

### Aid Missions Seen As Opportunity

ABOARD THE USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (AP) — As soon as Navy pilot Matthew Stafford puts his helicopter down in the village of Borongan, he is rushed by dozens of local men who form a line to unload the supplies and water he has flown in from the mothership, the USS George Washington aircraft carrier. Children swarm him as he breaks out a box of sweets.

On the Philippine islands of Leyte and Samar that were shattered by Typhoon Haiyan, there is no doubt about it: the U.S. military has been a godsend. "It is awesome to see this," says one grateful villager. "They are saving us."

But while U.S. military support can be critical when disasters like Haiyan strike, staging massive humanitarian relief missions for allies in need isn't just about being a good neighbor. They can be a strategic and publicity goldmine for U.S. troops whose presence in Asia isn't always portrayed in such a favorable light — and a powerful warning to countries that aren't on board.

"These disasters are not unique only to the Philippines. It will send a signal to all of Southeast Asia, to Asia, that the U.S. is serious about its presence here," said Philippine political analyst Ramon Casiple. "It's easy to translate this capability for disaster handling into handling warfare. This is the new orientation of the task forces."

From the military perspective, humanitarian missions like the ongoing Operation Damayan in the Philippines offer concrete benefits — the chance to operate in far-flung places, build military-to-military alliances and get realistic training — that they may later apply to their primary mission, which will always be fighting and winning wars.

### Airliner Crashes In Russian City, 50 Die

MOSCOW (AP) — A Boeing 737 jetliner crashed and burst into flames Sunday night while trying to land at the airport in the Russian city of Kazan, killing all 50 people aboard in the latest in a string of deadly crashes across the country.

The Tatarstan Airlines plane was trying to make a second landing attempt when it touched the surface of the runway near the control tower, and was "destroyed and caught fire," said Sergei Izvolky, the spokesman for the Russian aviation agency.

The Emergencies Ministry said there were 44 passengers and six crew members aboard the evening flight from Moscow and all had been killed. Kazan, a city of about 1.1 million and the capital of the Tatarstan republic, is about 720 kilometers (450 miles) east of the capital.

The ministry released a list of the dead, which included Irek Minnikhanov, the son of Tatarstan's governor, and Alexander Antonov, who headed the Tatarstan branch of the Federal Security Service, the main successor agency to the Soviet-era KGB.

Some Russian air crashes have been blamed on the use of aging aircraft, but industry experts point to a number of other problems, including poor crew training, crumbling airports, lax government controls and widespread neglect of safety in the pursuit of profits.

### Two Killed In Colorado Mining Accident

OURAY, Colo. (AP) — Two workers were killed and 20 others were injured Sunday in a mining accident near the southwestern Colorado town of Ouray.

The Ouray County sheriff's office was called to the Revenue-Virginus mine at about 7:20 a.m., county spokeswoman Marti Whitmore said. The miners were underground and were confirmed dead Sunday afternoon.

"Anything that has been reported is speculative," Whitmore said. "We don't know what the cause is."

Star Mine Operations, LLC, the owner of the mine, couldn't immediately be reached by The Associated Press for comment, but Whitmore said the company has accounted for all of the workers at the site.

She said 20 people were taken to area hospitals, and all but two have been treated and released. The conditions of those two hospitalized workers haven't been released.

### Nobel Prize-winning Novelist Dies

LONDON (AP) — Doris Lessing emerged from a black cab outside her home in London one day in 2007 and was confronted by a horde of reporters. When told she had won the Nobel Prize, she blinked and retorted "Oh Christ! ... I couldn't care less."

That was typical of the independent — and often irascible — author who died Sunday after a long career that included "The Golden Notebook," a 1962 novel that made her an icon of the women's movement. Lessing's books reflected her own improbable journey across the former British Empire, and later her vision of a future ravaged by atomic warfare.

The exact cause of Lessing's death at her home in London was not immediately disclosed, and her family requested privacy. She was 94.

"Even in very old age she was always intellectually restless, reinventing herself, curious about the changing world around us, always completely inspirational," her editor at HarperCollins, Nicholas Pearson, said in one of the many tributes.

Lessing explored topics ranging from colonial Africa to dystopian Britain, from the mystery of being female to the unknown worlds of science fiction. In winning the Nobel literature prize, the Swedish Academy praised Lessing for her "skepticism, fire and visionary power."

### Bachelet Leads In Chile Vote Count

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Michelle Bachelet is far ahead as votes are being counted in Chile's presidential election, but she is running short of the outright majority needed to avoid a Dec. 15 runoff.

With more than 34 percent of the votes counted, Bachelet has 46 percent to 25 percent for her nearest rival, conservative Evelyn Matthei. Seven other candidates trail far behind.

Bachelet was Chile's president in 2006-10, before millions began joining in protests demanding major reforms.

The socialist politician has promised big changes in taxes and education if she wins a second term. The key will be whether Bachelet's center-left New Majority coalition will gain the super-majorities in Congress needed to make those changes.

# Storms Sweep Across Midwest

BY DON BABWIN AND DAVID MERCER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Ill. — Dozens of tornadoes and intense thunderstorms swept across the Midwest on Sunday, unleashing powerful winds that flattened entire neighborhoods, flipping over cars, uprooting trees and leaving at least five people dead.

Illinois took the brunt of the fury as the string of unusually powerful late-season tornadoes tore across the state, injuring dozens and even prompting officials at Chicago's Soldier Field to evacuate the stands and delay the Bears game.

"The whole neighborhood's gone. The wall of my fireplace is all that is left of my house," said Michael Perdue, speaking by cellphone from the hard-hit central Illinois town of Washington, where he said his neighborhood was wiped out in a matter of seconds.

"I stepped outside and I heard it coming. My daughter was already in the basement, so I ran downstairs and grabbed her, crouched in the laundry room and all of a sudden I could see daylight up the stairway and my house was gone."

An elderly man and his sister were killed when a tornado hit their home in the rural southern Illinois community of New Minden, said coroner Mark Styninger. A third person died in Washington, while two others perished in Massac county in the far southern part of the state, said Patti Thompson of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. She did not provide details.

With communications difficult and many roads impassable, it remained unclear how many people were killed or hurt. The Illinois National Guard said it had dispatched 10 firefighters and three vehicles to Washington to assist with immediate search and recovery operations.

In the rural community of 16,000, whole blocks of houses were erased from the landscape and Illinois State Police Trooper Dustin Pierce said the tornado cut a path from one end of town to the other, knocking down power lines, uprooting trees and rupturing gas lines.

An auto parts store with several people inside was reduced to a pile of bricks, metal and rebar; a battered car, its windshield impaled by a piece of lumber, was flung alongside it. Despite the devastation, all the employees

managed to crawl out of the rubble unhurt, Pierce said.

"I went over there immediately after the tornado, walking through the neighborhoods, and I couldn't even tell what street I was on," Washington Alderman Tyler Gee told WLS-TV.

"Just completely flattened — some of the neighborhoods here in town, hundreds of homes."

Among those who lost everything was Curt Zehr, who described the speed with which the tornado turned his farmhouse outside Washington into a mass of rubble scattered over hundreds of yards. His truck was sent flying and landed on an uprooted tree.

"They heard the siren... and saw (the tornado) right there and got into the basement," he said of his wife and adult son who were home at the time. Then, seconds later, when they looked out from their hiding place the house was gone and "the sun was out and right on top of them."

At OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, spokeswoman Amy Paul said 37 patients had been treated, eight with injuries ranging from broken bones to head injuries that were serious enough to be admitted. Another hospital, Methodist Medical Center in Peoria, treated more than a dozen, but officials there said none of them were seriously injured.

Steve Brewer, Methodist Medical Center's chief operating officer, said doctors and other medical professionals were setting up a temporary emergency care center to treat the injured before transporting them to hospitals, while others were dispatched to search through the rubble for survivors.

By nightfall, Trooper Pierce said there were reports of looting in Washington.

About 90 minutes after the tornado destroyed homes in Washington, the storm darkened downtown Chicago. As the rain and high winds slammed into the area, officials at Soldier Field evacuated the stands and ordered the Bears and Baltimore Ravens off the field. Fans were allowed back to their seats shortly after 2 p.m., and the game resumed after about a two-hour delay.

Earlier, the Office of Emergency Management and Communications had issued a warning to fans, urging them "to take extra precautions and ... appropriate measures to ensure their personal safety."

Just how many tornadoes hit was

unclear. According to the National Weather Service' website, a total of 65 tornadoes had struck, the bulk of them in Illinois. But meteorologist Matt Friedlein said the total might fall because emergency workers, tornado spotters and others often report the same tornado.

Still, when the weather service was issuing its warning that severe weather was bearing down on the Midwest, officials said the last such warning issued so late in the season in November came in 2005, and the result was an outbreak of 49 tornadoes.

The storm followed warnings by the weather service that the storm was simply moving too fast for people to wait until they saw it to get ready.

"Our primary message is this is a dangerous weather system that has the potential to be extremely deadly and destructive," said Laura Furgione, deputy director of the National Weather Service National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Get ready now."

Hours later, at 11 a.m., weather service officials confirmed a tornado had touched down near the central Illinois community of East Peoria, about 150 miles southwest of Chicago. Within an hour, tornadoes were reported in Washington, Metamora, Morton and other central Illinois communities.

"This is a very dangerous situation," said Russell Schneider, director of the weather service's Storm Prediction Center. Some 53 million people in 10 states were "at significant risk for thunderstorms and tornadoes," he said.

The White House issued a statement saying President Barack Obama had been briefed about the damage and was in touch with federal, state and local officials.

Such severe weather this late in the season also carries the risk of surprise.

"People can fall into complacency because they don't see severe weather and tornadoes, but we do stress that they should keep a vigilant eye on the weather and have a means to hear a tornado warning because things can change very quickly," said Matt Friedlein, a weather service meteorologist.

According to agency officials, parts of Illinois, Indiana, southern Michigan and western Ohio were at the greatest risk of seeing tornadoes, large hail and damaging winds throughout the day Sunday.

### Mission To Mars



RED HUBER/ORLANDO SENTINEL/MCT  
An AtlasV rocket rolls out to Launch Complex 41 carrying the Maven spacecraft Saturday at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. The Maven spacecraft will directly assess the atmosphere of the planet Mars.

### NY Man Drowns In Contest

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP) — Police in the Bahamas are investigating the drowning of a 32-year-old man from New York who was participating in a free diving tournament.

The incident happened around 2 p.m. Sunday off the coast of the Bahamas' Long Island, which is about 164 miles (265 kilometers) southeast of the capital of Nassau.

The man's body was brought to shore, where a local doctor pronounced him

dead. His name was not released.

The nine-day International Free Diving Competition brings 56 free divers from 21 countries. They are competing for a \$20,000 prize as they try to see who can dive the deepest without fins or scuba gear.

The contest takes place at Dean's Blue Hole, which is considered the world's deepest underwater sinkhole in seawater.

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