

W. House Grapples With Somali Group

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House is under pressure to ramp up counterterrorism action against al-Shabab in Somalia following the al-Qaida-linked group's deadly attack on an upscale Kenyan shopping mall that has killed and injured dozens, including Americans.

Republican lawmakers Sunday said the attack showed al-Qaida is growing in size and strength, belying the Obama administration's claims that it has grown weaker.

"They're not on the decline," said Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, the ranking Republican on the Homeland Security Committee, on CBS' "Face the Nation." "They're on the rise, as you can see from Nairobi."

Al-Shabab militants launched their assault on Saturday, storming the mall with grenades and gunfire. Kenyan security forces launched a "major" assault late Sunday on the mall, where the militants are still holding an unknown number of hostages, trying to end the two-day standoff that had already killed nearly 70 people.

Suicide Bombing Kills 16 At Iraq Funeral

BAGHDAD (AP) — A suicide bomber detonated his explosive belt among Sunni mourners attending a funeral in Baghdad on Sunday, killing 16 people and wounding 35 others, officials said, in the latest episode of the country's near-daily violence.

Police officials said the evening attack took place when a suicide bomber detonated his explosive belt inside a tent where the funeral was being held in Baghdad's southern neighborhood of Dora.

Two other attacks in the country's north left two policemen dead and 37 others wounded, the officials added.

Sunday's bloodshed came a day after a wave of attacks killed 104 people, most at a double suicide attack on a Shiite funeral in Baghdad.

Violence has spiked in Iraq during the past few months. More than 4,000 people have been killed between April and August, a level of carnage not seen since the country was on the brink of civil war in 2006-08.

Mexican Landslide Rescue Ongoing

LA PINTADA, Mexico (AP) — Fourteen hours per body. That's how long rescue crews with shovels, hydraulic equipment, anything they can muster, are averaging to find the victims of a massive landslide that took half the remote coffee-growing village of La Pintada, leaving 68 people missing.

The Mexican army's emergency response and rescue team slogged in several feet of mud with five rescue dogs on Sunday, recovering a third body, a man found wedged under the collapsed roof of dirt-filled home.

Lt. Carlos Alberto Mendoza, commander of the 16-soldier team, said it's the most daunting situation he's seen in 24 years with the Mexican army.

"They are doing unbelievable work, hours and hours for just one body," he told The Associated Press. "No matter how hard the day is, they never get tired of working."

Merkel Triumphs In German Election

BERLIN (AP) — Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives triumphed in Germany's election Sunday and appeared likely to end up close to an absolute majority. While Merkel was headed for a third term, her center-right coalition partners faced ejection from parliament for the first time in post-World War II history.

Depending on which parties end up in parliament, Merkel could find herself leading a "grand coalition" government with the left-leaning Social Democrats or — less likely — with the environmentalist Greens. Either way, several weeks of difficult negotiations are expected. Each combination might bring a slightly softer tone to Europe's debt crisis, but probably without any significant policy shifts.

Merkel, Germany's chancellor since 2005 and the de facto leader of the response to Europe's debt crisis over the past three years, told supporters it was "a super result." She wouldn't immediately speculate about the shape of the next government, but the 59-year-old made clear she plans to serve a full term.

"I see the next four years in front of me and I can promise that we will face many tasks, at home, in Europe and in the world," Merkel said during a television appearance with other party leaders.

If her current coalition lacks a majority and the conservatives can't govern alone, the likeliest outcome is a Merkel-led alliance with the Social Democrats. The two are traditional rivals, but governed Germany together in Merkel's first term after an inconclusive 2005 election.

War Reunion Canceled In North Korea

NAMYANGJU, South Korea (AP) — Chang Choon didn't get much sleep as he prepared to travel to North Korea this week to see his brother and sister for the first time in more than six decades. But the anticipation of what he called the wish of a lifetime was shattered after North Korea abruptly canceled planned reunions for families separated by the Korean War.

"My wish to meet them for the first time in 62 years has burst like a bubble," Chang, 81, said in a drawling voice by phone Sunday.

Chang is one of hundreds of South Koreans who had planned to visit North Korea's scenic Diamond Mountain to meet long-separated relatives in what would have been the first such family reunion program between the rival countries in three years.

Millions of people have been separated since the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, and not a peace treaty. The reunions are highly emotional, as most people who apply to take part are in their 70s or older and are eager to see their loved ones before they die. Most have had no word on whether their relatives are still alive, with their governments prohibiting ordinary citizens from exchanging letters, phone calls or email.

But the two Koreas agreed last month to resume the reunion program amid signs that their animosities were easing following springtime threats of war. The plan fizzed Saturday when North Korea announced it would indefinitely postpone the reunions because of Seoul's "reckless and vicious confrontational racket" against Pyongyang.

Meeting

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involuntary homelessness." Added Desiree Warren Johnson, executive director of the Yankton Women's and Children's Center and Yankton Homeless Coalition member, "Change starts to happen when people work together. We are a community, and we need to take care of each other. The coalition is igniting crucial steps in the community to really embrace all the individuals and families that reside here in Yankton that are struggling from economic hardship and help them find long term financial stability and housing."

In addition to offering information to families, Project Connect will serve a dual purpose by helping the coalition gather its own information about those who are struggling, Hanson said. As part of the gathering, the coalition will be conducting

surveys assessing the needs faced by the homeless or those living in inadequate housing, she said.

"We want to get a clearer picture of the population that we're serving and how we can better use our resources and plan for the future," Hanson said.

Tuesday's Project Connect will include free pizza sponsored by Wal-Mart, Pizza Ranch, Little Caesar's and Godfathers. Local gardeners also are donating fresh vegetables to share.

For more information, contact the United Way & Volunteer Services at (605)665-6766.

"I really encourage people to come down and talk to us," Hanson said. "We just want to hear straight from the people of the community what their biggest hurdles are, and we'll help any way that we can."

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Blame Already Being Cast Over Budget Fight

BY PHILIP ELLIOTT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Even before a budget deadline arrives, leaders from both parties are blaming each other — and some Republicans are criticizing their own — for a government shutdown many are treating as inevitable.

The top Democrat in the House says Republicans are "legislative arsonists" who are using their opposition to a sweeping health care overhaul as an excuse to close government's doors. A leading tea party antagonist in the Senate counters that conservatives should use any tool available to stop the Affordable Care Act from taking hold.

President Bill Clinton's labor secretary says the GOP is willing "to risk the entire system of government to get your way," while the House speaker who oversaw the last government shutdown urged fellow Republicans to remember "this is not a dictatorship."

The unyielding political posturing on Sunday comes one week before Congress reaches an Oct. 1 deadline to dodge any interruptions in government services. While work continues on a temporary spending bill, a potentially more devastating separate deadline looms a few weeks later when the government could run out of money to pay its bills.

"This is totally irresponsible, completely juvenile and, as I called it, legislative arson. It's just destructive," House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said in an interview that aired Sunday.

The Republican-led House on Friday approved legislation designed to wipe out the 3-year-old health care law that President Barack Obama has vowed to preserve. But the House's move was more a political win than a measure likely to be implemented.

Across the Capitol, Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid said he would keep the health law intact despite Republicans' attempts, in his words, "to take an entire law hostage simply to appease the tea party anarchists."

One of those tea party agitators, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, showed little sign on Sunday that he cared about the



Pelosi



Reid

uphill climb to make good on his pledge to derail the health care law over Obama's guaranteed veto.

"I believe we should stand our ground," said Cruz, who already was trying to blame Obama and his Democratic allies if the government shuts down.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, a Missouri Democrat, said Cruz's efforts were destructive and self-serving as Cruz eyes a White House campaign.

"I cannot believe that they are going to throw a tantrum and throw the American people and our economic recovery under the bus," she said.

"This is about running for president with Ted Cruz. This isn't about meaningful statesmanship," she added later.

The wrangling over the budget comes as lawmakers consider separate legislation that would let the United States avoid a first-ever default on its debt obligations. House Republicans are planning legislation that would attach a 1-year delay in the health care law in exchange for ability to increase the nation's credit limit of \$16.7 trillion.

Obama, speaking to political allies on Saturday evening, showed little patience for the GOP efforts to undermine his legislative accomplishment by either avenue.

"We will not negotiate over whether or not America should keep its word and meet its obligations," Obama told the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation dinner. "We're not going to allow anyone to inflict economic pain on millions of our own people just to make an ideological point."

Congress doesn't seem eager to help Obama, although there are deep divides — both between parties and within them — over who deserves blame.

Rep. Tom Graves, R-Ga., said the goal was to defund the president's health care legislation for at least one more year if not forever.

"We do have eight days to reach a resolution on this, and I propose an idea

that kept the government operating and opened for an entire year while delaying and defunding Obamacare for a year so that we could work out those differences," Graves said.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, whose faceoff with Clinton led to government shutdowns that inflicted significant damage on the GOP and helped resurrect the then-president's political fortunes in time for his 1996 re-election bid, said his GOP colleagues should not yield.

"This is not a dictatorship. Under our constitution, there should be a period of tension and there should be a compromise on both sides," Gingrich said.

Robert Reich, who was Clinton's labor secretary, said that works only if both parties are willing to negotiate.

"Sorry, under our constitutional system you're not allowed to risk the entire system of government to get your way," Reich said.

It is likely that when the House legislation arrives in the Senate, Democrats there will strip off the health care defunding mechanism. Democrats plan to send back to the House a bill that prevents disruptions in government services but not the health provision they championed.

Cruz, however, said Senate Republicans cannot allow that to happen and should mount every procedural hurdle available. Cruz, who pushed lawmakers to tie a budget bill with health care hurdles, said Republicans should mount a procedural roadblock that would require 60 votes for any changes to the House bill.

"You know what? If Senate Republicans stand together, we can stop Harry Reid from doing it," Cruz said.

But within his own party, Cruz faced skepticism.

"It's not a tactic that we can actually carry out and be successful," said Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla. "The answer now in the Senate, by those who propose this strategy, is to filibuster the very bill they said they wanted."

Pelosi spoke to CNN's "State of the Union." Cruz and McCaskill were interviewed on "Fox News Sunday." Reich, Gingrich and Graves appeared on ABC's "This Week." Coburn was on CBS' "Face the Nation."

'Breaking Bad,' 'Modern Family' Win At Emmys

BY LYNN ELBER
AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES — "Breaking Bad," the brutal saga of an everyman's ambition turned evil, captured its first best drama Emmy Award on Sunday, while "Modern Family" won its fourth consecutive trophy for top comedy series.

"I did not see this coming," said "Breaking Bad" creator Vince Gilligan, tipping his hat to competitor "House of Cards," the first online contender for top Emmy honors.

Jeff Daniels won the Emmy for best drama series actor for his portrayal of an idealistic TV anchorman in "The Newsroom," with Claire Danes capturing top actress honors for her troubled CIA agent in "Homeland."

Danes, who captured her second trophy for the

terrorism drama, paid tribute to one of the series' writers, Henry Bromell, who died last March and who received a writing Emmy posthumously Sunday.

The ceremony often struck a melancholy note with extended tributes to stars and other industry members who died in the past year.

It also included upsets, defying the conventional wisdom in several categories, including acting categories.

"This just in. Nobody in America is winning their Emmy office pool. Surprises galore," host Neil Patrick Harris.

Julia Louis-Dreyfus claimed her second consecutive best comedy actress award for her role as an ambitious political second banana in "Veep," with Jim Parsons again claiming the top comedy acting trophy

for "The Big Bang Theory." Parsons added to the awards he won in 2011 and 2010 for the role of a science nerd.

Merritt Wever of "Nurse Jackie" won the night's first award, for best supporting actress in a comedy series, kicking off the ceremony on a surprising note and with a remarkably brief acceptance speech.

Tony Hale of "Veep" claimed the trophy for best supporting actor in a comedy, a category that has been the property in recent years of the men of "Modern Family."

Laura Linney was named best actress in a miniseries or movie for "The Big C: Hereafter." "The Voice" won best reality-competition program, and Tina Fey won for writing "30 Rock."

Michael Douglas was honored as best actor for his

portrayal of Liberace in "Behind the Candelabra," besting his co-star Matt Damon. The film also captured a top trophy as best movie or miniseries.

Bobby Cannavale, from "Boardwalk Empire," won as best supporting actor in a drama, and Anna Gunn from "Breaking Bad" won the best actress award in the same category.

Derek Hough of "Dancing with the Stars" won the trophy for best choreography, which offered an opportunity to include an upbeat dance number late in the show.

In the variety show category, "The Colbert Report" broke a 10-year winning streak held by "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart." It also won for best writing for a variety show.

Obama

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raising the prospect of a meeting at the United Nations. U.S.-brokered peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians have resumed — though on an uncertain course. And Russia has joined with the U.S. on a diplomatic deal to strip Syria of its chemical weapons.

Joel Rubin, a former State Department official who now works at the nonproliferation organization Ploughshares, said the confluence of events underscores an often frustrating aspect of diplomacy.

"You never know when it's going to break," said Rubin. He said Obama's biggest test now is to recognize if opportunities morph into stalling tactics.

Obama's advisers cast the sudden signs of progress as an outgrowth of the president's long-standing preference for resolving disputes through diplomacy and, in the case of Iran and Syria, with pressure built up through economic sanctions and the threat of military action.

"He said we'd be open to diplomacy, we'd pursue engagement, but that there would be pressure if Iran failed to take that opportunity," said Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser. And on Syria, Rhodes said it was the credible threat of a U.S. military strike "that opened the door for this diplomacy."

Aides say Obama will address developments on Iran,

Syria and Middle East peace in his speech to the U.N. on Tuesday. The issues will also be at the forefront of some of the president's bilateral meetings with world leaders, including a sit-down with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Lebanese President Michel Suleiman, whose country is burdened by the flow of refugees from neighboring Syria.

But Obama's most closely watched meeting may end up being with Iranian President Hasan Rouhani. No encounter is scheduled, but U.S. officials have left open the possibility the two men might talk on the sidelines of the international gathering.

If they do, it would mark the first meeting of U.S. and Iranian leaders in more than 30 years. A meeting could also be a precursor to renewed talks on Tehran's disputed nuclear program — though bridging differences over Iran's right to enrich uranium and maintain those stockpiles will be a far tougher task than arranging a handshake.

The election of Rouhani, a moderate cleric, signaled frustration among many Iranians with their country's international isolation and the crippling impact of Western sanctions. Obama and Rouhani have already exchanged letters. And the new Iranian president's rhetoric has so far been more palatable to the U.S. than former leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who would threaten Israel as well as lambast the U.S. in his annual remarks at the U.N.

Trita Parsi, the president of the National Iranian

American Council, said Rouhani shares with Obama a need to prove to a domestic audience that diplomacy can garner concrete results.

"If he can't show that his diplomatic approach will pay more dividends for Iran than Ahmadinejad's theatrics, then it's back to the conservatives being in the driver's seat. And the flexibility that Rouhani currently has will be lost," Parsi said.

As Rouhani considers re-engaging with the U.S., he's closely watching diplomatic developments in Syria, an Iranian ally.

A chemical weapons attack near Damascus in August brought the U.S. to the brink of a military strike. But an idea floated by Secretary of State John Kerry turned into a last-minute overture from Russia — another backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad — and resulted in a deal to turn Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles over to the international community.

The breakthrough was particularly unexpected given that Russia has thwarted U.S. efforts to punish Assad through the U.N. Security Council. When Obama was on the verge of launching a strike against Assad's regime, he said the U.N. had an "incapacity" to address Syria's violation of international agreements banning the deployment of deadly gases.

Now the U.S. once again sees a role for the Security Council. The U.S. wants the panel to approve a resolution making the U.S.-Russian agreement legally binding in a way that is verifiable and enforceable. But a key

obstacle remains, given U.S. and Russian disagreement over whether to put the resolution under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter.

Chapter 7 deals with threats to international peace and security and has provisions for enforcement by military or nonmilitary means, such as sanctions. Russia is sure to veto a resolution that includes a mandate for military action.

The prospect of diplomacy in Iran and Syria has overshadowed tenuous progress in recent months in restarting direct talks between the Israelis and Palestinians. Talks resumed this summer after months of prodding by Kerry, but the prospect of a resolution on issues that have long had the Israelis and Palestinians at odds remain as slim as ever.

Palestinian leaders, frustrated by the stalemate, have taken their case in recent years to the United Nations, where there is broad support for their bid for statehood. While the U.S. supports Palestinian statehood, it says that status can only be achieved through direct negotiations with the Israelis.

That's put Obama in the awkward position of arguing against Palestinian efforts during his previous trips to the U.N. American opposition stymied Palestinian efforts to become full U.N. members in 2011, but the Palestinians succeeded in a bid to gain implicit statehood recognition last year.

The 2012 measure passed overwhelmingly, with the U.S. and just a handful of other nations voting no.