

**French Taking Hard Line With Iranians**

PARIS (AP) — When Iran appeared close to a preliminary deal with world powers over its nuclear program, France stepped up to say: Not so fast — a surprise move that exposed divisions among the United States and other Western negotiators who had long been in lockstep on the issue. France, analysts say, was motivated by factors including its tough stand against the spread of nuclear weapons, skepticism about Tehran's trustworthiness, and the longstanding French tradition of speaking out on the world stage. Critics faulted France for alleged grandstanding and seeking closer ties with Iran's foes.

After the Geneva talks ended early Sunday with no deal, diplomats including U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that progress was nonetheless made and negotiations will continue Nov. 20. He said the U.S. was "grateful" to the French and shared some of their concerns.

After the failure of European-led talks with Iran over the nuclear program in the mid-2000s — when America gave Iran the silent treatment — Paris has staked out a hard-line stance. While President Barack Obama has recently sought a breakthrough, France has little to gain politically from an accord, and that gives Paris a freer hand to stick to strategic and security concerns.

In Geneva, the U.S., Britain, Germany, Russia, China and top EU diplomat Catherine Ashton were looking for initial caps on Iran's ability to make an atomic bomb, while Tehran sought some easing of sanctions stifling its economy. But French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius broke the near-uniform silence of the diplomats during the talks by using French radio to express reservations about Iran's enrichment of uranium and prospects of producing plutonium.

**GOP Seizes On Health Law's Problems**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The health care law's seemingly endless problems are giving congressional Republicans a much-needed boost of energy, helping them to move past the government-shutdown debacle and focus on a theme for next year's elections.

Republicans are back on offense, and more quickly than many had expected, after seeing their approval ratings plunge during last month's partial shutdown and worrisome talk of a possible U.S. debt default.

They pillory administration officials at Capitol Hill hearings. They cite the millions of people getting dropped by insurers despite President Barack Obama's promise that it wouldn't happen. They harp on the program's flawed enrollment process.

Now they're relishing Obama's apology to those who are losing health insurance plans he had repeatedly said they could keep.

"If the president is truly sorry for breaking his promises to the American people, he'll do more than just issue a half-hearted apology on TV," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said in a statement.

**Students Fatally Shot At Birthday Party**

HOUSTON (AP) — Celebratory gunshots fired at a girl's 18th birthday party triggered more gunfire that left two people dead, two critically injured and nearly two-dozen injured in a chaotic scene where people jumped from second-floor windows to escape the shooting at a suburban Houston home, authorities said Sunday.

Harris County Sheriff Adrian Garcia said the gathering Saturday night was openly promoted using multiple social media sites, drew more than 100 people, most of them 17- to 19-year-olds, and became a "birthday party gone wild."

He said it appears partygoers were dancing in the home when someone armed with a pistol shot into the air in celebration. In the ensuing confusion, another person who was armed began firing into the crowd, Garcia said. Young people then streamed into the narrow street to avoid the burst of gunshots that followed shortly before 11 p.m. Saturday.

Partygoer Shaniqua Brown — who said she heard about the party through Instagram, a photo-sharing app and website — told The Associated Press it "was not rowdy at all." She said she first heard gunshots in the house and they continued outside as people fled and sought cover.

Authorities have given varying accounts of the number of people injured, but they clarified Sunday that 20 were hurt, with 16 suffering gunshot wounds and four others varying injuries such as a fracture and twisted ankles in the panic to flee.

**Philippines**

**Typhoon Kills Thousands**

BY JIM GOMEZ  
Associated Press

TACLOBAN, Philippines — Corpses hung from trees, were scattered on sidewalks or buried in flattened buildings — some of the thousands believed killed in one Philippine city alone by ferocious Typhoon Haiyan that washed away homes and buildings with powerful winds and giant waves.

As the scale of devastation became clear Sunday from one of the worst storms ever recorded, officials said emergency crews could find more bodies when they reach parts of the archipelago cut off by flooding and landslides. Desperate residents raided grocery stores and gas stations in search of food, fuel and water as the government began relief efforts and international aid operations got underway.

Even in a nation regularly beset by earthquakes, volcanoes and tropical storms, Typhoon Haiyan appears to be the deadliest natural disaster on record.

Haiyan hit the eastern seaboard of the Philippines on Friday and quickly barreled across its central islands, packing winds of 235 kph (147 mph) that gusted to 275 kph (170 mph), and a storm surge of 6 meters (20 feet).

Its sustained winds weakened to 120 kph (74 mph) as the typhoon made landfall in northern Vietnam early Monday after crossing the South China Sea, according to the Hong Kong meteorological observatory. Authorities there evacuated hundreds of thousands of people.

Hardest hit in the Philippines was Leyte Island, where regional Police Chief Elmer Soria said the provincial governor had told him there were about 10,000 dead, primarily from drowning and collapsed buildings. Most were in Tacloban, the provincial capital of about 200,000 people that is the biggest city on the island.

Reports also trickled in indicating deaths elsewhere on the island.

On Samar Island, Leo Dacaynos of the provincial disaster office said 300 people were confirmed dead in one town and another 2,000 were missing, with some towns yet to be reached by rescuers. He pleaded for food and water, adding that power was out and there was no cellphone signal, making communication possible only by radio.

Reports from other affected islands indicated dozens, perhaps hundreds

**Obama Pledges Assistance To Victims**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama says he and his wife, Michelle, are "deeply saddened" by the deaths and damage caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines this weekend.

Obama says the United States is providing "significant" humanitarian assistance and is prepared to further assist relief and recovery efforts.

Haiyan struck the eastern seaboard of the Philippines on Friday and quickly barreled across its central islands, packing winds that gusted up to 170 miles per hour. The death toll has climbed into the thousands, and about 4 million people were affected by the storm.

Obama praised the Philippine people for their "incredible resiliency."

more deaths. With communications still knocked out in many areas, it was unclear how authorities were arriving at their estimates of the number of people killed, and it will be days before the full extent of the storm is known.

"On the way to the airport, we saw many bodies along the street," said Philippine-born Australian Mila Ward, 53, who was waiting at the Tacloban airport to catch a military flight back to Manila, about 580 kilometers (360 miles) to the northwest. "They were covered with just anything — tarpaulin, roofing sheets, cardboard." She said she passed "well over 100" bodies.

In one part of Tacloban, a ship had been pushed ashore and sat amid damaged homes.

Haiyan inflicted serious damage to at least six of the archipelago's more than 7,000 islands, with Leyte, Samar and

the northern part of Cebu appearing to bear the brunt of the storm. About 4 million people were affected by the storm, the national disaster agency said.

Video from Eastern Samar province's Guianan township — the first area where the typhoon made landfall — showed a trail of devastation. Many houses were flattened and roads were strewn with debris and uprooted trees. The ABS-CBN video showed several bodies on the street, covered with blankets.

"Even me, I have no house, I have no clothes. I don't know how I will restart my life, I am so confused," an unidentified woman said, crying. "I don't know what happened to us. We are appealing for help. Whoever has a good heart, I appeal to you — please help Guianan."

The Philippine National Red Cross said its efforts were

hampered by looters, including some who attacked trucks of food and other relief supplies it was shipping to Tacloban from the southern port of Davao.

Tacloban's two largest malls and grocery stores were looted, and police guarded a fuel depot. About 200 police officers were sent into Tacloban to restore law and order.

With other rampant looting reported, President Benigno Aquino III said he was considering declaring a state of emergency or martial law in Tacloban. A state of emergency usually includes curfews, price and food supply controls, military or police checkpoints and increased security patrols.

The massive casualties occurred even though the government had evacuated nearly 800,000 people ahead of the typhoon.

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