

**NATION/
WORLD**

Ethics Panel: Charges Filed Against Waters

WASHINGTON (AP) — A House investigative panel has charged California Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters with violating ethics rules.

Waters, a senior member of the House Financial Services Committee, would face a trial in the fall unless she negotiates a settlement.

If the case goes to trial, Democrats would have the political headache of two ethics trials — one for Waters and another for Rep. Charles Rangel of New York.

The specific charges against Waters were not made public in the announcement Monday from the House ethics committee.

Waters has been under investigation for a possible conflict of interest involving her assistance to a bank that was seeking federal aid. Her husband owned stock in the bank and had served on its board.

Intelligence Director Nomination Blocked

WASHINGTON (AP) — A spokeswoman for Sen. John McCain says the senator is blocking President Barack Obama's nominee to be the director of national intelligence.

Spokeswoman Brooke Buchanan says the Arizona Republican has requested a specific report from retired Air Force Gen. James R. Clapper. Buchanan declined to provide any details about the report but said it was not related to Clapper or his views.

Buchanan said McCain will continue to put a hold on Clapper's nomination until he provides the report.

The White House said it was "eager" to work with McCain, who lost a presidential bid to Obama, to answer questions not already discussed, "but we cannot accept further delay of this critical nomination."

"The Senate Intelligence Committee unanimously approved of Mr. Clapper's nomination last week — after hours of testimony and countless documents were provided to the committee — is a testament to the fact that he is one of our nations most experienced and respected intelligence professionals," White House spokesman Tommy Vietor said in a statement.

Obama nominated Clapper to succeed retired Adm. Dennis Blair to oversee the nation's 16 intelligence agencies.

Study Ties Deaths To Attacks On U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers are drawing the sharpest link yet between the accidental deaths of civilians in Afghanistan and increased attacks on U.S. forces there.

A study to be released Tuesday says each time U.S. or NATO forces accidentally kill Afghan civilians, insurgents and their sympathizers typically retaliate with six additional assaults on foreign forces over the following six weeks.

The study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research uses newly declassified NATO data. It concludes that revenge is often the motive for the increased violence, and that the Taliban use the issue of civilian casualties to recruit new fighters.

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Obama: U.S. Commitment In Iraq Is Shifting

BY JULIE PACE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama will set a course Monday for the nation's changing mission in Iraq as the military prepares to end its combat operations there.

In a speech at the national convention of the Disabled American Veterans in Atlanta, Obama was to address the progress being made to meet his deadline of drawing down all combat troops by the end of the month. A transitional force of 50,000 troops will remain to train Iraqi security forces, conduct counterterrorism operations and provide security for ongoing U.S. civilian efforts.

"Make no mistake: Our commitment in Iraq is changing, from a military effort led by our troops to a civilian effort led by our diplomats," Obama said in excerpts

released ahead of the speech.

Obama has said all U.S. troops will be gone from Iraq by the end of next year.

At the same time Obama has drawn down forces in Iraq, he has increased the U.S. commitment in Afghanistan, ordering a surge of 30,000 additional troops. But with casualties on the rise, there are fresh concerns about the 9-year mission in Afghanistan, as well as Obama's plan to begin withdrawing troops in July 2011, a timetable that critics say will embolden the Taliban and other extremist groups in the region.

Facing a potential loss of public and congressional support for the Afghanistan war, the White House is painting the U.S. mission there as humble and achievable: keeping the region from being a haven for terrorists.

"What we're looking to do is difficult, very difficult, but it's a fairly modest

goal," Obama told the CBS "Sunday Morning" show.

Despite the surge in Afghanistan, there are fewer U.S. troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan now than there were when Obama took office last year. Come September, when the Iraq drawdown is complete, the White House says there will be 146,000 troops on the ground, down from 177,000 in January 2009.

During his remarks Monday, Obama is expected to speak about the government's efforts to support those troops, as well as veterans of other wars.

"While our country has sometimes been divided, they have fought together as one," Obama said in the excerpts. "While other individuals and institutions have shirked responsibility, they have welcomed it."

After the speech, Obama was scheduled to attend a fundraising lunch for the

Democratic National Committee, his latest stop in a summer fundraising sprint that also includes events in Chicago later this week.

But Georgia's most prominent Democrat, former Gov. Roy Barnes, won't be joining Obama at either of his stops Monday. Barnes, who is running to get his old job back, had previously scheduled events in southern Georgia, his campaign said.

Distancing himself from the president could be politically smart for Barnes. Georgia is a Republican stronghold that John McCain carried in 2008. A poll conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc. in July had Obama with a 37 percent approval rating in the state. Fifty percent of those surveyed disapproved of Obama's performance.

N.Y. Jury Convicts Two In JFK Airport Fuel-Tank Plot

BY COLLEEN LONG
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Two men were convicted Monday of plotting to blow up jet fuel tanks at John F. Kennedy International Airport, a plan that authorities said was meant to outdo the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and avenge perceived U.S. oppression of Muslims around the world.

Russell Defreitas, a former JFK cargo handler, and Abdul Kadir, once a member of Guyana's parliament, were convicted of multiple conspiracy charges. Kadir was acquitted of one charge, surveillance of mass transportation. The Brooklyn federal court jury deliberated about five days.

Defreitas, a 66-year-old naturalized U.S. citizen from Guyana, and Kadir, 58, were arrested in 2007 after an informant infiltrated the plot and recorded them discussing it.

Prosecutors alleged that Defreitas and Kadir wanted to kill thousands of people and cripple the American economy by using explosives to blow up the fuel tanks and the underground pipelines that run through an adjacent Queens neighborhood. Authorities say the men sought the help of militant Muslims, including an al-Qaida operative, in Guyana.

The defendants wanted to set off an explosion "so massive ... that it could be seen from far, far away," Assistant U.S. Attorney Zainab Ahmad said in closing arguments. Their vision prompted them to code name the plot "The Shining Light," the prosecutor said.

The two men shut their eyes when the verdict was read and whispered quietly to their attorneys. During the trial, their lawyers described the two men as clueless trash-talkers who were led astray by the informant, a convicted drug dealer.

Kadir maintained his innocence. "Obviously, he's totally disappointed," said his attorney, Kafahni Nkrumah. "There's more than just the evidence Mr. Kadir was coming up against," Nkrumah said. "There's the atmosphere of fear in the country ... of Muslims, Islam and fear of terrorists, especially in New York City."

Defreitas' attorney Mildred Whalen said there wouldn't have been a case without the government's intervention. "I think it was clear these guys could-

n't act on their own ... and didn't act on their own," Whalen said. "We're deeply disappointed."

Both defendants planned to appeal. They are facing life in prison at sentencing Dec. 15.

U.S. Attorney Loretta Lynch praised the work of the investigators.

"The defendants intended to send a message by killing Americans and destroying the New York City economy," she said in a statement. "Today, the only message is that those who engage in potentially deadly plots against the United States will be stopped and punished."

Prosecutors relied heavily on the informant's secret recordings, which captured Defreitas bragging about his knowledge of Kennedy Airport and its vulnerabilities.

"For years, I've been watching them," he said of the fuel tanks while on a reconnaissance mission with the informant.

He also marveled at the lack of security, saying, "No soldier. Nothing at all."

In other tapes, Defreitas ranted about punishing the United States with an attack that would "dwarf 9/11." He told the informant his U.S. citizenship gave him cover.

"They don't expect nobody in this country to do something like this," he said. "They have their eyes on foreigners, not me."

Kadir testified in his own defense, denying he was a militant Muslim who spied for Iran for years before joining the JFK scheme. He told jurors that he warned the plotters: "Islam does not support aggression or killing innocent people."

As part of the plot, Defreitas and the informant traveled to Guyana to try to meet with Kadir and show him home-made videotapes of the airport's so-called fuel farms. The plotters also discussed reaching out to Adnan Shukrijumah, an al-Qaida member and explosives expert who was believed to be hiding out in the Caribbean at the time.

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