

KC Diocese Reaches Settlement In Civil Suit

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A lawsuit filed against the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and Bishop Robert Finn by a girl who was 2 years old when Kansas City priest Shawn Ratigan took pornographic photos of her has tentatively been settled for \$600,000, a Minnesota attorney representing the girl said Wednesday.

Gregg Meyers of the St. Paul, Minn., law firm Jeff Anderson and Associates told The Associated Press about the deal before it had been officially announced. He said it was reached after a full day of mediation between the parties Tuesday, soon after U.S. District Judge Gary Fenner in Kansas City dismissed one of two counts in the suit.

Fenner dismissed one count alleging the bishop and diocese aided and abetted Ratigan in his possession of child pornography. The judge said federal law stipulates that to be guilty of aiding and abetting, a party must have done so before or during the commission of a crime.

He said the diocese and bishop didn't know about hundreds of lewd photos on Ratigan's laptop computer until after he had committed the crime.

Ratigan pleaded guilty in August to taking pornographic photos of the girl, known as Jane Doe 173 in the litigation, in May 2006 at a church in Buchanan County. He awaits sentencing and initially was a party to the civil lawsuit but failed to respond.

Sexual Assault Cases Rocking The Pentagon

WASHINGTON (AP) — One after another, the charges have tumbled out — allegations of sexual assaults in the military that have triggered outrage, from local commanders to Capitol Hill and the Oval Office.

But for a Pentagon under fire, there seem to be few clear solutions beyond improved training and possible adjustments in how the military prosecutes such crimes. Changing the culture of a male-dominated, change-resistant military that for years has tolerated sexism and sexist behavior is proving to be a challenging task.

“Members of the Hill, people in the department and the American people have the right to be outraged,” Pentagon press secretary George Little said Wednesday, adding that the military “must hold ourselves to a higher standard.”

As new sexual assault allegations emerged this week involving an Army soldier who was assigned to prevent such crimes — the second military member involved in similar accusations — the Pentagon said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel is working on a written directive to spell out steps aimed at resolving the escalating problem.

But President Barack Obama, fuming at a news conference last week, warned that he wanted swift and sure action, not “just more speeches or awareness programs or training.” Sexual offenders need to be “prosecuted, stripped of their position, court-martialed, fired, dishonorably discharged. Period,” he said.

Russia Claims Second U.S. Spy Was Expelled

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian security services operative — his features bathed in shadows — went on state television Wednesday to claim that the U.S. diplomat who was ordered out of the country was the second American expelled this year over spying allegations.

The anonymous operative said the CIA had failed to halt this “disturbing activity” despite Moscow asking it to do so.

The TV report came one day after Russia ordered Ryan Fogle, a third secretary at the U.S. Embassy, to leave the country after the Federal Security Service claimed to have caught him red-handed trying to recruit a Russian agent in Moscow. The agency, known by the initials FSB, alleged that Fogle worked for the CIA.

State TV channels showed a man identified as an FSB agent saying that another American was told to leave in January in “another case of recruitment.” The anonymous speaker, whose identity as an FSB operative could not be confirmed by The Associated Press, did not give the name of the expelled American.

Various Russian TV networks gave different names for the American, and the FSB refused to clarify the name to The Associated Press. State Department spokesman Patrick Ventrell declined to comment.

Wisconsin Wildfire Consumes 8,700 Acres

BY CARRIE ANTLEFINGER  
Associated Press Writer

MILWAUKEE — Authorities are investigating whether logging operations may have sparked a massive wildfire in northwestern Wisconsin that destroyed dozens of buildings and forced at least 60 people from their homes, state officials said Wednesday.

The wildfire has consumed about 8,700 to 9,000 acres in Douglas and Bayfield County but is about 90 to 95 percent contained, meaning firefighters have largely arrested the spread of the fire, according to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

“I would say we are really close to having this fire in hand,” DNR spokesman Robert Manwell said Wednesday afternoon. “We are probably going to be here for another 36, 48 hours doing mop up, taking care of hotspots, things of that kind.”

No injuries have been reported in the largest forest fire to hit northern Wisconsin in 33 years, according to the DNR.

Winds were expected shift from northwest to west, which could

help push fire from more populated areas, according to the DNR.

The DNR was even expected to start taking people back to their properties Wednesday to check on damage and retrieve pets and supplies, Manwell said.

Officials were investigating whether a spark from logging equipment could have started the fire around 2:30 p.m. near Simms Lake in Douglas County, said DNR spokesman Ed Culhane said.

At least 60 people have evacuated their homes and 22 of them stayed overnight at a high school in Drummond, 60 miles southeast of Duluth, Minn., the DNR said. Forty-seven structures were destroyed, including 17 homes, but firefighters were able to save 77 other buildings, according to the DNR.

Danny Archambeau told the *Duluth News Tribune* Wednesday morning that he evacuated his home near Ellison Lake at 8 p.m. Tuesday. He didn't know at that time if his house had damage.

“We thought the fire was going to go north of us,” he said, “but when the wind switched it came at us so fast we had to run. I grabbed my guns, my mother-in-law and my

wife — in that order — and we got out.”

DNR spokeswoman Catherine Koele said they planned work throughout Wednesday night on the fire and monitor the fire line and put out hot spots on Thursday. She said they would also continue investigating the fire's cause. Winds were expected to be calmer Thursday, which would help but conditions are expected to be dry, she said.

She said expected the evacuation center at Drummond High School to be open for a second night Wednesday for evacuees in need of a place to stay.

Continued dry and windy weather pushed much of the state into the “very high” wildfire danger range prompting the DNR to suspend burning permits statewide. The DNR and National Weather Service issued a Red Flag Warning for Florence and Marinette counties, which means large forest fires were possible due to the weather conditions.

“We're urging extreme caution in all outdoor activities,” Trent Marty, director of DNR Bureau of Forest Protection, said in a news release.

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Petraeus Objected To Benghazi Talking Points

BY NEDRA PICKLER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Then CIA-Director David Petraeus objected to the final talking points the Obama administration used after the deadly assault on a U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, because he wanted to see more details revealed to the public, according to emails released Wednesday by the White House.

Under pressure in the investigation that continues eight months after the attacks, the White House on Wednesday released 99 pages of emails and a single page of handwritten notes made by Petraeus' deputy, Mike Morell, after a meeting at the White House on Saturday, Sept. 15. On that page, Morell scratched out from the CIA's early drafts of talking points mentions of al-Qaida, the experience of fighters in Libya, Islamic extremists and a warning to the Cairo embassy on the eve of the attacks of calls for a demonstration and break-in by jihadists.

Petraeus apparently was displeased by the removal of so much of the material his analysts initially had proposed for release. The talking points were sent to U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice to prepare her for an appearance on news shows on Sunday, Sept. 16, and also to members of the House Intelligence Committee.

“No mention of the cable to Cairo, either?” Petraeus wrote after receiving Morell's edited version, developed after an intense back-and-forth among Obama administration officials. “Frankly, I'd just as soon not use this, then.”

Petraeus' email comes at the end of extensive back-and-forth between officials at the CIA, White House, State Department and other agencies weighing in on a public explanation for the Sept. 11, 2012, attack that killed U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans.

The emails were partially blacked out, including removal of names of senders and recipients who are career employees at the CIA and elsewhere.

The emails show only minor edits were requested by the White House, and most of the objections came from the State Department. “The White House cleared quickly, but State has major concerns,” read an email that a CIA official sent to Petraeus on Friday, Sept. 14.

Critics have highlighted an email by then-State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland that expressed concern that any mention of prior warnings or the involvement of al-Qaida would give

congressional Republicans ammunition to attack the administration in the weeks before the presidential election. Fighting terror was one of President Barack Obama's re-election strong points.

That email was among those released by the White House, sent by Nuland on Sept. 14 at 7:39 p.m. to officials in the White House, State Department and CIA. She wrote she was concerned they could prejudice the investigation and be “abused by members to beat the State Department for not paying attention to agency warnings so why do we want to feed that either? Concerned.”

After Nuland sent several more emails throughout that Friday evening expressing further concerns, Jake Sullivan, then-deputy chief of staff at the State Department, said the issues would be worked out at a meeting at the White House on Saturday morning.

A senior U.S. intelligence official told reporters Wednesday that Morell made the changes to the talking points after that meeting because of his own concerns that they could prejudice an FBI investigation into who was responsible for the attacks.

The official said Morell also didn't think it was fair to disclose the CIA's advance warning without giving the State Department a chance to explain how it responded. The official spoke on a condition of anonymity without authorization to speak about the emails on the record. Petraeus declined to be interviewed Wednesday.

The intelligence official said Morell was aware of Nuland's objections but did not make the changes under pressure from the State Department but because he independently shared the concerns.

That is contradicted in an email sent to Rice on Saturday, Sept. 15, at 1:23 p.m. by a member of her

staff whose name was blacked out. The email said Morell indicated he would work with Sullivan and Ben Rhodes, the White House deputy national security adviser, to revise the talking points. The intelligence official disputed that assertion and insisted Morell acted alone.

An email from Morell also says he spoke to Petraeus “about State's deep concerns about mentioning the warnings and the other work done on this.”

The emails were shared with Congress earlier this year as a condition for allowing the nomination of John Brennan for CIA director to move forward. An interim report last month from the Republicans on five House committees criticized the Obama administration and mentioned the emails, but the issue exploded last Friday when new details emerged.

Republicans on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee read some of the emails aloud last Wednesday at a hearing with State Department officials.

The next day, House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, called on the White House to release the emails. A Boehner spokesman said Wednesday the emails released by the White House only confirm the interim report.

“They contradict statements made by the White House that it and the State Department only changed one word in the talking points,” Boehner spokesman Brendan Buck said in a statement. “The seemingly political nature of the State Department's concerns raises questions about the motivations behind these changes and who at the State Department was seeking them.”

The White House released the full set of emails sent to Congress under the pressure in hopes of putting an end to the controversy that has dogged the administration for months. White House spokesman

Eric Schultz said Wednesday that “these e-mails have been selectively and inaccurately read out to the media.”

“To make clear what is and is not in these e-mails, today the White House took the extraordinary step of releasing these e-mails,” Schultz said in a statement. “You can now see what the Congress has seen — collectively these e-mails make clear that the interagency process, including the White House's interactions, were focused on providing the facts as we knew them based on the best information available at the time and protecting an ongoing investigation.”

An official with the CIA's office of congressional affairs whose name was blacked out sent the final version to Petraeus on Saturday, Sept. 15, at 12:51 p.m. Petraeus responded at 2:27 saying he'd prefer not to even use them in that form.

But he said the decision was up to the White House's national security staff.

“NSS's call, to be sure; however, this is certainly not what Vice Chairman (Dutch) Ruppertsberger was hoping to get for unclas use. Regardless, thanks for the great work.”

Ruppertsberger is the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee.

At a Capitol Hill hearing Wednesday, Attorney General Eric Holder said there has been “very, very substantial progress” in the investigation into who was responsible for the twin nighttime attacks in Benghazi. Earlier this month, the FBI said it was seeking information on three people who were on the grounds of the diplomatic mission when it was attacked. The FBI posted photographs of the three people and said they may be able to provide information to help in the investigation.



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