

Obama Reviews Foreign, Domestic Response To Ebola

BY JIM KUHNHENN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama urged his top national security and public health officials on Monday to incorporate lessons from the most recent Texas Ebola infection into the U.S.'s response plans to the deadly virus. He also called on the international community to deliver assistance more quickly to the countries of West Africa that are struggling against the disease.

Obama huddled with senior advisers in the Oval Office and placed calls to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and French President Francois Hollande on a day largely devoted to the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia and to the infection of a nurse in Dallas, the first person known to catch the disease in the United States.

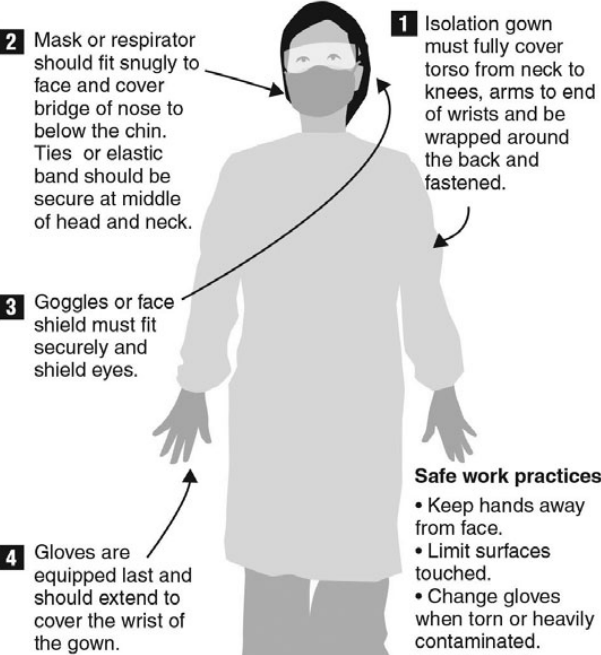
Obama met with national security adviser Susan Rice, Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell and Lisa Monaco, his top aide on homeland security and counterterrorism issues. Tom Frieden, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, joined the meeting by phone.

The White House said Burwell and Frieden described an increase in resources and personnel to help investigate the Dallas case as well as steps to increase training for public health workers across the country. The White House said Obama stressed that the investigation move quickly to better inform the response to the illness.

Hospital safety guidelines

The CDC provides guidelines for hospitals in the prevention and control of Ebola transmission. These are the personal protective gear recommendations for health care personnel working with a potentially infected patient.

Sequence for putting on necessary protective equipment



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Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Graphic: Troy Oxford, Dallas Morning News

The nurse had treated a Liberian man who died at the hospital after bringing the disease from Liberia.

The meeting came shortly after Frieden urged hospitals to be on greater alert for patients with fever or symptoms of Ebola who have traveled from the three Ebola-stricken African nations in the past 21 days.

The CDC is now monitoring all hospital workers who

treated the Liberian man. Frieden said he wouldn't be surprised if another hospital worker who cared for that patient when he was very sick becomes ill.

The White House said that in his call with Ban, Obama "stressed the need for all U.N. member states to support the U.N. appeal, and to provide the personnel, equipment, and supplies required to stop the epidemic

at its source and halt the devastating impact of this crisis on the affected countries and their citizens."

Obama has tried to maintain a high profile on the Ebola crisis in West Africa, especially since Thomas Eric Duncan fell ill in Texas after traveling from his home in Liberia.

On Sunday, the White House gathered reporters and photographers on the portico outside the Oval Office to observe Obama on the phone with Burwell regarding the Dallas Ebola diagnosis. On Monday, photographers were permitted into the Oval Office at the beginning of his meeting with senior officials.

In his talk with Hollande Monday, Obama and the French president discussed the need for treatment facilities in West Africa and steps needed to prevent the spread of Ebola outside the affected region.

The French presidency said in a statement Monday that the two leaders discussed the possibility of starting a screening program for passengers from Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. France will also accept a request by Guinean authorities to set up additional Ebola treatment centers, the presidency said. France is already building one such center in Guinea.

The White House said Obama and Hollande also discussed the threat from Islamic State, including France's participation in air strikes against the extremists in Iraq and its training of Iraqi Security Forces.

Ebola Wrecks West African Economies

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just as their economies had begun to recover from the man-made horror of coups and civil war, the West African nations of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have been knocked back down by a terrifying force of nature: the Ebola virus.

In addition to the human toll — more than 4,000 dead so far — the outbreak has paralyzed economic life. Across the Ebola zone, shops are closed, hotels vacant, flights cancelled, fields untended, investments on hold.

In Conakry, capital of Guinea, stray dogs, goats and sheep are plopping down next to empty stalls in street markets devoid of shoppers.

About the only things people want to buy are products meant to guard against Ebola — antiseptic gels and devices that attach to faucets and add chlorine to the water.

"These are selling like bread at the market," said Cece Loua, who sells pharmaceutical products in Conakry.

Islamic State Group Seizes Iraqi Camp

BAGHDAD (AP) — Militants with the Islamic State group on Monday captured a military training camp in western Iraq, inching closer to full control of the restive Anbar province, as a spate of deadly bombings shook Baghdad, hitting mostly Shiite neighborhoods and leaving at least 30 dead.

The attacks, which came as Iraqi Shiites marked a major holiday for their sect with families crowding the streets in celebration, raised new concerns that the Sunni militant group is making gains despite U.S.-led coalition airstrikes.

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, on a visit to Iraq, warned that the airstrikes will not be enough to defeat the extremist group and stressed that the Iraqi security forces would have to do the "heavy work on the ground."

But Iraqi troops, overstretched and overwhelmed by the Islamic State group's summer blitz that seized large swaths of territory in western and northern Iraq, continued to come under pressure Monday in the western Anbar province, where militants seized an Iraqi military training camp.

The camp, near the town of Hit that fell to the insurgents earlier this month, was overrun in the morning hours after clashes with Iraqi soldiers who were forced to abandon the camp and withdraw from the area, two Anbar officials told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media. Town residents confirmed the camp's fall, speaking to the AP also on condition of anonymity, fearing for their own safety.

Bishops Say Gays Have Gifts Offer Church

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Catholic bishops signaled a radical shift in tone Monday about accepting gays into the church, saying they had gifts to offer and that their partnerships, while morally problematic, provided homosexual couples with "precious" support.

In a preliminary report, released halfway through a Vatican meeting on family life called by Pope Francis, the bishops also said the church must welcome divorcees and recognize the "positive" aspects of civil marriages and even Catholics who cohabitate, as well as the children of these less traditional families.

While it does not change church doctrine, the tone of the report on a host of hot-button family issues such as marriage, divorce, homosexuality and birth control was one of almost-revolutionary acceptance and understanding rather than condemnation. It will guide a closed-door debate until a final document is issued Saturday.

Gay rights groups hailed what they called a "seismic shift" in the church's attitude toward gays.

"For the LGBT Catholics in the United States and around the world, this new document is a light in the darkness — a dramatic new tone from a church hierarchy that has long denied the very existence of committed and loving gay and lesbian partnerships," said Chad Griffin, president of Human Rights Campaign, the biggest LGBT rights organization in the U.S.

N. Korean Leader Makes An Appearance

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un has made his first public appearance in five weeks, state media reported Tuesday, ending an absence that drove a frenzy of global speculation that something was amiss with the country's most powerful person.

The sudden resumption of the "field guidance" tours that had been a regular part of Kim's public persona before he stopped showing up in media reports for 40 days allowed the country's massive propaganda apparatus to resume doing what it does best — glorify the third generation of the Kim family to rule — and will tamp down, at least for the moment, rumors of coups and serious health problems.

Turkey: No New Deal With US On Using Air Base

BY SUZAN FRASER
AND RYAN LUCAS

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — NATO allies Turkey and the United States differed Monday on where they stand on the use of a key air base, with Turkish officials denying reports from the United States that there was a new agreement on its use for operations against Islamic State militants.

The impasse suggests that major differences remain between the two sides. Turkey has said it won't join the fight against the extremists unless the U.S.-led coalition also goes after the Syrian government of President Bashar Assad, including establishing a no-fly zone and a buffer zone along the Turkish border.

The United States has been pressing Turkey to play a larger role against the Islamic militants, who have taken control of large swaths of Syria and Iraq, including territory on Turkey's border, and sent refugees fleeing into Turkey.

U.S. officials said again Monday that Turkey would let U.S. and coalition forces use its bases, including Incirlik air base, which is within 100 miles of the Syrian border, for operations against the Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq.

However, emerging Monday from a Cabinet meeting, Turkey's deputy prime minister, Bulent Arinc, said that "apart from the existing cooperation in combatting terrorism, there is no new situation concerning Incirlik air base."

The deputy premier added that Turkey had proposed the use of some of its bases to train and equip moderate opposition forces fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, but said the sides had not yet come to any agreement.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, in comments published Sunday, said Incirlik was already

being used for reconnaissance purposes in Iraq and said its use for wider operations would depend on whether Turkey's demands for a no-fly zone and a safe zone in Syria are met.

"There are activities that we are already undertaking jointly from Incirlik, concerning Iraq," Davutoglu told the Milliyet newspaper. "But as a base for a more extensive operation ... we have already made our position clear: There has to be a no-fly zone and a safe haven must be declared."

Arinc said the two countries would hold "deeper" talks in the coming days on Turkey's cooperation in the U.S.-led coalition, including its demands for a no-fly zone and a safe haven in Syria.

On the ground Monday, the battle continued to rage on Turkey's border as Islamic State fighters carried out at least three suicide bombings in the Syrian border town of Kobani, allowing the group to make a small push into the strategic town, activists said.

Islamic State extremists have carved out a vast stretch of territory from northern Syria to the outskirts of Baghdad where they have imposed their harsh interpretation of Islamic law. The fighters have massacred hundreds of captured Iraqi and Syrian soldiers, terrorized religious minorities, and beheaded two American journalists and two British aid workers. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have fled into Turkey from Syria ahead of the militants.

The U.S.-led coalition has been carrying out airstrikes against militant targets in and around Kobani for more than two weeks, and the town's fate has emerged as a major test of whether the air campaign can roll back the extremists in Syria.

The sound of explosions and occasional gunfire could be heard across the border in Kobani a day after Kurdish fighters managed to slow the advance of the jihadist group. What appeared to be a rocket-propelled grenade struck a minaret in the center of the town, emitting a cloud of white smoke.

Activists said Islamic State militants were carrying out a three-pronged attack from the eastern side of the town and that clashes were reported in the southern part.

The Syrian Kurdish enclave has been the scene of heavy fighting since late last month, with the better-armed Islamic State fighters determined to capture the border post.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said an Islamic State suicide bomber detonated a car filled with explosives in the northern part of Kobani near the border with Turkey. It said the car was headed to the border crossing between Kobani and Turkey.

Later Monday, another suicide attacker blew himself up in a vehicle east of Kobani near the security quarter that houses the main police station and other local government offices, according to the Observatory

and Kobani-based activist Farhad Shami.

The Observatory later reported a third suicide attack northeast of Kobani, adding that Islamic State fighters were able to capture a cultural center. Coalition warplanes later bombed the area, the Observatory said.

Shami said the third suicide attack was carried out by an armored vehicle that blew up about 300 yards (meters) from the main border crossing point into Turkey. He also confirmed that Islamic State fighters captured the cultural center southeast of the town.

There was no immediate word on casualties from the explosions.

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