

## NATION/WORLD DIGEST

## Cardinals Decry Alleged 'Hate' Campaign

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican heatedly defended Pope Benedict XVI on Tuesday, claiming accusations that he helped cover up the actions of pedophile priests are part of an anti-Catholic "hate" campaign targeting the pope for his opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage.

Vatican Radio broadcast comments by two senior cardinals explaining "the motive for these attacks" on the pope and the Vatican newspaper chipped in with spirited comments from another top cardinal.

"The pope defends life and the family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, in a world in which powerful lobbies would like to impose a completely different" agenda, Spanish Cardinal Julian Herranz, head of the disciplinary commission for Holy See officials, said on the radio.

Herranz didn't identify the lobbies but "defense of life" is Vatican shorthand for anti-abortion efforts.

Also arguing that Benedict's promotion of conservative family models had provoked the so-called attacks was the Vatican's dean of the College of Cardinals, Angelo Sodano.

## 50 Dead In Baghdad Bombings As Fears Rise

BAGHDAD (AP) — Bombs ripped through apartment buildings and a market in mostly Shiite areas of Baghdad on Tuesday, killing 50 people in postelection bloodshed that threatens to rekindle sectarian warfare that nearly destroyed the country three years ago.

The attacks appeared to be an attempt by al-Qaida in Iraq or other extremists to exploit a power vacuum during what promises to be lengthy negotiations to form a new government. About 120 people have been killed in and around the capital over the past five days — some of the most brutal strikes on civilians in months.

For two terrifying hours on a warm, sunny Tuesday morning, at least seven bombs rocked a broad swath of Baghdad. In a new tactic, several bombs were planted inside empty apartments after renters offered high prices for the properties, the government said.

The explosions reduced one building to rubble, knocked out windows and doors and ripped off facades. People rushed to the blast sites, digging through the rubble with their hands to find loved ones.

"Cars began to collide with one another in the street," said Ali Hussein, a 22-year-old college student who was riding the bus to school when one of the bombs went off. "We saw a cloud of fire and black smoke."

## Top RNC Activist, Official Quit Amid Criticism

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid growing concern over Michael Steele's stewardship of the Republican National Committee, a New Hampshire activist resigned his seat Tuesday, citing an "out-of-touch, free-spending culture of Washington" within the party.

Meanwhile, a finance report that showed the RNC spent \$982 at a Vermont winery for what it called "office supplies" — five cases of wine — was unlikely to calm the fretting.

Committeeman Sean Mahoney, a New Hampshire businessman who is mulling a run for Congress in November, joined the chorus of criticism from activists and donors over lavish spending by the RNC. Mahoney was the latest person to cut ties with the committee; Steele's top aide and one of his top outside advisers ended relationships with the committee Monday.

Republican officials said it was unlikely Steele would depart the committee, and Steele himself vowed to remain. Even so, revelations of an almost \$2,000 tab at a sex-themed California night club and almost \$1,000 at a winery did little to help his standing among the party activists who are optimistic about GOP chances in midterm elections and down on Steele's public profile.

"Not only has the out-of-touch, free-spending culture of Washington come to completely dominate the United States Congress, but I have watched with growing unease as the same mentality has seeped into our own national party," Mahoney wrote in a letter.

## FCC Loses Key 'Net Neutrality' Case

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal court threw the future of Internet regulations into doubt Tuesday with a far-reaching decision that went against the Federal Communications Commission and could even hamper the government's plans to expand broadband access in the United States.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that the FCC lacks authority to require broadband providers to give equal treatment to all Internet traffic flowing over their networks. That was a big victory for Comcast Corp., the nation's largest cable company, which had challenged the FCC's authority to impose such "network neutrality" obligations on broadband providers.

Supporters of network neutrality, including the FCC chairman, have argued that the policy is necessary to prevent broadband providers from favoring or discriminating against certain Web sites and online services, such as Internet phone programs or software that runs in a Web browser. Advocates contend there is precedent: Nondiscrimination rules have traditionally applied to so-called "common carrier" networks that serve the public, from roads and highways to electrical grids and telephone lines.

But broadband providers such as Comcast, AT&T Inc. and Verizon Communications Inc. argue that after spending billions of dollars on their networks, they should be able to sell premium services and manage their systems to prevent certain applications from hogging capacity.

Tuesday's unanimous ruling by the three-judge panel was a setback for the FCC because it questioned the agency's authority to regulate broadband. That could cause problems beyond the FCC's effort to adopt official net neutrality regulations. It also has serious implications for the ambitious national broadband-expansion plan released by the FCC last month. The FCC needs the authority to regulate broadband so that it can push ahead with some of the plan's key recommendations. Among other things, the FCC proposes to expand broadband by tapping the federal fund that subsidizes telephone service in poor and rural communities.

## China Military Secrets Trial To Begin

HONOLULU (AP) — Jury selection is under way for a Maui man accused of selling military secrets to China.

Noshir Gowadia of Haiku is being tried in U.S. District Court in Honolulu. The jury is being selected Tuesday.

The former B-2 stealth bomber engineer says he's not guilty of 21 counts including conspiracy, violating the arms export control act and money laundering.

Prosecutors allege Gowadia helped China design a cruise missile with stealth capabilities.

The trial comes some 4 1/2 years after Gowadia's arrest. It was originally scheduled to start in 2006, but the need for lawyers to obtain classified clearances and other issues repeatedly pushed back the date.

The 66-year-old has been in federal detention since his arrest because a judge ruled he was a flight risk.

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## OBITUARIES

## Irene Kolar

Irene M. Kolar, 64, of Yankton died Monday (April 5, 2010) at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

Services are at 10:30 a.m. Friday at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Chapel, Yankton, with Kathy Grow officiating. Burial will be in the Nedved Cemetery, rural Utica.

Visitation will begin one hour

prior to the service at the funeral chapel.

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## WEST VIRGINIA MINE EXPLOSION

## Owner Accused Of Ignoring Dangers

600 Citations Given In Last Year And Half; Death Toll Now At Least 25 Miners

BY TIM HUBER  
AP Business Writer

JULIAN, W.Va. — The coal mine rocked by an explosion that killed at least 25 workers in the nation's deadliest mining disaster since 1984 had been cited for 600 violations in less than a year and a half, some of them for not properly ventilating methane — the highly combustible gas suspected in the blast.

The disaster at the Upper Big Branch mine has focused attention on the business and safety practices of the owner, Massey Energy, a powerful and politically connected company in Appalachia known for producing big profits, as well as big piles of safety and environmental violations and big damage awards for grieving widows.

"There are mines in this country who have operated safely for 20 years," said J. Davitt McAteer, head of the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration in the Clinton administration. "There are mines who take precautions ahead of time. There are mines who spend the money and manpower to do it."

He added: "Those mines haven't been blown up."

Four other miners were missing and fussed dead underground in Monday's blast, believed to have been caused by a buildup of methane, a naturally occurring gas that is odorless and colorless.

Last year alone, MSHA cited Upper Big Branch for 495 violations and proposed \$911,802 in fines. Production more than tripled during that period, according to federal records. So far this year, the agency has found 105 violations at the mine.

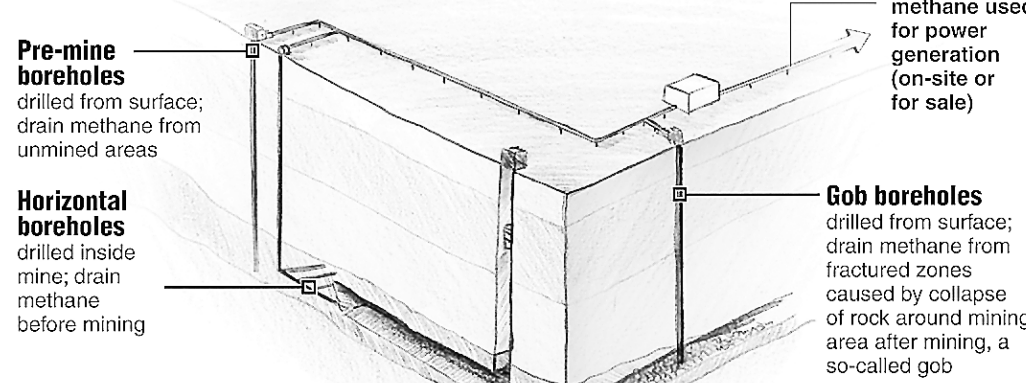
Upper Big Branch is one of Massey's biggest underground mines, with more than 200 employees, and it is not uncommon for big coal mines to amass hundreds of violations a year — and to contest many of them, as Massey does. But most big mines don't have as many serious infractions as Upper Big Branch, industry experts said.

At least 50 citations charge the company with "unwarrantable failure" to comply with

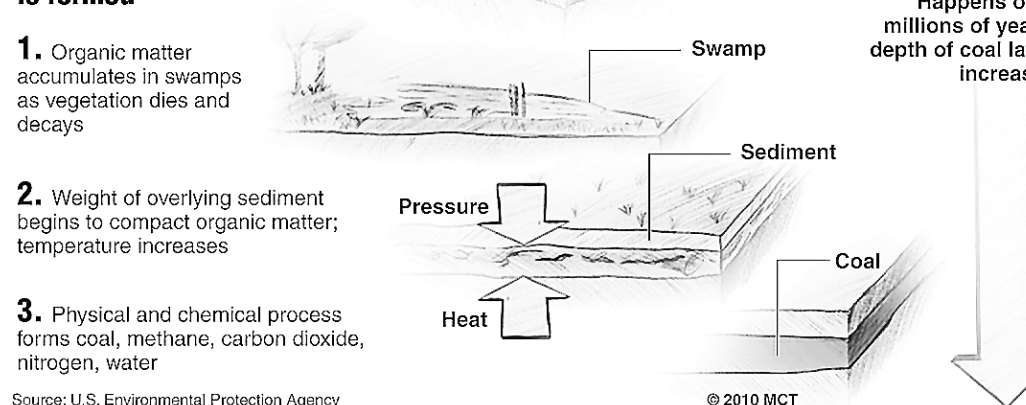
## Coal mine methane

Methane gas is released from coal or surrounding rock during mining and is explosive when mixed with air; methane must be removed so that it does not lead to fatal explosions.

## How mines handle methane



## How methane is formed



Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Happens over millions of years; depth of coal layer increases

safety standards such as following an approved ventilation plan, controlling combustible materials or designating escape routes.

"I've never seen that many for one mine in a year," said Ellen Smith, editor of Mine Safety & Health News. "If you look at other mines that are the same size or bigger, they do not have the sheer number of 'unwarrantable' citations that this mine has."

Massey has had problems elsewhere, too. In 2006, two miners were killed in a fire at Massey's Aracoma Alma No. 1 mine. Massey settled a wrongful death lawsuit for an undisclosed sum, and its subsidiary Aracoma Coal Co. paid \$4.2 million in civil and criminal penalties.

Testimony showed Massey CEO Don Blankenship suggested firing two supervisors for raising

concerns about conveyor belt problems just before the belt caught fire.

"Massey has a history of emphasizing production," said Pittsburgh lawyer Bruce Stanley, who represented the miners' widows. "I'm concerned that they may not have learned the lessons of Aracoma."

In an interview less than 24 hours after the disaster at Upper Big Branch, Blankenship insisted the mine is no more dangerous than others of comparable size, and he defended the company's track record in a perilous business.

Kevin Stricklin, an MSHA administrator, said that the number of citations at the mine appeared high, and that he was concerned about the more serious violations. "It means the

operator was aware of some of these conditions," he said.

Massey is contesting 36 percent of all violations at Upper Big Branch since 2007. The Associated Press found. Overall, U.S. mine operators contest 27 percent. Challenging violations can enable a mine owner to stave off the heavier punishment that the government can impose on companies that have been deemed repeat offenders.

Massey became a political and industrial powerhouse under the guidance of Blankenship, who rose from poverty to become one of corporate America's highest-paid and least apologetic executives, a guy who proudly displays in his office a TV set with a bullet hole from a striking union miner's rifle.

## Obama: Nuke Terrorism Top U.S. Threat

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rewriting America's nuclear strategy, the White House on Tuesday announced a fundamental shift that calls the spread of atomic weapons to rogue states or terrorists a worse threat than the nuclear Armageddon feared during the Cold War.

The Obama administration is suddenly moving on multiple fronts with a goal of limiting the threat of a catastrophic international conflict, although it's not yet clear how far and how fast the rest of the world is ready to follow.

In releasing the results of an in-depth nuclear strategy review, President Barack Obama said his administration would narrow the circumstances in which the U.S. might launch a nuclear strike, that it would forgo the development of new nuclear warheads and would seek even deeper reductions in American and Russian arsenals.

His defense secretary, Robert Gates, said the focus would now be on terror groups such as al-Qaida as well as North Korea's nuclear buildup and Iran's nuclear ambitions.

"For the first time, preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism is now at the top of America's nuclear agenda," Obama said, distancing his administration from the decades-long U.S. focus on arms competition with Russia and on the threat posed by nuclear missiles on hair-trigger alert.

"The greatest threat to U.S.

and global security is no longer a nuclear exchange between nations, but nuclear terrorism by violent extremists and nuclear proliferation to an increasing number of states," he said, spelling out the core theme of the new strategy.

Obama's announcement set the stage for his trip to Prague Thursday to sign a new arms reduction agreement with Russia. And it precedes a gathering in Washington next Monday of government leaders from more than 40 countries to discuss improving safeguards against terrorists acquiring nuclear bombs.

In May, the White House will once again help lead the call for disarmament at the United Nations in New York during an international conference on strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Congressional Democrats hailed Tuesday's announcement, but some Republicans said it could weaken the nation's defense.

Two leading Senate voices on nuclear strategy, Arizona Republicans John McCain and Jon Kyl, criticized the Obama policy's restrictions on using nuclear arms to retaliate against a chemical or biological attack.

"The Obama Administration must clarify that we will take no option off the table to deter attacks against the American people and our allies," the senators



Obama

said in a joint statement.

From the start of his term in office, Obama has put halting the spread of atomic arms near the top of his defense priorities. But during his first year he failed to achieve a significant breakthrough on arguably the two biggest threats: Iran and North Korea.

Obama's current push for arms control initiatives is designed to strengthen international support for strengthened nonproliferation efforts.

In presenting the results of the administration's policy review, Gates said a central aim was to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense strategy.

That will include removing some of the intentional ambiguity about the circumstances under which the U.S. would launch a nuclear strike, Gates told reporters at the Pentagon.

"If a non-nuclear weapons state is in compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its obligations, the U.S. pledges not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against it," Gates said. If, however, such a state were to use chemical or biological weapons against the U.S. or its allies, "it would face the prospect of a devastating conventional," or non-nuclear, military response.

That is not a major departure from the policy of past administrations, but it is slightly more forthright about which potential aggressors might fear a nuclear strike, and which might not.

## U.S. Military Can't Find Copy Of Iraq Killing Video

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military said Tuesday it can't find its copy of a video that shows two employees of the Reuters news agency being killed by Army helicopters in 2007, after a leaked version circulated the Internet and renewed questions about the attack.

The video includes audio of troops calling to "light 'em up!" and referring to the men as "dead bastards." An internal investigation concluded that the troops had acted appropriately, despite having mistaken the camera equipment for weapons.

The July 12, 2007, attack has been reported before. But Web site Wikileaks.org on Monday posted the video shot from one of the Apache helicopters, putting it on "collateralmurder.com" site.

Military officials said they believed the video was authentic, but that they had to compare the images and audio with their own video before confirming it publicly.

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