

Strikes Kill 100 On Muslim Holiday In Syria

TEL RIFAT, Syria (AP) — Government forces pummeled the battered city of Aleppo with airstrikes and tanks and shelled parts of Damascus and southern Syria Monday, killing at least 100 people during a major Muslim holiday, rights groups and activists said.

The violence escalated dramatically after a one-day lull on Sunday, the start of the three-day Eid al-Fitr holiday which marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. The renewed fighting showed President Bashar Assad's regime is not letting up on its drive to quell the 17-month-old uprising out of respect for the occasion.

In Washington, President Barack Obama said U.S. thinking on military involvement in Syria would change if chemical or biological weapons came into play in the civil war. He told reporters the use of such weapons of mass destruction would widen the conflict considerably.

"It doesn't just include Syria. It would concern allies in the region, including Israel, and it would concern us," Obama said, warning the Assad regime and "other players on the ground" that the use or movement of such weapons would be a "red line" for the United States. The U.S. has been reluctant to intervene militarily so far.

Obama 'Deeply Concerned' Over Afghan Attacks

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama declared Monday he is sticking to his war strategy of using U.S. troops to advise and mentor Afghan forces, even as a suddenly growing number of Americans are being gunned down by the very Afghans they are training to take on insurgents.

In just the past 10 days, Afghan forces have attacked their coalition partners seven times, killing nine Americans. For the year there have been 32 such incidents, killing 40, compared to 21 attacks killing 35 troops in all of 2011.

"We are deeply concerned about this, from top to bottom," Obama told a White House news conference. But he said the best approach, with the fewest number of deaths in the long run, would be to stick to the plan for shifting security responsibilities to the Afghans.

"We are transitioning to Afghan security, and for us to train them effectively we are in much closer contact — our troops are in much closer contact with Afghan troops on an ongoing basis," Obama said. "Part of what we've got to do is to make sure that this model works but it doesn't make our guys more vulnerable."

Phyllis Diller Dies In Los Angeles At 95

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Phyllis Diller, the housewife turned humorist who aimed some of her sharpest barbs at herself, punctuating her jokes with her trademark cackle, died Monday morning in her Los Angeles home at age 95.

"She died peacefully in her sleep and with a smile on her face," her longtime manager, Milton Suchin, told The Associated Press.

Diller, who suffered a near-fatal heart attack in 1999, was found by her son, Perry Diller. The cause of her death has not been released.

Obama Defends Tenor Of His Campaign

BY JIM KUHNHEIN AND CHARLES BABINGTON
Associated Press



Obama

WASHINGTON — Denounced by his Republican rival for divisiveness, President Barack Obama on Monday defended the tone of his campaign in a combative election year and insisted it's actually Mitt Romney's ads that are "patently false." But Obama did distance himself from a particularly provocative negative ad by a political group that supports him.

Obama also joined the cascade of criticism from both parties for comments on rape and abortion by a Republican Senate candidate in Missouri, using that new controversy to draw sharp distinctions between his views on women's health issues and those of Republicans.

Obama made a surprise visit to the White House briefing room, at least partly upstaging a joint campaign appearance by Romney and his running mate, Paul Ryan, in New Hampshire. The rally by Romney and Ryan, their

first appearance together after a week of vigorous campaigning separately, had been highly anticipated, drawing an enthusiastic crowd and wide media attention.

The president turned the day into a long-distance point-counterpoint debate with his opponent. He took questions from four reporters, the most he has taken from the national press corps in two months, dealing to an extent with complaints about his inaccessibility. What's more, the flap over rape-and-abortion remarks by Republican Rep. Todd Akin gave the president a chance to make a direct appeal to women, who both campaigns say make up a majority of undecided voters.

At issue was Akin's answer in an interview that aired Sunday that women's bodies can prevent pregnancies in "a legitimate rape" and that conception is rare in such cases. He later said he misspoke and apologized, but he

said he would not get out of the race despite such urging from several prominent fellow Republicans.

As for the tone of the campaign, Obama declared that it was important to draw attention to major differences with Romney, but he said his criticism has never been "out of bounds."

Still, he distanced himself from an ad by the pro-Obama Priorities USA Action super political action committee, which is run by former Obama White House aides.

That ad pointedly notes the death of the wife of a steelworker whose company had been taken over by a group of partners that included Bain Capital, the private equity firm that Romney cofounded.

"I don't think that Governor Romney is somehow responsible for the death of the woman that was portrayed in that ad," Obama said. But he added that he did not approve or produce the ad and said it had had only a brief airing on television.

Missouri Congressman Fights To Save GOP Senate Bid

BY JIM SALTER
Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Rep. Todd Akin fought to salvage his Senate campaign Monday, even as members of his own party turned against him and a key source of campaign funding was cut off in outrage over the Missouri congressman's comments that women are able to prevent pregnancies in cases of "legitimate rape."

Akin made no public appearances but went on former Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee's national radio show to apologize. He vowed to continue his bid for higher office.

"The good people of Missouri nominated me, and I'm not a quitter," Akin said. "To quote my old friend John Paul Jones, I have not yet begun to fight."

But Akin seemed to be losing political support by the hour as fellow Republicans urged him to abandon a race the party had long considered essential in their bid to regain control of the Senate. Incumbent Democrat Claire McCaskill is seen as vulnerable in public opinion polls and because she has been a close ally of President Barack Obama.

An official with the National Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee said the group's head, Texas Sen. John Cornyn, called Akin on Monday to tell him that the committee had withdrawn \$5 million in advertising planned for the Missouri race. The official spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the conversation was private.

At least one outside group that has pounded McCaskill with ads,

the Karl Rove-backed Crossroads organization, also pulled its ads from Missouri.

Publicly, Cornyn called Akin's comments "indefensible" and suggested he take 24 hours to consider "what is best for him, his family, the Republican Party and the values that he cares about and has fought for."

The Senate's top Republican, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, said Akin's remarks about rape may "prevent him from effectively representing" the Republican Party.

Two other Republican senators — Scott Brown of Massachusetts and Ron Johnson of Wisconsin — urged Akin to step aside from the Senate race.

Brown, who is locked in a tight race with Democrat Elizabeth Warren, said Akin's comments

were "outrageous, inappropriate and wrong."

Johnson called Akin's statements "reprehensible and inexcusable," and urged Akin to withdraw "so Missouri Republicans can put forth a candidate that can win in November."

Akin also got a swift rebuke from the campaign of presumptive GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney and his running mate, Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

Romney and Ryan "disagree with Mr. Akin's statement, and a Romney-Ryan administration would not oppose abortion in instances of rape," Romney spokeswoman Amanda Henneberg said.

"Like millions of other Americans, we found them to be offensive," Romney said in an interview with National Review Online.

OBITUARIES

Franklin 'Fox' Kocer

APPLE VALLEY, Minn. — Franklin Edward "Fox" Kocer, age 78 of Apple Valley, MN passed away on Tuesday, August 14, 2012.

Frank was born on January 26, 1934 to Vit and Lillian Kocer in Lesterville, SD. He attended North Star Country School and graduated from Scotland High School in 1952. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served aboard the USS Yorktown during the Korean War. Frank was a long time member of the VFW and American Legion, serving as the Legion Representative during Lesterville's 1983 State Championship baseball team.

After his military service, Frank attended school at Southern State College in Springfield, SD. Frank held numerous jobs in the service industry, including Cesar's Palace in Las Vegas, NV and owner/proprietor of The Fox's Den in Tabor, SD where he was also President of the Chamber of Commerce in 1980. Frank broadcast the Tabor News "live from the penthouse atop the Fox's Den" in beautiful downtown Tabor each week on KYNT radio.

Frank enjoyed outdoor activities, including softball and working for the Egan, MN parks department. He loved animals and is surely playing with his late dog Tori today. Frank was a compassionate person and was awarded an honorary police badge from the Apple Valley, MN police chief for rescuing a little girl.

Survivors include his son Mark Kocer of Apple Valley, MN, daughter-in-law Danita (Bierle) Kocer of Apple Valley, MN, grandchildren Nathan Kocer of Apple Valley, MN, Stephanie Kocer of Minneapolis, MN, and Ashley (Aaron) Sauter, of Farmington, MN, great-grand daughters Kendelyn and Elliana Sauter of Farmington, MN, and sisters Marjorie (John) Scherschligt of Lesterville, SD, Patricia (Jim) Boydston, of Renton, WA, and Kay Bruna of Scotland, SD.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Vit and Lillian (Post) Kocer.

A private celebration of life ceremony will be held in Apple Valley, MN.

His family has requested that memorials be dedicated to the Humane Society as a Kindred Spirits gift at www.humanesociety.org or call (866) 693-7436.

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Kocer

William 'Wil' Webbert III

NORFOLK, Neb. — Funeral services for William Edward "Wil" Webbert III, 21 of Norfolk, will be 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 22, 2012, at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Reverend Daniel Andrews will be the Celebrant. Burial will be in Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 4 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, with a wake service at 7:00 p.m., all at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Home for Funerals is in charge of arrangements.

Wil died Saturday, August 18, 2012, outside of his home.

Wil was born on April 29, 1991, in Norfolk, the son of William Jr. and Denise (Lammers) Webbert. He was baptized and confirmed at St. Mary's Catholic Church. He attended Sacred Heart Elementary School and Norfolk Catholic High School. While in school, Wil participated in football, wrestling, bowling, school musical, choir and show choir. He graduated in 2010.

He enjoyed hunting, fishing, canoeing and camping. He liked to play paint ball, video games and text messaging. He loved scary movies and dressing up for Halloween. Wil especially liked to spend time with his family and friends.

At the time of his death, Wil was employed by Guardsmark Security Company.

Wil is survived by his parents, two brothers, Dylan and Ryan Webbert, of Norfolk; his grandparents: Lavon Webbert, of Norfolk, and Francis and Margaret Lammers, of Hartington and special friend McKenzie Sommerfeld.

He was preceded in death by his grandfather, William E. Webbert, Sr., of Stafford, VA and a half-brother Josh Baller of Lincoln NE.

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Webbert

Terrell Schanche

Terrell Curtis "Terry" Schanche, age 82, of Yankton, passed away Saturday, August 18, 2012 at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton, SD.

Funeral services will be 10:30 a.m., Thursday, August 23, 2012 at the United Church of Christ (Congregational), Yankton, SD with Rev. Paul Opsahl officiating. Burial will be in the Yankton Cemetery.

Visitations will begin at 5 p.m., Wednesday, at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton with a prayer service at 7 p.m. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Pallbearers will be Dave Schanche, Dale Schanche, Harold Cook, Tim Schaeffer, Kenny Schanche and Delmar Nelson. Honorary Pallbearers will be John Kenna, Cori Stahlecker, Vincent Kenna, Cara Stahlecker, Martin Kenna and Devin Stahlecker.

Terrell (Terry) was born to Clarence and Twila Schanche on August 23rd, 1929 in Lesterville, South Dakota. Terry was raised on the family farm in rural Lesterville. He was baptized and confirmed at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Menno. Terry attended school in Lesterville and also worked on the family farm. In 1951, Terry married Jacqueline Albert. To this union they had 4 daughters, Pam, Charlotte, Terri and Kristi. Terry continued to work on the farm during this time.

In 1958, Terry drove truck for Chauncy Brewer & Son. In 1962 Terry and his family moved to Oregon. Terry worked for Ralston Purina Company for 11 years.

In 1971, Terry married Ruth Mueller. Terry and Ruth spent a few years in Oregon until returning to Yankton, South



Schanche

Dakota in 1973. Terry worked at Ford Garage, Cimpl Meat Packing Company, Agland Fertilizer and Wal-Mart until his retirement.

Terry and Ruth enjoyed hosting family and friends at the Schanche "Funhouse." Terry enjoyed polka music, tending his garden, tinkering in the garage and collecting his model tractors. Grandpa Terry also enjoyed putting together puzzles and watching his west-erns and three Stooges.

Terry was also a member of the Tri-State Old Iron Association. Terry was a warm, fun loving, easy going father, step-father, grandfather and husband. We love you Terry! We will miss you dearly.

Terry is survived by his daughter's Pam (Harold) Cook, Terri (Earl) Bell; stepdaughters Connie Kenna and Susan Stahlecker; his 11 grandchildren; 5 great grandchildren; his sister's Adelle Nelson, Sharon (Bob) Nagel; his brother's C.A. (Ruth) Schanche and Delmar Schanche; sister's in law Edna Fargo and Mary Schanche.

Terry was preceded in death by his parents; wife Ruth; his daughter's Charlotte and Kristi; grandchildren Tony and Andy; his brother's Cletus and Donald; one son in law and numerous sister in laws and brother in laws.

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Miner

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events. However, she noted that she is particularly proud of the Art in Healing program.

"The program got started in conjunction with Avera Sacred Heart and we provide free classes for cancer patients and survivors all year long," she said. "There are a huge range of classes available that professional artists voluntarily teach."

Miner said that Avera provides all the supplies needed for each class, which has been a big help to YAA.

"I've been physically present and witnessed the difference that this program makes for people in a time of need, and I'm very proud of it and hope it's something that will continue," she said.

Another project she has been proud to be a part of has been the "Before I Die" wall at Meridian Bridge. The wall allows visitors to write what they would like to do before they pass away. She noted it has been very popular and YAA members must erase the wall completely about every other day.

However, despite her successes at YAA, she says she is excited to move back to YSD as a teacher at Yankton High School (YHS).

"I think by nature I'm a teacher," she said. "One of my strengths at YAA has been having educational programs and an education outreach."

Miner is both an alumni of YSD as a teacher and a student (YHS class of 1984).

"I'm immensely proud of Yankton's education system, both as a student and a teacher," she said.

"It's a real honor to have a chance to go back into the classroom, having had some of the educational adventures I've had over the last seven or eight years."

Sherman thinks YHS is getting an extremely gifted teacher for the new school year.

"As a former colleague of hers at YHS, I know they are extremely fortunate to have her back on the staff and, although I regret her leaving YAA after such a short time with us, I wish her the best since I know teaching is her life's passion," he said.

One of the things that Miner loves so much about teaching is the possibilities students have while in school, and their potentials for the future.

"Kids are just discovering their voices and possibilities in school, and to be present and encourage them as they make incredible discoveries about what they're capable of is the coolest job in the world for me," she said.

Miner will be teaching drama and language arts at YHS.

One thing she is looking forward to is seeing how her job at YAA blends with her new position at YHS.

"The advantage to the job I had at YAA is that I had some say over what project we tackle next and how we approach it," Miner said. "That's true to some degree in a classroom, but there are standards that must be addressed that you need to think about on a daily basis."

Mostly, she is happy to continue contributing to the community.

"I love this town and I am just thrilled to be back in the classroom."

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James Grabowski

James H. Grabowski, 81, of Vermillion died Sunday, August 19, 2012 at Royal C. Johnson Veteran's Hospital, Sioux Falls.

Funeral arrangements are pending with Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion.