

2 Arrested On Suspicion Of Endangering Aircraft

LONDON (AP) — Britain scrambled fighter jets Friday to intercept a commercial airliner carrying more than 300 people from Pakistan, diverting it to an isolated runway at an airport on the outskirts of London and arresting two British passengers who allegedly threatened to destroy the plane.

A British security official said the situation involving the Pakistan International Airlines flight did not appear terror-related, though police were still investigating, but the incident further rattled the U.K. just days after a soldier was killed on a London street in a suspected terror attack.

The security official requested anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the investigation.

A Pakistani official briefed by British police and PIA security on the investigation said the two suspects, speaking Urdu, allegedly threatened to “destroy the plane” after an argument with crew. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the case on the record.

Flight P709 was traveling from Lahore, Pakistan, to Manchester Airport when it was diverted by the fighter jets to Stansted Airport. The U.K. Ministry of Defense confirmed that Typhoon jets were launched to investigate an incident involving a civilian aircraft but gave no further details.

Wash. Gov: Officials Looking For Temporary Fix

MOUNT VERNON, Wash. (AP) — Federal officials were searching the country for a possible temporary replacement for a bridge that collapsed along the crucial Interstate 5 corridor, but Washington Gov. Jay Inslee cautioned Friday that major disruptions will last for weeks, if not months.

A truck hauling an oversized load of drilling equipment hit an overhead bridge girder Thursday night, sending a section of the highway into the river below. The truck driver watched helplessly as the structure collapsed in his rearview mirror. Two other vehicles plunged into the Skagit River, but all three occupants escaped with only minor injuries.

At a news conference, Inslee said federal officials were looking for a pre-fabricated structure to replace the 160-foot section that fell into the river. If one is found, a temporary fix could be in place in weeks. If one can't be quickly secured, the governor said it could be months before a replacement can be built.

“You cannot overstate the importance of this corridor to Washington state,” Inslee said. Traffic on the interstate and surrounding roads was backed up for miles throughout the area, a situation that the governor said would continue indefinitely.

“There will be substantial delays,” he said.

Obama’s Drone Guidelines Leave Questions

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama left plenty of ambiguity in new policy guidelines that he says will restrict how and when the U.S. can launch targeted drone strikes, leaving himself significant power over how and when the weapons can be deployed.

National security experts say it's imperative to leave some room in the guidelines, given the evolving fight against terrorism. But civil rights advocates argue too little has been revealed about the program to ensure its legality, even as the president takes steps to remove some of the secrecy.

“Obama said that there would be more limits on targeted killings, a step in the right direction,” said Kenneth Roth, executive director at Human Rights Watch. “But a mere promise that the US will work within established guidelines that remain secret provides little confidence that the US is complying with international law.”

An unclassified version of the newly established drone guidelines was made public Thursday in conjunction with Obama's wide-ranging address on U.S. counterterrorism policies. Congress' Intelligence committees and the Capitol Hill leadership have been briefed on the more detailed, classified policies, but because those documents are secret, there's no way of knowing how much more clarity they provide.

The president has already been using some of the guidelines to determine when to launch drone strikes, administration officials said. Codifying the strictest standards, they argue, will ultimately reduce the number of approved attacks.

Principal Recounts Tornado Hitting School

BY JUSTIN JUOZAPAVICIUS
Associated Press

MOORE, Okla. — Teachers and students at Plaza Towers Elementary School hunkered down against the storm just as they had been taught in countless tornado drills, their principal said Friday, recounting how she walked the halls until the twister was on the doorstep, then announced on the intercom, “It's here.”

In a pause-filled recollection that left many weeping, Amy Simpson said at a news conference that her teachers emerged battered after doing what they could to save every child in the Oklahoma school. Still, seven second- and third-graders were among the 24 killed when the top-of-the-scale EF5 tornado with 210 mph winds struck Moore on Monday.

“The teachers covered themselves in debris while they were covering their babies. And I believe that is why so many of us survived that day, because the teachers were able to act quickly, stay calm and take literally the weight of a wall onto their bodies to save those that were under them,” said Simpson, a native of the city of about 56,000.

The tornado was on the ground for 40 minutes and left a 17-mile path of destruction.

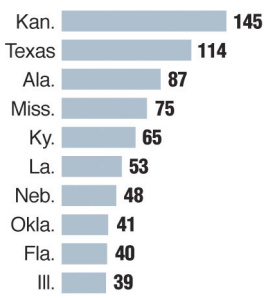
Its victims at the school were ages 8 and 9.

“These kids are close. They grew up in one neighborhood. They play in the streets. They play in the creek. They have their own little community, even more so in the classroom,” second-grade teacher Amy Eischen said.

The Moore School District canceled its school year after the tornado hit Plaza Towers and the Briarwood school, where all students survived. District officials and teachers met with pupils and their parents Thursday to give

Tornado states

Top 10 states for tornadoes in 2012



Source: NOAA
Graphic: The Palm Beach Post
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everyone a chance to say goodbye before heading into summer vacation.

Simpson said that, having been born and raised in Oklahoma, she knew what it meant to deal with tornadoes. The state, in the heart of Tornado Alley, has averaged more than 50 tornadoes per year since record-keeping began in 1950.

“Not one parent blamed us because they're Oklahomans, too, and they know what a tornado means and they know what it means in school,” Simpson said. “We practice our procedures. We get in our safest places.”

Simpson said teachers and students had spent much of Monday morning celebrating their achievements and practicing this year's sixth-grade graduation.

Then attention turned to the sky.

When the sirens blared, the principal walked the school to make sure everyone was prepared.

“Teachers were rubbing kids on the back, singing songs,” while the students were crouched with their hands behind their necks, Simpson said.

When Simpson got to her office,

Mayor Says He Doesn’t Smoke Cocaine

TORONTO (AP) — Toronto Mayor Rob Ford denied Friday that he smokes crack cocaine and said he is not an addict after a video purported to show him using the drug. Ford did not say whether he has ever used crack.

Ford did not take questions from reporters at a news conference at City Hall after close allies released a letter urging him to address the purported video, which apparently shows him smoking crack.

“I do not use crack cocaine, nor am I an addict of crack cocaine,” he said before going on to criticize the media.

Ford has been ducking the media and his only comments before today on the scandal came last Friday, a day after the story broke, when he called the crack smoking allegations “ridiculous” and said that the Toronto Star was out to get him.

The alleged video has not been released publicly and its authenticity has not been verified. Reports on gossip website Gawker and in the Toronto Star claimed it was taken by men who said they had sold the drug to Ford. The Associated Press hasn't seen the video.

a fifth-grade teacher told her the storm was just southwest of the school. “I got on the intercom and said, ‘It's here,’” Simpson said.

She rode out the storm in a bathroom.

“You feel things trickling down on you from the ceiling, then those things become chunks of things,” Simpson said. “I yelled and said, ‘In God's name, go away!’ I yelled it about four times. And then it was gone.”

While debris was still flying, Simpson said, she told others, “I've got to get to the kids. I got out of the bathroom and the whole neighborhood was gone.”

She quickly tended to the younger students then saw that students in grades 4, 5 and 6 were heading to a nearby church. She asked her husband to help the second- and third-graders — she hadn't seen any of them yet.

They were in a part of the school that was particularly hard-hit. School counselor Kristin Atchley said surviving class members could tell while still trapped in the

rubble who wasn't going to make it.

“They knew before they got pulled out,” Atchley said.

Simpson, sobbing, said she had already been to three funerals and will have gone to four more by the end of the week.

One of the Friday funerals was for 8-year-old Kyle Davis. Hundreds of mourners packed a Baptist church — many wearing T-shirts with “K. Davis (hash)16” emblazoned on the back to memorialize his love of soccer. Teammates passed around a soccer ball and a Sharpie to sign before the service.

“It's hard to believe that someone who was only 8 years old touched so many lives enough to fill a church like this to capacity,” said John Jackson, one of Kyle's coaches.

On a display in the church lobby were some of Kyle's trophies and other medals from sports and school, as well as a poster Kyle made on which he wrote, “When I grow up, I want to be a soccer champion.”



Our thoughts are with the brave men and women serving our country and the ones who served before them.

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Our respect and gratitude will forever be with our fallen military heroes and their families. Their service and sacrifice are beyond measure, and we will never forget their dedication to our country and our freedom.

To all the brave men and women who serve in uniform today, we thank you for your commitment to preserving freedom at home and around the world. You are an inspiration to all of us, and you make us proud to be Americans. We salute you and your families, and pray for your safe return home.

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Century 21 Real Estate Revs Up Its' Marketing with IndyCar Team Sponsorship in Indianapolis 500

Century 21 Real Estate is teaming up with the Sarah Fisher Hartman racing team along with driver Joset Newgarden. Newgarden's Dallara/Honda/Firestone car will forgo its traditional No. 67 in favor of No. 21, the world's largest real estate sales organization's signature number, for the “Greatest Spectacle in Racing.”

The 97th running of the Indianapolis 500 will take place on May 26, and be broadcast on ABC television.

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