai within India's range. Government officials hailed the launch as "proof that the country has taken its place among the world's most powerful and scientifically advanced nations," although there are a number of tests left to complete before the missile can come into military use, the Associated Press reports.

China already has missiles in its arsenal that can reach anywhere in India, while the longest-range missile in use in India (the Agni-III) can travel only 2,100 miles – not far enough to reach most major Chinese cities, according to AP.

"At the moment there is a huge asymmetry in China's favor," said C. Uday Bhaskar, the former head of the Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses. After it adds the missile to its arsenal, however, "India's deterrent profile in the region would be appropriately burnished."

India has long been able to reach any part of archrival Pakistan with its missiles, but in recent years it has also become concerned about a possible Chinese threat and began seeking weapons that could deter China as well, AP reports.

The Agni-V can carry a 1.5-ton nuclear warhead and can be transported by road or rail. It will take four or five more tests before officials feel confident enough to add it to India's weapons store, likely sometime in 2014 or 2015, according to AP. Only France, Russia, China, the US, and possibly Israel have similar technology.

The successful test was hailed with excitement and triumph in India. V. K. Saraswat, the director general of India's Defense Research and Development Organization, said, "This launch has given a message to the entire world that India has the capability to design, develop, build and manufacture missiles of this class, and we are today, a missile power," The Times of India reports.

Mr. Saraswat pointed out that "80 percent" of the missile was developed in the country, and the chief scientist for the Agni-V project called the launch a "great event" for India.

Meanwhile, the editorial "India being swept up by missile delusion" from the Global Times, a daily newspaper owned by the ruling Communist Party, warned India that it would be "unwise" to seek a balance of power with China by developing missiles and urged Delhi to pursue cooperation with Beijing instead.

India should not overestimate its strength. Even if it has missiles that could reach most parts of China, that does not mean it will gain anything from being arrogant during disputes with China. India should be clear that China's nuclear power is stronger and more reliable. For the foreseeable future, India would stand no chance in an overall arms race with China.

India should also not overstate the value of its Western allies and the profits it could gain from participating in a containment of China. If it equates long range strategic missiles with deterrence of China, and stirs up further hostility, it could be sorely mistaken.

The editorial continued:

China understands the Indian desire to catch up with China. China, as the most appropriate strategic target for India, is willing to take India as a peaceful competitor. ... But objectively speaking, China does not spend much time guarding against India, while India focuses a lot of attention on China.

China hopes India will remain calm, as this would be beneficial to both giants.

Today's missile test comes only a week after North Korea's unsuccessful launch of a missile of its own, which earned Pyongyang widespread condemnation.

The international response to India's test was markedly muted because, according to a New Delhi-based Western diplomat, "India is not considered a global threat," AP reports. Indian officials cited Delhi's "no-first-use" policy as reassurance, emphasizing that missile stores are intended to be merely deterrence.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said that while the US encourages all nuclear-capable countries to act with restraint, "India has a solid non-proliferation record. ... They're engaged with the international community on non-proliferation issues."



[Back to top](#)

47. [Security, South Korea] South Korea Says New Missile Can Hit Any Target In North

Thursday, 19 April 2012

<http://www.voanews.com/tibetan-english/news/South-Korea-Says-New-Missile-Can-Hit-Any-Target-in-North-148094925.html>

South Korea is deploying a new cruise missile capable of hitting targets anywhere in North Korea.

South Korea, simultaneous to releasing a video showing its new cruise missile destroying a target, is vowing to “firmly and thoroughly retaliate” if North Korea conducts further provocations.

South Korean army Major General Shin Won-sik, briefing domestic defense reporters at the ministry, took a tough posture in view of North Korea's recent activities.

The general says the new missile has a range of more than 1,000 kilometers and can immediately strike anywhere in North Korea.

The deployment announcement comes less than a week after North Korea tried to launch what Seoul and Washington characterize as a Taepodong-2 long-range missile.

Pyongyang says its failed launch was a peaceful attempt to place an earth observation satellite into orbit.

General Shin did not name the newly deployed missile. Analysts say it is the surface-to-surface Hyunmu 3C (also referred to as the Chollyong), reputed to be able to strike a target with two meters accuracy while carrying a 450-kilogram warhead.

The general also announced the South Korean military has deployed a new tactical ballistic missile with a range of 300 kilometers.

Professor Kim Yeon-su, at the National Defense University in Seoul says the cruise missile is precise but slow, making it susceptible to being intercepted.

The professor says having this type of advanced cruise missiles, able to target anywhere in North Korea, means South Korea has partly achieved an ability to defend itself.

The United States maintains more than 28,000 uniformed personnel in South Korea and includes the country under its nuclear weapons umbrella.

South Korea is bound by an agreement with the United States to limit its ballistic missiles to a range of 300 kilometers, but slower, surface-skimming cruise weapons are exempt from the agreement.

Defense and intelligence officials here and in Washington say they expect North Korea to conduct a third underground nuclear test sometime this year.

Earlier this month, South Korean officials released satellite photos showing new activity at North Korea's nuclear test site.

Pyongyang followed two previous failed long-range missile launches, in 2006 and 2009, with nuclear tests.

Former CIA Director Michael Hayden says he is concerned the country's new leader, Kim Jong Un, may feel pressured to follow last week's rocket launch with an additional provocative act.

"We have seen this pattern in the past - where they have a missile launch, the rest of the world has responded, and rather than compromise and negotiate, the North has taken another provocative action. And in two instances, the provocative action has been an attempt at a nuclear test. So I fear that this is the course of action they may be on," said Hayden.

North Korea on Wednesday again threatened - with its typical bombastic rhetoric - to wage a "sacred war to clearly annihilate the traitorous group of dogs" in the South.

The two Koreas fought to a stalemate in a three-year civil war during the early 1950s. The United States led U.N. forces against the North, which was backed by as many as three million Chinese soldiers.

China remains North Korea's only significant ally.



[Back to top](#)

48. [Attack, Thailand] Bomb Explodes In Narathiwat; School Set Ablaze

Friday, 20 April 2012

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Bomb-explodes-in-Narathiwat;-school-set-ablaze-30180294.html>

A school in Narathiwat province was set ablaze on Wednesday night while a bomb targeting government personnel exploded nearby, though no injuries were reported. The school was set fire on the eve of Deputy PM Yuthasak Sasiprapha's and Army chief General Prayuth Chanocha's visit.

The twostorey Ban Ta Ngo School was set ablaze at a time when volunteers guarding the school went for their prayers. Initial investigation found traces of gasoline in a classroom. About 300 metres from the school, an explosive placed inside a 20kilogram fire extinguisher was set off by remote control. It is believed this bomb was targeted at the response team.



Pol Colonel Prayong Khotsakha, superintendent of the Cho Ai Rong police station, led a team of 30 police officers and soldiers in three pickup trucks to inspect the scene. A group of attackers, believed to have been hiding in a rubber plantation, detonated the bomb when the vehicles passed. Police suspect that insurgents had set fire to the school in a move to ambush the response team. It is believed that this was in retaliation of their crackdown.

Yuthasak and Prayuth will be visiting the violenceplagued deep South day. Before heading off, General Prayuth said he would check up on local authorities' operations to ensure that their implementation of government policies is in line with the strategies of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC).

With the 8th anniversary of the Krue Se incident on April 28 drawing near, the army chief said he ordered tight security with checkpoints being set up by all units. Intelligence work has been increased and efforts are being made to reduce public misunderstanding.

Both officials first visited a military camp in Pattani to review operations there and to be told about progress on the investigations of the March 31 car bombings in Yala and Hat Yai districts.

While local intelligence reports say that the number of attacks have dropped, the authorities need to remain vigilant because they are not getting full cooperation from local residents, the army chief said.

"I have ordered officials to work hard and they are now implementing policies as directed by governmentappointed committees to tackle the violence," Prayuth said.

[Back to top](#)

49. [Attack, India] IED Blast At Heirok

Friday, 20 April 2012

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=11..200412.apr12>

An IED went off suddenly near a BSF outpost located at Heirok in Thoubal district this morning.

A police source informed that the IED exploded about 50 metres away from the outpost occupied by B Coy of 116th Bn BSF at Heirok Litan Makhong at about 7 am today.

However, there is no report of any human casualty.

While the outpost is located above a small hillock, there is a playground and a Government High School at the foothill.

On searching the area by a joint team of BSF and Thoubal District Police after the blast, another IED was recovered from near the blast site.

Explosives experts of Manipur Police retrieved the bomb and set it off at a safer place.

[Back to top](#)

NORTHCOM

50. [Security, United States] Rooftop Bomb Showers Glass And Debris In Tarpon Springs, Injuring Two

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/courts/criminal/rooftop-bomb-showers-glass-and-debris-in-tarpon-springs-injuring-two/1225228>

A deafening bomb exploded on the roof of a vacant building early Sunday, shattering downtown windows, showering patrons of a nightclub below with debris and blowing doors off their hinges.

Tarpon Springs police tied the blast to similar explosions in past years marking the celebration of Greek Orthodox Easter, but will likely rank it among the most devastating. Sunday's explosion coincided with a midnight resurrection service taking place at a nearby cathedral.

At the Zone Lounge at 121 E Tarpon Ave., more than 225 customers raced for cover. Some were bleeding. One of the bar's owners, Deanna Dunbar, briefly lost her hearing.

The blast detonated at 12:12 a.m., authorities say, on the roof of an empty building between the Zone Lounge and second-floor apartments above the Artists' Faire Gallery, 111 E Tarpon Ave.

"I have been here 25 years, and this is one of the loudest explosions I have heard around this event," said Tarpon Springs police Capt. Barbara Templeton.

Emergency responders including police, firefighters, bomb technicians and forensic teams rushed to the scene. Templeton said at least two women were treated for cuts, but she was not aware of anyone being hospitalized.

A backpack on Hibiscus Street was found to contain materials that could be used to set off a bomb, Templeton said, but police have not arrested anyone for the blast. The Tarpon Springs Police Department is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to an identification and arrest.

Kyle Larson was on the sidewalk across from the Zone Lounge when he saw a "big white flash."

"It was like lightning, almost," said Larson, 42. The explosion came milliseconds later. "It wasn't like, 'kabam.' It was like, boom ... ba-BOOM. It was like a two-stage concussion."

Chris Seslar, a partner in the Zone, was on the sidewalk outside when he heard what sounded like a bottle rocket followed by a massive blast. He raced inside and toward a rear patio, where many patrons with bicycles had gathered, part of a charity event for autism.

Later Sunday, Seslar, 48, stood in his empty lounge and pointed to the huge space that a day before had contained doors. "This whole door was blown wide open," he said. "There was glass everywhere."

The same bomb left a 6-foot-wide depression, destroyed a shed on the roof of the vacant building and rained glass and asphalt on frightened customers below.

"You've got people bleeding," Seslar said. "You've got people running this way, running that way. Nobody knows if there's a secondary bomb or anything like that."

Travis Merriex, who lives in the second-floor apartments, topped off a quiet Saturday night by walking his dog.

A little before midnight, he fell asleep on the couch. The explosion pushed the couch from the wall and threw him to the floor.

"I didn't know what to do," said Merriex, 21. "I thought the world was coming to an end."

As investigators from several agencies worked the scene, unrelated bits of chaos broke out on their own. Someone set a fire on the asphalt of Ring Avenue, with flames estimated at 3 feet high.

And an unidentified man was accused of stealing an ambulance. Authorities tracked the ambulance through its GPS device to a nearby water treatment facility. Police found a man inside the facility they say advanced toward them with objects clenched in both hands.

Police Tasered the man, thought to be at least 30 years old, Templeton said. The objects in his hands turned out to be a flashlight and a potato.

The Zone Lounge had closed its second-floor bar Saturday because of the charity event and the start of renovations. That floor has two restrooms, both nearly always in use, said Seslar.

Those restroom windows overlook the vacant rooftop where the bomb went off. "The bomb technician said, if anyone had been in those restrooms, they would be dead," Templeton said.

The tradition of setting off explosives around Easter migrated here in the Greek community from the islands in the Aegean Sea, when celebrants threw dynamite over cliffs to mark the resurrection. But in recent years in Tarpon Springs, such celebrations have become increasingly destructive, authorities fear.

In 2005, a "Greek bomb" demolished windows of two restaurants on Dodecanese Boulevard. In 2010, someone remotely set off 11 minutes' worth of illegal fireworks on the roof of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral during its Easter Eve service.

"When a tradition threatens life and property," Templeton said, "it's time to rethink the tradition."

Well-wishers called Seslar all day, asking how to help.

"If I have to tell you what I need," he said, "the word I want to get out to everybody is, 'Stop making bombs.' "

[Back to top](#)

SOUTHCOM

51. [Attack, Colombia] Car Bomb Damages Home In Southwestern Colombia

Saturday, 14 April 2012

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/04/14/car-bomb-damages-home-in-southwestern-colombia/>

A car bomb near a police station in southwestern Colombia has damaged about 200 homes and injured three people. The site is far from where President Barack Obama and other leaders are meeting at the Summit of the Americas.

The explosion in Morales in Cauca province is the fourth since leaders began arriving Friday, but appears unrelated to the summit in the northern city of Cartagena.

Cauca secretary of government Milena Cabeza says the bomb damaged 180 to 200 homes. Three people were slightly wounded but no one was killed.

Authorities did not say who was behind the blast, but various armed groups operate in the area, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the National Liberation Army.

Two small bombs detonated Friday in Cartagena and one in Bogota.

[Back to top](#)

52. [Security, Chile] Couple Arrested With Parts To Make Bomb In Santiago

Monday, 16 April 2012

<http://latinamericacurrentevents.com/santiago-chile-couple-arrested-with-material-for-construction-of-a-bomb/17946/>

A police patrol was doing a course of routine surveillance, arrested a man and a woman who, in an identity check on Monday morning, they discovered artifacts that enable the manufacture of at least one pump, while traveling by the municipality of La Granja, in southern Santiago.

The police Major Cristian Toledo, said the arrests were executed effective Quadrant Plan which, he said, "recorded two backpacks, carrying both, and within these are elements which, together, form an explosive device".

In the control, at about 4 am on Avenida Lo Ovalle with Maipu Passage, according to early reports, among other items they found a fire extinguisher, methane gas and clothes seem to change in the alleged attack is presumed could be made.

The detainees were referred to the Park subcomisaría Brazil, while troops of Crime Laboratory and the Special Police Operations Group (BEPGs) developed the skills.

[Back to top](#)

53. [Security, Colombia] Eight Suspected Collaborators Of The Farc's 30th Front Captured

Saturday, 14 April 2012

http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/C/capturados_ocho_supuestos_colaboradores_del_frente_30_de_las_farc/capturados_ocho_supuestos_colaboradores_del_frente_30_de_las_farc.asp?CodSeccion=185

The Navy and the CTI of the Attorney General's Office captured eight people to be part of the support network of the Front 30 of FARC in the town of Puerto de Buenaventura.

Catches were in a house in the neighborhood on July 14 of that town as far as troops arrived Marines and judicial police CTI pursuant to a warrant.

The inspection of the site were also found and seized 13 grenades, 4 electric detonators, a video camera, three cameras, six cell phones and 10 SIM card.

The captured must respond to the prosecution 42 sectional Buenaventura for the crime of manufacture, trafficking and possession of weapons, exclusive of the security forces.

[Back to top](#)

54. [Security, Peru] Peru Troops Free Shining Path Hostages

Saturday, 14 April 2012

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-17717145>

The Peruvian government says a group of gas workers kidnapped by Shining Path rebels on Monday has been freed.

Officials said hundreds of troops surrounded the rebels, forcing them into a hasty retreat, during which they left their captives behind. The government said all 36 hostages were safe.

There had been conflicting reports about the number of workers abducted, with some reports putting the number as high as 43, and others as low as 7.

"As a result of the energetic pressure and the tactical and intelligence operations carried out by the Armed Forces and the National Police, the criminal narco-terrorists were surrounded and forced to flee, freeing their hostages in the process," a statement by the Ministry of Defence said.

The government said it had not paid any ransom for the hostages' release.

The rebels had reportedly demanded a one-off payment of \$10m plus an annual "war contribution" of \$1.2m, as well as explosives.

But Justice Minister Juan Jimenez told a local TV station on Thursday that the government did "not negotiate with terrorists, the government acts within the law".

The authorities sent 1,500 troops to the area.

A policewoman was killed on Thursday during the search for the rebels, when the helicopter she co-piloted came under fire by alleged rebels.

Two other crew members were injured.

The workers were abducted on Monday morning in the Apurimac and Ene valleys, the last remaining stronghold of the Shining Path rebels.

The Maoist group posed a major challenge to the Peruvian state in the 1980s and early 1990s, but is now reduced to small gangs involved in cocaine trafficking.

Last week, Peruvian President Ollanta Humala said the Shining Path had been "totally defeated" in the Alto Huallaga Valley, once one of its key regions.

The hostages were building a new plant for gas from the huge Camisea field.

Peruvian President Ollanta Humala, who is attending the Summit of the Americas in Colombia, said he would fly to the area to meet the released hostages as soon as he returned to Peru.

[Back to top](#)