

Judge Halts Fort Hood Shooting Trial

FORT HOOD, Texas (AP) — The standby attorney for the soldier charged in the 2009 Fort Hood shooting rampage accused Maj. Nidal Hasan on Wednesday of deliberately charting a course toward a conviction and death sentence, abruptly halting the trial after only one day.

Lt. Col. Kris Poppe, Hasan's lead court-appointed standby attorney, said he is willing to step in and be Hasan's defense lawyer. But he asked that his responsibilities as co-counsel be minimized if Hasan, who is representing himself at trial, continues to work toward being executed.

It is "clear his goal is to remove impediments or obstacles to the death penalty and is working toward a death penalty," Poppe told the judge overseeing the case at the Texas military base.

Hasan responded: "I object. That's a twist of the facts." The judge, Col. Tara Osborn, then cleared the courtroom.

Egyptian Efforts To End Standoff Failing

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's military-backed interim leadership proclaimed Wednesday that a crackdown against two protest sites is inevitable, saying that nearly two weeks of foreign diplomatic efforts to peacefully resolve its standoff with the Muslim Brotherhood have failed.

The government's statements strongly suggested that Egypt's sharp polarization may spiral into even more bloodshed as thousands of supporters of ousted President Mohammed Morsi, a longtime Brotherhood figure, camp out at two main Cairo intersections and hold daily protests outside security buildings.

At stake is stability in the Arab world's most populous country. Already more than 250 people have been killed in violence since the military ousted Morsi last month, including at least 130 Brotherhood supporters in two major clashes between security forces and backers of the deposed president.

"The decision agreed on by all to clear the sit-ins is final and irreversible," Prime Minister Hazem el-Beblawi said on state television, reading a statement issued by the Egyptian Cabinet.

Inferno Swarms Kenyan Airport

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — A small fire at Kenya's main airport swelled into a roaring inferno Wednesday that destroyed part of East Africa's largest aviation hub and hampered air travel across the continent.

Firefighters were desperately short of equipment in an area where the county government apparently lacks a single working fire engine. Crews needed hours to get the flames under control and at one point resorted to a line of officers passing water buckets.

The early morning blaze gutted the arrival hall, forcing authorities to close the entire airport and airlines to cancel dozens of flights. The flames also charred airport banks and foreign exchange bureaus.

No serious injuries were reported.

The fire broke out on the 15th anniversary of the bombings by al-Qaida of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, in neighboring Tanzania. No terror connection to the fire was immediately evident, but the blaze revived long-standing safety concerns about Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

Yemen's Government Says It Uncoveres al-Qaida Plots

BY AHMED AL-HAJ AND MAGGIE MICHAEL

Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — Military and intelligence officials in Yemen said Wednesday they uncovered an al-Qaida plot to fire missiles at foreign embassies in the capital and to attack naval forces guarding international shipping in the Red Sea.

Details of the plot, which was reminiscent of the suicide attack on the USS Cole in 2000 that killed 17 American sailors, emerged as Yemen remains in a heightened state of alert that has seen the U.S. and British embassies evacuated and a new suspected U.S. drone strike that killed seven alleged militants from the terrorist group.

The discovery of the al-Qaida plot prompted the Defense Ministry to step up security around the strategic Bab el-Mandeb waterway, which connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden. Officials banning speedboats or fishing vessels from the area, and military forces have been ordered to shoot to kill anybody who arouses suspicion or refuses to identify themselves.

Defense Minister Minister Gen. Mohammed Nasser Ahmed visited the area Sunday and urged the forces, known as Battalion 117, to stay on high alert for possible suicide attacks, according to officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

An estimated 3.5 million barrels of oil passed daily in 2010 through the Bab el-Mandeb strait, increasing the strategic importance of impoverished Yemen, which itself has only a relatively small

production of oil and natural gas. Revenue from oil and gas production is declining, worsening Yemen's ability to provide social services.

The militants from the terrorist group's Yemeni branch — known as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula — also were said to be plotting to use long-range missiles to target embassies and diplomats' residences, or try to take foreigners as hostages, the officials said.

Ahmed urged the forces to stay "on alert against any sabotage operations aiming at destabilizing the country," according to the officials.

Drastic security measures have been instituted across Sanaa, with multiple checkpoints set up, and tanks and other military vehicles guarding vital institutions.

A Yemeni government spokesman claimed earlier Wednesday that it had foiled a separate plot to target the southern cities of Mukalla and Bawzeer, then send militants disguised as Yemeni troops to attack two nearby strategic oil ports on the Arabian Peninsula, government spokesman Rageh Badi said.

Badi said other al-Qaida militants would also try to sabotage oil pipelines to "create panic among Yemeni army, and Yemeni security services." Pipelines in the lawless south have been repeatedly attacked by al-Qaida militants and armed tribesmen who maintain ties with the terrorist group.

Details of the plot were first reported by the BBC.

A Mideast official urged caution about the Yemeni government spokesman's assertion that the al-Qaida plan was to take over the Yemeni ports. The official said al-Qaida has long tried to target the oil

industry, and kidnap foreign oil executives, but lacks the troop strength to overrun the oil facilities, which are ringed by Yemeni troops, or the equally well-defended port cities.

The Mideast official said the recent rise in drone strikes — five in 10 days — had been carefully coordinated with U.S. officials together with Yemeni action on the ground in response to the threat from the al-Qaida branch, which is considered the most active of the terrorist network.

A U.S. intelligence official would only confirm that the U.S. and Yemen coordinate all counterterrorist action. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the counterterrorism campaign publicly.

The description of the al-Qaida plots came a day after the U.S. and Britain evacuated staff due to a threat that prompted Washington to close temporarily 19 diplomatic posts in the Middle East and Africa. The Yemeni military officials did not link the al-Qaida plot described Wednesday to the U.S. decision last week to temporarily close its diplomatic posts in the Middle East and Africa.

A U.S. intelligence official and a Mideast diplomat told the AP that the closures were triggered by the interception of a secret message between al-Qaida chief Ayman al-Zawahiri and Nasser al-Wahishi, the leader of the Yemen-based al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, about plans for a major attack.

President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi met with military, security and intelligence officials in an emergency session late Tuesday and warned them that al-Qaida has infil-

Leader of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)



Nasir al Wuhayshi

Early life

Born Yemen, in the late 1970s to a reportedly wealthy family

Rise in al-Qaida

1998 Travels to Afghanistan; becomes Osama bin Laden's personal secretary

2001 Arrested by Iranian authorities after fleeing Afghanistan

2006 Breaks out of maximum security prison in Sanaa, Yemen, with more than 20 other al-Qaida militants

2009 Named head of the joined Yemeni and Saudi Arabian branches of al-Qaida (AQAP)

2012 Elevated by al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri to No. 2 position

2013 Zawahiri orders Wuhayshi to carry out attack that leads to the closure of U.S. embassies and a global travel alert

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Source: McClatchy Washington Bureau, Georgetown University, MCT Photo Service

trated the security service, putting its militants in key positions as well as recruiting agents to work for the terrorist group, according to officials familiar with the discussions at the meeting. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

The president described Yemen's security situation as "fragile," the officials said.

Obama Cancels Putin Summit Amid Snowden Tensions

BY MATTHEW LEE AND DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Already faltering, President Barack Obama's five-year effort to reboot U.S.-Russian relations finally crashed Wednesday, as the White House abruptly canceled his planned face-to-face summit with Russia's Vladimir Putin.



Obama

The effort to upgrade the relationship has fallen victim to the rapidly shrinking common ground between the former Cold War rivals, including extreme differences over the Syrian civil war, Russia's domestic crackdown on civil rights and — the final straw — the asylum granted to National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden.

The U.S. and Russian foreign and defense ministers will sit down in Washington later this week, but Obama canceled his planned early September summit in Moscow with Putin because of what the White House called a lack of "recent progress" on a wide array of critical issues. Such steps are not taken lightly, and the decision will almost certainly herald a new frostiness in already chilly ties.

"We have informed the Russian government that we believe it would be more constructive to postpone the summit until we have more results from our shared agenda," the White House said in a statement, citing deep differences over missile defense, arms control, trade, global security and human rights. "Russia's disappointing decision to grant Edward Snowden temporary asylum was also a factor that we considered in assessing the current state of our bilateral relationship," it added.

The Kremlin responded quickly, voicing its own disappointment with the canceled summit and blaming it on Washington's inability to develop relations with Moscow on an "equal basis." Putin's foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Ushakov, added that the decision was "clearly linked" to the Snowden case, a

situation that he said wasn't of Russia's making.

While Snowden might have been the immediate catalyst for canceling the summit, the seeds of renewed U.S.-Russia discord were planted more than a year ago when Putin retook the Russian presidency. On returning to power, he adopted a deeply nationalistic and more openly confrontational stance toward the United States than had his chosen successor Dmitry Medvedev, whose 2008-2012 tenure roughly overlapped Obama's first term in the White House.

Where Medvedev abstained in a U.N. Security Council vote that authorized NATO airstrikes in Libya, Putin has refused repeated entreaties from Washington to allow the world body to impose even minimal sanctions on President Bashar Assad's Syria. At the same time, Putin's government has continued to supply its ally Assad with weapons. And it has not delivered on pledges to coax Assad into sending representatives to talks with the opposition aimed at finding a political solution to the Syrian conflict.

Obama sought to cultivate Medvedev as a friend of the United States, making significant changes to Bush administration plans for European missile defense to try to ease Russian concerns about that project, signing a new arms control treaty and famously sending then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Geneva where she proclaimed a "reset" in U.S.-Russia relations.

Putin, however, seems to want none of the coziness that a "reset" would bring and has actively sought to undo previous agreements on cooperation. Under Putin, Russia has stepped up its negative rhetoric on missile defense, ended two decades of democracy and civil society training by the U.S. Agency for International Development and banned adoptions of Russian children by Americans.



Putin

Consumer Borrowing Rose \$13.8B In June

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans borrowed more in June to buy cars and attend schools. But they were frugal again with their credit cards, as many remain wary of taking on high-interest debt.

Consumers increased their borrowing \$13.8 billion in June from May to a seasonally adjusted \$2.85 trillion, the Federal Reserve said Wednesday in its monthly report on consumer credit. That's the highest level ever. The category that includes credit card debt dropped \$2.7 billion in June and remains 16.5 percent below its July 2008 peak.

Borrowing for autos and student loans rose \$16.5 billion in June. Gains in this category have lifted overall consumer credit to record levels in all but one month since June 2011.

Since January 2011, the measure of student and auto loans has risen \$312.6 billion.

During that same 2 1/2-year period, credit card debt has increased just \$16 billion.

The Federal Reserve's consumer credit report does not separate student loans and auto loans. But the Federal Reserve Bank of New York tracks consumer credit on a quarterly basis. Those reports show that student loan debt has been the biggest driver of borrowing since the Great Recession officially ended in June 2009. In part, that's because many unemployed Americans have returned to school for training in hopes of landing a job.

More credit card borrowing could help boost consumer spending, which accounts for 70 percent of economic activity. But many consumers have been hesitant to run up high-interest debt since the Great Recession ended. And this year consumers have been hit by higher Social Security taxes.

Yankton School District hosts...

7th & 8th Grade Parent/Student Meeting

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Yankton Middle School Theatre
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