

NATO: Afghan Forces Can Take Control Next Year

BY ANNE FLAHERTY
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S.-led NATO troops in Afghanistan should be able to start handing off responsibility for security to the Kabul government sometime next year, Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Tuesday.

While stopping short of setting a firm deadline, Rasmussen's public declaration puts the security alliance in line with President Barack Obama's promise to begin pulling U.S. troops out in July 2011.

But Rasmussen's latest prediction also reflects a growing realization by NATO that security conditions won't dramatically improve this year, as many hoped. At a NATO meeting in April, the secretary-general had said that handing over responsibility to the Afghans was a primary goal for this year. Some NATO members have

already pulled out of the mission or plan to do so soon because of a lack of public support.

NATO members were to meet in Lisbon, Portugal, in November to devise a plan for handing off control to the Afghans, including a timeline for various provinces and benchmarks to measure progress.

Rasmussen said he believes security conditions have improved enough so a transition is possible. However, he said the precise timing of a drawdown will depend upon conditions on the ground.

"We will not leave until we finish our job," he told reporters before a meeting with Obama at the White House. "But it is very helpful to have this roadmap."

War commanders have been more reluctant to put a date on when Afghan troops might take control. Lt. Gen. Bill Caldwell, the head of NATO's training mission in Afghanistan, has said the alliance needs at least another year to

recruit and train enough soldiers and police officers.

Rasmussen said setting next year as a goal for beginning to wind down troop levels does not conflict with a request by Gen. David Petraeus, NATO's top commander in Afghanistan, for 2,000 more troops. Rasmussen said most of the 2,000 troops would be assigned to train Afghan security forces, in preparation for NATO's eventual withdrawal.

"Trainers are the ticket to transition," he said.

The Pentagon said Tuesday that the request for 2,000 more troops is a long-standing requirement for more trainers that will not be filled by U.S. forces.

"NATO will have to determine how to fill that requirement," said Marine Col. Dave Lapan, a Defense Department spokesman.

NATO has been eager to show progress in the war. The alliance's top commander in southern

Afghanistan, British Maj. Gen. Nick Carter, said this week that coalition troops will clear the area around the key city of Kandahar by December.

In the meeting with Obama, the president thanked Rasmussen for NATO's efforts to promote peace and stability around the world, particularly in Afghanistan, the White House said. Obama and Rasmussen also discussed goals for the Nov. 19-20 NATO Summit in Lisbon.

Although U.S. and NATO forces are expected to begin leaving Afghanistan next year, the U.S. government is expected to provide massive financial aid to the country for years to come.

According to a NATO document, the United States expects to spend about \$6 billion a year training and supporting Afghan troops and police after it begins withdrawing its own combat troops in 2011.

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Judge Won't Let Stem Money Keep Flowing

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge has turned down the Justice Department's request to temporarily delay his order that could shut down federal funding for some stem cell research.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth on Tuesday turned down federal officials' request for a stay.

Lamberth blocked federal dollars from going to certain stem cell research on grounds the research could violate a law prohibiting use of taxpayer dollars in work that destroys a human embryo.

The Justice Department wanted to keep the money flowing until an appeal could be heard of Lamberth's ruling. But Lamberth turned down the request.

Some scientists believe stem cell research could eventually lead to cures for spinal cord injuries, Parkinson's disease and other ailments.

DOJ Investigating Anti-Muslim Acts

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is investigating a handful of apparently anti-Muslim incidents in four states, including the stabbing of a Muslim cab driver in New York City.

FBI agents and civil rights division investigators also are looking into vandalism and other incidents at mosques or mosque construction sites in Arlington, Texas; Murfreesboro, Tenn.; Madera, Calif.; and Waterport, N.Y.

Attorney General Eric Holder was meeting Tuesday with Muslim and other religious leaders to discuss the attacks and the uproar over a planned mosque near ground zero in New York.

They want Holder to condemn hate crimes and to try to defuse tensions over a Florida church's plan to burn copies of the Quran (ku-RAHN) on Saturday, the ninth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

US To Discuss N.Korea Impasse In Asia

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials are heading to Asia to discuss the impasse over North Korea's nuclear program.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said Tuesday that Obama administration's envoys to North Korea, Stephen Bosworth and Sung Kim, as well as the National Security Council's Asia director, Daniel Russell, are leaving next week for talks in Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing.

The trip comes as China pushes to resume talks with North Korea. China has suggested a compromise among the six countries involved in the nuclear disarmament talks.

Seoul and Washington have been wary. They accuse North Korea of torpedoing a South Korean warship in March.

North Korea walked away from the talks to protest international condemnation of its latest missile test.

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Ariz. Green Party Sues To Block 'Sham Candidates'

BY JONATHAN J. COOPER
Associated Press Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Arizona Green Party is asking a judge to kick more than half of the group's nominees off the November ballot.

The unusual request, filed in federal court Monday, follows the nomination of 11 candidates allegedly recruited by Republican operatives to siphon votes from Democratic candidates.

Unless the judge intervenes, Arizona voters will be able to vote for a tarot card reader to be state treasurer or a street performer to regulate utilities.

It's all thanks to a little-known provision in state law that allows Green Party candidates to get the party's nomination with just one write-in vote. They don't even have to collect petition signatures.

The candidates say they're serious about changing government and energized to make their voices heard. Democrats claim they're being used as a dirty trick.

In legal filings that sought a swift hearing, the Green Party has labeled the group "sham candidates" and are asking a federal judge to oust them from the November ballot and strike down the obscure law that put them there with so little effort. Democrats have called for a

criminal investigation.

"We in the Arizona Green Party want our team to play by the same rules as other teams, and not have somebody in the stands deciding to be a player on our team," party co-chair Claudia Ellquist said in a statement Tuesday.

Democrats and Greens say the 11 disputed candidates don't represent the Green Party and are being used as pawns.

"They're playing games with the voters," said Jennifer Johnson, an Arizona Democratic Party spokeswoman.

Democrats say Green Party candidates attract left-leaning voters, making it tougher for Democrats to get elected.

Steve May, a former Republican state lawmaker running for the Arizona House, acknowledges he helped some of the disputed candidates get on the ballot. He insists he's just trying to help them get their voices heard.

May, 38, lives and frequently hangs out near downtown Tempe's Mill Avenue — a commercial corridor near Arizona State University with an odd mix of chain restaurants, local bars and bohemian culture. His recruits are drifters who also like to hang out on Mill.

The shunned nominees don't like being labeled sham candidates. They insist they're real people with tangible concerns and a legitimate desire to help shape public policy.

"I don't care who I take votes from," said Anthony Goshorn, a 53-year-old state Senate candidate who pilots a pedicab and drives a taxi for a living. "I didn't do this to hurt a particular political party. I did this to help people."

Goshorn, a white-bearded veteran of Mill Avenue, is known as "Grandpa" to the younger drifters he mentors. He said he's frustrated that reporters always want to talk about the political party dispute or the fact that he's homeless.

He just wants to talk about the struggling economy and his desire for lower taxes.

State treasurer candidate Thomas Meadows, a 27-year-old who reads tarot cards on Mill Avenue and investigates sightings of ghosts and UFOs, said he isn't sure why his own party is so upset about his decision to run.

"I'm not sure why they're so dead set against me," he said. "Probably because they didn't think of it."

Admitting he has "a snowball's chance in Phoenix" of winning, Meadows said he hopes his candidacy inspires other political upstarts to run for office and helps the Greens become a stronger alternative to the Republicans and Democrats.

OBITUARIES

Rodney Fahey

HURON — Rodney B. Fahey, age 62, passed away Sunday, September 5, 2010, in Huron, after a long battle with Ehlers Danlos Syndrome.



Fahey

Per Rodney's request, a family memorial dinner was held Tuesday, September 7th. Donations to the Beadle County Humane Society (605-352-8955) are preferred, in lieu of flowers.

Kuhler Funeral Home assisted the family with arrangements. Visit www.kuhlerfuneralhome.com.

Rodney was born on August 16, 1948, to Edith and Bernard Fahey, in Huron, South Dakota. He graduated from the University of South Dakota, in Vermillion, and made his home for many years in Yankton, employed in administration at the South Dakota State Hospital. He later retired in Huron.

Rodney's interests included a deep love of literature, computer technology and travel. Throughout his life, he also pursued a passion for fine wines and international cuisine.

He is survived by two sisters: Katharine Mueller, of Park City, Utah and Patricia French, of Vidor, Texas.

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Pearl Balfany

Pearl N. Balfany, 104, of Yankton died Monday (Sept. 6, 2010) at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

Funeral services are at 10:30 a.m. Friday at United Church of Christ (Congregational), Yankton, with the Revs. Joe Schulte and Paul Opsahl officiating. Burial will be in the Yankton Cemetery, Yankton.

Visitations is 5-9 p.m. Thursday at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory,

Yankton, with a Scripture service at 7 p.m. Visitations will resume prior to the service at the church.

Sophie Kafka

WAGNER — Mass of Christian Burial for Sophie Kafka, 104, of Wagner will be 10:30 a.m. Thursday, September 9, 2010 at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Dante. Burial is in St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Dante.



Kafka

Visitation will be Wednesday from noon until 5 p.m. at the Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home in Wagner followed by a 7:30 p.m. Rosary/Wake service at the church in Dante.

Sophie Helen Kafka was born May 6, 1906 on the family farm north of Dante, the daughter of Frank and Ann (Carda) Hron. She died Monday, September 6, 2010 at the Good Samaritan Society in Wagner. She attained the age of 104 years and four months.

Sophie attended country school through the eighth grade. She then helped on the family farm with chores and housework and also helped raise the younger siblings.

Sophie married Steve Kafka on February 13, 1928 at Dante Assumption parish. Three children were born to their union. Together they farmed southwest of Dante until Steve's death on February 4, 1969. She moved into Wagner in 1974 and entered the Good Samaritan Center in 1997. She will be remembered there for her love of crocheting, playing bingo, visiting with friends and for the love she had for the staff.

Sophie was a life time member of the St. Mary's Altar Society and member of the Assumption parish.

Sophie loved gardening, fishing, playing cards, sewing and most of all, crocheting, until her eyesight went poor after her 100th birthday. She loved spending time with her children, her many grandchildren and visiting with friends and neighbors. Sophie was a great gardener, raising cucumbers and tomatoes by the bushel, as well as cleaning frier chickens, then selling and delivering them to town and neighbors. She also loved to cook and was known for cooking for large threshing crews at her home and for her homemade pies.

Thankful for having shared her life are her daughter Irene and husband Joe Kril of Dante; 8 grandchildren: Debbie (Dwayne) Brandt of Avon; Karen (JK) Dolan

of Beresford; Tim (Tricia) Kril of Dante; Steve (Karen) Kril of Wagner; Susan (Jim) Bacon of Spearfish; Mary (Dave) Mudder of Garretson; Theresa (Brian) Adel of Blackhawk; and Jason Kril of Sturgis; 25 great grandchildren; 2 great-great grandchildren; daughter-in-law Alice Kafka of Dante; 4 step grandchildren: Cathy (Bernie) Harrington of Aberdeen; Barb Frei of Hastings, NE; Diane (Dave) Robertson of Wagner; Faye (Jon) Williams of Avon; 9 step great grandchildren; 10 step great-great grandchildren; sister Lillian Blaha of Wagner and many nieces and nephews.

Sophie was preceded in death by her husband Steve, parents, sons: Jim and Orvin; grandson Lawrence; 3 brothers and 6 sisters.

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