

Obama, Romney March Through Key States

President Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney are in the cat-and-mouse stage of their national race, chasing each other around the map as they jockey for position.

The GOP nomination assured, Romney marched this week through three states vital to both men.

In North Carolina, which Obama narrowly won in 2008 but where Republicans see an opening this year, Romney taunted the president with a slashing attack delivered across from the Charlotte stadium where Obama will give his Democratic convention acceptance speech in September.

The trip mirrored 2008. That year, after dispatching primary rival Hillary Rodham Clinton, Obama went to St. Paul, Minn., for a victory speech that helped him pivot toward John McCain. It was no coincidence that he spoke in the same hall where Republicans would later formally nominate McCain.

Obama visits North Carolina early next week. As Romney spoke there this week, Obama was campaigning in Ohio — his fourth visit since January. He carried the state in 2008 but faces a harder time now.

Manchin Unsure On Who He'll Vote For

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin says he's unsure whether he'll vote for his party's leader, President Barack Obama, or the likely Republican nominee Mitt Romney.

In a statement Friday, the West Virginia lawmaker said he had "some real differences" with both leaders, finding fault with Obama's energy and economic policies while questioning whether Romney could understand the challenges facing ordinary people.

"I strongly believe that every American should always be rooting for our president to do well, no matter which political party that he or she might belong to," Manchin said. "With that being said, many West Virginians believe the last 3 1/2 years haven't been good for us, but we're hopeful that they can get better."

Manchin, one of the more moderate Senate Democrats, has broken with his party on several issues as he seeks re-election this year.

His state has backed the Republican candidate in the last three presidential elections, and Obama did not fare well in 2008. Obama lost to GOP nominee Sen. John McCain, 56-43 percent, and was overwhelmed by Hillary Rodham Clinton in the Democratic primary, losing 67-26 percent.

Manchin, the former governor who won the Senate seat in 2010, remains popular in West Virginia and is not considered vulnerable in his rematch against Republican John Raese.

Workers Excavate Basement In 1979 Case

NEW YORK (AP) — Investigators ripped up the basement floor of a Manhattan building Friday in a hunt for the remains of Etan Patz, a 6-year-old boy who disappeared on his way to school in 1979.

Utility workers with jackhammers and saws helped chip away an area around aging pipes, then law enforcers wearing workmen's gloves carried out the basketball-size chunks of rubble and carefully placed them in bins. The material will be sifted and then taken elsewhere for testing.

The space being excavated was about a block from the bus stop where Etan was headed when he vanished. It is one of the few secluded places, easily accessible from the street, that sat along his two-block walk to the bus from his home.

At the time, part of the basement was being used as a workshop by Othniel Miller, a neighborhood handyman who had been friendly with the family.

Police and FBI officials haven't named a suspect in the case.

Romney Raises Nearly \$13M In March

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mitt Romney's presidential campaign raised \$12.6 million in contributions in March, adding to roughly \$14 million his Republican Party brought in last month. But the combined figure puts Romney at a disadvantage with the man whose job he wants in November.

President Barack Obama countered Romney's fundraising haul with about \$53 million in donations between his campaign and the Democratic Party during the same period. That left his campaign with \$104 million cash on hand — about 10 times more than the \$10 million Romney had in the bank at the end of March.

Yet a fire hose of cash from a major GOP "super" political committee is likely to bring some financial parity to the race, and Romney just recently started collecting funds for the general election. Restore Our Future, a super PAC supporting Romney, raised about \$8.6 million last month, largely from a handful of wealthy donors. It spent more than \$11 million on ads.

For the first time since Super Tuesday, voters are getting a look at just how much money presidential candidates and their supporters have been raking in.

Friday also marks nearly three months since Obama's campaign changed course and asked supporters to pony up cash to a favorable super PAC.

Financial reports due Friday to the Federal Election Commission will also show how much red ink struggling campaigns are bleeding — or, in the case of the Republican super PAC American Crossroads, how much money some groups have been stuffing into their war chests.

The Republican National Committee reported a March fundraising haul of \$13.7 million, which will boost the eventual GOP nominee during the general election.

More Secret Service Agents Gone

6 Officers Have Now Lost Jobs Due To Scandal

BY KEN THOMAS AND ALICIA A. CALDWELL
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Three more Secret Service officers resigned Friday in the expanding prostitution scandal that has brought scorching criticism of agents' behavior in Colombia just before President Barack Obama's visit for a summit meeting last week. Agency Director Mark Sullivan came to the White House late Friday to personally brief Obama in the Oval Office.

The Secret Service announced the new resignations, bringing to six the number of agency officers who have lost their jobs so far because of events at their hotel in Cartagena.

Also late Friday, Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa urged a broader investigation, including checking hotel records for White House advance staff and communications personnel who were in Cartagena for the summit. In a letter to Sullivan and the inspector general at the Homeland Security Department, Grassley asked whether hotel records for the White House staffers had been pulled as part of the investigations.

An additional Secret Service employee was

implicated Friday, a government official said, commenting only on condition of anonymity concerning the continuing investigation. That brings the number to 12. One has been cleared of serious misconduct but still faces administrative action, an official said.

Obama's spokesman has assailed Republican criticism that has attempted to blame a lack of presidential leadership for the scandal and has said Obama would be angry if allegations published so far proved to be true. Friday's was Obama's first personal briefing by Sullivan on the subject, officials said.

Involvement by 11 Secret Service employees had been noted earlier. The 12th has been placed on administrative leave.

The scandal also involves at least 11 military members who were working on security before Obama arrived in Cartagena for the Summit of the Americas. The Pentagon acknowledged Friday that the 11th military person, a member of the Army, was implicated.

The incident in Colombia involved at least some Secret Service personnel bringing prostitutes to their hotel rooms. News of the incident, which involves at least 20 Colombian women, broke a week ago after a fight over payment be-

tween a prostitute and a Secret Service agent spilled into the hotel hallway. A 24-year-old Colombian prostitute told The New York Times that the agent agreed to pay her \$800 for a night of sex but the next morning offered her only \$30. She eventually left the hotel, she told the newspaper, after she was paid \$225.

Two Secret Service supervisors and another employee were forced out of the agency earlier in the week. All of the agents being investigated have had their top-secret clearances revoked.

Meanwhile, the lawyer for two Secret Service supervisors said that Obama's safety was never at risk, and he criticized leaks of internal government investigations in the case, signaling a possible strategy for an upcoming legal defense.

The Secret Service briefed about two-dozen congressional staff members Friday, mainly from the Senate Judiciary Committee, according to one individual who was there but was not authorized to be quoted by name.

The person said investigators have photo ID's and names from a Cartagena, Colombia, hotel registry for all the women who stayed overnight and are in the process of conducting interviews. Investigators have interviewed maids and said no alcohol or drugs were found in the rooms.



GARY W. GREEN/ORLANDO SENTINEL/MCT
George Zimmerman enters Circuit Judge Kenneth Lester's courtroom for his bond hearing in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Fla. Friday, April 20, 2012. Lester ruled that Zimmerman can be released on \$150,000 bail as he awaits trial.

Zimmerman Apologizes For Shooting; Gets Bail

BY MIKE SCHNEIDER AND CURT ANDERSON
Associated Press

SANFORD, Fla. — A routine bail hearing for George Zimmerman took a surprising turn into remorse and explanation Friday when the neighborhood watch volunteer got on the witness stand and told Trayvon Martin's parents: "I am sorry for the loss of your son."

"I did not know how old he was. I thought he was a little bit younger than I am. I did not know if he was armed or not," Zimmerman said, marking the first time he has spoken publicly about the Feb. 26 shooting of the unarmed black 17-year-old.

The hearing wrapped up with a judge ruling Zimmerman can be released from jail on \$150,000 bail while he awaits trial on second-degree murder charges. Zimmerman, who has been in jail for more than a week, could be out within days and may be allowed to live outside Florida for his own safety once arrangements are made to monitor him electronically.

Defendants often testify about their financial assets at bail hearings, but it is highly unusual for

them to address the charges, and rarer still to apologize.

An attorney for Martin's parents, who were in the courtroom when Zimmerman spoke, spurned the apology. The parents, Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton, had no comment as they left.

"This was the most disingenuous and unfair thing I've seen," said attorney Natalie Jackson. "This was the most unmeaningful apology."

In a measure of how volatile the case has become, Zimmerman appeared to be wearing a bulletproof vest under his suit and tie, and his parents and wife testified via telephone because of fears for their safety.

After the hearing, Zimmerman's lawyer, Mark O'Mara, acknowledged that putting Zimmerman on the stand was risky but said his client wanted to respond after Martin's mother said in an interview that she would like to hear from him.

"He had always wanted to acknowledge what happened that day," O'Mara said. "I was hoping that it could be accomplished in a private way. We weren't afforded that opportunity."

Hundreds Of Thousands May Lose Internet In July

LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For computer users, a few mouse clicks could mean the difference between staying online and losing Internet connections this summer.

Unknown to most of them, their problem began when international hackers ran an online advertising scam to take control of infected computers around the world. In a highly unusual response, the FBI set up a safety net months ago using government computers to prevent Internet disruptions for those infected users. But that system is to be shut down.

The FBI is encouraging users to visit a website run by its security partner, <http://www.dcwg.org>, that will inform them whether they're infected and explain how to fix the problem. After July 9, infected users won't be able to connect to the Internet.

Most victims don't even know their computers have been infected, although the malicious software probably has slowed their web surfing and disabled their antivirus software, making their machines more vulnerable to other problems.

Last November, the FBI and other authorities were preparing to take down a hacker ring that had been running an Internet ad scam on a massive network of infected computers.

"We started to realize that we might have a little bit of a problem on our hands because ... if we just pulled the plug on their criminal infrastructure and threw everybody in jail, the victims of this were going to be without Internet service," said Tom Grasso, an FBI supervisory special agent. "The average user would open up Internet Explorer and get 'page not found' and think the Internet is broken."

On the night of the arrests, the agency brought in Paul Vixie, chairman and founder of Internet

Systems Consortium, to install two Internet servers to take the place of the truckload of impounded rogue servers that infected computers were using. Federal officials planned to keep their servers online until March, giving everyone opportunity to clean their computers. But it wasn't enough time. A federal judge in New York extended the deadline until July.

Now, said Grasso, "the full court press is on to get people to address this problem." And it's up to computer users to check their PCs.

This is what happened: Hackers infected a network of probably more than 570,000 computers worldwide. They took advantage of vulnerabilities in the Microsoft Windows operating system to install malicious software on the victim computers. This turned off antivirus updates and changed the way the computers reconcile website addresses behind the scenes on the Internet's domain name system.

The DNS system is a network of servers that translates a web address — such as www.ap.org — into the numerical addresses that computers use. Victim computers were reprogrammed to use rogue DNS servers owned by the attackers. This allowed the attackers to redirect computers to fraudulent versions of any website.

The hackers earned profits from advertisements that appeared on websites that victims were tricked into visiting. The scam netted the hackers at least \$14 million, according to the FBI. It also made thousands of computers reliant on the rogue servers for their Internet browsing.

When the FBI and others arrested six Estonians last November, the agency replaced the rogue servers with Vixie's clean ones. Installing and running the two substitute servers for eight months is costing the federal government about \$87,000.

OBITUARIES

Henry Meyerhoff
VIBORG — Henry Meyerhoff, 91, died April 17, 2012, at Sanford Hospital, Sioux Falls.
A memorial service is at 11 a.m. Monday at United Methodist Church, Viborg.
Register online at www.viborg-funeralhome.com

Maria Lebkowski
Maria Z. Lebkowski, 76, of Yankton died in her home Friday, April 20, 2012, with her brother and friend at her side.
Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, is handling the arrangements.

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