

Clinton To Attend Steak Fry In Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton will headline a high-profile fundraiser next month in the nation's first presidential caucus state of Iowa, creating a big campaign splash as Democrats scramble to hold a key Senate seat in November and the former secretary of state considers a campaign of her own in 2016.

Former President Bill Clinton and Mrs. Clinton will attend retiring Sen. Tom Harkin's annual steak fry in Indianapolis on Sept. 14, Iowa Democrats said Monday. It will be the former first lady's first appearance in Iowa since 2008 when she finished a disappointing third in the state's presidential caucuses.

Clinton has urged Democrats to mobilize for November's midterm elections and party officials said she would likely appear at other events around the country to help the party's major fundraising committees.

And Harkin's steak fry, an event that draws thousands of grassroots activists each year, and future presidential campaign staff and volunteers, could be among the biggest, potentially serving as the unofficial start of Clinton's second presidential bid. Early polls show her as the leading candidate to succeed President Barack Obama, her onetime rival.

Clinton is "looking forward to campaigning for her Democratic friends and colleagues and to helping the effort to move America forward," her spokesman Nick Merrill said, adding that she'd "help raise money for important races in Iowa."

No Arrest Warrant Coming After Perry

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A judge isn't issuing an arrest warrant for Texas Gov. Rick Perry, a court official said Monday, and the Republican is planning to continue galloping around the country gearing up for a possible 2016 presidential run — despite being indicted on two felony counts of abuse of power back home.

Perry on Friday became the first Texas governor since 1917 to be indicted, and is facing charges that carry a maximum sentence of 109 years in prison for carrying out a threat to veto funding for the state's public integrity unit last summer.

Perry has emphatically denied all wrongdoing. His attorneys scheduled a Monday afternoon news conference in Austin to discuss their next moves.

Linda Estrada, a Travis County grand jury clerk, said that the judge overseeing the case, Bert Richardson, decided against issuing an arrest warrant.

Instead, Perry will receive a summons which has not been issued yet. He eventually will have to be booked and fingerprinted.

Egypt: No Deal Yet On Gaza Cease-Fire

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt late Monday announced a 24-hour extension in talks between Israel and the Hamas militant group aimed at salvaging a long-term arrangement that would allow reconstruction of the Gaza Strip following a monthlong war that killed more than 2,000 people.

The announcement came just minutes before a temporary truce was set to expire at midnight, averting a resumption of the fighting that has caused devastating damage across Gaza and disrupted life throughout southern Israel.

"Palestinians and Israelis agreed on extending the cease-fire by 24 hours to continue current negotiations," the Egyptian government said in a statement. Palestinian and Israeli officials confirmed they had accepted Egypt's request for an extension.

A Palestinian negotiator said the sides had exchanged draft proposals for a long-term truce that were to be addressed during the 24-hour extension in talks. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media.

Since last week, Egypt has been hosting indirect talks between Israel and Hamas aimed at ending the war.

Ukraine: Dozens Of Civilians Killed

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine accused pro-Russia separatists of killing dozens of civilians in an attack early Monday on a convoy fleeing a besieged rebel-held city. The rebels denied any attack took place, while the U.S. confirmed the shelling of the convoy but said it did not know who was responsible.

The refugees were attacked with Grad rockets and other weapons imported from Russia as their convoy traveled on the main road leading from Russia to the rebel-held city of Luhansk, Col. Andriy Lysenko, a spokesman for Ukraine's National Security Council, told reporters.

"Many people were killed, among them women and children," Lysenko said of the attack, which occurred between the towns of Khryshchuvate and Novosvitlivka. "We are not able to count the death toll at this point."

When asked about a rough estimate of deaths, he said "dozens."

Oleksiy Dmytrashkivsky, a spokesman for the Ukrainian government's military operation in the east, later told The Associated Press that 15 bodies had been recovered from the smoldering vehicles and servicemen were collecting the body parts of at least 10 more people.

Pope Wants To Protect Iraq Minorities

ABOARD THE PAPAL PLANE (AP) — Pope Francis on Monday said efforts to stop Islamic militants from attacking religious minorities in Iraq are legitimate but said the international community — and not just one country — should decide how to intervene.

"In these cases, where there is an unjust aggression, I can only say that it is licit to stop the unjust aggressor," Francis said. "I underscore the verb 'stop.' I'm not saying 'bomb' or 'make war,' just 'stop.' And the means that can be used to stop them must be evaluated."

Francis also said he and his advisers were considering whether he might go to northern Iraq himself to show solidarity with persecuted Christians. But he said he was holding off for now on a decision.

Obama: Iraq Has Regained Control Of The Mosul Dam

BY ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama hailed the recapture of Mosul dam Monday as a "major step forward" as a barrage of U.S. airstrikes helped Kurdish and Iraqi forces score the biggest victory of its counteroffensive against the Islamic State militants.

Obama also urged the badly fractured and largely dysfunctional Iraqi government to move quickly to forge a united front and give hope to Sunni tribes who've been marginalized. Obama noted last week's decision by Nouri al-Maliki to step down as Iraq's prime minister, a move that raised hopes a new government could roll back Iraq's powerful Sunni insurgency and prevent the country from splitting apart.

"They've got to get this done because the wolf's at the door," the president said.

Speaking from the White House briefing room, Obama said he was pleased the United States had given Iraqi security forces and the Kurdish militia an important boost in Mosul. But he stressed the importance of political progress and said it is imperative that Iraq become a viable partner for the U.S.

The U.S. will continue to assist Iraqi security forces with a limited military campaign designed to protect American personnel and facilities and to alleviate humanitarian crises created by Islamic State militants, he said.



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT
President Barack Obama delivers a statement to provide an update on Iraq and the situation in Ferguson, Mo., in the Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House Monday in Washington.

He added that it is not for the U.S. to be a surrogate air force for Baghdad and it is up to Iraqis to create a sustainable peace.

"We've got a national security interest in making sure our people are protected and in making sure that a savage group that seems willing to slaughter people for no rhyme or reason other than they have not kowtowed — that a group like that is contained because ultimately it can pose a threat to us," Obama told reporters.

The Islamic extremists captured the Mosul dam on Aug. 7. Obama said if the dam on the Tigris River had been breached it could have had catastrophic consequences and endangered American Embassy personnel in Baghdad.

A Pentagon spokesman, Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby, said the U.S. had conducted

35 airstrikes in the area of the Mosul dam since Saturday.

"In all, we destroyed over 90 targets including a range of vehicles, equipment, and fighting positions. Iraqi forces have cleared the dam and are working to further expand their area of control," Kirby said.

The president gave no indication of how long the U.S. military will remain engaged in Iraq. Washington is urgently providing arms and assistance to Iraqi security forces as well as Kurdish fighters as they seek to reverse Islamic State gains, he said. Obama has said he will not send U.S. ground forces to fight in Iraq.

U.S. Central Command said American fighters, bombers and drone aircraft conducted 15 strikes Monday around the dam, hitting Islamic State fighting positions as well as an anti-aircraft ar-

tillery gun and other weaponry of the group that has captured wide swaths northern and western Iraq this summer.

The White House notified Congress by letter Sunday that U.S. warplanes were engaged in strikes aimed at helping Iraq regain control of the dam.

The letter said "failure of the Mosul dam could threaten the lives of large numbers of civilians, threaten U.S. personnel and facilities — including the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad — and prevent the Iraqi government from providing crucial services to the Iraqi populace."

A Pentagon spokesman, Army Col. Steve Warren, said Monday the U.S. had no indication of the dam's imminent failure but is determined to prevent that possibility, which would pose a humanitarian disaster for people along the Tigris river.

Before Obama spoke, Kurdish forces said they regained full control of the dam and its surrounding facilities following two days of fierce clashes. But Iraq's Defense Ministry said security forces only "liberated a large part" of the dam and not the entire complex.

The 15 U.S. airstrikes on Monday were in addition to 16 on Sunday and nine on Saturday. The Pentagon refused to identify the specific types of aircraft used in the airstrikes around the Mosul dam, citing restrictions imposed by countries in the Middle East that are allowing the U.S. to use their air bases.

Obama Reviews Local Police Militarization

BY JIM KUHNHEIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Calling for a sharp separation between the nation's armed forces and local police, President Barack Obama on Monday urged a re-examination of programs that have equipped civilian law enforcement departments with military gear from the Pentagon.

The transfers have come under public scrutiny after the forceful police response to racially charged unrest in Ferguson, Missouri.

Amid video images of well-armed police confronting protesters with combat weapons and other surplus military equipment, Obama said it would be useful to review how local law enforcement agencies have used federal grants that permit them to obtain heavier armaments.

"There is a big difference between our military and our local law enforcement, and we don't want those lines blurred," Obama told reporters at the White House. "That would be contrary to our traditions."

Obama's remarks came as he called for understanding in

the face of anger in Ferguson in the wake of a police shooting of an unarmed 18-year-old black man. Obama said the vast majority of protesters in the St. Louis suburb were peaceful, but said that a small minority was undermining justice for the shooting victim, Michael Brown.

The initial police reaction to the protests drew attention to the militarization of local police departments, with critics arguing that the heavily-armed police presence only fueled the tensions. Attorney General Eric Holder and several lawmakers have suggested that the practice of supplying police with such military surplus be reconsidered. A report by the American Civil Liberties Union in June said police agencies had become "excessively militarized," with officers using training and equipment designed for the battlefield on city streets.

Obama said he also spoke to Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon about Nixon's deployment of National Guard units to help secure Ferguson, urging the governor to ensure that the guard be used in a "limited and appropriate way."

"I'll be watching over the next several days, to assess whether, in fact, it's helping rather than hindering progress in Ferguson," he said.

Pausing briefly in the middle of his summer vacation, Obama expressed sympathy for the "passions and anger" sparked by Brown's death. But he said giving in to that anger through looting and attacks on police only stirs tensions and leads to further chaos. He said overcoming the mistrust endemic between many communities and their local police would require Americans to "listen and not just shout."

"That's how we're going to move forward together, by trying to unite each other and understand each other and not simply divide ourselves from one another," Obama told reporters at the White House.

Obama said Holder would travel to Ferguson this week to meet with FBI and other officials carrying out an independent federal investigation into Brown's death. Separately, Rep. William Lacy Clay Jr., whose district includes Ferguson, told Democratic lawmakers Monday that he will meet with Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to push for

changes in the program that provides military equipment to local police departments.

Appearing in the White House briefing room in a dress shirt but no tie, Obama also spoke for the first time to the racial tensions and grievances perceived by African-Americans in Ferguson. In previous comments about the situation, Obama had avoided talking directly about race, wary of rushing to judgment or further inflaming the situation.

Weighing his words carefully, Obama said it was clear that disparities in how blacks and whites are treated and sentenced must be addressed, calling for more safeguards and training to prevent mistakes. At the same time, he acknowledged the difficult situation that police officers sometimes face.

"There are young black men that commit crime. We can argue about why that happened — because the poverty they were born into or the school systems that failed them or what have you — but if they commit a crime, then they need to be prosecuted," Obama said. "Because every community has an interest in public safety."

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