

POLITICO

Hagel says ISIL 'beyond anything that we've seen' — Airstrikes may prompt Iraq vote — Doctor heads home after Ebola treatment — Rebranding net neutrality

By Leigh Munsil
August 22, 2014

BREAKING: HAGEL SAYS ISIL 'BEYOND ANYTHING THAT WE'VE SEEN': Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said today that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant poses a greater terrorism threat than Al Qaeda, and is as sophisticated and well-funded as any previous terror group.

Key quote: “They’re beyond just a terrorist group. They marry ideology, sophistication of strategic and tactical military prowess; they are tremendously well-funded. This is beyond anything that we’ve seen. So we must prepare for everything. And the only way you do that is take a cold, steely, hard look at it and get ready.”

But Hagel and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey assured reporters that the U.S. role to combat the group’s spread in Iraq will be limited, despite the fact that airstrikes alone will not be able to eradicate ISIL.

Pro Defense’s Jeremy Herb reports from the Thursday afternoon press conference:
<http://politico.pro/1tvCBnj>

AIRSTRIKES MAY PROMPT IRAQ VOTE: The ramped-up U.S. military presence in Iraq may prompt Congress to weigh in on troop action, Jeremy Herb of Pro Defense writes. A small but bipartisan group of lawmakers wants Congress to vote on military actions against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, “arguing that the conflict has intensified to a point that makes authorization necessary,” Jeremy reports.

Rep. Scott Rigell (R-Va.): “This is not some trite administrative task here. It truly is about the [War] Powers issues, and I think it’s one that has been breached clearly by not only this administration but prior administrations expanding and enlarging the authority of the presidency.”

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.): “Many of my congressional colleagues share my concerns over mission creep in Iraq. ... The overwhelming passage of [the Iraq resolution] was a clear indicator that Congress must have a role any future U.S. military action in Iraq.”

An Iraq vote may take place as soon as September, when lawmakers return to Capitol Hill. More in Jeremy's story: <http://politico.pro/1qtOG9q>

AP: ISIL WANTED \$132.5M RANSOM FOR FOLEY: The terrorist group that executed American journalist James Foley this week had asked for 100 million Euros, or \$132.5 million, to secure his release. The group sent its demands by email to the Foley family in New Hampshire, The Associated Press reported according to unnamed sources: <http://politi.co/YF82lG>

And the U.S. Department of Justice is investigating Foley's death, Jonathan Topaz writes: <http://politi.co/1tpM8Ns>

CHENEY WARNS OF MORE VIOLENCE IN IRAQ: Former Vice President Dick Cheney warned today that the violence in Iraq will multiply if the U.S. doesn't move decisively in the region.

"When you see them behead an American reporter, as they did today, that's obviously a terrible development," Cheney said Wednesday on Fox News' "Hannity." "But magnify that a million times over because that is what's in store for the rest of the world if we don't deal with this crisis."

Kendall Breitman has more: <http://politi.co/1pVL5EE>

WELCOME TO PRO REPORT. On this day in 1878, a group of lawyers, judges and law professors in Saratoga, N.Y., formed the American Bar Association. Q: Why won't sharks attack lawyers? A: Professional courtesy. Send your best lawyer jokes, tips and scoops to lmunsil@politico.com, and follow us at @leighmunsil, @nickgass and @POLITICOPro.

— Just a reminder, Pro Report will take a break starting Monday, Aug. 25. and return after Labor Day on Tuesday, Sept. 2.

DOCTOR HEADS HOME AFTER EBOLA TREATMENT: American aid worker Kent Brantly left Emory University Hospital in Atlanta less than a month after being admitted with the Ebola virus. Doctors said the other patient, Nancy Writebol, was discharged two days ago. Pro Health Care's Susan Levine has more on their recoveries: <http://politico.pro/1kYnnaK>

GAO: BERGDAHL SWAP BROKE LAW: The Government Accountability Office announced today that the Pentagon broke the law by negotiating the transfer of five Taliban commanders from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, without giving Congress 30 days' notice. The deal, which freed Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, cost \$988,400, a violation of both the 2014 Defense Appropriations Act and the Antideficiency Act's ban on unauthorized spending. More details from Defense's Jeremy Herb: <http://politico.pro/1roFWYs>

TODAY'S POLICY NEWS:

REBRANDING NET NEUTRALITY: Rep. Anna Eshoo is holding a contest on Reddit to see whether users can come up with a better name for the issue, which she says needs more clarity.

"If Internet users care about their right to uninhibited access to the Internet, this is their opportunity to have an impact on the process, to help put the advantage back in the hands of the Internet user, and to ensure that the free and open Internet prevails," the California Democrat said in a statement.

The most popular name will be announced on the site Sept. 8. More details from the Pro Tech staff: <http://politico.pro/1s5ldoe>

SLOW GOING FOR STEYER SUPER PAC: A new FEC disclosure reveals Tom Steyer's NextGen Climate Action Committee took in a little more than \$8 million last month, with \$7.5 million of it coming from Steyer himself. Pro Energy's Alex Guillén writes that the billionaire liberal activist has contributed \$11.6 million to the group so far this year, after pledging to spend \$50 million or more on the November midterms.

With \$5.8 million in cash on hand on July 31, the group spent \$6.5 million on state-level and grass-roots efforts. Alex has more background on the super PAC's effort here: <http://politico.pro/1sWWFC4>

AMBASSADORS HANDS-ON FOR TRADE DEAL: The U.S. ambassador to Sweden is taking a weeklong, 400-mile trip through the Scandinavian country to pitch the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership to businesses, local leaders and average citizens, Pro Trade's Adam Behsudi writes. The pending trade deal would mean more European goods on American shelves and vice versa.

"I know that my fellow ambassadors across Europe are having conversations like this. I've got my bike shorts on and my TTIP T-shirt on and sitting down and having an honest conversation about what this means for a small business," Ambassador Mark Brzezinski said.

Adam reports on how other European embassies are getting the word out about TTIP: <http://politico.pro/1rnJ8Uc>

RURAL HOSPITALS' TECH WORRIES: Fulton County Medical Center in McConnellsburg, Pa., is among the rural hospitals across the U.S. to incorporate health IT infrastructure but now worry about sustaining it. As Pro eHealth's Ashley Gold reports, hospitals like the one in Fulton County are considered critical access, meaning they're facilities that need financial assistance and are located in isolated or poor populations.

While it's been called "a rural success story," Fulton County's hospital needs about \$420,000 yearly to run its information system, or 20 percent of its total annual budget. Ashley has more on how other rural hospitals are coping with the decrease in funding: <http://politico.pro/1ljRzxC>

ON TAP FOR FRIDAY:

- Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee speaks to the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference at 10:30 a.m. in the National Press Club.
- The Cato Institute hosts an online discussion of events in Ferguson, Mo., at 3 p.m.
- President Barack Obama continues his vacation on Martha's Vineyard.

SPEED READ:

- Poll finds racial divide in Ferguson unrest, via NYT: <http://nyti.ms/1wek9Vz>
- Sprint, T-Mobile duke it out over unlimited plans, the Los Angeles Times reports: <http://lat.ms/XDt4kn>
- Chinese social media censorship may be more selective than previously thought, per BuzzFeed: <http://bzfd.it/1pOkVUG>
- A photographer captures the sweet moments of summer, via Time: <http://ti.me/1s5jq2w>