

Accidental Drone Killing May Change Policy

WASHINGTON (AP) — The accidental killing of two hostages in a U.S. operation against al-Qaida has put a new spotlight on the Obama administration's reliance on drones in the battle against terrorism — and has also raised pressure on the White House to revise the nation's oft-criticized strategy for dealing with abducted Americans and their families.

A day after President Barack Obama apologized and took responsibility for the deaths of American Warren Weinstein and Italian Giovanni Lo Porto in a January strike along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, officials said Friday that a nearly yearlong, interagency review of the hostage policy is to be completed this spring.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest said the Obama administration is considering whether to create a "fusion cell" comprised of the FBI, Pentagon, State Department and intelligence community to ensure they are closely coordinating on rescue efforts and communication with families. The administration is seeking reaction to the idea from relatives of hostages, after several have complained about the government's response in the past.

"These families are in a terrible situation — unthinkable to imagine what it would be like to have a loved one, a family member, being held against their will by a terrorist organization," Earnest said.

The review won't affect the longstanding U.S. refusal to offer ransom or other concessions for the release of hostages. "Paying ransom or offering a concession to a terrorist organization may result in the saving of one innocent life, but could put countless other innocent lives at greater risk," Earnest said.

Night Train Kills 14 Migrants On Tracks

VELES, Macedonia (AP) — A group of migrants trying to reach European opportunity via what's billed by smugglers as a "safe" route — trekking along train tracks through the Balkans — was hit by an overnight train in a remote river gorge in Macedonia, killing 14.

The deaths of the undocumented migrants from Africa and Asia underscore how, even as tens of thousands risk drowning in the Mediterranean to reach European shores, many others gamble with their lives by taking perilous overland journeys to reach Hungary, a popular back door to the 28-nation European Union.

Railway officials said many of those killed Thursday night had stopped to rest after an exhausting hours-long hike and were sleeping on the tracks when the train plowed into them.

The overland route from Greece through Macedonia and Serbia has soared in popularity over the past two years as migrants seek a less dangerous path than the sea crossing from North Africa to Italy.

Trains killed 40 migrants last year, usually in groups of one or two, compared to the more than 1,300 lives lost in the Mediterranean over the past three weeks alone — a horrifying statistic that has put 2015 on track to be the deadliest year ever for the sea crossing.

Police: Gray Needed Medical Attention

BALTIMORE (AP) — Freddie Gray should have received medical attention at the spot where he was arrested — before he was put inside a police van, authorities said Friday.

Baltimore police have come under intense scrutiny after Gray was taken into custody and suffered an unexplained spinal injury that led to his death. Six officers have been suspended with pay as local police and federal authorities investigate.

Commissioner Anthony Batts said the investigation is being refined and the picture is getting "sharper and sharper." He did not elaborate.

As for calls for his resignation, he said: "That's not going to happen."

Gray, who is black, was arrested April 12 after he made eye contact with officers and ran away, police said. Officers held him down, handcuffed him and loaded him into a police van. While inside, he became irate and leg cuffs were put on him, police have said.

Vatican Terror Suspects Sought in Italy

MILAN (AP) — Islamic extremists suspected in a bomb attack in a Pakistani market that killed more than 100 people had also planned an attack against the Vatican in 2010 that was never carried out, an Italian prosecutor said Friday.

The alleged foiled plot, known to authorities for years, was revealed as prosecutors announced the results of a decade-long investigation into an Italy-based terror network that aimed to stop Pakistan's actions against the Taliban. Police arrested nine suspects related to the probe Friday throughout Italy. Another nine were being sought, three of whom were believed to still be in the country.

Wiretaps collected as part of the investigation gave "signals of some preparation for a possible attack" at the Vatican, prosecutor Mauro Mura told a news conference in Cagliari, Sardinia. That included the arrival in Rome of a Pakistani suicide bomber, Mura said.

The Pakistani eventually left Italy, Mura said, without explaining why. The Italian news agency ANSA reported that there were two suicide bombers and that they were warned off by their associates in Italy when police began executing search warrants in the wider investigation of the Italy-based Islamic terror network.

The Vatican downplayed the significance of the alleged plot.

Comcast Spikes Time Warner Cable Deal

NEW YORK (AP) — What killed Comcast's \$45 billion bid for Time Warner Cable? Regulators' desire to protect the Internet video industry that is reshaping TV.

A combination of the No. 1 and No. 2 U.S. cable companies would have put nearly 30 percent of TV and about 55 percent of broadband subscribers under one roof, along with NBCUniversal, giving the resulting behemoth unprecedented power over what Americans watch and download.

Competitors, consumer groups, and politicians have criticized the deal, saying it would lead to higher prices and less choice.

"The proposed merger would have posed an unacceptable risk to competition and innovation, including to the ability of online video providers to reach and serve consumers," Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler said in a written statement.

PepsiCo To Drop Aspartame

NEW YORK (AP) — PepsiCo says it's dropping aspartame from Diet Pepsi in response to customer worries and replacing it with sucralose, another artificial sweetener commonly known as Splenda.

The decision to swap sweeteners comes as Americans keep turning away from popular diet sodas. Rival Coca-Cola said this week that sales volume for Diet Coke, which also uses aspartame, fell 5 percent in North America in the first three months of the year.

Atlanta-based Coca-Cola said in a statement that it has no plans to change the sweetener in Diet Coke, which is the country's top-selling diet cola.

Armenia Marks Centennial Of Killing Of 1.5 Million People

BY AVET DEMOURIAN
Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia — The presidents of Russia and France joined other leaders Friday at ceremonies commemorating the massacre of Armenians a century ago by Ottoman Turks, an event which still stirs bitter feelings as both sides argue over whether to call it genocide.

The annual April 24 commemorations mark the day when some 250 Armenian intellectuals were rounded up in what is regarded as the first step of the massacre. An estimated 1.5 million died in the slaughters, deportations and forced marches that began in 1915 as Ottoman officials worried that the Christian Armenians would side with Russia, its enemy in World War I.

The event is widely viewed by historians as genocide but modern Turkey, the successor to the Ottoman Empire, vehemently rejects the charge. It says that the toll has been inflated, and that those killed were victims of civil war and unrest. On the eve of the centennial, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan insisted that his nation's ancestors never committed genocide.

The observances ended Friday night with a torchlight parade by an estimated 30,000 people from the capital's central square to the hilltop complex memorializing the deaths. Participants started the march by burning a Turkish flag.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Francois Hollande and other dignitaries assembled in the morning at the memorial complex, called Tsitsernakaberd, overlooking the capital, Yerevan.

Each leader walked along the memorial with a single yellow rose and put it into the center of a wreath resembling a forget-me-not, a flower chosen as the symbol of the commemoration.

"We will never forget the tragedy that your people went through," Hollande said.

France is home to a sizeable Armenian community. Among the French



Shannon Blanck records as thousands march west on Sunset Blvd. at the beginning of a six mile march marking the 100th anniversary of Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Turkish government on Friday in Los Angeles, Calif.

AL SEIB/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Armenians at Yerevan was 90-year-old singer Charles Aznavour, who was born in Paris to a family of massacre survivors.

For many Armenians, the massacre anniversary is not only a moment of grief but also a reminder of the resilience of the nation.

"We feel a big pain today, historic pain but at the same time we feel a big historic strength," Nadezhda Antonyan, a teacher from Yerevan said on the sidelines of the ceremony. "We should not only survive but we must live, be strong and build our statehood."

Putin used his speech to warn of the dangers of nationalism as well as "Russophobia" in a clear dig at the West-leaning government in Ukraine.

Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan criticized Putin's participation, saying "They should look at their own past first ... the cruelties, the massacres, the genocides they have committed against their own people."

Earlier this month, Turkey recalled its ambassadors to Vienna and the Vatican after Austria and Pope Francis described the

killings as genocide. The European Parliament has also triggered Turkey's ire by passing a non-binding resolution to commemorate "the centenary of the Armenian genocide."

Armenian President Serge Sarkisian expressed hope that recent steps to recognize the massacre as genocide will help "dispel the darkness of 100 years of denial."

Armenians and Turks planned to march in Istanbul's main square to remember the Armenian intellectuals who were rounded up in the city 100 years ago and to urge the government to recognize genocide. A small nationalist group planned a protest denouncing the genocide accusations.

Sarkisian welcomed the rally in Taksim Square to honor the dead, calling them "strong people who are doing an important thing for their motherland."

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu earlier this week issued a message of condolence to the descendants of the victims, without calling the killings genocide.

On Friday, Volkan Bozkir,

the minister in charge of Turkey's relations with the European Union, attended a service at the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul to honor the dead in the 1915 massacre — a first by a Turkish government official.

In a message read at the service, Turkish President Erdogan said "that we are cognizant of the sorrowful events experienced in the past by the Armenian community and that I sincerely share your pain."

"We respect the pain experienced by our Armenian brothers," Bozkir said. "We are in no way opposed to the commemoration of this pain."

In Yerevan, thousands of mourners lined up to lay flowers at the memorial on Friday despite the pouring rain. Many expressed disappointment at Turkey's refusal to apologize and recognize the atrocity as genocide.

"It doesn't benefit either the Turks or us to live in eternal animosity," said mourner Karen Bakhshinian. "We need to look for a way out of this deadlock. Sooner or later we are going to have to find it."

Obama Defends US Intelligence After Two al-Qaida Hostage Deaths

BY NEDRA PICKLER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A day after revealing an intelligence failure that cost the lives of two al-Qaida hostages, President Barack Obama on Friday praised his spying operations as the most capable in the world while promising a review aimed at preventing future mistakes.

"We all bleed when we lose an American life," Obama said in a speech at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to mark its 10th anniversary. "We all grieve when any innocent life is taken. We don't take this work lightly. And I know that each and every one of you understand the magnitude of what we do and the stakes involved. And these aren't abstractions and we're not cavalier about what we do."

Obama said he knows that the U.S. intelligence community has faced criticism but argued that



Obama

the world doesn't always see their successes that have prevented attacks and saved lives. He said he could not

do his job without their insights and analysis and they can take great pride in their work.

"We're more secure because of your service," Obama said. "It's been 10 long and challenging years, but when we look back on those 10 years, the American people have been a whole lot safer."

Obama was speaking

one day after making the surprise announcement that a counterterrorism operation in January against an al-Qaida compound accidentally killed two aid workers being held hostage — American Warren Weinstein and Italian Giovanni Lo Porto. Obama said that despite hundreds of hours of surveillance of the compound, the U.S. was unaware the hostages were in the targeted position.

The White House said the attack also killed two American al-Qaida leaders, Ahmed Farouq and Adam Gadahn, without the U.S. knowing in advance they were there. Targeting an American with a drone strike would have triggered

a more intense review in consideration of constitutional due process protections.

"We're going to review what happened," Obama said Friday. "We're going to identify the lessons that can be learned and any improvements and changes that can be made. And I know those of you who are here share our determination to continue doing everything we can to prevent the loss of innocent lives."

Obama said the willingness of his administration to review the circumstances behind the deaths and make corrections sets the U.S. apart from other nations.

Kmart Names New Pharmacy Manager, Justin Cunningham

Sears Holding Company Hoffman Estates, IL, has named Justin Cunningham, Bloomfield, NE as its' new Pharmacy Manager at Yankton Kmart #4813.

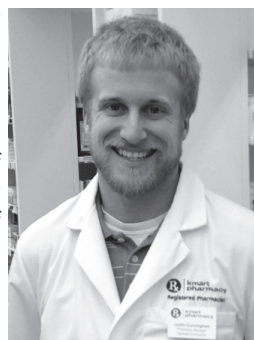
Justin is a 2014 graduate of South Dakota State University where he earned his doctor of pharmacy degree. He has lived in Nebraska/South Dakota area his entire life and is excited to be part of the Kmart family.

Recently several rumors have been spreading throughout Yankton and the surrounding area that Kmart will be closing. This is false. Kmart is not closing. This store and pharmacy are doing well and plan on being here in Yankton for many years to come.

So if you are looking for a fast, friendly pharmacy, stop in Kmart and visit with the staff there.



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