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Avalanches sweep through Swiss, Italian Alpine slope

BOLZANO, Italy (AP) — Avalanches swept down Alpine slopes at the height of the ski season Monday, killing three skiers in Italy and three in Switzerland.

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In Italy, back-to-back avalanches in the northern Venosta Valley trapped a group of seven Germans and one Italian skiing on an unauthorized route, alpine rescue official Luigi Weger said.

Searchers recovered the bodies of two women and one man and accounted for the remaining five skiers, Weger said. At least one was hospitalized with severe hypothermia. The valley is about 90 miles from the northern Italian city of Bolzano.

In Switzerland, police blamed an avalanche near the popular Davos ski resort on a German man and his son who skied into an area of deep snow despite avalanche warnings.

The two set off a snowslide that covered the father and two Swiss men skiing farther down the mountain on a prepared course, police said. Only the son survived.

Recent heavy snowfall followed by blue skies and sunshine Monday had prompted avalanche alerts in Switzerland and Italy.

In central Switzerland, an avalanche next to a children's ski area caught an adult and three children at the Lasenberg

providers in

opened a hole."

GERMAN FRANCE • Zurich LICH. OBern SWITZERLAND ITALY 40 km

ski area near Erlenbach.

The adult and two of the children managed to clim the snow by themselves and pulled a 6-year-old girlt Italian schools are out this week for what is known

'white week," freeing pupils for family ski trips.

Many Swiss youngsters also are given week-long vacations during the winter - most frequently in Feb - to go skiing.

In 1999, alpine avalanches killed 12 people in Ital 36 in Switzerland, according to an Italian avalanched

KGB to penetrate Coca crop Russia's Internet continue

MOSCOW (AP) — The successor to the KGB is now also spying on the Internet, raising fears that the information it collects could be used for blackmail and business espionage.

'The whole Federal Security Service will be crying tomorrow over your love letters," warns one of the banners angry Russian Web designers have posted on the Internet.

Russian human-rights and free-speech advoeates say the security service has already forced many of the counall the large try's 350 Internet service providers to install surveilmany in the lance equipment. "Most Internet providers Moscow, including all the large providers and many in the provinces, have

opened a hole" security

agents to peep at traffic, said Anatoly Levenchuk, a Russian Internet expert. Like its counterparts in other countries, the Federal Security Service may

Alexei Rokotyan, the Communications Ministry's electronic communications department chief, denied that the project was aimed at "total control of the information that is transmitted

via the global network. "Security organs and special forces have the right - and now the capability - to monitor private correspondence and tele-

phone "Most Internet conversations of individual citizens according to the law," The Moscow Times Moscow, including daily quoted him as saying. providers and Levenchuk and others said the Federal Security Service has provinces, have been quietly im-

> since 1998. "As you look - Anatoly Levenchuk Russian Internet expert

at all these Orwellian things you understand it's coming — total control, total surveillance," Levenchuk told a round

plementing the system at least

table held in St. Petersburg. Federal Security Service officials argue it needs the monitoring system to

RIO NEGRO, Colombia(A In nearly a decade of U.S.-sponse fumigation, planes have spray hundreds of thousands of gallon herbicide on illicit drug crops in expanses of Colombia's high and rainforests. Drug cultivation in the world's

l cocaine-producing nationisatarea high and climbing. Crop yields are als improving as traffickers plantmore po tent strains of coca and opium poppy, the sources of cocaine and heroin. The stubbornness of the pla

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seems matched only by the determination trounced in tion of U.S. and Colombian office friendly der continue the chemical counteratta As President Andres Past

awaits action in the U.S. Congress lican Party v John Mc \$1.6 billion aid package that we when he looi fund an accelerated spraying effort, McCain's estimates show coca cultivation u 20 to 30 percent last year. Since l a maverick o it has more than doubled, according fact, it show: the Colombian and U.S. figures. currently inh opportunist

Pastrana, who expressed se reservations about fumigation'set McCain is ev tiveness during his first months fice, has toned down the criticism Bush as the I now welcomes the U.S. assistant

that Bush wa "If anyone has been tough on a

coca-cola beach ARE YOU READYS

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catch spies, terrorists and bandits, and to combat black-market businesses and capital flight.

The system has raised particular alarm in Russia, where memories of KGB surveillance and repression remain fresh. And the abundance of secretly filmed, juicy videotapes and transcripts of telephone conversations in Russia seems to justify the fear of blackmail by renegade security agents or others who get hold of the information.

Free-speech activists fear that the Internet surveillance is evidence of the security services' resurgence under acting President Vladimir Putin, a 15-year KGB veteran. They have already accused him of chipping away at press freedoms championed by former President Boris Yeltsin.

Last week, a government official for the first time publicly acknowledged the existence of the Internet control project, called the System of Operative and Investigative Procedures or SORM-2, its Russian acronym.

apparently view the steps simply as an extension of SORM regulations enacted in the mid-1990s, which allow security agents with a warrant to tap telephones and Internet traffic.

At a series of meetings with Internet providers in 1998, security service officials described a system that would involve a box installed in providers' computers that would route electronic traffic to the local security service headquarters through a highspeed link.

The project still seems a far cry from Echelon, a high-tech spying network which, according to a European Parliament report, is coordinated by the U.S. National Security Agency and involves "routine and indiscriminate" monitoring of electronic communications around the world.

Russia's Internet freedom activists are still raising the alarm. Levenchuk's www.libertarium.ru site is filled with accounts from mostly provincial providers that say they were forced to install SORM-2 equipment.

trafficking it's me," he told The Ass extent, M same sin. ciated Press earlier this month.

Adm. Joh Colombian and U.S. officials Pacific Fleet cluding White House drug czar Bu sisted his sor McCaffrey, who arrives Tuesday Naval liaison three-day visit, argue that drug and to make polit would be expanding even more ly if there wasn't any attempt toil first run for t their proliferation. His votin Even a recent effort to shows later is hardly

the spraying effort ended up lighting the many questions sun ing it, including its distressinging on this Andean nation's diver fragile ecosystem.

Flying with anti-narcotics po an opium poppy field in the sol western state of Huila, the view the Bell 212 helicopter windows of huge scars in the forests, of val denuded by clear-cutting.

"That's the ecological crime narcos," national police spokespo Carlos Perdomo says, gesturin deforested ridges around Rio Ne

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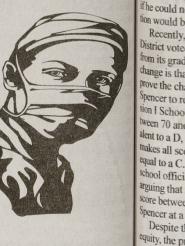
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