

Obama May OK Project For Syrian Rebels

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama may soon sign off on a project to train and equip moderate Syrian rebels, in an open move that would significantly boost U.S. support for forces who have been asking for three years for military help in their quest to oust President Bashar Assad, administration officials said Tuesday.

The step would send a limited number of American troops to Jordan to be part of a regional training mission that would instruct carefully vetted members of the Free Syrian Army on tactics, including counterterrorism operations, the officials said. They said Obama has not yet given approval for the initiative, and that there is still internal discussion about its merits and potential risks.

In a foreign policy speech on Wednesday to the U.S. Military Academy, Obama is expected to frame Syria as a counterterrorism challenge and indicate that he will expand assistance to the opposition, according to the officials. However, he is not likely to announce the specific program, which is still being finalized, the officials said.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss administration deliberations.

The State Department, Pentagon, intelligence community, along with many in Congress who back the move, have concluded that Assad will not budge without a change in the military situation on the ground, according to the officials. At the same time, there are growing fears about the threat posed by al-Qaida-linked and inspired extremists fighting in Syria, the officials said.

Malaysia Releases Satellite Data On Jet

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Close to three months after the Malaysian jetliner disappeared, the government on Tuesday released reams of raw satellite data it used to determine that the flight ended in the southern Indian Ocean, a step long demanded by the families of some of the passengers on board.

But while the 45 pages of information may help satisfy a desire for more transparency in a much criticized investigation, experts say it's unlikely to solve the mystery of Flight 370 — or give much comfort to relatives stuck between grieving and the faintest hope, no matter how unlikely, their loved ones might still be alive.

"It's a whole lot of stuff that is not very important to know," said Michael Exner, a satellite engineer who has been independently researching the calculations. "There are probably two or three pages of important stuff, the rest is just noise. It doesn't add any value to our understanding."

He and others said the needed assumptions, algorithms and metadata to validate the investigators' conclusion were not there.

The release of the information came as the underwater hunt for the jet is poised to pause until later in the summer while new, powerful sonar equipment is obtained, a sign of just how difficult it will be to locate the jet and finally get some answers on how it went missing with 239 people on board.

High-Pollution Power Plant Surviving

HOMER CITY, Pa. (AP) — Three years ago, the operators of one of the nation's dirtiest coal-fired power plants warned of "immediate and devastating" consequences from the Obama administration's push to clean up pollution from coal.

Faced with cutting sulfur dioxide pollution blowing into downwind states by 80 percent in less than a year, lawyers for EME Homer City Generation L.P. sued the Environmental Protection Agency to block the rule, saying it would cause it grave harm and bring a painful spike in electricity bills.

None of those dire predictions came to pass.

Instead, the massive western Pennsylvania power plant is expected in a few years to turn from one of the worst polluters in the country to a model for how coal-fired power plants can slash pollution.

The story of the Homer City plant reflects the precarious position of older coal-fired plants these days, squeezed between cheap and plentiful natural gas and a string of environmental rules the Obama administration has targeted at coal, which supplies about 40 percent of the nation's electricity. The latest regulation, the first proposal to curb earth-warming carbon dioxide from power plants, is due next week. It will pose yet another challenge to coal-fired power plants. Dozens of coal-fueled units have already announced they would close in the face of new rules.

Egypt Extends Presidential Election

CAIRO (AP) — "Where are the people?" one talk show host on a military station shouted as Egypt on Tuesday extended its presidential election to a third day in an apparent drive to raise voter turnout and avoid an embarrassingly meager show of support for former army chief Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi.

Throughout the day, officials and supporters of el-Sissi, the expected winner, exhorted voters to go to the polls.

Scenes of empty polling stations drove el-Sissi supporters on the country's TV stations into a lather, and they scolded Egyptians for not turning out.

Opponents said the turnout showed the depth of discontent with el-Sissi, not just among his Islamist foes but among a broader section of the public that says he has no solutions for the country's woes and fears he will return Egypt to the autocratic ways of Hosni Mubarak, overthrown in 2011 after 29 years in power.

There has never been any doubt that the 59-year-old el-Sissi would win over his sole opponent, leftist politician Hamdeen Sabahi.

CEO Pay Crosses \$10M Mark

BY KEN SWEET
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — They're the \$10 million men and women.

Propelled by a soaring stock market, the median pay package for a CEO rose above eight figures for the first time last year. The head of a Standard & Poor's 500 company earned a record \$10.5 million, an increase of 8.8 percent from \$9.6 million in 2012, according to an Associated Press/Equilar pay study.

Last year was the fourth straight that CEO compensation rose following a decline during the Great Recession. The median CEO pay package climbed more than 50 percent over that stretch. A chief executive now makes about 257 times the average worker's salary, up sharply from 181 times in 2009.

The best paid CEO last year led an oil-field-services company. The highest paid female CEO was Carol Meyrowitz of discount retail giant TJX, owner of TJ Maxx and Marshall's. And the head of Monster Beverage got a monster of a raise.

Over the last several years, companies' boards of directors have tweaked executive compensation to answer critics' calls for CEO pay to be more attuned to performance. They've cut back on stock options and cash bonuses, which were criticized for rewarding executives even when a company did poorly.

Boards of directors have placed more emphasis on paying CEOs in stock in-

stead of cash and stock options.

The change became a boon for CEOs last year because of a surge in stocks that drove the S&P 500 index up 30 percent. The stock component of pay packages rose 17 percent to \$4.5 million.

"Companies have been happy with their CEOs' performance and the stock market has provided a big boost," says Gary Hewitt, director of research at GMI Ratings, a corporate governance research firm. "But we are still dealing with a situation where CEO compensation has spun out of control and CEOs are being paid extraordinary levels for their work."

The highest paid CEO was Anthony Petrello of oilfield-services company Nabors Industries, who made \$68.3 million in 2013. Petrello's pay ballooned as a result of a \$60 million lump sum that the company paid him to buy out his old contract.

Nabors Industries did not respond to calls from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Petrello was one of a handful of chief executives who received a one-time boost in pay because boards of directors decided to re-negotiate CEO contracts under pressure from shareholders. Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold CEO Richard Adkerson also received a one-time payment of \$36.7 million to renegotiate his contract. His total pay, \$55.3 million, made him the third-highest paid CEO last year.

The second-highest paid CEO among companies in the S&P 500 was Leslie

Moonves of CBS. Moonves' total compensation rose 9 percent to \$65.6 million in 2013, a year when the company's stock rose nearly 70 percent.

"CBS's share appreciation was not only the highest among major media companies, it was near the top of the entire S&P 500," CBS said in a statement. "Mr. Moonves' compensation is reflective of his continued strong leadership."

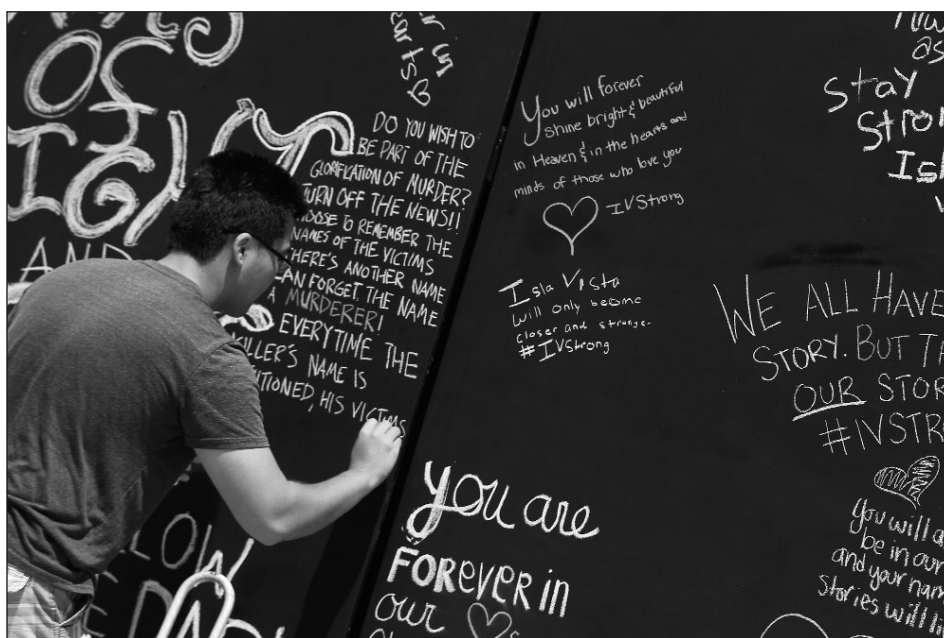
Media industry CEOs were, once again, paid handsomely. Viacom's Philippe Dauman made \$37.2 million while Walt Disney's Robert Iger made \$34.3 million. Time Warner CEO Jeffrey Bewkes earned \$32.5 million.

The industry with the biggest pay bump was banking. The median pay of a Wall Street CEO rose by 22 percent last year, on top of a 22 percent increase the year before. BlackRock chief Larry Fink made the most, \$22.9 million. Kenneth Chenault of American Express ranked second with earnings of \$21.7 million.

Like stock compensation, performance cash bonuses jumped last year as a result of the surging stock market and higher corporate profits. Earnings per share of the S&P 500 rose 5.3 percent in 2013, according to FactSet. That resulted in a median cash bonus of \$1.9 million, a jump of 12.6 percent from the prior year.

More than two-thirds of CEOs at S&P 500 companies received a raise last year, according to the AP/Equilar study, because of the bigger profits and higher stock prices.

'Never Forget'



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT
University of California at Santa Barbara student Forrest Liu, 20, writes out his thoughts at a memorial for those killed by Elliot Rodger at the Associated Students Pardall Center on Tuesday in Isla Vista, Calif.

California University Near Deadly Rampage Mourns

BY RAQUEL MARIA DILLON
Associated Press

GOLETA, Calif. — Classes were canceled Tuesday at the University of California, Santa Barbara, as the college community reeled from the deadly rampage that took the lives of six of its students.

The school declared a day of mourning and reflection and scheduled a campus memorial service on Tuesday afternoon.

Elliot Rodger, 22, killed six people and injured 13 others in the shooting and stabbing attacks Friday night in the Isla Vista community near campus. He apparently shot himself to death after a

shootout with deputies, authorities said.

Authorities said the community college student was obsessed with exacting retribution for what he saw as a lifetime of social and sexual isolation.

Investigators said Rodger had posted an Internet video stating that he would slaughter as many people as he could.

On Tuesday, students stopped by to leave flowers and candles at makeshift memorials at the shooting scenes. Flowers even were placed through bullet holes in windows of a store.

Some people chalked messages on the street, in-

cluding the words "Never forget."

"This spot right here will always mean something to me," said Rick Stevens, 38-year-old geography student. "It's not going to take away from all the goodness that's going to overcome it all."

UC President Janet Napolitano has ordered flags at all 10 UC campuses lowered to half-staff to honor the victims' memories.

"This is a time for mourning and grieving, and for consoling and supporting each other. It will take time for our UCSB colleagues to recover and heal from this," Napolitano said in a letter to the UC community Monday.

Fighting In Ukraine Intensifies After Election

DONETSK, Ukraine (AP) — Dozens of dead insurgents lay piled in a van outside a morgue Tuesday, and a rebel said more were on the way. Bomb disposal experts disarmed a mortar round lodged in a corpse. A wrecked and blood-soaked truck at the Donetsk airport showed the grisly aftermath of battle.

The fight for eastern Ukraine seems to have taken a ferocious turn, as both sides step up their attacks after the rebellious regions mostly boycotted a presidential election that delivered a decisive winner.

Following a day and night of the heaviest and most sustained assault by Ukrainian government forces to date, the pro-Russia separatist movement finds itself facing an emboldened and resolute national leadership.

With Sunday's election of billionaire Petro Poroshenko to the presidency, Kiev has received grudging and tentatively positive diplomatic overtures from Russia.

Leaders of the 28 EU countries, meeting Tuesday in Brussels, said they expect Russia to cooperate with newly elected President Petro Poroshenko, winner of Sunday's elections.

In a statement, the EU heads of state and government said Moscow should "use its leverage on the armed separatists to de-escalate the situation in eastern Ukraine."

City

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Plant No. 2 on the west end of Riverside Park.

HDR, Inc., researched four options for the location of the new water plant.

- Option one is adjacent to Water Treatment Plant No. 2 and is estimated to cost \$28.7 million;

- Option two is just north of Water Treatment Plant No. 2 along Levee Street and east of the Meridian Bridge. It is estimated to cost just more than \$29 million;

- Option three is at Paddle Wheel Point in the vicinity of where the city plans to construct a collector well. The estimated cost of building there is between \$37.1 million and \$43.2 million, depending if dedicated raw water transmission mains or a common raw water transmission main is built between the new plant and Plant No. 2; and

- Option four is the industrial park near the intersection of Alumax Drive and Bill Bagges Road. It is estimated to cost \$45.7 million.

Knoff proposed that the city should look at the cost of building a 10-million gallon per day facility at the aforementioned and other sites, and allow for the eventual removal of Plant No. 2.

"If we were to look long term, beyond our lives, in 40 years we'll be looking at Plant No. 2 and Plant No. 3," Knoff said. "Are we going to tear down Plant No. 2 and build on to Plant No. 3? ... I think what we're doing is kicking the can down the road. At some point, we have to determine whether Riverside Park is a park we want to preserve and have our community grow and have investment in."

"We're hoping people invest in the riverside," he continued. "But we, ourselves, don't invest in that. That causes me concern. Putting a water plant there, I don't think, says, 'Build here.' Making a green space and more desirable place for more people to want to invest makes better sense."

Riverside Park is probably the most valuable property in the community, Knoff said.

"Right now, it seems like a lot of money to go from \$28 million to \$40 million," he stated. "It is a lot of money, but that will not seem like such a big bite 30-40 years from now. Had they moved this water plant out into the industrial park in 1972, I'm guessing the cost would now seem almost laughable. It would be so small. That's the same thing we have to remember with this type of investment. When we look long term, those dollars — although they are a lot now — are an excellent investment."

Commissioner Pauline Akland was the most outspoken

critic on the governing body of investigating alternative options.

She noted that for more than five years the discussion has been to add the new plant on to Water Plant No. 2.

"Now, we're talking about green space," Akland stated. "Yet, in front of the (Meridian) bridge — where we have green space — we're going to tear that up and put a fountain, a splash pad and concrete in. I'm confused. Do you want green space or don't you want green space? To me, it doesn't make any sense to even have this discussion to move the water treatment plant when we've been talking about it for six years, and most of us have been on the commission for that time."

Knoff said the discussion has come up now because the funding is in place through a water rate increase and surcharge, and design work is being done.

People in the community are upset about their current water bills, Akland stated.

"When you talk about adding a larger debt service, (the people I talk to) are furious," she said. "I'm surprised this room isn't packed because people have been calling and emailing me."

City Finance Officer Al Viereck said that for every extra \$1 million needed above the current approximately \$29 million, a water bill surcharge increase of 4 percent would be

needed. If the city relied instead on a rate increase, that would be a 1.34 percent hike. A combination of the two would result in a 1 percent increase for consumers.

Several members of the public spoke in favor of looking at alternative locations in order to best serve the long-term vision of the community.

Former City Commission member Jim Means said his biggest regret was not fighting harder to have the wastewater treatment plant built further downstream.

"I hope you don't regret not taking a bigger stand," he stated.

One woman said she cannot afford higher water rates and pleaded against such a move.

Knoff made a motion to have HDR, Inc., present a contract for investigating the construction of a 10-million gallon per day water treatment plant at potential locations to be determined by city staff — not including Riverside Park. Another vote would have to be held at that time to approve the expenditure for the study.

Commissioners Jake Hoffner, Craig Sommer and Brad Werner supported Knoff in his endeavor. However, the tie vote meant that the motion died.

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.