



MUZAFFAR SALMAN/REUTERS

A rebel fighter of the Free Syrian Army took cover inside a damaged shop in the old city of Aleppo, in northern Syria, on Tuesday.

Arab League Rejects Attack Against Syria

Lack of Public Support Muddies U.S. Case

By DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK
and MARK LANDLER

CAIRO — The leaders of the Arab world on Tuesday blamed the Syrian government for a chemical weapons attack that killed hundreds of people last week, but declined to back a retaliatory military strike, leaving President Obama without the broad regional support he had for his last military intervention in the Middle East, in Libya in 2011.

While the Obama administration has robust European backing and more muted Arab support for a strike on Syria, the position of the Arab League and the unlikelihood of securing authorization from the United Nations Security Council complicate the legal and diplomatic case for the White House.

The White House said Tuesday that there was "no doubt" that President Bashar al-Assad's government was responsible for the chemical weapons attack — an assessment shared by Britain, France and other allies — but it has yet to make clear if it has any intelligence directly linking Mr. Assad to the attack. The administration said it planned to provide intelligence on the attack later this week.

As Mr. Obama sought to shore up international support for military action, telephoning Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain, administration officials said they did not regard the lack of an imprimatur from the Security Council or the Arab League as insurmountable hurdles, given the carnage last week.

Administration officials said the United States did not seek an endorsement of military action from the Arab League. It sought condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and a clear assignment of responsibility for the attack to the Assad government, both of which the officials said they were satisfied they got.

The Obama administration has declined to spell out the legal justification that the president would use in ordering a strike, beyond saying that the large-scale use of chemical weapons violates international norms. But

Continued on Page A8

OBAMA WEIGHING 'LIMITED' STRIKES ON SYRIAN FORCES

TO 'DETER AND DEGRADE'

Attackers Would Target Military Units, Not Chemical Sites

This article is by Thom Shanker, C. J. Chivers and Michael R. Gordon.

WASHINGTON — President Obama is considering military action against Syria that is intended to "deter and degrade" President Bashar al-Assad's government's ability to launch chemical weapons, but is not aimed at ousting Mr. Assad from power or forcing him to the negotiating table, administration officials said Tuesday.

A wide range of officials characterized the action under consideration as "limited," perhaps lasting no more than one or two days. The attacks, which are expected to involve scores of Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from American destroyers in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, would not be focused on chemical weapons storage sites, which would risk an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe and could open up the sites to raids by militants, officials said.

The strikes would instead be aimed at military units that have carried out chemical attacks, the headquarters overseeing the effort and the rockets and artillery that have launched the attacks, according to the options being reviewed within the administration.

An American official said that the initial target lists included fewer than 50 sites, including air bases where Syria's Russian-made attack helicopters are deployed. The list includes command and control centers as well as a variety of conventional military targets.

Perhaps two to three missiles would be aimed at each site, a far more limited unleashing of American military power than past air campaigns over Kosovo or Libya.

Some of the targets would be "dual use" systems, like artillery that is capable of firing chemical weapons as well as conventional

Continued on Page A6

THE ASSAD ENIGMA If President Bashar al-Assad of Syria did carry out a deadly chemical attack in the Damascus area, his detractors and defenders alike have been asking, Why? PAGE A6

CHEMICAL TRAIL The deadly nerve agent sarin can be detected years after its use on a battlefield, which would make it difficult for the Syrian government to hide its use. PAGE A8

Candidate Ran M.T.A. (He Doesn't Dwell on It)

By MATT FLEGENHEIMER

Not so long ago, Joseph J. Lhota would swagger through subway stations with an eye toward chipped paint and trash on the tracks — an executive surveying his stock, which was, in this case, New York City's transit system.

On a recent afternoon in Forest Hills, Queens, less than eight months after he resigned his post as chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to pursue a run for mayor, Mr. Lhota mined the station for undecided voters.

The going was slow. "Joe Lhota for mayor," he said halfheartedly, offering fliers and handshakes that were, as often as not, rebuffed. He signed one autograph. He high-fived two

IN THE RUNNING The Transit Chief

children. He waved to a transit worker, then turned to his small entourage — "you see the M.T.A. guy?" — when the worker waved back.

When a heckler arrived, recognizing Mr. Lhota at the top of a station staircase, the candidate mustered no response.

"Didn't you run the mass transit authority?" the man shouted, disappearing into 71st Avenue with a final, Queensian addendum from down the block. "Come onnnnnnnnn."

Mr. Lhota's yearlong tenure as chairman of the transportation agency is one of his most recognized credentials as he now runs

for mayor as a Republican. The rapid restoration of subway service after Hurricane Sandy won him widespread praise, and propelled him into the public eye, and then, onto the campaign trail.

But he seldom trumpets his tenure managing the authority, which, although indispensable to New York City, is also unloved. Asked at a recent debate to list his relevant experience for the job of mayor, he cited stints on Wall Street and as a deputy mayor to Rudolph W. Giuliani.

Beyond the storm, Mr. Lhota's record at the helm of the nation's largest subway system was complicated, marked by nimble political calculations and, occasionally, unforced errors.

He slashed hundreds of mil-

Continued on Page A24

Merrill Lynch In Big Payout For Bias Case

By PATRICK MCGEEHAN

Merrill Lynch, one of the biggest brokerage firms on Wall Street, has agreed to pay \$160 million to settle a racial bias lawsuit that wound through the federal courts for eight years, including two appeals to the United States Supreme Court.

The payout in the suit, which was filed on behalf of 700 black brokers who worked for Merrill, would be the largest sum ever distributed to plaintiffs in a racial discrimination suit against an American employer. Merrill, which was acquired by Bank of America after the suit was filed, also agreed to take advice from black employees on how to improve their chances of succeeding as brokers.

A spokesman for Merrill Lynch refused to confirm the terms of a preliminary settlement, which were provided by Linda D. Friedman, a Chicago lawyer who represents the brokers.

The pool of money, available to all black brokers and trainees at the firm since May 2001, is larger than those offered by other corporations sued by employees for

Continued on Page A3

The Dream, the Speech and Its Lasting Power

It was late in the day and hot, and after a long march and an afternoon of speeches about federal legislation, unemployment and racial and social justice, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. finally stepped to the lectern, in front of the Lincoln Memorial, to address the crowd of 250,000 gathered on the National Mall.

He began slowly, with magisterial gravity, talking about what it was to be black in America in 1963 and the "shameful condition" of race relations a hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Unlike many of the day's previous speakers, he did not talk about particular bills before Congress or the marchers' demands. Instead, he situated the civil rights movement within the broader landscape of history — time past, present and future — and within the timeless vistas of Scripture.

Dr. King was about halfway through his prepared speech when Mahalia Jackson — who earlier that day had delivered a stirring rendition of the spiritual "I Been 'Buked and I Been Scorned" — shouted out to him from the speakers' stand: "Tell 'em about the 'Dream,' Martin, tell 'em about the 'Dream!'" She was referring to a riff he had delivered on earlier occasions, and Dr. King pushed the

Continued on Page A18



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Today, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous words are chipped into the spot where he spoke on Aug. 28, 1963.

Farmers Change Over Spices' Link to Food Ills

By GARDINER HARRIS

IDUKKI, India — Spices grown in the mist-shrouded Western Ghats here have fueled wars, fortunes and even the discovery of continents, and for thousands of years farmers harvested them in the same traditional ways. Until now.

Science has revealed what ancient kings and sultans never knew: instead of improving health, spices sometimes make people very sick, so Indian government officials are quietly pushing some of the most far-reaching changes ever in the way farmers here pick, dry and thresh their rich bounty.

The United States Food and Drug Administration will soon release a comprehensive analysis that pinpoints imported spices, found in just about every kitchen in the Western world, as a surprisingly potent source of salmonella poisoning.



GRAHAM CROUCH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A customer at a spice shop in Kochi, in southwestern India.

In a study of more than 20,000 food shipments, the food agency found that nearly 7 percent of spice lots were contaminated with salmonella, twice the average of all other imported foods. Some 15 percent of coriander and 12 percent of oregano and basil shipments were contaminated,

with high contamination levels also found in sesame seeds, curry powder and cumin. Four percent of black pepper shipments were contaminated.

Each year, 1.2 million people in the United States become sick from salmonella, one of the most common causes of food-borne illness. More than 23,000 are hospitalized and 450 die. Symptoms include diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps that begin 12 to 36 hours after infection and can last three to five days. Death can result when infection spreads from the intestines to the bloodstream and affects vital organs. Infants and older people are most at risk.

Mexico and India had the highest share of contaminated spices. About 14 percent of the samples from Mexico contained salmonella, the study found, a result Mexican officials disputed.

India's exports were the second-most contaminated, at approximately 9 percent, but India

Continued on Page A12

INTERNATIONAL A4-12

Drug Kingpin Is Sought Again

After Rafael Caro Quintero, a drug lord behind the killing of an American agent, was released in Mexico, American officials returned to his pursuit. Below, Mr. Caro Quintero in 2005. PAGE A4



NATIONAL A14-19

A Michigan Vote for Medicaid

Michigan's Republican governor, Rick Snyder, narrowly swayed enough conservative lawmakers to expand Medicaid under the health care law. PAGE A14

NEW YORK A20-24

More Trouble for an Informer

A former state assemblyman admitted to lying about an interview he gave on his role in an investigation. PAGE A20

City Cites a Drop in Police Stops

City lawyers cited a drop in police stops as they sought a delay in having to follow a stop-and-frisk ruling. PAGE A22

BUSINESS DAY B1-9

China's Towers Cause Concern

China is home to 60 of the world's 100 tallest buildings now under construction, but the scale and speed of the projects are drawing scrutiny, with work on the tallest one halted. PAGE B1

Times Site Is Victim of Attack

The New York Times Web site was unavailable after an online attack, possibly by the Syrian Electronic Army. PAGE B1

ARTS C1-7

On the Trail of Lost Music

Benjamin Britten's score of "Les Sylphides" may have been found. PAGE C1



SPORTSWEDNESDAY B10-15

Ex-Champ Out at U.S. Open

Victoria Duval, above, whose father was badly injured when he was trapped under rubble for 11 hours in the Haitian earthquake, upset 11th-seeded Samantha Stosur, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4. PAGE B10

DINING D1-8

Attention, Shoppers

Mirrored carts and other tricks can nudge customers to consider their health and buy more produce. PAGE D1

A Brown-Bag Manifesto

Mark Bittman suggests fresh ways to take your lunch to work. PAGE D1

EDITORIAL, OP-ED A26-27

Maureen Dowd

PAGE A27



0 354613 9