

## Officials Say French Forces To Remain In Mali

PARIS (AP) — French troops will stay in the West African country of Mali at least until July, amid tougher-than-expected resistance from Islamic fighters, officials have told The Associated Press, despite earlier government promises to begin a quick pullout within weeks.

France's leadership has painted the intervention against al-Qaida-backed radicals in Mali, which began in January, as a swift and limited one, and said that France could start withdrawing its 4,000 troops in Mali in March and hand over security duties to an African force.

But the combat in rugged Sahara Desert mountains is growing harder, and there's a rising threat that the militants will turn to suicide bombings, hostage-taking and other guerrilla tactics.

One French diplomat acknowledged this week that a French military presence is expected to remain for at least six months. Two other French officials told The Associated Press that the French will remain at least until July, when France is hoping that Mali can hold elections.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly on the military campaign.

## Speedometers Often Show Too High Top Speeds

DETROIT (AP) — The speedometer on the Toyota Yaris says the tiny car can go 140 miles per hour.

In reality, the bulbous subcompact's 106-horsepower engine and automatic transmission can't push it any faster than 109.

So why do the Yaris — and most other cars sold in the U.S. — have speedometers that show top speeds they can't possibly reach?

The answer has deep roots in an American culture that loves the rush of driving fast. The automakers' marketing departments are happy to give people the illusion that their family car can travel at speeds rivaling a NASCAR racer. And companies often use one speedometer type in various models across the world, saving them money.

But critics say the ever-higher numbers are misleading. Some warn they create a safety concern, daring drivers to push past free-way speed limits that are 65 to 75 mph in most states.

## Juror Dismissed In Bell, Calif., Corruption Case

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A weeping juror was dismissed Thursday for committing misconduct during deliberations in the public corruption trial of six former officials of the suburban city of Bell.

The woman juror admitted she looked up information online and had her daughter search out a definition of what would constitute coercion by other jurors.

Superior Court Judge Kathleen Kennedy scheduled an afternoon hearing to select an alternate juror to join the panel so that deliberations could begin anew.

The defendants are charged with misappropriation of public funds for giving themselves huge salaries and nearly bankrupting the tiny suburb of Los Angeles.

The jury had been in its fifth day of deliberations after a three-week trial.

## Rodman: Kim Jong Un Has 'Friend For Life'

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Ex-NBA star Dennis Rodman hung out with North Korea's Kim Jong Un during his improbable journey to Pyongyang, watching the Harlem Globetrotters with the leader and later drinking and dining on sushi with him.

"You have a friend for life," Rodman told Kim before a crowd of thousands Thursday at a gymnasium where they sat side by side, chatting as they watched players from North Korea and the United States face off in mixed teams, Alex Detrick, a spokesman for the New York-based VICE media company, told The Associated Press.

Rodman arrived in Pyongyang on Monday with three members of the professional Harlem Globetrotters basketball team, VICE correspondent Ryan Duffy and a production crew to shoot an episode on North Korea for a new weekly HBO series.

The unlikely encounter makes Rodman the most high-profile American to meet Kim since the young North Korean leader took power in December 2011, and takes place against a backdrop of tension between Washington and Pyongyang. North Korea conducted an underground nuclear test just two weeks ago, making clear the provocative act was a warning to the United States to drop what it considers a "hostile" policy toward the North.

Kim, a diehard basketball fan, told the former Detroit Pistons and Chicago Bulls star that he hoped the visit would break the ice between the United States and North Korea, VICE founder Shane Smith said.

## Obama Wants Gay Marriage Ban Overturned

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a historic argument for gay rights, President Barack Obama on Thursday urged the Supreme Court to overturn California's same-sex marriage ban and turn a skeptical eye on similar prohibitions across the country.

The Obama administration's friend-of-the-court brief marked the first time a U.S. president has urged the high court to expand the right of gays and lesbians to wed. The filing unequivocally calls on the justices to strike down California's Proposition 8 ballot measure, although it stops short of the soaring rhetoric on marriage equality Obama expressed in his inaugural address in January.

California is one of eight states that give gay couples all the benefits of marriage through civil unions or domestic partnership, but don't allow them to wed. The brief argues that in granting same-sex couples those rights, California has already acknowledged that gay relationships bear the same hallmarks as straight ones.

"They establish homes and lives together, support each other financially, share the joys and burdens of raising children, and provide care through illness and comfort at the moment of death," the administration wrote.

The brief marks the president's most expansive view of gay marriage and signals that he is moving away from his previous assertion that states should determine their own marriage laws. Obama, a former constitutional law professor, signed off on the administration's legal argument last week following lengthy discussions with Attorney General Eric Holder and Solicitor General Donald Verrilli.

In a statement following the filing, Holder said "the government seeks to vindicate the defining constitutional ideal of equal treatment under the law."

Obama's position, if adopted by the court, would likely result in gay marriage becoming legal in the seven other states: Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon and Rhode Island.

## Weekly Unemployment Claims Drop To 344K

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans seeking unemployment aid fell 22,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 344,000, evidence that the job market may be picking up.

The four-week average of applications dropped 6,750 to 355,000, the Labor Department said Thursday.

Economists were mildly encouraged by the decline. It "suggests further healing in the labor markets," Sal Guatieri, an economist at BMO Capital Markets, said in a note to clients.

Stronger hiring is one of the reasons economists expect growth is probably picking up in 2013 after a disappointing October-December quarter, when the economy barely grew.

Weekly applications are a proxy for layoffs. When they decline, it suggests companies are cutting fewer workers and may be more willing to hire.

Applications have fallen steadily in recent weeks. The four-week average has declined almost 11 percent since November. At the same time, employers have added an average of 200,000 jobs per month from November through January. That's up from about 150,000 in the previous three months.

In January, the economy added 157,000 jobs. The unemployment rate ticked up to 7.9 percent from 7.8 percent in December. Economists think the rate will slowly decline if hiring continues at last year's monthly pace of 180,000. The unemployment rate fell 0.7 percentage point in 2012.

The drop in applications suggests companies will add more jobs in February than in January, economists said.



ANSA/ZUMA PRESS/MCT

**Pope Benedict XVI pledged obedience to his successor at a meeting of cardinals on his last day as pontiff on Thursday in Vatican City. "Among you is the future pope, to whom I promise my unconditional reverence and obedience," Benedict said.**

# Now A 'Simple Pilgrim'

## Benedict Becomes 1st Pope To Resign In 600 Years

BY NICOLE WINFIELD  
AND FRANCES D'EMILIO  
Associated Press

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy — As bells tolled and the clock struck 8, the brass-studded wooden doors swung shut Thursday at this palace in the Italian hills, marking an end to Benedict XVI's papacy and the start of his final journey as a "simple pilgrim."

Capping a day of tearful farewells that included an extraordinary pledge of obedience to his successor, Benedict entered history as the first pope in 600 years to resign — leaving the Catholic Church in unprecedented limbo and ending a pontificate shaped by struggles to move beyond clerical sex abuse scandals and reawaken Christianity in an indifferent world.

On Benedict's last day, the mood was vastly different inside the Vatican than at Castel Gandolfo, the 17th-century papal retreat set in the hills south of Rome, where he will spend the first two months of his retirement.

At the seat of the popes, Benedict's staff bade the pontiff goodbye in scenes of dignified solemnity, with Swiss Guards in full regalia and prelates kneeling to kiss his papal ring one last time.

A livelier atmosphere reigned in the countryside, with well-wishers jamming the hilltop town's main square, shouting "Viva il Papa!" and waving the yellow and white flags of the Holy See.

Cheers went up as the 85-year-old Benedict stepped out onto the

## Pope Benedict XVI

*Pope Benedict XVI is the first pope in 600 years to resign.*

### Papal years

**2005** Vatican imposes restrictions on homosexuals becoming priests; first papal encyclical, "God is Love"

**2006** Visits Bavarian homeland; while visiting Turkey, prays with Istanbul's grand mufti facing Mecca

**2007** Approves services with traditional Catholic rituals — a concession to the traditionalists

**2009** Lifts excommunications of four ultra-traditionalist bishops, including one Holocaust denier

**2010** On a trip to Spain, attacks abortion and gay marriage, both legal in Spain

**2012** Names 22 new cardinals



Source: Reuters, Catholic News Services

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### Future plans

- Says he plans to be "hidden from the world" and living a life of prayer

- Will continue to live in Vatican City after retirement

- Will be called "emeritus pope" and "Your Holiness"

- Will wear the white cassock and brown shoes

palace balcony and, arms outstretched, declared his papacy was nearing the end.

"I am simply a pilgrim beginning the last leg of his pilgrimage on this Earth," he said. Then giving a final blessing, he declared: "Grazie e buona notte" — "Thank you and good night" in Italian.

It was a remarkable bookend to a papacy that began on April 19, 2005, with a similarly meek speech delivered from the loggia overlooking St. Peter's Square, where the newly elected Benedict said he was but a "simple humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord."

Over his eight-year papacy,

Benedict tried to set the church on a more traditional course, convinced that all the ills afflicting it — sexual abuse, dwindling numbers of priests and empty pews — were a result of a misreading of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

His successor is likely to follow in his footsteps, given that the vast majority of the 115 cardinals who will elect the next pope were appointed by Benedict himself and share his conservative bent.

For the time being, the governance of the church shifts to Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the camerlengo, or chamberlain, who along with the College of Cardi-

# GI Pleads Guilty In WikiLeaks Case, Faces 20 Years

BY BEN NUCKOLS  
Associated Press

FORT MEADE, Md. — Bradley Manning, the Army private arrested in the biggest leak of classified material in U.S. history, pleaded guilty Thursday to charges that could send him to prison for 20 years, saying he was trying to expose the American military's "bloodlust" and disregard for human life in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Military prosecutors said they plan to move forward with a court-martial on 12 remaining charges against him, including aiding the enemy, which carries a potential life sentence.

"I began to become depressed at the situation we found ourselves mired in year after year. In attempting counterinsurgency operations, we became obsessed with capturing and killing human targets on lists," the 25-year-old former intelligence analyst in Baghdad told a military judge.

He added: "I wanted the public to know that not everyone living in Iraq were targets to be neutralized."

It was the first time Manning directly admitted leaking the material to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks and detailed the frustrations that led him to do it.

The slightly built soldier from Oklahoma read from a 35-page statement through his wire-rimmed glasses for more than an hour. He spoke quickly and evenly, showing little emotion

## "I wanted the public to know that not everyone living in Iraq were targets to be neutralized."

### BRADLEY MANNING

even when he described how troubled he was by what he had seen.

The judge, Col. Denise Lind, accepted his plea to 10 charges involving illegal possession or distribution of classified material. Manning was allowed to plead guilty under military regulations instead of federal espionage law, which knocked the potential sentence down from 92 years.

He will not be sentenced until his court-martial on the other charges is over.

Manning admitted sending hundreds of thousands of Iraq and Afghanistan battlefield reports, State Department diplomatic cables, other classified records and two battlefield video clips to WikiLeaks in 2009 and 2010. WikiLeaks posted some of the material, embarrassing the U.S. and its allies.

He said he was disturbed by the conduct of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the way American troops treated the populace. He said he did not believe the release of the information would harm the U.S.

"I believed that if the general public, especially the American

public, had access to the information ... this could spark a domestic debate on the role of the military and our foreign policy in general," Manning said.

Manning said he was appalled by 2007 combat video of an assault by a U.S. helicopter that killed 11 men, including a Reuters news photographer. The Pentagon concluded the troops mistook the camera equipment for weapons.

"The most alarming aspect of the video to me was the seemingly delightful bloodlust the aerial weapons team happened to have," Manning said, adding that the soldiers' actions "seemed similar to a child torturing ants with a magnifying glass."

As for the State Department

cables, he said they "documented backdoor deals and criminality that didn't reflect the so-called leader of the free world."

"I thought these cables were a prime example of the need for a more open diplomacy," Manning said. "I believed that these cables would not damage the United States. However, I believed these cables would be embarrassing."

The battlefield reports were the first documents Manning decided to leak. He said he sent them to WikiLeaks after contacting *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. He said he felt a reporter at the *Post* didn't take him seriously, and a message he left for news tips at the *Times* was not returned.

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