



Residents repair the ceiling of a flat damaged in shelling between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists in the eastern Ukrainian city of Horlivka in the Donetsk region, yesterday. Three Ukrainian civilians and two soldiers have been killed in the past day of intensifying clashes, officials from both sides said yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SOUTH CHINA SEA, CYBERATTACKS

China urges US to end 'microphone diplomacy'

REUTERS, Washington

Differences between the United States and China over the South China Sea and cyber security should not be addressed by "microphone diplomacy" but in "a proper way" to allow for a successful US visit by President Xi Jinping this year, a senior Chinese diplomat said on Wednesday.

Wu Xi, deputy chief of mission at the Chinese embassy in Washington, said individual issues should not be allowed to overshadow the overall US-China relationship and that common interests, including bilateral trade volume of \$550 billion last year, "far outweigh" differences between the countries.

"Resorting to microphone diplomacy, or pointing fingers at each other, will not solve any problems," Wu told a meeting on Capitol Hill to mark the 10th anniversary of the US Congress's US-China Working Group.

"The right choice is to recognize our differences, respect each other and engage in real dialogue," she said. "The choice we make today will decide the future of our two great nations, as well as the entire world."

Wu was referring to disagreements between Washington and Beijing over China's increasingly assertive pursuit of territorial claims in the South China Sea, which have raised fears of military confrontation, and a massive cyber attack on the US government that US officials have blamed on Chinese hackers.

China has called the hacking allegations irresponsible and says it has the right to build artificial islands in contested territory. Wu said the two sides should use the annual meeting of the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue from June 22-24, and a US visit this week of a top Chinese military official, "to articulate the outcome and deliverables" for Xi's September visit to Washington.

"We need to address our differences in a proper way," she told reporters.

Wu said she did not see any US-China "tensions," as the countries shared a common interest in peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and always discussed differences.

"We have no alternative but to succeed in the interests of our two nations and the world," she said.

Save the Children ordered to leave Pakistan: officials

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani authorities yesterday ordered the international aid group Save the Children to leave the country saying the charity was "working against the country", police and government officials said.

Government administration officials accompanied by police arrived at the charity's office in the heart of the capital Islamabad after working hours and placed a lock on the door and a notice saying the building had been sealed.

In 2012 a Pakistan intelligence report had linked the aid group to Pakistani doctor Shakeel Afridi who the CIA allegedly used to carry out a fake vaccination programme as they searched for al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

Save the Children has always denied it had any links with Afridi or the CIA.

OBAMA'S NEW PLAN TO SAVE IRAQ
A double paradox

THE DAILY BEAST ONLINE

President Obama's decision to send another 450 troops to Iraq is the latest example of a strategy mired in double paradox. The US wants to save a unified Iraq—by strengthening the ethnic and religious militias that could tear the country apart. And to pull it off, Washington is counting on the cooperation of groups divided by a chasm of suspicion.

In its announcement Wednesday, the Obama administration said the additional American troops are supposed to help more Sunnis come forward and eventually receive US military training. The goal is for those Sunnis to align with the largely Shia government in Baghdad to drive out the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the Sunni-dominated terror army that controls the region where they live.

But there's a major catch. Several, actually. For these Sunni fighters, fighting ISIS not only means going to war against their fellow Sunnis. It also means teaming up with the central government in Baghdad—a government dominated by their Shia rivals, with a long history of mistreating Sunnis.

In Iraq, Sunni leaders describe a central government that is deeply distrustful of its potential trainees, unwilling to give them arms provided by the United States, and quick to turn a blind eye when sectarian forces carry out attacks against them.

"This is a half-measure not designed to achieve effects on the ground but a response to critics," an adviser who works with the US military on its strategy against ISIS explained to The Daily Beast. "This is the least they could do with the least amount of risk."

White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters Wednesday that "these new advisers will work to build capacity of Iraqi forces, including local tribal fighters, to improve their ability to plan, lead, and conduct operations against ISIL in eastern Anbar under the command of the prime minister."

Sunnis, recruited by US troops, would join the Iraqi military—or, more likely, local militias—to fend off an expanding ISIS threat. Among the ways the US troops will find potential recruits will be to seek recommendations of candidates from tribesmen, Army Col Steven Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters Wednesday.

In other words, the US military is reaching out to a sect of Iraqis that does not trust the US-backed central Shia-dominated Iraqi government and encouraging them to join the Iraqi military or fight ISIS through their own forces.

Until now, all trainees came by way of the Shia-dominated central Iraq government—usually unsuccessfully—leading to a largely sectarian Shia-dominated military

and Sunni areas of Iraq susceptible to ISIS.

This would be the first time in the new Iraq war that the US military has reached out at a local, tribal level for potential trainees.

"What we are trying to do is bring Sunnis into the fold," Warren told reporters.

The US forces will be stationed at Taqaddum base, in Iraq's restive, Sunni-dominated Anbar province. The base is at Habbaniya, which sits between the Iraqi cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, both under ISIS control. Taqaddum became a headquarters for the Iraqi police and military after its troops lost Ramadi and fled to the base last month. It was a major tactical and psychological defeat for the Iraqi military.

The US troops will advise members of the Iraqi army's 8th Division about tactics to eventually reclaim Ramadi, Warren said. American forces will also help find Sunnis to join the army or to receive military training to create a local force. US-backed Sunni candidates for training will also receive body armor, small arms, and communications equipment, Warren said.

The announcement of the additional 450

NEWS IN
brief

China's ex security chief jailed for life

AFP, Beijing

Former Chinese security chief Zhou Yongkang, the highest ranking ex-official to be investigated for corruption in decades, was sentenced to life in prison at a secret trial, state-media said yesterday. Zhou admitted to charges of "bribery, abuse of power and leaking state secrets," at a secret trial in the northern city of Tianjin, the official Xinhua news agency said in a surprise announcement. Zhou, 72, is a former member of the ruling Communist party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee, and wielded vast power as head of the police and courts until his retirement.

Philippines rescues 8 kids in online sex abuse raid

AFP, Manila

Filipino police have freed eight children from a house in Manila where they were allegedly sold for prostitution and forced to have sex for an online audience, authorities said yesterday. Two people, including the alleged mastermind of the abuse Christopher Villanueva and the mother of three of the children, have been arrested after the raid in the Philippine capital on Wednesday night. Villanueva is accused of forcing the children, all but one of them girls aged between 13 and 17, and another 18-year-old girl to have sex with him and each other in front of web cameras for watchers in Asia.

Israel denies cyberattacks on Iran talks venues

REUTERS, Jerusalem

An Israeli deputy minister yesterday dismissed as baseless reports Israel may have had a connection to a computer virus that a security company said was used to hack into venues linked to talks on Iran's nuclear program. Both Kaspersky and US security company Symantec said the virus shared some programming with previously discovered espionage software called Duqu, which security experts believe to have been

A unique marriage proposal

THE HINDU ONLINE

A few days ago, the amusing ways in which some men proposed to their girlfriends were telecast by America's Funniest Video show. Now a scientist has found a more strange and scholarly route to propose to his girlfriend.

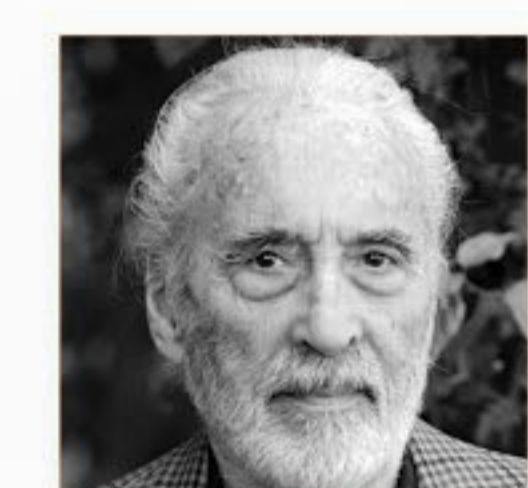
In a paper published in the reputable journal Current Biology on June 4, Caleb M Brown, the first author from the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology in Drumheller, Alberta, Canada, proposed to his girlfriend in his journal paper. The proposal is buried at the very end of the acknowledgement section of the paper.

The proposal reads: "CMB would specifically like to highlight the ongoing and unwavering support of Lorna O'Brien. Lorna, will you marry me?"

Retraction Watch, a watch guard website that spots and turns the spotlight on all forms of scientific misconduct in published journal papers had recently spotted this saying: "It's the first time we've come across such an unusual acknowledgement. The question is: Will she say yes?"

The outcome of the proposal too was confirmed in a rather unusual way even as Retraction Watch reached out to the author to know the result.

Writing in a news item published in the journal Science, Michael Balter confirmed Lorna as accepting the proposal. "At its very end, the lead author asks a fellow researcher at the museum to marry him. (After seeing a preprint, she has already said yes,)" he wrote.



Horror legend Christopher Lee dies at 93

AFP, London

British actor Christopher Lee, the ultimate movie villain who played Dracula and starred in "The Lord of the Rings", has died aged 93, a local government official told AFP yesterday.

"I can confirm we issued a death certificate on June 8. Mr. Christopher Lee died on June 7th," said a spokeswoman for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London.

According to The Daily Telegraph newspaper, Lee died in hospital, where he had been treated for respiratory problems and heart failure over the preceding three weeks.

Tall, pale and with a deep, resonating voice, Lee will forever be remembered for his spine-chilling performance as Dracula in the cult Hammer Horror movies.

He went on to scare a new generation as Saruman in the adaptation of JRR Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy and as Count Dooku in the "Star Wars" prequels.

The London-born actor appeared in more than 250 films and television productions, including the James Bond movie "The Man with the Golden Gun" (1974).

A lifelong devotee of heavy metal, Lee made several albums featuring his booming, classically-trained bass voice. His last album was "Metal Knight", released on his 92nd birthday, followed by a metal Christmas carol in December 2014.

Lee married former Danish model Gitte Kroencke in 1961 and had one daughter, Christina.

UN peacekeepers trade sex for goods: Report

AFP, United Nations

UN peacekeepers routinely trade sex for money, jewellery, cellphones in countries where they are deployed in clear violation of UN rules, according to a draft UN report.

A third of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel involve a minor under 18, according to the report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) obtained by AFP yesterday.

Interviews done with victims in Haiti and Liberia suggest that US is underreporting cases of sexual abuse and exploitation by its peacekeeping personnel.

In Haiti, 231 people admitted to having "transactional sexual relationships" with peacekeeping personnel in exchange for "jewellery, 'church' shoes, dresses, fancy underwear, perfume, cell phones, radios, televisions and, in a few cases, laptops." Women interviewed in the report said they were hungry, homeless or needed items for their babies or their households.

A survey of 489 women in Monrovia showed that over a quarter of the city's women had engaged in sex with UN peacekeepers, usually for money.

There were 480 allegations of sexual abuse from 2008 and 2013 with the largest missions registering high numbers of cases, in DR Congo, Liberia, Haiti, Sudan and South Sudan.

The final report to be released on Monday. The UN has 125,000 peacekeepers deployed in 16 missions worldwide.



Indian child labourers receive books at 'Udaan', a school run by the NGO in Siliguri yesterday, on the eve of World Day Against Child Labour. The theme of this year's World Day Against Child Labour is 'No to child labour - Yes to quality education'.

PHOTO: AFP

No more paid speeches if Hillary wins: Bill Clinton

REUTERS, Denver

Bill Clinton said on Wednesday he would no longer give paid speeches if his wife, Hillary Clinton, is elected US president.

Republicans and media commentators have criticized both Clintons for earning millions of dollars from paid speeches, saying the practice raises the possibility of conflicts of interest.

The former president said he would continue to give speeches without compensation if Hillary Clinton, the front-runner for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination, enters the White House.

"I will still give speeches though on the subjects I'm interested in, and I've really enjoyed those things," he told Bloomberg TV at a Clinton Foundation conference in Denver.

Asked whether he would keep giving paid speeches if Hillary Clinton entered the White House, Clinton said: "No. I don't think so. I don't think that - because once you get to be president then you're just making a daily story."

In an interview with CNN at the conference, Clinton gave one of his lengthiest rebuttals yet of allegations Hillary Clinton gave favorable treatment to donors to the family's charities while she was US secretary of state.

"No one has ever asked me for anything," he said of the foundation's donors.

Clinton said he did not know whether foreign governments, companies and other foundation donors were seeking anything in return beyond supporting philanthropy.

Journalists and political opponents have failed to turn up any proof that Clinton's State Department sold favors. The Clintons dismiss the allegations as politically motivated.

But an increasing number of Americans have said they find Hillary Clinton untrustworthy in polls.

He described Hillary Clinton as "the rock" of his family and said he believed that Americans would come to learn more about that side of her.

"I trust her with my life and have on more than one occasion," he said.



ISIS's deadliest atrocity

FROM PAGE 20

of Saddam Hussein, fell to the so-called "Islamic State" on 12 June 2014, two days after the larger city of Mosul, is now the group's biggest stronghold in Iraq.

According to reports, images and videos posted online by ISIS at the time, the group also captured the Speicher military base near Tikrit, and with it around 4,000 unnamed air force recruits.

Between 1,000 and 1,700 mostly Shia recruits were executed and buried in mass graves in several locations.

Tikrit was recaptured by government forces in April, the start of a mammoth task for the state's forensic scientists to identify those massacred.

"The remains of 597 Speicher martyrs have been exhumed," Mohammed al-Bayati told journalists in Baghdad.

In a previous update, health minister Adila Hammoud described the

work to exhume the Speicher victims as "complicated".

"There were several layers of bodies all piled on top of each other," he said. "It's a huge case. It takes a lot of work to identify the victims."

"ISIS closes in on to get dirty bomb"

In another worrying development, an Australian intelligence reports said the militant group has seized enough radioactive material from government facilities to suggest it has the capacity to build a large and devastating "dirty" bomb.

ISIS declared its ambition to develop weapons of mass destruction in the most recent edition of its propaganda magazine Dabiq, and Indian defence officials have previously warned of the possibility the militants could acquire a nuclear weapon from Pakistan.

According to the Australian foreign minister, Julie Bishop, Nato has expressed deep concerns about the materials

seized by ISIS from research centres and hospitals that would normally only be available to governments.

The threat of ISIS's radioactive and biological weapons stockpile was so severe that the Australia Group, a 40-nation bloc dedicated to ending the use of chemical weapons, held a session on the subject at its summit in Perth last week.

Last week Bishop spoke at the Australia Group meeting about fears ISIS was weaponising poisonous gases such as chlorine.

She confirmed that the concerns she was raising stemmed from reports filed by the Australian department of defence as well the foreign office.

The growing concerns about ISIS's development of weapons of mass destruction come at a time when experts fear the militant group will be "more active than ever" to mark the start of Ramadan and the one-year anniversary of its declaration of a "caliphate".