

Raids Suggest Future Shape Of Counterterror Bids

BY ROBERT BURNS
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — The U.S. commando raids in Libya and Somalia suggest the future shape of U.S. counterterrorism efforts — brief, targeted raids against highly sought extremist figures — and highlight the rise of Africa as a terrorist haven.

The strikes also raise questions about where to interrogate and try captured terrorist suspects such as Abu Anas al-Libi, accused by the U.S. of involvement in the 1998 bombings of two American embassies in Africa.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Sunday that al-Libi was in U.S. custody; officials would not say where.

The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon, said al-Libi has “vast intelligence value.”

McKeon, R-Calif., said President Barack Obama should “fully exploit this potential” before moving on to his prosecution. The White House seemed to agree, saying Saturday’s raid in Tripoli was specifically designed to apprehend, not kill, the suspect.

“The president has made clear our preference for capturing terrorist targets when possible, and that’s exactly what we’ve done in order to elicit as much valuable intelligence as we can and bring a dangerous terrorist to justice,” said the White House National Security Council’s spokeswoman, Caitlin Hayden.

The outcome of a second U.S. commando raid Saturday, targeting a leader of the al-Qaida affiliated terror group, al-Shabab, was less clear.

A Navy SEAL team swam ashore in Somalia early in the morning and engaged in a fierce firefight. A U.S. official said afterward the Americans disengaged after inflicting some al-Shabab casualties, but it was unclear who was hit. The official was granted anonymity



al-Libi

because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The raid in Somalia reflected the importance the Obama administration attaches to combating al-Shabab, whose leaders are believed to be collaborating more with other al-Qaida affiliated Islamic insurgent groups across Africa.

In a speech in May outlining his strategy for the use of drones, Obama counted Somalia as among the places where the U.S. and its allies face “lethal yet less capable al-Qaida affiliates.”

The commando assaults unfolded against the backdrop of political paralysis in Washington, where the Congress and the White House are locked in battle over budgets but have agreed to keep the military operating and paid on time.

Libya said Sunday it has asked the United States for “clarifications” regarding the capture of al-Libi by U.S. Delta Force commandos.

The Tripoli government said that al-Libi, as a Libyan national, should be tried in his own country. He is on the FBI’s most-wanted list of terrorists with a \$5 million bounty on his head. He was indicted by the U.S. in November 1998.

In a statement, Libya also said it hoped the incident would not affect its strategic relationship with the U.S., which is evolving in the aftermath of the 2011 ouster of longtime ruler Moammar Gadhafi. Ties were complicated by the Sept. 11, 2012, attack on U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, in eastern Libya.

Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., a vocal advocate of placing captured high-value terrorist suspects in the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay, said Sunday that al-Libi should be treated as an enemy combatant, detained in military custody “and interrogated to gather

information that will prevent future attacks and help locate other al-Qaida terrorists.”

Al-Libi was indicted by a federal court in New York for his alleged role in the bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, on Aug. 7, 1998, that killed more than 220 people.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, in Indonesia for an economic summit, said the U.S. hopes the raids make clear that America “will never stop in the effort to hold those accountable who conduct acts of terror.” He added: “Members of al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations literally can run but they can’t hide.”

It was not immediately clear whether al-Libi had been involved with al-Qaida since or had been connected to militant activities in Libya, where al-Qaida has a growing presence since Gadhafi was unseated.

The family of al-Libi denied he was ever a member of al-Qaida and said he was not involved in militant activity since his return.

In a 157-page indictment filed in the Southern District of New York in November 1998, the U.S. government accused al-Libi and others of conspiring to kill American civilians and military members at the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Specifically, prosecutors said al-Libi helped bin Laden and al-Qaida plan the attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi by scouting and photographing the site in 1993. The indictment also alleges al-Libi discussed other attacks on the U.S. Agency for International Development as well as British, French and Israeli targets in Kenya.

The court filing does not charge al-Libi in the bombing and deaths of those at the embassies, but rather says he conspired to achieve that result.

U.S. Moves Closer To First-Ever Default

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States moved closer to the possibility of the first-ever default on the government’s debt Sunday as Speaker John Boehner adamantly ruled out a House vote on a straightforward bill to boost the borrowing authority without concessions from President Barack Obama.

With no resolution in sight, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew warned that Congress is “playing with fire” as he called on lawmakers to quickly pass legislation re-opening the government and a measure increasing the nation’s \$16.7 trillion debt limit.

The government shutdown precipitated by the budget brinkmanship entered its sixth day with hundreds of thousands of federal employees furloughed, national parks closed and an array of government services on hold.

Lew said Obama has not changed his opposition to coupling a bill to re-open the government and raise the borrowing authority with Republican demands for changes in the 3-year-old health care law and spending cuts.

Boehner insisted that Obama must negotiate if the president wants to end the shutdown and avert a default that could trigger a financial crisis and recession that would echo the events of 2008 or worse. The 2008 financial crisis pushed the country into the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

44 Dead In Clashes In Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Clashes erupted on Sunday across much of Egypt between security forces and supporters of the ousted president, leaving 44 killed, as rival crowds of supporters of the military and backers of the Islamist Mohammed Morsi it deposed poured into streets around the country to mark a major holiday.

The capital, Cairo, saw multiple scenes of mayhem as street battles raged for hours in some neighborhoods, with Morsi supporters firing birdshot and throwing firebombs at police who responded with gunshots and tear gas.

In some cases, pro-military crowds set upon supporters of the former president, with the two sides pelting each other with rocks. By late evening, several parts of the city resembled combat zones, with fires burning, black smoke rising and the crack of gunfire piercing the air, thick with tear gas. Streets were strewn with debris.

An Associated Press photographer saw nine bodies lying on the floor of a clinic in the Cairo district of Dokki, scene of some of the heaviest clashes. Most of the bodies had gunshot wounds to the head or chest.

The Health Ministry reported 40 people killed in Cairo and four others killed in provinces south of Cairo, with more than 240 people injured. The Interior Ministry, which is in charge of the police, said 423 Morsi supporters were detained across the nation.

Italy Migrant Death Toll Nears 200

LAMPEDUSA, Italy (AP) — Pairs of divers plumbed calmer seas off the Italian island of Lampedusa on Sunday to recover the corpses of would-be asylum seekers who died when a fishing boat packed with 500 African migrants capsized within sight of land. By nightfall, 83 bodies were retrieved, including one child, raising the official death toll to 194.

About 150 more are believed to still be missing, many likely trapped in the wreckage 47 meters (154 feet) below the surface.

The enormous scale of the tragedy, which could become the largest death toll in a migrant shipwreck in the Mediterranean on record, has created momentum for a comprehensive EU immigration policy to cope with the tens of thousands fleeing strife in Africa and the Middle East.

“The Mediterranean cannot remain a huge cemetery under the open skies,” French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said on French TV station iTele.

Inspectors Begin Weapon Destruction

BEIRUT (AP) — International disarmament experts on Sunday began dismantling and destroying Syria’s chemical weapons arsenal and the equipment used to produce it, taking the first concrete step in their colossal task of eliminating the country’s chemical stockpile by mid-2014, an official said.

The inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have about nine months to purge President Bashar Assad’s regime of its chemical program. The mission, endorsed by the U.N. Security Council, faces the tightest deadline in the watchdog group’s history and must simultaneously navigate Syria’s bloody civil war.

Sunday marked the fifth day that an advance team of around 20 inspectors have been in the country and the first day that involved actually disabling and destroying weapons and machinery, an official on the joint OPCW-U.N. mission said.

The production equipment included filling and mixing machinery, some of it mobile, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

The Syrians are responsible for the actual physical demolition of the materials, while OPCW inspectors monitor the process and verify what is being destroyed, the official said. He declined to provide details or say where the work took place.

Supreme Court

Term Begins With Contentious Topics

BY MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court is beginning a new term with controversial issues that offer the court’s conservative majority the chance to move aggressively to undo limits on campaign contributions, undermine claims of discrimination in housing and mortgage lending, and allow for more government-sanctioned prayer.

Assuming the government shutdown doesn’t get in their way, the justices also will deal with a case that goes to the heart of the partisan impasse in Washington: whether and when the president may use recess appointments to fill key positions without Senate confirmation.

The court was unaffected for the first few days of the government shutdown and there was no expectation that arguments set for October would have to be rescheduled.

The new term that starts Monday may be short on the sort of high-profile battles over health care and gay marriage that marked the past two years. But several cases ask the court to overrule prior decisions — bold action in an institution that relies on the power of precedent.

“There are an unusual number of cases going right to hot-button cultural issues and aggressive briefing on the conservative side asking precedents to be overruled,” said Georgetown University law professor Pamela Harris, who served in President Barack Obama’s Justice Department.

Paul Clement, a frequent advocate before the court and the top Supreme Court lawyer under President George W. Bush, agreed that the opportunity exists for dramatic precedent-busting decisions. But Clement said each case also offers the court “an off-ramp,” a narrower outcome that may be more in keeping with Chief Justice John Roberts’ stated desire for incremental deci-

sion-making that bridges the court’s ideological divide.

There is a familiar ring to several cases the justices will take up.

Campaign finance, affirmative action, legislative prayer and abortion clinic protests all are on the court’s calendar. The justices also will hear for the second time the case of Carol Anne Bond, a woman who was convicted under an anti-terrorism law for spreading deadly chemicals around the home of her husband’s mistress.

The justices probably will decide in the fall whether to resolve competing lower court decisions about the new health care law’s requirement that employer-sponsored health plans include coverage of contraceptives.

An issue with a good chance to be heard involves the authority of police to search the contents of a cell-phone found on someone they arrest. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said over the summer that the right to privacy in the digital age “is bound to come up in many forms” in the years ahead.

The court may hear its first abortion case since 2007, a review of an Oklahoma law that would restrict the use of certain abortion-inducing drugs such as RU-486.

The campaign finance argument on Tuesday is the first major case on the calendar. The 5-4 decision in the Citizens United case in 2010 allowed corporations and labor unions to spend unlimited sums in support of or opposition to candidates, as long as the spending is independent of the candidates.

The new case, McCutcheon v. Federal Election

Commission, is a challenge to the overall limits on what an individual may give to candidates, political parties and political action committees in a two-year federal election cycle, currently \$48,600 to candidates and \$123,600 in total. The \$2,600 limit on contributions to a candidate is not at issue.

Since the Buckley v. Valeo decision in 1976, the court has looked more favorably on contribution limits than on spending restrictions because of the potential for corruption in large contributions. The big issue in the current case is whether the justices will be just as skeptical of limits on contributing as on spending.

Three justices, Anthony Kennedy, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, have signaled their willingness to do so. It remains to be seen whether Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito, the other two members of the Citizens United majority, are willing to go along.

While several cases call into question high court precedents, the justices will be writing on a blank slate when they take up the president’s recess appointment power under the Constitution.

In that case, the court will confront an appeals court ruling that effectively would end the president’s ability to make such appointments, if it is left standing.

Former Justice Department official Peter Keisler said that justices often ask a lawyer for the best case in support of his argument. “No one is going to ask that question because ‘I ain’t none.’ No Supreme Court decisions are material here,” said Keisler, a partner at the Sidley, Austin law firm in Washington.

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