

### Officials: Anthrax Sent Dozens Of Places

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon disclosed Wednesday that it inadvertently shipped possibly live anthrax to at least 51 laboratories across the U.S. and in three foreign countries over the past decade, but it has yet to determine how it happened, who is to blame, why it was not discovered earlier and how much worse the embarrassment will get.

One of the few things Pentagon officials said they were sure of is that public health is not at risk.

"We know of no risk to the general public," Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work told a Pentagon news conference. He said the suspect anthrax was shipped in such low concentrations and in such secure packaging that it almost certainly posed no health risk to anyone outside the 51 labs.

The anthrax was supposed to have been killed with gamma rays by Defense Department lab technicians before being shipped for use by commercial labs and government facilities in research and the calibration of biohazard sensors. But for reasons not yet explained, the anthrax apparently remained alive.

To compound the error, follow-up lab tests to verify that the anthrax had been killed before being shipped apparently also failed. One question for the ongoing investigation is whether a sufficiently large sample size of the irradiated anthrax was used in the verification tests, or whether those follow-up tests were even performed.

### Blazer Says He Agreed To Accept Bribes

NEW YORK (AP) — Former FIFA executive committee member Chuck Blazer told a U.S. federal judge that he and others on the governing body's ruling panel agreed to receive bribes in the votes for the hosts of the 1998 and 2010 World Cups.

Prosecutors unsealed a 40-page transcript Wednesday of the hearing in U.S. District Court on Nov. 25, 2013, when Blazer pleaded guilty to racketeering and other charges.

Four sections of the transcript were redacted by prosecutors, presumably to protect avenues of their investigation.

Blazer, in admitting 10 counts of illegal conduct, told the court of his conduct surrounding the vote that made South Africa the first nation on that continent to host soccer's premier event.

"Beginning in or around 2004 and continuing through 2011, I and others on the FIFA executive committee agreed to accept bribes in conjunction with the selection of South Africa as the host nation for the 2010 World Cup," Blazer told U.S. District Judge Raymond J. Dearie.

### NSA Emerges Mostly Unscathed

WASHINGTON (AP) — The surveillance law enacted this week stands as the most significant curb on the government's investigative authorities since the 1970s. But it's practically inconsequential in the universe of the National Security Agency's vast digital spying operations, a technical overhaul of a marginal counterterrorism program that some NSA officials wanted to jettison anyway.

After a six-month transition, the new law will end the NSA's bulk collection of Americans' phone records, moving instead to a system of case-by-case searches of records held by phone companies.

The existence of the program, in place since shortly after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, was perhaps the most startling secret revealed by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, because it so directly affected the privacy of Americans. It was the first Snowden disclosure published by the journalists with whom he shared documents, and it landed with a thunderclap.

But in the two years since Snowden took up exile in Russia to avoid prosecution in the U.S., his documents have fueled dozens of revelations of NSA surveillance operations, disclosing how the agency seeks to exploit Internet communications. None of those programs are affected by the law President Barack Obama signed Tuesday night.

"It's being talked about like it's the Declaration of Independence or something," said Robert Deitz, a former NSA lawyer. "These adjustments are marginal."

### FBI: Man Had Talked Of Attacks

BOSTON (AP) — A knife-wielding man killed by the terror investigators who had him under surveillance was confronted because he had bought knives and talked of an imminent attack on "boys in blue," the FBI said Wednesday.

Usaama Rahim plotted for at least a week to attack police, the FBI said in a complaint against a family member who was arrested Tuesday, the day Rahim was shot to death. On Wednesday, the relative, David Wright, was ordered held on a charge of conspiracy with intent to obstruct a federal investigation.

The FBI said Rahim, who had previously discussed beheadings, bought three fighting knives and a sharpener on or before May 26 and he told Wright on Tuesday he would begin trying to randomly kill police officers.

An anti-terror task force of FBI agents and Boston police, faced with an imminent threat, confronted Rahim on a sidewalk and fatally shot him when he refused to drop his knife, authorities said.

An affidavit written by an FBI agent assigned to Boston's Joint Terrorism Task Force refers to a recorded conversation between Rahim and Wright in which Wright made a comparison to "thinking with your head on your chest." The FBI said that was a reference to Islamic State propaganda videos showing severed heads on the chests of beheading victims.

### Bus Crash Kills 3 In Pennsylvania

TOBYHANNA, Pa. (AP) — A charter bus taking Italian tourists to Niagara Falls collided with a tractor-trailer Wednesday morning on an eastern Pennsylvania highway, killing the bus driver and two others on the bus and leaving four people in critical condition, authorities said.

The crash occurred on Interstate 380 in the Pocono Mountain region as the bus, which departed from New York, was about a quarter of the way to its first destination.

The mangled front end of the bus was upright on the highway but wedged into the side of the tractor-trailer, which was sheared in half. The cab of the truck came to rest on its side in the woods next to the road, one of its axles torn off.

It appeared from a wide swath of grass scraped away in the median that the tractor-trailer was southbound when it crossed over the divided highway and into the path of the northbound bus. State police said a second tractor-trailer was involved but they were still investigating what led to the accident.

Monroe County coroner Robert Allen, who confirmed the three deaths, said there were 17 people aboard the bus. Italian tour operator Viaggidea said there were only 16: 14 passengers, a tour guide and a driver.

### Rebel Commander Welcomes Talks

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — The second-in-command of Yemen's Shiite rebels said Wednesday that the Iranian-backed group was ready to go to Geneva for U.N.-mediated peace talks on ending the country's civil war, and accused the internationally-recognized government in exile of "obstructing" dialogue.

Mohammed al-Houthi, who heads the rebels' powerful Revolutionary Council, told The Associated Press that exiled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi had derailed earlier attempts at negotiations by demanding the rebels first withdraw from all territory they had captured.

"They are putting pre-conditions to obstruct any talks that could lead the Yemeni people to a solution," al-Houthi said, adding that the Saudi-led coalition refused to halt its air campaign to allow for peace talks. "The coalition is the one that rejects the talks and works on foiling them."

The talks were postponed last month just two days before they were to have begun on May 28 and no new date has been announced. However, Yemen's ambassador to the U.N., Khaled Alyemany, told the AP they would begin June 14, and that an official announcement was expected shortly.

# China Escalates Effort To Recover Missing From Capsized Ship

BY CHRISTOPHER BODEEN  
Associated Press

JIANLI, China — Chinese authorities deployed scores more divers and a large crane as they escalated efforts Wednesday to recover more than 410 people believed to be trapped inside an overturned river cruise ship.

The capsizing late Monday of the multi-decked Eastern Star in the Yangtze River is on track to become the country's deadliest maritime disaster in seven decades. Chinese authorities have launched a high-profile response while tightly controlling media coverage.

Premier Li Keqiang, the country's No. 2 political leader, has traveled to the disaster site in the Hubei province county of Jianli where he urged "all-out," 24-7 efforts.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said the bodies of 26 victims have been pulled from the boat, which floated with a sliver of its hull jutting from the grey river. Fourteen people survived, some of them by swimming ashore and three by being pulled out of the ship by rescuers on Tuesday.

But the vast majority of the 456 people on board remain missing. Many were elderly tourists taking in the scenic vistas of the Yangtze on a cruise from Nanjing



HAN YUQING/XINHUA/ZUMA PRESS/TNS  
Relatives of passengers on the overturned ship wait for information at a makeshift reception center in Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu Province. A ship, named Dongfangzhixing, or Eastern Star, sank at around 9:28 p.m. on Monday after being caught in a cyclone in the Jianli section of the Yangtze River. Carrying 405 passengers, five travel agency workers and 47 crew members, the ship was heading from Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu Province, for southwest China's Chongqing Municipality.

to the southwestern city of Chongqing.

Records from a maritime agency show the capsized ship was cited for safety violations two years ago. Authorities in Nanjing held the ship and five other Yangtze cruise vessels after it found them violating standards during a safety inspection campaign in 2013, according to a report on the city's Maritime Safety website. It didn't specify the Eastern Star's violations.

The shallow-draft boat, which was not designed to withstand as heavy winds as

an ocean-going vessel can, overturned in what Chinese weather authorities have called a cyclone with winds up to 80 mph (130 kph).

"The river ships tend to have a lower standard on wind-resistance and wave-resistance than ocean ships," Zhong Shoudao, president of the Chongqing Boat Design Institute, said at a news conference along with weather and Transportation Ministry officials. "Under the special circumstance of cyclone, the pressure on the one side of the boat went beyond the

standard it was designed for, resulting in the overturning of the boat.

"The boat had lifejackets and lifeboats, but due to the sudden capsizing, there was not enough time for people to put on lifejackets or for the signals to be sent out," Zhong said.

The squad of 13 navy divers who searched the boat Tuesday — and pulled out three trapped survivors from air pockets after voices were heard through the hull — was expanded Wednesday to 202, including 45 from civilian rescue services. They were working in shifts virtually around-the-clock as part of a last-ditch attempt to find survivors, the last of which was found on Tuesday afternoon.

CCTV said rescuers were deciding whether to cut into the overturned hull — an option that would imply hopes still lingered for finding survivors trapped in air pockets — or to bring two salvage ships to the stern and bow to act as a wise keeping the craft in place while a crane pulls it upright.

Transport Ministry spokesman Xu Chengguang said divers would search the ship for as long as possible.

"Until all hope is lost and more accurate information becomes available, we will not give up on our final efforts, although I know that our colleagues at the scene

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## Greek Leader Defends Bailout Plan

BY ELENA BECATOROS AND RAF CASERT  
Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Greece's prime minister Alexis Tsipras said early Thursday he found a constructive approach during a showdown with creditors in Brussels and all sides insisted talks to unlock crucial bailout loans and save the country from financial disaster would continue within days.

Even though Greece is running out of cash and faces more debt repayments as soon as Friday, Tsipras still found a lifeline to keep the momentum for more negotiations going.

"I believe that, in any case, agreement is in sight but we need to conclude the discussions with a realistic point of view," Tsipras said.

French President Francois Hollande said ahead of the Brussels talks that end around midnight Wednesday that the negotiations were at least heading in the right direction: "We are some days, not to say some hours away from a possible agreement."

Greece has been negotiating for four months with its creditors over what budget reforms it should make to get the 7.2 billion euros (\$8.1 billion) in loans that are left over in its bailout fund. Wednesday's meetings are part of a string of high-level diplomatic efforts to bring the negotiations to a successful end.

Asked whether he would be able to make the next repayment to the International Monetary Fund next Friday, Tsipras said: "Don't worry about it."

After his dinner with EU Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, Tsipras stressed the positive.

"The Commission showed a constructive intention to reach common ground," he said. "Discussions will continue in coming days."

At the same time, Tsipras maintained he would continue to defend the poor and needy in the face of calls for more austerity reforms to unlock bailout funds.

Tsipras said "proposals such as cutting supplementary payments to people with very low pensions, or increasing VAT on power bills by ten percentage points are proposals that, naturally, lack any basis for us to discuss them."

Tsipras also spoke by teleconference with Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel ahead of his meeting with Juncker, a Greek government official said.

The three agreed on the need for Greece to have lower primary surpluses — the budget balance without taking into account debt servicing.

"We are very close in an agreement in the primary surpluses, that means that all the sides agreed to go further without the tough austerity measures of the past," Tsipras said.

Lower primary surpluses than those initially demanded under Greece's five-year bailout have been one of Athens' main requests, although it appears to have been the easiest to overcome in the negotiations.

Sticking points appear to have been labor and pension reforms, as well as some changes to consumer tax.

The eurozone's top financial official, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, was also in Brussels and met with Juncker and Tsipras. He was less upbeat than others going into the meeting, saying: "We still have a lot of work to do." But he also came out saying the talks would continue within days.

Greek markets were rising on hopes of a deal, with the main stock index closing up 4.1 percent.

Time is pressing. Greece must repay 1.6 billion euros to the IMF this month alone. The first installment of just over 300 million euros is due Friday, with other installments on June 12, 16 and 19. Although Athens insists it intends to repay its debts, it is unclear how much longer it will be able to do so without outside help.

One option Greece could choose is to bundle this month's IMF payments into one on June 30, giving more time

for negotiations. While allowed under IMF regulations, the option is rarely used.

Without bailout funds, Greece could eventually default on its debts and crash out of the euro, possibly pushing Europe and potentially the global economy into turmoil.

"We are working with high pressure" to find a solution, Merkel said in Berlin. Tsipras says he submitted his proposal to creditors on Monday night but gave no details of what fiscal reforms Greece was suggesting in return for its final bailout funds.

Greece needs the loans because it is locked out of the international bond markets as wary investors demand prohibitively high interest rates to lend it money. The country has not received bailout funds since August.

So far it has managed to scrape together enough to repay its debts by seizing the reserves of state enterprises, including municipalities, schools, embassies and hospitals. But those funds will not be enough to sustain the country through the summer.

Elected in January on promises to repeal the deeply resented austerity measures Greece had to impose in return for its five-year bailout, Tsipras said his government had made concessions during the negotiations.

The 40-year-old premier faces dissent from hardliners from within his own radical left Syriza party, some of whom openly say they prefer a rupture in negotiations and even a euro exit, to capitulation on pre-election promises.

One of the most vocal critics of compromise has been Energy Minister Panagiotis Lafazanis.

"The logic of a deal at any cost ... is a logic of the country's total surrender to the worst neocolonial regime," Lafazanis was quoted as telling the news website Deal.gr Wednesday.

"A deal will either be compatible with Syriza's progressive program, or it will not exist."

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