

Syrian Rebels Capture Country's Largest Dam

BY BASSEM MROUE
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Syrian rebels scored one of their biggest strategic victories Monday since the country's crisis began two years ago, capturing the nation's largest dam and iconic industrial symbol of the Assad family's four-decade rule.

Rebels led by the al-Qaida-linked militant group Jabhat al-Nusra now control much of the water flow in the country's north and east, eliciting warnings from experts that any mistake in managing the dam may drown wide areas in Syria and Iraq.

A Syrian government official denied that the rebels captured the dam, saying "heavy clashes are taking place around it." The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. But amateur video released by activists showed gunmen walking around the facility's operations rooms and employees apparently carrying on with their work as usual.

In the capital, Damascus, the rebels kept the battle going mostly in northeastern and southern neighborhoods as the fighting gets closer to the heart of President Bashar Assad's seat of power.

The capture of the al-Furat dam came after rebels seized two smaller dams on the Euphrates river, which flows from Turkey through Syria and into Iraq. Behind al-Furat dam lies Lake Assad, which at 640 square kilometers (247 square miles) is the country's largest water reservoir.

The dam produces 880 megawatts of electricity, a small amount of the country's produc-

"This is the most important dam in Syria. It is a strategic dam, and Lake Assad is one of the largest artificial lakes in the region."

RAMI ABDUL-RAHMAN

tion. Syria's electricity production relies on plants powered by natural gas and fuel oil.

Still, the capture handed the rebels control over water and electricity supplies for both government-held areas and large swaths of land the opposition has captured over the past 22 months of fighting.

"This is the most important dam in Syria. It is a strategic dam, and Lake Assad is one of the largest artificial lakes in the region," said Rami Abdul-Rahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"It supplies many areas around Syria with electricity," Abdul-Rahman said, citing the provinces of Raqqa, Hassaka and Aleppo in the north as well as Deir el-Zour in the east near the Iraqi border.

The dam, constructed in the late 1960s in cooperation with the Soviet Union, is located in a northeastern town once called Tabqa. After the dam was built, the town's name changed to Thawra, Arabic for revolution, to mark the March 8, 1963 coup that brought Assad's ruling Baath party to power.

Early Monday, when the rebels stormed the dam and the town, one of the first things they

did was set ablaze a giant statue of the late President Hafez Assad, the current president's father.

"This is one of the biggest projects that have a moral value in Syria's history," said Dubai-based Syrian economist Samir Seifan. "It was the Syrian government's biggest project in the 20th century."

Seifan said that the dam is "a very sensitive plant" and it is very important that technicians and experts keep it running as usual because any mistake could have dangerous consequences.

He added that any mistake could "release massive amounts of water that will drown wide areas including the city of Deir el-Zour as well as cities in Iraq," Seifan added that "any damage will have dangerous consequences on civilians. It supplies hundreds of thousands of hectares with water."

An amateur video released by activists showed rebels walking through large operations rooms as employees went on with their work as usual.

"The al-Furat dam is now in the hands of the Free Syrian Army heroes," says the narrator. "And these are the workers, continuing their work as usual."

The video appeared genuine and corresponded to other Associated Press reporting on the events depicted.

Abdul-Rahman, of the Observatory, said the rebels have told their fighters not to interfere with the work of the dam. He added that the gunmen will leave the dam for employees to run but will keep their checkpoints around the dam.

Fugitive Ex-LA Cop Charged With Murder

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP) — A fugitive ex-Los Angeles police officer was charged Monday with murdering a Riverside police officer and special circumstances that could bring the death penalty.

Riverside County District Attorney Paul Zellerbach said Christopher Dornier was also charged with the attempted murder of another Riverside officer and two Los Angeles Police Department officers.

The LAPD officers and the Riverside officers were fired on in two separate shootings early Thursday after Dornier became the target of a manhunt suspected of killing a former LAPD captain's daughter and her fiancé the previous weekend.

"By both his words and conduct, he has made very clear to us that every law enforcement officer in Southern California is in danger of being shot and killed," Zellerbach said.

Southern California authorities were investigating hundreds of tips Monday after offering a \$1 million reward for information leading to Dornier's arrest.

Northeast Commuters Deal With Clogged Roads

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — The workweek opened with a white-knuckle ride Monday in the snow-clobbered Northeast as drivers encountered unplowed streets, two-lane roads reduced to a single channel and snowbanks so high it was impossible to see around corners.

Schools remained closed across much of New England and New York, and about 140,000 homes and businesses were still waiting for the electricity to come back on after the epic storm swept through on Friday and Saturday with 1 to 3 feet of snow that entombed cars and sealed up driveways.

The storm was blamed for at least 15 deaths in the U.S. and Canada, and officials warned of a new danger as rain and higher temperatures set in: roof collapses.

In hard-hit Connecticut, where some places were buried in more than 3 feet of snow, the National Guard used heavy equipment to clear roads in the state's three biggest cities.

Military Weighs Cutbacks In Drone Programs

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AP) — The Pentagon for the first time is considering scaling back the massive buildup of drones it has overseen in the past few years, both to save money and to adapt to changing security threats and an increased focus on Asia as the Afghanistan war winds down.

Air Force leaders are saying the military may already have enough unmanned aircraft systems to wage the wars of the future. And the Pentagon's shift to Asia will require a new mix of drones and other aircraft because countries in that region are better able to detect unmanned versions and shoot them down.

If the Pentagon does slow the huge building and deployment program, which was ordered several years ago by then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates, it won't affect the CIA drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere against terror suspects. Those strikes were brought center stage last week during the confirmation hearing for White House counterterror chief John Brennan, President Barack Obama's pick to lead the CIA.

U.S. Ships Military Equipment Out Of Afghanistan

BY PATRICK QUINN
AND RAHIM FAIEZ
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The United States began its withdrawal from Afghanistan in earnest, officials said Monday, sending the first of what will be tens of thousands of containers home through a once-blocked land route through Pakistan.

The shipment of 50 containers over the weekend came as a new U.S. commander took control of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan to guide the coalition through the end stages of a war that has so far lasted more than 11 years.

The containers were in the first convoys to cross into Pakistan as part of the Afghan pullout, said Marc Spade, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, meanwhile, faced his first headache just one day after taking command, after an Afghan government panel acknowledged that detainees taken off the battlefield by coalition and Afghan troops face widespread torture at the hands of local security forces — although it denied systematic torture in government-run prisons.

Dunford's predecessor, Marine Gen. John Allen, had urged the Afghan government to investigate allegations of detainee abuse.

Allen also had to deal with the delicate task of improving relations with Pakistan, which closed two key land routes from Afghanistan to its southern port of Karachi to all U.S. and NATO cargo for seven months. The Pakistani move came in retaliation for U.S. airstrikes that killed 24 Pakistani troops at a post along the Afghan border in November 2011. Islamabad reopened the route after Washington apologized for the deaths.

During the closure of the Pakistan route, the U.S. had to use a longer, more costly path that runs north out of Afghanistan through Central Asia and Russia. The U.S. has also used that route to withdraw equipment — but not at the pace it wanted because of the length of the process. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said last year that the rerouting was costing the U.S. more than \$100 million a month.

It's unclear what took the U.S. so long to begin withdrawing equipment through the Pakistan route, which runs south out of Afghanistan to the Pakistani port city of Karachi. Supplies have been flowing into Afghanistan since the route re-

opened in July 2012, and the U.S. signed a new deal with Pakistan governing the shipments that same month. There have been temporary disruptions at several points since then because of security concerns and strikes by truckers over compensation.

The abuse allegations are just some of the diplomatic land mines that Dunford will have to deal with as he guides the coalition through its final 23 months in Afghanistan. Most foreign combat forces will leave at the end of 2014, and those that remain will do so after separate agreements are made with the Afghan government.

U.N. complaints about the torture of detainees in Afghan facilities last year prompted the U.S.-led NATO coalition to stop many transfers of detainees to the Afghans, a key part of the transition process.

The planned transfer of the Parwan detention facility at Bagram from the United States military to the Afghan army has also been delayed, apparently because of administrative problems. Afghan President Hamid Karzai has for months demanded the full transfer of the facility, threatening not to sign a bilateral security agreement with the U.S. if the handover doesn't take place. That agreement is key to keeping military forces here after 2014.

The majority of the prison was handed over with much fanfare last September, but the two sides remained locked in a dispute over the fate of hundreds of Taliban and terror suspects behind bars. The United States is withholding the transfer of scores of inmates, reportedly out of concern that Afghan authorities may torture some or simply let some political detainees

go for reasons of expediency, and no longer hold dangerous prisoners without charge.

Dunford also has to oversee the drawdown of about 100,000 foreign troops, including 66,000 from the United States, and make sure that the newly recruited and trained Afghan security forces are capable of taking the lead for their country's security in the spring.



0 Foot Pain + Comfort = LOVE

We have the insole & arch support right for you!

Make life better everyday without foot pain!

Boston Shoes to Boots

312 W. 3rd • Yankton • 665-9092

Congratulations



Anytime Fitness Ribbon Cutting

The Yankton Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Committee hosted a ribbon cutting for the new location of Anytime Fitness, 2509 Fox Run Parkway. Anytime Fitness is Yankton's only 24 hour fitness gym with state of the art equipment, tanning, 24-hour security, private restrooms, private showers and worldwide reciprocity! Call Lora Elliott, manager of the Yankton facility at (605)260-0360 or email at yankton@anytimefitness.com or www.anytimefitness.com.

YANKTON DAILY
PRESS&DAKOTAN

Lavish you and your loved one this Valentine's Day.

CREATE YOUR OWN Spa Package

Purchase a 60 Minute massage (\$52) and choose 1 option from each of the following Categories to create the perfect Spa Package!

Category 1

Clarity Facial —\$54
Oxygen Facial- \$62
Fire and Ice Back Facial —\$54

Category 2

Hands and Feet Paraffin Wax —\$20
Foot Scrub —\$10
Lip Scrub —\$6

Receive 15% off Total Purchase Amount

All of our services are available as gift certificates!

Avera Sacred Heart Massage Therapy

Call (605) 668-8376 for appointments.



YANKTON ECONOMIC SUCCESS



Thanks to our investors!



Yankton Area Progressive Growth
Economic Development

GOAL: \$2,200,000 PROGRESS TO GOAL: \$1,990,500

Platinum \$100,000 or more
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital
First Dakota National Bank
First National Bank South Dakota
Yankton County
Gold \$50,000-\$99,999
Yankton Media
Applied Engineering, Inc.
CorTrust Bank
Slowey Construction, Inc.
Dakota Trailer Manufacturing
Eisenbraun & Associates
Silver \$25,000-\$49,999
Northtown Automotive
Bronze \$5,000-\$24,999
John A. Conkling Distributing
MidAmerican Energy
Johnson, Miner, Marlow, Woodward & Huff Prof., LLC
Vishay-Dale Electronics, Inc.
Yankton Motor Company
Williams & Company, P.C.
Vision Real Estate Services
Bernard Properties
Dakota Archery & Outdoor Sports
Mike Dellinger
Fejfar Plumbing & Heating
Wayne & Lori Ibarolle
First Chiropractic Center
David Hosmer & Steph Tamisiea
Legacy Financial Group - Raymond James
Copper \$500-\$4,999
Gerstner Oil Co.
Mannes Architects
Kline's Jewelry
Roger's Family Pharmacy
Willcockson Eye Associates
Lewis & Clark Realty, Inc.
Todd & Danyal Chance
Jeff & Amy Jones
Somsen Agency
L&S Electric
State Farm - Rhonda Wesseln
Blackburn & Stevens, Prof. LLC
Matt & Alyssa Walters
Jack & Tiffany Weeks
Jay Werth
Katie Wintz - Vision Real Estate
Yankton Insurance Agency
Wohlenberg Ritzman & Co LLC
Joe & Patti Vig
Brian & Amy Beran
Nate & Michelle Franzen
Tanya Hacecky
Marc & Julie Mooney
Brad & Sheryl Dykes
Ron & Pat Kraft
Deb Specht
Hatch Furniture & Flooring



Wish to contribute?

Become an investor and supporter of YES!

Your contribution will ensure the continued success of the YES! campaign that creates new jobs, training and education opportunities.

Yes, I will invest in YES!

The investment pledge is \$ _____ Total

You have five years to complete your pledge (circle your choice)

To be paid: one time / quarterly / yearly / monthly

Name for publicity _____

Your Name _____ Your Signature _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____ Work Phone _____

Make checks payable to Yankton Area Progressive Growth or charge to:

AMEX/Discover/MasterCard/VISA: Name on card _____

Card Number _____ Exp Date _____ 3-4 digit code _____

ACH monthly draft is also available. Please provide a voided check and monthly withdrawal date.



Questions?

Contact:

Jay Werth, YES! Campaign Director

803 E. 4th St., Yankton, SD 57078

605-668-4560 - jay@yanktonsd.com