

Congress Unlikely To Block Nuclear Deal

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fiercely contested Iran nuclear deal will likely survive in Congress despite unified GOP opposition and some Democratic defections, the top Senate Republican says. That would mean a major foreign policy win for President Barack Obama.
 Obama has “a great likelihood of success,” Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said in his home state of Kentucky this week — giving public voice to what other Republicans have acknowledged in private. “I hope we can defeat it, but the procedure is obviously stacked in the president’s favor.”
 Indeed, even as Congress’ August recess has hardened Republicans’ opposition to the deal on Capitol Hill and on the presidential campaign trail, reality is setting in: They probably can’t stop it. Significant Democratic defections from Obama would be required in both chambers of Congress, and even with opponents mounting a strenuous lobbying campaign in key congressional districts, such a prospect looks remote.
 That means that even with Obama firmly in lame-duck territory and his GOP opponents in control of Congress and aiming for the White House, the president is on the verge of a legacy-defining victory on a pact that he and his supporters say will keep the world safe from Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Opponents continue to warn furiously that the result could be just the opposite: to strengthen Tehran’s hand, in an existential threat to Israel and the world.
 On Tuesday a second Democratic senator, Bob Menendez of New Jersey, did announce his opposition to the deal, joining Chuck Schumer of New York.

Military Likely To Open Jobs To Women

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two women have now passed the Army’s grueling Ranger test, and even tougher and more dangerous jobs could lie ahead. The military services are poised to allow women to serve in most front-line combat jobs, including special operations forces, senior officials told The Associated Press.
 Based on early talks, officials say the Army, Navy and Air Force likely will not seek exceptions that close any jobs to women. Marine Corps leaders, they say, have expressed concerns about allowing women to serve in infantry jobs and yet may seek an exception.
 The services are wrapping up reviews and must make their recommendations to Defense Secretary Ash Carter this fall. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the internal debate.
 Even if Marine leaders object, they are likely to meet resistance from senior Navy and Defense Department officials who want the military to be united on this issue.
 Undercutting the Marines’ reservations is that Special Operations Command is likely to allow women to compete for the most demanding military commando jobs — including the Navy SEALs and the Army’s Delta Force — though with the knowledge that it may be years before women even try to enter those fields.

Subway Pitchman To Plead Guilty

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Longtime Subway pitchman Jared Fogle is expected to plead guilty to child-pornography charges, an Indiana television station reported Tuesday.
 The report on Fox59 comes six weeks after authorities seized electronics and other items from Fogle’s home in Zionsville, an affluent Indianapolis suburb.
 Citing sources it did not identify, the station said Fogle would enter a plea Wednesday. It also said the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Indianapolis planned to hold a news conference Wednesday.
 The 37-year-old Fogle became a Subway pitchman more than 15 years ago after shedding more than 200 pounds as a college student, in part by eating the chain’s sandwiches.
 Subway suspended its association with Fogle after the raid. The company declined to comment Tuesday, saying only that the chain had “already ended our relationship with Jared.”

Turkey's Pres. Takes High-Risk Gamble

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan appeared a shadow of his former self after his party suffered major losses in the June election — embattled and no longer in control of his political fate. His once-dominant movement was forced into the humiliating position of seeking a coalition with opposition parties intent on reining him in.
 Two months later, the shrewd politician seems to be back in the saddle. The coalition-building he reportedly opposed has collapsed, and Turkey is now edging closer toward the new election he has been angling for.
 Erdogan appears to be betting that a new ballot could revive the fortunes of the Islamic-rooted party, which he founded and led for more than a decade. That would put him back on course to reshape Turkey’s democracy, giving the largely ceremonial presidency sweeping powers that would allow him to wield control over government affairs.
 Last week, he claimed since he was elected by popular vote instead of by Parliament, Turkey now had a “de facto” new system with a more powerful president, and a new constitution was needed to reflect the change. Erdogan has already been overstepping the bounds of his symbolic role on most matters of state, including Turkey’s fight against terror.
 But a new election at a time of escalating violence between Turkey’s security forces and Kurdish rebels — and amid Turkey’s deeper involvement in the U.S.-led campaign against Islamic State extremists — could backfire.

GOP Hopeful Scott Walker Offers Health Plan With Tax Credits

BY SCOTT BAUER
 Associated Press

BROOKLYN CENTER, Minn. — Republican presidential candidate Scott Walker on Tuesday offered an alternative to President Barack Obama’s health care law that would provide tax credits and restructure Medicaid, and took a swipe at GOP rivals in Congress for their inability to repeal the law.
 “I’m willing to stand up against anyone, including members of my own party,” Walker said at Cass Screw Machine Products in suburban Minneapolis. “I’m willing to stand up against anyone to get the job done.”
 Walker’s proposal calls for repealing the law immediately and replacing it with a plan that gives states more power to operate Medicaid, ties refundable tax credits to age rather than income, and shifts to discretion of states the decision on whether to offer the popular Obama provision that currently allows people up to age 26 to remain on their parents’ insurance plans.
 The biggest hurdle facing the Wisconsin governor, and other Republicans calling for repeal, is getting the 60 votes needed in the Senate. The Supreme Court in June also upheld a key component of the law, a major setback for critics fighting it in court.
 Walker detailed his plans with a slide presentation that mixed policy and politics, seeking both to distinguish himself from Republicans who have failed to eliminate Obama’s law, such as Sens. Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Rand



GLENNE STUBBE/MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/TNS
Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker speaks to a small crowd at Cass Screw Machine Company on Aug. 18 in Brooklyn Center, Minn. Walker announced his Day One Plan to replace Obamacare.

Paul and Lindsey Graham, and to tie Democratic presidential contender Hillary Rodham Clinton to it.
 “We were told by Republican leaders during the campaign last year that we just needed a Republican Senate to repeal Obamacare,” Walker said. “Well, here we sit.”
 Walker’s anti-Washington argument will appeal to conservatives frustrated that Republicans leaders in the House and Senate have not moved fast enough to undo Obama’s policies. But the criticism misses the political and institutional reality: Republicans hold 54 Senate seats, short of the 60 needed to break a filibuster, and Obama can veto legislation.
 Of Clinton, he added: “As bad as things have been under Obamacare, they’d only get worse under Hillary Clinton,” Walker said.
 Clinton took to Twitter to criticize Walker’s health care plan.
 “16 million Americans have gained health insurance from the Affordable Care Act,” Clinton tweeted. “We need to protect it — not repeal it.”
 Other Democrats were dismissive of Walker’s proposal. “If this vague grab-bag of conservative wish-list items is the best health plan the GOP can come up with for the largest economy on earth, it’s the clearest signal yet that Republicans like Scott Walker are out of ideas and out of touch,” said Democratic National Committee spokesman Eric Walker.
 Walker’s plan does not include cost figures or an estimate of the number of people who would be covered, making it nearly impossible to compare with current law. For the period from April to June of this year, 11.4 percent of U.S. adults were uninsured,

Man In Yellow Shirt Is Focus Of Bangkok Bombing Probe

BY NATTASUDA ANUSONADISAI AND PAPITCHAYA BOONNGOK
 Associated Press

BANGKOK — In the grainy security video, a man in a yellow shirt sits on a bench at the crowded Erawan Shrine, removes a backpack he is wearing, and leaves it behind when he walks away.
 For police hunting who was responsible for Monday’s deadly bombing in central Bangkok, there was no doubt about the man with youthful shaggy dark hair and glasses. “The yellow shirt guy is not just the suspect. He is the bomber,” police spokesman Lt. Gen. Prawut Thavornsiri told The Associated Press on Tuesday.
 Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha called the shrine bombing near a busy intersection that killed 20 and wounded more than 100 “the worst incident that has ever happened in Thailand,” and he promised to track down those responsible.
 “There have been minor bombs or just noise, but this time they aimed for innocent lives,” Prayuth said. “They want to destroy our economy, our tourism.”
 Bangkok was rattled again Tuesday when another pipe bomb blew up at the Sathorn Pier, which is used by tourists, although no one was hurt.
 Prawut released several photos of the man, with and without the backpack, on social media. The images were apparently taken from closed-circuit video at the shrine before the bomb exploded.
 Video posted separately on Thai media appeared to

show the same man sitting on a bench at the shrine, taking off the backpack and leaving it behind as he walked away.
 Without elaborating, the prime minister said, “Today we have seen the closed-circuit footage, we saw some suspects, but it wasn’t clear. We have to find them first.”
 Prayuth said the government will expedite “all investigative efforts to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice.”
 The bomb, which police say was made from a pipe and weighed 3 kilograms (more than 6 pounds), went off about 7 p.m. in an upscale area filled with tourists, office workers and shoppers. No one has claimed responsibility.
 Prawut said Tuesday’s blast at the Sathorn Pier frequented by tourist boats also was caused by a pipe bomb and could be related to the shrine attack.
 Police said the bomb was thrown from the Taksin Bridge and fell into the Chao Phraya River, where it exploded. Security video showed a sudden blast of water over a walkway at the pier as bystanders ran for safety.
 The Erawan Shrine is dedicated to the Hindu god Brahma, but is extremely popular among Thailand’s Buddhists as well as Chinese tourists. Although Thailand is predominantly Buddhist, it has enormous Hindu influence on its religious practices and language.
 Thai authorities identified five victims as Thai and four as Chinese — two of them from Hong Kong — along with two Malaysians and one Singaporean, and said the nationalities of the other eight victims remained unknown.
 The British Foreign Office said one victim was a British citizen named Vivian Chan who lived in Hong Kong. It was not immediately clear whether she was one of the two Hong Kong victims identified by Thai officials. Officials at London’s BPP University said she had studied there.
 “Everyone at BPP University is devastated to hear of the loss of one of our students, Vivian Chan Wing Yan, in Bangkok yesterday. Our thoughts are with Vivian’s family and we will work to support them in any way we can,” the school said in a statement.
 Defense Minister Prawit Wongsuwan said authorities had no idea an attack had been planned.
 “We didn’t know about this ahead of time. We had no intelligence on this attack,” he said.
 Prayuth vowed to “hurry and find the bombers,” though he noted there may be just one perpetrator. Speaking to reporters, he continued what has been a

notoriously prickly relationship with the media since the former general took control in a May 2014 coup that ousted a civilian government.
 Asked if there were leads on the suspects, Prayuth bristled: “We are still investigating. The bomb has just exploded — why are you asking now? Do you understand the word investigation? It’s not like they claim responsibility.”
 In Washington, State Department spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. is offering to support Thailand in its investigation but has not received a request. He said there was no indication that any Americans were among the casualties.
 Thailand has seen many violent attacks in recent years, particularly in a more-than-decade-long insurgency by Muslim separatists that has killed over 5,000 in the country’s south. Those attacks have never reached the capital, however.
 Bangkok has seen politically charged violence in the past decade; the deadliest, in 2010, killed more than 90 over two months and was centered on the same intersection where Monday’s bomb went off. But none of those attacks included a bomb that seemed intended to produce mass casualties.




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