

Syria

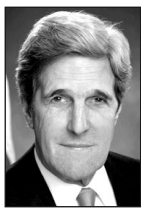
# Broader Talks Are Possible

BY MATTHEW LEE AND CONNIE CASS  
Associated Press

GENEVA — The top diplomats from the United States and Russia raised hopes Friday for reviving broad talks to end the long and deadly Syrian civil war, even as they struggled to deal with the most notorious part — the use of chemical weapons on civilians. The path to a U.N. resolution on securing those weapons seemed at least somewhat clearer, with the U.S. indicating it could accept an enforcement measure that didn't threaten military retribution.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, leading talks in Geneva to defuse the crisis, both made clear that any prospects for restarting broad peace negotiations depended on first settling the standoff over the chemical weapons. They were to meet again Saturday.

The U.S. has been seeking a U.N. Security Council resolution to solidify the turnover that Syrian President Bashar Assad has promised, including consequences if he doesn't follow through. Addressing a difficult sticking point, administration officials said Friday that



Kerry

President Barack Obama was open to a resolution that did not include military force as a punishment, given that Russia would be all but certain to veto any measure including such a penalty.

Even without a military trigger included in a U.N. resolution, the officials said Obama would retain the authority to order U.S. airstrikes against Syria.

At the White House, Obama said any agreement to remove Syria's chemical weapons stockpile "needs to be verifiable and enforceable." As for possible U.N. action, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said, "We are not going to prejudice the outcome of negotiations that are just beginning in New York. The U.S. has been clear that for any effort to be credible it must be verifiable and include consequences for noncompliance."

Senior administration officials also outlined for the first time a timetable for a diplomatic resolution of the issue of the weapons, saying the U.S. will know within a few weeks whether a path is workable. The officials spoke only on condition of anonymity because they were not author-

ized to discuss the internal deliberations publicly.

U.N. inspectors prepared to turn in their own poison gas report this weekend, sure to be an important basis for any further action. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Friday that he expected "an overwhelming report" that chemical weapons were indeed used on the outskirts of Damascus on Aug. 21.

Two U.N. diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because the time was not yet final, said Friday night that Ban was expected to brief the Security Council on the report Monday morning.

In Geneva, meanwhile, Kerry and Lavrov have disclosed little since their meetings began Thursday with Kerry's dismissal of Assad's offer to begin by turning over information, not weapons, starting weeks from now after signing an international convention.

A U.S. official said the talks were at a "pivotal point" and would continue Saturday morning. Some progress has been made on how to account for Syria's chemical weapons inventory, the official said, adding that the U.S. and Russia also had narrowed their differences over what each country believes to be the size of the Syrian stockpiles.

Immigration

## Advocates Turn To President For Action

BY ERICA WERNER AND ALICIA A. CALDWELL  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With immigration legislation stalled in Congress, advocates are intensifying pressure on the Obama administration to act unilaterally to stop deportations or grant legal status to some of the 11 million people now living in the U.S. illegally.

Activists are stepping up acts of civil disobedience like one last month in Phoenix, where they blocked a bus full of immigrant detainees. And labor leaders plan to press the issue with a top White House official in an upcoming meeting.

Many advocates continue to hold out hope for a legislative solution even as some shift their focus to the White House.

"If Congress doesn't move, the president has a duty to act," said Ana Avendano, director of immigration and community action at the AFL-CIO. "Just because the Republicans have buried their heads in the sand doesn't mean that immigrant communities aren't feeling the sting of constant deportations."

The possibility of executive action is inflaming Republican suspicions. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and others warn that President Barack Obama will be tempted to act on his own to legalize some or all of the people now living in the country illegally.

"I think that's actually what Obama wants to do. I think he wants Congress not to pass something so he can do it on his own and he can take credit for it," Rep. Raul Labrador, R-Idaho, said in an interview. "He needs to be very careful, though, because he continues to flout the law, and he continues to do things that are beyond his authority. And at some point, Congress is going to have enough."

The administration acted on its own a year ago to change policy and suspend deportations of some immigrants brought illegally to the country as children. About 400,000 of them have benefited so far.

White House officials refuse to publicly entertain any discussion of taking further steps. "The only way to bring 11 million undocumented individuals out of the shadow economy is for Congress to pass common-sense reform with an earned path to citizenship. That's it. Full stop," said White House spokesman Bobby Whitthorne.

When asked in interviews about the high number of deportations under his administration, Obama has sought to put the onus on Congress. "I'm not a king," he told Telemundo earlier this year.

Advocates say administration officials are no more receptive in private, although Cecilia Munoz, director of Obama's Domestic Policy Council, has agreed to meet with labor leaders on the issue, something that's in the process of being scheduled, according to one union official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private gathering.

The issue arises against the backdrop of an uncertain outlook in Congress for comprehensive immigration legislation offering eventual citizenship to those already in the country illegally.



Cars sit in a flooded driveway as Cheyenne Creek flows over its banks and into the surrounding creek side properties in Colorado Springs, Colo., Friday.

## Stranded Residents Plucked From Colorado Floodwaters

BY P. SOLOMON BANDA AND MEAD GRUVER  
Associated Press

LYONS, Colo. — By truck and helicopter, thousands of people stranded by floodwaters came down from the Colorado Rockies on Friday, two days after seemingly endless rain turned normally scenic rivers and creeks into coffee-colored rapids that wrecked scores of roads and wiped out neighborhoods.

Authorities aimed to evacuate 2,500 people from the isolated mountain community of Lyons by the end of the day, either by National Guard convoys or airlifts.

One of them, Mary Hemme, recalled hearing sirens going off in the middle of the night and her husband saying they needed to leave. They stepped outside their trailer and into rushing water that nearly reached their knees.

She got in her car and tried to drive away. "But I only got so far, because the river was rushing at me, so I threw it in reverse as fast as I could," Hemme said. "I was so afraid that I was going to die, that water came so fast."

Others were less fortunate. The body of a woman who had been swept away was found Friday near Boulder, raising the death toll to four.

National Guard troops aided by a break in the weather started airlifting 295 residents from the small community of Jamestown, which has been cut off and without power or water for more than a day.

Dean Hollenbaugh, 79, decided to take one of the helicopters after officials warned electricity and water could be disrupted for weeks.

"Essentially, what they were threatening us with is 'if you stay here, you may be here for a month,'" Hollenbaugh said as he waited for his son to pick him up from the Boulder airport. "I felt I was OK. I mean I've camped in the mountains for a week at a time."

Airlifts also were taking place to the east in Larimer County for people with special medical needs.

The relentless rush of water from higher ground turned towns into muddy swamps, and the rain returned Friday afternoon after brief lull. In at least one community, pressure from

the descending water caused sewer grates to erupt into huge black geysers.

Damage assessments were on hold with many roads impassable and the rain expected to continue.

"This one's going to bring us to our knees," said Tom Simmons, president and co-owner of Crating Technologies, a Longmont packing service that had its warehouse inundated. "It's hoping against hope. We're out of business for a long time."

About 90 miles of Interstate 25 were closed Friday from Denver to Cheyenne, Wyo., because of flooding from the St. Vrain, Poudre and Big Thompson rivers, transportation officials said.

Hundreds of people were forced to seek emergency shelter up and down Colorado's heavily populated Front Range, which has received more than 15 inches of rain this week, according to the National Weather Service.

That's about half the amount of precipitation that normally falls in the foothills near Boulder during an entire year.

Boulder County officials said 80 people were unaccounted for Friday. But, they noted, that doesn't necessarily mean they are missing.

"It means we haven't heard back from them," county spokesman James Burrus said.

Two backpackers became stranded on Longs Peak, one of Colorado's highest mountains, after the weather turned. Suzanne Turell and Connie Yang of York, Maine, last sent a text message Thursday with their GPS coordinates, but their cellphones went dead, said Turell's mother, Barbara.

The pair hiked off the mountain themselves as the National Park Service was organizing a rescue effort.

The park service closed Rocky Mountain National Park and was escorting visitors and residents of Estes Park on a trail over the Continental Divide.

In Lyons, residents took shelter on higher ground, including some at an elementary school, before National Guard convoys could push through the water and into the isolated town. The convoys carried 15 people at a time to buses beyond the roadblocks, past cheering crowds.

## Police: Fla. Suicide Victim Was Bullied

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — For nearly a year, as many as 15 girls ganged up on 12-year-old Rebecca Ann Sedwick and picked on her, authorities say, bombarding her with online messages such as "You should die" and "Why don't you go kill yourself."

Rebecca couldn't take it anymore. She changed one of her online screen names to "That Dead Girl." She messaged a boy in North Carolina: "I'm jumping." And then, on Monday, the Lakeland girl went to an abandoned concrete plant, climbed a tower and hurled herself to her death.

Authorities have seized computers and cellphones from some of the girls as they decide whether to bring charges in what appeared to be the nation's latest deadly cyberbullying case.

The bullying started over a "boyfriend issue" last year at Crystal Lake Middle School, Sheriff Grady Judd said. But he gave no details. Police said Rebecca was suspended at one point for fighting with a girl who used to be her friend.

## 2 Jersey Towns Face Another Rebuilding

SEASIDE PARK, N.J. (AP) — They were the kind of places that made for family memories of french fries and ice cream, but also created some raucous reality TV, like the time Snooki was laid out by a barroom sucker punch.

They included an arcade where New Jersey's governor played Skee Ball with his wife and kids, and a shop where he ate pizza (at least before his recent weight-loss surgery). There were three frozen custard shacks, games of chance, and stores where tourists could buy naughty T-shirts.

And now they're gone, reduced to smoldering ruins by a spectacular fire that engulfed more than four blocks of a Jersey shore boardwalk that had been rebuilt just five months ago after being destroyed by Superstorm Sandy.

"We're wiped out again. It's just unimaginable," said Daniel Shauger, manager of Funtown Arcade, which reopened June 1 — and struggled all summer — after Sandy's floodwaters ruined game machines and other equipment.

The cause of Thursday's blaze was under investigation, though prosecutors said they had seen no evidence it was suspicious.

## Mexico: Police Confront Teachers

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Thousands of striking teachers briefly seized control of the historic heart of Mexico City on Friday, blockading the Zocalo plaza armed with metal pipes and wooden clubs. Minutes after a late-afternoon government deadline, riot police started pushing into the area, firing tear gas and ducking hurled rocks in a confrontation culminating weeks of protests against an education reform.

The teachers used steel grates and plastic traffic dividers to block the streets leading into the Zocalo, home to the Metropolitan Cathedral, Templo Mayor and National Palace, some of the city's best-known tourist attractions. Hundreds of Mexico City and federal riot police massed on the other sides of the barriers, then swarmed into the square past the famed Aztec temple, chasing down and arresting protesters.

Mexico's government had promised that Independence Day celebrations, including the traditional presidential shout of independence from a balcony overlooking the square, would take place in Zocalo Sunday and Monday.

The president's office pointedly released an official schedule in the middle of the protests, noting that the independence "shout" would take place at the National Palace at its usual time Sunday night. Manuel Mondragon, the head of the federal police, warned on national television that police would move in at 4 p.m. local time. The teachers, many veterans of battles with police in the poor southern states where they live, promised not to move from the square where they have camped out for weeks, launching a string of disruptive marches around the city.

## Taliban Hit US Consulate In Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The Taliban attacked a U.S. Consulate in western Afghanistan with car bombs and guns on Friday, killing at least four Afghans but failing to enter the compound or hurt any Americans.

The attack in the city of Herat underscored concerns about an insurgency that shows no signs of letting up as U.S.-led troops reduce their presence ahead of a full withdrawal next year.

Within hours of the assault, the U.S. temporarily evacuated many of its consular personnel to the embassy in Kabul, 650 kilometers (400 miles) to the east.

Herat lies near Afghanistan's border with Iran and is considered one of the safer cities in the country, with a strong Iranian influence. Friday's attack highlighted the Taliban's reach: The militants once concentrated their activities in the east and the south, but in recent years have demonstrated an ability to strike with more frequency in the once-peaceful north and west.

In a phone call, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi took responsibility for the assault.

## Last Name Causes License Issue

HONOLULU (AP) — A Hawaii woman's last name is a real mouthful, containing 36 characters and 19 syllables in all. And it's so long that she couldn't get a driver's license with her correct name.

Janice "Lokelani" Keihanaikukauakahihuliheekahaunaale is in the midst of a fight with state and local officials to ensure that her full name gets listed on a license or ID card. Her name is pronounced: KAY'-ee-hah-nah-EE'-coo-COW'-ah-KAH'-hee-HOO'-lee-heh-eh-KAH'-how-NAH-eh-leh.

The documents only have room for 35 characters. Her name has 35 letters plus a mark used in the Hawaiian alphabet, called an okina.

So Hawaii County instead issued her driver's license and her state ID with the last letter of her name chopped off. And it omitted her first name.

The 54-year-old Big Island resident wrote her mayor and city councilwoman for help, but the county said the state of Hawaii computer system they used wouldn't allow names longer than 35 characters.

Keihanaikukauakahihuliheekahaunaale got the name when she married her Hawaiian husband in 1992.



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