

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, August 11, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Task force: CENTCOM manipulated intel reports

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — U.S. Central Command manipulated intelligence on the Islamic State group to provide an overly positive impression of progress in the war, a joint House task force said Thursday.

An interim report by the task force found Central Command senior leaders signed off on intelligence reports on Iraq and Syria in 2014 and 2015 that were routinely more positive than ones produced by other agencies, and said that practice might have spawned policies that put U.S. troops in danger.

Dozens of analysts in the command cited a “toxic” leadership environment under former commander Gen. Lloyd Austin III, who retired from military service in April.

The findings come after analyst whistleblowers made claims last year of widespread massaging of war intelligence at the command and a recent House survey of its analysts found 40 percent felt somebody had attempted to distort or suppress their findings despite persuasive evidence.

The House investigation remains ongoing, according to the task force, which included members of the Armed Services Committee, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Appropriations Committee.

The Defense Department inspector general is also probing the allegations, though it has not issued any findings yet.

“The leadership failures at CENTCOM reach to the very top of the organization,” said Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Calif., a member of the task force with the Appropriations Committee. “I hope that the new CENT-

COM commander and the new director of intelligence can turn things around quickly.”

Gen. Joseph Votel took over the command this year after leading U.S. Special Operations Command, and Maj. Gen. Mark Quantock was named intelligence director in March.

Cmdr. Kyle Raines, a command spokesman, said Central Command appreciates the independent oversight by the House and is reviewing the task force findings, but declined further comment because the congressional and IG investigations are still ongoing.

Last year, a spokesman said former commander Austin looked for “unvarnished” intelligence guidance from staff.

Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Kan., who serves on the Intelligence Committee, said the massaging of information gleaned from the war zone was meant to downplay the threat of the Islamic State group.

“That may well have resulted in putting American troops at risk as policymakers relied on this intelligence when formulating policy and allocating resources for the fight,” Pompeo said in a released statement.

However, Rep. Brad Wenstrup, R-Ohio, a task force member from the Armed Services Committee who acknowledged accurate analysis is crucial to the war effort, said he was less certain about Central Command’s handling of the information.

“Despite nearly nine months of review, we still do not fully understand the reasons and motivations behind this practice and how often the excluded analyses were proven ultimately to be correct,” said Wenstrup, who is also a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve.

## AF leaders: Service to be 1K pilots short

BY TARA COPP  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Air Force will face a shortage of 1,000 fighter pilots in the next few years, the Air Force’s top leadership said Wednesday. That is a significant jump from earlier announcements that it would be 700 fighter pilots short by the end of the year, and indicates that despite recent efforts to improve readiness, the fighter pilot shortage will continue to increase.

“It is a crisis,” said new Air Force chief of staff Gen. David Goldfein, who flew combat missions in the F-16 fighter jet and the F-117 stealth fighter.

The pilot shortage is a result of lower pilot morale at a time when increased hiring by the commercial airline industry has made it more attractive to leave, Goldfein and Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James told reporters at the Pentagon.

The lower morale is due to constant wartime deployments and reduced budgets, which has left nondeployed pilots without

the funds or available aircraft to train with to stay current.

Goldfein testified before the Senate in June that the Air Force is also short 4,000 maintainers, which exacerbates the problem, because it cuts into the number of aircraft that are available to fly.

All of that is driving the Air Force’s losses, he said Wednesday.

“The reality is, pilots who don’t fly, maintainers who don’t maintain, controllers who don’t control are not going to stay with the company,” Goldfein said.

The Air Force is working to address the shortfalls by establishing two new F-16 training facilities later this year; the locations have not been announced.

The shortfall in pilots is also a reflection of a nonstop demand on air power since the Persian Gulf War 25 years ago, he said. Today’s pilots have about half the flight-training opportunities that Goldfein had, he said, which is feeding the low morale.

## US: 45K fewer Islamic State militants fighting

WASHINGTON — The military campaigns in Iraq and Syria have taken 45,000 enemy combatants off the battlefield and have reduced the total number of Islamic State fighters to as few as 15,000, the top U.S. commander for the fight against the Islamic State group said Wednesday.

Lt. Gen. Sean MacFarland said both the quality and number of Islamic State fighters is declining, and he warned it is difficult to determine accurate

numbers. Earlier estimates put the number of Islamic State fighters between 19,000 and 25,000, but U.S. officials say the range is now roughly 15,000 to 20,000.

Saying that “the enemy is in retreat on all fronts,” MacFarland said U.S.-backed local forces in both Iraq and Syria have been gaining ground. And he said the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq and Syria has decreased and that many people pressed into fighting for the Islamic State group are unwilling or untrained.

From The Associated Press

# Trump says Obama is 'founder of ISIS'

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Donald Trump is now accusing President Barack Obama of founding the Islamic State group that is wreaking havoc from the Middle East to European cities.

"In many respects, you know, they honor President Obama," Trump said Wednesday during a raucous campaign rally outside Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "He is the founder of ISIS."

He repeated the allegation three more times for emphasis.

Trump also pointedly referred to the president by his full legal name: Barack Hussein Obama.

The Republican presidential nominee in the past has accused his opponent, Democrat Hillary Clinton, of founding the militant group. As he shifted the blame

to Obama on Wednesday, he said "crooked Hillary Clinton" was actually the group's co-founder.

Trump has long blamed Obama and his former secretary of state — Clinton — for pursuing Mideast policies that created a power vacuum in Iraq that was exploited by the Islamic State group. He's sharply criticized Obama for announcing he would pull U.S. troops out of Iraq, a decision that many Obama critics say created the kind of instability in which extremist groups like the Islamic State group thrive. The White House declined to comment on Trump's accusation.

The Islamic State group began as Iraq's local affiliate of al-Qaida, the group that attacked the U.S. on Sept. 11. The group carried out massive attacks

against Iraq's Shiite Muslim majority, fueling tensions with al-Qaida's central leadership. The local group's then-leader, Jordanian-born Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was killed in 2006 in a U.S. airstrike but is still seen as the Islamic State group's founder. Trump's accusation — and his use of the president's middle name, Hussein — echoed previous instances where he's questioned Obama's loyalties.

In June, when a shooter who claimed allegiance to the Islamic State group killed 49 people in an Orlando, Fla., nightclub, Trump seemed to suggest Obama was sympathetic to the group when he said Obama "doesn't get it, or he gets it better than anybody understands." In the past, Trump has also falsely suggested Obama is a Muslim

or was born in Kenya, where Obama's father was from.

The president, a Christian, was born in Hawaii.

Trump lobbed the allegation midway through his rally at a sports arena, where riled-up supporters shouted obscenities about Clinton and joined in unison to shout "lock her up." He railed against the fact that the Orlando shooter's father, Seddique Mateen, was spotted in the crowd behind Clinton during a Monday rally in Florida, adding, "Of course he likes Hillary Clinton."

Sitting behind Trump at his rally on Wednesday was former Rep. Mark Foley, R-Fla., who resigned in 2006 after allegations he sent sexually suggestive messages to former House pages.

## US says THAAD will target only North Korea

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — A senior U.S. military official said Thursday that an advanced U.S. missile defense system that is to be deployed in South Korea will target only North Korea, not China.

China has grown increasingly angry over the plan to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system, believing it is capable of tracking missiles inside China. Chinese state media have published daily attacks against the U.S. and South Korea, and China has reportedly canceled events involving South Korean entertainers.

During a group interview with South Korean media including Yonhap news agency, Vice Adm. James D. Syring, director of the Missile Defense Agency, said the THAAD system will never be used against China.

"We don't defend against China as a threat," he said in the interview at Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff building.

Syring said the system is strictly defensive in nature and had successfully intercepted targets in 13 out of 13 tests.

Seoul's Defense Ministry confirmed the substance of Syring's reported comments.

Seoul and Washington announced last month that they will deploy the THAAD system in southern South Korea by the end of next year to better deal with North Korean threats. North Korea responded by warning of unspecified consequences and conducting several missile launches.

Residents at the South Korean deployment site have launched protests over fears that the electromagnetic waves emitted by THAAD radar systems could possibly harm health.

## Military court upholds discharge in NC case of Marine, religion

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The highest U.S. military court has upheld the bad-conduct discharge of a Marine whose case had climbed to the top of the legal system over the question of whether her religious freedom had been violated.

In a 4-1 ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Armed Forces upheld lower court determinations that Lance Cpl. Monifa Sterling's religious rights were not violated when a superior ordered her to take down signs containing a biblical passage that she'd posted around her desk at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. The judges upheld lower court conclusions that Sterling's refusal, in the context of a contentious relationship with her bosses and the combative nature of the passage, was less an exercise of religion than an act of insubordination.

Sterling was ordered demoted and discharged in a 2014 court-martial and the case has been climbing through the courts

since, with defenders of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act arguing on Sterling's behalf.

The court found Sterling had failed to establish a Religious Freedom Restoration Act case and determined that her superior's orders to remove the signs was "lawful."

"Without question, a junior Marine in a contentious relationship with her superiors posting combative signs in the workplace could undermine good order and discipline," the ruling said.

The First Liberty Institute, which led Sterling's defense, said it would file an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court. "This is absolutely outrageous," Kelly Shackelford, president and CEO of First Liberty Institute, said in a statement. "This is shameful, it's wrong and it sets a terrible precedent ..."

Bradley Girard, a constitutional litigation fellow at the Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said the ruling served to protect religious freedom in the military.

# Hammel, Cubs best Angels

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Jason Hammel won his career-best fifth straight start, pitching four-hit ball over six scoreless innings, and Chicago beat Los Angeles 3-1 for its season-high ninth straight win.

The major league-leading Cubs matched their longest streak since Aug. 6-15 of last year and moved a season-best 30 games over .500 (71-41).

Hammel (12-5) struck out six, walked two and helped himself at the plate when he singled and scored in the fifth against Ricky Nolasco (4-9) to make it 2-0. Addison Russell made it 3-1 with a solo homer off JC Ramirez in the eighth. Dexter Fowler chipped in with two hits, including an RBI double.

Chicago's Pedro Strop came on in the eighth and had to be helped off the field when he tried to make a play on Yunel Escobar's leadoff tapper down the third base line. Strop slid in front of third baseman Javier Baez and his left leg appeared to bend awkwardly.

Aroldis Chapman struck out the side in the ninth for his fourth save in five chances since the Cubs got him in a trade with the New York Yankees last month.

The Angels, last in the AL West, matched a season high with their sixth straight loss.

**Giants 1, Marlins 0:** Two days after Brandon Crawford battered Miami with seven hits, he homered in the fourth inning to help visiting San Francisco win a series for the first time since the All-Star break.

Crawford tied an NL record with seven hits in the opener of the three-game set. In the finale, he put San Francisco ahead with his 11th homer leading off the fourth.

**Phillies 6, Dodgers 2:** Freddy Galvis hit a three-run home run in the seventh inning, Ryan Howard added a three-run, pinch double in the ninth and Philadelphia beat host Los Angeles.

Ryan Howard added a three-run, pinch double in the ninth.

Los Angeles closer Kenley Jansen pitched the ninth, even with the Dodgers down 3-2, and loaded the bases. Howard hit the bases-clearing double to right for insurance runs in the victory that dropped the Dodgers a game behind first-place San Francisco in the NL West.

**Athletics 1, Orioles 0:** Ross Detwiler and John Axford combined on a seven-hitter and host Oakland beat Baltimore to knock the Orioles out of first place in the AL East.

Called up from the minors earlier in the day, Detwiler (1-0) allowed six hits over a career-high eight innings and struck out two while leading the A's to their third consecutive one-run win over the Orioles.

**Nationals 7, Indians 4:** Jayson Werth hit a three-run home run, Anthony Rendon had a two-run double and Washington's offense broke out in a victory over visiting Cleveland. Werth was 2-for-3 and had three runs. Rendon and Ben Revere each went 2-for-4.

It was a welcome output on a day that left-hander Gio Gonzalez (8-9) allowed four runs and seven hits, including a home run by Francisco Lindor, and struck out five in five-plus innings.

**Padres 4, Pirates 0:** Travis Jankowski capped San Diego's scoring with a straight steal of home in the eighth inning, and Edwin Jackson limited host Pittsburgh to two hits in seven innings.

Jankowski took off during

catcher Eric Fryer's return throw to pitcher Anonio Bastardo and scored standing up when Fryer could not handle Bastardo's low throw to the plate.

**Blue Jays 7, Rays 0:** J.A. Happ became the first 16-game winner in the major this season, combining with three relievers on a four-hitter in host Toronto's victory over Tampa.

**Cardinals 3, Reds 2:** Matt Carpenter and Jhonny Peralta homered to back up a second straight dominant start by Jaime Garcia in St. Louis' victory over visiting Cincinnati.

**Rangers 5, Rockies 4:** Adrian Beltre singled in two runs in the eighth inning, and host Texas rallied late for the third straight game against Colorado.

**Diamondbacks 3, Mets 2 (12):** Oscar Hernandez hit his first major league homer in the 12th inning to lift visiting Arizona past New York.

Hernandez was recalled from Double-A Mobile after Arizona placed catcher Wellington Castillo on the paternity list Tuesday.

**Brewers 4, Braves 3:** Chris Carter hit a three-run homer, Chase Anderson won his third straight decision in host Milwaukee's victory over Atlanta.

**Royals 3, White Sox 2 (14):** Lorenzo Cain's two-out single in the 14th inning scored Christian Colon from second base to give host Kansas City the win.

**Mariners 3, Tigers 1:** Nelson Cruz hit his 28th homer in the eighth inning after Felix Hernandez and Justin Verlander duelled through the first seven, and host Seattle completed a three-game sweep.

# A-Rod pinch hits, Yanks top Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Yankees manager Joe Girardi finally found a spot he liked for Alex Rodriguez.

Two more games and he won't have to worry about it.

Benched from the starting lineup once again as his finale approaches, Rodriguez pinch hit and flied out in the seventh inning of New York's 9-4 comeback win against the Boston Red Sox on Wednesday night.

"I was looking for a three-run homer so I went to him," Girardi said of A-Rod. "Just missed it."

Red Sox star David Ortiz limped off in the ninth inning after fouling a pitch off his right shin. Boston said X-rays were negative.

"My heart sank a little bit when I saw it, but I just saw him and I feel much better," Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski said.

New York received another health scare when pitcher Nathan Eovaldi left after one inning because of right elbow discomfort.

Chants of 'We Want A-Rod!' echoed around the park at the start of the seventh. He was greeted by loud boos when he stepped out of the dugout to face Matt Barnes. They were louder when he was announced and again when he trotted back to the dugout after his flyout to right field, which dropped his batting average to .203 and extended his slump to 4-for-37 (.108).

Rodriguez has just one start and eight at-bats in 17 games since July 22 as New York traded veterans and turned toward a youth movement. He had not appeared in a game since Aug. 2.



## Ship's Store official new car program

Exclusive Navy at-sea offers:

[www.navyauto.com](http://www.navyauto.com) or [nasinfo@navyauto.com](mailto:nasinfo@navyauto.com)

# Gatlin defends competing in Rio

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — It didn't take long for Justin Gatlin's name to get dragged into the doping drama swirling at the Olympics.

No big deal to Gatlin.

The sprinter considered the best threat to defeat Usain Bolt in the 100-meter final Sunday told The Associated Press he's not paying attention to what people are saying about him, and is not concerned with those who think he doesn't belong here.

"At the end of the day, the time has been served. I've served that time," the 34-year-old Gatlin told AP on Wednesday. "I've dealt with that punishment. I've moved forward."

Not everyone else has.

Gatlin, who won gold at 100 meters at the 2004 Olympics, has been caught using banned substances twice. The first was for amphetamines, though ar-

bitrators determined he didn't use them for doping but to treat attention deficit disorder. The second came for excessive testosterone in 2006 and resulted in a four-year ban.

His name almost always comes up in the debate over how past dopers should be treated. In Rio, it surfaced in the wake of American swimmer Lilly King's finger-wagging display toward Yulia Efimova, the Russian who was allowed to compete after a last-minute appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Like Gatlin, Efimova has served a doping ban but was reinstated.

But in refusing to bar the entire Russian team from the Olympics after investigations detailed state-sponsored doping in the country, the IOC put in a special caveat: Any Russian who had been previously banned for doping was not

welcome.

That rule was overturned by CAS, which had made similar decisions in previous cases, saying athletes can't be punished twice for the same offense.

King's criticism of Efimova — and her icy stares toward the Russian before the two squared off in the pool — instantly made King a voice in support of clean athletes everywhere.

The dispute led to King, and many others, being asked if it was fair that Gatlin was competing.

"Do I think people who have been caught doping should be on the team? They shouldn't. It is unfortunate we have to see that," King said.

But, King said, she had to respect the rules.

Same with sprinter Michael Johnson, the four-time Olympic gold medalist, who was asked whether Gatlin should be here.

"The issue people need to

understand is that you're not going to solve the problem by pointing the finger at an athlete and making that athlete the villain," Johnson said, talking in general about athletes with violations.

"The athlete has been a villain and certainly has done damage to the sport. ... I don't appreciate that. But the athlete's not the one that's making the rules that allows him to get back on the track or back in the pool, or back on the field."

Gatlin does not see himself as a villain — and does not buy into the now-hackneyed portrayal of him vs. Bolt as track's version of "Good vs. Evil."

"People want to label people and that's all they want to do," Gatlin said. "They don't want to get to know them, they don't want to understand the story, in-depth."

# Ledecky picks up third swimming gold

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Katie Ledecky was the fastest swimmer in the pool, and she brought her American teammates along for the ride.

The 19-year-old turned in another overpowering performance to carry the United States to victory in the 4x200-meter freestyle relay, capturing her third gold and fourth medal overall at the Rio Olympics.

The U.S. trailed through the first three legs of the race, as Sweden, China and then Australia swapped the top spot.

Then, it was Ledecky's turn on the anchor leg.

She blew everyone away.

Ledecky turned in a split of 1 minute, 53.74 seconds, which was nearly 2.5 seconds faster than her next-fastest teammate, Allison Schmitt in 1:56.21.

Only one other swimmer in the race, Australia's Emma McKeon, got within a second of Ledecky's four-lap time.

The U.S. finished in 7 minutes, 43.03 seconds, with Ledecky a full body length ahead of Tamsin Cook, who touched in 7:44.87 to give Australia the silver. Canada took the bronze in 7:45.39.

Kyle Chalmers, 18, dethroned defending champion Nathan Adrian in the final of the 100 freestyle, the first Australian to be crowned king of speed in 48 years. Kazakhstan claimed its first swimming medal — a gold one, at that — when Dmitriy Balandin pulled off a stunning upset in the 200 breaststroke.

**Men's basketball:** Carmelo Anthony and Kyrie Irving had the answers in the first test for the U.S. team.

Anthony scored 31 points on the night he became the U.S. men's Olympic career scoring leader, combining with Irving for all the Americans' baskets in the fourth quarter of a 98-88 victory over Australia on Wednesday.

A team that won its first

two games by a combined 101 points could never get a comfortable lead.

**Women's basketball:** Diana Taurasi knocked down a personal Olympic best six three-pointers and finished with 25 points as the United States took a big step toward the quarterfinals, routing Serbia 110-84.

Taurasi scored 16 in the first quarter and hit five threes in the first half. After beating their first two opponents by an average of 52.5 points, the Serbians wouldn't go away easily.

**Field hockey:** Melissa Gonzalez scored on a penalty corner 22 seconds into the team's match against Japan, and Katie Bam scored the first of her three goals four minutes later. The Americans went on to rout Japan 6-1 in the Pool B contest to earn a slot in the quarterfinals.

The Americans improved to 3-0 at the Olympics and leapfrogged Britain for the top spot in the pool by moving ahead in goal differential. The United

States is plus seven, while the Brits are plus five.

**Men's rugby:** Nate Ebner ran almost half the length of the field with world champion Fiji players in pursuit and scored with a minute to go in the most crucial game of the pool stage.

The U.S. team needed to stay within four points of Fiji in the last group-stage game to advance to the quarterfinals at the expense of 12-time world series champion New Zealand.

At the moment Ebner scored, the difference was five points with a conversion to come — two crucial points that would have cut the difference to three.

U.S. captain Maddison Hughes took the conversion attempt, wide on the right sideline, but couldn't angle it between the uprights.

Seconds later, the Americans were out of contention with a 24-19 loss, and New Zealand got a backdoor pass into the quarterfinals at the expense of the United States.