

Obama Tested By Terror And Political Defeat

WASHINGTON (AP) — For President Barack Obama, one of his most wrenching White House weeks saw the fresh specter of terrorism and the first crushing political defeat of his new term, and the more emotional side of a leader often criticized for appearing clinical or detached.

The events presented sharp tests for a president committed to an ambitious agenda in the limited window offered by a second term.

There was the challenge to reassure a nervous nation about threats at home and to keep the rest of his legislative goals on track after the Senate rejected gun control measures that had become his top priority.

“This was a tough week,” Obama said late Friday, shortly after authorities captured the second suspect in the Boston Marathon bombings.

Midwest Towns Experiencing Harsh Flooding

CLARKSVILLE, Mo. (AP) — Those fighting floods in several communities along the Mississippi River were mostly successful Sunday despite the onslaught of water, but an ominous forecast and the growing accumulation of snow in the upper Midwest tempered any feelings of victory.

The surging Mississippi was at or near crest at several places from the Quad Cities south to near St. Louis — some reaching 10-12 feet above flood stage. Problems were plentiful: Hundreds of thousands of acres of swamped farmland as planting season approaches; three people died; roads and bridges closed, including sections of major highways like U.S. 61 in Iowa and Missouri and crossings at Quincy, Ill., and Louisiana, Mo.

The U.S. Coast Guard said 114 barges broke loose near St. Louis on Saturday night, and four hit the Jefferson Barracks Bridge in St. Louis County. The bridge was closed about six hours for inspection but reopened around 8 a.m. Sunday. Most of the runaway barges were corralled but at least 10 sank and two others were unaccounted for, Coast Guard Lt. Colin Fogarty said.

Two of the confirmed flood-related deaths occurred near the same spot in Indiana; another was in Missouri. In all three cases, vehicles were swept off the road in flash floods. High water could be responsible for two more, both in Illinois, where a decomposed body was found Thursday in an Oak Brook creek and a body was found Saturday in the Mississippi River at Cora. Investigations continue.

And the danger is far from over, as spots south of St. Louis aren't expected to crest until late this week. Significant flooding is possible in places like Ste. Genevieve, Mo., Cape Girardeau, Mo., and Cairo, Ill.

Syrian Opposition: Hezbelloah Needs To Withdraw

BEIRUT (AP) — The Syrian opposition called on Hezbollah to withdraw its fighters from the country, as activists said regime troops supported by gunmen linked to the Lebanese Shiite militant group battled rebels Sunday for control of a string of villages near the Lebanon-Syria border.

Outside the capital, Damascus, activists said they had documented the names of 80 people killed in a government assault on the area over the past five days.

The Syrian National Coalition — the main Western-backed opposition group — warned that Hezbollah involvement in Syria's civil war could lead to greater risks in the area, and urged the Lebanese government to “adopt the necessary measures to stop the aggression of Hezbollah” and to control the border to “protect civilians in the area.”

The statement, posted on the Coalition's Facebook page, coincided with a surge in fighting around the contested town of Qusair in Syria's Homs province near the frontier with Lebanon.

Series Of Attacks Kill 9 In Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Insurgents killed six police officers at a checkpoint and a suicide bomber killed three civilians at a shopping bazaar in separate attacks Sunday in eastern Afghanistan, while an independent security group warned 2013 is on track to be one of the most violent years of the war.

April already has been the deadliest month this year for security forces and Afghan and foreign civilians as the U.S. and other countries prepare to end their combat mission by the end of next year. According to an Associated Press tally, 222 people have been killed in violence around the nation this month, including Sunday's nine fatalities.

The Taliban ambushed the checkpoint in the Dayak district of Ghazni province, killing six police officers, wounding one and leaving one missing, said Col. Mohammad Hussain, deputy provincial police chief. The checkpoint was manned by Afghan local police, forces recruited at the village level that are nominally under the control of the Afghan Interior Ministry.

Prayer And Waiting In Town Rocked By Blast

BY PAUL J. WEBER

AND CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN
 Associated Press

WEST, Texas — The First Baptist Church in the tiny Texas town where a fertilizer plant exploded is still off-limits, so the Rev. John Crowder put folding chairs in a hay pasture and improvised a pulpit on a truck flatbed. At the elementary school, an official carted extra desks and chairs into the only public school campus that's left.

This was Sunday in West. Four days after the blast that killed 14 people and injured 200 others, residents prayed for comfort and got ready for the week ahead, some of them still waiting to find out when — or if — they will be able to go back home.

“We have lost our friends and neighbors. We lost the safety and comfort of our homes,” said Crowder, raising his voice over the whirr of helicopters surveying the nearby rubble from overhead. “But as scary as this is, we don't have to be afraid.”

The explosion at the West Fertilizer Co. rocketed shrapnel across several blocks and left what assistant state fire marshal Kelly Kirstner described Sunday as “a large crater.” A section of the flat farming town near the crater, including Crowder's church, is still behind barricades.

One school campus was obliterated, and on the eve of 1,500 students returning to class for the first time since Wednesday's blast, Superintendent Marty Crawford said the high school and middle school could also be razed.

Nearly 70 federal and state investigators are still trying to determine what caused the fire that set off the explosion, Kirstner said. Authorities say there are no signs of criminal intent.

Robert Champion, the special agent in charge for the Dallas office of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, said experts plan to enter the crater in the next few days and start digging in search of an explanation.

“It's a slow process, but we're getting there,” Champion said.

Slow is the normal way of life in West. But the last several days for many of its 2,800 residents have melded into an anguishing and frustrating stretch of wait-and-hear — whether about the safety of family and friends, or the fate of their homes.

Six firefighters and four emergency medics were among the dead, and city officials announced that a memorial service would be held Thursday at Baylor University.



POOL PHOTO BY MICHAEL AINSWORTH/DALLAS MORNING NEWS/MCT
An apartment complex, pictured on Sunday, near the West Fertilizer plant explosion was destroyed from the blast in West, Texas.

Professional organizations and family and friends on Sunday identified four of the first responders who died: brothers Doug and Robert Snokhous, who were both firefighters with the West Volunteer Fire Department; Jerry Chapman, a firefighter with the Abbott Volunteer Fire Department; and Kevin Sanders, who worked with West EMS and another area volunteer fire department.

At least one of the West volunteer firefighters who was killed, Joey Pustejovsky, was a member of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption that held a solemn first Mass since the blast.

Firefighters and emergency workers in bright yellow jackets kneeled in the pews as the Rev. Boniface Onjefu recalled driving toward the fire after the explosion rattled his house.

“I stopped at the nursing home,” Onjefu said. “I noticed a lot of people trapped. I assisted. I prayed with some and held the hands of some that needed comfort. I saw him in the eyes of everyone.”

Said Onjefu, “God heard our prayers and prevented another tank from exploding.”

Edi Botello, a senior at West High School, is Catholic but

stood in a roadside pasture with friend Chelsea Hayes for the First Baptist Church service that drew more than 100 people. “We needed this,” Botello said.

They wore gray “#prayfor-west” shirts that have become ubiquitous in the town. On the night of the explosion, Botello asked his mother if Hayes, who lived close to the plant, could come over. He said his mom still wonders what might have been if she had said no.

“Every time I close my eyes, all I can think about is the explosion,” Botello said. “People running around. People evacuating. There was one point I couldn't even talk. I just stuttered.”

Wendy Castro, a clerk at a nearby Wal-Mart, was among the first allowed back into her home, which sits on the outmost edge of the barricaded area. Broken windows and screen doors twisted off hinges is about the worst damage in her neighborhood.

The streets look like a bad storm rumbled through, not the deadliest fertilizer plant explosion since 31 were killed in Toulouse, France, in 2001. Dozens of homes close to the blast — some of which were leveled — may not be accessible to

owners for another week or more.

Among the scorched buildings in the shadow of the plant were the town's high school and intermediate school.

Crawford said the track team probably would have been at the high school when the plant erupted if they hadn't stopped to eat on their way back from a meet. On Sunday, he checked on volunteers furnishing three portable classrooms trucked to the elementary campus. Starting Monday, the school that usually has 350 students will be crowded with twice that.

Crawford noticed the proximity of the schools to the fertilizer plant when he came down from Dallas to interview for the superintendent job. “A red flag went up,” he said. Teachers are practiced in emergency drills and there's an evacuation plan on paper in the district office.

Had the explosion happened hours earlier, Crawford is certain it would have made no difference.


“We would have tried our best,” Crawford said. “But I couldn't see us being successful. I don't have to describe to you in graphic detail what would have happened.”



With Fondest Memories

**We remember those who have passed
away and are especially dear to us.**

*On Saturday, May 25th we will publish in print and online at Yankton.net
a Memorial Day section devoted to those who are gone but not forgotten.*



**Aneta
Burrows**

Dec. 30, 1960-Nov. 8, 2002

Your courage and bravery
still inspire us all, and the
memory of your smile
fills us with joy
and laughter.

Dan, Ann & Sarah

Select one of the verses below to accompany your tribute.


1. We hold you in our thoughts and memories forever.
2. May God cradle you in his arms, now and forever.
3. Forever missed, never forgotten. May God hold you in the palm of His hand.
4. Thank you for the wonderful days we shared together.
My prayers will be with you until we meet again.
5. The days we shared were sweet. I long to see you again in Gods heavenly glory.
6. Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.
7. Though out of sight, you'll forever be in my heart and mind.
8. May the light of peace shine on your face for eternity.
9. May God's angels guide you and protect you throughout time.
10. You were a light in our life that burns forever in our hearts.
11. May God's graces shine over you for all time.
12. You are in our thoughts and prayers from morning to night and from year to year.
13. We send this message with a loving kiss for eternal rest and happiness.
14. May the Lord bless you with His graces and warm, loving heart.
15. I have written my own message and it is included.

To remember your loved one in this special way, send \$12.00 per listing,
up to 25 word verse and \$5 for photo.

Fill out the form below and mail to:
 Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan/With Fondest Memories
 319 Walnut Street, Yankton, SD 57078

Deadline: Tuesday, May 21, 2013

Name of deceased _____	
Date of birth _____	Date of passing _____
Number of selected verse _____ OR Personal message (25 word limit) _____	
Print your name here _____	
Phone Number _____	Address/City/State/Zip _____



> PHONE

> DATA

> VIDEO

> TELEVISION ADVERTISING

1.800.888.1300

MIDCONTINENT.BIZ

The Ramada Convention Center Aberdeen knows what personal service means. And so do we.


Mike, General Manager, knows he can count on Midcontinent Business Solutions' high speed Internet, cable and phones in all of their 156 rooms. Ramada customers can enjoy smooth running data connections in the restaurant and video in the lounge. Conference-goers depend on the uninterrupted Wi-Fi in the convention center. The one other thing Mike counts on? Kim Ogden, from Midcontinent Business Solutions.™ It's important that Mike can put a face with his service, and that she's there when he calls. Like when a conference needed improved connectivity in the convention center, Kim delivered. Mike knows a thing or two about personal service. So we're proud he thinks highly of ours.

Make the easy switch to Phone, Data and Video from Midcontinent Business Solutions.

Get up to **6 months of service FREE** with speeds up to 100 Mbps x 15 Mbps.

Business Broadband Service starts at **\$65 per month** for speeds up to 30 Mbps x 5 Mbps.

Limited time offer. Some restrictions apply. Contract or contract extension required. Video package is Basic Cable with sat top box and does not include public viewing packages. An HDTV is required to receive HD programming. Actual Internet speeds may vary depending on your computer's capacity and web traffic. Speeds may also be impacted by third party equipment (such as your computer or router). All services not available in all areas. To find out what services are available in your area, visit midcontinent.biz.



Midcontinent
Business Solutions™

Making Your Business Better.