

### Mexico Taking Gamble Against Cartel

MEXICO CITY (AP) — After months of tacit cooperation with rural vigilantes trying to drive out a cult-like drug cartel, the Mexican government is seeking to permanently solve one of its toughest security problems with a plan to legalize the growing movement and bring it under the army's control. But the risks are high. To succeed, the government must enforce military discipline and instill respect for human rights and due process among more than 20,000 heavily armed civilians, then eventually disband them and send them back home in the western state of Michoacan. In other Latin American countries, similar experiments have created state-backed militias that carried out widespread human rights abuses as armed civilians turned to vengeance, or assisted in mass killings. The Mexican army itself has been accused of rights abuses during the more than seven-year war against organized crime that has seen it deployed as a police force in much of the country. Vigilante leaders met Tuesday with government officials to hash out details of the agreement that would put avocado and lime pickers with AR-15 semi-automatic rifles under army command. The Mexican military has a century-old tradition of mobilizing "rural defense corps" manned by peasants to fight bandits and uprisings in the countryside.

### Winter Storm Socks The Deep South

ATLANTA (AP) — Atlanta highways instantly became clogged with commuters who left work at the first sign of snow, bronze statues of civil rights heroes were encrusted, and snowplows that hardly ever leave the garage were sent rolling through the city. At one point, traffic in the business capital of the South was so bad that security guards and office doormen took to the streets to direct cars amid a cacophony of blaring horns. A winter storm Tuesday that would probably be no big deal in the North all but paralyzed the Deep South, where folks have little experience driving on snow and ice. "My family is from up north and we're used to driving in the snow and stuff, and seeing everyone freak out, sliding and stuff, it's pretty funny," said Alex Tracy, a Georgia State University student who was watching the gridlock in downtown Atlanta. Many cities across the region don't have big fleets of salt trucks or snowplows, and it showed. Dozens of wrecks happened from Georgia to Texas. Two people died in an accident in Alabama.

### Syria Peace Talks Slow But 'Still At It'

GENEVA (AP) — Syrian government anger over a U.S. decision to resume aid to the opposition prompted the U.N. mediator to cut short Tuesday's peace talks, but he said no one was to blame for the impasse and that the negotiations would continue. A deal to allow humanitarian aid into Homs remained stalled, with the Syrian delegation demanding assurances the U.S. aid will not go to "armed and terrorist groups" in the besieged city. U.N.-Arab League mediator Lakhdar Brahimi said he was relieved that the government and opposition said they will remain in the daily talks through Friday, as planned. "Nobody's walking out. Nobody's running away," he told reporters. "We have not actually made a breakthrough, but we are still at it, and this is enough as far as I'm concerned." Tuesday's talks were the fifth day of negotiations regarding the civil war, focusing on opposition calls for the formation of a transition government in Syria and help for Homs.

### Ukraine PM Resigns, Protest Laws Nixed

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — In back-to-back moves aimed at defusing Ukraine's political crisis, the prime minister resigned Tuesday and parliament repealed anti-protest laws that had set off violent clashes between protesters and police. The two developments were significant concessions to the anti-government protesters who have fought sporadically with police for the last 10 days after two months of peaceful around-the-clock demonstrations. The protests erupted after President Viktor Yanukovich turned toward Russia for a bailout loan instead of signing a deal with the European Union and have since morphed into a general plea for more human rights, less corruption and more democracy in this nation of 45 million. The departure of Prime Minister Mykola Azarov removes one of the officials most disliked by the opposition forces whose protests have turned parts of Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, into a barricaded maze.

# More Implicated In Nuke Cheat Probe

BY ROBERT BURNS  
 AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — The cheating scandal inside the Air Force's nuclear missile corps is expanding, with the number of service members implicated by investigators now roughly double the 34 reported just a week ago, officials said Tuesday.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the additional 30-plus airmen suspected of being involved in cheating on proficiency tests are alleged to have participated in the cheating directly or were involved indirectly.

Regardless, a doubling of the number implicated means that approximately 14 percent of the entire Air Force cadre of nuclear missile launch control officers, which numbers about 500, has been removed at least temporarily from active missile duty. It was not clear Tuesday how that affects the mission, beyond requiring the remaining crew members to bear a bigger share of the work.

The officials who disclosed the higher number cheating suspects spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose the information by name while the investigation is ongoing.

The Air Force announced on Jan. 15 that while it was investigating possible criminal drug use by some airmen, it discovered that one missile officer at

Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., had shared test questions with 16 other officers. It said another 17 admitted to knowing about this cheating but did not report it.

The 34 officers had their security clearances suspended and they were taken off missile launch duty.

Lt. Col. John Sheets, a spokesman for Air Force Global Strike Command, which manages the nuclear Air Force, said he could not comment on the number of additional officers implicated in the cheating investigation since last week, but he said all are launch control officers at Malmstrom and all have been removed from performing that duty pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Air Force has 450 intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, on alert at all times, with a contingent of about 500 launch control officers, some number of which are unavailable on any given day due to illness or other reasons. So the number temporarily unavailable for duty because of the cheating scandal is substantial — about 14 percent of the total if the number of those who have been decertified is now double the original 34.

Each day, a total of 90 officers work in pairs inside 45 underground launch control centers, with each center monitoring and controlling a group of 10 ICBMs. They work 24-hour shifts in the missile field and then return to their base. They generally do as many as

eight of these shifts per month. The tests in question are designed to ensure proficiency by launch officers in handling "emergency war orders," which involve the classified processing of orders received through their chain of command to launch a missile. These written tests are in addition to two other types of monthly testing on the missile system and on launch codes. An Air Force spokesman, Lt. Col. Brett Ashworth, said the Air Force would not discuss details of the cheating investigation, including any change in the number of suspects, until the probe is completed.

The drug and cheating probes are being handled by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

A "profoundly disappointed" Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James, the service's top civilian official, told a Pentagon news conference last week that the alleged cheating at Malmstrom was discovered during a previously announced probe of drug possession by 11 officers at several Air Force bases, including at least two who also are in the nuclear force and suspected of participating in the cheating ring.

The Air Force's top general, Mark Welsh, has said the removal of 34 missile launch officers at one time appeared to be the largest such action in the history of the missile force. He said there is "absolutely no excuse" for cheating.

## SOTU

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Republicans, who saw their own approval ratings fall further in 2013, have also picked up the refrain of income inequality in recent months, though they have cast the widening gap between rich and poor as a symptom of Obama's economic policies.

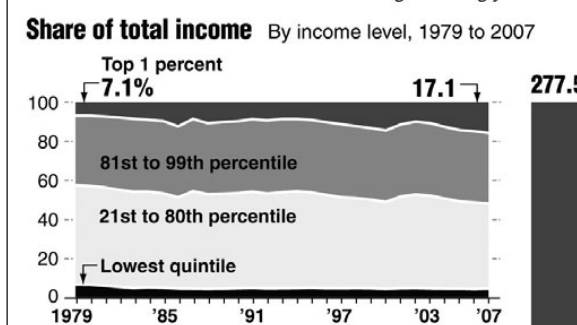
"Republicans have plans to close the gap, plans that focus on jobs first without more spending, government bailouts and red tape," said Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., in the Republicans' televised response to the president's speech.

The economy and other domestic issues, including health care, dominated the president's address. He touched only briefly on foreign policy, touting the drawdown of American troops from Afghanistan this year and reiterating his threat to veto any new sanctions Congress might levy on Iran while nuclear negotiations with the Islamic republic are underway.

Even as Washington increasingly focuses on income inequality, many parts of the economy are gaining strength,

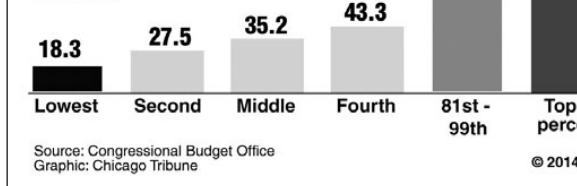
### Income inequality

Since the early 1980s, the income gap between the wealthiest Americans and the rest has been widening alarmingly.



### Growth in household income

By quintile, for real after-tax income, 1979-2007



Source: Congressional Budget Office  
 Graphic: Chicago Tribune  
 © 2014 MCT

with corporate profits soaring and the financial markets hitting record highs. But with millions of Americans still out of work or struggling with stagnant wages, Obama has found himself in the sometimes awkward position of promoting a recovery that feels distant for many.

"The cold, hard fact is that even in the midst of recovery, too many Americans are work-

ing more than ever just to get by, let alone get ahead," Obama said. "And too many still aren't working at all."

The president garnered some of his loudest applause — at least from Democrats — when he took on lawmakers who oppose his signature health care law, which floundered in its initial rollout last fall. Obama said that while he doesn't expect to convince Re-

publicans on the merits of the law, "I know that the American people aren't interested in re-fighting old battles."

The president's speech drew an eclectic mix of visitors to the House chamber. Among those sitting with first lady Michelle Obama were two survivors of the Boston Marathon bombing, as well as Jason Collins, an openly gay former NBA player. Republican House Speaker John Boehner brought business owners from his home state of Ohio who say Obama's health care overhaul is hurting their companies. Willie Robertson, a star of the television show "Duck Dynasty," also scored a seat in the House gallery, courtesy of the Republicans.

Though Obama sought to emphasize his presidential powers, there are stark limits to what he can do on his own. For example, he unilaterally can raise the minimum hourly wage for new federal contractors from \$7.25 to \$10.10, as he announced, but he'll need Congress in order to extend that increase to all of America's workers.

The executive order for contractors, which Obama will sign in the coming weeks, is limited in its scope. It will not affect existing federal contracts, only new ones, and then only if other terms of an agreement change.

## Kid Scoop

Happy New Year! 马 Gung Hay Fat Choy! It's the Year of the Horse!



Color the two identical horses.

This is the Chinese character for the word horse.

How many times can you find it on this page?

### The Chinese Year of the Horse begins January 31, 2014.

According to Chinese astrology, people born in the Year of the Horse are like horses in that they are independent and popular, fun, cheerful and energetic. They are hard workers and like to see a task completed. Sometimes they can be stubborn.

### What year were you born?

The Chinese tell a story that, one day, a great teacher named Buddha invited all the animals to a meeting. Only twelve animals came. Buddha named a year after each of these animals.

The Chinese year starting January 31, 2014 is named after the horse.

Find the year you were born. Then work with a parent to figure out the animal representing the year they were born by counting back counter-clockwise. (Someone born in 1962 would be born in the year of the tiger.)



I was born in the year of the \_\_\_\_\_  
 My parent was born in the year of the \_\_\_\_\_

Standards Link: Social Studies: Students understand the traditions of varied cultures.

### Firecrackers

Firecrackers are popular during the Chinese New Year celebrations. Why? Circle every other letter.

TQHMEBYTAFRLEDTGHPQSUQG  
 KHKZTMONSNCVAJRWETOD  
 FKLEDRVITLBSUPLIWRVKTFTST

TH

### Paper-cuts

Doors and windows are decorated with red-colored paper-cuts. These are made much like cut-paper snowflakes. How many differences can you find between these two paper-cuts?

### Extra! Extra!

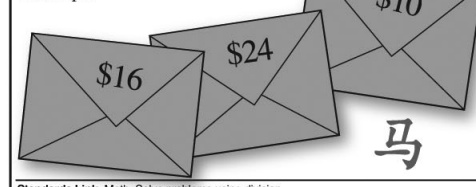
Even and Odd  
 Look through the newspaper for 5 even numbers and 5 odd numbers. Write each group in order from smallest to largest.  
 Standards Link: Number Sense: Recognize odd and even numbers.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

#### Chinese New Year Gifts

Children receive red envelopes full of money. The amount they receive is usually an even number. The amount cannot be divisible by four. In Chinese, the number 4 means death.

Only one of these envelopes follows this principle. Circle the correct envelope.



Standards Link: Math: Solve problems using division.

### Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. Then look for each word in this week's Kid Scoop stories and activities.

ASTROLOGY	F H Y E A R F U N F
ENVELOPES	E O A I S A R E C R
STUBBORN	S R A Y T Y P A H
SPIRITS	E S P I R I T S C K
CHINESE	N E N R O B B U T S
MONEY	I E R F L E S T I N
HORSE	H S E P O L E V N E
HAPPY	C H O Y G U N G V W
GUNG	I W I E Y E N O M S
YEAR	
CHOY	
HAY	
FAT	
NEW	
FUN	

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

### FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

#### Passionate About Palindromes

Search through the newspaper for numbers that are palindromes. A palindrome is a number that remains the same when written forwards or backwards. 3663 is a palindrome.

Standards Link: Math: problem solving.

### Write On!

#### Fortune Cookie Writer

Pretend it is your job to write the fortunes in fortune cookies. What would you write?

### Kid Scoop Together:

#### Chinese Characters

Below are the Chinese characters for each of the animals. On the left, you'll see the complete character. Trace the shaded character on the right. Keep practicing until you can create each character.

鼠 rat: 鼠 鼠

牛 ox: 牛 牛

虎 tiger: 虎 虎

兔 rabbit: 兔 兔

龙 dragon: 龙 龙

蛇 snake: 蛇 蛇

马 horse: 马 马

羊 sheep: 羊 羊

猴 monkey: 猴 猴

鸡 rooster: 鸡 鸡

狗 dog: 狗 狗

猪 pig: 猪 猪