

Justice Dept. Charges Snowden

BY PETE YOST
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department has charged former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden with espionage and theft of government property in the NSA surveillance case.

Snowden, believed to be holed up in Hong Kong, has admitted providing information to the news media about two highly classified NSA surveillance programs.

A one-page criminal complaint unsealed Friday in federal court in Alexandria, Va., says Snowden engaged in unauthorized communication of national defense information and willful communication of classified communications intelligence information. Both are charges under the Espionage Act. Snowden also is charged with theft of government property. All three crimes carry a maximum 10-year prison penalty.

The federal court in the Eastern District of Virginia where the complaint was filed is headquarters for Snowden's former employer, government contractor Booz Allen Hamilton.

The complaint is dated June 14, five days after Snowden's name first surfaced as the

leaker of information about the two programs in which the NSA gathered telephone and Internet records to ferret out terror plots.

The complaint could become an integral part of a U.S. government effort to have Snowden extradited from Hong Kong, a process that could turn into a prolonged legal battle. Snowden could contest extradition on grounds of political persecution. In general, the extradition agreement between the U.S. and Hong Kong excepts political offenses from the obligation to turn over a person.

Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, welcomed the charges. "I've always thought this was a treasonous act," he said in a statement. "I hope Hong Kong's government will take him into custody and extradite him to the U.S."

Michael di Pretoro, a retired 30-year veteran with the FBI who served from 1990 to 1994 as the legal liaison officer at the American consulate in Hong Kong, said "relations between U.S. and Hong Kong law enforcement personnel are historically quite good."

"In my time, I felt the degree of cooperation was outstanding to the extent that I almost felt I was in an FBI field office," said di Pretoro.

The U.S. and Hong Kong cooperate on law enforcement matters and have a standing agree-

ment on the surrender of fugitives.

However, Snowden's appeal rights could drag out any extradition proceeding.

The success or failure of any extradition proceeding depends on what the suspect is charged with under U.S. law and how it corresponds to Hong Kong law under the treaty. In order for Hong Kong officials to honor the extradition request, they have to have some applicable statute under their law that corresponds with a violation of U.S. law.

Disclosure of the criminal complaint came as President Barack Obama held his first meeting with a privacy and civil liberties board as his intelligence chief sought ways to help Americans understand more about sweeping government surveillance efforts exposed by Snowden.

The five members of the little-known Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board met with Obama for an hour in the White House Situation Room, questioning the president on the two NSA programs that have stoked controversy.

One program collects billions of U.S. phone records. The second gathers audio, video, email, photographic and Internet search usage of foreign nationals overseas, and probably some Americans in the process, who use major providers such as Microsoft, Google, Apple, and Yahoo.

Rejected House Farm Bill Leaves Few Options

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House's broad rejection of a massive farm bill could signal a shift in the way Congress views agriculture policy.

Farm issues once had enormous clout on Capitol Hill, but the healthy agriculture economy and an increased interest in cutting spending have worked against farm-state lawmakers who are now trying to push a farm bill through for a third year in a row.

The five-year, half-trillion dollar measure would have expanded some subsidies while saving about \$4 billion annually overall, including a 3 percent cut in the almost \$80 billion-a-year food stamp program. The vote Thursday was 234-195 against the bill, with 62 Republicans voting "no," arguing it was too expensive.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas, R-Okla., said after the vote that the committee is assessing its options.

But just before the vote, he signaled that he was not optimistic he would be able to get another bill to the floor.

"I can't guarantee you'll see in this Congress another attempt," he said.

Lucas and other rural lawmakers argue that a farm bill is needed to avert crises stemming from bad weather or price collapses. They could push for an extension of the 2008 farm bill, which expires in September, or negotiate a new bill with the Senate and try again. Some conservatives have suggested separating the farm programs from the food stamps into separate bills.

Lawmakers on the agriculture committees have for decades added food stamps to farm bills to

garner urban votes. But that marriage has made passage harder this year.

The Senate overwhelmingly passed its version of the farm bill last week, with about \$2.4 billion a year in overall cuts and a \$400 million annual decrease in food stamps — one-fifth of the House bill's food stamp cuts. The White House was supportive of the Senate version but had issued a veto threat of the House bill.

In addition to conservative opposition, the bill also suffered from lack of Democratic support necessary for traditional bipartisan passage. Only 24 Democrats voted in favor of the legislation after many said the food stamp cuts could remove as many as 2 million needy recipients from the rolls. The addition of the optional state work requirements by Republican amendment just before final pas-

sage turned away many remaining Democratic votes.

Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, the senior Democrat on the House Agriculture Committee, said he believes the work requirements and a vote that scuttled a proposed dairy overhaul turned too many lawmakers against the measure.

"I had a bunch of people come up to me and say 'I was with you but this is it, I'm done,'" Peterson said after the vote.

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, voted for the bill but lobbied for the dairy amendment that caused some dairy-state lawmakers to eventually turn on the legislation. Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., vocally supported the amendment that imposed the work requirements, coming to the House floor to endorse it just before the vote on that amendment and the final vote on the bill.

Clinton: Female President Would Send Right Signal

BY KEN THOMAS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hillary Rodham Clinton mused aloud about the significance of America electing its first female president. Left unsaid: whether she might try again to be the one.

In a video of a private Clinton speech posted to YouTube on Friday, Clinton told a Canadian audience that she hoped the U.S. would elect a woman to the White House because it would send "exactly the right historical signal" to men, women and children. She said women in politics need to "dare to compete" and the nation needs to "take that leap of faith."

"Let me say this, hypothetically speaking, I really do hope that we have a woman president

"Let me say this, hypothetically speaking, I really do hope that we have a woman president in my lifetime."

HILLARY CLINTON

in my lifetime," Clinton said at a women's conference in Toronto on Thursday night. "And whether it's next time or the next time after that, it really depends on women stepping up and subjecting themselves to the political process, which is very difficult."

The former secretary of state told the cheering audience that she would "certainly vote for the right woman to be president."

Should she run for president in 2016, Clinton would emerge as the Democratic Party's leading contender to succeed President Barack Obama, but she has not

said whether she will seek the White House again. Clinton has said she is enjoying time off since departing the State Department in February but has taken a number of steps that could enhance a future presidential bid, speaking to a variety of groups around the country, working on a book and outlining her agenda at the foundation started by her husband, former President Bill Clinton.

In remarks during an interview at the "Unique Lives and Experiences" conference, Clinton mused about the possibility of a woman winning the White House

and what it would mean for the nation — but she avoided identifying herself as the leading prospect. The event was not open to the media, but a person in attendance posted a clip of Clinton's interview on YouTube on Friday.

Clinton spoke in an interview with Samantha Nutt, the founder and executive director of War Child Canada, a nonprofit that works with war-affected communities to help children. The former first lady was asked if women lead differently than men and whether she thought the next U.S. president would be a woman.

Clinton cited former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who said that women in politics needed skin as "thick as a rhinoceros."

Obama To Nominate Democrat, Republican To Head FEC

BY JIM KUHNHENN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama intends to nominate two lawyers with government experience to become commissioners on the Federal Election Commission, the agency that oversees and enforces campaign finance laws. One of the nominees would fill a Democratic vacancy on the commission and the other would replace the Republican vice chairman, the White House said.

Obama's nominee to replace Republican Donald F. McGahn is Lee Goodman, who served as a top

aide to former Republican Gov. Jim Gilmore of Virginia. Obama's Democratic nominee is Ann Ravel, the chair of the California Fair Political Practices Commission. She would fill the seat vacated earlier this year by Cynthia Bauerly.

If confirmed by the Senate, the FEC would have all of its six commissioners — three Democrats and three Republicans.

The even partisan split on the FEC has at times contributed to gridlock on the commission with votes breaking along party lines.

Advocates of tighter campaign finance laws applauded Ravel's nomination Friday. While she was chair, the California Fair Political

Practices Commission last year sued an Arizona nonprofit group for failing to divulge the source of money it used to fight a tax initiative proposed by California Gov. Jerry Brown. Under orders from the state Supreme Court, the group ultimately revealed that two conservative groups were behind its \$11 million campaign.

"Ann Ravel has led an effort in California to shed light on secret money in California elections and has demonstrated a commitment to effective enforcement of campaign finance disclosure laws," said Fred Wertheimer, president of Democracy 21, a group that advocates changes in campaign finance

law.

Goodman himself played a significant role in a case that was closely watched by campaign finance observers. He defended a donor to Hillary Rodham Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign who was accused of reimbursing donors with money from his corporation, a violation of the law. Goodman argued that a ban on corporate donations was unconstitutional. Goodman won at the lower court level, but a federal appeals court upheld the corporate contribution ban and the Supreme Court declined to review that decision, leaving the ban in place.

Brazil's President Remains Silent On Protests

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — More than a week of massive, violent protests across Brazil invited only stoic silence Friday from President Dilma Rousseff, even after she had called an emergency meeting with a top Cabinet member in response to the growing unrest.

Only on Friday night did the government confirm that Rousseff would address the nation a few hours later, but through a prerecorded message. She was expected to meet in the evening with top bishops from the Roman Catholic Church about the protests' effects on a papal visit still scheduled for next month in Rio and Sao Paulo state.

Trying to decipher the president's reaction to the unrest has become a national guessing game, especially after some 1 million anti-government demonstrators took to the streets the night before across the country to denounce everything from poor public services to the billions of dollars spent preparing for next year's World Cup soccer tournament and the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.

Obama Chooses New FBI Leader

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the FBI grapples with scrutiny over government surveillance, President Barack Obama on Friday moved to turn the agency over to James Comey, a top Bush administration lawyer best known for defiantly refusing to go along with White House demands on warrantless wiretapping nearly a decade ago.

Obama cited Comey's "fierce independence and deep integrity" as he nominated him to replace outgoing FBI Director Robert Mueller.

Mueller has led the agency for 12 years, longer than any previous director except J. Edgar Hoover, after Obama asked him to stay on beyond his initial 10-year term at a time of global threats. Mueller had moved into the director's office just the week before the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and Obama applauded him during a Rose Garden ceremony for leading "one of the biggest transformations of the FBI in history to make sure that nothing like that ever happens again."

Food Network Won't Renew Deen's Contract

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — The Food Network said Friday it's dumping Paula Deen, barely an hour after the celebrity cook posted the first of two videotaped apologies online begging forgiveness from fans and critics troubled by her admission to having used racial slurs in the past.

The 66-year-old Savannah kitchen celebrity has been swamped in controversy since court documents filed this week revealed Deen told an attorney questioning her under oath last month that she has used the N-word. "Yes, of course," Deen said, though she added, "It's been a very long time."

The Food Network, which made Deen a star with "Paula's Home Cooking" in 2002 and later "Paula's Home Cooking" in 2008, weighed in with a terse statement Friday afternoon.

"Food Network will not renew Paula Deen's contract when it expires at the end of this month," the statement said. Network representatives declined further comment. A representative for Deen did not immediately return phone and email messages seeking comment on the decision.

FAA Moving To Easing Device Restrictions

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government is moving toward easing restrictions on airline passengers using electronic devices to listen to music, play games, read books, watch movies and work during takeoffs and landings, but it could take a few months.

An industry-labor advisory committee was supposed to make recommendations next month to the Federal Aviation Administration on easing the restrictions. But the agency said in a statement Friday the deadline has been extended to September because committee members asked for extra time to finish assessing whether it's safe to lift restrictions.

"The FAA recognizes consumers are intensely interested in the use of personal electronics aboard aircraft; that is why we tasked a government-industry group to examine the safety issues and the feasibility of changing the current restrictions," the statement said.

The agency is under public and political pressure to ease the restrictions as more people bring their e-book readers, music and video players, smartphones and laptops with them when they fly.

Technically, the FAA doesn't bar use of electronic devices when aircraft are below 10,000 feet. But under FAA rules, airlines that want to let passengers use the devices are faced with a practical impossibility — they would have to show that they've tested every type and make of device passengers would use to ensure there is no electromagnetic interference with aircraft radios and electrical and electronic systems.

Egypt's Islamists Stage Show Of Force

CAIRO (AP) — More than 100,000 supporters of Egypt's Islamist president staged a show of force Friday ahead of massive protests later this month by the opposition, chanting "Islamic revolution!" and warning of a new and bloody bout of turmoil.

Adding to the combustible mix, comments by the U.S. ambassador that were interpreted as critical of the opposition's planned protests sparked outrage, with one activist telling the diplomat to "shut up and mind your own business."

Friday's mass gathering was ostensibly called by Islamists to denounce violence, but it took on the appearance of a war rally instead. Participants, many of them bearded and wearing robes or green bandanas, vowed in chants to protect Morsi against his opponents. Some who addressed the crowd spoke of smashing opposition protesters on June 30, the anniversary of Morsi's assumption of power.

"We want to stress that we will protect the legitimacy with our blood and souls," declared Mohammed el-Beltagi, a senior leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic group from which Morsi hails.

Officials Worry About Arming Syrian Rebels

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Syrian opposition's record so far in handling tens of millions of dollars in U.S. humanitarian and other non-lethal assistance paints a bewildering picture of logistical challenges ahead of any delivery of American weapons and ammunition.

No aid shipments appear to be heading to terrorists or corrupt hoarders, according to U.S. officials, but packages of food, medicine and other lifesaving supplies regularly face long delays because of political rivalries among various rebel factions.

Anecdotes abound.

An American shipment of humanitarian goods was held up for two weeks amid a dispute between opposition groups over whose label should be attached to the boxes, a senior administration official recounted this week. Aid-filled planes have landed in neighboring countries with no trucks at the landing sites for transporting the items into Syria. In Cairo, funds the U.S. was prepared to provide an opposition political office were flat-out rejected, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the official wasn't authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

Unemployment Fell In Half Of U.S. States In May

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Unemployment rates fell in half of U.S. states last month, led by drops in California, West Virginia, New York and Hawaii.

The Labor Department said Friday that unemployment rates rose in 17 states and were unchanged in eight.

Hiring has been steady nationwide, leading to a better job market in many areas of the country. Employers added jobs in 33 states last month. The biggest

gains were in Ohio, Texas and Michigan.

The unemployment rate dipped in the Northeast to 7.5 percent from 7.6 percent, and fell in the West to 7.8 percent from 8 percent. It was flat in the Midwest at 7.2 percent and edged up in the South to 7.2 percent from 7.1 percent.

California and West Virginia had the largest declines in unemployment among all states. In California, the rate dropped to 8.6 percent from 9 percent in April. West Virginia's rate fell to 6.2 percent from 6.6 percent.

Both states reported job gains.

California has also seen the largest drop in unemployment among the states in the past 12 months. Its rate fell 2.1 percentage points from May 2012. Nevada's decline of 2 percent was the second largest.

New York and Hawaii also had significant declines in May from April. New York's unemployment rate dropped to 7.6 percent from 7.8 percent, while Hawaii's fell to 4.7 percent from 4.9 percent.

North Dakota had the nation's lowest unemployment rate at 3.2

percent.

Nevada had the highest at 9.5 percent. It was followed by Illinois and Mississippi, each at 9.1 percent.

Nationally, the economy added 175,000 jobs in May, nearly matching the average monthly gain for the past year. The unemployment rate ticked up to 7.6 percent from 7.5 percent, but for a good reason: More Americans were confident they could find work and began searching for a job.



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