

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Taliban closing in on key Afghan city

*Associated Press*

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Afghan troops are being deployed to the capital of the key southern province of Helmand amid intense fighting with the Taliban in surrounding areas and fears the city could fall to the insurgents within days, officials said Wednesday.

According to Kareem Atal, the head of Helmand's provincial council, Taliban insurgents have completely surrounded Lashkar Gah after weeks of intense fighting across the province. Army and police units have now been pulled back from

checkpoints farther afield and brought back to reinforce the city. Also, "new forces are arriving" in the city, he added.

The United States has conducted roughly 25 airstrikes in support of the Afghan security forces in Helmand in the past two weeks, U.S. Army Col. Michael T. Lawhorn, a spokesman for the United States military in Afghanistan, said in an email statement. He said the NATO-led mission is also continuing to train, advise and assist Afghan forces.

"Additionally, the U.S. is providing combat enablers to assist the ANDSF in Helmand," he

added, referring to the additional support, in the form of air or ground forces, that the U.S. may provide as part of its mission to prevent "detrimental strategic effects" to the Afghan security forces.

Military officials did not clarify what type of enablers were being provided in Helmand. It also was not immediately clear whether the number of airstrikes in the past two weeks represented a significant uptick over previous periods.

The fighting has closed all the highways leading into Lashkar Gah, forcing up prices for food and other basics inside the provincial capital, Atal said.

Doctors Without Borders, the international medical charity, has reduced its international staff in Lashkar Gah and is maintaining basic emergency and surgical services, said the country representative Guillem Molinie.

Haji Fazal Amin, a tribal elder in the Lashkar Gah, said the fear that it could fall has increased as the Taliban have closed in on the provincial capital.

But Omar Zwak, spokesman for the governor of Helmand, said reinforcements were arriving and Afghan forces were fighting to clear outlying areas.

## Navy officer held by Iran faces punishment

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Lt. David Nartker, the last of nine U.S. sailors implicated in the January seizure of two patrol boats by Iran, will have his punishment for the incident announced Thursday, the Navy confirmed.

Nartker was the most senior of the 10 sailors seized Jan. 12 along with their riverine command boats after the vessels crossed into Iran's territorial waters. During the sailors' overnight detention, Nartker was filmed apologizing for the incident, among other images spread on Twitter and Iranian television for propaganda purposes.

The Navy has not said why Nartker is being punished.

An investigation by the Navy into the incident was released June 30 and found a string of missteps led to the seizure,

including the crews were not prepared for the mission, had recently failed navigation tests, did not have enough sleep and were using boats with broken equipment such as radios. The nine male sailors and one female sailor aboard the boats were detained overnight and interrogated by their Iranian captors.

On Aug. 4, Nartker and another sailor, who was not identified, appeared before Rear Adm. Frank Morneau, commander of the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, to hear the charges against them, according to a defense official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

All charges were dropped against the unidentified sailor. However, Nartker was notified he will face punishment, which could include loss of rank or a letter of reprimand.

## DOD: US gear discarded during casualty evacuation

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — U.S. military equipment displayed in Islamic State group photographs was discarded last month in eastern Afghanistan when troops came under fire while evacuating wounded soldiers, Army Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland said Wednesday.

The photos published Saturday by the Islamic State group show a small cache of American gear, including a rocket launcher, ammunition, a radio and some personal protection materials that the militants said they captured on the battlefield in Nangarhar province. Afghan security forces launched a massive operation last month to route Islamic State fighters from the province along the Pakistan border where it controls about three or four districts.

American special operations troops accompanying

Afghan commandos on clearing operations in the province came under "effective enemy fire" at a casualty collection point and left some gear behind while moving to a safer location to evacuate the wounded, Cleveland said in a prepared statement.

It was not clear Wednesday whether any of the gear recovered by the Islamic State group included any sensitive materials, according to a Pentagon official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

But Cleveland said the United States did "not expect any measurable operational impact due to the loss" of the equipment.

Five U.S. special operators were injured in Nangarhar during fighting with Islamic State group on July 24 and July 25. Three were evacuated from Afghanistan for treatment, and the other two were quickly returned to duty.

# Trump blames media for uproar

Associated Press

BRISTOL, Va. — On the defensive once again, Donald Trump is blaming faulty interpretations and media bias for an uproar over his comments about the Second Amendment. He's insisting he never advocated violence against Hillary Clinton, even as Democrats pile on.

The latest controversy to strike Trump's campaign arose, as they often do, out of an off-hand quip at a boisterous campaign rally. Claiming falsely that Clinton wants to revoke the right to gun ownership guaranteed in the Constitution's Second Amendment, Trump said there would be "nothing you can do," if she's elected, to stop her from stacking the Supreme Court with anti-gun justices.

Then he added ambiguously: "Although the Second Amendment people, maybe there is — I don't know. But I'll tell you what: that will be a horrible day."

Was Trump suggesting gun owners take matters into their own hands if Clinton wins the White House? Or was he merely musing about the indisputably powerful influence of the gun lobby?

Like so many times before, Trump's supporters and opponents construed his comments in entirely different ways.

"Give me a break," Trump said hours later, insisting was referring to the power that vot-

ers hold. He told Fox News that "there can be no other interpretation."

But Democrats saw — and seized — an opportunity to reinforce the perception that Trump can't moderate the things that come out of his mouth, much less the decisions he'd make as president.

"I really, frankly couldn't believe he said it," said Tim Kaine, the Democratic vice presidential nominee. "Nobody who is seeking a leadership position, especially the presidency, the leadership of the country, should do anything to countenance violence, and that's what he was saying."

By Tuesday evening, Clinton's campaign was fundraising off the firestorm, asking supporters by email to chip in \$1 to "show that we don't tolerate this kind of politics in America." Trump's team, too, was using the controversy to reinforce a theme it's been pitching to voters: that an underdog Trump is being unfairly treated by the media.

"They will buy any line, any distortion, and spin that the Clintons put out," said former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, an ardent Trump supporter.

But House Speaker Paul Ryan, who was celebrating a primary victory in Wisconsin Tuesday night, said: "It sounds like just a joke gone bad. I hope they clear this up very quickly.

You never joke about something like that."

The controversy immediately overwhelmed Trump's intended campaign-trail focus: the economic plan he unveiled just a day earlier and was promoting during rallies in competitive election states.

It also underscored the concern, voiced by many worried Republicans, that he cannot stay disciplined and avoid inflammatory remarks that imperil not only his White House prospects but the re-election chances of many Republican lawmakers.

For Trump, the next opportunity to shift themes was to come Wednesday when he holds a pair of rallies in Abington, Va., and in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Clinton, fresh off her own campaign swing in Florida, planned to spend the day in the battleground state of Iowa, where she will tour a Des Moines T-shirt shop and hold a rally.

It wasn't immediately clear whether Trump's latest stumble would continue to dog him or whether, like many in the past, it would quickly fade away. In Ohio, a competitive state coveted by both candidates, Trump's comments struck some of those questioned in a focus group of voters the wrong way.

"Maybe I'm hearing it wrong, but sounds like he's basically saying take her out," said Julie B, an office administrator.

## Legal group releases more Clinton emails

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The State Department has turned over 44 previously unreleased Hillary Clinton email exchanges that the Democratic presidential nominee failed to include among the 30,000 private messages she turned over to the government last year. They show her interacting with lobbyists, political and Clinton Foundation donors and business interests as secretary of state.

The conservative legal group Judicial Watch obtained the emails as part of its lawsuit against the State Department. They cover Clinton's first three months as secretary of state in early 2009, a period for which Clinton did not turn over any emails to the State Department last year. The government found the newly disclosed messages during a search of agency computer files from longtime Clinton aide Huma Abedin.

In one instance, Clinton exchanged messages with a senior Morgan Stanley investment executive whom she met with later that year at her office in Washington.

The emails are separate from a larger batch of several thousand work-related emails that FBI officials recovered from Clinton's private server. Clinton's legal team turned over more than 30,000 emails from her server to the State Department last March but only after deleting another 30,000 messages that Clinton's team deemed private and personal. The FBI plans to turn over the reconstructed Clinton emails to the State Department for public release.

The new Clinton emails include a February 2009 message to her from Stephen Roach, then-chairman of Morgan Stanley Asia, saying he planned to testify to Congress that week and was "happy to help in any way I can." Roach later met with Clinton over the summer for 30 minutes, according to Clinton calendars obtained by The Associated Press.

## 3 B-2 bombers sent to Guam AFB

Stars and Stripes

Three of America's most advanced bombers deployed to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Tuesday to support U.S. Pacific Command.

The B-2 Spirit stealth aircraft from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., will take part in a variety of local and regional training exercises aimed at prepping bomber crews for future deployments while maintaining a high state of readiness, according to a Pacific Air Forces

statement that did not specify how long the "short-term deployment" would last.

"Bomber aircraft provide [PACOM] with an effective deterrent capability, ensuring the regional security and stability of the U.S. and our allies and partners," Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy, PAF commander, said in the statement. "These bomber deployments visibly demonstrate our readiness and commitment to the Indo-Asia-Pacific region."

It's not the first time the U.S.

has sent the bombers to the Pacific. In March, three B-2s flew to Guam the same day North Korea claimed it had developed the capability to put a miniaturized nuclear weapon on a ballistic missile. In March 2013, two B-2s conducted a flyover near Seoul, South Korea, after a North Korean missile test.

Over the weekend, B-1 bombers from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., and about 300 airmen arrived at Andersen to replace the base's aging fleet of B-52s.

# Indians ruin Nats' no-hitter

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Trevor Bauer remembered what it was like to be on the wrong side of a no-hitter. Oregon State's Josh Osich did it to him at UCLA, and he was determined not to let it happen again.

Bouncing back from some rough outings, Bauer outdueled Max Scherzer, and the Cleveland Indians beat the Washington Nationals 3-1 on Tuesday night.

Bauer (8-5) allowed four hits and struck out four in 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> shutout innings opposite Scherzer's flirtation with his third no-hitter.

"For me, it's like I want to make sure that he doesn't get the win," Bauer said. "If he's going to throw a no-hitter, I want to make him throw 10, 12, 14 no-hit innings. The way you do that is keep it scoreless. It was kind of a challenge."

In his past five starts, Bauer had allowed 22 earned runs on 33 hits for an ugly 8.37 ERA. That wouldn't have gotten it done against Scherzer (12-7), who retired 19 of the first 20 batters before struggling in the seventh.

Francisco Lindor singled to break up Scherzer's no-hit bid in the seventh, advanced to third on the pitcher's pickoff attempt-turned two-base error and scored on Jose Ramirez's double. Lonnie Chisenhall drove in Ramirez as Cleveland made the most of an opportunistic inning.

Ramirez went 2-for-4 with two RBIs and a stolen base.

"He's been doing it all year," said bench coach Brad Mills, who filled in for Terry Francona when the manager fell ill before the game. "He was hitting cleanup tonight for a reason, because of that, and he did a great job and then that steal of third there was huge to be

able to get that."

Scherzer struck out 10 batters for the 10th time this season and 46th time in his career. He was aiming to be the sixth pitcher with three no-hitters but came up short while allowing two runs (one earned) on three hits in seven innings.

"Once you make it through six, you've got a shot," Scherzer said. "On the mound pitching, I threw the ball really well tonight. It's the little things that beat me."

**Red Sox 5, Yankees 3:** Rick Porcello continued to dominate at Fenway Park with eight solid innings, Matt Barnes cleaned up a mess created by closer Craig Kimbrel and host Boston held on to beat New York.

**Cubs 5, Angels 1:** Kris Bryant hit his 28th home run, John Lackey outpitched friend and former teammate Jered Weaver, and host Chicago earned its eighth straight victory.

**Rangers 7, Rockies 5:** Adrian Beltre hit a two-run double, Elvis Andrus added a tiebreaking single and visiting Texas scored four runs in the eighth inning to beat Colorado.

**Rays 9, Blue Jays 2:** Drew Smyly pitched six innings to win his second straight decision, Logan Forsythe hit a solo homer and Tampa Bay defeated host Toronto.

**Diamondbacks 5, Mets 3:** Zack Greinke won in his return from a six-week stay on the disabled list, Michael Bourn hit a go-ahead triple in the seventh inning and visiting Arizona rallied past New York.

**Marlins 2, Giants 0:** Tom Koehler pitched two-hit ball for seven innings to help host Miami blank San Francisco, which fell into a first-place tie with the Dodgers in the NL West.

**Dodgers 9, Phillies 3:** Howie Kendrick, Yasmani Grandal and Justin Turner homered,

and host Los Angeles beat Philadelphia to pull even with the Giants atop the NL West.

**Pirates 6, Padres 4:** Gregory Polanco hit a tiebreaking homer and Chad Kuhl pitched six innings for the win after being called up from the minors as host Pittsburgh defeated San Diego.

**Braves 2, Brewers 1:** Tyrell Jenkins pitched six strong innings, Nick Markakis and Adonis Garcia each drove in a run in the seventh and Atlanta beat host Milwaukee.

**Astros 7, Twins 5:** Jose Altuve had four hits following a brief absence from the lineup, and Carlos Correa homered and drove in four runs to help Houston beat host Minnesota.

**White Sox 7, Royals 5 (10):** Todd Frazier hit a three-run homer in the 10th inning and Justin Morneau had four hits to lift Chicago over host Kansas City.

Frazier is tied for the major league lead with 31 home run.

**Reds 7, Cardinals 4:** Adam Duvall drove in two runs and Tyler Holt hit a tiebreaking double in the eighth inning that sent Cincinnati past host St. Louis.

**Athletics 2, Orioles 1:** Jake Smolinski reached base four times and scored the deciding run in the third inning, and rookie Zach Neal earned his first win as a starter when host Oakland held on to beat Baltimore.

**Mariners 6, Tigers 5 (15):** Kyle Seager had two key hits that tied the score, Mike Zunino lofted a game-winning sacrifice fly and host Seattle rallied twice to beat Detroit in 15 innings for its season-high fifth straight victory.

# Source: Fielder can't play

Associated Press

Texas Rangers slugger Prince Fielder will have to quit playing baseball after his second neck surgery.

A person with direct knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press that Fielder isn't formally retiring, but that doctors won't give the six-time All-Star medical clearance to play again. That person spoke on condition of anonymity Tuesday because there was no official announcement from the Rangers or Fielder about his future.

The Rangers said only that Fielder would hold media availability Wednesday when the team returns home after an eight-game trip. Texas won at Colorado 7-5 on Tuesday.

Fielder, who is signed through 2020, had a cervical fusion on July 29 to repair a herniation between two disks in his neck. That was done just above the area where the 32-year-old Fielder had the same procedure in May 2014, only 26 months earlier.

He will finish his 12 MLB seasons with 319 career homers, the same number that his father Cecil Fielder had in 13 seasons but fewer games.

Before surgery in 2014, Prince Fielder had MLB's longest active streak of 547 consecutive games played. He played in 809 of 810 possible games from 2009-13 with Milwaukee and Detroit, after playing at least 157 games each of the three seasons before that.

The Rangers acquired Fielder from Detroit in 2013 for second baseman Ian Kinsler.

Fielder hit .247 with three homers and 16 RBIs over 42 games in 2014 before the first surgery.



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# US gymnastics team takes gold again

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Just call them the Final Five.

Dominant. Peerless. Golden. The U.S. women's gymnastics team gave retiring national team coordinator Martha Karolyi a fitting send off in the Olympic finals on Tuesday night, putting on a two-hour display of precision and class. Their score of 184.897 was more than eight points clear of silver medalist Russia, a blowout that Michael Jordan's "Dream Team" should envy.

The Americans' second straight Olympic team triumph — and third overall — was

never in doubt. From the second Laurie Hernandez drilled her opening vault to Simone Biles' boundary-pushing floor exercise to end it, the U.S. put on an exhibition that showed how far the divide between themselves and everyone else has become.

It's a gap that Karolyi created from scratch since taking over for husband Bela in 2001. She's molded the U.S. program into a ponytailed juggernaut. The 73-year-old is stepping down after the games. Watching from the front row of the Rio Olympic Arena in a red jumpsuit, Karolyi watched perhaps her greatest team seem totally immune

to the pressure.

Maybe that's because for Hernandez, Biles, Gabby Douglas, Madison Kocian and Aly Raisman, the meets are the fun part of their jobs. The toughest competitions happen in quiet at the regular training camps Karolyi carefully oversees. When the lights come on, it's time to let loose.

Laurie Hernandez's double-twisting Yurchenko — basically a roundoff into a pair of twists — put the machine in motion. Raisman, who won three medals in London four years ago and seemed to be on the outside looking in as recently as this spring, followed with perhaps

the finest vault of her long career. When Biles drilled her Amanar and put up a 15.933 — the highest of the night — the U.S. was already on top of the leaderboard.

Yet it's not just enough for Karolyi for her team to win. She stopped measuring the Americans against everyone else long ago. Karolyi wants there to be no doubt. And there wasn't.

Russia, which wasn't sure it would even be included in the games until just days before the opening ceremonies as the IOC and sport federations sorted out punishments for a national doping scandal, won silver. China took bronze.

# Phelps, Ledecky add more gold medals

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Michael Phelps sat alone, thoroughly exhausted. He put his head in his hands and then motioned at his neck as though he had nothing left to give.

No need.

His work was done.

He had his 20th and 21st gold medals.

Phelps made up for one of the rare losses in his brilliant career by winning the 200-meter butterfly Tuesday night. An hour later, he returned to take what amounted to nothing more than a triumphant victory lap in anchoring the 4x200 freestyle relay.

It was another performance for the ages, but Phelps has done it so many times that nothing else would have been fitting. It came on a night that American teammate Katie Ledecky picked up her second gold of the Rio Olympics on the way to what could be a historic run of her own in the pool.

Phelps held off Japan's Masato Sakai with a time of 1 minute, 53.36 seconds.

In the relay, Conor Dwyer, Townley Haas and Ryan Lochte went out ahead of Phelps, handing off a commanding lead to the most decorated athlete in Olympic history.

The British claimed silver in 7:03.13, while Japan took the bronze in 7:03.50.

Ledecky held off Sweden's Sarah Sjöström to win the 200 freestyle and give the American star her second gold of the games.

Hungarian Katinka Hosszu earned her third gold medal of the Rio Games with a victory in the 200 individual medley.

Hosszu added to her wins in the 400 IM

and 100 backstroke with a time of 2:06.58. Siobhan-Marie O'Connor of Britain challenged Hosszu all the way but had to settle for silver. Maya DiRado of the United States held on for the bronze.

**Cycling:** Kristin Armstrong of the United States won her third straight Olympic time trial Wednesday, a golden effort through wind and rain over a brutal course that left her in an exhausted heap at the finish.

She covered the Rio Games route in 44 minutes, 26.42 seconds to top reigning bronze medalist Olga Zabelinskaya of Russia by 5.55 seconds.

Anna van der Breggen of the Netherlands added a bronze medal to her gold from the road race.

**Judo:** Undefeated all year, Khasan Khalmurzaev is now the Olympic champion.

The sixth-seeded Russian beat Travis Stevens of the United States to win the judo gold medal Tuesday in the 81-kilogram division. It was Russia's second gold in judo at the Rio de Janeiro Games.

The bronze medals were won by Sergiu Toma of the United Arab Emirates and Takanori Nagase of Japan.

**Equestrian:** German Pair Michael Jung and Sam FBW won the eventing gold medal, their second straight Olympic title in the discipline.

Astier Nicolas and Piaf de B'Neville took silver. It was the 27-year-old Nicolas' second medal of the day after helping France win team gold.

Phillip Dutton of the United States won bronze on Mighty Nice.

**Canoe:** France's Denis Gargaud Chanut put together a strong run in the finals of men's slalom canoe to claim the gold medal, topping Slovakian Matej Benus' time by 0.85 seconds.

Bronze medalist Takuya Haneda of Japan became the first paddler from an Asian country to win a medal in canoe/kayak.

**Fencing:** Sanyoung Park, a 20-year-old from South Korea, stormed back to score the final five points and win men's epee.

**Shooting:** Greece's Anna Korakaki took gold in the 25-meter air pistol, beating Germany's Monika Karsch in the seventh five-shot series after Karsch had drawn level at 6-6.

Switzerland's Heidi Diethelm took bronze.

**Weightlifting:** China's Deng Wei and Shi Zhiyong won their events hours after one of the top female lifters, Lin Tzu-Chi of Taiwan, was forced to withdraw from the competition because of an abnormal doping test.

Deng won the women's 63-kilogram category, setting a world record total of 262 kilograms.

Later in the day, Shi continued China's success by winning the men's 69kg class.

**Women's soccer:** The U.S. and Colombia played to a 2-2 draw Tuesday.

While disappointing, the draw did not have much impact on the defending Olympic champions. The United States still emerged at the top of Group G and will play Sweden in Brasilia on Friday in the quarterfinals.