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Obama: We must try to work with Russia

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The United States must try to broker a deal with Russia to coordinate military operations in Syria and to drive the Islamic State group out of that country, President Barack Obama said Thursday at the Pentagon.

Obama was there to meet with his national security advisers to discuss ongoing strategies in the campaign against the Islamic State group. At a news conference that followed, he said no tactic used by the terrorists will stop the United States from fighting them on every front across the globe.

"We'll keep working with allies and partners to go after [the Islamic State group] wherever

it tries to spread," the president said. One partner could be Russia.

For the past month, the United States and Russia have been negotiating terms that would have their militaries join forces in Syria against the Nusra Front, a formerly al-Qaida-affiliated group targeted by Russian and Syrian government warplanes. Under the agreement, the United States would join the fight against the Nusra Front and Russia would adhere to the May 2016 Aleppo ceasefire they have often violated.

Obama said Thursday that the escalation of hostilities in and around Aleppo make the negotiations with Russia more difficult, but still necessary.

"I'm not confident we can trust the Russians and Vladimir Putin," the president told reporters. "Which is why we have to test whether we can get an actual cessation of hostilities ... we go into this without any blinders on."

In the fight against the Islamic State group, U.S.-backed Iraqi and Syrian forces have recaptured significant portions of their countries from the terrorist group, attempting to isolate them in their strongholds of Mosul and Raqqa. But at the same time, the Islamic State group and militants affiliated with the terrorist group have executed multiple high-profile attacks in western Europe and the United States.

In response, Obama said his administration has ramped up U.S. efforts, including sensitive negotiations with Russia to potentially coordinate a strategy to speed the defeat of the Islamic State group in Syria.

But the United States has had no formal military relations with Russia since its takeover of Crimea in 2014. Obama said Thursday that negotiations are critical in achieving a political solution in Syria and speeding the demise of the Islamic State group there.

An agreement with Russia exposes the United States to risks, said Jeff Mankoff, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank.

Trump ends standoff with Ryan, works to mend mistakes

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — In an effort to repair some of the damage he had inflicted on his presidential campaign, Donald Trump endorsed House Speaker Paul Ryan to end a four-day standoff that exposed the deep chasms in the Republican Party over his candidacy.

Trump struck a rare conciliatory tone at a Wisconsin rally on Friday, imploring his party to unite behind him and opening a full-throttle attack on Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.

"Arm in arm, we will rescue the country from the Obama-Clinton disaster," Trump told supporters after formally declaring his support for Ryan in next week's congressional primary.

It was an unusual gesture for Trump, who is known for his refusal to admit mistakes and his

tendency to double down when he's under attack. Trump's general election campaign has been defined by his constant attacks on fellow Republicans — a habit that has baffled party leaders, who have begged him to stay focused on his Democratic rival.

The refusal to back Ryan had been seen by many as a final straw. Trump had told *The Washington Post* in an interview earlier this week that he was "just not quite there yet" when it came to backing Ryan — language that echoed the words used by Ryan as he weighed whether to endorse the party's nominee.

In addition to praising Ryan, Trump also threw his support behind Arizona Sen. John McCain. In the past, Trump questioned McCain's status as a war hero. Trump also endorsed New Hampshire Sen. Kelly Ayotte, with whom he has also sparred.

Clinton admits gaffe about emails, FBI chief

The Washington Post

In an effort to clarify her most recent statements about her use of a private email server as secretary of state, Hillary Clinton on Friday only further muddled a controversy that has dogged her presidential candidacy from the start.

Clinton acknowledged that she had misspoken in two recent media interviews when she claimed that FBI Director James Comey had characterized as "truthful" all of her public statements about her use of a private email server as secretary of state.

She explained that Comey was referring only to her interviews with the FBI — but she also insisted that all of her other public statements on the matter have been consistent with those interviews. Clinton also made a reference to Comey's testimony on the existence

of about 100 emails containing classified information at the time they were sent or received — but she continued to suggest that they were not marked classified at the time and were retroactively classified.

Clinton said explicitly that her public statements and the statements that she made to the FBI are the same. She went on to say that, because Comey testified that her comments to the FBI were "truthful," it is also an indication that her public statements also were truthful.

Additionally, Clinton said: "I have acknowledged repeatedly that using two email accounts was a mistake," but in fact Clinton used only one email account as secretary of state — the private one. A campaign aide later clarified that Clinton misspoke and intended to say that it was a mistake to use only one account.

Hazardous waste could emerge in Greenland

USA Today

Global warming is slowly thawing out a once-top-secret subterranean U.S. nuclear base in northern Greenland, potentially exposing the environment to radioactive coolant, PCBs, and raw sewage that the military originally believed would stay entombed for millennia.

The hazardous waste could emerge by the end of the century, according to a new, peer-reviewed study published Thursday in *Geophysical Research Letters*, a journal of the American Geophysical Union. The melting seems likely to bring modern-day environmental and political headache.

Camp Century was a U.S. base built on the Greenland ice sheet in 1959. To the public, its mission was scientific tasks such as drilling for ice

cores. But it doubled as a top-secret site for testing nuclear missiles during the height of the Cold War. Codenamed Project Iceworm, it tested whether launch sites could be built close enough for missiles to reach the Soviet Union.

The camp included a series of tunnels roughly 50 feet underground. It was one of five ice-sheet bases in northern Greenland.

When the camp was decommissioned in 1967, the base and its waste, including radioactive coolant, tons of PCBs, and thousands of gallons of sewage and diesel fuel, were abandoned. The thinking was they'd be entombed for millennia by the snow that falls each winter. Since being abandoned, at least another 100 feet of snow has fallen on top of that.

"Two generations ago, peo-

ple were interring waste in different areas of the world, and now climate change is modifying those sites," said Liam Colgan, a climate scientist at York University in Toronto, Canada, and lead author of the study.

Climate change has warmed the Arctic more than any other region on Earth, and the portion of the ice sheet covering Camp Century is expected to start to melt by the end of the century, according to the study. At that point, the rates of ice loss there might be greater than annual snowfall increases. The waste then would seep into the ocean. That would threaten the ecosystems of the fish and other animals that are depended on by the people who live there, said Mike MacFerrin, a study co-author and researcher at the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences.

The ice sheet that sits on Greenland is melting at an alarming rate, as much as 8,000 tons per second, said Colgan. That equates to 280 billion tons of ice melting and calving off into the ocean each year.

In addition to the environmental impact, determining who cleans up the mess decades from now also could lead to political disputes not considered before. The U.S. built the base, Denmark permitted it (though not the missile launch program), and now Greenland is a self-governing territory.

Colgan added that once resolved, it could serve as a model for how to resolve other multinational climate-change-related issues around the globe, such as the relocation of displaced people in the Pacific Islands who are losing their land to rising sea levels.

101st Airborne soldiers tapped to fight Islamic State

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — About 400 101st Airborne Division soldiers will deploy to Iraq this summer to bolster the upcoming fight to retake Mosul from the Islamic State group, the Army announced Friday.

The soldiers from the Fort Campbell, Ky.-based division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team will make up a portion of the increased force size that President Barack Obama approved last month. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, in Baghdad on July 11, announced the president had approved an additional 560 American troops to help establish and run a logistics hub at Qayyara West Airfield, about 40 miles south Mosul. The Pentagon has not identified any other units deploying soon.

The base was seized in early July by Iraqi security forces fighting Islamic State group militants, and it will serve as a springboard for the upcoming assault on Mosul, the terrorist group's final urban stronghold in Iraq. That fight is expected to begin in the coming months.

The United States is authorized 4,657 troops in Iraq. Army Col. Chris Garver, a spokesman for the anti-Islamic State group coalition, said

Wednesday that no American troops had yet arrived at Qayyara West. He did not say when he expected them to arrive.

The deploying soldiers come from several of 2nd Brigade's subordinate units and include soldiers with a wide range of jobs and skills, said Master Sgt. Kevin Doheny, a spokesman for the 101st Airborne Division. He and the Army declined to provide the specific capabilities the soldiers would bring to the fight in Iraq.

The top American commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Sean MacFarland, told reporters last month that the forces deploying to Qayyara would include an airfield operations team, logistics and communications specialists, command-and-control elements and a security detachment.

The 101st soldiers will join nearly 1,800 Fort Campbell soldiers already in Iraq. About 500 soldiers from the division's headquarters, including its commander, Maj. Gen. Gary J. Volesky, deployed to Iraq in the spring alongside about 1,300 2nd Brigade soldiers. The soldiers, including the troops who will deploy soon, are expected to return to Fort Campbell in early 2017.

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AF officer supporting Islamic State fight dies

Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department announced on Saturday the death of an Air Force officer supporting the campaign to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Lt. Col. Flando E. Jackson, 45, of Lansing, Mich., died of a noncombat-related injury Aug. 4, the DOD said. The incident is under investigation.

Jackson was deployed last month to Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, where he was serving as the U.S. Air Forces Central Command deputy for Manpower and Personnel, AFCENT said.

Jackson was assigned to the 194th Wing in Camp Murray, Wash., and he received his commission from the Reserve Officer Training Corps program in 1993.

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Rio delivers simple, spirited opening

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — What it lacked in flash, Rio made up for with feeling.

With a limited budget, the consequence of a biting recession that roiled preparations for South America's first Olympics, Brazil laced its high-energy opening party for the games of the 31st Olympiad with a sobering message of the dangers of global warming.

Graphic projections of world cities being swamped by rising seas set Rio de Janeiro's otherwise fun and festive gala apart from the more self-congratulatory and lavish celebrations that Beijing and London wowed with in 2008 and 2012.

"The heat is melting the icecap," a voice intoned in the Maracana Stadium. "It's disappearing very quickly."

But it wasn't all doom and gloom. After all, no place parties quite like Rio.

Supermodel Gisele Bundchen shimmered to the tune of "The Girl from Ipanema." Fireworks formed the word "Rio" in the skies. The colossal Christ the Redeemer statue was bathed in Brazilian yellow and green.

Dancers, all hips and wobble, grooved to thumping funk and sultry samba.

After one of the roughest-ever rides from vote to games by an Olympic host, the city of beaches, carnival, grinding poverty and sun-kissed wealth celebrated Brazil's can-do spirit, biodiversity and melting pot history.

The crowd roared when Bundchen sashayed from one side of the 78,000-seat arena to the other, as Tom Jobim's grandson, Daniel, played his grandfather's famous song about the Ipanema girl "tall and tan and young and lovely."

In a video preceding the show, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the games "celebrate the best of humanity" and appealed for an Olympic truce, calling on "all warring parties to lay down their weapons" during the two weeks of sporting achievement.

There were times after the International Olympic Committee selected Rio ahead of Chicago, Tokyo and Madrid in 2009 when it seemed that the city of 6.5 million people might not get its act together for the world's greatest sporting mega-event.

The spreading health crisis of the mosquito-born Zika virus kept some athletes away. Promises to clean up Rio's filthy waters remained unfulfilled. The heavy bill for the games, at least \$12 billion, made them unpopular with many. Heavily armed security stopped a small group of protesters from getting close to the stadium ahead of the ceremony.

But with more than a dash of "gambiarra," the Brazilian art of quick-fixes and making do, Rio is ready.

Just.

"Our admiration is even greater because you managed this at a very difficult time in Brazilian history. We have always believed in you," IOC President Thomas Bach said.

The cannonball-shaped cauldron was lit by Brazilian marathoner Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima. At the 2004 games, an Irish spectator wearing a kilt, knee-socks and a beret tackled de Lima while he was leading the Olympic marathon. Instead of gold, he fell back to take bronze.

Another cauldron was lit in the city's port area early Saturday that will be displayed for

Rio residents to enjoy.

The athletes were given tree seeds, plus cartridges of soil. When the seeds sprout, they will be planted in a Rio park.

With "USA" emblazoned on the back of his jacket, Michael Phelps carried the flag for the U.S. team, the largest with 549 competitors. At his fifth and last Olympics, it was the first time the record holder of 22 medals had marched in an opening ceremony, having skipped previous ones to save energy for competition.

On behalf of all 11,288 competitors (6,182 men; 5,106 women), Brazilian two-time Olympic champion sailor Robert Scheidt pledged that they won't take banned drugs — an oath likely to ring false to fans after the scandal of government-orchestrated cheating in Russia. As a consequence, Russia's team was whittled down from a hoped-for 389 athletes to around 270.

Iran picked a woman, archer Zahra Nemati, as flag-bearer for its team made up overwhelmingly of men. Another woman pushed Nemati's wheelchair. She was paralyzed in a car accident as a teenager.

Thrasher wins first US gold medal in 10-meter air rifle

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Virginia Thrasher went through a three-week spring whirlwind, winning three NCAA titles and a spot on the U.S. Olympic Shooting team.

The precocious 19-year-old closed out the summer with her biggest surprise yet.

Keeping her nerve on sport's biggest stage, Thrasher on Saturday earned the first gold

medal of the Rio Olympics, outlasting two-time gold medalist Du Li to capture the women's 10-meter air rifle title.

"This is beyond my wildest dreams," Thrasher said. "I knew it was a realistic expectation for me to get into the finals and once you get into the finals, anything can happen. For me, this year has been incredible."

Thrasher had a quick rise to the top.

A figure skater growing up,

she switched sports five years ago after a hunting trip with her family. Thrasher killed a deer with her first shot of her first hunting trip and has continued to hit the mark wherever she's gone.

Thrasher was not expected to be among the top five scorers — all that counts in NCAA competition — at shooting powerhouse West Virginia, yet got better as the season progressed. She became the first freshman

to win both NCAA rifle titles and led the Mountaineers to the team championship.

Less than a month later, Thrasher won the U.S. Olympic Trials, earning a spot in Rio.

Thrasher entered the final with a 0.7-point lead and opened with a solid 10.5, which Li matched. Thrasher smiled after a 10.4 left a slight opening, but Li's 10.1 on her final shot sent Thrasher on a surprising trip to the podium.



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Castro's helps lift Yanks over Indians

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Starlin Castro hit a third-inning grand slam off Josh Tomlin that gave the Yankees a six-run lead and Mark Teixeira got two hits after tearfully announcing his retirement as New York beat Cleveland 13-7 on Friday night.

Jacoby Ellsbury had a four-hit game, and Michael Pineda (6-10) won for the third time in four outings following a six-start winless streak, allowing four runs and six hits in six-plus innings.

New York's Gary Sanchez made his first league start behind the plate and threw out Jason Kipnis and Mike Napoli trying to steal second base in the first two innings. The rookie, called up from the minors on Wednesday, doubled in the fifth for his first big league RBI and walked with the bases loaded in the sixth.

The Yankees had 16 hits, including at least one by every starter, and the Indians failed to retire New York in order in any inning. Cleveland lost for the fourth time in five games, and its AL Central lead over second-place Detroit was cut to two games.

Slowed by injuries, Teixeira said he will retire after this season at age 36. He doubled in the first inning and legged out a single in the third on a ball stopped by Kipnis, the second baseman, in short right field. At .202, Teixeira's average reached

.200 for the first time since before play on May 20.

Cubs 7, Athletics 2: Jorge Soler hit a three-run home run in his first at-bat following a two-month absence and Jon Lester pitched seven innings as Chicago beat host Oakland.

Nationals 5, Giants 1: Gio Gonzalez pitched seven innings of two-hit ball and Trea Turner and Wilson Ramos homered as Washington beat visiting San Francisco in a matchup of first-place teams.

Red Sox 9, Dodgers 0: Knuckleballer Steven Wright threw a three-hitter and Mookie Betts had one of Boston's three homers as the Red Sox routed host Los Angeles with David Ortiz out of the lineup in a National League park.

Tigers 4, Mets 3: Victor Martinez homered and Detroit ace Justin Verlander limited visiting New York to four hits in six innings to help the Tigers to their ninth victory in their last 10 games.

Astros 5, Rangers 0: Dallas Keuchel threw a three-hitter to help Houston beat visiting Texas for just the second time in 11 tries this season.

Cardinals 1, Braves 0: Jaime Garcia pitched eight scoreless innings and had an RBI single to lead host St. Louis past Atlanta.

Orioles 7, White Sox 5: Pedro Alva-

rez hit two solo shots to extend his homer streak as visiting Baltimore had 16 hits to overpower Chicago and keep pace with Toronto for first place in the AL East.

Blue Jays 4, Royals 3: Devon Travis hit his second homer of the game in the ninth inning to lift Toronto past host Kansas City.

Twins 6, Rays 2: Eddie Rosario had a pinch-hit two-run homer in the seventh inning and Miguel Sano homered and had three hits as Minnesota beat host Tampa Bay.

Marlins 5, Rockies 3: Martin Prado hit a go-ahead, two-run single during a four-run rally in the ninth inning that sent Miami over host Colorado in a matchup of NL wild-card contenders.

Mariners 6, Angels 4: Mike Zunino capped his team's six-run first inning with a three-run home run off Tim Lincecum as host Seattle held off Los Angeles.

Pirates 3, Reds 2: Sean Rodriguez homered leading off the ninth inning to lift Pittsburgh past visiting Cincinnati.

Diamondbacks 3, Brewers 2 (11): At Phoenix, Welington Castillo drew a one-out walk with the bases loaded to drive in Paul Goldschmidt with the winning run.

Phillies 5, Padres 4: Cameron Rupp homered and tied a career high with four RBIs to lift visiting Philadelphia.

Earnhardt Jr. 'not ready to quit' despite concussions

BY JOHN KEKIS

Associated Press

WATKINS GLEN, N.Y. — Say this about Dale Earnhardt Jr. — he follows doctor's orders.

After missing three straight Sprint Cup races because of lingering effects of a concussion, NASCAR's most popular driver did something Friday that's part of his therapy — he made his first public appearance to speak about his recovery.

"I missed my team, my teammates," Earnhardt said. "I just wanted to come see everybody. I get to hang out with my guys a little bit. This has been so weird not to be at the track. It's frustrating, but it's the process. We're just taking it one evaluation at a time.

"I just want to get better. Nothing else is a priority. Our intentions are to get cleared and

get back to racing. I'm not ready to quit."

Doctors told Earnhardt his latest injury occurred June 12 at Michigan International Speedway. He was clipped in the rear by Chris Buescher's No. 34 while racing three wide with AJ Allmendinger and hit the wall at an angle that softened the impact. He drove three more races before symptoms became too severe.

"The doctors feel they can make my brain stronger to be able to cope with these common events," he said. "The event that I had at Michigan I shouldn't have had a concussion from. I should be able to get through events like that without having any issues."

Earnhardt has been keeping fans updated on his condition via weekly podcasts. Besides reconnecting with his team and

his competitors in the garage, his appearance at the road course in the Finger Lakes of upstate New York served a purpose.

"My doctor wants to put me in situations that drive the symptoms," Earnhardt said. "My doctor calls that exposure, and this is probably the worst situation as far as making my systems go haywire. That's what he wants. That's just part of the process.

"The one thing that I worry most about is ... people making assumptions of where I'm at, what I'm doing, and what I'm up to. I don't want people making assumptions. To give me peace of mind and to bring down any type of stress and anxiety through the process is to open up and be honest about what's going on and how we're doing."

Earnhardt won't drive at Watkins Glen on Sunday and also will miss the race at Bristol on Aug. 20. Four-time series champion Jeff Gordon, who came out of retirement to fill in for Earnhardt the last two races, will remain behind the wheel in the No. 88 Chevrolet for Hendrick Motorsports.

There remains no timetable for Earnhardt's return. That decision will be left to his doctors. He underwent further evaluation Monday at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Sports Medicine Concussion Program and said afterward that he continues to experience issues with balance and an ability to focus on an object while he moves his head.

Earnhardt expressed frustration at how long he's been out.

"I never anticipated being out this long," he said.