

### Tensions Run High In Eastern Cuba

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, Cuba (AP) — Two and a half years after Hurricane Sandy trashed Cuba's second-largest city, 35-year-old Melba Martinez is still out of work and struggling to feed two children on her state ration book and a daily hustle for extra rice or cooking oil.

"There's no work, no money," Martinez said, her voice rising in fury. "How are you going to buy a pair of shoes that cost \$20? If you buy them, you don't eat. If you eat, you go barefoot."

Down the hill in the pastel-tinted colonial center of Santiago, Josefina Arocha Saco pours thickening, sugary milk through a soft-serve ice cream machine made of an old air-conditioner, a pan from a cafeteria steam table and a handmade metal driveshaft. If enough schoolchildren spend 4 cents on ice-cream, she can cover the costs of her government license and taxes, and make more in private business than she used to earn as a teacher.

"There used to be very little here," Arocha said. "It's more open, more free ... Now everyone can get a license."

Far from the tourist boom and foreign investment bounty of Havana, residents of eastern Cuba are struggling with the country's sputtering economy, some faring better than others in a region that is poorer and more isolated than the bustling capital. While many from Santiago have opened businesses under the economic reforms of the last four years, the city is largely removed from the big-spending foreigners and wealthy Cuban-Americans whose cash is cascading through private businesses, from high-end restaurants to spas and spinning classes, for a growing class of wealthy locals.

### Hillary Clinton Opens Campaign In Iowa

MONTICELLO, Iowa (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton declared herself a "champion" for struggling families Tuesday, offering a full-throated embrace of economic and good-government policies promoted by liberal Democrats at the first formal event of her young presidential campaign.

"I think it's fair to say that as you look across the country, the deck is still stacked in favor of those already at the top," Clinton said during a discussion with students and teachers at a community college in rural Iowa. "There's something wrong with that."

After a morning stop at a coffee shop in the Mississippi River town of LeClaire, Clinton arrived in this town of a few thousand people to lay out four pillars for her candidacy: a need to build "the economy of tomorrow, not yesterday," strengthen families, fix a dysfunctional government and protect the country from threats at home and abroad.

And though she's running in what's expected to become the most expensive election in U.S. history, Clinton embraced the idea of a constitutional amendment to get "unaccountable money" out of the county's campaign finance system.

Clinton didn't get into any specifics Tuesday about how she would achieve her goals, promising she would unveil policy specifics in the coming weeks.

### Year Later, Hope For Girls' Return Wanes

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — They have been gone a year now, the hundreds of girls abducted by Islamic militants from their school in northeastern Nigeria.

And while the cry to "Bring Back Our Girls" remains a worldwide cause, the new president Tuesday would not repeat his predecessor's failed promise to find them — only that they won't be forgotten.

A solemn march was held to remember the 219 girls seized from their boarding school in Chibok by gunmen from the Boko Haram extremist group. In Nigeria's capital of Abuja, 219 girls paraded in the streets, with each carrying a placard bearing the name of a kidnap victim.

"We believe the girls are still alive," said Dr. Allan Marnasseh, the brother of missing 18-year-old Maryamu Wavi, in an interview with The Associated Press.

But it was clear that hope has dwindled a year after the April 14-15 mass abduction.

### Al-Qaida's Yemen Branch Cleric Killed

CAIRO (AP) — Yemen's al-Qaida branch announced on Tuesday that its top cleric, a Saudi-national who has had a \$5 million bounty on his head, has been killed, allegedly in a drone attack.

Al-Qaida said in a statement posted on Twitter that Ibrahim al-Rubaish was killed by a drone late on Sunday, along with other, unnamed members of the group. The statement did not specify the location of the drone attack.

Yemeni officials had no immediate comment on the claim and the White House declined to comment.

Al-Rubaish, believed to be in his late 30s, was released from Guantanamo Bay in 2006, after which he joined al-Qaida in Yemen. He was considered the group's the main ideologue and theological adviser and his writings and sermons were prominent in its publications.

### Leaders Push Medicare Bill Forward

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate leaders drove legislation permanently overhauling how Medicare pays physicians toward final congressional approval Tuesday in a rare bipartisan push to erase an irritant that has dogged lawmakers for years.

The Senate debated the measure less than three weeks after the House passed it by a lopsided 392-37. With Republicans controlling the Senate since January, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has been eager to demonstrate his party's ability to conduct Congress' business efficiently.

President Barack Obama has promised to sign the bill, which marks a tandem effort by Democrats and Republicans at a time when the two parties are far likelier to block each other's initiatives. The bill would also block an immediate 21 percent cut in doctors' fees and provide extra funds for health programs for children and the poor.

Though two-thirds of the measure's \$214 billion, 10-year price tag is financed by simply adding to federal deficits, Republicans were claiming victory in changes the bill makes in Medicare that would have a long-term though modest impact on the huge program's finances.

About \$35 billion over the decade would come from Medicare beneficiaries, mostly by raising the medical and prescription drug premiums paid by some upper-income recipients starting in 2018. Though the affected beneficiaries already pay higher premiums than lower-earning people, Congress seldom increases costs on seniors, fearing retribution come the next Election Day.

# Obama To Remove Cuba From Terror List

BY JULIE PACE  
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama will remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, the White House announced Tuesday, a key step in his bid to normalize relations between the two countries.

The terror designation has been a stain on Cuba's pride and a major stumbling block for efforts to mend ties between Washington and Havana.

In a message to Congress, Obama said the government of Cuba "has not provided any support for international terrorism" over the last six months. He also told lawmakers that Cuba "has provided assurances that it will not support acts of international terrorism in the future."

Cuba will officially be removed from the terror list 45 days after the president's message was sent to Congress. Lawmakers could vote to block the move during that window, though Obama would be all-but-certain to veto such a measure.

Cuba's top diplomat for U.S. affairs hailed Obama's action. "The Cuban government recognizes the president of the United States' just decision to take Cuba off a list in which it should never have been included," Josefina Vidal said Tuesday night. "As the Cuban government has said on many occasions, Cuba rejects and condemns all acts of terrorism, in every form, as well as any action aimed at encouraging, supporting, financing or concealing terrorism."

Tuesday's announcement comes days after Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro met on the sidelines of a regional summit in Panama. The historic talks marked the first formal meeting between the leaders of their countries in a half-century.



Obama

The U.S. has long since stopped actively accusing Cuba of supporting terrorism. When Obama and Castro announced a thaw in relations in December, the U.S. president expressed his willingness to remove Cuba from that list.

However, he held off on making a final decision amid indications that the White House was reluctant to grant Cuba's request until other thorny issues — such as restrictions on U.S. diplomats in Havana — were resolved.

The president's final decision followed a State Department review of Cuba's presence on the list.

Removing Cuba from the terror list could pave the way for the opening of a U.S. Embassy in Havana and other steps. Administration officials said they were optimistic about the prospects of opening the embassy, but did not provide any specific updates in timing.

Cuba was designated a state sponsor of terror in 1982 because of what the White House said was its efforts "to promote armed revolution by organizations that used terrorism."

Those efforts included support for leftist guerrilla groups in Central and South America that carried out attacks on civilians in their efforts to overthrow U.S.-backed governments.

State Department reports on the terror list specifically mention Cuba sheltering members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, and the Spanish Basque separatist group ETA. Cuba has also given shelter to black and Puerto Rican militants who fled to the island after carrying out attacks in

the United States.

Cuba renounced its direct support for foreign militants years ago, and is sponsoring peace talks between the FARC and Colombian government.

Most of the terror list's direct legal impact is on relatively narrow issues that don't affect Cuba due to the longstanding trade embargo on the island and deep historical enmity between the two nations. For example, the listing bars U.S. arms sales and other aid to Cuba, an issue that's been moot for more than a half-century.

However, Cubans say the listing has badly damaged their ability to conduct international financial transactions by frightening banks away from doing business with the communist government. Those who do businesses with state sponsors of terror are vulnerable to lawsuits in U.S. courts.

Cuba's removal from the terror list will likely make it easier to get credit from non-U.S. banks, transfer funds between countries and conduct a host of other international financial transactions.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest said that taking Cuba off the terror list does not change the fact that the U.S. has differences with the island nation's government.

"Our concerns over a wide range of Cuba's policies and actions fall outside the criteria that is relevant to whether to rescind Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism," Earnest said.

The terror list has been a particularly charged issue for Cuba because of what the government there sees as the U.S. history of supporting exile groups responsible for attacks on the island, including the 1976 bombing of a Cuban passenger flight from Barbados that killed 73 people aboard.

## WH Agrees To Give Congress Say On Iran Deal

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bowing to pressure from Republicans and his own party, President Barack Obama on Tuesday relented to a compromise empowering Congress to reject the emerging nuclear pact with Iran.

The rare and reluctant agreement between the president and the Republican-led Congress came after the White House maintained for weeks that congressional interference could jeopardize sensitive negotiations with Tehran. But lawmakers refused to back down from their insistence that Congress have a formal role in what could be a historic nuclear weapons deal.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously approved the compromise bill shortly after White House spokesman Josh Earnest conveyed the president's decision to sign it.

"Maybe they saw the handwriting on the wall," House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said after the White House dropped its opposition.

The bill, which cleared the committee 19-0, is now likely to clear both houses of Congress. It's expected to come before

the full Senate as soon as next week.

A vote on an actual agreement to lift economic sanctions in exchange for Iranian nuclear concessions would come later, if negotiations between the Obama administration, Iran and five other nations come to fruition.

Obama retains his right to veto any attempt by Congress to scuttle such a pact if the time comes. To override a veto would require a two-thirds majority of both the House and Senate, meaning some Demo-

crats would have to oppose their president to sink a deal.

The White House's announcement came after an intensive administration effort to prevent Democrats from signing on to legislation requiring Obama to submit any pact with Iran to Congress.

International negotiators are trying to reach a deal that would prevent Iran from being able to develop nuclear weapons. In exchange, Tehran would get relief from economic sanctions that are crippling its economy.

"We believe it is our role to ensure that any deal with Iran makes them accountable, is transparent and is enforceable," said Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., chairman of Foreign Relations Committee.

Corker said Secretary of State John Kerry was lobbying against it on Capitol Hill a few hours before the vote. The Republican said the White House's sudden support was dictated by the number of senators — Republicans and Democrats — backing the measure.

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