

## Obama vows to know the motive

AFP, Washington

President Barack Obama vowed to find out what turned two young US residents accused of the Boston bombings to violence, after the second suspect was captured alive, ending a week of horror.

Obama said in a late-night on-camera statement that the attacks had failed because Americans refused to be terrorized and heaped praise on police and law enforcement services while remembering the dead and injured.

"Tonight, there are still many unanswered questions. Among them, why did young men who grew up and studied here as part of our communities and our country resort to such violence?" Obama asked.

"How did they plan and carry out these attacks? And did they receive any help? The families of those killed so senselessly deserve answers."

The president came to the podium in the White House press briefing room shortly after law enforcement services captured suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, 19, alive in the Watertown suburb of Boston.

## Islamists, rivals clash in Cairo; 82 hurt

AFP, Cairo

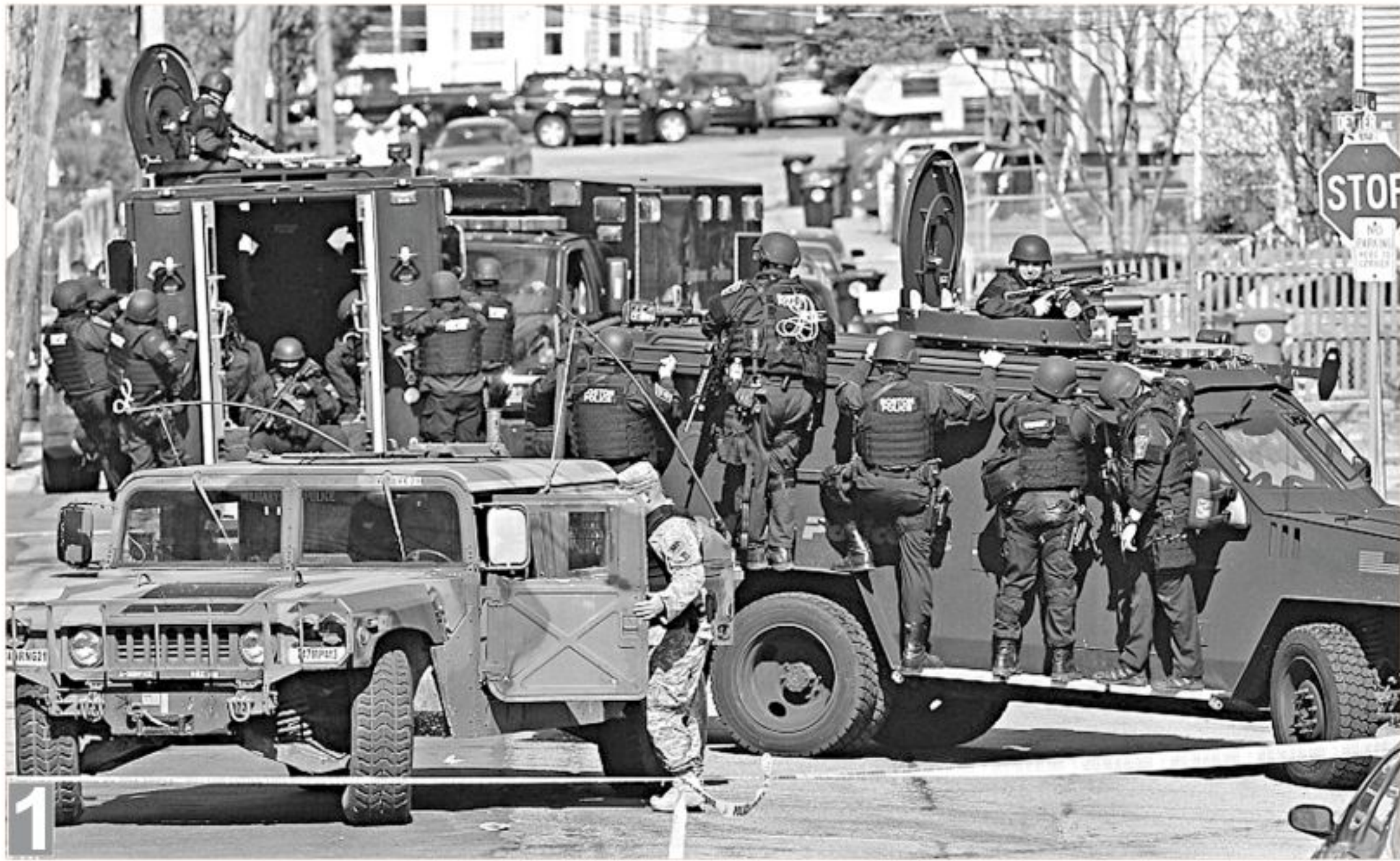
At least 82 people were hurt on Friday in clashes after opposition activists marched on thousands of Islamists rallying outside a central Cairo court demanding judicial reform, an official said.

The fighting erupted near the iconic Tahrir Square, roughly 0.5 kilometres from where the Islamists had staged their rally, with each side throwing stones at the other.

A few activists on the opposition side fired homemade guns loaded with birdshot at the Islamists, who had taken over a main bridge that crosses the Nile River.

Five Islamist protesters wounded with birdshot were carried away by comrades, an AFP correspondent reported. The head of the Egyptian emergency services, Mohammed Sultan, told television at least 82 people had been hospitalised.

An interior ministry statement said police had arrested 19 suspects in Cairo's clashes.



## CAPTURE OF BOSTON BLAST SUSPECT



1. Scores of police and SWAT team members were surrounding the Boston suburb on Friday morning. 2. The place where the suspect was hiding. 3. Spectators clap and cheer while law enforcement members leave the scene of siege. 4. A woman reacts during the police siege. (More story and photo on page 20)

PHOTO: AFP, AP

## Promise of Arab Spring may be lost: US

AFP, Washington

Global hopes that democracy could replace dictatorships in Arab Spring nations risk being crushed by repressive regimes, the United States warned Friday in its annual human rights report.

Two years after the first uprisings against iron-fisted rulers in the Middle East and North Africa, the countries that gave rise to the Arab Spring are encountering "harsh realities" and face "immense challenges," the State Department said in its assessment of the global rights situation in 2012.

"The hope of the early days of the Arab Awakening has run up against the harsh realities of incomplete and contested transitions," the report said.

While there was praise for countries such as Tunisia and Libya, there is growing concern in other states about moves to stifle civil society.

From Syria -- where President Bashar al-Assad is fighting to stay in power, to Bahrain standing at a "crossroads", as well as Yemen and Iraq, there were "inter-communal tensions and political violence."

There were also "serious hurdles to sustainable democracy in Egypt and Libya" as across the world "demands for democratic change surge against outmoded economic and political structures in many of these countries," the report added.

## Dozens killed in battle near Syria Capital

US set to boost 'non-lethal' military aid to rebels

AFP, Beirut

At least 69 people, many of them rebels, have been killed in a four-day battle pitting Syrian insurgents against government forces in Jdaidet al-Fadl near Damascus, a monitoring group said yesterday.

Violence also raged in Sunni areas of the nearby majority Christian town of Jdaidet Artuz. The two towns are near Daraya, the scene of fierce fighting for several months.

It added that regime troops had deployed reinforcements including "30 tanks and military vehicles" to the town.

Since last year, the army has tried to root out rebels positioned southwest and east of Damascus, in a bid to secure the capital.

Elsewhere, a woman and three children were killed in army shelling of Kharita town in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor, said the Observatory. And in the central province of Homs, regime troops took control of

Radwaniyeh village near the flashpoint rebel town of Qusayr, said the group.

Yesterday's violence comes a day after at least 157 people were killed across Syria, said the Observatory, breaking the toll down to 75 civilians, 44 rebels and 38 soldiers.

Meanwhile, the United States is set to boost its support for Syria's rebels at a meeting of the opposition's main foreign backers yesterday and could for the first time agree to supply non-lethal military gear.

But Washington is expected to stop short of agreeing to rebel demands for arms as the 11-nation core group of the "Friends of Syria" hold talks in Istanbul with key figures in the opposition battling President Bashar al-Assad.

US media reports have suggested Washington is preparing to provide protective battlefield equipment to the rebels such as body armour, armoured vehicles and night-vision goggles, as well as communications gear.



Security personnel restrain a man (jacket) who all of a sudden approached Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro during his inauguration in Caracas on Friday. Maduro was sworn in as president of Venezuela on Friday and urged dialogue with the opposition to build a better country.

PHOTO: AFP

## Serbia, Kosovo strike historic deal

AFP, Brussels

The leaders of Serbia and Kosovo initialled a historic deal on Friday to normalise ties, a move key to the future of the Western Balkans and destined also to bring both closer to the European Union.

Fourteen years after the end of the war and five after Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia, hopes are that the deal will turn the page on Europe's last Balkans trouble-spot.

## The stories of two Chechen brothers

AP, Boston



Tamerlan Tsarnaev practiced martial arts and boxing, even aspiring to fight on the US Olympic team. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev had been on the wrestling team at a prestigious high school and won a scholarship from the city to pursue higher education. Neighbours recalled the ethnic Chechen brothers, living on a quiet street in Cambridge, Mass., riding bikes and skateboards.

The brothers, who came from a Russian region near Chechnya, lived together on Norfolk Street in Cambridge. They had been in the country for about a decade, according to an uncle, Ruslan Tsarni of Montgomery Village, Md.

Less was immediately known about Tamerlan, believed to be 26 when he was killed overnight in a shootout. He was the stockier one identified in video released to the public, wearing a black baseball cap and khaki pants. He was involved in martial arts, and competed in boxing matches. According to a crime website he was once arrested for domestic assault on a girlfriend.

"I don't have a single American friend. I don't understand them," he was quoted as saying in a photo package that appeared in a Boston University student magazine in 2010.

He identified himself as a Muslim and said he did not drink or smoke: "God said no alcohol." He said he hoped to fight for the US Olympic team and become a naturalized American. He said he was studying at Bunker Hill Community College to become an engineer.

Dzhokhar, 19, attended the prestigious Cambridge Rindge and Latin school, participating on the wrestling team. In May 2011, his senior year, he was awarded a \$2,500 scholarship from the city to pursue higher education, according to a news release at the time. That scholarship was celebrated with a reception at city hall.

He attended the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Mass., university officials said Friday.

The school would not say what he was studying. The father of the suspects, Anzor Tsaraev, told the AP his younger son was "a second-year medical student," though he graduated high school in 2011.

## 'Beatles washed away Soviet foundation'

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE



Crossing the famous Finland station in Leningrad one day in the early 1960s, Kolya Vasin was stopped by a policeman who had spotted his long hair. "You are not a Soviet man!" charged the officer. "And he grabbed my hair," recalls Vasin, who was then hauled across a platform while dozens of people laughed. "I was crying from the pain, but I had to keep silent. I was afraid the man would drag me off to prison."

Vasin was a diehard Beatles fan. The Beatles' music had given him, he said "all the adventures of my life", for which "I was arrested many times, accused of 'breaching social order'. They said anyone who listened to the Beatles was spreading western propaganda." More than that, in the USSR, the Fab Four "were like an integrity test. When anyone said anything against them, we knew just what that person was worth. The authorities, our teachers, even our parents, became idiots to us."

The band inspired dissidents and musicians worldwide but meant more to youth in the USSR than in the west, claims a new book, 'How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin'.

"Beatlemania washed away the foundations of Soviet society," explains Mikhail Safonov at the Institute of Russian History.

And the Russian rocker Sasha Lipnitsky insists: "The Beatles brought us the idea of democracy. For many of us, it was the first hole in the iron curtain."

As Woodhead points out, to Beatles fans in 1970s Russia, "Everything west was good. The kids came to believe the exact opposite of everything they were being told all those years."

"The more the state persecuted the Beatles," concurs Mikhail, "the more they exposed the falsehood and hypocrisy of Soviet ideology."

## Won't give up nuke arms: North Korea

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea yesterday reiterated that it would not give up its nuclear weapons, rejecting a U.S. condition for talks although it said it was willing to discuss disarmament.

North Korea, in a sign of a possible end to weeks of heightened hostility on the Korean peninsula, offered the United States and South Korea a list of conditions on Thursday for talks, including the lifting of UN sanctions.

But the United States said it was awaiting "clear signals" that North Korea would halt its nuclear weapons activities.

"The US should not think about the denuclearisation on the peninsula before the world is denuclearised," the North's state-run Rodong Sinmun newspaper said in a commentary.

"There may be talks between the DPRK and the US for disarmament but no talks on denuclearisation," it said. North Korea's official name is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

North Korea signed a denuclearisation-for-aid deal in 2005 but later backed out of that pact. It now says its nuclear arms are a "treasured sword" that it will never give up.

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