



Change comes to Afghanistan

Top Story: In the Obama administration's latest move to [shake up its approach](#) to the war in Afghanistan, Defense Secretary Robert Gates [yesterday fired](#) Gen. David McKiernan from command of operations there, replacing him with [Lt. Gen Stan McChrystal](#). The hope is that McChrystal, formerly commander of the Joint Special Operations command and credited with commanding the operations to capture Saddam Hussein and Kill Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, has the expertise in unconventional warfare needed to bring "fresh eyes" to the fight against the Taliban.

Reactions to the decision within the military seemed mixed with several officers [expressing disappointment](#) in the way McKiernan was dismissed. The Brookings Institution's Michael O'Hanlon noted, ""Basically, McKiernan did a good job, but they need someone that they think can do an excellent job."

A spokesman for the Afghan government [said they hoped](#) McChrystal would "pay serious attention to the issue of cutting down civilian casualties and air raids."

Teams of suicide bombers [attacked government buildings](#) in the Eastern Afghan city of Khost, taking hostages and ambushing a U.S. reaction force. A U.S. military spokesman responded to the latest crisis with a statement that could easily apply to the Afghan theater generally, saying, "A lot of stuff is going on right now."

Stat of the day: Chinese exports [fell 22.6 percent](#) year-on-year in April, pouring cold water on hopes that the countries manufacturing sector could be recovering.

Middle East

- A U.S. soldier [opened fire](#) at a stress clinic in Baghdad, killing five of his comrades.
- U.S. journalist Roxana Saberi has been [released from prison](#) and will leave Iran within days.
- The Pope continued his tour of the Holy Land with a [visit to Jerusalem](#).

Asia

- Pakistan [continued to bombard](#) Taliban strongholds in the Swat Valley by helicopter. The [total number of refugees](#) in Northwest Pakistan has risen to 1.3 million.
- A hospital within Sri Lanka's conflict zone was [hit by government shelling](#), killing at least 45 people.
- China marks the [one-year anniversary](#) of the Sichuan earthquake.

Europe

- A meeting between Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and opposition leaders ended [without any new agreements](#).
- Accused Nazi guard John Demjanjuk [has been extradited](#) to Germany, though doctors may declare him medically unfit to stand trial.
- After talks with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov says [he is optimistic](#) about a new arms control deal with the U.S.

Africa

- Thousands are fleeing Mogadishu as fighting in the capital reaches its [worst level in months](#).
- A new report finds that the same planes used to bring humanitarian aid to Africa are often [used for weapons smuggling](#).
- Tribal violence in Southern Sudan is [threatening to disrupt](#) next February's planned elections.

Americas

- A close ally of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe [has been arrested](#) for ties to right-wing militias.
- Venezuelan authorities seized nearly [two tons of cocaine](#) in the largest drug bust in months.
- Scientists say tens of thousands of people in Mexico [could have been infected](#) with Swine Flu before it was declared an epidemic.

-By Joshua Keating