

Putin Signs Treaty To Add Crimea To Map Of Russia

BY VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

MOSCOW — In a gilded Kremlin hall used by czars, Vladimir Putin redrew Russia's borders Tuesday by declaring the Crimean Peninsula part of the motherland — provoking a surge of emotion among Russians who lament the loss of empire and denunciations from Western leaders who called Putin a threat to the world.

In an ominous sign, a Ukrainian serviceman and a member of a local self-defense brigade were killed by gunfire in Crimea just hours after Putin's speech, the first fatalities stemming from the Russian takeover.

While Putin's action was hailed by jubilant crowds in Moscow and cities across Russia, Ukraine's new government called the Russian president a threat to the "civilized world and international security," and the U.S. and Europe threatened tougher sanctions against Moscow.

Vice President Joe Biden, meeting with anxious European leaders in Poland, denounced what he called "nothing more than a land grab."

"The world has seen through Russia's actions and has rejected the flawed logic," Biden said.

In an emotional 40-minute speech televised live from the Kremlin's chandeliered St. George hall, Putin said the time has come to correct a historical injustice and stand up to Western pressure by incorporating Crimea.

"In people's hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an integral part of Russia," he declared.

He dismissed Western criticism of Sunday's Crimean referendum — in which residents of the strategic Black Sea peninsula voted overwhelmingly to break off from Ukraine and join Russia — as a manifestation of the West's double standards.

"They tell us that we are violating the norms of international law. First of all, it's good that they at least remember that international law



Putin

exists," Putin said, pointing at what he called the U.S. trampling of international norms in wars in Serbia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya.

"Our Western partners led by the United States prefer to proceed not from international law, but the law of might in their practical policies," he said.

Often interrupted by raucous applause, Putin said the rights of ethnic Russians in Ukraine had been abused by the new Ukrainian government and insisted Crimea's vote to join Russia was legitimate and reflected its right for self-determination.

Denouncing what he called Western arrogance, hypocrisy and pressure, Putin warned that the West must drop its stubborn refusal to take Russian concerns into account. He pointed at NATO's eastward expansion, the alliance's

U.S.-led missile defense plans and, finally, the Western moves to pull Ukraine into its orbit.

"If you push a spring too hard, at some point it will spring back," he said. "You always need to remember this."

Only hours after Putin boasted that the Russian takeover of Crimea was conducted without a single shot, a Ukrainian military spokesman said a Ukrainian serviceman was killed and another injured when a military facility in Crimea was stormed Tuesday by armed men.

A Crimea police spokeswoman, Olga Kondrashova, later was quoted by Interfax news agency as saying that a Ukrainian serviceman and a member of a local self-defense brigade were killed by gunfire coming from the same location, and two other people were wounded.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk declared the violence showed the conflict "has gone from the political stage to the military by the fault of the Russians."

Investigators Comb Scene Of Deadly News Helicopter Crash In Seattle

BY PHUONG LE
AND MANUEL VALDES
Associated Press

SEATTLE — A news helicopter crashed into a street and burst into flames Tuesday near Seattle's Space Needle, killing both people on board, badly injuring a man in a car and sending plumes of black smoke over the city during the morning commute.

The chopper was taking off from a helipad on KOMO-TV's roof when it went down at a downtown intersection and hit three vehicles, starting them on fire and spewing burning fuel down the street.

Kristopher Reynolds, a contractor working nearby, said he saw the helicopter lift about 5 feet off the low-rise building before it started to tilt. The chopper looked like it was trying to correct itself when it took a dive.

"Next thing I know, it went into a ball of flames," Reynolds said.

Witnesses also reported hearing unusual noises coming from the helicopter as it took off after refueling, said Dennis Hogenson, deputy regional chief with the National Transportation Safety Board in Seattle. They said the aircraft then rotated before it crashed near the Seattle Center campus, which is home to the Space Needle, restaurants and performing arts centers.

Mayor Ed Murray noted the normally bustling Seattle Center was relatively quiet at the time. Had it been a busier day, "this would have been a much larger tragedy," he said.

Murray added the city will review its policies about per-



The crashed news helicopter with car behind at the scene that left at least two people killed Tuesday can be seen near Seattle Center, KOMO-TV, in Seattle.

KEN LAMBERT/SEATTLE TIMES/MCT

mitting helicopter pads in response to the crash.

Investigators were working to document the scene and clear the wreckage, and will examine all possibilities as they determine what caused the crash, Hogenson said. A preliminary analysis is expected in five days, followed by a fuller report with a probable cause in up to a year.

Only the helicopter's blue tail end could be identified among the wreckage strewn across the street.

KOMO identified the pilot as Gary Pfitzner, of Issaquah. Also killed in the crash was Bill Strothman, a former long-time KOMO photographer. Both men were working for Ca-

hokia, Ill.-based Helicopters Inc., which owned the Eurocopter AS350 helicopter. The aircraft was leased jointly by KOMO and KING-TV.

Firefighters who arrived at the scene before 8 a.m. found a "huge black cloud of smoke" and two cars and a pickup truck engulfed in flames, Seattle Fire Department spokesman Kyle Moore said.

Fuel running down the street also was on fire, and crews worked to stop it before it entered the sewer, Moore said.

An injured man managed to free himself from a burning car and was taken to Harborview Medical Center. The man was on fire, and a police

officer helped him to the ground and put out the flames, police spokeswoman Renee Witt said.

Richard Newman, 38, suffered burns on his lower back and arm, covering up to 20 percent of his body, hospital spokeswoman Susan Gregg said. He was in serious condition in the intensive care unit and likely will require surgery, she said.

Two others who were in cars that were struck by the helicopter were uninjured. One of them, a woman, went to a police station and talked to officers, while a man from the pickup walked to a nearby McDonald's restaurant. Police later located him unharmed.

Cancer Centers Concerned About Access

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some of America's best cancer hospitals are off-limits to many of the people now signing up for coverage under the nation's new health care program.

Doctors and administrators say they're concerned. So are some state insurance regulators.

An Associated Press survey found examples coast to coast. Seattle Cancer Care Alliance is excluded by five out of eight insurers in Washington's insurance exchange. MD Anderson Cancer Center says it's in less than half of the plans in the Houston area. Memorial Sloan-Kettering is included by two of nine insurers in New York City and has out-of-network agreements with two more.

In all, only four of 19 nationally recognized comprehensive cancer centers that responded to AP's survey said patients have access through all the insurance companies in their states' exchanges.

Not too long ago insurance companies would have been vying to offer access to renowned cancer centers, said Dan Mendelson, CEO of the market research firm Avalere Health. Now the focus is on costs.

Jeb Bush Considers Run For White House

MIAMI (AP) — Jeb Bush gets the question at just about every public appearance these days: Will you run for president?

The former Florida governor gives a well-worn answer: "I can honestly tell you that I don't know what I'm going to do." It's an answer that won't satisfy the GOP faithful for much longer.

The scion of the Bush political dynasty will likely be asked the question many times in the coming weeks as he raises his profile with appearances in Tennessee, New Mexico, Nevada and Texas — where he'll bump into another possible 2016 presidential candidate, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Bush's "yes" or "no" is one of the most significant factors looming over the 2016 Republican presidential contest. A White House bid by the brother and son of presidents would shake up a wide-open GOP field, attract a legion of big-money donors and set up a showdown with the influential tea party movement. Bush has said he'll consult with his family this summer and make a decision by the end of the year.

With New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie facing multiple investigations in a political retribution probe, many Republicans see Bush as a potent alternative: a two-term GOP governor who thrived in the nation's largest swing-voting state and could make the party more inclusive.

Oklahoma Court Rechedules Executions

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — An Oklahoma court on Tuesday rescheduled a pair of executions set for this week and next so state prison officials will have more time to find a supply of drugs for the lethal injections.

The decision came in a lawsuit in which two inmates had sought more information about the drugs that would be used to execute them later this month. The inmates had sought a stay of their executions, but the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals said that request was moot because the state Department of Corrections doesn't have enough drugs on hand to carry out their death sentences.

"The attorney general's attestations give this court no confidence that the state will be able to procure the necessary drugs before the scheduled executions are carried out," the court wrote.

Oklahoma and other states that have the death penalty have been scrambling for substitute drugs or new sources for drugs for lethal injections after major drugmakers — many based in Europe with longtime opposition to the death penalty — stopped selling to prisons and corrections departments.

While the judges didn't rule on the merit of the inmates' stay request, they pushed their executions back a month — Clayton Lockett to April 22 and Charles Warner to April 29.

Thai Radar Might Have Tracked Missing Plane

BY CHRIS BRUMMITT
AND THANAYARAT DOKSONE
Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Ten days after a Malaysian jetliner disappeared, Thailand's military said Tuesday it saw radar blips that might have been from the missing plane but didn't report it "because we did not pay attention to it."

Search crews from 26 countries, including Thailand, are looking for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which vanished early March 8 with 239 people aboard en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. Frustration is growing among relatives of those on the plane at the lack of progress in the search.

Aircraft and ships are scouring two giant arcs of territory amounting to the size of Australia — half of it in the remote seas of the southern Indian Ocean.

Cmdr. William Marks, a spokesman for the U.S. 7th Fleet, said finding the plane was like trying to locate a few people somewhere between New York and California.

Early in the search, Malaysian officials said they suspected the plane backtracked toward the Strait of Malacca, just west of Malaysia. But it took a week for them to confirm Malaysian military radar data suggesting that route.

Thai military officials said Tuesday their own radar showed an unidentified plane, possibly Flight 370, flying toward the strait beginning minutes after the Malaysian jet's transponder signal was lost.

Air force spokesman Air Vice Marshal Montol Suchookorn said the Thai military doesn't know whether the plane it detected was Flight 370.

Thailand's failure to

quickly share possible information about the plane may not substantially change what Malaysian officials now know, but it raises questions about the degree to which some countries are sharing their defense data.

Flight 370 took off from Kuala Lumpur at 12:40 a.m. March 8 and its transponder, which allows air traffic controllers to identify and track it, ceased communicating at 1:20 a.m.

Montol said that at 1:28 a.m., Thai military radar "was able to detect a signal, which was not a normal signal, of a plane flying in the direction opposite from the MH370 plane," back toward Kuala Lumpur. The plane later turned right, toward Butterworth, a Malaysian city along the Strait of Malacca. The radar signal was infrequent and did not include data such as the flight number.

When asked why it took so long to release the information, Montol said, "Because we did not pay any attention to it. The Royal Thai Air Force only looks after any threats against our country." He said the plane never entered Thai airspace and that Malaysia's initial request for information in the early days of the search was not specific.

"When they asked again and there was new information and assumptions from (Malaysian) Prime Minister Najib Razak, we took a look at our information again," Montol said. "It didn't take long for us to figure out, although it did take some experts to find out about it."

The search area for the plane initially focused on the South China Sea. Pings that a satellite detected from the plane hours after its communications went down eventually led authorities to concentrate instead on two

vast arcs — one into Central Asia and the other into the Indian Ocean.

Malaysia said over the weekend the loss of communications and change in the aircraft's course were deliberate, whether it was the pilots or others aboard who were responsible.

Malaysian police are considering the possibility of hijacking, sabotage, terrorism or issues related to the mental health of the pilots or anyone else on board, but have yet to say what they have uncovered.

Investigators had pointed to a sequence of events in which two communications systems were disabled in succession — one of them before a voice from the cockpit gave an all-clear message to ground controllers — as evidence of a deliberate attempt to fly the plane off-course in a hard-to-detect way. On Monday, they backtracked on the timing of the first switch-off, saying it was possible that both were cut around the same time, leading to new speculation that some kind of sudden mechanical or electrical failure might explain the flight

KYNT
AM 1450
MORNING COFFEE
WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY
Wednesday, March 19
7:40 am Kick Butts
(Tiffany Kashas, YHS Students)
8:20 am Hy-Vee
8:45 am Mount Marty College
(Andy Hennickson)
Thursday, March 20
7:40 am Yankton Chamber
(Carmen Schramm)
8:20 am Yankton Conv/Vis
(Lisa Scheve)

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