

White House Outlines Climate Change

WASHINGTON (AP) — Failure to act on climate change could cause an estimated 57,000 deaths a year in the United States from poor air quality by 2100, the Obama administration argued in a report released Monday that warns of dire effects of global warming.

The report says inaction on climate change could cost billions of dollars a year in damage from rising sea levels, increased wildfires and drought, as well as higher costs for electricity to cool homes and businesses in hotter temperatures. The Environmental Protection Agency report argues that action now on climate could save billions in avoided costs for maintenance and repairs on roads and bridges made vulnerable by global warming and save the lives of an estimated 12,000 people in 49 U.S. cities who could die from extreme temperatures in 2100.

The report comes as Republicans in Congress seek to undo the administration's environmental policies, including an expected plan by the EPA to target coal-fired power plants, and days after Pope Francis issued a stern warning about global warming's consequences, especially for the poor and underdeveloped nations. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said last month was the hottest May around the globe in 136 years of global records.

The White House report is part of a weeklong effort to emphasize climate change to mark the two-year anniversary of a "climate action plan" announced by President Barack Obama.

While the most severe effects of global warming would not be felt for decades, the Obama administration said decisions about climate change need to be made now.

30 Killed At Crowded Mosque In Nigeria

BAUCHI, Nigeria (AP) — Two girls blew themselves up on Monday near a crowded mosque in northeast Nigeria's biggest city, killing about 30 people, witnesses said.

It is the fourth suicide bombing this month in Maiduguri, which is the birthplace of the Boko Haram Islamic extremist group.

Fishmonger Idi Idrisa said one teenager exploded as she approached the mosque crowded with people from the nearby Baga Road fish market, performing afternoon prayers during the holy month of Ramadan.

The second teen appeared to run away and blew up further away, killing only herself, he said.

Civilian defense fighter Sama Ila Abu said he counted at least 30 corpses as he helped collect the dead.

US To Provide For NATO Response Force

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — The U.S. committed Monday to contribute weapons, aircraft and forces, including commandos, as needed for NATO's new rapid reaction force, to help Europe defend against potential Russian aggression from the east and the Islamic State and other violent extremists from the south.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced the specifics of American contributions to the rapid reaction force a year after President Barack Obama made a commitment to such assistance at the NATO summit last year in Wales.

Carter said the U.S. will provide intelligence and surveillance capabilities, special operations forces, logistics, transport aircraft, and a range of weapons support that could include bombers, fighters and ship-based missiles. It would not provide a large ground force.

Carter announced the new details in Munster, Germany, after meeting with defense ministers from Germany, Norway and the Netherlands. Those countries had agreed to provide the initial troops for the rapid reaction force. The U.S. had pledged to support the task force, but NATO has been waiting to hear specifically what America was willing to provide.

The U.S., with its massive military and high-tech capabilities, has generally carried the greatest load in NATO operations, including in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. U.S. officials made it clear early on that it would provide the enabling capabilities that other nations may not have, and not send ground forces, which other allies may be more able to do.

Euro Leaders Discuss Greek Debt Deal

BRUSSELS (AP) — Greece has finally offered economic reforms that creditors consider closer to being acceptable, giving Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras a few days to turn a spirit of goodwill into a deal that might keep the country from a painful exit from the euro currency and roil international markets.

Even though a firm deal between Greece and its lenders to get Athens more loans remained elusive at an emergency summit Monday, leaders from the 19 euro nations and the International Monetary Fund said Tsipras' new reform plan offered the basis to break a four-month deadlock in talks.

"We are advancing toward an agreement," said French President Francois Hollande. But the gap separating what Greece wants to yield in painful reforms and what creditors are demanding before providing more funds remained sizable.

"We are closer than we ever were before," said European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde said that despite the improvements in the Greek offer "it still lacks specificity. And it is still short of everything that we expected."

Middle East Guilty Of War Crimes

JERUSALEM (AP) — A U.N. investigation on Monday accused both Israel and Hamas militants of committing possible war crimes in last summer's Gaza war, finding that Israeli airstrikes on residential buildings caused many civilian deaths and suggesting Israeli leaders knowingly endangered them.

The report, which Israel rejected as biased, further strained its already troubled relations with the world body and could provide new ammunition in a preliminary investigation of Israel at the International Criminal Court in the Hague. Hamas, condemned for indiscriminately firing thousands of rockets at Israeli cities and its use of tunnels to infiltrate border towns, also rejected the report.

"We must remember that victims are not just numbers or collateral damage — that unfortunate word. They are individual people with human rights," Mary McGowan Davis, the American judge who led the investigation, told journalists in Geneva.

The war started July 8, 2014, after a chain of events stemming from the kidnapping and killing of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank by Hamas militants and the kidnapping of a Palestinian teenager who was burned to death by Jewish extremists in a revenge attack. Israel arrested hundreds of Hamas members in raids in the West Bank, prompting militant groups in Gaza to step up their rocket attacks.

More than 2,200 Palestinians, including 1,462 civilians, were killed during the fighting, according to the U.N. Seventy-three people, including six civilians, among them a 4-year-old boy, died on the Israeli side. Israel has blamed Hamas for the civilian casualties, saying the group used schools, mosques and residential areas for cover and noting that Hamas repeatedly fired rockets from populated areas.

Israeli Ask Jewish State To Help

DALIYAT AL-KARMEL, Israel (AP) — Members of Israel's Druze minority, long among the Jewish state's most loyal citizens, have become increasingly concerned about the plight of their beleaguered brethren in neighboring Syria. Now, they are asking the state of Israel to help their fellow Druze next door — and some are even offering to go fight in Syria if needed.

Israel has been careful to stay out of the four-year-old Syrian civil war and the Syrian Druze have themselves mostly avoided involvement.

But after al-Qaida-linked militants earlier this month brutally killed as many as 20 Druze in what amounted to the deadliest violence against members of the small Arab sect since the Syrian conflict started in March 2011, Israel finds itself under increasing internal pressure to act. That would have the extraordinary outcome of having Israel intervene on behalf of a group perceived as loyal to Syrian President Bashar Assad's government.

Items Recovered From NY Cabin In Hunt For Escaped Murderers

BY MIKE GROLL
Associated Press

BELMONT, N.Y. — Items recovered from a remote hunting cabin might be linked to a pair of convicted killers who escaped from a nearby prison more than two weeks ago, authorities said Monday as searchers swarmed rugged woods in the hamlet in far northern New York.

State Police Maj. Charles Guess said at a news conference that authorities had "specific items" from the Adirondack cabin some 20 miles west of the prison and sent them to labs for DNA and other testing. He would not elaborate on the items but characterized the latest search effort — one of many over the past 17 days — as a confirmed lead.

"There are a number of factors that make this a complex search: the weather, the terrain, the environment and frankly the vast scope of the north country of the Adirondacks," Guess said.

He urged residents and seasonal camp owners to call police if they notice anything out of place or capture footage on trail cameras of any suspicious activity.

Acting Franklin County District Attorney Glenn



Source: AP Graphic: Staff, TNS

MacNeill had told WPTZ-TV on Sunday that a hunter had reported seeing a person fleeing from a camp in the area.

Terry Bellinger, owner of nearby Belly's Mountain View Inn, said the hunter told him he saw a man run into the woods as he approached the camp Saturday on an ATV. When the hunter went into the cabin, he noticed two things out of place: a jug of water and an open jar of peanut butter on a table. Bellinger said the hunter went to his restaurant, where he talked to police for several hours.

"He was visibly shaken. He wanted a glass of water," Bellinger said.

Inmates David Sweat and Richard Matt escaped June 6 from the Clinton County Cor-

rectional Facility. Sweat, 35, was serving a life sentence without parole for killing a sheriff's deputy. Matt, 48, was doing 25 years to life for the 1997 kidnapping, torture and hacksaw dismemberment of his former boss.

Prison worker Joyce Mitchell remained in custody on charges she helped the two men escape by providing them hacksaw blades, chisels and other tools. She has pleaded not guilty.

Authorities say she had talked to the inmates about killing her husband, Lyle, who also works at the prison. Andrew Wylie, Clinton County district attorney, said Joyce Mitchell told authorities that she and Matt discussed having Matt and Sweat go to her house after they escaped to kill Lyle Mitchell.

Monday's search area is about 20 miles east of Mitchell's home in Dickinson Center.

Busloads of officers, search dogs and helicopters began arriving in the Adirondack hamlet of Belmont late Sunday as a parallel search more than 350 miles away from the prison wrapped up with no sign of the inmates.

The search had been focused over the weekend on two towns in Allegany

County along the Pennsylvania state border. An unconfirmed but credible report came in that two men resembling the prisoners had been spotted near a railroad line that runs along a county road.

New York State Police said Monday morning that the search in the towns of Amity and Friendship in western New York had concluded.

Since Sweat and Matt escaped from the prison in Dannemora, more than 800 law enforcement officers have gone door-to-door checking houses, wooded areas, campgrounds and summer homes.

Vermont State Police also have joined the Adirondack-area search.

Officials said a corrections officer has been placed on administrative leave as part of the investigation into the men's escape.

Attorney Andrew Brockway told Plattsburgh television station WPTZ that the officer, Gene Palmer, was completely forthcoming during 14 hours of questioning Saturday.

"I can 100 percent confirm that he did not know they were planning on breaking out of the prison," Brockway said.

Palmer has not been charged.

Lawmakers Move To Change Mississippi Flag

BY EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS
AND CLAIRE GALOFRARO
Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — A top Mississippi lawmaker said Monday that the Confederate battle emblem is offensive and needs to be removed from the state flag.

House Speaker Philip Gunn became the first top-tier Republican to call for a change in the flag, which has had the Confederate symbol in the upper left corner since Reconstruction.

"We must always remember our past, but that does not mean we must let it define us," Gunn, a leader in his local Baptist church, said in a statement. "As a Christian, I believe our state's flag has become a point of offense that needs to be removed. We need to begin having conversations about changing Mississippi's flag."

Mississippi and Tennessee officials are grappling with whether to retain Old South symbols, even as South Carolina leaders are pushing to remove a Confederate battle flag that flies outside the statehouse there.

Mississippi voters decided by a 2-to-1 margin in 2001 to keep the state flag that has been used since 1894. It features the Confederate battle emblem — a blue X with 13 stars, over a red field.

Republican Gov. Phil Bryant on Mon-

day repeated his long-held position that the state should keep the flag as is.

"A vast majority of Mississippians voted to keep the state's flag, and I don't believe the Mississippi Legislature will act to supersede the will of the people on this issue," Bryant said in a statement.

Democratic Sen. Kenny Wayne Jones of Canton, chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus, said the Confederate emblem is a "symbol of hatred" often associated with racial violence. Jones said the flag represents the power structure's resistance to change during the 1960s and '70s, when civil rights activists were pushing to dismantle segregation and expand voting rights.

"We should be constantly re-examining these types of stereotypes that label our state for what it used to be a long time ago," Jones told The Associated Press.

At the Tennessee Capitol in Nashville, a bust of Nathan Bedford Forrest, a Confederate general and an early Ku Klux Klan leader, has sat in an alcove outside the Senate chamber for decades.

Democratic and Republican leaders are calling for the bust to be removed. Craig Fitzhugh, the state House Democratic leader, said it should go to the archives or a museum and be replaced in the Capitol by a statue of Lois DeBerry, an African-American who became the

first female speaker pro tempore of the Tennessee House. Women and minorities are underrepresented in government symbols, Fitzhugh wrote.

"We need to revisit what we have displayed in the Capitol so that it better represents a Tennessee for all of us," he wrote Monday.

Since the 2001 Mississippi election, bills that proposed changing the flag have gained no traction, with legislators saying voters settled the issue.

The massacre of nine worshippers at a black church in South Carolina last week renewed public debate about the Confederate battle flag. The white suspect, Dylann Storm Roof, appeared in photos holding the banner.

Russell Moore, a Mississippi native who serves as president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, wrote in his blog Friday that the Confederate flag — including the emblem on the Mississippi state flag — should be retired. He said its connection with the "great evil" of slavery makes it incompatible with Christianity.

"White Christians ought to think about what that flag says to our African-American brothers and sisters in Christ, especially in the aftermath of yet another act of white supremacist terrorism against them," Moore wrote. "The gospel frees us from scrapping for our 'heritage' at the expense of others."

Death Penalty Sought In Craigslist Slays

MCRAE, Ga. (AP) — Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against a Georgia man accused in the deaths of an elderly couple looking to buy a classic car through Craigslist.

Telfair County District Attorney Tim Vaughn told local media Monday that he filed notice of intent to seek the death penalty against Ronnie Adrian Towns in the deaths of Elrey and June Runion.

The couple drove from Marietta, north of Atlanta, in

January seeking to buy a 1966 Ford Mustang.

A potential seller responded to an ad that Elrey Runion placed on Craigslist. Friends and family members said the couple drove to the rural town of McCrae to complete the sale. After a search, investigators found their bodies. Both had been shot in the head.

Towns is charged with malice murder and armed robbery.

Inside every human being there are treasures to unlock.

—Mike Huckabee

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