

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Leader Of Taliban Charged In Bombing

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials have charged the leader of Pakistan's Taliban with planning attacks against American forces in Afghanistan, including last year's suicide bombing that killed seven CIA employees.

The Justice Department on Wednesday unsealed charges against Hakimullah Mehsud. The self-proclaimed emir of the Pakistani Taliban is charged with two counts of conspiracy that could lead to life in prison.

Mehsud is believed to be hiding along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Seven CIA employees and a Jordanian intelligence officer were killed when a suicide bomber detonated explosives at a CIA base in Khost, Afghanistan, on Dec. 30.

BP Spent \$93M On Advertising After Spill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Oil giant BP says it has spent more than \$5 million a week on advertising since the Gulf Coast oil spill — more than three times the amount it spent on ads during the same period last year.

BP PLC told the House Energy and Commerce Committee that it spent a total of \$93 million on advertising from April to the end of July. The company says the money was intended to keep Gulf Coast residents informed on issues related to the oil spill and to ensure transparency about its actions. The increased spending was largely targeted at TV, newspapers and magazines. A small portion was directed to the Internet.

BP says it actually aired fewer TV spots from April to July than during a similar period last year.

Regulators Defend Lehman Actions

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal bank regulators are defending their actions leading up to the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the purchase of Wachovia at the height of the financial crisis.

They are telling the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission that government officials' decisions in 2008 not to rescue Lehman and to encourage Wells Fargo & Co.'s takeover of Wachovia made sense under the circumstances.

Thomas Baxter, general counsel of the New York Fed, says in prepared testimony: "The Federal Reserve did not 'allow' Lehman Brothers to die."

Robert Steel, the former Wachovia CEO, says Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. Chairman Sheila Bair directed Wachovia to enter talks with potential buyers.

The panel is examining potential systemwide risk from financial institutions.

Oregon Men Settle Boy Scout Sex Cases

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Six men who alleged they were sexually abused by an Oregon Boy Scouts leader in the 1980s have settled their lawsuits against the group's national organization for undisclosed amounts.

The settlements include the case of one man, Kerry Lewis, who was awarded nearly \$20 million in damages from Boys Scouts of America in a trial that ended in April. It was believed to be the largest such award against the national organization.

A jury found the Texas-based group negligent for allowing a former assistant scoutmaster, Timur Dykes, to associate with Scouts after he admitted to a Scouts official in 1983 that he had molested 17 boys. The verdict came as the Boy Scouts, a congressionally chartered organization, mark their centennial.

WikiLeaks Lawyer Questions Soldier's Sanity

HAGERSTOWN, Md. (AP) — A lawyer for the Army private charged with giving classified material to WikiLeaks says his client has mental health problems that could avert a court-martial.

Civilian lawyer David Coombs says Pfc. Bradley Manning has been ordered to undergo a mental health examination to determine his understanding of his own behavior from November through May.

That's when Manning is alleged to have given a classified video and documents to an unauthorized person while working as an intelligence analyst in Iraq. He faces up to 52 years in prison if convicted.

Coombs says Manning's supervisors documented a decline in his mental stability during his deployment in Iraq, and even disabled his rifle out of concern for his safety.

GM Reports Seven Percent Sales Dip

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors says its August sales dropped 7 percent compared with July, as the shaky economy discouraged customers from buying new cars and trucks.

U.S. auto sales in July were a strong point for the economy, helping to boost consumer spending. But high unemployment and a declining stock market have made people afraid to spend money on big-ticket items, industry analysts say.

Sales last month also fell 25 percent from August of 2009. But last year's sales were boosted by the government's Cash for Clunkers rebates.

GM says sales from its four remaining brands — Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac — fell 11 percent compared with August of last year. Buick, GMC and Cadillac reported increases. But Chevrolet sales slipped because last year's clunkers program gave a boost to its lineup of smaller cars.

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Police Kill Gunman Who Held Three At Discovery Channel

BY SARAH BRUMFIELD

Associated Press Writer

SILVER SPRING, Md. — A man who rallied against the Discovery Channel's environmental programming for years burst into the company's headquarters with at least one explosive device strapped to his body Wednesday and took three people hostage at gunpoint before police shot him to death, officials said.

The hostages — two Discovery Communications employees and a security guard — were unhurt after the four-hour standoff.

Montgomery County Police Chief Thomas Manger said tactical officers moved in after officers monitoring the gunman on building security cameras saw him pull out a handgun and point it at a hostage.

An explosive device on the gunman's body detonated when police shot him, Manger said. Police were trying to determine whether two boxes and two backpacks the gunman had also contained explosives.

A law enforcement official speaking on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing said authorities had identified James J. Lee as the likely suspect. Police had not released

the gunman's identity.

County Police and firefighters Wednesday night looked at a laptop screen that showed an image of a body lying face-up, surrounded by blood. Authorities also sent in a robot to disarm the explosive on the gunman's body. Police Capt. Paul Starks said the suspect had shot a gun at least once. He also said police believe the suspect was acting alone but are investigating all possibilities.

NBC News reported that after its producers called Discovery's general number, a man identifying himself as James J. Lee got on the phone and said he had a gun and several bombs.

"I have several bombs strapped to my body ready to go off. I have a device that if I drop it, if I drop it, it will ... explode," the man told NBC.

He said he built the bombs in about three weeks. "I did a lot of research. I had to experiment," he said.

Manger said the suspect held the hostages in the lobby area of the first floor. Authorities said they will methodically go through the building and identify any suspicious items.

The "building is still a crime scene," Manger said. "We still have work to do."

Manger said police spent several hours negotiating with the armed man after he entered the suburban Washington building about 1 p.m. None of the 1,900 people who work in the building were hurt, and most made it out before the standoff ended.

Lee was convicted of disorderly conduct for a protest he organized outside Discovery's offices in February 2008. According to court records, he paid homeless people to carry signs and set off a scramble when he threw fistfuls of cash into the air, calling it "just trash."

Lee served two weeks in jail after his arrest during which doctors evaluated his competency to stand trial. County State's Attorney John McCarthy said Lee was ordered to stay 500 feet away from Discovery headquarters as part of his probation, which ended two weeks ago. A magistrate ordered a doctor's evaluation, but he result was not immediately available Wednesday.

"The Discovery Channel produces many so-called 'Environmental Programs' supposedly there to save the planet," Lee said in an ad he took out in a Washington newspaper to promote the protest. "But the truth is things are getting WORSE! Their programs are causing more

harm than good."

In court and online, Lee faulted the Discovery Channel for shows as varied as "Future Weapons," "It Takes a Thief" and "Planet Green."

A lengthy posting that could be seen Wednesday on a website registered to Lee said Discovery and its affiliates should stop "encouraging the birth of any more parasitic human infants," a possible reference to shows like "Kate Plus 8" and "19 Kids and Counting." Instead, he said, the network should air "programs encouraging human sterilization and infertility."

Discovery Communications Inc. operates U.S. cable and satellite networks including The Discovery Channel, TLC and Animal Planet. Discovery shows include "Cash Cab" and "Man vs. Wild," and TLC airs "American Chopper" and "Kate Plus 8."

David Leavy, Discovery's executive vice president for corporate affairs, said all employees had been accounted for. "We're relieved that it ended without any harm to our employees," he said.

Discovery Channel executives met with some employee witnesses and at least one hostage Wednesday at the Silver Spring precinct. The officials declined to comment to the media except to say everyone was doing OK.

Island Evacuations Start As Earl Nears East Coast

BY MIKE BAKER

Associated Press Writer

NAGS HEAD, N.C. — Hurricane Earl steamed toward the Eastern Seaboard on Wednesday as communities from North Carolina to New England kept a close eye on the forecast, worried that even a slight shift in the storm's predicted offshore track could put millions of people in the most densely populated part of the country in harm's way.

Vacationers along North Carolina's dangerously exposed Outer Banks took advantage of the typical picture-perfect day just before a hurricane arrives to pack their cars and flee inland, cutting short their summer just before Labor Day weekend.

The governors of North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland declared states of emergency, sea turtle nests on one beach

were scooped up and moved to safety, and the crew of the Navy's USS Cole rushed to get home to Norfolk, Va., on Wednesday ahead of the bad weather. The destroyer was supposed to return later this week from a seven-month assignment fighting piracy off Somalia.

Further up the East Coast, emergency officials urged people to have disaster plans and supplies ready and weighed whether to order evacuations as they watched the latest maps from the National Hurricane Center — namely, the "cone of uncertainty" showing the broad path the storm could take.

Earl was expected to reach the North Carolina coast late Thursday and wheel to the northeast, staying offshore while making its way up the Eastern Seaboard. But forecasters said it could move in closer, perhaps coming ashore in North Carolina,

crossing New York's Long Island and passing over the Boston metropolitan area and Cape Cod.

That could make the difference between modestly wet and blustery weather on the one hand, and dangerous storm surge, heavy rain and hurricane-force winds on the other.

"Everyone is poised and ready to pull the trigger if Earl turns west, but our hope is that this thing goes out to sea and we're all golfing this weekend," said Peter Judge, a spokesman for the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

As of Wednesday afternoon, Earl was a powerful Category 4 hurricane centered more than 680 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras, N.C., with winds of 135 mph.

The only mandatory evacuations were for 30,000 residents and visitors ordered to leave Hatteras Island on the Outer Banks. Dare County spokes-

woman Dorothy Toolan said there was no official notification of the evacuation order, and many residents didn't appear worried.

Nancy Scarborough, who manages the Hatteras Cabanas, said locals are ready to help each other and ride out a hurricane, even if they are cut off from the mainland for days.

"I worry about not being able to get back here," she said. "I'd rather be stuck on this side than that side."

About 5,000 tourists were ordered to leave Ocracoke Island to the south, and officials in Carteret County were evacuating low-lying areas, but didn't know how many people would be affected.

The North Carolina National Guard also is deploying 80 troops to help and Gov. Beverly Perdue sent a letter to President Barack Obama requesting a federal emergency declaration before landfill in anticipation of damages.

Obama Says Mideast Peace Moment 'Must Be Seized'

BY ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama convened the first direct Israeli-Palestinian talks in two years Wednesday, challenging Mideast leaders to seize a fleeting opportunity to settle their differences and deliver peace to a region haunted by decades of hostility.

"I am hopeful, cautiously hopeful, but hopeful," Obama said with the leaders of Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians beside him in the crowded East Room of the White House. Earlier Obama had met with each individually, and they gathered afterward for dinner.

Shadowed by fresh violence in the region, the leaders solemnly commenced the talks aimed at creating a sovereign Palestinian state beside a secure Israel.

"Do we have the wisdom and the courage to walk the path of peace?" Obama asked.

In turn, each of the leaders answered positively but with qualifications. And they spoke of hopes for a breakthrough within the one-year timeframe prescribed by Obama.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his nation desires a lasting peace, not an interlude between wars. He called Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas "my partner in peace," and said, "Everybody loses if there is no peace."

Abbas urged Israel to freeze settlement construction in areas the Palestinians want as part of their new state, and to end its blockade of Gaza, which is controlled by the militant Hamas movement. The settlements issue is a central obstacle to achieving a permanent peace.

Is The Tea Party Becoming The New GOP?

BY LIZ SIDOTI

AP National Political Writer

WASHINGTON — Is the tea party the new Republican Party?

The grass-roots network of fed-up conservative-libertarian voters displayed its power in its biggest triumph of the election year: the toppling of Sen. Lisa Murkowski in Alaska's GOP primary. Political novice Joe Miller is the fifth tea party insurgent to win a GOP Senate nominating contest, an upset that few, if any, saw coming.

With the stunning outcome, the fledgling tea party coalition and voters who identify with its anti-tax, anti-spending sentiments proved that democracy is alive and well — within the Republican Party. Don't like who is representing you? Rise up, fire them and choose someone new.

The tea party has taken hold in the Grand Old Party, unseating lawmakers, capturing nomina-

tions for open seats and forcing Republicans to recalibrate both their campaign strategy and issues agenda. Out is talk of delivering federal dollars back home; in is talk of fiscal discipline.

Within minutes of Murkowski conceding late Tuesday night, Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., was among the conservative Republicans cheering Miller.

"He pulled off the upset victory of the year because he ran on principles and because Alaskans, like all Americans, want to stop the massive spending, bailouts and debt that are bankrupting our country," said DeMint.

Taking a shot at Murkowski if not the entire Republican establishment, he added: "Joe Miller's victory should be a wake-up call to politicians who go to Washington to bring home the bacon. Voters are saying 'We're not willing to bankrupt the country to benefit ourselves.'"

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Christopher A. Hathaway, MD, Ph.D graduated from the University of South Dakota School of Medicine and completed his residency in Urology at the Medical College of Georgia. He joins Dr. Joseph Boudreau in practice at Yankton Urological Surgery, Prof., L.L.C., 2009 Locust, Yankton, SD.



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