

## IRS Apologizes For Targeting Conservatives

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Internal Revenue Service apologized Friday for what it acknowledged was “inappropriate” targeting of conservative political groups during the 2012 election to see if they were violating their tax-exempt status.

IRS agents singled out dozens of organizations for additional reviews because they included the words “tea party” or “patriot” in their exemption applications, said Lois Lerner, who heads the IRS division that oversees tax-exempt groups. In some cases, groups were asked for lists of donors, which violates IRS policy in most cases, she said.

The agency — led at the time by a Bush administration appointee — blamed low-level employees, saying no high-level officials were aware. But that wasn’t good enough for Republicans in Congress, who are conducting several investigations and asked for more.

“I call on the White House to conduct a transparent, government-wide review aimed at assuring the American people that these thugish practices are not under way at the IRS or elsewhere in the administration against anyone, regardless of their political views,” said Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

White House spokesman Jay Carney declared it was indeed inappropriate for the IRS to target tea party groups. But he brushed aside questions about whether the White House itself would investigate.

## Woman Rescued After 17 Days In Ruins

SAVAR, Bangladesh (AP) — For 17 days, the seamstress lay trapped in a dark basement pocket beneath thousands of tons of wreckage as temperatures outside climbed into the mid-90s F. She rationed food and water. She banged a pipe to attract attention. She was fast losing hope of ever making it out alive.

In the ruins of the collapsed eight-store garment factory building above her, the frantic rescue operation had long ago ended. It had turned instead into a grim search for the decaying bodies of the more than 1,000 people killed in the world’s worst garment industry disaster.

“No one heard me. It was so bad for me. I never dreamed I’d see the daylight again,” the seamstress, Reshma Begum, told Somoy TV from her hospital bed after her astonishing rescue on Friday.

The miraculous moment came when salvage workers finally heard Begum’s banging. They pulled her to safety. She was in shockingly good condition, wearing a violet outfit with a large, bright pink scarf.

“I heard her say, ‘I am alive, please save me.’ I gave her water. She was OK,” said Miraj Hossain, a volunteer who crawled through the debris to help cut Begum free.

## Bank Heist Even Impressed Crime Experts

NEW YORK (AP) — A bloodless bank heist that netted more than \$45 million has left even cybercrime experts impressed by the technical sophistication, if not the virtue, of the con artists who pulled off a remarkable internationally organized attack.

“It was pretty ingenious,” Pace University computer science professor Darren Hayes said Friday.

On the creative side of the heist, a small team of highly skilled hackers penetrated bank systems, erased withdrawal limits on prepaid debit cards and stole account numbers. On the crude end, criminals used handheld devices to change the information on the magnetic strips of old hotel key cards, used credit cards and depleted debit cards.

Seven people were arrested in the U.S., accused of operating the New York cell of what prosecutors said was a network that carried out thefts at ATMs in 27 countries from Canada to Russia. Law enforcement agencies from more than a dozen nations were involved in the investigation, which was being led by the Secret Service.

## Pakistan Getting Set For Historic Election

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Despite a bloody campaign marred by Taliban attacks, Pakistan holds historic elections Saturday pitting a former cricket star against a two-time prime minister once exiled by the army and an incumbent blamed for power blackouts and inflation.

The vote marks the first time in Pakistan’s 65-year history that a civilian government has completed its full term and handed over power in democratic elections. Previous governments have been toppled by military coups or sacked by presidents allied with the powerful army.

Deadly violence struck again Friday, with a pair of bombings against election offices in northwest Pakistan that killed three people and a shooting that killed a candidate in the southern city of Karachi. More than 130 people have been killed in the run-up to the vote, mostly secular party candidates and workers. Most attacks have been traced to Taliban militants, who have vowed to disrupt a democratic process they say runs counter to Islam.

The vote is being watched closely by Washington since the U.S. relies on the nuclear-armed country of 180 million people for help in fighting Islamic militants and negotiating an end to the war in neighboring Afghanistan.

The rise of former cricket star Imran Khan, who has almost mythical status in Pakistan, has challenged the dominance of the country’s two main political parties, making the outcome of the election very hard to call.

## Boston Marathon Suspect Buried In Virginia

DOSWELL, Va. (AP) — Boston Marathon bombing suspect Tamerlan Tsarnaev has been buried in a cemetery in central Virginia, infuriating some members of the area’s Islamic community who say they weren’t consulted and flooring at least one neighbor who said she didn’t even know she lived near a burial ground.

The secret interment this week at a small Islamic cemetery ended a frustrating search for a community willing to take the body, which had been kept at a funeral parlor in Worcester, Mass., as cemeteries in Massachusetts and several other states refused to accept the remains.

Tsarnaev, 26, was killed April 19 in a getaway attempt after a gun-battle with police. His younger brother, Dzhokhar, was captured later and remains in custody. They are accused of setting off two shrapnel-packed pressure-cooker bombs April 15 near the marathon finish line, an attack that killed three people and injured more than 260.

Their uncle, Ruslan Tsarni of Montgomery Village, Md., took responsibility for the body after Tamerlan’s wife, Katherine Russell, said she wanted it released to her in-laws. He said his nephew was buried in a cemetery in Doswell with the help of a faith coalition. “The body’s buried,” said the uncle. “That’s it.”

## Man Attacked By Gator Describes His Fight

PINELLAS PARK, Florida (AP) — The man attacked by an alligator after fleeing police in Florida says he was in a fight for his life with the croc.

Twenty-year-old Bryan Zuniga tells Tampa Bay’s Fox 13 News Friday that he was swimming and trying to hide when a 6- to 8-foot gator lunged at him.

Zuniga says he was nearly knocked unconscious when the gator’s mouth hit his head. He fought back with both legs and the arm not caught between the alligator’s jaws.

# State Dept. Sought To Change Talking Points

BY DONNA CASSATA AND JULIE PACE  
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Political considerations influenced the talking points that U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice used five days after the deadly Sept. 11 assault in Benghazi, Libya, with State Department and other senior administration officials asking that references to terror groups and prior warnings be deleted, according to department emails.

The latest disclosures Friday raised new questions about whether the Obama administration tried to play down any terrorist factor in the attack on a diplomatic compound just weeks before the November presidential election. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans were killed when insurgents struck the U.S. mission in two nighttime attacks.

The White House has insisted that it made only a “stylistic” change to the intelligence agency talking points from which Rice suggested on five Sunday talk shows that demonstrations over an anti-Islamic video devolved into the Benghazi attack.

Numerous agencies had engaged in an email discussion about the talking points that would be provided to members of Congress and to Rice for their public comments. In one email, then-State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland worried about the effect of openly discussing earlier warnings about the dangers of Islamic extremists in Benghazi.

Nuland’s email said such revelations “could be abused by members of Congress to beat the State Department for not paying attention to (central intelligence) agency warnings,” according to a congressional official who reviewed the 100 pages of emails.

The final talking points that weekend reflected the work of several government agencies — CIA, FBI, State Department, the office

of the Director of National Intelligence — apparently determined to cast themselves in the best light as the investigation was just getting underway.

A scathing independent report in December found that “systematic failures and leadership and management deficiencies at senior levels” of the State Department meant that security was “inadequate for Benghazi and grossly inadequate to deal with the attack that took place.”

Eight months after the attack, the long-running and bitter dispute between the Obama administration and congressional Republicans on the subject shows no sign of abating. The GOP argues that the administration deliberately tried to mislead Congress and the American people. The White House insists that Republicans are trying to politicize the issue.

“There’s an ongoing effort to make something political out of this,” White House spokesman Jay Carney said Friday of the disclosure of the emails, which the administration had provided to lawmakers. “The problem with that effort is that it’s never been clear what it is they think they’re accusing the administration of doing.”

Republicans have complained that the administration was trying to conceal that the attack was the work of terrorists and not a protest over an anti-Islamic film that got out of hand. Such revelations just before the election perhaps could have undercut President Barack Obama’s record on fighting terrorism, including the killing of 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden, one of his re-election strengths.

The State Department emails and other internal administration deliberations were summarized last month in an interim investigative report by Republicans on five House committees. New details about politi-

cal concerns and the names of the administration officials who wrote the emails concerning the talking points emerged on Friday.

Following Capitol Hill briefings in the days after the attack, members of Congress asked the CIA for talking points to explain the assault, and the CIA under the direction of David Petraeus put together an assessment.

It said Islamic extremists with ties to al-Qaida took part in the attack, cited reports linking the attack to the group Ansar al-Sharia, mentioned the experience of Libyan fighters and referred to previous warnings of threats in Benghazi.

The reference to al-Sharia was deleted, but Nuland wrote later that night that changes she had seen “don’t resolve all my issues and those of my building leadership, they are consulting with NSS,” a reference to the National Security staff within the White House.

She also wrote that she had serious concerns about giving information to members of Congress “to start making assertions to the media that we ourselves are not making because we don’t want to prejudice the investigation.”

Senior administration officials, including Jake Sullivan, deputy chief of staff at the State Department, and Ben Rhodes, the White House deputy national security adviser, met that Saturday morning to finalize the talking points.

Deputy CIA Director Mike Morrell worked with the officials to produce a final set of talking points that deleted mentions of al-Qaida, the experience of fighters in Libya and Islamic extremists, according to the congressional official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to speak publicly about the emails that still have not been released.

# Greenhouse Gas Milestone; CO2 Levels Set Record

SETH BORENSTEIN  
 AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON — Worldwide levels of the chief greenhouse gas that causes global warming have hit a milestone, reaching an amount never before encountered by humans, federal scientists said Friday.

Carbon dioxide was measured at 400 parts per million at the oldest monitoring station in Hawaii which sets the global benchmark. The last time the worldwide carbon level was probably that high was about 2 million years ago, said Pieter Tans of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

That was during the Pleistocene Era. “It was much warmer than it is today,” Tans said. “There were forests in Greenland. Sea level was higher, between 10 and 20 meters (33 to 66 feet).”

Other scientists say it may have been 10 million years ago that Earth last encountered this level of carbon dioxide.

The measurement was recorded Thursday. The number 400 has been anticipated by climate scientists and environmental activists for years as a notable indicator, in part because it’s a round number — not because any changes in man-made global warming happen by reaching it.

When measurements of this chief greenhouse gas were first taken in 1958, carbon dioxide was measured at 315. Levels are now growing about 2 parts per million per year. That’s 100 times faster than at the end of the Ice Age.

Before the Industrial Revolution, carbon dioxide levels were around 280 ppm, and they were closer to 200 during the Ice Age. There are natural ups and downs

of this greenhouse gas, which comes from volcanoes and decomposing plants and animals. But that’s not what has driven current levels so high, Tans said. He said the amount should be even higher, but the world’s oceans are absorbing quite a bit, keeping it out of the air.

“What we see today is 100 percent due to human activity,” said Tans, a NOAA senior scientist. The burning of fossil fuels, such as coal for electricity and oil for gasoline, has caused the overwhelming bulk of the man-made increase in carbon in the air, scientists say.

At the end of the Ice Age it took 7,000 years for carbon dioxide levels to rise by 80 parts per million, Tans said. Because of burning of fossil fuels, such as oil and coal, carbon dioxide levels have gone up by the same amount in just 55 years.

Carbon dioxide traps heat just like in a greenhouse and most of it stays in the air for a century, some lasts for thousands of years scientists say.

The speed of the change is the big worry, said Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann. If carbon dioxide levels go up 100 parts per million over thousands or millions of years, plants and animals can adapt. But that can’t be done at the speed it is now happening.

Last year, regional monitors briefly hit 400 ppm in the Arctic. But those monitoring stations aren’t seen as a world mark like the one at Mauna Loa, Hawaii.

Generally carbon levels peak in May then fall slightly, so the yearly average is usually a few parts per million lower than May levels.

# Texas Launches Criminal Probe Into Plant Explosion

BY ANGELA K. BROWN  
 AND RAMIT PLUSHNICK-MASTI  
 Associated Press

WACO, Texas — Texas law enforcement officials on Friday launched a criminal investigation into the massive fertilizer plant explosion that killed 14 people last month, after weeks of largely treating the blast as an industrial accident.

The announcement came the same day federal agents said they found bomb-making materials belonging to a paramedic who helped evacuate residents the night of the explosion. Bryce Reed was arrested early Friday on a charge of possessing a destructive device, but law enforcement officials said they had not linked the charge to the April 17 fire and blast at West Fertilizer Co.

“It is important to emphasize that at this point, no evidence has been uncovered to indicate any connection to the events surrounding the fire and subsequent explosion ... and the arrest of Bryce Reed by the ATF,” the McLennan County Sheriff’s Office said in a statement.

Texas Department of Public Safety said earlier Friday that the agency had instructed the Texas Rangers and the sheriff’s department to conduct a criminal probe into the explosion. The agencies will join the State Fire Marshall’s Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, which have been leading the investigation and never ruled out that a crime may have been

committed.

“This disaster has severely impacted the community of West, and we want to ensure that no stone goes unturned and that all the facts related to this incident are uncovered,” DPS Director Steven McCraw said.

McLennan County Sheriff Parnell McNamara said residents “must have confidence that this incident has been looked at from every angle and professionally handled — they deserve nothing less.”

The statement did not detail any further reasons for the criminal investigation and said no additional information would be released.

Reed, meanwhile, was in federal custody. A criminal complaint unsealed Friday afternoon said he was arrested after McLennan County deputies were called earlier this week to a home in Abbott, a town about five miles from West, and found bomb-making materials — including a galvanized metal pipe, canisters filled with fuses, a lighter, a digital scale and a variety of chemical powders.

“After further investigation, it was determined that the resident had unwittingly taken possession of the components from Reed on April 26,” says the complaint signed by ATF special agent Dou-

glas Kunze.

An ATF explosives specialist and a chemist examined the items and agreed the “combination of parts can be readily assembled into a destructive device,” the complaint says.

Reed made an initial appearance in federal court in Waco on Friday, but did not enter a plea.

Officials have largely treated the West explosion as an industrial accident, though investigators still searching for the cause of a fire that preceded the blast have said they would treat the area as a crime scene until all possibilities were considered.

The State Fire Marshal’s Office released a statement Friday saying it decided to continue pursuing a criminal probe because

roughly 250 leads have developed and more than 400 people have been interviewed.

Authorities have focused on ammonium nitrate, a chemical commonly used as a fertilizer, but that also can be explosive in the right conditions, as the cause of the explosion.

Reed was one of several paramedics who helped evacuate residents from nearby apartments after the fire erupted and shortly before the explosion. He has spoken to The Associated Press extensively, and said he was devastated by the explosion, which he said killed one of his closest friends, Cyrus Reed. Bryce Reed eulogized the firefighter at his funeral; the two are not related.

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