

Pistorius: I Mistook Girlfriend For Intruder

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP) — Oscar Pistorius wept Tuesday as his defense lawyer read the athlete's account of how he shot his girlfriend to death on Valentine's Day, claiming he had mistaken her for an intruder.

Prosecutors, however, told a packed courtroom that the double-amputee known as the Blade Runner intentionally and mercilessly shot and killed 29-year-old Reeva Steenkamp as she cowered inside a locked bathroom.

Pistorius told the Pretoria Magistrate's Court at a bail hearing he felt vulnerable in the presence of an intruder inside the bathroom because he did not have his prosthetic legs on, and fired into the bathroom door.

The Valentine's Day shooting in Pistorius' home in Pretoria shocked South Africans and many around the world who idolized him for overcoming adversity to become a sports champion, competing in the London Olympics last year in track besides being a Paralympian.

Steenkamp was a model and law graduate who made her debut on a South African reality TV program that was broadcast on Saturday, two days after her death.

In a major point of contention emerged even during Tuesday bail hearing, prosecutor Gerrie Nel said Pistorius took the time to put on his prostheses, walked seven meters (yards) from the bed to the enclosed toilet inside his bathroom and only then opened fire. Three of the bullets hit Steenkamp of the four that were fired into the door, Nel said.

Missile Strike In Northern Syria Kills 33

BEIRUT (AP) — A Syrian missile strike leveled a block of buildings in an impoverished district of Aleppo on Tuesday, killing at least 33 people, almost half of them children, anti-regime activists said.

Many were trapped under the rubble of destroyed houses and piles of concrete and the death toll could still rise further if more bodies are uncovered.

The apparent ground-to-ground missile attack struck a quiet area that has been held by anti-regime fighters for many months, a reminder of how difficult it is for the opposition to defend territory in the face of the regime's far superior weaponry.

In the capital Damascus, state-run news agency SANA said two mortars exploded near one of President Bashar Assad's palaces. It dealt a symbolic blow to the embattled leader, who has tried to maintain an image as the head of a functioning state even as rebels edge closer to the heart of his seat of power.

No casualties were reported and it was unclear whether Assad was in the palace. He has two others in the city.

UN Concerned About Rise In Drone Strikes

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The number of U.S. drone strikes in Afghanistan rose sharply last year compared with 2011, the United Nations said Tuesday. The increase was a sign that unmanned aircraft are taking a greater role as Americans try to streamline the fight against insurgents while preparing to withdraw combat forces in less than two years.

Drones have become a major source of contention between the U.S. and countries like Pakistan, where covert strikes on militant leaders have drawn condemnation and allegations of sovereignty infringements as family members and other bystanders are killed.

They have not been a prominent issue in Afghanistan, however. While drone attacks have occurred, they have largely been in support of ground troops during operations and have not been singled out by President Hamid Karzai's administration in its campaign against international airstrikes.

The steep rise in the number of weapons fired from unmanned aerial aircraft — the formal term for drones — raises the possibility that may change as U.S. forces become more dependent on such attacks to fight al-Qaida and other insurgents as combat missions are due to end by the end of 2014.

The U.N. mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said 506 weapons were released by drones in 2012, compared with 294 the previous year. Five incidents resulted in casualties with 16 civilians killed and three wounded, up from just one incident in 2011.

Storm

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snowfall potential in Clay and Turner counties is 4-8 inches.

Winter storm warnings have been issued for almost all of Nebraska except the northeast corner, and some forecast models said there was a potential of at least a foot of snow across southern Nebraska and Kansas.

Ahead of the storm, much of the Upper Plains saw extremely cold temperatures and strong winds Tuesday. The high reading in Yankton was just 12 degrees, just two days after the mercury crept into the 40s.

The prospect of the storm's arrival already caused school officials in Yankton and Mitchell to shift Thursday's boys' basketball game to this past Tuesday night.

For more weather details, see page 2.


Pipeline

From Page 1

urge President Barack Obama to reject the \$7 billion pipeline and take other steps to fight climate change.

Opponents say the pipeline would carry "dirty oil" derived from tar sands that requires significantly more energy to produce than conventional crude oil and emits up to 20 percent more greenhouse gases.

At Tuesday's forum, organized by the National Association of Manufacturers, Pourbaix took on the climate argument head-on. He and other TransCanada executives have previously emphasized the pipeline's safety, the jobs it will create and the fact the oil comes from a U.S. neighbor and ally.



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Sequestration Draws Little Urgency

Congress In No Hurry To Avoid Automatic Spending Cuts

BY JIM KUHNHENN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ten days before a new deadline for broad, automatic government spending cuts, the sense of urgency that surrounded other recent fiscal crises is absent. Government agencies are preparing to absorb an \$85 billion hit to their budgets, and politicians, at least for now, seem willing to accept the consequences.

President Barack Obama, back from a Florida golfing weekend, warned Tuesday that "people will lose their jobs" if Congress doesn't act. But lawmakers weren't in session to hear his appeal, and they aren't coming back to work until next week.

Still dividing the two sides are sharp differences over whether tax increases, which Obama wants and Republicans oppose, should be part of a budget deal.

Obama cautioned that if the immediate spending cuts — known as sequestration — occur, the full range of government will



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT  
Surrounded by first responders who may be impacted by looming budget cuts, U.S. President Barack Obama speaks Tuesday during an event at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington, DC.

feel the effects. Among those he listed: furloughed FBI agents, reductions in spending for communities to pay police, firefighters and teachers, and decreased ability to respond to threats around the world.

"So far at least, the ideas that the Republicans have proposed ask nothing of the wealthiest Americans or the biggest corporations," Obama said at a White House event against a backdrop of firefighters and other emer-

gency personnel. "So the burden is all on the first responders, or seniors or middle class families."

Aides say Obama is ready to take his case more directly to the public in an effort to pressure Republicans, either by traveling to vulnerable states or, as the White House often does, through local media interviews. They say neither Obama nor White House officials are now engaged in direct negotiations with Republican leaders.

U.S. Ready To Strike Back Against China Cyberattacks

BY LOLITA C. BALDOR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As public evidence mounts that the Chinese military is responsible for stealing massive amounts of U.S. government data and corporate trade secrets, the Obama administration is eyeing fines and other trade actions it may take against Beijing or any other country guilty of cyberespionage.

According to officials familiar with the plans, the White House will lay out a new report Wednesday that suggests initial, more-aggressive steps the U.S. would take in response to what top authorities say has been an unrelenting campaign of cyberstealing linked to the Chinese government. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the threatened action.

The White House plans come after a Virginia-based cybersecu-

rity firm released a torrent of details Monday that tied a secret Chinese military unit in Shanghai to years of cyberattacks against U.S. companies. After analyzing breaches that compromised more than 140 companies, Mandiant has concluded that they can be linked People's Liberation Army's Unit 61398.

Military experts believe the unit is part of the People's Liberation Army's cyber-command, which is under the direct authority of the General Staff Department, China's version of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As such, its activities would be likely to be authorized at the highest levels of China's military.

The release of Mandiant's report, complete with details on three of the alleged hackers and photographs of one of the military unit's buildings in Shanghai, makes public what U.S. authorities have said less publicly for years. But it also increases the pressure on the U.S. to take more forceful action

against the Chinese for what experts say has been years of systematic espionage.

"If the Chinese government flew planes into our airspace, our planes would escort them away. If it happened two, three or four times, the president would be on the phone and there would be threats of retaliation," said former FBI executive assistant director Shawn Henry. "This is happening thousands of times a day. There needs to be some definition of where the red line is and what the repercussions would be."

Henry, now president of the security firm CrowdStrike, said that rather than tell companies to increase their cybersecurity the government needs to focus more on how to deter the hackers and the nations that are backing them.

James Lewis, a cybersecurity expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that in the past year the White House has been taking a serious look at

responding to China, adding that "this will be the year they will put more pressure on, even while realizing it will be hard for the Chinese to change. There's not an on-off switch."

The Chinese government, meanwhile, has denied involvement in the cyberattacks tracked by Mandiant. Instead, the Foreign Ministry said that China, too, is a victim of hacking, some of it traced to the U.S. Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei cited a report by an agency under the Ministry of Information Technology and Industry that said in 2012 alone that foreign hackers used viruses and other malicious software to seize control of 1,400 computers in China and 38,000 websites.

"Among the above attacks, those from the U.S. numbered the most," Hong said at a daily media briefing, lodging the most specific allegations the Chinese government has made about foreign hacking.

CROSSWORD  
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Swindle
  - 5 Bout site
  - 9 Unspoken
  - 11 Ballpark feat
  - 12 "The Last of the Mohicans" character
  - 13 Stroll
  - 14 Way off
  - 15 Orchestra member
  - 17 Orchestra member
  - 19 Big snake
  - 20 Prophetic ones
  - 21 Hanker-ing
  - 22 Recital piece
  - 24 Central
  - 26 Singer Nellie
  - 29 José or Juan
  - 30 Orchestra member
  - 32 Orchestra member
  - 34 Toronto-to-D.C. dir.
  - 35 Ready to hit
  - 36 Sean of "The Lord of the Rings"
- DOWN**
- 1 Cram
  - 2 Venice
  - 3 Build up
  - 4 Farrow of films
  - 5 Easy win
  - 6 Drink
  - 7 Wrestling hold
  - 8 Film leg-end Garbo
  - 10 Casual top
  - 11 Hind's cousin
  - 16 Takes for granted
  - 18 Started a golf hole
  - 21 Holler
  - 23 River features
  - 24 Rum drink
  - 25 Shortly
  - 27 Café's
  - 28 Appoint
  - 29 Fire starter
  - 30 Refer to
  - 31 Principle
  - 33 "Candy" is dandy"
  - 37 Blue

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2-20

A X Y D L B A A X R  
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-20

CRYPTOQUOTE

Y O F P F K P F V Q T K U H Y O B U E V  
Y O K Y N F N B V O N F O K G G Q U F  
H F V Y F P G K H , V Q W F N Y O K Y  
N F W F F C C B D F G Q B U E Y Q G K H .  
— T B E U Q U T J C K S E O C B U  
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: A MAN CAN STAND  
A LOT AS LONG AS HE CAN STAND HIMSELF.  
— AXEL MUNTHE

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