

Pentagon: Bin Laden Book Has Classified Data

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former Navy SEAL’s insider account of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden contains classified information, the Pentagon said Tuesday, and the admiral who heads the Naval Special Warfare Command said details in the book may provide enemies with dangerous insight into secretive U.S. operations.

Rear Adm. Sean Pybus told his force Tuesday that “hawking details about a mission” and selling other information about SEAL training and operations puts the force and their families at risk.

“For an elite force that should be humble and disciplined for life, we are certainly not appearing to be so,” Pybus wrote in a letter to the roughly 8,000 troops under his command. “We owe our chain of command much better than this.”

The letter was obtained by The Associated Press.

At the Pentagon, press secretary George Little said that an official review of the book, “No Easy Day,” determined that it reveals what he called “sensitive and classified” information. He was not more specific but said the author was required to submit the book to the Pentagon before publication for a formal review of potential disclosures of such information.

100,000 Syrians Fled Country In August

BEIRUT (AP) — More than 100,000 Syrians fled their country in August, the highest monthly total since the crisis began in March 2011, the U.N. refugee agency said Tuesday.

That exodus sharply increased the number of Syrians now living in neighboring countries, bringing the total number of refugees to 234,368 in the past 17 months, the agency said.

Along with activists’ reports that the death toll in August was also the highest in the civil war with 5,000 killed, all signs are pointing to unprecedented levels of misery in a country where President Bashar Assad’s regime is fighting an increasingly violent rebellion.

“If you do the math, it’s quite an astonishing number,” U.N. refugee agency spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said of the number of people who fled in August, speaking to reporters Tuesday in Geneva.

“And it points to a significant escalation in refugee movement and people seeking asylum, and probably points to a very precarious and violent situation inside the country,” she said.

Romney Campaign, RNC Raise \$100M In Aug.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign has raised at least \$100 million in August, The Associated Press has learned, hitting that mark for a third consecutive month with a fundraising prowess that has let him outraise President Barack Obama so far this summer.

The early numbers, which include money raised by the national Republican Party, will be publicly released next week. They were described by two people familiar with the figures who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to share internal campaign matters.

The numbers were revealed on the first day of the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., where delegates will nominate Obama for a second term. Federal records show that Romney and the GOP have pulled in more cash than Obama’s re-election effort in May, June and July, including money collected by the Democratic Party.

It is usually difficult for a challenger to raise more money than an incumbent holding a major elective office, particularly in a presidential race.

The figures exclude tens of millions of dollars that outside “super” political action committees are pouring into the race to help Romney. Those groups have been largely bankrolled by wealthy Americans, thanks to changes in recent years that have loosened campaign-finance regulations.

Judge: Mass. Must Provide Sex-Change Surgery

BOSTON (AP) — State prison officials must provide taxpayer-funded sex-reassignment surgery to a transgender inmate serving life in prison for murder, because it is the only way to treat her “serious medical need,” a federal judge ruled Tuesday.

Michelle Kosilek was born male but has received hormone treatments and now lives as a woman in an all-male prison. Robert Kosilek was convicted of murder in the killing of his wife in 1990.

U.S. District Judge Mark Wolf is believed to be the first federal judge to order prison officials to provide sex-reassignment surgery for a transgender inmate.

Kosilek first sued the Massachusetts Department of Correction 12 years ago. Two years later, Wolf ruled that Kosilek was entitled to treatment for gender-identity disorder but stopped short of ordering surgery. Kosilek sued again in 2005, arguing that the surgery is a medical necessity.

In his 126-page ruling Tuesday, Wolf found that surgery is the “only adequate treatment” for Kosilek and that “there is no less intrusive means to correct the prolonged violation of Kosilek’s Eighth Amendment right to adequate medical care.”

Komen Insider’s Book Finds Plenty Of Fault

NEW YORK (AP) — Criticizing major players on both sides, former Susan G. Komen for the Cure vice president Karen Handel has written a blistering insider’s account of the prominent cancer charity’s decision to halt grants to Planned Parenthood and its swift retreat in the face of an intense, widespread backlash.

Titled “Planned Bullyhood” and due for publication on Sept. 11, the book depicts Planned Parenthood as an aggressive, partisan organization that was willing to weaken Komen to further a liberal political agenda. However, Handel — a conservative who resigned from Komen after its reversal — also assails Komen’s leadership as indecisive, timid and politically naive, and says the hasty decision to backtrack was “a terrible mistake.”

Handel was hired by Komen as vice president for public policy in April 2011 after losing a Republican gubernatorial primary in Georgia, and was given the task of figuring out how to disengage Komen from Planned Parenthood. The grants from Komen were for breast-cancer education and screening, but the charity was under increasing pressure from anti-abortion groups and religious conservatives to cut all ties with Planned Parenthood because, in addition to its other services, it is the nation’s leading provider of abortion.

Late in 2011, Komen made a final decision to halt the grants, which totaled \$680,000 that year, and its president, Liz Thompson, informed Planned Parenthood’s president, Cecile Richards, of the decision in mid-December. However, the rift did not become public knowledge until Jan. 31, when The Associated Press broke the news.

Reaction was immediate and passionate. Twitter and Facebook were flooded with denunciations of Komen’s action. Democratic members of Congress urged Komen to reconsider, as did some of Komen’s own affiliates. Planned Parenthood accused Komen of bowing to right-wing bullying and eagerly mobilized its supporters, raising \$3 million in donations within days of the news report.

Gadget Makers Unveil Holiday Lineups

NEW YORK (AP) — Think of it as the opening act at a concert: Nokia, Motorola and Amazon are expected to unveil new mobile devices this week before attention turns to a new iPhone and possibly a smaller iPad from Apple.

Makers of consumer electronics are refreshing their products for the holiday shopping season. Apple’s rivals are hoping that a head start on the buzz will translate into stronger sales. Nokia and Microsoft, in particular, are trying to generate interest in a new Windows operating system out next month.

Apple dominates the market for tablet computers. Seven out of every 10 tablets shipped in the second quarter were iPads, according to research firm IHS iSuppli. Rivals have been trying to compete with smaller, cheaper models — such as the Kindle Fire, which Amazon is expected to update on Thursday. Now, there’s speculation that Apple will be coming out with a smaller iPad as well.

Sales of Apple’s iPhones are still strong, though the company lost the lead in smartphones to Samsung this year. Samsung Electronics Co. benefited from having its Galaxy S III out in the U.S. in June, while Apple was still selling an iPhone model released last October. A new iPhone is expected as early as this month, allowing Apple to recapture the attention and the revenue.:



ADAM JENNINGS/CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/MCT
The delegation listens to Illinois Governor Pat Quinn at the 2012 Democratic National Convention at the Time Warner Cable Arena in Charlotte, North Carolina, Tuesday, September 4, 2012.

Democrats:

GOP’s Romney Just ‘Doesn’t Get It’

BY DAVID ESPO AND MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Democrats ridiculed Republican Mitt Romney as a millionaire candidate for president who “quite simply doesn’t get it” and worse on Tuesday, opening night of a national convention aimed at propelling Barack Obama to re-election despite high unemployment and national economic distress.

Obama “knows better than anyone there’s more hard work to do” to fix the sputtering economy, said San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro, the convention keynote speaker, sharing the prime-time spotlight with first lady Michelle Obama.

After the deep recession, Castro said in excerpts released in advance of his speech, the nation is making progress “despite incredible odds and united Republican opposition.” He said 4.5 million jobs have been created since the president took office.

Obama was back home in the White House after a campaign appearance in Virginia earlier in the day. He said he’d be watching on television when his wife spoke.

Polls made the race for the White House a tight one, almost certain to be decided in a string of eight or 10 battleground states where neither the president nor Romney holds a clear advantage. And during the day there was ample evidence of an underperforming economy, from a report that said manufacturing activity declined for a third straight month to the Treasury’s announcement that the government’s debt exceeded \$16 trillion at the close of the business day.

Castro, the first Hispanic chosen to deliver a keynote address, was unsparing in criticizing Romney, suggesting the former Massachusetts governor might not even be the driving force on the Republican ticket this fall.

“First they called it ‘trickle down, the supply side,’ he said of the economic proposals backed



KAITLIN MCKEOWN/
NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS/MCT
Supporters cheer as President Barack Obama greets supporters during a campaign stop at Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia, on Tuesday.

by Republicans. “Now it’s Romney/Ryan. Or is it Ryan/Romney?”

“Either way, their theory has been tested. It failed. ...Mitt Romney just doesn’t get it,” Castro said. Romney’s running mate is Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan.

The divide over taxes goes to the core of the campaign.

Romney and the Republicans favor extension of all of the existing Bush-era tax cuts due to expire on Dec. 31, and also want to cut tax rates 20

percent across the board.

Obama, too, wants to keep the existing tax cuts in place — except for people with earnings of \$250,000 a year or more.

Delegates in the convention hall cheered whenever Obama’s image showed on the huge screen behind the speaker’s podium, and roared when the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy was shown mocking Romney in their 1994 Senate race.

“On the issue of choice, I am pro-choice, my opponent is multiple choice,” the late senator said as cheers grew louder.

Romney supported abortion rights while serving as governor; he opposes them now.

Democrats unspooled insult after insult as they took their turn the week after the Republicans had their convention in Tampa, Fla.

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn said that Republicans had omitted mention of Romney’s term as Massachusetts governor at their gathering.

“We already knew this extremely conservative man takes some pretty liberal deductions. Evidently that includes writing off all four years he served as governor,” Quinn declared.

Said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, speaking of Romney: “Never in modern American history has a presidential candidate tried so hard to hide himself from the people he hopes to serve.”

“When you look at the one tax return he has released, it’s obvious why there’s been only one. We learned that he pays a lower tax rate than middle-class families. We learned he chose Swiss bank accounts and Cayman Island tax shelters over American institutions.”

Obama, by contrast, was lauded for helping win approval of health care legislation and for supporting abortion rights and gay marriage.

“He said he’d take out bin Laden, and with our great SEAL team, he did,” added Tim Kaine, former national party chairman and Virginia governor, now running for the Senate.

In Southern La., Residents Blame Levees For Floods

BY CAIN BURDEAU
AND STACEY PLAISANCE
Associated Press

LAPLACE, La. — At the urging of residents who have long felt forgotten in the shadow of more densely populated New Orleans, the Army Corps of Engineers says it will look into whether the city’s fortified defenses pushed floodwaters into outlying areas.

However, the Corps has said it’s unlikely scientific analysis will confirm that theory suggested not only by locals, but by some of the state’s most powerful politicians. Instead, weather experts say a unique set of circumstances about the storm — not the floodwalls surrounding the New Orleans metro area — had more to do with flooding neighborhoods that in recent years have never been under water because of storm surge.

Isaac was a large, slow-moving storm that wobbled across the state’s coast for about two and a half days, pumping water into

back bays and lakes and leaving thousands of residents under water outside the massive levee system protecting metropolitan New Orleans. It was blamed for seven deaths and damaged thousands of homes on the Gulf Coast.

The Corps’ study was prompted by the suggestion that Isaac’s surge bounced off the levees and floodgates built since Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and walloped communities outside the city’s ramparts.

Blaming the Army Corps of Engineers is nothing new in southern Louisiana, a region that is both dependent on the Corps and by instinct distrustful of an agency that wields immense power in this world of harbors, wetlands, rivers and lakes, all of which fall under the agency’s jurisdiction.

The Corps was roundly criticized after Hurricane Katrina, which pushed in enough water to break through the levees that had surrounded New Orleans.

Much of the city was left under-water, and since then the government has spent millions rebuilding the system of floodwalls protecting the metro area.

Before that, the Corps was blamed for the unraveling of coastal marshes by erecting levees on the Mississippi River.

In towns like the bedroom community of LaPlace, people want answers. There, communities were under water even though they had never before flooded because of storm surge.

“It has a lot of us questioning,” said Ed Powell, a 47-year-old airport emergency worker who’s lived in LaPlace for 15 years and had never seen flooding on his street until Isaac hit.

On Friday, U.S. Sen. David Vitter asked the Corps to commission an independent study to determine if the new floodwalls, gates and higher levees around greater New Orleans caused water to stack up elsewhere.

The corps is expected to complete its study within two

months, said U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., who joined Vitter in calling for the study. The Corps said it was too early to say how much the study would cost. The agency said Corps researchers would conduct the study and that it will be peer-reviewed.

In a statement, the corps said it expects the study will find “minimal” changes in surge elevation because of its works around New Orleans. It based that assessment on previous modeling. The agency said it would not comment further until the scientific work is done.

Isaac came ashore as a Category 1 storm, but that classification is based on wind speed, not surge predictions. In the past, much stronger storms have produced much smaller surge levels. Isaac had a broad wind field — at times, more than 200 miles from its center — that made it capable of scooping up a lot of water, said James Franklin, the chief of hurricane operations at the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

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