

Medical Specialists Involved In Terror

WASHINGTON (AP) — From the early stages of the CIA's coercive interrogations of terror detainees, the agency's health professionals were intimately involved.

Front-line medics and psychologists monitored and advised on abusive tactics, even as they sometimes complained about the ethical dilemmas gnawing at them, according to this week's Senate intelligence committee report. Senior CIA medical officials helped the agency and the White House under President George W. Bush.

The report describes rare moments when CIA health professionals openly balked and objected. But for four years, until Bush shuttered the CIA prison program in 2006, medical teams at each "black site" observed almost every step of procedures that President Barack Obama now calls torture.

They oversaw water dousing to ensure detainees suffered but did not drown. They inserted feeding tubes and improvised enemas. They took notes when detainees were body-slammed and forced to stand for hours — intervening only to ensure that the brutal measures were not crippling enough to prevent the next round of interrogations.

Medical ethicists, already familiar with debate on the issue, say that both the Senate report and a CIA response fail to comprehensively tackle questions of medical morality and offer reforms.

Shortages A Problem In IS Held Territory

BAGHDAD (AP) — Saadi Abdul-Rahman was recently forced to pull his three children out of school in the Iraqi city of Mosul, where Islamic State militants have ruled with an iron fist since June. The cost of living has soared there, and the family is barely able to make ends meet, even after putting the kids to work.

"We are not able to pay for cooking gas, kerosene and food," laments the 56-year-old retired government worker. "The situation in Mosul is miserable."

The economy in the self-styled "caliphate" declared by the Islamic State group bridging Iraq and Syria is starting to show signs of strain. Prices of most staples have more than doubled as coalition airstrikes make it difficult for products to move in and out of militant strongholds, leading to shortages, price-gouging and the creation of black markets.

Resentment has grown among residents under the rule of the extremists, who initially won support with their ability to deliver services.

In the early days of its rule, the Islamic State group subsidized food and gas prices through the wealth it accumulated from oil smuggling, extortion and ransom demands. They sold their smuggled oil at a discount — \$25 to \$60 a barrel for oil that normally cost \$100 a barrel or more, according to analysts and government officials.

US Stocks Slump To Worst Weekly Loss

NEW YORK (AP) — A rout in oil prices shook financial markets Friday, pushing stocks to their worst weekly loss in two and a half years.

The stock market fell sharply as investors worried that slumping oil demand is signaling that growth outside of the U.S. is weaker than earlier thought. And while consumers and airlines will benefit from lower fuel prices, energy companies will see their earnings suffer. Some may even go out of business.

"In a nation like the U.S. (as well as) Europe and most of Asia, the benefits of falling oil outweigh the costs," said Jeff Kleintop, Schwab's chief global investment strategist. "The concern is that there's something more to it, given such a sharp decline, that there's something deeper here."

The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 33 points, or 1.6 percent, to 2,002.33. The index dropped 3.5 percent over the week, its biggest decline since May 2012. U.S. benchmark oil slipped \$2.14 Friday, or 3.6 percent, to \$57.81 a barrel. Energy stocks in the S&P 500 index fell 2.1 percent, taking their loss for the year to 16.5 percent.

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 315.51 points, or 1.8 percent, to 17,280.83. The Nasdaq composite dropped 54.57 points, or 1.2 percent, to 4,653.60.

Bill Cosby Pushes On With Comedy Tour

LOS ANGELES (AP) — For five decades, Bill Cosby maintained a busy stand-up career even as his TV visibility rose and fell and new generations of comedians took center stage.

But the renewal of sexual assault claims that have soured TV and other comeback deals for Cosby are undermining the live performances that represent his direct avenue to fans and a semblance of business as usual.

The 77-year-old comedian's ambitious tour schedule that has him crisscrossing the U.S. and into Canada this winter and spring has been whittled by cancellations and indefinite postponements of about 10 concerts in as many states.

"The venues are getting cold feet. Everyone is worried about protesters," said Gary Bongiovanni, editor of Pollstar, a concert industry trade publication. "If I was advising him, I would tell him to cancel everything and lie low for a while."

FBI Investigates Death Of Teenager

BLADENBORO, N.C. (AP) — The black teenager was found in a North Carolina trailer park, hanging from a swing set by a dog leash and a belt that was not his own. His mother said he showed no sign of suicidal thoughts, yet authorities quickly ruled that he had taken his own life.

Now the FBI is reviewing the investigation after Lennon Lacy's relatives and the NAACP raised doubts about the official findings, which the county coroner also questions.

A 911 caller reported spotting the 17-year-old's body Aug. 29 in the small town of Bladenboro, about 100 miles south of Raleigh. His feet were suspended 2 inches off the ground.

The state medical examiner ruled that the boy killed himself, but his mother said she does not believe it.

"When I saw him, I just knew automatically he didn't do that to himself," Claudia Lacy told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "If he was going to harm himself, his demeanor would have changed. His whole routine, everything, his attitude, everything would have changed."

US Senate Approves Defense Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress on Friday sent President Barack Obama a massive defense policy bill that endorses his stepped-up military campaign of air strikes and training of Iraqis and moderate Syrian rebels in the war against Islamic State militants.

The Senate overwhelmingly approved the bill that authorizes funds for basic military operations, including construction of new ships, aircraft, and weapons as well as a 1 percent pay raise for the troops. The vote was 89-11.

A coalition of defense hawks and Western state Republicans overcame objections by Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., and several other GOP senators, who were furious that unrelated provisions to designate 250,000 acres of new, federally protected wilderness were added to the popular legislation dedicated to military operations.

The measure would authorize the training and equipping of moderate Syrian rebels battling the extremists, a mandate that lasts for two years. It also would provide \$5 billion to train Iraqis to counter the militants who brutally rule large sections of Iraq and Syria.

"American air power had changed the momentum on the ground somewhat and given moderates in the region an opportunity to regroup, but ISIS cannot be defeated without an opposing force to take the fight to it on the ground," said Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., chairman of the Armed Services Committee. "To do that, our Arab and Muslim partners must be in the lead because the fight with ISIS is primarily a struggle within Islam for the hearts and minds of Muslims."

Major Storm Sweeps Through Southern CA

BY JUSTIN PRITCHARD AND JOHN ANTCHAK
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Californians got a lot of what they wanted and not too much of what they didn't from a major storm that finally blew out of the state Friday.

After drenching Northern California the previous day, the storm dumped up to 5 inches of desperately needed rain in Southern California. A landslide left 10 homes uninhabitable and fire officials executed a dramatic rescue of two people from the Los Angeles River.

There were street flooding, traffic tie-ups and wind gusts up to 60 mph in some areas. At its height, about 50,000 customers lost power, though most had it back quickly.

Still, with few exceptions, damage across the region was minor and the soaking was welcome in a state withered by three years of drought. No serious injuries were reported and the storm was exiting east toward the desert.

Adriana Fletcher, 39, of Huntington Beach, said her 5-, 6- and 7-year-olds were happy to see the rain after learning about the drought in school.

"When it started raining, my kids were like, 'This is so cool,'" Fletcher said.

As the storm crept down the coast overnight, its powerful winds caused power outages around Santa Barbara, where the National Weather Service said up to 5 inches fell in coastal mountains. Amtrak suspended service between Los Angeles



MARCUS YAM/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS
Los Angeles Fire Department swift water rescue members help a rescued woman onto an ambulance stretcher after retrieving her from the gushing waters of the Los Angeles river, after the rainstorm on Friday in Los Angeles.

and the Central Coast city of San Luis Obispo.

In Camarillo, a Ventura County city about 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles, rain was falling at about an inch an hour over hillsides ravaged by a 2013 wildfire. With few roots to hold the soil in place, and a waxy sub-surface layer caused by heat from the flames, the deluge caused part of a hillside to give way.

Debris brushed aside concrete barriers crews had set up on the slope and surrounded about a dozen homes with silt, sticks and rocks — some as large as a couch. The force was so great that two large earth-movers used to set up barriers were swept down to the street, with one nearly buried.

"Wow, are we lucky!" said Ted Elliot, whose house was barely spared.

"We'll be the only house

on the block," his wife, Rita, added.

Earthen avalanches also blocked part of the Pacific Coast Highway in Ventura County.

Near downtown Los Angeles, the fire department rescued two people from the storm-swollen Los Angeles River. Orange County fire officials and Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies each pulled a body from smaller waterways, though in both cases the cause of death wasn't clear.

Even after the fast-moving storm cleared out, the risk remained that sodden topsoil on wildfire-scarred hillsides could collapse.

A debris flow sent rocks and bricks down streets in suburban Glendora east of Los Angeles, the site of the devastating Colby Fire in January. No injuries or damage to homes were immediately reported.

The threat of slides in several other inland Southern California areas led to some evacuations.

It was the second major storm in a week for Southern California. Still, weather experts say many more such storms are needed to pull the state out of drought.

The latest storm raised the amount of precipitation in the northern Sierra Nevada mountain range to 18.3 inches, 145 percent of normal for the first two months of the rainy season that began Oct. 1. Still, that's only about a third of the average amount for an entire season, said Maury Roos, chief hydrologist with the state Department of Water Resources.

"It's a nice start. It's certainly not the end," he said.

In the southern Sierra, the drenching only raised precipitation totals to 65 percent of normal for this time of year.

Northern California was hard hit Thursday, with some areas betting up to 10 inches of rain. While the sun rose Friday in a dry San Francisco sky, the storm's affects lingered in the region.

The swollen Russian River in Guerneville reached flood stage by noon. One man used a kayak to survey an RV park where he had removed his vehicle prior to the flooding. A nearby amusement park also flooded. In nearby Forestville, several vineyards were under water.

There was good news: Ski resorts in the northern Sierra Nevada were celebrating up to 3 feet of new snow.

Obama-Democratic Split

BY JIM KUHNHENN AND CHARLES BABINGTON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The drama surrounding passage of a massive spending bill exposed internal party tensions that had once only bedeviled Republican House Speaker John Boehner. It turns out Democrats have their divisions, too.

An increasingly liberal Democratic wing in the House of Representatives showed this week it's not afraid of bucking its president. In the end, President Barack Obama peeled off enough Democrats to get his way, but the spectacle surrounding the House vote on the \$1.1 trillion package demonstrated that cutting deals with Republicans has a political cost.

The break, and the last minute arm-twisting from Obama that it took to save the bill, illustrated the challenge the president faces in his remaining two years if he negotiates with a Congress that will be completely under Republican control starting next month.

"This by definition was a compromise bill," Obama said Friday. "This is what's produced when you have the divided government that the

American people voted for."

Coming out of midterm elections that battered his party, Obama promptly staked out positions promoted by liberals. He moved on his own to protect millions of immigrants from deportation, negotiated a deal with China to cut polluting emissions, and unveiled a plan for a "free and open" internet.

But the left still abandoned Obama during the spending vote, led by House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, one of Obama's most stalwart allies. At issue were two provisions most Democrats opposed — the rollback of the big bank regulation and another dramatically increasing limits on certain political contributions by wealthy donors.

"We don't like lobbying that is being done by the president or anybody else that would allow us to support a bill that ... would give a big gift to Wall Street," said Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters of California, referring to a provision in the bill that would roll back a regulation on big banks.

The bill now awaits action in the Senate, where it will likely pass.

In a matter of weeks, Obama has managed to zig-zag his way through Congress

showing that even though weakened by the midterm losses, he retains enough influence to affect congressional outcomes. Besides pulling the spending deal out of the fire, he used a veto threat in late November to derail a tax deal Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid had negotiated with Republicans but that liberal Democrats opposed.

Annoying your own party is not unique to Obama. President Bill Clinton did it after the House shifted to Republican control in 1995 by employing a negotiating strategy known derisively among many Democrats as "triangulation."

"The president working with Republican leadership is not triangulation in the malicious sense, but it comes at a price with his own party, and I think he bumped into that yesterday," Patrick Griffin, who was Clinton's legislative director, said Friday.

In an interview Friday, Pelosi said even if Democrats don't fall in line every time to support Obama's deals with Republicans, they will be there to help Obama fight Republican measures they all oppose.

"Should the president threaten a veto, the votes will be here in the House to sustain it," she said. Veto over-

rides require a two-thirds majority vote in the House and Senate.

No doubt, reaching congressional compromise is difficult largely because many voters see compromise itself as capitulation. What's more moderates from both parties have largely disappeared in the House, making the Democratic caucus overwhelmingly liberal, and the GOP caucus overwhelmingly conservative. Party discipline has also weakened, making it harder for Democratic and Republican leaders to craft bipartisan measures that will survive attacks from the ideological left and right.

Still, there will be opportunities for Obama to get cross-wise with a significant number of Democrats. He is eager to work with Republicans on trade deals that will likely draw stiff criticism from organized labor and environmental advocates, both key members of the Democratic Party coalition.

"It does appear that there will be a revolt on the left at least some of the time when the White House and Democratic leadership look to actually legislate alongside Republicans," said Matt Bennett, another veteran of the Clinton White House.

Questions Rising Over Who's In Charge Of Protests

BY JESSE J. HOLLAND
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Who, if anyone, is leading the emerging movement around the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner — younger activists or legacy civil rights groups?

Established civil rights organizations — the National Action Network, the NAACP, the National Urban League — last week called for people to gather in Washington Saturday for a national march with the families of the two unarmed black men who died at the hands of white police officers. Grand juries declined to indict the officers.

In the past, calls like that would have brought activists from around the nation to the capital. But groups like Fergu-

son Action are instead sponsoring their own actions in cities around the nation, calling for a "National Day of Resistance" in such places as Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Bloomington, Indiana, and Bend, Oregon.

"There are many ways to take action in this impactful moment," said Phil Agnew, executive director of the group Dream Defenders. "This Saturday we will be where we have been, and will continue to be — building a movement in the streets of our communities."

A major march in New York City had already been planned when the Washington march was declared last week, said Ferguson Action's Mervyn Marciano.

"There are young people on the street — and not just young people — who don't be-

long and don't want to belong to any particular organization, and so we want to make sure those folks have a way to plug in as well," he said. "We all have the same vision, and want to be able to coordinate with any group that wants to work toward that vision."

It's about getting results, not about "turf," who's in charge or who gets to stand before a microphone, said Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League.

"Some of us have been at this for a long time," Morial said. "And it's our work and we work on these issues all the time. There's a new spark and I welcome the involvement of broad cross sections of Americans for whom perhaps the disparities in the justice system were not on the top of their consciousness before

these incidents occurred."

These are the kind of growing pains that all movements go through, said Barbara Aronwine, leader of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Some of the older and newer groups met in Washington for a face-to-face on Thursday, and while there were some harsh words exchanged between groups, Aronwine said that was to be expected at this early point.

"There's a need for more discussion on how to proceed between the younger movements and the established groups," Aronwine said. "It's a tough space for everybody because everything is happening really quickly, everyone's under-resourced tremendously and everyone's under a lot of stress. So it's a very, very tough time."

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