

## US sends Marine anti-terrorism team to Libya

AFP, Tripoli

The United States is deploying a US Marine anti-terrorism team to Libya to bolster security after the attack on its consulate in Benghazi, a US defense official said yesterday.

The decision to move the roughly 50-member unit to Libya comes after Washington's ambassador to Tripoli and three other Americans were killed when a mob stormed the US consulate in Benghazi.

President Barack Obama quickly ordered increased security at US diplomatic posts around the world, while slamming Tuesday's deadly assault in Benghazi -- an Islamist stronghold in eastern Libya -- which coincided with the anniversary of the September 11 attacks in the United States.



Egyptian protesters tear down the US flag and wave various black Islamic flags at the US embassy in Cairo on Tuesday during a demonstration against a film deemed offensive to Islam. PHOTO: AFP

## 'Innocence of Muslims'

The anti-Islam film behind violent protests

AFP, Cairo

An anti-Islam film, which wrongly portrayed the life of the Prophet Mohammed, has sparked a deadly attack on a US mission in Libya and furious protests in Egypt.

Clips of the film at the centre of the controversy have been posted on the Internet and private satellite channels have been showing segments.

The low-budget movie, "Innocence of Muslims" in which actors have strong American accents, portrays Muslims as immoral and gratuitously violent.

The film was produced by Israeli-American Sam Bacile, according to the Wall Street Journal, but Egyptian media say that some Egyptian Copts living in the US were involved in the production.

Bacile, a 52-year-old real-estate developer from southern California says Islam is a hateful religion.

"Islam is a cancer," Bacile told the Wall Street Journal of his crudely-produced film, which depicts the Prophet Mohammed in a darker light, talking about killing children and referring to a donkey as "the first Muslim animal."

With amateur costumes, a choppy script and fake backdrops, the film would hardly have been noticed some say, had it not been for its promotion by US pastor Terry Jones, who drew protests in the past for burning the Quran.

Bacile told the Journal he had raised \$5 million to make it from about 100 Jewish donors, whom he declined to identify.

# Obama slams Libya attack

Arab, Muslim world outraged by film

Vows to keep ties with Tripoli; world expresses shock over diplomat killings

AFP, Washington

President Barack Obama yesterday condemned the "outrageous" attack which killed four Americans including the US ambassador in Libya but vowed it would not break America's bond with the liberated nation.

In a somber statement in the White House Rose Garden, Obama paid tribute to Ambassador Chris Stevens and his colleagues, killed when an Islamist mob, angered by reports of a film deemed insulting to Islam, stormed the US consulate in Benghazi.

But he took pains to note that the assault should not be deemed as representative of Libya after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi and noted that some Libyans fought to repel the assault on the US consulate.

"The United States condemns in the strongest terms this outrageous and shocking attack," Obama said in a statement in the White House Rose Garden.

Obama, who reiterated his earlier warning that he had ordered stepped up security at US posts around the world, noted that many Libyans had already condemned the assault.

"The attack will not break the bonds between the United States and Libya.

The world also rallied behind the United States

and condemned the attack on US stations in Libya and Egypt.

The United Nations strongly condemned the killing of the US ambassador to Libya and three other American diplomats.

The UN's top political official, Jeffrey Feltman, told the UN Security Council "we condemn in the strongest terms" the attack in Benghazi on Tuesday. The killings "further emphasize the security challenges facing the authorities in Libya," said Feltman.

"I am deeply shocked by the despicable attack" that claimed the lives of four US officials, including US ambassador Christopher Stevens, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said in a statement.

"I call on Libya to take all necessary measures without delay to protect the lives of all diplomats and foreign staff" working in the country, she added.

British Defence Secretary Philip Hammond urged Libya's authorities to bring those responsible to justice.

"There is no excuse ever for a violent response to such provocation (the anti-Islam film) and the perpetrators of violence must be brought to justice in a proper way," he added.

Nato chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen strongly condemned the attack on the US consulate in

Benghazi, saying "such violence can never be justified".

France also demanded a swift reaction from the Libyan authorities.

"France demands that the Libyan authorities shed all possible light on these odious and unacceptable crimes, identify the culprits and bring them to justice," President Francois Hollande said.

## Vatican condemns anti-Muslim 'provocations'

AFP, Vatican City

The Vatican yesterday condemned anti-Muslim "provocations" and the resulting "unacceptable violence" after a deadly attack on a US consulate in Libya over a film deemed offensive to Islam.

"The serious consequences of unjustified offence and provocations against the sensibilities of Muslim believers are once again evident," Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi said in a statement.

"Profound respect for the beliefs, texts, outstanding figures and symbols of the various religions is an essential precondition for the peaceful coexistence of peoples," he added.

Meanwhile, an Orthodox Israeli rabbi and former cabinet minister also condemned as "garbage and slime" a film deemed offensive to Islam.

"Although freedom of expression and the right to use satire are sacred democratic principles, these freedoms should not be used as an excuse to publish garbage and slime," Michael Melchior, a long-standing advocate of inter-faith dialogue, wrote in a statement.

BBC ONLINE

The Muslim world yesterday reacted strongly over a movie mocking Islam.

There has been also criticism in pan-Arab and regional media of the US-produced film which has provoked violent protests in Egypt and Libya.

Protests were held outside US embassies in Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Gaza and other parts of the Muslim world.

Iran condemned the film deemed offensive to Islam.

"The Islamic republic of Iran strongly condemns insults to Islamic sanctities and sympathises with the hurt feelings of the Islamic Umma (nation)," foreign ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said in a statement.

Egypt denounced the film, calling on

Egyptians to exercise restraint.

"The film is offensive to the Prophet and immoral," the cabinet said in a statement read by Prime Minister Hisham Qandil at a news conference.

The Afghan government also strongly condemned the film and banned YouTube from the country for the first time to prevent people from watching the anti-Islam film.

Nigeria placed its police force on red alert to guard against attacks related to the controversial film. And the US embassy in Algiers warned Americans in Algeria to avoid non-essential travel amid calls for protests on social media.

Tunisian police fired tear gas and rubber bullets into the air to disperse protesters.

The media in Egypt yesterday highlighted the previous day's protests outside the US embassy in Cairo.

State-run Al-Ahram carried a picture of protesters carrying a banner saying: "Anything but God's Prophet."

It pointed out that Christians as well as Muslims in Egypt condemned the film, and praised the press for describing the protests as "public anger" rather than "religious anger".

There was also condemnation of the film in the wider region and the pan-Arab press.

## EU chief calls for 'federation' of nations

BBC ONLINE

EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso called for the EU to evolve into a "federation of nation-states".

Addressing the EU parliament in Strasbourg, Barroso said such a move was necessary to combat the continent's economic crisis.

He said he believed Greece would be able to stay in the eurozone if it stood by its commitments.

Barroso also set out plans for a single supervisory mechanism for all banks in the eurozone.

He called the plans a "quantum leap... the stepping stone to the banking union".

The European Central Bank would get much greater powers of oversight and regulation of Europe's 6,000 banks under the plan.

Barroso said he was not calling for a "superstate", but rather "a democratic federation of nation states that can tackle our common problems, through the sharing of sovereignty".

"Creating this federation... will ultimately require a new treaty," Barroso said.

The inability of governments thus far to respond effectively to economic developments was "fuelling populism and extremism in Europe and also elsewhere", he added.

The banking union would be a first step in the creation of closer union within the eurozone, the BBC's Chris Morris in Strasbourg reports.

There will be opposition to the plans - the German government, for example, says far fewer banks should be involved, the BBC correspondent says.



US actress and UNHCR special envoy Angelina Jolie meets with Syrian children refugees in the eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley near the border with Syria yesterday. Jolie said that she was moved at how Lebanese families were opening their homes to Syria refugees, after Beirut ruled out setting up camps for them. PHOTO: AFP

## Somali president survives attack

REUTERS, Mogadishu

Somalia's new President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the visiting Kenyan foreign minister yesterday escaped an apparent suicide bomb attack on a Mogadishu hotel where they were holding a news conference unscathed, witnesses said.

Somalia's al Shabaab rebels said they had carried out the attack, which killed at least eight people and came just two days after Mohamud was elected in the first presidential vote in Somalia in decades.

Two explosions shook the Somali capital, underscoring the huge security challenges facing Mohamud who came to power in a process that was billed as an historic break with 20 years of violent anarchy.

"We were behind the Mogadishu hotel blasts. It was a well planned Mujahideen operation," a spokesman for al Shabaab's military operation told Reuters.

Mohamud's election by Somali lawmakers on Monday was hailed by his supporters as a vote for change in the war-ridden Horn of Africa country that has lacked effective central government since 1991.

Although he is a relatively new face in Somali politics, the former academic faces old problems: a stubborn Islamist insurgency, acrimonious clan politics, rampant corruption.

## Jolie urges intl help for Syrian refugees

AFP, Zaataria Refugee Camp, Jordan

Hollywood star and UN special envoy Angelina Jolie urged the world on Tuesday to help Syrians fleeing the conflict in their country as she visited a refugee camp in Jordan.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres and Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh accompanied Jolie and called for international support to help the tiny kingdom cope with the influx of refugees from its northern neighbour.

"We encourage the international community to do everything they can to support these refugees, and there is much to be done," Jolie told a joint news conference at Zaataria refugee camp, 85 kilometres (53 miles) north of Amman in a desert area near the border with Syria.

"It has been a very heavy experience," she said of her tour of the camp. It is very emo-

tional to be with people who are wondering who is on their side."

Guterres appealed to the international community to "help us and to help the Jordanian government... in order to be able to massively invest in improving the living conditions of refugees in this camp... please help us."

Guterres also highlighted the miserable living conditions in Zaataria. "This camp, like all other camps in the world, is a very difficult place to live in," he said.

In Geneva, meanwhile, UNHCR spokesman Adrian Edwards said the number of refugees who have fled Syria for neighbouring countries since the start of the conflict nearly 18 months ago has reached more than 250,000.

The UN says more than 1.2 million Syrians, over half of them children, have become internally displaced in the country.

## North Korea refuses South's flood aid

AFP, Seoul

North Korea has refused to receive flood relief supplies from South Korea after checking details of the aid on offer, a government official in Seoul yesterday said.

The North this week responded to Seoul's offer, made following devastating floods in June and July, by asking the South to present more details of its proposal.

On Tuesday the South sent a list of aid items it was offering its neighbour, including 10,000 tonnes of flour, instant noodles and medicine.

But the following day the North suddenly changed its stance, saying it would not accept "such aid", a ministry official told AFP.

The official added that the list of supplies had not included rice -- a key issue in an earlier refusal of aid.

## South Africa mining unrest spreads

AFP, Rustenburg

Rioting South African miners blocked access to shafts of platinum giant Amplats yesterday as officials sought to prevent the widening strike movement from spiralling into a nationwide revolt.

Maverick politician Julius Malema, who was expelled from the ruling African National Congress party this year, has galvanised mine workers since police killings at another platinum mine in August, and his plans to address the military unnerved the government.

The latest unrest broke out on roads leading to a shaft run by Amplats -- the world's top platinum producer -- in the same region as the Lonmin plant where 45 people have died in a wildcat strike that started last month.

"There is a strike, mine workers are gathering," police spokesman Thulani Ngubane told AFP. "They are rioting, barricading the roads with tyres, tree trunks and rocks."

Anglo American Platinum (Amplats) denied its workers were on strike, saying only that some of its staff were unable to report for duty overnight amid intimidation on the way.

An AFP reporter on the scene however said there were no barricades around the mines by noon, but around 1,500 striking workers were moving from shaft to shaft trying to stop those on the job to down their tools.

At least 45 people have died -- including 34 in a police shooting last month which has been described as the worst case of police violence since the end of apartheid.

## Japan to abandon nuke power by 2030s

AFP, Tokyo

Japan will abandon nuclear power within the next three decades under new government policy on the post-Fukushima energy mix, a newspaper yesterday said.

Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda's administration will declare its intention to permanently shut down reactors by some time in the 2030s, the Mainichi Shimbun reported, citing unnamed government sources.

The move would bring resource-poor Japan in line with Germany, which has said it will wean itself off nuclear power by 2022, and comes as regular vocal protests against nuclear power continue.

The government "will formally decide at an energy and environment meeting this weekend" to stop the use of nuclear, the paper said.