

Hezbollah Pulled More Deeply Into Syria War

BEIRUT (AP) — Hezbollah was pulled more deeply into Syria's civil war as 28 guerrillas from the Lebanese Shiite militant group were killed and dozens more wounded while fighting rebels, Syria activists said Monday.

The intense battle drove rebels from large parts of the town of Qusair, part of a withering government offensive aimed at securing a strategic land corridor from Damascus to the Mediterranean coast.

Hezbollah-affiliated hospitals in Lebanon urged blood donations through mosque loudspeakers and ambulances raced along the Damascus road in a stark indication of the group's increasingly prominent role in Syria.

The overt Hezbollah involvement — several funerals for group members were held Monday in Lebanon — edges the war further into a regional sectarian conflict pitting the Middle East's Iranian-backed Shiite axis against Sunnis.

It also raised tensions considerably in Lebanon, where Hezbollah has come under harsh criticism for its involvement in the civil war next door.

Yahoo Buys Blogging Forum Tumblr For \$1.1B

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Yahoo is buying online blogging forum Tumblr for \$1.1 billion as CEO Marissa Mayer tries to rejuvenate an Internet pioneer that had fallen behind the times.

The deal announced Monday is Mayer's boldest move since she left Google 10 months ago to lead Yahoo's latest comeback attempt. It marks Yahoo's most expensive acquisition since the Sunnyvale, Calif., company bought online search engine Overture a decade ago for \$1.3 billion in cash and stock.

Yahoo is paying mostly cash for Tumblr, dipping into what remains of a \$7.6 billion windfall reaped last year from selling about half of its stake in Chinese Internet company Alibaba Holdings Group. Taking over Tumblr will devour about one-fifth of the \$5.4 billion in cash that Yahoo had in its accounts at the end of March.

While hailing Tumblr as a fount of creativity that attracts 300 million visitors each month, Mayer told analysts Monday that she is "making a sincere promise to not screw it up." David Karp, a high school dropout who started Tumblr six years ago, will remain in control of the service in an effort to retain the same "irreverence, wit and commitment to empower creators," Yahoo said.

Karp, 26, may now have a managerial mentor in Mayer, 37. Tumblr, which will remain based in New York, has about 175 employees while Yahoo has 11,300 workers.

Wave Of Attacks Across Iraq Kill 95

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's wave of bloodshed sharply escalated Monday with more than a dozen car bombings across the country, part of attacks that killed at least 95 people and brought echoes of past sectarian carnage and fears of a dangerous spillover from Syria's civil war next door.

The latest spiral of violence — which has claimed more than 240 lives in the past week — carries the hallmarks of the two sides that brought nearly nonstop chaos to Iraq for years: Sunni insurgents, including al-Qaida's branch in Iraq, and Shiite militias defending their newfound power after Saddam Hussein's fall.

But the widening shadow and regional brinksmanship from Syria's conflict now increasingly threaten to feed into Iraq's sectarian strife, heightening concerns that Iraq could be turning toward civil war.

The Shiite-led government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki must balance its close ties with Iran — the main regional ally of Syria's Bashar Assad — and its position among fellow Arab League members and neighboring Turkey, which strongly back Syria's mainly Sunni opposition.

Al-Maliki appears determined to boost security crackdowns to keep Iraq's minority Sunnis from taking a more high-profile role in the anti-Assad forces, which have received pledges of support from the long-time insurgent group al-Qaida in Iraq.

Arias Will Testify During Death-Penalty Phase

PHOENIX (AP) — Complaining that Jodi Arias' sensational murder case has become a modern-day "witch trial," her lawyers tried to quit in the middle of the death-penalty phase Monday, then said they will call only one witness: Arias.

When Arias addresses the jury on Tuesday, the big question will be whether she pleads for mercy or repeats what she told a TV reporter minutes after she was convicted: that she would rather be executed than spend the rest of her life in prison.

The courtroom fireworks came as the jury that found Arias guilty of murder in the 2008 shooting and stabbing death of boyfriend Travis Alexander was hearing evidence on whether the former waitress should get the death penalty or a life sentence.

Last week, Alexander's brother and sister tearfully described for the jury how his killing had torn their lives apart. This week, the defense planned to call its own witnesses, including a female friend and an ex-boyfriend of Arias, in hopes of convincing the jury her life is worth saving.

But defense attorney Kirk Nurmi told the court Monday morning that the female witness refused to testify after receiving threats, and he asked the judge to declare a mistrial in the penalty phase. He argued that he could no longer effectively defend Arias without all of the intended witnesses, and that "a partial picture is not good enough for this jury."

IRS Scandal

More WH Aides Knew Of Audit

Say They Knew Of Impending Report In Late April; President Was Not Told

BY JULIE PACE AND CHARLES BABINGTON

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — White House chief of staff Denis McDonough and other senior advisers knew in late April that an impending report was likely to say the IRS had inappropriately targeted conservative groups, President Barack Obama's spokesman disclosed Monday, expanding the circle of top officials who knew of the audit beyond those named earlier.

But McDonough and the other advisers did not tell Obama, leaving him to learn about the politically perilous results of the internal investigation from news reports more than two weeks later, officials said.

The apparent decision to keep the president in the dark underscores the White House's cautious legal approach to controversies and reflects a desire by top advisers to distance Obama from troubles threatening his administration.

Obama spokesman Jay Carney defended

keeping the president out of the loop on the Internal Revenue Service audit, saying Obama was comfortable with the fact that "some matters are not appropriate to convey to him, and this is one of them."

"It is absolutely a cardinal rule as we see it that we do not intervene in ongoing investigations," Carney said.

Republicans, however, are accusing the president of being unaware of important happenings in the government he oversees.

"It seems to be the answer of the administration whenever they're caught doing something they shouldn't be doing is, 'I didn't know about it,'" Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, told CBS News. "And it causes me to wonder whether they believe willful ignorance is a defense when it's your job to know."

Obama advisers argue that the outcry from Republicans would be far worse had McDonough or White House Counsel Kathryn Ruemmler told the president about the IRS audit before it became public, thereby raising

questions about White House interference.

Still, the White House's own shifting information about who knew what and when is keeping the focus of the IRS controversy on the West Wing.

When Carney first addressed the matter last week, he said only that Ruemmler had been told around April 22 that an inspector general audit was being concluded at a Cincinnati IRS office that screens applications for organizations' tax-exempt status. He said the audit was described to the counsel's office "very broadly."

But on Monday, Carney said lower-ranking staffers in the White House counsel's office first learned of the report one week earlier, on April 16. When Ruemmler was later alerted, she was told specifically that the audit was likely to conclude that IRS employees improperly scrutinized organizations by looking for words like "tea party" and "patriot." Ruemmler then told McDonough, deputy chief of staff Mark Childress, and other senior advisers, but not Obama.



KEVIN P. CASEY/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT
Ray Manzarek, performing in this undated file photo, has died in Germany, where he was receiving treatment for bile duct cancer. He was 74.

Ray Manzarek, Founding Member Of The Doors, Dies

BY CHRIS TALBOTT

AP Music Writer

Ray Manzarek, a founding member of The Doors whose versatile and often haunting keyboards complimented Jim Morrison's gloomy baritone and helped set the mood for some of rock's most enduring songs, has died. He was 74.

Manzarek died Monday in Rosenheim, Germany, surrounded by his family, said publicist Heidi Robinson-Fitzgerald. Robinson-Fitzgerald said his manager, Tom Vitorino, confirmed Manzarek died after being stricken by bile duct cancer.

The Doors' original lineup, which also included drummer John Densmore and guitarist Robbie Krieger, was only together for a few years. But the band has retained a large and obsessive following decades after Morrison's death, in 1971.

The Doors have sold more than 100 million records and songs such as "Light My Fire" and "Riders On the Storm" are still "classic" rock standards. For Doors admirers, the

band symbolized the darker side of the Los Angeles lifestyle, what happened to the city after the sun went down and the Beach Boys fans headed home.

Next to Morrison, Manzarek was the most distinctive looking band member, his glasses and wavy blond hair making him resemble a young English professor more than a rock star, a contrast to Morrison's Dionysian glamour — his sensuous mouth and long, dark hair. Musically, Manzarek's spidery organ on "Light My Fire" is one of the most instantly recognizable sounds in rock history.

But he seemed up to finding the right touch for a wide range of songs — the sleepy, lounge-style keyboards on "Riders On the Storm"; the liquid strains for "The Crystal Ship"; the barrelhouse romps on "Roadhouse Blues." The Doors always considered themselves "more" than a rock band and Manzarek, Densmore and Krieger often managed a flowing rapport that blended rock, blues and jazz behind Morrison's self-consciously poetic lyrics.

Government Presses On With Another Case Of Leaked Documents

WASHINGTON (AP) — In another case of the Obama administration investigating classified information improperly disclosed to reporters, the government is prosecuting a State Department expert on North Korea in a probe that appears to step into uncharted territory — by declaring that a journalist is committing a crime in disclosing leaked information.

During the investigation of State Department adviser Stephen Kim, law enforcement officials obtained a search warrant for some private emails of James Rosen, the chief Washington correspondent for Fox News. Investigators also tracked Rosen's comings and goings from the State Department.

An FBI agent seeking the search warrant spelled out the government's view of the journalist's role, saying the reporter is a co-conspirator and that there is probable cause to believe that the reporter committed a violation of criminal law.

"We are outraged to learn today that James Rosen was named a criminal co-conspirator for simply doing his job as a reporter," said Michael Clemente, Fox's executive vice president for news. "In fact, it is

downright chilling. We will unequivocally defend his right to operate as a member of what up until now has always been a free press."

Kim, who is awaiting trial, is accused of revealing secrets to the news organization. No charges have been filed against Rosen.

The Kim case is further along than a more recent leak probe in which prosecutors secretly subpoenaed Associated Press phone records. In the AP case, AP President and Chief Executive Gary Pruitt said the government's conduct has already had a chilling effect on newsgathering, a week after the AP subpoenas were revealed publicly.

In June 2009, Rosen reported that U.S. intelligence officials warned President Barack Obama and senior U.S. officials that North Korea would respond to a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning nuclear tests with another nuclear test.

The 2010 affidavit for a search warrant, first reported by *The Washington Post*, does not identify Rosen as "the reporter," but he wrote the story at issue, and Fox News confirmed it was him on Monday.

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Obama Meets With Myanmar Leader

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a long-awaited White House visit, President Barack Obama on Monday told Myanmar's president that he appreciates the Asian leader's efforts to lead the country in "a long and sometimes difficult, but ultimately correct, path to follow" toward democracy.

Obama spoke as he sat in the Oval Office with former general Thein Sein, who became the first president of Myanmar to visit the White House in 47 years. Activists object to the invitation because of concerns over human rights in the country, but it marks a turnaround in international acceptance for Myanmar after decades of isolation and direct military rule.

Obama credited Thein Sein's leadership in political and economic reform in bringing about an end to significant tensions between their two countries.

"As I indicated to President Sein, countries that are success are countries that tap into the talents of all people and respect the rights of all people," Obama said. "And I'm confident that if Myanmar follows that recipe, that it will be not only a successful democracy but a thriving economy."

Thein Sein previously served in a repressive junta, and his meetings at the White House and Congress would have been all-but-impossible before he took the helm of a nominally civilian government in 2011. His name was only deleted from a blacklist barring travel to the U.S. last September.

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