

STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, August 16, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Trump reverses position on NATO's value

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump said Monday he will work with NATO to combat the Islamic State group if elected president, reversing his earlier statements that the military alliance is obsolete and his administration might not honor U.S. membership obligations.

The GOP presidential nominee, speaking in Youngstown, Ohio, proposed NATO cooperation as part of what he called a new global approach to anti-terrorism efforts that taps all potential partners including Russia, and “extreme vetting” of immigrants to increase security inside the United States. He charged President Barack Obama and Democratic presidential challenger Hillary Clin-

ton, a former secretary of state, with failed policies of nation-building and regime change in Iraq and elsewhere that has led to rise of the Islamic State group around the world.

The foreign policy speech came as Trump was confronted with falling poll numbers in key battleground states and rejections from Republicans over his earlier stance on the post-World War II NATO alliance, which requires a joint response to military aggression against member states and is widely credited with securing relative peace in Europe for generations.

“We will also work closely with NATO on this new mission,” Trump said. “I had previously said that NATO was obsolete because it failed to deal adequately with terrorism.

Since my comments, they have changed their policy and now have a new division focused on terror threats.”

NATO confirmed in June it was moving ahead with creating a top intelligence post to better deal with terrorism, but officials denied it was related to any comments by Trump.

Trump’s shift on NATO could be an effort to win members of his party. Earlier this month, 50 former top Republican national security officials wrote an open letter opposing Trump’s candidacy, citing his approach to foreign policy.

“Mr. Trump has demonstrated repeatedly that he has little understanding of America’s vital national interests, its complex diplomatic challenges, its indispensable alliances, and the democratic values on which

U.S. foreign policy must be based,” the group wrote in the Aug. 8 letter.

The real estate mogul has also been dogged by continuing controversies over a string of other recent statements, including his claim that Obama and Clinton founded the Islamic State group and verbal sparring with a Gold Star family who backed the Democrats.

Trump said his new strategy will focus on radical Islamic terrorism — what he called a “hateful ideology” — similar to the effort to defeat communism during the Cold War.

“It is now time for a new approach. Our current strategy of nation-building and regime change is a proven absolute failure,” Trump said. “We have created the vacuums that allow terrorism to grow and thrive.”

Russian bombers take off from Iran, bound for Syria

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian warplanes took off Tuesday from a base in Iran to target Islamic State fighters and other militants in Syria, Russia’s Defense Ministry said, widening Moscow’s bombing campaign in a major development in the country’s civil war.

The long-range bombers took off from near the city of Hamedan, about 175 miles southwest of the Iranian capital, Tehran, and struck targets in three provinces in northern and eastern Syria.

It is virtually unheard of in Iran’s recent history to allow a foreign power to use one of its bases to stage attacks. Russia has also never used the territory of another country in the Middle East for operations in

Syria, where it has been carrying out an aerial campaign in support of President Bashar Assad’s government for nearly a year.

In Washington, Col. Chris Garver, the Baghdad-based spokesman for Operation Inherent Resolve, told reporters via teleconference that Russia alerted U.S. and coalition air operations that it was launching the airstrikes. The notification is part of an agreement signed last year between the U.S. and Russia after Russia began launching strikes in Syria.

Russia and the U.S. have been discussing greater coordination for striking extremists in Syria, but they have been unable to reach agreement on which militant groups could be targeted.

US sends 15 uncharged Gitmo detainees to UAE

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Fifteen prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay detention center were sent to the United Arab Emirates in the single largest release of detainees during the Obama administration, the Pentagon announced Monday.

The transfer of 12 Yemeni nationals and three Afghans to the UAE comes amid a renewed push to whittle down the number of detainees held at the U.S. prison in Cuba that President Barack Obama aims to close. The Pentagon says 61 detainees now remain at Guantanamo, which was opened in January 2002 to hold foreign fighters suspected of links to the Taliban or the al-Qaida terrorist organization. During the Bush administration, 532

prisoners were released from Guantanamo, often in large groups to Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia.

The latest batch of released prisoners had been held without charge at Guantanamo, some for over 14 years. They were cleared for release by the Periodic Review Board, comprised of representatives from six U.S. government agencies.

The UAE resettled five detainees transferred there last year, according to the Pentagon. The UAE is a major regional military ally for the U.S., as it hosts American military personnel targeting the Islamic State group with airstrikes in Iraq and Syria. Dubai’s Jebel Ali port is the most frequently visited by ships of the U.S. Navy outside of America.

Milley visits China amid THAAD tensions

Associated Press

BEIJING — The U.S. Army chief of staff told Chinese officials during a visit Tuesday that China should not feel threatened by American ally South Korea's decision to deploy a powerful U.S. missile defense system.

Gen. Mark A. Milley met with his Chinese counterpart, Gen. Li Zuocheng, and other senior Chinese Army leaders amid strong Chinese protests over the decision to base the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system south of the South Korean capital, Seoul.

Milley reiterated the American position that the defense

system is intended to destroy possible North Korean missiles and not to track missiles inside China. Milley said THAAD is not a threat to China, the U.S. Army said in a statement.

Chinese state media have published daily attacks against the U.S. and South Korea over the missile defense system, and China has canceled events involving South Korean entertainers. China also appears to be withholding support at the United Nations for condemnations of North Korea's missile programs.

Milley's visit also comes amid friction following an international arbitration panel's ruling last month that invalidated China's claim to virtu-

ally the entire South China Sea. China angrily rejected the verdict and has vowed to continue developing man-made islands that the U.S. says have exacerbated tensions in the strategically crucial region.

According to the U.S. Army statement, Milley told Chinese officials the U.S. was committed to following international rules "and encouraged the Chinese to do the same as a way to reduce regional tensions."

Highlighting the issue, the interior minister of Taiwan, one of the six governments to claim territory in the South China Sea, planned to travel to Taiping Island where it maintains a garrison.

Tensions have also spiked in

recent days between China and Japan over a chain of uninhabited islands controlled by Tokyo but claimed by Beijing.

Japan last week called in the Chinese ambassador to protest over a large increase in the number of Chinese coast guard and fishing ships operating in waters surrounding the islands, called Senkaku by Japan and Diaoyu by China.

Following his Beijing meetings, Milley is to travel to South Korea to meet with U.S. troops and hold discussions with South Korean military leaders on the THAAD deployment and other issues. He then is to travel to Japan.

Navy F-35s begin their last round of sea trials

The Virginian-Pilot

ABOARD THE USS GEORGE WASHINGTON — For Navy pilot Lt. Graham "Boss" Cleveland, landing the Navy's new Joint Strike Fighter aboard a moving aircraft carrier was a relief.

That relief came not because landing the Navy's new fighter is more difficult — it comes with a program called Delta Flight Path that functions as a sort of cruise control for the aircraft, which can help to make that crucial step easier — but because this day has been a long time coming.

Cleveland, a landing signal officer who transitioned from the F/A-18C, was aboard for the first two phases of developmental testing of the F-35C Lightning II as the Navy commenced trials in 2014 and 2015. This week, he was at the controls for what's expected to be the third and final phase of sea-based developmental testing as the Navy puts the aircraft through some of its most rigorous tests

yet.

"It's kind of something I've been working toward for quite some time," Cleveland said.

Cleveland was among 12 pilots from Strike Fighter Squadron 101 "Grim Reapers," a fleet replacement squadron based at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., to complete carrier qualifications as part of this round of testing. The Navy's Patuxent River-based Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 23 will spend the next two to three weeks working through other capabilities, including taking off and landing with external simulated weapons and asymmetrical loading.

The F-35 is the military's next-generation fighter. The Navy's jet is one of three variations, and includes greater internal fuel capability, larger wings and more robust landing gear for carrier settings. The single-engine stealth fighter will replace the Air Force's A-10 and F-16, the Navy's F/A-18 and the Marines' AV-8B Harrier jets.

Waters receding in La., but dangers continue

Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — As waters begin to recede in parts of Louisiana's capital city, some residents struggled to return to flood-damaged homes on foot, in cars and by boat. But though the rain had mostly stopped, new places in the state faced flood dangers from the deluge that has sent thousands into shelters.

Rivers and creeks were still dangerously bloated in areas south of Baton Rouge as people filled sandbags there to protect their houses, bracing for the worst as the water worked its way south. In one area, Ascension Parish, officials said some small towns have already been inundated.

Seven deaths have been reported, and more than 20,000 have had to be rescued since Friday in some of the worst flooding the state has ever seen. And at least 11,000 have hunkered down in shelters to wait out the floods.

The slow-moving, low-pressure system that dumped more

than 20 inches of rain on some parts of Louisiana was crawling into Texas, but the National Weather Service warned that the danger of new flooding remained high due to the sheer volume of water flowing toward the Gulf of Mexico.

Authorities late Monday said a body had been pulled from floodwaters in Baton Rouge, raising the toll to seven dead.

Casey Rayborn Hicks, a spokeswoman for the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, said a volunteer patrolling in his boat Monday found the victim in front of a library.

Despite the dangers, people ventured out.

Karla and Johnathon McDaniel waded through chest-deep water to revisit their home, which they fled late Saturday night. However, the water was too deep to get inside.

On their way out, the McDaniels stopped to gawk at a monster truck revving its engine in a failed attempt to free a National Guard vehicle mired in a muddy ditch.

Choo breaks arm in Rangers' win over A's

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas—Adrian Beltre's decisive grand slam came shortly after the Texas Rangers ended a 24-inning scoreless streak — and three batters after Shin-Soo Choo was possibly lost for the season with a fractured left forearm when he was hit by a pitch.

The news on Choo, who is headed to the disabled list for the fourth time this season, dampened a 5-2 win over the Oakland Athletics on Monday night following consecutive shutout losses at home to Detroit.

"He's such a key part of this ballclub, this organization," manager Jeff Banister said of his right fielder, who started this game as the designated hitter in his regular leadoff spot. "You feel terrible for him personally and obviously it's a gut punch but one that we're going to be challenged with."

Martin Perez pitched seven strong innings for his first win since late June.

Beltre's 100th home run at Globe Life Park, which went about a dozen rows above the 14-foot wall in left field, came against former teammate Ross Detwiler (1-1) in the fifth inning with Texas trailing 2-1.

Choo checked his swing as the ball hit near his left wrist, and he immediately dropped to one knee. He left after spending several minutes talking to an athletic trainer and was replaced by Nomar Mazara.

Red Sox 3, Indians 2: David Ortiz hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in a three-run sixth inning, and visiting Boston extended its winning streak to four.

Yankees 1, Blue Jays 0: Chad Green struck out 11 in six dominant innings, Aaron Judge

delivered again with an RBI double and Dellin Betances escaped a big ninth-inning jam, leading host New York over Toronto.

Royals 3, Tigers 1: Ian Kennedy pitched effectively into the seventh inning to win for the first time since June 26 as Kansas City beat visiting Detroit.

Marlins 6, Reds 3: Chris Johnson drove in two runs with a homer and a double, former reliever David Phelps pitched into the sixth inning in his third start of the season and Miami won the opener of its four-game series against host Cincinnati.

Rays 8, Padres 2: Drew Smyly allowed just a solo homer over seven innings of one-hit ball, and Tampa Bay got home runs from Logan Forsythe and Kevin Kiermaier in its victory over visiting San Diego.

Nationals 5, Rockies 4: Jayson Werth and Wilson Ramos homered, Bryce Harper doubled in the go-ahead run in the seventh inning and visiting Washington beat skidding Colorado despite a lackluster start from Max Scherzer.

Pirates 8, Giants 5: Gregory Polanco had a homer and four RBIs, Ryan Vogelsong won in his return to AT&T Park and Pittsburgh beat San Francisco.

Diamondbacks 10, Mets 6: Wellington Castillo, just back from a six-day leave due to complications with the birth of his son, matched his career high of four hits to lead host Arizona.

Bartolo Colon (10-7) drew the first walk of his 19-year major league career.

Mariners 3, Angels 2: Nelson Cruz hit his 30th home run to lead Felix Hernandez and Seattle past Los Angeles as the host Angels matched a franchise record with their 11th consecutive defeat.

NFL: Talk or face bans in PED probe

Associated Press

The NFL is still seeking an audience with the four linebackers it's investigating for an alleged link to performance-enhancing drugs.

The league's latest message to James Harrison, Clay Matthews, Mike Neal and Julius Peppers came with an ominous and onerous threat: Answer our questions in the next 10 days, or start your suspension.

NFL senior vice president of labor policy and league affairs Adolpho Birch sent a letter Monday to the NFL Players Association detailing a plan to suspend Harrison, Matthews, Peppers and Neal if they don't speak with the league by Aug. 25.

Their punishment would then start the following day on an indefinite basis, to be ended at the discretion of Commissioner Roger Goodell once an interview has been completed.

Birch's memo to the union was obtained by The Associated Press, according to a person with knowledge of the investigation who's not authorized to speak publicly about it.

Harrison, a 14-year veteran, is a longtime leader for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Matthews and Peppers are key cogs in Green Bay's defense, and Neal is currently a free agent who spent the past six seasons with the Packers. Harrison, Matthews and Peppers have been picked for the Pro Bowl a combined 20 times.

The NFL first notified the quartet on Jan. 11 about the investigation into a television report by Al-Jazeera featuring allegations made by Charlie Sly, who worked as an intern at an anti-aging clinic, about the use

of banned performance-enhancing drugs by several athletes including the four linebackers. Sly later recanted his claims.

Birch, in his letter, said the league has made "at least seven attempts" to arrange the interviews.

Goodell's power to punish has been a prickly issue between the NFL and the union in recent years, so the elevation of this dispute was not surprising since it revolves around the potential of player discipline and how it fits within the collective bargaining agreement.

The stance of the players has been steadfast in this case, refusing to be interviewed without being presented with what they've called credible evidence. Affidavits were sent by the NFLPA on behalf of the players to substitute for the interviews. Birch dismissed each as simply half-page statements, which were "wholly devoid of any detail." Birch also said the league determined that an assertion made in Neal's affidavit was "demonstrably false."

Harrison said in his statement, sent to Birch July 25 by the NFLPA, he never met nor communicated with the source of the report and has never violated the NFL's policy on performance-enhancing substances.

Birch cited Article 46 of the CBA in noting the discipline that can come for noncooperation or obstruction. Such a suspension would be separate from any possible future determination of violation of the steroid policy.

"We cannot accept your unilateral assertion that the cursory, untested statements you have submitted satisfy the players' obligation," Birch wrote.



Ship's Store official new car program

Exclusive Navy at-sea offers:

www.navyauto.com or nasinfo@navyauto.com

Miller holds off Felix in women's 400

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — For beating Allyson Felix, Shaunae Miller gets a gold medal. Maybe they should give her a cape, too.

It took a head-first dive, Superwoman-style, for Miller to spring an Olympic upset Monday over America's top female sprinter in the 400 meters and deny her a record fifth gold medal.

Miller, a 22-year-old from the Bahamas, took an early lead, then held off Felix's charge along the straightaway. Neck-and-neck with two steps to go, Miller sprawled and tumbled across the line to win by .07 seconds.

Now, instead of a coronation for Felix, it's a celebration for Miller, who finished second to the American at last year's world championships. Her dive will go down as one of the most dramatic images we've seen at these, or any, Olympics.

Not that she planned it that way.

"I don't know what happened. My mind just went blank," Miller said. "The only thing I was thinking (about) was the gold medal, and the next thing I know, I was on the ground."

And yet, she didn't even get the evening's biggest roars. Those were reserved for pole vaulter Thiago Braz da Silva,

who gave Brazil its first medal in track and field by setting an Olympic record (6.03 meters) to upset world-record holder and defending champion Renaud Lavillenie of France.

"I thought I was in a movie. ... My first urge was to go run and hug Thiago so much," said bronze medalist Sam Kendrick of the United States. "But I knew that it was his moment and he needed to be on camera and experience it for himself."

Lavillenie put the bar at 6.08 meters for his last attempt, and as he was getting ready to jump, the crowd booed. He responded with a thumbs-down sign. After the loss, he complained about the spectators taking sides.

In the 800 meters, David Rudisha of Kenya won a second straight gold medal, and Clayton Murphy picked up bronze to give the United States its first medal in that event since 1992.

But The Dive is what everyone will be talking about.

As Miller, who formerly competed for University of Georgia, lay on her back, gasping for breath and maybe even stunned herself at what she'd done, Felix sat on the ground stone-faced. Ten seconds passed. Then 20.

The winner's first clue came from the stands, not the scoreboard, which showed Miller winning in 49.44 seconds, ahead

of Felix and bronze medalist Shericka Jackson of Jamaica.

A familiar voice cut through the air.

"I heard my mom screaming," Miller said. "When I heard her screaming, I was like, 'OK, I had to have won the race.'"

Starting from Lane 7, Miller expanded the lag, instead of getting gobbled up the way most women do when Felix is on the track.

Stride for stride they ran down the last 100 meters, until the last few steps. Felix, classically trained by Bobby Kersee, made a textbook lean into the finish line. Miller tried something else. Something no coach would ever teach.

"She gave everything she had and her legs gave out at the line," said Miller's coach, Lance Brauman, who also works with 100-meter silver medalist Tori Bowie of the U.S. "Was not intentional."

Then again, amazing things happen with a gold medal at stake.

While Miller jumped with her arms flailing forward, the rules say the win is determined by which athlete has any part of her torso cross the line first. The photo finish showed Miller's shoulder barely beat Felix to the line.

"I don't think I ever quite had a year this tough," Felix said, as

her eyes welled with tears.

She was one of those rare athletes who had the cachet to get the Olympics to change the schedule. After winning the world championship at 400 meters last year, she put the 200-400 double in her sights for the Olympics. The schedule as it was originally written made it impossible: The 200 heats were scheduled for the same evening as the 400 final.

Felix asked, and she received: The 200 heats were moved to the morning to give America's best female sprinter a chance for the two-fer.

But she never got to the starting line in the 200 because an injury derailed her training and she came up short at Olympic trials.

The 400 was her only chance for individual gold. Instead, she got silver to go with the pair she won in 2004 and 2008 in the 200.

Even so, Felix became the most decorated U.S. female track athlete, with seven overall medals.

But this was Miller's night.

The flagbearer for her country in the opening ceremonies, Miller came into the games 5 for 5 in her races this season, including Diamond League meets in Shanghai, Eugene and London.

Now she's 6 for 6.

US women's water polo team earns berth in semifinals

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — The U.S. women's water polo team pushed around Brazil for most of Monday afternoon. Led by Ashleigh Johnson's six saves, the Americans carried a shut-out into the fourth quarter.

Coach Adam Krikorian loved most of the game. It was the last part that annoyed him a bit.

Maggie Steffens, Kiley Neushul, Makenzie Fischer and Kaleigh Gilchrist scored two goals apiece to help the U.S. to a big lead in a 13-3 victory, but Brazil scored the final three

goals in the fourth.

"Not happy with how we played in the fourth quarter," Krikorian said. "I know it's a tough position to be in in some ways. But I thought we relaxed."

Next up for the world champions is Hungary, which went to penalty shots against Australia before emerging with a 13-11 win. Russia, a surprise 12-10 winner against Spain, takes on Italy in the second semifinal match on Wednesday at the Olympic Aquatics Stadium.

The U.S. stretched its win streak to 20 games, includ-

ing four victories in Rio by a combined score of 47-16. The London gold medalists beat Hungary 11-5 on Saturday after sweeping a three-game series against the country earlier this year, but Hungary is brimming with confidence after reaching the semifinals for the third straight Olympics.

"Everybody's beatable," Hungary center back Orsolya Takacs said.

Hungary trailed Australia 5-3 at halftime, and Orsolya Kaso replaced Edina Gangl in goal at the start of the second half. After captain Bronwen Knox

made it 8-6 Australia with 5:53 remaining, Barbara Bujka and Dora Antal responded for Hungary.

"We got our defense together for the second half of the match when we changed our goalkeeper," Hungary's Ildiko Toth said through a translator. "We had left Edina alone for too much of the match, so we needed to swap things around and be stronger without the ball."

Knox threw one off the cage on her penalty shot, leaving the door open. Dora Czigany and Antal then converted their attempts, closing it out.