

Green Zone Bomb Was Assassination Attempt

BAGHDAD (AP) — An explosion earlier this week in the Green Zone, a protected area in the center of the Iraqi capital, was an assassination attempt against the Iraqi prime minister, an Iraqi spokesman said.

That assailants were able to get a bomb inside what is supposed to be the most heavily fortified area in the country raises serious doubts about the abilities of Iraq's security forces at a crucial time when American troops are leaving the country.

The Baghdad military spokesman, Qassim al-Moussawi, said an attacker was able to get a vehicle carrying about 44 pounds (20 kilograms) of explosives into the Green Zone and then tried to join a convoy of other vehicles going into the parliament grounds.

But at a checkpoint leading into the parliament compound, guards prevented the driver from going any farther because he did not have proper authorization. The driver then drove to the parking lot just opposite the parliament entrance where many lawmakers or their staff park, and the vehicle exploded seconds later.

At the time, officials had said they did not know if the explosion was the result of rocket or mortar fire into the Green Zone, whether a bomber managed to get inside or whether a bomb had been attached to a vehicle that then drove into the Green Zone.

Camp Victory Now In Iraqi Government Hands

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq (AP) — Inside palace walls built by Saddam Hussein, U.S. generals plotted the war's course, tracked the mounting death toll and swore in new American citizens under gaudy glass chandeliers.

Just outside the palace, American troops whacked golf balls into man-made lakes or fished for carp, while others sat down with a cigar and a can of nonalcoholic beer hoping for a respite from incoming rockets or mortar shells.

Along another lake some distance away, a jailed Saddam tended to tomatoes and cucumbers in a small, walled-off enclosure with guards patrolling overhead.

Ever since the soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division fought their way into the Baghdad airport grounds nearly nine years ago, the sprawling area they renamed Camp Victory has held a special place in the American military experience in Iraq.

From here, the highest-ranking generals sitting behind banks of telephones and video screens communicated with commanders in the field and political leaders in Washington, and dictated strategy that unfolded on the streets of Fallujah, Mosul and Najaf.

Inquiry Reveals Depth Of Tabloid Scandal

LONDON (AP) — Hacking into celebrity phones was just the tip of the iceberg.

Britain's media ethics inquiry, set up in response to illegal eavesdropping by a Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid, has turned out to be a masterclass in skullduggery that has exposed the murky practices of the U.K.'s muckraking press.

This week, witnesses described how Murdoch's company had wreaked havoc on their lives and those of their families, with reporters targeting critics for spying and negative coverage and slurring the name of an innocent man.

"We have a press that has just become frankly putrid in many of its elements," Alastair Campbell, former tabloid journalist and long-time communications aide to former Prime Minister Tony Blair, told the tribunal this week.

Former Sheriff Charged In Meth For Sex Case

DENVER (AP) — A former Colorado lawman who was once named the nation's sheriff of the year was charged Friday with drug and prostitution offenses after authorities said he offered methamphetamine to a man in exchange for sex.

Patrick Sullivan Jr., 68, was being held on \$500,000 bond in an isolation cell at a jail named in his honor in suburban Denver. Arapahoe County Sheriff Grayson Robinson said current or former law enforcement officials are usually kept from the general inmate population for their safety at the Patrick J. Sullivan Jr. Detention Facility.

Prosecutors charged Sullivan with felony distribution, possession of meth as well as a misdemeanor charge of soliciting prostitution. Authorities say he offered methamphetamine in exchange for sex from a male acquaintance in a sting set up by officers with a drug task force.

Sullivan also is charged with attempting to influence a public servant following a Sept. 20 report of an "old man" inside a home that the caller said he wanted to leave.

An incident report notes a man at the house reported Sullivan was getting three recovering addicts back into drugs. Sullivan told investigators he was helping them out as part of his work with a law enforcement and state drug rehab program. Officials have no record of Sullivan working for either.

Obama: Relations With Tribes At Turning Point

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama says his administration offers a turning point in the tangled relationship between Washington and Native American tribes.

Obama told tribal leaders that as president, he's "got your back."

Obama spoke Friday to the nation's 565 tribal leaders. The president said he has honored his promise to Native Americans to make his administration more responsive to their needs.

Obama used the annual Tribal Nations Conference to announce a new education initiative for American Indians and Alaska natives. It aims to expand educational opportunities for Native Americans, including learning their native languages, cultures and histories.

Market Closes Out Best Week Since 2009

BY FRANCESCA LEVY AND MATTHEW CRAFT
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK — An early rally fizzled on the stock market Friday but still left the Standard & Poor's 500 index up 7.4 percent for the week, its biggest gain since March 2009.

A surprise drop in the U.S. unemployment rate sent stocks higher in early trading, but the gains faded during the afternoon.

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 0.61 of a point to close at 12,019.42. The Dow ended the week up 7 percent, the largest weekly gain since July 2009.

Bank stocks rose sharply, continuing a week-long rally. JPMorgan Chase & Co. jumped 6.1 percent, the most among the 30 stocks in the Dow average. Morgan Stanley leapt 6.9 percent, the second-biggest gain of any stock in the S&P 500 index.

European stock indexes and the euro rose after German Chancellor Angela Merkel made a speech pushing for tighter rules on government spending. Merkel said the 17 countries that use the euro must quickly restore market confidence by making financial controls stricter.

Bond yields for Spain and Italy fell, a sign that investors are becoming more confident in

the ability of those countries to pay their debt. France's CAC-40 and Britain's FT-SE each rose 1.1 percent.

Markets could be in for more volatility next week as European leaders prepare for a summit to propose new measures for containing the crisis.

The Labor Department reported before the market opened that the unemployment rate fell to 8.6 percent last month, the lowest level in 2 1/2 years. Economists had expected the rate to stay at 9 percent. But a key reason the unemployment rate fell so much was that more than 300,000 people gave up looking for work and were no longer counted as unemployed.

The Nasdaq composite index inched up 0.73 to 2,626.93. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 0.31 of a point to 1,244.28. The S&P surged 7.4 percent over the week, the most since March 2009.

Decisive steps by world leaders to right Europe's teetering economy sent stocks soaring on Wednesday. The Dow jumped 490 points, its biggest gain since March 2009 and its seventh-largest one-day point gain in history. The weekly point gain of 787 in the Dow was the second-biggest in its history, following a 946-point gain in October 2008.

"This market has been gripped with fear for a long time," said Peter Cardillo, chief market economist at Rockwell Global Capital. "And I think some of these fear factors are beginning to dissipate."

This week's strong stock performance is partially a reflection of the market's increased volatility since August, when concerns that Europe's debt was spinning out of control made dramatic stock price swings the norm. On Monday the S&P 500 broke a 7-day slide that had taken the index down 7.9 percent.

The improvements in the U.S. job market are "another illustration that the US economy is, for now at least, shrugging off the global economic downturn and fears about the collapse of the euro-zone," Capital Economics Chief U.S. Economist Paul Ashworth said in a note to clients.

Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy will meet Monday to discuss changes to European Union treaties. The talks will culminate in a Dec. 9 summit of EU leaders, where the proposals are expected to be debated and detailed.

Analysts say stricter controls on spending could encourage the European Central Bank to offer more short-term help for governments struggling with their debts.

End of the line for Cain? Announcement Saturday

BY SHANNON MCCAFFREY AND PHILIP ELLIOTT
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Rapidly becoming a mere footnote in the presidential race, Herman Cain sent mixed signals Friday on whether he would abandon his beleaguered White House bid on Saturday after a woman's allegation of an extramarital affair.

He said he would make a "major announcement" on whether he would press on — at an event still being billed as the grand opening of a new headquarters.

It is the latest — and perhaps final — twist in a campaign saga that has taken the Georgia businessman from unknown longshot to surprise frontrunner to embattled tabloid subject.

He arrived at his suburban Atlanta home on Friday afternoon to talk with his wife of 42 years, Gloria, about whether to press on after his campaign was rocked by multiple sexual harassment allegations and this week's claim that he had a 13-year affair. He denies wrongdoing. It was their first face-to-face meeting since the allegation was made public.

Earlier, in a speech in Rock Hill, S.C., Cain wouldn't disclose whether he would drop out but told supporters to stay tuned. He said he would clarify the next steps of the campaign and assured backers the affair claim was "garbage."

But he also said he needed to consider what he would do with campaign donations already banked if he dropped out of the race.

"Nobody's going to make me

make that prematurely," Cain told a crowd of about 100 people. "That's all there is to it."

"My wife and family comes first. I've got to take that into consideration," Cain added. "I don't doubt the support that I have. Just look at the people who are here."

Cain had not seen his wife since Ginger White, 46, came forward and said she had a sexual affair with Cain that lasted more than a decade. He has said they were only friends but acknowledged that he helped pay her monthly bills and expenses. His wife, Cain said, did not know of the friendship with White.

The former Godfather's pizza executive said he is reassessing whether his presidential bid is still viable.

But it was difficult to imagine a

path forward with just a month until the lead-off Iowa caucuses.

Polls suggest his popularity has taken a deep hit.

A Des Moines Register poll released Friday showed Cain's support plummeting, with backing from 8 percent of Republican caucusgoers in Iowa, down from 23 percent a month ago.

Fundraising has also fallen off. He issued an email appeal to supporters on Friday asking for donations, in an attempt to gauge whether his financial support has dried up.

"I need to know that you are behind me 100 percent," Cain told backers. "In today's political environment, the only way we can gauge true support is by the willingness of our supporters to invest in this effort."

EGYPT

Ultraconservative Islamists Making Gains

BY MAGGIE MICHAEL
Associated Press

CAIRO — Egypt's ultraconservative Islamist party said Friday it plans to push for a stricter religious code in Egypt after claiming surprisingly strong gains in this week's initial round of voting for parliament, the first elections since Hosni Mubarak's ouster.

Egypt's election commission announced only a trickle of results Friday and said 62 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in the highest turnout in Egypt's modern history. Abdel-Moaez Ibrahim, the head of High Election Commission, jokingly described it as "the highest since the time of pharaohs."

Preliminary counts leaked by judges and individual political groups indicated that the Muslim Brotherhood's political arm took the largest share of votes. Following closely behind, was the ultra-conservative Islamist Nour Party and a coalition of liberal parties called the Egyptian bloc, accord-

ing to those unofficial counts.

That trend — if confirmed and if extended over more rounds of voting — would give the religious parties a popular mandate in the struggle to win control from the ruling military that took over from Mubarak and ultimately reshape a key U.S. ally.

The Islamist Nour Party expects to get 30 percent of the vote, party spokesman Youssef Hamad told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

A strong showing would put them in a position to influence policy, although it's unclear how much power the new parliament will have with the ruling generals still in overall control. For example, the military, which is not keen to see Egypt delivered to radical Islamists, maintains that it — not the largest bloc in parliament — will choose the prime minister and Cabinet once all parliamentary voting rounds are completed. It is also poised to closely oversee the drafting of a new constitution.

The Nour Party's purist pursuit of strict Shariah, or Islamic law, would also face tough opposition from a diverse array of youth activists in the streets, Egypt's Coptic Christian minority, as well as liberal and secular political parties pushing for more social and political freedoms — perhaps forcing it to veer less toward the large role that religion plays in Saudi Arabia.

The Nour Party is the main political arm of the hard-line Salafi movement, which was inspired by the Saudi-style Wahabi school of thought.

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