

# Eritrea confounds US in Somalia



SCHALK VAN ZUYDAM / AP

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, center, loads bricks, at a housing project, in Khayelitsha on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa, Saturday. On a mission to improve ties with Africa's most prosperous nation, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met Saturday with South African President Jacob Zuma and later toured a housing project she had visited twice in the past.

**MATTHEW LEE**  
Associated Press

**CAPE TOWN, South Africa** — As it boosts aid to Somalia's weak interim government to fight an al-Qaida-linked Islamist militia, the Obama administration is grasping for ways to cut off what it says is one of the militant group's main supply lines: the tiny Red Sea state of Eritrea.

The enigmatic and authoritarian nation has emerged as a principle player in the conflict in lawless Somalia, where the enfeebled government is struggling for survival against the extremist al-Shabab faction.

U.S., U.N. and other investigators say the Eritrean government is funneling money, weapons and other

supplies to al-Shabab, which Western intelligence agencies regard as a growing regional and international threat bent on using Somalia as a base to export terrorism abroad. Eritrea emerged out of internecine conflict, seceding from Ethiopia in 1993 after a 30-year guerrilla war.

Eritrea, a Somalia neighbor about the size of Pennsylvania with a population of only 3.6 million, has consistently denied the charges. Its accusers are equally adamant. The United States, in particular, has been warning the country that it will face sanctions if it doesn't stop supporting the extremists. The African Union has also called for sanctions to be imposed.

After pledging last week to expand U.S. support, including military aid, to the beleaguered Somali government and an undermanned and under-equipped African peacekeeping force protecting it, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton issued a stern new warning to Eritrea.

"It is long past time for Eritrea to cease and desist its support for al-Shabab," she said at a news conference with Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. "We are making it very clear that their actions are unacceptable. We intend to take action if they do not cease."

Yet despite similar tough talk dating back to the administration of President George W. Bush, the U.S. has

rarely followed up on its warnings to Eritrea. In 2008, the Bush administration found that Eritrea was not fully cooperating in the war on terrorism and slapped an arms embargo on Eritrea.

But the United States has stopped short of more punitive steps, including designating Eritrea a "state sponsor of terrorism," a move that would impose a wide range of additional sanctions.

A senior U.S. official said an Obama administration review of whether Eritrea's activities in Somalia meet the legal requirements for such a designation is still underway and could be completed soon.

Washington's seeming reluctance thus far to take more than token measures against Eritrea is unclear but appears partly rooted in a desire to woo the country away from supporting al-Shabab.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice told Congress last month that Eritrea's backing for al-Shabab is "unacceptable and we will not tolerate it." At the same time, she said the United States wants to engage Eritrea and was hopeful the isolated African nation would respond to American entreaties.

# Doubts raised that dead terrorist was top leader

**ANTHONY DEUTSCH**  
Associated Press

**JAKARTA, Indonesia** — Police scrambled Sunday to identify the body of a suspected terrorist killed in a farmhouse gunbattle after discovering a plot to kill Indonesia's president in a suicide car bombing.

Forensics teams planned to collect DNA samples from family members of regional terror mastermind Noordin Muhammad Top, who was reportedly killed during a 16-hour firefight with officers in central Java on Saturday, said Dynno Chressbon, a government anti-terrorism adviser.

One of Noordin's wives and children were traveling to the capital Jakarta to provide samples, Chressbon said.

Malaysian authorities were also coming to Indonesia to assist in the identification, he said. Noordin is a Malaysian citizen, blamed for some of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Southeast Asian in recent years, and a self-proclaimed al-Qaida commander.

Serious doubts were raised Sunday that a massive manhunt for Noordin had come to a close after seven years. "We cannot yet confirm that this is Noordin Top," national police Chief Bambang Hendarso Danuri said.

Chressbon expressed skepticism that Noordin was killed citing comments from former militants who told media that a militant leader would have never been left alone at a hide-out. Only one body was recovered from the scene. "I indeed doubt that the victim is the suspected terrorist Noordin Top," he said.

Retired Gen. Abdullah Hendropriyono, a former intelligence agency, said he also doubted if the dead terrorist was Noordin.

"It is impossible for a terrorist like Noordin to walk or stay alone, without guards," Hendropriyono told MetroTV. "If he is just alone it is hard to believe ... As an analyst, I bet it is not Noordin."

Widespread media reports of Noordin's death, which were attributed to anonymous police officers, were largely retracted Sunday.

The English-language Jakarta Post daily newspaper headlined: "Was it Noordin?" while Indonesia broadcaster TV One — which aired dramatic footage of the siege and said Noordin was dead — backtracked on its coverage.

Australia's Prime Minister Kevin Rudd told reporters in Canberra on Sunday he planned to speak with Indonesia's Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono later in the day to learn whether Noordin had actually been killed.

"It is still unclear as to who precisely has been killed and who has been apprehended," Rudd said.

Police on Saturday also raided a house on the outskirts of Jakarta where they killed two suspected militants and seized bombs and a car rigged to carry them, the police chief said. The house was just 3 miles (5 kilometers) from the president's residence.

Hendarso said Noordin and other militants had been plotting to bomb Yudhoyono's home. He said the decision was made at an April 30 meeting led by Noordin because of the government's execution of three convicted Bali bombers.

Yudhoyono told reporters he was briefed about an ongoing operation "to uphold law and to eradicate terrorism," but made no mention of Noordin.

"I extend my highest gratitude and respect to the police for their brilliant achievement in this operation," he said.

Noordin is also suspected of planning last month's suicide bombings at the J.W. Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta that killed seven people and ended a four-year pause in terror strikes in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation.

Noordin claimed in a video in 2005 to be al-Qaida's representative in Southeast Asia and to be carrying out attacks on Western civilians to avenge Muslim deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"If Noordin M. Top was captured or killed, this would be extremely good news and a huge step forward for Indonesia's struggle against terrorism," said Jim Della-Giacoma, Southeast Asia project director for the International Crisis Group think tank. "Whether or not the risk of further attacks declines depends on who else is arrested or killed with Noordin."

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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

### ORDINANCE NO. 09-35

Notice is hereby given that the City Commission of the City of Eustis will conduct a Public Hearing for the first reading of **Ordinance No. 09-35** on **August 20, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.** and the second reading on **September 3, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.**, or as may be continued at their discretion, in the City Commission Room, City Hall, 10 North Grove Street, Eustis, Florida. The proposed Ordinance is described as follows:

**Ordinance No. 09-35**, voluntarily annexing approximately 0.68 acres of real property located on the southeast corner of Orange Avenue and Abrams Road (2754 SR 44).

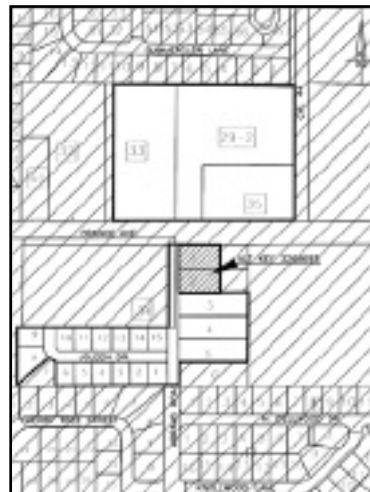
The complete legal description of any property described above can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by any board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he will need a record of the proceedings and that, for such purposes, he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based (Florida Statutes, 286.0105).

The proposed ordinance and staff report may be examined one week prior to the public hearing, during normal working hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Division of Development Services, City Hall, 4 North Grove Street, Eustis, Florida and the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 10 North Grove Street, Eustis, Florida. For further information call (352) 483-5460.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THESE PROCEEDINGS SHOULD CONTACT THE DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AT (352) 483-5460 AT LEAST 48 HOURS BEFORE THE DATE OF THE SCHEDULED HEARING.

CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA  
Dianne L. Kramer  
Director of Development Services



183157 August 10 & 16, 2009

# Taliban leader's death disputed

**ELENA BECATOROS and ISHTIAQ MAHSUD**  
Associated Press

**ISLAMABAD** — Senior Taliban commanders denied their leader was killed in a CIA missile strike in Pakistan while conflicting reports emerged of a clash between rival factions during a meeting to choose a successor.

Interior Minister Rahman Malik said late Saturday that authorities received information about a fight breaking out during a meeting, or shura, between groups led by Hakimullah — one of the Taliban's most powerful commanders — and Waliur Rehman.

Both are believed to be top contenders to replace Baitullah Mehsud — should reports of his death in Wednesday's strike prove true.

"We had the information that one of them is dead. So the information is being verified. We need to see the dead bodies, we need to do some DNA, we need to have something solid," Malik told local television.

He said the incident occurred Friday. Hakimullah spoke to an Associated Press reporter Saturday morning when he called to claim that Mehsud was alive.