

Ukraine Leader Names New Army Chief

BY MARIA DANILOVA AND JIM HEINTZ
Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine's protest leaders and the president they aim to oust called a truce Wednesday, just hours after the military raised fears of a widespread crackdown with a vow to defeat "terrorists" responsible for seizing weapons and burning down buildings.

The two sides agreed to negotiate in an effort to end the violence that left at least 26 people dead and more than 400 injured on Tuesday. Protesters say the casualty toll is substantially higher.

The intense clashes between police and protesters led President Viktor Yanukovich to declare that the military would take part in a "national anti-terrorist operation." The parameters weren't specified, but the military's involvement and Yanukovich's appointment of a new military chief of staff fueled new worries.

As protective fires blazed around the tent camp in Kiev for a second night and protesters defending it showed no signs of yielding, Yanukovich met with top opposition leaders. A statement on his website said they had agreed on a truce and negotiations.

Vitali Klitschko, a leader of the protests that have sought to keep Ukraine open to Europe and out of a close alliance with Russia, said Yanukovich assured them that police would not storm the protesters' encampment on Kiev's Independence Square, according to the Interfax news agency.

The brief statement on the president's website did not give details of what terms a truce would entail or how it would be implemented. Nor did it specify how the negotiations would be conducted or give an indication of how they would be different from previous meetings of the president and the opposition leaders.

Perhaps crucially, there was no immediate indication of whether radical elements among the protesters would observe the truce or be mollified by the prospect of negotiations.

Although the initial weeks of protests were determinedly peaceful, radicals helped drive an outburst of clashes with police in January in which at least three people died. And the day of violence on Tuesday — the worst in nearly three months of anti-government protests that have paralyzed Kiev — may have radicalized many more.

The two sides are locked in a battle over the identity of this nation of 46 million, whose loyalties are divided between Russia and the West. The protests began in late November after Yanukovich turned away from a long-anticipated deal for closer ties with the European Union.

After Yanukovich shelved the agreement with the EU, Russia announced a \$15 billion bailout for Ukraine, whose economy is in tatters.

Political and diplomatic maneuvering



SERGEI L. LOIKO/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT
A protester hurls a cobblestone over a wall of fire toward police forces storming Independence Square in central Kiev, Ukraine, Wednesday.

has continued, with both Moscow and the West eager to gain influence over this former Soviet republic. Three EU foreign ministers — from Germany, France and Poland — were heading to Kiev on Thursday to speak with both sides before an emergency EU meeting in Brussels to consider sanctions against those responsible for the recent violence in Ukraine.

President Barack Obama also stepped in to condemn the violence, warning Wednesday "there will be consequences" for Ukraine if it continues. The U.S. has raised the prospect of joining with the EU to impose sanctions against Ukraine.

On a visit to Mexico, Obama said the Ukrainian military should not step into a situation that civilians should resolve and added that the U.S. holds Ukraine's government primarily responsible for dealing with peaceful protesters appropriately.

Russia's Foreign Ministry, in turn, described the violence as an attempted coup and even used the phrase "brown revolution," an allusion to the Nazi rise to power in Germany in 1933. The ministry said Russia would use "all our influence to restore peace and calm."

In Kiev, Ukraine's top security agency accused protesters Wednesday of seizing hundreds of firearms from its offices and announced a nationwide anti-terrorist operation to restore order.

Demonstrators, meanwhile, forced their way into the main post office on Kiev's Independence Square, also known as the Maidan, after a nearby building they had previously occupied was burned down in fierce, fiery clashes late Tuesday with riot police. Thousands of activists armed with fire bombs and rocks had defended the square, a key symbol of the protests.

"The revolution has turned into a war with the authorities," Vasyl Oleksenko, a retired geologist from central Ukraine, said Wednesday. "We must fight this bloody, criminal leadership. We must fight for our country, our Ukraine!"

Before the truce was announced the bad blood was running so high it has

fueled fears the nation could be sliding toward a messy breakup. While most people in the country's western regions resent Yanukovich, he enjoys strong support in the mostly Russian-speaking eastern and southern regions, where many want strong ties with Russia.

Neither side had appeared willing to compromise, with the opposition insisting on Yanukovich's resignation and an early election and the president apparently prepared to fight until the end.

Opposition lawmaker Oleh Lyashko warned that Yanukovich himself was in danger.

"Yanukovich, you will end like (Moamar) Gadhafi," Lyashko told thousands of angry protesters. "Either you, a parasite, will stop killing people or this fate will await you. Remember this, dictator!"

Before the truce announcement, Yanukovich had blamed the protesters for the violence and said the opposition leaders had "crossed a line when they called people to arms."

"I again call on the leaders of the opposition ... to draw a boundary between themselves and radical forces, which are provoking bloodshed and clashes with the security services," the president said in a statement. "If they don't want to leave — they should acknowledge that they are supporting radicals."

He called for a day of mourning Thursday for the dead.

In Moscow, the Kremlin said it put the next disbursement of its bailout on hold amid uncertainty over Ukraine's future and what it described as a "coup attempt."

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told reporters that he and his counterparts from Germany and Poland would meet both sides in Ukraine ahead of the EU meeting on possible sanctions. He said he hoped the two sides "will find a way for dialogue."

Possible sanctions include travel bans and asset freezes, which could hit hard the powerful oligarchs who back Yanukovich.

Ordinary Ukrainians, meanwhile, are struggling amid a stagnating economy and soaring corruption. They have been especially angered to see that Yanukovich's close friends and family have risen to top government posts and amassed fortunes since he came to power in 2010. Yanukovich's dentist son, Oleksander, has become a financial and construction magnate worth \$187 million, according to Forbes Ukraine.

The latest bout of street violence began Tuesday when protesters attacked police lines and set fires outside parliament, accusing Yanukovich of ignoring their demands to enact constitutional reforms that would limit the president's power — a key opposition demand. Parliament, dominated by his supporters, was stalling on taking up a constitutional reform to limit presidential powers.

Taliban: Talks Held For Prisoner Swap

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Washington has held indirect talks with the Taliban over the possible transfer of five senior Taliban prisoners from Guantanamo Bay in exchange for a U.S. soldier captured nearly five years ago, a senior Taliban official told The Associated Press.

Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, 27, of Hailey, Idaho, was last seen in a video released in December, footage seen as "proof of life" demanded by the United States. Bergdahl is believed to be held in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. He is the only U.S. soldier to be captured in America's longest war, which began with the U.S.-led ouster of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan for sheltering al-Qaida in 2001 in the wake of the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

The talks, which the Taliban official said took place sometime over the past two months in a Middle East country, would be the first significant movement toward an exchange since it was last discussed by the U.S. and the Taliban in June 2013. That earlier initiative, along with the overall peace efforts, lost steam after Afghan President Hamid Karzai argued over the name of a Taliban political office that opened in the Gulf nation of Qatar. The office was eventually closed but several Taliban have remained behind in Qatar.

A U.S. official said the Americans are considering a prisoner exchange but would not comment on whether any new talks have taken place. The official, who has been closely involved with this issue and has knowledge of previous talks with the Taliban, refused to give more details.

L.A. Bishop Kept List From Police

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When Los Angeles police were investigating allegations of child abuse by a Roman Catholic priest in 1988, they asked for a list of altar boys at the last parish where the priest worked.

Archbishop Roger Mahony told a subordinate not to give the list, saying he didn't want the boys to be scarred by the investigation and that he felt the altar boys were too old to be potential victims, according to a February 2013 deposition made public Wednesday.

The detectives investigating allegations against Nicolas Aguilar Rivera, a visiting Mexican priest, ultimately got the names of the boys from parish families. They determined the priest molested at least 26 boys during his 10 months in Los Angeles, according to the priest's confidential archdiocese file and police records made public by attorneys for the victims.

Twenty-five of the alleged victims were altar boys and the 26th was training with the priest to be one, said Anthony DeMarco, a plaintiff attorney. It's not clear what impact Mahony's action had on the investigation, though at the time police complained that the archdiocese wasn't fully cooperating.

Mahony's deposition was obtained by The Associated Press and is part of the evidence included in a settlement of abuse claims against Aguilar Rivera and four other priests. The archdiocese, the nation's largest, agreed to pay \$13 million to 17 victims.

Facebook To Buy WhatsApp For \$19B

NEW YORK (AP) — Facebook is buying mobile messaging service WhatsApp for up to \$19 billion in cash and stock, by far the company's largest acquisition.

The world's biggest social networking company said Wednesday that it is paying \$12 billion in Facebook stock and \$4 billion in cash for WhatsApp. In addition, the app's founders and employees will be granted \$3 billion in restricted stock that will vest over four years after the deal closes.

Facebook says it is keeping WhatsApp as a separate service, just as it did with Instagram, which it bought for about \$715.3 million.

WhatsApp has more than 450 million monthly active users. In comparison, Twitter had 241 million users at the end of 2013.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg says WhatsApp is on path to reach a billion users.

Stores Tracking Shoppers Using Mobile Based Technology

BY JENNIFER C. KERR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Should shoppers turn off their smartphones when they hit the mall? Or does having them on lead to better sales or shorter lines at the cash register?

Retailers are using mobile-based technology to track shoppers' movements at some malls and stores. The companies collecting the information say it's anonymous, can't be traced to a specific person and no one should worry about invasion of privacy. But consumer advocates aren't convinced. It's spying, they say, and shoppers should be informed their phones are being observed and then be able to choose whether to allow it.

The Federal Trade Commission held a workshop Wednesday on the issue, part of a series of privacy seminars looking at emerging technologies and the impact on consumers. FTC attorney Amanda Koulousias says the commission wants to better understand how companies are using phone-location technology, how robust privacy controls are and whether shoppers are notified in advance.

Here's how the technology works:

- Your smartphone has a unique identifier code — a

MAC address — for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. It's a 12-character string of letters and numbers. Think of it like a Social Security or vehicle identification number, but this address is not linked to personal information, like your name, email address or phone number. The numbers and letters link only to a specific phone.

- When your smartphone is turned on, it sends out signals with that MAC address (for media access control) as it searches for Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. Those signals can also be captured by sensors in stores that could tell a department store how often shoppers visit, how long they stay, whether they spend more time in the shoe department, children's clothing section or sporting goods, or whether they stop for the window display, take a pass and decide to move on.

Companies that provide "mobile location analytics" to retailers, grocery stores, airports, and others say they capture the MAC addresses of shoppers' phones but then scramble them into different sets of numbers and letters to conceal the original addresses — a process called hashing. This is how they make the data they collect anonymous, they say.

The companies then analyze all the information those hashed numbers provide as shoppers move from store to store in a mall, or department to department in a store. Mall managers could learn which stores are popular and which ones aren't. A retailer could learn how long the lines are at a certain cash register, how long people have to wait — or whether more people visit on "sale" days at a store.

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5:30 - 7 p.m. Enjoy a health fair, massages, wine-tasting, hors d'oeuvres and dinner.

7 p.m. **Cardiologist Timothy Irwin, MD, Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C.** will speak on cardiac health and cardiac treatments.

7:30 p.m. **Avera Sacred Heart Wellness Center** fitness experts will provide tips on finding a well-balanced approach to fitness and good health.

Tickets are \$10 at the door with a limited number of tickets available. Register for your healthy night out by calling 605-668-8080, or stop by Avera Sacred Heart Hospital's Information Desk located at 501 Summit, Yankton.

Remember to wear red in celebration of heart month!

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