

Nasir Al-Wahishi Killed In US Strike

CAIRO (AP) — A U.S. airstrike has killed al-Qaida's second-most-powerful figure, the head of its Yemeni branch, dealing the terror network its biggest blow since the killing of Osama bin Laden at a time when it is vying with the Islamic State group for the mantle of global jihad.

Nasir al-Wahishi was the latest in a series of senior figures from al-Qaida's powerful Yemeni branch eliminated by U.S. drone attacks over the past five months, including its top ideologue and a senior military commander. The U.S. has intensified its campaign, trying to push back the group as it has captured new territory in Yemen by taking advantage of the southern Arabian nation's chronic chaos.

In confirming the killing of al-Wahishi in a June 9 drone attack, the White House said Tuesday that his death "removes from the battlefield an experienced terrorist leader and brings us closer to degrading and ultimately defeating these groups."

The U.S. activity against al-Qaida has not been limited to Yemen. Over the weekend, a U.S. airstrike in Libya targeted an al-Qaida-linked militant commander, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, who led a 2013 attack on an Algerian gas complex that killed 35 hostages, including several Americans. U.S. officials are still trying to confirm whether he was killed in the raid.

Al-Wahishi was a former aide to bin Laden who, after the al-Qaida affiliate in Saudi Arabia was crushed in the mid-2000s, rebuilt it in his Yemeni homeland and turned it into the terror network's most dangerous branch. He also served as deputy to Ayman al-Zawahiri, who succeeded bin Laden in 2011 as the network's leader. The U.S. had put a bounty of up to \$10 million on al-Wahishi.

Dolezal Controversy Defines Race In US

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rachel Dolezal, born to white parents, self-identifies as black — a decision that illustrates how fluid identity can be in a diversifying America, as the rigid racial structures that have defined most of this country's history seem, for some, to be softening.

Dolezal resigned as the leader of the NAACP's Spokane, Washington, branch after questions surfaced about her racial identity. When asked directly on NBC's "Today" show Tuesday whether she is "an African-American woman," Dolezal replied, "I identify as black."

Her parents identified her as white with a trace of Native American heritage, and her mother, Ruthanne Dolezal, has said Rachel began to "disguise herself" as black after her parents adopted four black children more than a decade ago.

Dolezal isn't the first person to make this type of change. Millions of Americans changed racial or ethnic identities between the 2000 and 2010 censuses, even though their choices may have contradicted what their skin color appeared to be, or who their parents said they are.

"It forces us to really question whether or not this biological basis for identity is a smart path to continue down in the future," said Camille Gear Rich, a University of Southern California law and sociology professor who writes about elective race choices.

Russian Military To Add 40 Missiles

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's military will add over 40 new intercontinental ballistic missiles this year alone that are capable of piercing any missile defenses, President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday in a blunt reminder of the nation's nuclear might amid tensions with the West over Ukraine.

Putin spoke at the opening of an arms show at a shooting range in Alabino just west of Moscow, a huge display intended to showcase Russia's resurgent military.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg accused the Russians of "nuclear saber-rattling," and said that was one of the reasons the western military alliance has been beefing up its ability to defend its members.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, briefing reporters via teleconference from Boston, where he is recovering from surgery on a broken leg, called Putin's announcement concerning.

"We're trying to move in the opposite direction," Kerry said. "We have had enormous cooperation from the 1990s forward with respect to the structure of nuclear weapons in the former territories of the Soviet Union. And no one wants to see us step backwards."

Hunt For Escaped Murderers Continues

DANNEMORA, N.Y. (AP) — Search teams hindered by cool, rainy weather combed through woods for an 11th day trying to track down two escaped murderers on Tuesday as one official raised doubts the escapees relied solely on a now-jailed prison worker to help them get away after their breakout.

More than 800 law enforcement officers who are searching for convicts David Sweat and Richard Matt shifted their focus eastward along Route 374 leading from the village of Dannemora, home of the Clinton Correctional Facility, in far northern New York.

State police said Tuesday the manhunt will be expanded beyond where it's been most intense, 16 square miles of woods, fields and swamps around a road where search dogs caught the scent of both men and searchers found evidence indicating they may have spent time there.

Clinton County Sheriff David Favro said rain has been washing away any scent dogs might find and interfering with thermal imaging devices being used to detect body heat.

Matt and Sweat escaped June 6 from the maximum-security prison near the Canadian border.

Tropical Storm Bill Weakens In Texas

TEXAS (AP) — The National Weather Service says that even though Tropical Storm Bill has weakened after hitting the Texas mainland, it still could regain strength before the severe weather passes.

Most tropical storms gather power from the warm waters of the ocean and then weaken over land. But scientists say wet conditions from last month's heavy rainfall in Texas could sustain or strengthen a tropical storm over land in a phenomenon known as the "brown ocean" effect.

Meteorologist Victor Murphy of the National Weather Service in Fort Worth said Tuesday that the storm's weakening doesn't mean the "brown ocean" effect is no longer plausible. He said "it's still on the table" that the dynamic could occur as the storm moves further inland over Texas and Oklahoma.

Security Left Door Open To Hackers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The agency that allowed hackers linked to China to steal private information about nearly every federal employee — and detailed personal histories of millions with security clearances — failed for years to take basic steps to secure its computer networks, officials acknowledged to Congress on Tuesday.

Democrats and Republicans on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee spoke in unison to describe their outrage over what they called gross negligence by the Office of Personnel Management. The agency's data was breached last year in two massive cyberattacks only recently revealed.

The criticism came from within, as well. Michael Esser, the agency's assistant inspector general for audit, detailed a years-long failure by OPM to adhere to reasonable cybersecurity practices, and he said that for a long time, the people running the agency's information technology had no expertise.

Last year, he said, an inspector general's audit recommended that the agency shut down some of its networks because they were so vulnerable. The director, Katherine Archuleta, declined, saying it would interfere with the agency's mission.

The hackers were already inside her networks, she later acknowledged.

Decision 2016

Trump Jumps In, Too

BY JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

DERRY, N.H. — Newly declared Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush is fast out of the gate when it comes to criticizing Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Democratic front-runner.

In his New Hampshire debut as an official candidate, Bush commended Clinton as tough and smart Tuesday but labeled her record as secretary of state "a complete failure" and said she didn't accomplish much as a New York senator before that.

As a presidential candidate, Clinton has run a cloistered operation with limited opportunities to face questions from the press, he said. "It's ridiculous."

The former Florida governor made the comments in an interview with Fox News host Sean Hannity that could be overheard by those at a town hall event that followed.

Appearing without a tie or jacket at the town hall that followed, Bush appeared relaxed and sounded confident and engaged as he took questions for just over an hour. He voiced his conviction that, as president, he could help the country achieve 4 percent annual growth, which many economists consider unrealistic.

"The future can be extraordinary for this country," he told the crowd.

Bush, as he's done before, assigned responsibility to Clinton for what he regards as President Barack Obama's misbegotten foreign policy.

Republicans in Congress have gone after Clinton

Who's in the race?

Here are the people who have officially announced a campaign for the 2016 presidential election:

Democrats



Hillary Clinton



Bernie Sanders



Martin O'Malley



Lincoln Chafee

Republicans



Ted Cruz



Rand Paul



Marco Rubio



Ben Carson



Carly Fiorina



Mike Huckabee



Rick Santorum



George Pataki



Lindsey Graham



Rick Perry



Jeb Bush



Donald Trump

Source: Campaign websites
Graphic: Tribune News Service

the most sharply for her handling of the deadly attack on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya. But even apart from that, Bush said in the Fox interview, she was engaged in diplomacy that failed to reset relations with Russia and shrank U.S. commitments abroad.

On so-called enhanced interrogation techniques used during his brother's administration that some have equated to torture, Bush said they were appropriate at the time but are no longer necessary.

After months of testing the waters, there were signs that Bush was still getting used to being a candidate. After answering his last question, Bush thanked the crowd for coming — but then interrupted his applause because he forgot to ask for something.

"I totally blew it," he said. "This is my first day, so I'm a rookie at this, and running. I want your vote."

New Hampshire, which has a history of backing more moderate Republican candidates, is seen as an important state for Bush.

But it has also proven a difficult win for his family. In 2000, his brother, George W. Bush, lost the state to John McCain. His father stumbled when he competed for the first time in 1980 as well.

Still, he told reporters he plans to return often.

"This is my kind of campaigning," he said through an open SUV window before driving off. "I'll be here a lot."

Bush is among the top candidates in a Republican race that now has a dozen notable figures, with more to come. Donald Trump entered the contest Tuesday.

6 Killed In California Balcony Collapse During A Birthday Party

BY KRISTIN J. BENDER
AND WMARtha MENDOZA
Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — A 21st-birthday party thrown by a group of visiting Irish college students turned tragic early Tuesday when the fifth-floor balcony they were crammed onto collapsed with a sharp crack, spilling them about 50 feet onto the pavement. Six people were killed and seven seriously injured.

Police and fire and building officials were working to figure out why the small balcony broke loose from the stucco apartment house a couple of blocks from the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. But one structural engineer said it may have been overloaded if, as city officials said, it was holding 13 people.

High school student Jason Biswas' family nearby was awakened by the noise.

"They thought there was an earthquake, but then we looked out the window and saw seven or eight people on the ground," the 16-year-old said. "There were piles of blood everywhere."

Five of the dead were 21-year-olds from Ireland who were in the country on so-called J-1 visas that enable young people to work and travel in the U.S. over the summer, while the sixth victim was from California, authorities said.

The accident brought an outpouring of grief in Ireland from the prime minister on down, with the country's consul general in San Francisco calling it a "national tragedy."

Police had gotten a complaint about a loud party in the apartment about an hour before the accident but had not yet arrived when the metal-rail balcony gave way just after 12:30 a.m., spokesman Byron White said. It landed on the fourth-floor balcony just beneath it, leaving the pavement strewn with rubble and the red plastic cups that are practically standard at college parties.

"I just heard a bang and a lot of shouting," said Dan Sullivan, a 21-year-old student from Ireland who was asleep in the five-story building. Mark Neville, another Irish student in the building, said: "I walked out and I saw rubble on the street and a bunch of Irish students crying."

The U.S. government's J-1 program brings 100,000 college students to this country every year, many of them landing jobs at resorts,



MARK BOSTER/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS
Area residents behind the yellow police tape near a balcony collapse at an apartment in Berkeley, Calif., that killed six Irish students and injured eight more just a few blocks from UC Berkeley, on Tuesday, June 16, 2015.

summer camps and other attractions. The San Francisco Bay area is especially popular with Irish students, about 700 of whom are working and playing here this summer, according to Ireland's Consul General Philip Grant. Many work at Fisherman's Wharf and other tourist sites.

Sinead Loftus, 21, who attends Trinity College Dublin and is living this summer in a different apartment in Berkeley, said Berkeley is "the Irish hub." In fact, she said, "I've heard people complain there are too many people from Ireland here."

"It's student-friendly, it's warm and it's a lot cheaper than San Francisco," she said.

Investigators will look at such things as whether the balcony was built to code, whether it was overloaded and whether rain or other weather weakened it, said Kevin Moore, chairman of the structural standards committee of the Structural Engineers Association of California. On Tuesday afternoon, engineering crews were inspecting jagged broken beams of wood sticking from the building, marking where the balcony had snapped off. Pieces of wood came away, falling to the ground, as the engineers touched them.

Berkeley officials said the building code would have required the balcony to hold at least 60 pounds per square foot. Its exact dimensions were not released, but Grace Kang, a structural engineer and spokeswoman for Pacific Earthquake Engineering Research Center at Berkeley, said it looked to her to be 4 by 6 feet, or 24 square feet. That would mean it was sup-

posed to hold at least 1,440 pounds.

She said it appeared small for the crowd that had apparently gathered on it, Kang said.

"They were packed like sardines, and then they were moving," Kang said. When people "are moving about a lot or dancing, that impact load may further exacerbate" the strain.

Also, the apartment building had wood-frame construction, and the balcony was cantilevered out from the building, with no additional support beneath. Both can make a balcony more vulnerable to dry rot and weathering in general, Kang said.

In the meantime, city inspectors barred use of the building's other balconies while they are checked for safety.

The Library Gardens apartment complex, completed in 2007, is in a lively part of downtown Berkeley close to the campus and is a popular place for students to live. Several tenants reached by telephone said it is well-maintained.

Berkeley Police Chief Michael Meehan said the response to the noise complaint had been given a lower priority after police received a call of shots fired elsewhere.

The building is owned by BlackRock, the largest asset management fund in the U.S., according to city officials, and managed by Greystar Management, whose website says it operates more than 400,000 units in the U.S. and abroad.

In a statement, Greystar extended condolences to the

victims' families and added: "The safety of our residents is our highest priority and we will be working with an independent structural engineer and local authorities to determine the cause of the accident."

On the closed street below, a shrine was growing: flowers, a pack of cigarettes, a Cal Berkeley banner, condolence notes. Victims' relatives were expected to begin arriving from Ireland on Tuesday night.

The dead were identified as Ashley Donohoe, 22, of Rohnert Park, California; and Ireland's Olivia Burke, Eoghan Culligan, Niccolai Schuster, Lorcan Miller and Eimear Walsh. The Irish students attended various colleges in Dublin.

"My heart breaks for the parents who lost children this morning, and I can only imagine the fear in the hearts of other parents whose children are in California this summer as they seek to contact them now," Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny told lawmakers in Dublin.

"It is truly terrible to have such a serious and sad incident take place at the beginning of a summer of adventure and opportunity for so many young people on J-1 visas in the U.S."

A 2010 Associated Press investigation of the J-1 program and the companies that arrange the visits found that many students paid thousands of dollars to come to the U.S., only to learn the jobs they were promised didn't exist. Some had to share beds in crowded houses or filthy apartments.

Following the investigation, the State Department tightened its rules governing participating businesses.



AM 1450

MORNING COFFEE

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7:40AM
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THRU
FRIDAY

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