

Marines To Court-Martial 2 Staff Sergeants

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two Marine non-commissioned officers will be court-martialed for allegedly urinating on the bodies of Taliban fighters last year in Afghanistan and posing for unofficial photos with casualties, the Marine Corps said Monday.

The charges against Staff Sgt. Joseph W. Chamblin and Staff Sgt. Edward W. Deptola are in addition to administrative punishments announced last month for three other, more junior Marines for their role in the urination episode.

The disclosure in January of a video showing four Marines in full combat gear urinating on the bodies of three dead men led to a criminal investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service as well as a Marine investigation of the unit involved, the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines, which fought in the southern Afghan province of Helmand for seven months before returning to its home base at Camp Lejeune, N.C., last September.

In the video, one of the Marines looked down at the bodies and quipped, "Have a good day, buddy."

In a statement Monday, the Marine Corps said disciplinary actions against additional Marines will be announced later. It also said there are "other pending cases related to this incident," but said no specifics would be made public now.

Houston Police Chief: Don't Judge Officer

HOUSTON (AP) — The FBI will help investigate what led a Houston police officer to shoot and kill a wheelchair-bound double amputee who was agitated and threatening police with what turned out to be a ballpoint pen, the city's police chief said Monday.

Police Chief Charles McClelland also asked the community to "reserve judgment" on the officer and his actions this weekend at the Healing Hands group home for the mentally ill, and sought to reassure the public that all of the city's officers are trained to deal with people with mental problems.

Officer Matthew Martin shot 45-year-old Brian Claunch early Saturday after responding to a call that the one-armed, one-legged man was causing a disturbance inside the home. Police have said Claunch cornered and threatened Martin, who reportedly told investigators he didn't know the object in Claunch's hand was a pen.

"It is my desire to have everyone reserve judgment until all the facts and evidence in this investigation have been gathered," McClelland said in a statement.

Police spokeswoman Jodi Silva said she didn't know if FBI assistance in officer-involved shootings was rare, but said "it's the step we're taking at this point." She referred other questions to McClelland's statement.

Muslim Cope With Free Speech 'Red Lines'

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — In U.S.-funded ads running on Pakistani TV, subtitled clips show President Barack Obama extolling America's traditions of religious freedom. For many watching, though, the message misses the mark in efforts to calm the Islamic outrage over a film denigrating the Prophet Muhammad.

America's free speech laws and values of openness are not in question, but rather there is confusion and anger over how they are applied.

A powerful theme binding the protests from Indonesia to Africa is the perception that the U.S. codes of free speech are somehow weighted against Islam — permitting the Internet video that insults the faith but placing clear limits on hot button issues such as hate speech, workplace discrimination and even what is acceptable on prime-time network TV.

Beyond the rage, bloodshed and death threats — churning now for two weeks — is a quandary for American policymakers that will linger long after the latest mayhem fades: How to explain the U.S. embrace of free expression to an Islamic world that increasingly sees only double standards?

Although there are many nuances — including strict U.S. laws when hate speech crossed the line into threats or intimidation — they are mostly lost in the current outrage that included a peaceful march in Nigeria on Monday and Iran threatening to boycott the 2013 Academy Awards after the country's first Oscar-winning film this year.

Facebook Stock Falls After Assessment

NEW YORK (AP) — Facebook Inc.'s stock took a hit Monday after an article in the financial magazine *Barron's* said it is "still too pricey" despite a sharp decline since its initial public offering.

Though Facebook's stock has plunged since its May IPO, Andrew Bary at *Barron's* said the stock trades at "high multiples of both sales and earnings, even as uncertainty about the outlook for its business grows."

At issue is the shift of Facebook's massive user base to mobile devices. The company is still figuring out how to advertise to people who use their mobile phones and tablet computers to access the social network. Bary said success in the mobile space is "no sure thing" for the company. Mobile ads must fit into much smaller screens, which doesn't give Facebook "much room to configure ads without alienating users," Bary said.

Facebook also has what Bary called "significant" stock-based compensation expenses. Last year, the company issued \$1.4 billion worth of restricted stock and \$1 billion so far this year, he noted. Yet technology companies such as Facebook "routinely encourage analysts to ignore stock-based compensation expense — and most comply. This dubious approach to calculating profits is based on the idea that only cash expenses matter," Bary wrote. "That's a fiction, pure and simple."

Menlo Park, Calif.-based Facebook's stock fell \$2.03, or 8.9 percent, to close at \$20.83 on Monday. The company went public on May 18 at a share price of \$38, which it has not matched since.

Apple Supplier Halts Production At Factory After Worker Fight

BEIJING (AP) — The company that makes Apple's iPhones suspended production at a factory in China on Monday after a brawl by as many as 2,000 employees at a dormitory injured 40 people.

The fight, the cause of which is under investigation, erupted Sunday night at a privately managed dormitory near a Foxconn Technology Group factory in the northern city of Taiyuan, the company and Chinese police said. A police statement reported by the official Xinhua News Agency said 5,000 officers were dispatched to the scene.

The Taiwanese-owned company declined to say whether the factory is involved in iPhone production. It said the facility, which employs 79,000 people, will suspend work Monday and reopen Tuesday.

Foxconn makes iPhones and iPads for Apple Inc. and also assembles products for Microsoft Corp. and Hewlett-Packard Co. It is one of China's biggest employers, with some 1.2 million workers in factories in Taiyuan, the southern city of Shenzhen, in Chengdu in the west and in Zhengzhou in central China.

The unrest happens at a critical time for Apple. The fight started days after the launch of the latest iPhone model in the U.S. and eight other countries.

Decision 2012

GOP Assails Obama On Foreign Policy

BY DAVID ESPO AND KASIE HUNT  
Associated Press

PUEBLO, Colo. — Mitt Romney led a chorus of Republican criticism of the administration's foreign policy on Monday, accusing President Barack Obama of minimizing the recent killing of the U.S. ambassador to Libya as a mere "bump in the road" rather than part of a chain of events that threatens American interests.

White House press secretary Jay Carney called the accusations "desperate and offensive" as Romney and his allies sought to gain political advantage in the latter stages of a political campaign that seems to be trending Obama's way.

The president did not comment on the criticism when he and first lady Michelle Obama taped an appearance on ABC's "The View" that blended the personal with the political. Asked if a Romney presidency would be a disaster, Obama said the nation can "survive a lot." He added: "The American people don't want to just survive, we want to thrive."

The back and forth on foreign policy occurred as Romney said he was shifting to a more energetic schedule of public campaign events, bidding to reverse recent erosion in battleground state polls. After days spent largely raising campaign cash — and trying to minimize the fallout from one speech to donors last spring — he pledged to make the case for "real and positive change."

While national polls make the race exceedingly close, Obama has gained ground on Romney in many recent surveys when potential voters are asked to compare the two rivals in their ability to fix the economy. Sluggish growth and national unemployment of 8.1 percent make the economy by far the dominant issue in the



race, and the two men have focused much of their time and advertising budgets on highlighting their differences on taxes, spending and plans for job creation.

The same polls show Obama with a healthy lead over Romney when voters are asked which candidate is better equipped to handle foreign policy, and the president has not shied away from trumpeting his decision to order the secret mission by U.S. forces that killed terrorism mastermind Osama bin Laden in his Pakistani hideout more than a year ago.

At the same time, Romney's advisers say voters are more inclined to question Obama's handling of foreign policy after the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, earlier this month resulted in the death of the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans.

Not only Romney, but other Republicans, as well, challenged Obama on foreign policy on Monday.

In a conference call with reporters, Rep. Eric Cantor, R-Va., the House majority leader, said: "Israel continues to find itself on the receiving end of harsh language by the president of the White House. ... There is a somewhat continued pattern of throwing Israel under the bus when Israel stands as our closest ally."

And the National Republican Senatorial Committee issued challenges to Democratic candidates in several races to "share their view" on Obama's remarks in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" over the weekend.

In the interview itself, Obama was respond-

ing when asked if recent events in the Middle East gave him pause for supporting governments that came to power following a wave of regime changes known as the Arab Spring.

He said he has long noted that events were going to be rocky, adding that the question itself "presumes that somehow we could have stopped this wave of change."

"I think it was absolutely the right thing for us to align ourselves with democracy, universal rights. ... But I was pretty certain and continue to be pretty certain that there are going to be bumps in the road because — you know, in a lot of these places — the one organizing principle has been Islam."

He added: "There are strains of extremism, and anti-Americans, and anti-Western sentiments and you know can be tapped into by demagogues."

Romney was eager to talk about the topic, squeezing interviews with three television networks into his schedule and touching on the subject at the beginning of a rally in Pueblo, Colo.

"I can't imagine saying something like the assassination of ambassadors is a bump in the road, when you look at the entire context, the assassination, the Muslim Brotherhood president being elected in Egypt, 20,000 people killed in Syria, Iran close to becoming a nuclear nation, that these are far from being bumps in the road," he told ABC.

"They represent events that are spinning out of the kind of influence we'd like to have. We're at the mercy of events rather than shaping the events in the Middle East."

U.S. officials are investigating the deaths in Libya, which occurred when the consulate was breached.

UN Envoy: Syria War Threatening Region

BY DAVID STRINGER AND RON DEPASQUALE  
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Syria's civil war is worsening and there is no prospect of a quick end to the violence, international envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said Monday in a gloomy assessment to the U.N. Security Council.

The new envoy leavened his message, however, saying he was crafting a new plan that he hoped could break the impasse, but refused to give details or say when it would be ready.

Despite President Bashar Assad's refusal to end his family's 40-year grip on power, some tentative hope of a solution remained, Brahimi said in his first briefing to the council since he took over from Kofi Annan on Sept. 1 as the U.N.-Arab League special representative for Syria.

"I think there is no disagreement anywhere that the situation in Syria is extremely bad and getting worse, that it is a threat to the region and a threat to peace and security in the world," Brahimi told reporters after the closed-door talks.

Activists claim nearly 30,000 people have died in the uprising which began in March 2011, including in attacks Monday by Syrian warplanes in the northern city of Aleppo.

Brahimi had just returned from Syria and refugee camps in Jordan and Turkey. His gloomy report of a looming food crisis, battle-damaged schools and shuttered factories, contradicted his insistence that he saw grounds for optimism, including "some signs" that the divided Syrian opposition may be moving toward unity. That is key for any political negotiations Brahimi would oversee.

"I refuse to believe that reasonable people do not see that you cannot go backward, that you can-

not go back to the Syria of the past. I told everybody in Damascus and everywhere that reform is not enough anymore, what is needed is change," said Brahimi, who has met with Assad and other regime officials in Damascus.

"Paradoxically, now that I have found out a little more about what is happening in the country and the region, I think that we will find an opening in the not too distant future," Brahimi said.

Brahimi said he wanted to hold further discussions before disclosing precisely what action he plans to propose. "I do not have a full plan for the moment,

but I do have a few ideas," he said.

According to a diplomat inside the council's private briefing, who demanded anonymity because he was not authorized to publicly to reveal details, Brahimi was also reluctant to discuss the proposals with the Security Council. "He kept his cards very close to his chest," he said.


In the private talks, Brahimi urged Security Council members to overcome the diplomatic deadlock which has paralyzed their ability to help end the crisis.

The Security Council is the only U.N. body that can impose global sanctions and authorize


military action. Russia, Syria's key protector, and China have vetoed three Western-backed resolutions aimed at pressuring Assad to halt the violence and open talks with his opponents on a transition of power.

"If I do not represent the entire council, I am nothing. I need to be seen to represent a united council and a united League of Arab States," Brahimi told reporters.


Brahimi told the council that he believed Assad's goal was to return the country to "the old Syria," in which he and his father had ruled as dictators for four decades, the diplomat said.



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