

Bill Clinton To Aid Dems In 2014 Races

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bill Clinton, popular in territory unfriendly to President Barack Obama, is reprising his role as a super-surrogate for Democrats battling to keep their Senate majority and win other races. In the long run, Clinton could pick up political chits for his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, should she run for president in 2016.

The political terrain is rough in these Senate battleground states. Obama's signature domestic achievement, the Affordable Care Act, is unpopular. Obama himself has soft poll numbers. Many Democrats won't appear with the president, even though they'll accept his prodigious fundraising help.

Not so with Clinton, who appears Tuesday in Louisville, Ky., with Alison Lundergan Grimes, the Democrat who's trying to unseat Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell. It's perhaps the nation's hardest-fought Senate race in a state where Obama would be of little help.

Clinton is the last Democratic presidential candidate to carry a swath of Southern states crucial to the 2014 midterms, including his native Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky and Louisiana. The former president remains in heavy demand as a fundraiser and adviser as his wife plans an upcoming book tour and considers how she may help Democrats this year.

"He has an open invitation from me," Ed Fitzgerald, a Democrat challenging GOP Ohio Gov. John Kasich, said of Clinton.



Clinton

Ukraine Issues Warrant For Yanukovych

SEVASTOPOL, Ukraine (AP) — With Viktor Yanukovych on the run, Ukraine's interim government drew up a warrant Monday for the fugitive president's arrest in the killing of anti-government protesters last week, while Russia issued its strongest condemnation yet of the new leaders in Kiev, deriding them as "Kalashnikov-toting people in black masks."

Parliament speaker Oleksandr Turchinov, the interim president, moved quickly to open a dialogue with the West, saying at a meeting with European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton that the course toward closer integration with Europe and financial assistance from the EU were "key factors of stable and democratic development of Ukraine."

In a statement released by his office, Turchinov said Ukraine and the EU should immediately revisit the closer ties that Yanukovych abandoned in November in favor of a \$15 billion bailout loan from Russia that set off a wave of protests. Within weeks, the protests expanded to include outrage over corruption and human rights abuses, leading to calls for Yanukovych's resignation.

Yanukovych, who fled Kiev on Saturday after the opposition took over government buildings, has reportedly gone to the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, a pro-Russia area.

Calls are mounting in Ukraine to put Yanukovych on trial after a tumultuous presidency in which he amassed powers, enriched his allies and family, and cracked down on protesters. Anger boiled over last week after 82 people, primarily demonstrators, were killed in clashes with security forces in the bloodiest violence in Ukraine's post-Soviet history.

Acting Interior Minister Arsen Avakhov said on his official Facebook page that a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Yanukovych and several other officials for the "mass killing of civilians."

Ariz. Governor Pressure Over Measure

PHOENIX (AP) — Republican Gov. Jan Brewer faced intensifying pressure Monday from CEOs, politicians in Washington and state lawmakers in her own party to veto a bill that would allow business owners with strongly held religious beliefs to deny service to gays and lesbians.

Senate Bill 1062 has set off a political firestorm since the Arizona Legislature passed it last week, with critics denouncing the measure as blatantly discriminatory and embarrassing to the state.

The chorus of opposition has grown each day, and on Monday, three state senators who voted in favor of the bill changed course and said they oppose it. U.S. Sen. John McCain asked Brewer to veto the measure, as did the CEO of American Airlines.

State Sens. Bob Worsley, Adam Driggs and Steve Pierce sent their letter urging a veto just days after they joined the entire 17-member Senate GOP caucus in voting for the bill.

"I think laws are (already) on the books that we need, and have now seen the ramifications of my vote," Worsley told The Associated Press. "I feel very bad, and it was a mistake."

Uganda's President Signs Anti-Gay Bill

ENTEBBE, Uganda (AP) — Uganda's president on Monday signed an anti-gay bill that punishes gay sex with up to life in prison, a measure likely to send Uganda's beleaguered gay community further underground as the police try to implement it amid fevered anti-gay sentiment across the country.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said the bill, which goes into effect immediately, was needed because the West is promoting homosexuality in Africa.

Museveni may have defied Western pressure to shelve the bill, four years and many versions after it was introduced, but his move — likely to galvanize support ahead of presidential elections — pleased many Ugandans who repeatedly urged him to sign the legislation.

Nigeria's president similarly signed an anti-gay bill into law just over a month ago, sparking increased violence against gays who already were persecuted in mob attacks. Some watchdog groups warn a similar backlash of violence may occur in Uganda.

Drug Lord Charged Inside Mex. Prison

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Lawyers for drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman have filed an appeal seeking an injunction against any attempt to extradite him to the United States, a federal court announced Monday.

Mexican drug suspects have used such appeals in the past to delay extraditions for months or even years, though most eventually lose the appeals.

On Sunday, Guzman was also formally charged with violations of Mexico's drug-trafficking laws, starting a legal trial process in Mexico that would also make a swift extradition to the U.S. less likely.

Guzman was charged with cocaine trafficking Sunday inside a maximum-security prison outside the nation's capital, Mexico's Federal Judicial Council announced. A judge has until Tuesday to decide whether to release him or start the process of bringing him to trial. Authorities believe the judge will launch the trial process, a Mexican federal official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to publicly discuss the matter.

Hagel Eyes Smaller Military

BY ROBERT BURNS
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — Looking beyond America's post-9/11 wars, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Monday proposed shrinking the Army to its smallest size in 74 years, closing bases and reshaping forces to confront a "more volatile, more unpredictable" world with a more nimble military.

The nation can afford a smaller military so long as it retains a technological edge and the agility to respond on short notice to crises anywhere on the globe, Hagel said. He said the priorities he outlined reflect a consensus view among America's military leaders, but Republicans in Congress were quick to criticize some proposed changes.

In a speech at the one-year mark of his tenure as Pentagon chief, Hagel revealed many details of the defense spending plan that will be part of the 2015 budget that President Barack Obama will submit to Congress next week. Hagel described it as the first Pentagon budget to fully reflect the nation's transition from 13 years of war.

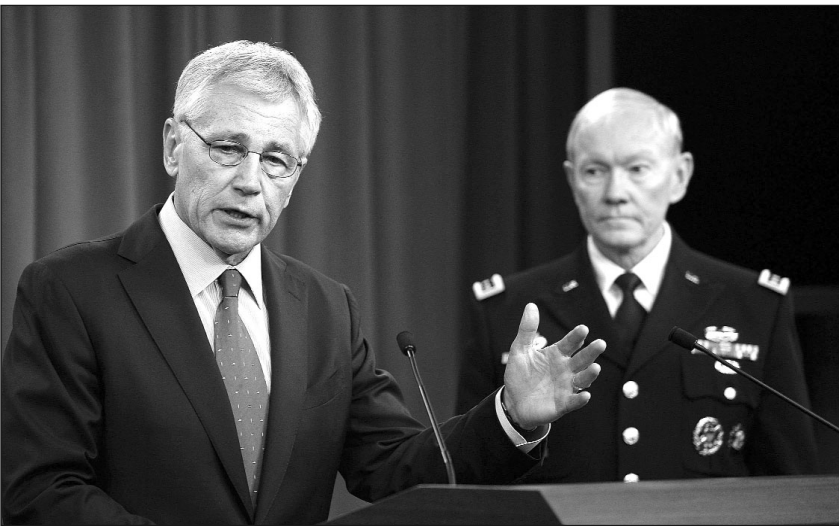
At the core of his plan is the notion that after wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that proved longer and more costly than foreseen, the U.S. military will no longer be sized to conduct large and protracted ground wars. It will put more emphasis on versatile, agile forces that can project power over great distances, including in Asia.

Hagel stressed that such changes entail risk. He said, "We are entering an era where American dominance on the seas, in the skies and in space can no longer be taken for granted."

However, budget constraints demand that spending be managed differently from the past, with an eye to cutting costs across a wide front, including in areas certain to draw opposition in the Congress, he said.

He proposed, for example, a variety of changes in military compensation, including smaller pay raises, a slowdown in the growth of tax-free housing allowances and a requirement that retirees and some families of active-duty service members pay a little more in health insurance deductibles and co-pays.

"Although these recommendations do not cut anyone's pay, I realize they will be controversial," Hagel said, adding that the nation cannot afford the escalating cost of military pay and benefit packages that were



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, flanked by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey, calls for 20 percent troop cut during a press conference at the Pentagon Monday in Virginia. The Pentagon's proposed 2015 budget will call for a future American army smaller than any since before World War II.

enacted during the war years.

"If we continue on the current course without making these modest adjustments now, the choices will only grow more difficult and painful down the road," he said.

Although Congress has agreed on an overall number for the military budget in fiscal 2015 — just under \$500 billion — there are still major decisions to be made on how that money should be spent to best protect the nation.

Early reaction from Republicans in Congress was negative.

"I am concerned that we are on a path to repeat the mistakes we've made during past attempts to cash in on expected peace dividends that never materialized," said Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, a possible presidential contender in 2016.

Another proposal likely to draw fire on Capitol Hill is Hagel's call for a new round of domestic military base closings in 2017. In the years following the last round, in 2005, members of Congress fought to protect bases in their home districts and states, arguing that the process does not yield as much savings as advertised.

Among other changes Hagel proposed:

— The active-duty Army would shrink

from today's 522,000 soldiers to between 440,000 and 450,000 — the smallest number since 1940 when the nation was gearing up to enter World War II. The Army currently is scheduled to be reduced to 490,000.

— The Army National Guard would drop from 355,000 soldiers to 335,000 by 2017, and the Army Reserve would drop by 10,000, to 195,000. The National Guard also would send its Apache attack helicopters to the active-duty Army in exchange for Black Hawk helicopters more suitable for domestic disaster relief missions.

— The Marine Corps would shrink from 190,000 to 182,000.

— The Navy would keep its 11 aircraft carriers but "lay up," or temporarily remove from active service, 11 of its 22 cruisers while they are modernized. The Navy would reduce from 52 to 32 its purchase of littoral combat ships, which are smaller vessels designed to operate closer to shore.

— The Air Force would retire its fleet of A-10 "Warthog" tank-killer planes for an estimated savings of \$3.5 billion over five years. It also would retire the venerable U-2 spy plane, which debuted early in the Cold War as a stalwart of U.S. intelligence.

Governors Conference

Govs Erupt In Partisan Dispute At WH

BY NEDRA PICKLER AND STEVE PEOPLES

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's governors emerged from a meeting with President Barack Obama on Monday claiming harmony, only to immediately break into an on-camera partisan feud in front of the West Wing.

Louisiana Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal lashed out first, saying if Obama were serious about growing the economy, he would approve the Keystone XL pipeline project and take other executive actions.

Instead, Jindal said, Obama "seems to be waving the white flag of surrender" on the economy by focusing on raising the federal minimum wage to \$10.10, up from \$7.25. "The Obama economy is now the minimum wage economy. I think we can do better than that," Jindal said.

Jindal's statements were the kind that Republicans often make on television appearances or at partisan events, but don't usually come from potential presidential candidates standing yards from the Oval Office. Other governors had been instead expressing wide agreement and appreciation for the president's time. As Jindal spoke, some of his colleagues began shaking their heads, and Hawaii Democratic Gov. Neil Abercrombie began audibly mumbling to others around him.

Connecticut Democratic Gov. Dannel Malloy took over the microphone from Jindal and responded sharply, "Wait a second, until a few moments ago we were going down a pretty cooperative road. So let me just say that we don't all agree that moving Canadian oil through the United States is necessarily the best thing for the United States economy."



Jindal

asked Obama when the administration would decide whether to allow it and he told her there would be an answer in the next couple months.

Malloy said Jindal's "white flag statement" was the most partisan of their weekend conference and that many governors support a minimum wage increase.

"What the heck was a reference to white flag when it comes to people making \$404 a week?" Malloy snapped. "I mean, that's the most insane statement I've ever heard."

Jindal did not back down. "If that's the most partisan thing he's heard all weekend, I want to make sure he hears a more partisan statement," the Louisiana governor responded. "I think we can grow the economy more if we would delay more of these Obamacare mandates."

As the news conference broke up, Colorado Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper, vice chair of the governors association, called Jindal a "cheap shot artist" as he

walked off the White House grounds.

The public dispute came after Obama appealed to the governors for their help to advance his economic policies that stand little chance of winning passage on Capitol Hill.

"Even when there's little appetite in Congress to move on some of these priorities, on the state level you guys are governed by practical considerations," Obama told the governors during remarks in the State Dining Room. "You want to do right by your people."

The president pressed in particular for states to act on their own to raise the minimum wage and expand access to early childhood education, two initiatives that have gained little traction in Congress since Obama first introduced them last year.

Several governors were seen as potential presidential candi-

dates in 2016. Obama made light of the speculation about the race to replace him, saying he "enjoyed watching some of you with your eyes on higher office size up the drapes, and each other."

Not every governor met Monday with the president.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie left the NGA meeting early to attend his daughter's birthday and prepare for a budget address.

Facing multiple investigations in a political-retribution probe in New Jersey, the Republican leader also skipped a Monday news conference by the Republican Governors Association, which he leads.

Jindal shrugged off Christie's absence from the news conference, declaring that the RGA is "more important than just any one governor."

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Plans for the 2014 Rockin' Ribfest are well underway. We are going to need even more support this year to accommodate the positive changes.

Ribfest will be moving to its new location at Memorial Park on June 7th.

The move creates lots of new opportunities:

- Bigger and better bands
- A family atmosphere
- The possibility of a two day event in the future
- More money raised for Historic Downtown Yankton and the community
- A chance for the community to get together for a big summer kick-off with friends and family



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