

## Turkish Jets Shoot Unidentified Drone

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey shot down an unidentified drone that flew into its airspace Friday near the Syrian border, while Russian President Vladimir Putin said his country's air campaign backing a Syrian government offensive has killed hundreds of militants.

A U.S. official said the downed drone was Russian, but Moscow staunchly rejected the claim.

The incident underlined the potential dangers of clashes involving Russian, Syrian and U.S.-led coalition planes in the increasingly crowded skies over Syria. Russian and U.S. military officials have been working on a set of rules to prevent any problems.

The Turkish military said it issued three warnings before shooting down the aircraft with its fighter jets. It didn't specify how it had relayed the warnings to the operators of the drone.

The drone crashed 3 kilometers (about 2 miles) inside Turkish territory, said Foreign Minister Feridun Sinirlioglu. "We have not been able to establish who the drone belongs to, but we are able to work on it because it fell inside Turkish territory," he added.

## House Questions Clinton Confidante

WASHINGTON (AP) — A longtime aide to Hillary Rodham Clinton said Friday she answered all questions posed by the House Benghazi committee after a daylong meeting behind closed doors that Democrats said was unnecessary.

Huma Abedin said she answered questions "to the best of my ability," adding that she tried "to be as helpful as I could be to the committee" investigating the 2012 attacks, which killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens.

Abedin, committee staff and a few lawmakers met for nearly eight hours Friday at a session focused on the Sept. 11, 2012, attacks. Clinton, the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, is scheduled to appear before the panel on Thursday in a widely anticipated public hearing.

Rep. Lynn Westmoreland, R-Ga., said questions to Abedin focused on the Benghazi attacks, but also touched on Clinton's use of a private email account and server while serving as secretary of state.

"If it had something to do with Benghazi and an email then that was asked. If it wasn't about Benghazi, it wasn't asked," Westmoreland told reporters.

## Thunderstorms Unleash Mudslides

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Rescuers threw ladders and tarps across mud up to 6 feet deep to help hundreds of trapped people from cars that got caught in a roiling river of mud along a major Southern California trucking route, a California Highway Patrol official said Friday in what he and other witnesses described as a chaotic scene.

Amazingly, officials said, no deaths or injuries were reported. The people rescued from State Route 58, about 30 miles east of Bakersfield, were stranded in a powerful storm on Thursday evening. They were rescued in darkness about 10 hours after the storm hit and taken to three shelters.

"It was terrifying," 51-year-old Rhonda Flores of Bakersfield told The Associated Press on Friday. "It was a raging river of mud. I've never experienced anything like it, ever."

Flores said she, her mother and her stepfather were driving back to Bakersfield from her sister's funeral in Utah when the storm hit out of nowhere.

## US Faces Uncertainties In Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (AP) — America's war in Afghanistan, now in its 15th year, is long on official U.S. optimism about building a self-reliant Afghan army but short on convincing evidence that the goal will be reached anytime soon.

That is the backdrop to President Barack Obama's decision to extend the U.S. military mission beyond his last day in the White House, giving U.S. forces still more time to train and advise the Afghan army and keep up the hunt for remnants of the al-Qaida network, whose Sept. 11 attacks drew them to Afghanistan in 2001. Just last year Obama had said the outlook was so encouraging that only an embassy-based military oversight office would remain after January 2017.

It looks different now, and not as encouraging. "The bottom line is, in key areas of the country, the security situation is still very fragile, and in some places there is risk of deterioration," Obama said Thursday in announcing what he called a calculated adjustment to his plan.

Supporters of prolonging the U.S. presence say it is necessary to secure Afghanistan's future and keep al-Qaida and other extremist groups at bay. Others question whether keeping nearly 10,000 U.S. troops there in 2016 and then holding at 5,500 troops beyond that will make a significant difference, given the uneven results from 14 years of efforts to build and professionalize an Afghan army and police force paid for largely by the United States.

## Hungary Shuts Down Border With Croatia

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — Hungary shut down its border with Croatia to the free flow of migrants on Saturday, a move experts say could leave thousands of people on their way to western Europe stranded in the small Balkan nation.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto announced the decision after a meeting of the national security Cabinet and the border, reinforced with a razor-wire fence, was closed from midnight (2200 GMT Friday).

Several hundred migrants who reached the border minutes before the deadline would still be allowed to enter Hungary for humanitarian reasons, government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs told reporters in the border village of Zakany.

"The Hungarian government has taken the steps ... to protect the internal European freedoms and the security of the citizens of Hungary and Europe," Kovacs said minutes after the shutdown.

Hungary decided to order the border clampdown after EU leaders who met Thursday in Brussels failed to agree on a plan backed by Hungary to send EU forces to block migrants from reaching Greece.

## Victim Was Punished For Trying To Leave

NEW HARTFORD, N.Y. (AP) — A mother and father whipped their 19-year-old son in church with an electrical cord and what appeared to be a belt during a deadly, all-night spiritual counseling session triggered by his desire to leave the fold, according to witness testimony and police Friday.

Church deacon Daniel Irwin testified he peered through a doorway window in the sanctuary during the more than 12-hour ordeal at the Word of Life Christian Church and saw Lucas Leonard bleeding and in apparent agony.

"Lucas was rolling himself back and forth on the floor and making a sustained, monotone moaning," Irwin said.

Within hours, the young man would be dead, killed by blows inflicted by his parents, sister and fellow church members, authorities said. His mother told police the group took turns hitting him and holding him down, state police investigator Jason Nellis testified.

# 4 Palestinians Killed By Israeli Fire In Unrest, Stabbing

BY MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH  
Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Stone-throwing protests erupted across the West Bank and Gaza on Friday, and assailants firebombed a site revered by Jews as the tomb of biblical Joseph on a "day of rage" against Israel. Four Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire, including a laborer disguised as a journalist who stabbed an Israeli soldier.

The U.N. Security Council convened an emergency meeting to discuss the escalation, which has been marked by a spate of Palestinian stabbing attacks and an Israeli security crackdown. Troops manned roadblocks in Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem, a center of unrest, and ordered some Palestinian men to lift their shirts to show they were not armed.

The violence comes at a time when a possible partition of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean into two states — Palestine alongside Israel — is fading.

This has left many Palestinians frustrated because all paths to independence appear blocked. The tensions have also been stoked by Palestinian fears that Israel is trying to expand its presence at a major Muslim-run shrine in Jerusalem, a claim Israel has denied.

Taye-Brook Zerihoun, a senior U.N. official, told the Security Council that Israel's long rule over the Palestinians and diminishing prospects for achieving a Palestinian state have transformed "long-simmering Palestinian anger into outright rage." The current crisis cannot be resolved by security measures alone, Zerihoun warned.

Israel's new U.N. ambassador, Danny Danon, accused Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of "dangerous incitement" against Israel with what he called "hate-filled speech," including claims that Israel is trying to change the status quo at the hilltop Jerusalem compound. The shrine is revered by Muslims as the spot where Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven and by Jews as the home of their biblical Temples.

Over the past month, eight Israelis have been killed in Palestinian attacks, most of them stabbings. During the same period, 36 Palestinians were killed by Is-

raeli fire — 15 labeled by Israel as attackers, and the others in clashes between stone-throwers and Israeli troops.

Most of the attacks on Israelis were carried out by Palestinians with no known ties to militant groups. Palestinian factions, including Abbas' Fatah and its rival, the Islamic militant Hamas, have mainly been involved in organizing stone-throwing protests in the West Bank and on the Israel-Gaza border.

On Friday, hundreds joined protests after Muslim noon prayers, after Palestinian factions called for a "day of rage." Israeli troops opened fire in several locations, killing three Palestinians, including two in Gaza and a 19-year-old in the town of Beit Furik in the West Bank.

Munadil Hanani, a protest organizer in Beit Furik, said hundreds of Palestinians walked to an Israeli military post on the outskirts of the town and threw stones at troops who responded with live rounds and rubber-coated steel pellets. "They were very angry and wanted to attack the soldiers," he said of the stone-throwers, most of them teens.

He said tensions rose in recent days after Israel announced plans to demolish the family homes of several suspects in a shooting ambush earlier this month that killed an Israeli couple who lived in a nearby Jewish settlement.

"This intifada (uprising) will continue in various forms," Hanani said. "People are fed up."

Nearby, in the West Bank city of Nablus, dozens of Palestinians firebombed a site known as Joseph's Tomb that is revered by some Jews as the burial place of the son of the biblical patriarch Jacob. The pre-dawn attack blackened exterior walls of the stone structure located near the Balata refugee camp and a scene of Israeli-Palestinian clashes in the past.

Abbas condemned the arson as "irresponsible," ordered an investigation and promised quick repairs.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the arson attack and welcomed Abbas' condemnation, U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

"This reprehensible act is yet another example of the escalating violence in the region, threatening to further inflame sensitivities owing to the religious significance of Joseph's Tomb," Haq said. "The secretary-general calls on all sides

to respect the sanctity of all holy sites, refrain from any inflammatory actions or statements and reject the extremist elements that are pursuing a political agenda seeking to transform the current situation into a religious conflict."

The Palestinian leader has tried to lower the temperature, telling his security commanders that armed attacks on Israelis hurt Palestinian interests. However, he has also told his forces not to stop Palestinian stone-throwers heading to confrontations with Israeli troops.

Dore Gold, a senior Israeli Foreign Ministry official, said Joseph's Tomb was targeted "just because it is a place in which Jews pray." Lt. Col. Peter Lerner, an Israeli army spokesman, said the attack violates freedom of worship and that the military will "bring the perpetrators of this despicable act to justice."

For centuries, the site has been identified with the biblical Joseph but some Palestinians say it was a sheikh's grave or used as a mosque. The tomb has become a popular prayer site in recent years among some sects of religious Jews.

The site is located in an area under Palestinian self-rule and visits by Jews are coordinated between Palestinian security forces and Israeli troops.

In the West Bank city of Hebron, meanwhile, a 26-year-old Palestinian laborer posed as a journalist covering a stone-throwing clash to get close to Israeli soldiers. Wearing a T-shirt with the word "press" in large letters on the front and back, the man mingled with journalists standing near the soldiers, who were firing tear gas at stone-throwers.

At one point, shouts were heard, followed by several gunshots.

Troops rushed to the scene where one of the soldiers had been stabbed, and administered aid to the wounded soldier who was eventually taken away by ambulance. The attacker, identified as Eyad Awardeh, lay on the ground, clutching a knife in his right hand.

The Committee to Protect Journalists in New York condemned the attack in a statement issued Friday.

"Journalists are civilians, and that status should shield them from danger and allow them to gather news in dangerous environments. Today's stabbing has left a major dent in the shield," said CPJ's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator, Sherif Mansour.

## Obama: If NKorea Serious On Denuclearization, We'll Talk

BY MATTHEW PENNINGTON  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. is ready to negotiate with long-time adversary North Korea as it has with Iran, but Pyongyang has to be serious about abandoning nuclear weapons, President Barack Obama said Friday.

Obama was speaking after meeting with South Korean President Park Geun-hye, a close ally, who echoed the U.S. leader's view.

The North has conducted three nuclear tests since 2006 and is developing a mobile ballistic missile that could potentially hit the U.S.

Obama said Iran had been prepared to have a "serious conversation" about the possibility of giving up the pursuit of nuclear weapons. He said there's no indication of that in North Korea's case.

International aid-for-disarmament talks with the North stalled seven years ago.

"At the point where Pyongyang says, 'We're interested in seeing relief from sanctions and improved relations, and we are prepared to have a serious conversation about denuclearization,' it's fair to say we'll be right there at the table," Obama told a joint news conference.

However, he added that North Korea's violation of past agreements called into question its willingness to allow the kind of "rigorous" verification regimes put in place with Iran.

Park's visit follows heightened tensions this summer at the heavily militarized border between the two Koreas, and speculation that North Korea could be planning another nuclear test explosion or a rocket launch into space using ballistic missile technology.

In a joint statement issued after Friday's meeting, the U.S. and South Korea said that if



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/TNS  
President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea speaks during a joint press conference with President Obama in the East Room of the White House on Oct. 16 in Washington, D.C.

North Korea takes such a step, "it will face consequences, including seeking further significant measures by the UN Security Council." The statement also said they would never accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state.

Park has cultivated closer relations with China as she looks to coax Beijing away from its traditional embrace of Pyongyang. Last month, she prompted handwringing in Washington when she attended a Chinese military parade marking the end of World War II that was snubbed by leaders of most major democracies.

But Obama said he had no problem with Park meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping, and joked that Xi "was in this room, eating my food," during a state visit to the U.S. last month.

"We want South Korea to have a strong relationship with China, just as we want

to have a strong relationship with China. We want to see China's peaceful rise. We want them to be cooperating with us in putting pressure on the DPRK," Obama said, referring to the North's official title, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

But he added that the U.S. would expect South Korea to speak out if China fails to abide by international norms and rules.

The U.S. has voiced mounting concerns to Beijing over cyber theft and China's

massive island-building the disputed South China Sea.

Obama and Park discussed the often-touchy relations among China, Japan and South Korea, whose leaders are to hold a long-awaited summit in Seoul in early November. Park said that the summit will be an opportunity to improve South Korea's relations with another key U.S. ally, Japan, which would be welcomed by Washington.

U.S. retains 28,500 troops in South Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War. Obama called the U.S.-South Korean alliance "unbreakable." Park called it "the lynchpin of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific." Her language may rattle a little with Japan, which is also a critical U.S. ally in the region, hosting nearly 50,000 American troops.

Obama commended Park's handling of an August stand-off between the two Koreas, when they threatened each other with war after two South Korean soldiers were wounded by land mines Seoul says were planted by the North. The tensions have since eased, and the two sides have agreed to resume next week reunions of Korean families divided by the Korean War.

The Obama administration has faced criticism from hawks and doves alike for a lack of high-level attention on North Korea, which estimated to have enough fissile material for between 10 and 16 nuclear weapons.



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