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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Security Alerts And A New Kind Of War

he announcement by the U.S. that 19 embassies in the Middle East and in Africa would be closed for several days amid security concerns has stirred fresh anxieties throughout this nation — a stark breeze reminding us of the war-like status that this nation still considers itself

when it comes to terrorism. But it's also been rather startling to consider the kind of detail that has come out about this elevated threat level.

For instance, it was reported Monday that the U.S. made its decision to close the embassies after intercepting communications between top al-Qaida leaders. According to the Los Angeles Times, Officials said Monday that Ayman Zawahiri, the Egyptian leader of Al Qaeda who is believed to be hiding in Pakistan, ordered Nasser Wuhayshi, who heads the affiliate known as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP, to orchestrate an attack or attacks as early as last Sunday."

CNN even reported that Zawahiri ordered his second-in-command in Yemen to "do something" — which really pinpoints the channel of communication being mined in this case.

What seems odd to us is that this bit of information, which was reported by numerous other sources, essentially informs al-Qaida that their secure lines of communication aren't so secure at all. Somewhere amid the chatter, intelligence officials picked up something that was fairly specific. And now, these al-Qaida officials are quite aware of this.

In a conventional war scenario, this would seem to be a reckless tipping of one's hand in the arena of covert combat. It would be unthinkable.

But as we must always remind ourselves, this is a post-Cold War world in which the unconventional is now the norm.

What's more, we are also seeing what Time magazine calls "the

new normal" in the realm of terrorism. Clearly, the major alert that was issued from Washington tips our

hand to our enemies that we have access to sensitive information. But in this unconventional war on terrorism, those high-profile security alerts are the best defense we have against the hit-and-run suicide tactics of elusive, border-less, state-less terrorist organizations. Since it's impossible to issue a warning without indicating some access to information — and since it's pointless to keep it a secret and let the terrorists strike as they will — the open acknowledgment of such intercepted information is necessary and practical.

The warnings and details also help mobilize the many levels of global counter-terrorism, ranging from military units to more local law enforcement in the various nations in question, to deal with the

So, while it all seems new and uncomfortably revealing, it is part of post-modern strategy to deal with an elusive enemy that continually morphs in different directions.

It's also part of the aforementioned "new normal," in which groups like al-Qaida and its affiliates are now more apt to hit softer international targets closer to their home bases instead of concentrating on a 9/11-type strike here. This will mean dealing with localized attacks in distant locales. It may take the pressure off the U.S. mainland, but it still finds Americans and others in harm's way and

It is an unconventional fact of life in this new state of retail, piecemeal war, the likes of which we've rarely seen before. It must keep us constantly on our guard, and that can be just as taxing and as dangerous as wars of a more familiar and conventional stripe.

kmh

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press Today is Wednesday, Aug. 7, the 219th day of 2013. There are 146 days

Ieft in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On August 7, 1782, Gen. George Washington created the Order of the Purple Heart, a decoration to recognize merit in enlisted men and noncommis-

On this date: In 1882, the famous feud between the Hatfields of West Virginia and the McCoys of Kentucky erupted into full-scale violence.

1927, the already opened Peace Bridge connecting Buffalo, N.Y., and Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada, was officially dedicated.

In 1942, U.S. and other allied forces landed at Guadalcanal, marking the start of the first major allied offensive in the Pacific during World War II. (Japanese forces abandoned the island the following February.)

In 1947, the balsa wood raft Kon-Tiki. which had carried a six-man crew 4,300 miles across the Pacific Ocean, crashed into a reef in a Polynesian archipelago: all six crew members reached land safely.

In 1959, the United States launched the Explorer 6 satellite, which sent back images of Earth.

In 1963, first lady Jacqueline Kennedy gave birth to a boy, Patrick Bouvier Kennedy, who died two days

later of respiratory distress syndrome. In 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, giving President Lyndon B. Johnson broad powers in dealing with reported North Vietnamese attacks on U.S. forces.

In 1971, the Apollo 15 moon mission ended successfully as its command module splashed down in the Pacific Ocean. In 1989, a plane carrying U.S.

Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Texas, and 14 others disappeared over Ethiopia (The wreckage of the plane was found six days later; there were no sur-In 1993, the public got its first

glimpse inside Buckingham Palace as people were given the opportunity to tour the London home of Queen Elizabeth II. (Proceeds were earmarked to help repair fire damage at Windsor

In 1998, terrorist bombs at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed 224 people, including 12 Amer-

In 2007, San Francisco's Barry Bonds hit home run No. 756 to break Hank Aaron's storied record with one out in the fifth inning of a game against the Washington Nationals,

Ten years ago: A bombing outside the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad killed 19 people. An Indonesian court sentenced Amrozi bin

Nurhasyim to death in the 2002 Bali bombings that killed 202 people (he was executed in 2008). West African peacekeepers entered Liberia's rebel-besieged capital; President Charles Taylor picked Vice President Moses

Blah as his successor. Five years ago: President George W. Bush, speaking in Bangkok, Thailand, praised the spread of freedom in Asia while sharply criticizing oppression and human rights abuses in China, Myanmar and North Korea: the president then traveled to Beijing to attend the

opening of the Olympic games.

One year ago: Jared Lee Loughner agreed to spend the rest of his life in prison, accepting that he went on a deadly shooting rampage at an Arizona political gathering in 2011 and sparing the victims a lengthy, possibly traumatic death-penalty trial. Syrian President Bashar Assad made his first appearance on state TV in nearly three weeks. Aly Raisman became the first U.S. woman to win Olympic gold on floor, and she picked up a bronze on balance beam on the final day of the gymnastics competition at the London Games. Movie critic Judith Crist, 90, died in New York.

Today's Birthdays: Writer-producer Stan Freberg is 87. Magician, author and lecturer James Randi is 85. Former MLB pitcher Don Larsen is 84. Actress Verna Bloom is 74. Humorist Garrison Keillor is 71. Singer B.J. Thomas is 71. Singer Lana Cantrell is 70. FBI Director Robert Mueller is 69. Actor John Glover is 69. Actor David Rasche is 69. Rhythmand-blues singer Harold Hudson is 64 Former diplomat, talk show host and activist Alan Keyes is 63. Country singer Rodney Crowell is 63. Actress Caroline Aaron is 61. Comedian Alexei Sayle is 61. Actor Wayne Knight is 58. Rock singer Bruce Dickinson is 55. Marathon runner Alberto Salazar is 55. Actor David Duchovny is 53. Country musician Michael Mahler (Wild Horses) is 52. Actress Delane Matthews is 52. Actor Harold Perrineau is 50. Jazz musician Marcus Roberts is 50. Country singer Raul Malo is 48. Actress Charlotte Lewis is 46. Actress Sydney Penny is 42. Actor Michael Shannon is 39. Actress Charlize Theron is 38. Rock musician Barry Kerch (Shinedown) is 37. Actor Randy Wayne is 32. Actor-writer Brit Marling

Thought for Today: "Happiness, it seems to me, consists of two things: first, in being where you belong, and second — and best — in comfortably going through everyday life, that is, having had a good night's sleep and not being hurt by new shoes." — Theodor Fontane, German author (1819-1898).

FROM THE BIBLE

Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:25. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



No Corporate Complaints

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

Job growth is sputtering. So why aren't the captains of American industry and finance — the nation's top CEOs, the titans of Wall Street, the corporate movers and shakers — demanding that more be done to revive the economy? They have the political

clout to make it happen. It can't be they don't know that job growth is sputtering. The data are indisputable. July's job growth of 162,000 iobs was the weakest in four months. The average workweek was the shortest in six months. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has also lowered its estimates of hiring during May and June.

They can't really believe further Robert spending cuts will help. They can see **REICH** the devastating effects of austerity economics on Europe. They know that the studies relied on by deficit hawks to justify more spending cuts have been debunked. Not even Republicans are any longer trying to make the case for austerity.

So why isn't corporate America demanding more dramatic measures to boost job growth? I can come up with only one rational explanation.

They don't really mind high unemployment. In fact, they rather like it. That may seem like a harsh conclusion, but

consider the realities. For one thing, high unemployment is keeping wages down. Workers who are worried about losing their jobs settle for whatever they can get — which is why hourly earnings keep dropping. The median wage of American workers is now 4 percent lower than it was at the start of the recovery.

Low wages, in turn, are boosting corporate profits. Corporations are doing well not because sales are up but because costs are down.

High unemployment is also fueling Wall Street's extraordinary bull market. That's because the Fed is committed to buying long-term bonds as long as unemployment remains high. This keeps bond yields low and pushes investors into

The bull market in equities is boosting execu-

tive pay, which is tied to stock-market gains through stock options and bonuses. And it's making Wall Street traders richer than they were before the Street's near-meltdown five years ago.

Finally, high unemployment keeps most Americans economically fearful and financially insecure. Why would the captains of American

industry and finance want this? Because people who are losing ground are more likely to believe that taxes should be cut on corporations and wealthy "job cre-

But wait. Over the longer term, high unemployment can't possibly be good for the captains of American industry and finance.

The real job creators are consumers, and if average people don't have jobs or good wages, this economy can't have a vigorous recovery. As growth slows, it's only a matter of time before profits take a beating and stock prices plummet.

Over the long term, the corporate and Wall Street elites of America would do better with a smaller share of a rapidly growing economy than their current big share of an economy that's hardly moving.

If they took the long-term view, they'd support higher taxes on themselves and their corpora tions to finance public investments in roads, bridges, public transit, better schools, and affordable higher education and health care - all of which will generate more and better jobs, and lead to faster growth.

But the captains of American industry and finance don't take the long-term view. Their time horizons are myopically focused on tomorrow's stock price and next quarter's profits. That's how they've made their money.

And that's the problem — because the rest of America is languishing in a long term that's looking ever bleaker.

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of "Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future." He blogs at www.robertreich.org.

I Am Officially A Twit!

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

"Surrender, Dorothy!" — the Wicked Witch in "The Wizard of Oz"

"You can't win, Rock!" — Mickey in "Rocky III" "Resistance is futile!" — The Borg in "Star Trek: the Next Generation" That's kind of how I feel right now, except that, unlike Dorothy, Rocky Balboa

and Captain Picard, I'm throwing in the towel. Four years ago I made a vow. Now I'm here to break it. "Today," I wrote in 2009, "I make you a solemn promise: I will never Twitter you.

Or is it tweet? I'm never sure. Four years later, I've resolved my noun/verb confusion. And I just tweeted you for the first time.

Some of you will wonder how this could be. You've been following me for years, you say.

Actually, you haven't. You've been following somebody who's been using my name (or, for all I know, using his own name) but you haven't been following me. That hasn't been possible 'til right now: (at)LeonardPittsJr1 just opened for busi-

There is, I suppose, some consoling satisfaction to be found in the fact that I've kept this promise for four years, kept it through the nonstop eye rolling of my Twitter-happy youngest son, the relentless grilling of a roomful of college students struggling to comprehend why anyone would choose a life of such deprivation and the aggravation of an editor who asked me to tweet real-time reactions to a political convention — only to be told I could not.

I am not a Luddite (he said somewhat defensively). I know a Luddite when I see one. My cousin (Fred Flintstone I call him) was still using a rotary dial phone last I checked and has yet to send an email. He's younger than me. That's a Luddite.

I, by contrast, have an iPad, e-books, digital music and a cloud computing account. I am not a

But what I am is a guy who thinks we as a society too often buy too uncritically into the idea of technology as salvation. New is not necessarily improved and having more ways to say a thing only equals more ways to create noise pollution if you have nothing to say.

Four years ago you have to remember, Twitter was primarily the domain of people narrating the minutiae of their lives in real time. In the 2009 column, I made fun of Roland Martin (then of CNN) tweeting that he was stuck on an airplane and

NBC's Ann Curry tweeting that her feet were cold.

Ask yourself: would anyone have cared about such ephemera if Martin had shared it by phone or Curry had sent a letter? No. Because the message did not matter; the medium did.

Four years later, Twitter is no longer quite so trivial. Four years later, it is a valuable tool of opinion and information sharing. Four years later, a colleague asks for my Twitter handle in a tone that takes for granted that I have one. What was a novelty is now a utility.

So fine, here I am, tweeting. I shared this news with my 22-year-old daughter, another Twitter holdout. "Sellout,"

she said.

Leonard

PITTS

Sellout though I may be, I remain skeptical of the idea that tech is its own reward. I still think the ubiquity of social media has impacts upon privacy, attention span, intelligence and interpersonal relationships we have barely begun to address, much less quantify. And I continue to think life is too short to be spending any part of it being informed about the state of Ann Curry's feet.

You will not be surprised to learn that yours truly was also the last person in America to get a cell phone. In defending that choice 16 years ago, I wrote that what was being lost was the ability to be out of touch. I waxed rhapsodic about "moments unaccounted, time spent beyond responsibility's

And yes, 16 years later, I am as wedded to my cell as the next guy. Novelties become utilities. I get

that. But even so, I was right about cell phones. And you know something? I'm right about this, too.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for The Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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YOUR LETTERS

Reagan's Rants

Fernande Bitsos, Yankton Peter Hecht of Indiana, High School teacher and radio host spilled his bile for a while on the *Press & Dakotan* to keep us nauseated. Then

goodbye Peter. Now we have Michael reagan, President Reagan's "adopted" son, and his continuous diatribes of malicious criticism or denunciations, using his father as his "umbrella." All of his commentaries use the same recipe. I do not believe that President Reagan, a decent man, would have condoned his adopted son's many vicious tales of exaggerations or gossips. No! President Reagan was a good man who never used in his presi-

We live in a democratic country, not in an autocratic one where one person has "UNLIMITED"

dency this kind of language.

power. Thus, to "trash" our government in the mud as Michael Reagan has been doing is "UN-American." We choose.. We vote We elect an American-born president to do his job. He does not "INHERIT" it, as is customary with royalties, by succession or with dictatorships by strong arms who have absolute power of authority.

We choose and vote for a president, be he Democrat or Republican. And we do our best, whether we him like or not, to support that president. Under a dictatorship, writers, newsmen, radio men — anyone criticizing it — would be imprisoned or executed.

Michael Reagan should be thankful to live in a more than 200-year-old democratic USA and not try to "destroy" it with his vitriolic commentaries. Write, Mr. Reagan, but do not tarnish our democracy.