



US SECRET SERVICE VIA AP

This small drone flying low to the ground crashed onto the White House grounds before dawn Monday, triggering a major emergency response. A man later came forward to say he was responsible and didn't mean to fly it over the complex.

Small drone crashes at White House

BY JOSH LEDERMAN AND JOAN LOWY
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A two-foot-long drone apparently flown by a hobbyist crashed on the White House grounds Monday in an extraordinary, if unintended, breach that raised fresh questions about the president's security — and a growing threat from the sky.

A man later came forward to say he was responsible for the mishap in the middle of the night and hadn't meant to fly the drone over the complex, officials said. "Initial indications are that this incident occurred as a result of

recreational use of the device," said Secret Service spokesman Brian Leary.

President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, were overseas when the quadcopter struck the southeast side of the grounds at about 3 a.m. Daughters Sasha and Malia stayed behind in Washington; it was not known whether they were at the mansion.

Officials believed the intrusion to be the first of its kind on the White House grounds, although not the first in the vicinity.

Low-flying drones like the quadcopter — a two-foot-long device lifted

by four propellers — have become increasingly sophisticated and affordable instruments that authorities worry could also become tools for terrorists or others meaning to do harm.

Police, fire and other emergency vehicles swarmed the White House just after the crash, with several clustered near the southeast entrance to the grounds. The White House was dark and the entire perimeter was on lockdown until around 5 a.m. when those who work there were allowed inside.

After daylight, more than a dozen

PLEASE SEE DRONE, 2B



ALIK KEPLICZ / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mordechai Ronen, a Holocaust survivor from the U.S., stands Monday under the Arbeit Macht Frei (Work Sets you Free) sign above the entrance gate of the Auschwitz Nazi death camp in Oswiecim, Poland. Organizers are expecting 300 Holocaust survivors to visit the camp today for the 70th anniversary of its liberation.

Group of survivors return to Auschwitz

People gather to mark 70th anniversary of death camp liberation

BY VANESSA GERA
The Associated Press

KRAKOW, Poland — Film director Steven Spielberg told a group of Holocaust survivors Monday that Jews are again facing the "perennial demons of intolerance" from anti-Semites who are provoking hate crimes and trying to strip survivors of their identity.

His warning came in a speech to dozens of Auschwitz survivors the evening before official commemorations marking the 70th anniversary of the Soviet army's liberation of the death camp in Nazi-occupied Poland.

About 300 survivors will gather with leaders from around the world today to remember the 1.1 million people killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau and the millions of others killed in the Holocaust. Leaders expected include the presidents of Germany and Austria, while the United States is sending a delegation led by Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, who is an Orthodox Jew.

Spielberg, the Oscar-winning director of the 1993 Holocaust film "Schindler's List," was introduced by an 81-year-old survivor, Paula Lebovics, who praised him as "a man who has given us a voice in history."

In a short speech, Spiel-

berg then spoke of how his own Jewish identity evolved, first as a boy learning to read numbers from the numbers tattooed on the arms of survivors, and as an adult when he filmed "Schindler's List" in Krakow.

But he warned of "anti-Semites, radical extremists, and religious fanatics" who are again provoking hate crimes — a warning that comes after radical Islamists massacred Jews at a kosher supermarket earlier this month in Paris.

Spielberg also noted that there are now Facebook pages that identify Jews and their geographic locations

PLEASE SEE AUSCHWITZ, 2B

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MORE NATION, WORLD NEWS, 4B

Medicare to change way hospitals, doctors are paid

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Medicare will change the way it pays hospitals and doctors to reward quality over volume, the Obama administration said Monday, in a shift that officials hope will be a catalyst for the nation's \$3-trillion health care system.

"It is in our common interest to build a health care system that delivers better care, spends health care dollars more wisely and results in healthier people," said Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell.

A broad cross-section of health-care industry representatives attended Burwell's announcement, including insurers, hospitals, and doctors, as well as employers, who provide coverage for most workers and their families.

The shift won immediate support from insurers and the American Hospi-

Medicare continues to grapple with financing problems, despite a welcome slowdown in spending over the last few years. Among the issues is a budget formula that will cut doctor payments by about 20 percent in April unless Congress acts.

tal Association. The professional group representing primary care doctors also said it's "on board." But American Medical Association president Robert Wah stopped short of an endorsement, telling reporters his group is encouraged but wants specifics.

Burwell also announced the formation of the Learning and Action Network, a group that will bring together a wide range of affected parties to drive change in how America pays for

health care. It was unclear Monday whether the group will operate under federal open meetings rules. Its first meeting is planned for March.

Supporters say the ultimate goal is to promote and reward quality care, not just the sheer volume of services like imaging scans and some elective surgeries.

Medicare and employers were already moving in that direction, but Burwell's announcement sets specific goals and timetables. "It's time we put our money where our mouth is," said Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, the top Democrat on the committee that oversees Medicare.

Still, the outlook for the administration's initiative is unclear. Lofty aspirations have not been fulfilled. Although there's been progress, President Barack Obama's goal of providing every American with a secure electronic medical record has not been met.

Kurdish fighters oust Islamic State from key town

US-led coalition aids in four-month battle

BY ZEINA KARAM
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — Jubilant Kurdish fighters ousted Islamic State militants from the key Syrian border town of Kobani on Monday after a four-month battle — a significant victory for both the Kurds and the U.S.-led coalition.

The Kurds raised their flag on a hill that once flew the Islamic State group's black banner. On Kobani's war-ravaged streets, gunmen fired in the air in celebration, male and female fighters embraced, and troops danced in their baggy uniforms.

The failure to capture Kobani was a major blow to the extremists whose hopes for an easy victory dissolved into a costly siege under withering airstrikes by coalition forces and an assault by the Kurdish militia.

For the U.S. and its partners, Kobani became a strategic prize, especially after they increased the number of airstrikes against Islamic State fighters there in October.

"Daesh gambled on Kobani and lost," said senior Kurdish official Idriss Nassan, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

"Their defenses have collapsed and its fighters have fled," he said.

Kobani-based journalist Farshad Shami said the few civilians who remained had joined in the celebration. Most of the town of about 60,000 people had fled to Turkey to escape the fighting.

Several U.S. officials said they couldn't confirm that Kurdish fighters have gained full control of Kobani, but added that they have no reason to disbelieve the claims.



AP PHOTO

Kurds wave flags of an outlawed rebel group Monday to celebrate in Istanbul, Turkey, hours after Kurdish fighters backed by intense U.S.-led airstrikes pushed the Islamic State group entirely out of a key Syrian town.

A senior U.S. official said the Kurds controlled most of the town and have consolidated control particularly in the central and southern areas. The official said Islamic State militants still have a considerable presence in outlying areas around Kobani and are still putting up stiff resistance to the Kurds in those pockets outside it.

Kurdish officials and activists said Kobani was entirely in Kurdish hands, with only sporadic fighting on the eastern outer edges where the militants retained some footholds.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said fighters of the main Kurdish militia known as the People's Protection Units were searching houses in the eastern suburbs of the town and dismantling and detonating bombs and booby-traps left behind.

Dog days of winter approach



CHARLES KRUPA / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

REVERE, Mass. — Crystal, a golden retriever, dashes through the snow Monday as she gets away from Danielle Reid, who was walking dogs with her mom at Revere Beach. New England braced for a blockbuster blizzard threatening more than 2 feet of snow.

To see photo galleries of the worst storms in the Northeast and from this storm, go to www.uticaod.com/photos.