

Data Breach Sets Off Charges Of Theft

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Democratic race for president unexpectedly exploded with rancor Friday as Hillary Clinton's campaign accused rival Bernie Sanders of stealing millions of dollars worth of information about potential voters.

Sanders' team, meanwhile, accused the Democratic Party of holding his White House bid hostage by temporarily barring it from accessing its own voter data. His campaign filed a lawsuit to get it back and aggressively tried to turn the allegations into a political advantage.

"This information is really key to our campaign and our strategy," said Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook. "We are particularly disturbed right now that they are using the fact that they stole data as a reason to raise money for their campaign."

The reaction to the data breach, the depth of which was debated by all involved, tore open an ugly fault line between two camps that had so far engaged in a relatively civil White House campaign.

On the eve of the party's next presidential debate, it also thrust into the open longstanding suspicions among Sanders and his supporters that the national party is unfairly working to support Clinton's candidacy.

Gun Buyer In Faces Charge In Old Plot

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When the FBI went to speak with a man accused of buying the assault rifles used by his friend in the San Bernardino terror attack, they learned about a sinister plot the two men had crafted years earlier.

In interviews over 11 days, Enrique Marquez Jr. willingly told agents how he and Farook had planned to slaughter students at a community college they attended and massacre motorists on a gridlocked freeway, according to court documents.

Marquez, the only person arrested in connection with the Dec. 2 shootings carried out by Farook and his wife, is now facing his most serious charge in the plot that fizzled years ago.

Marquez, 24, is charged with conspiring to provide material support to terrorists for the alleged plots in 2011 and 2012 that he never acted on.

"The material support provision is sort of the prosecutor's weapon of choice in going after individuals in plots like this," said William C. Banks, interim dean the Syracuse University law school. "They'll have no problem applying that to this guy's activities."

Recruiting Push Comes Deeper In Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — At tightly guarded facilities in south Lebanon, men as young as 17 undergo training by the Shiite guerrilla group Hezbollah on weapons and anti-insurgent tactics before being sent to Syria to fight alongside President Bashar Assad's forces.

Hezbollah has been conducting a large recruitment drive, a sign of how the war in Syria has become perhaps the most intense conflict the group has waged. Its losses in Syria — now more than 1,000 killed — are approaching the toll incurred by the group in 18 years of fighting the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon in the 1980s and 1990s. That conflict earned Hezbollah its reputation as Lebanon's strongest armed force.

The recruitment, drawing from Lebanon's Shiite community, is even more important now as Hezbollah expands its involvement in Syria, engaging in battles deep inside the country and trying to take back rebel-held territory.

"Hezbollah is both battle-weary and battle-hardened," said Bilal Saab, a resident senior fellow for Middle East Security at the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security. "Hezbollah has lost many men in Syria, but it has also acquired new skills. It is overstretched, but it can operate in multiple terrains."

With strong financial and military backing from Iran, Hezbollah has been able to step up its role in Syria even while maintaining the political domination in Lebanon that it has held for several years.

Bad Boy: Rap-Fan CEO Faces Charges

NEW YORK (AP) — He's the enfant terrible of pharmaceuticals, a 32-year-old CEO who unapologetically raised the price of the only approved drug for a rare disease from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill.

He's a millionaire music aficionado who riled rap fans by buying the only known copy of an album by the Wu-Tang Clan. He's an unabashed self-promoter who livestreams his daily life and boasts he's "the world's most eligible bachelor" and "the most successful Albanian to ever walk the face of this Earth." And he's an equally unabashed provocateur who jousts online with his critics.

Now, prosecutors say Martin Shkreli is a fraudster. He pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges that he looted Retrophin, a pharmaceutical company he founded, of \$11 million to pay back disgruntled hedge fund clients.

By Friday, he was out on \$5 million bail and back on YouTube, ready anew for his self-created close-up.

"Sorry I didn't livestream yesterday," he said. "I had a lot going on."

Women Are Out-Earning Men In Finance

Women may be badly outnumbered in the top ranks of corporate America, but at least they aren't underpaid.

Compensation for female chief financial officers at S&P 500 companies last year outpaced that of their male counterparts, according to an analysis by executive compensation firm Equilar and the Associated Press. It follows a similar trend seen with female CEOs in recent years.

The median pay for female CFOs last year rose nearly 11 percent to \$3.32 million. Male CFO pay rose 7 percent, to \$3.3 million. This follows several years of steady gains for both sexes.

The gains, for both men and women, are in part a result of the expansion of the CFO role to include far more responsibility and visibility.

"The CFO is no longer a bean counter," said Josh Crist, managing director at executive search firm Crist Kolder Associates.

Agreeing At Last: Congress Sends Tax, Spending Bill To Obama

BY ERICA WERNER
AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Congress ended its chaotic year on a surprising note of bipartisan unity and productivity Friday, overwhelmingly approving a massive 2016 tax and spending package and sending it to President Barack Obama, who promptly signed it.

Obama welcomed the sprawling legislation, a rare compromise product of the divided government. It includes something for nearly everyone, from parents and teachers to Big Oil and small business, from 9/11 first responders to cybersecurity hawks and more.

"There's some things in there that I don't like, but that's the nature of legislation and compromise, and I think the system worked," the president said at his year-end news conference at the White House before traveling with his family on their annual vacation to Hawaii. "It was a good win."

The legislation pairs two enormous bills: a \$1.14 trillion government-wide spending measure to fund every Cabinet agency through next September, and a \$680 billion tax package extending dozens of breaks touching all sectors of the economy, making several of them permanent and tossing the entire cost onto the deficit.

Republicans and Democrats joined to approve the spending bill on a resounding 316-113 vote in the House, a day after passing the tax bill. The unexpectedly large margin was a victory for new Speaker Paul Ryan, who saw a majority of his GOP lawmakers back the legislation despite complaints by frustrated conservatives whose priorities were ignored.

Not long after, the Senate voted 65-33 to send the entire package to Obama's desk, and lawmakers began rushing out the Capitol's exits to catch flights back home with Congress adjourning until January.



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/TNS
US President Barack Obama signs a compromise \$1.1 trillion spending package that funds the government through next September in the Oval Office at the White House on Dec. 18, in Washington, D.C.

On Capitol Hill, it was a harmonious conclusion to a wild 2015 that was driven largely by tea party lawmakers pushing for showdowns with Obama on immigration, Planned Parenthood and the president's health law. They never achieved their principal goals even with the Senate newly under GOP control, but along the way they forced out Ryan's predecessor, John Boehner, and nearly shut down the Homeland Security Department.

On Friday several hardliners expressed disappointment over a year that ended with passage of a spending bill funding many of Obama's priorities while excluding their own, including curbs on Syrian refugee resettlement in the U.S.

"The product we're delivering this year is awful," grouched GOP Rep. Dave Brat of Virginia.

Several of the GOP presidential candidates in the Senate were among those opposing the legislation, though Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida didn't show up to vote. Sens.

Ted Cruz of Texas and Rand Paul of Kentucky voted "no."

Yet few conservatives were complaining about Ryan himself, and many lawmakers, Republicans and Democrats alike, proudly touted the accomplishments achieved since the new speaker was sworn in, including bipartisan bills on highways and education and a two-year budget and debt deal that paved the way for Friday's spending and tax legislation.

"Truly historic," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., boasted on the Senate floor as he and Congress' other top leaders of both parties took turns claiming credit for the holiday-season largesse.

Ryan himself told reporters he fielded a congratulatory call from Obama who thanked him for keeping government working and invited him to dinner at the White House in the new year.

The Democratic leaders, Nancy Pelosi of California in the House and Harry Reid of Nevada in the Senate, complained about a provision

lifting the four-decade-old ban on exporting crude oil and the legislation's failure to address Puerto Rico's fiscal woes, which Ryan pledged to tackle next year instead.

But they boasted of using their leverage, veto threats from Obama and the GOP's craving for the oil export ban to extract numerous concessions from Republicans, including five-year extensions of solar and wind tax credits, a top goal for Reid. And they blocked numerous policy "riders" Republicans sought on the environment and other issues.

"They wanted big oil so much that they gave away the store," Pelosi gloated.

The spending measure awards increases of about 6 percent, on average, above tight spending caps that were a relic of a 2011 budget and debt deal, and were opposed by both GOP defense hawks and Democrats seeking boosts in domestic spending. It contains large spending boosts for veterans and medical research.

UN Endorses Peace Process For Syria, But No Mention Of Assad

BY EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — U.N. Security Council members unanimously approved a U.N. resolution Friday endorsing a peace process for Syria including a cease-fire and talks between the Damascus government and the opposition, but the text makes no mention of the most contentious issue — the future role of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The resolution makes clear that the blueprint it endorses will not end the conflict, deep into its fifth year with well over 300,000 killed, because "terrorist groups," including the Islamic State group and the al-Qaida-linked al-Nusra Front, are not part of the cease-fire.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry praised "the unprecedented degree of unity" in the council, which has been stymied in the past over a political solution in Syria, and called the resolution "a milestone."

Foreign ministers from 17 countries met for more than

five hours on how to implement their call in Vienna last month for a cease-fire and the start of negotiations between the government and opposition in early January. At the same time, diplomats worked to overcome divisions on the text of the resolution.

The resulting agreement "gives the Syrian people a real choice, not between Assad and Daesh, but between war and peace," Kerry said, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State extremists.

"We're under no illusions about the obstacles that exist ... especially about the future of President Assad" where "sharp differences" remain, Kerry said.

He said Assad must go if there is to be peace in Syria, stressing that "Assad has lost the ability ... to unite the country."

But Kerry later told reporters that the United States and the opposition had eventually realized that demanding Assad's departure up front in the process was "in fact, prolonging the war."

Kerry, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and U.N. special envoy Staffan de Mistura made clear that the previously envisioned Jan. 1 start to peace talks was unlikely. De Mistura said invitations to the talks will go out in January, at least.

Kerry said a start to the talks in the middle or end of the month would be more reasonable. "In January, we expect to be at the table and implement a full cease-fire," he said.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the council that Syria was "in ruins," singling out besieged areas where "thousands of people have been forced to live on grass and weeds," which he called "outrageous."

"This marks a very important step on which we must build," Ban said of Friday's resolution.

But Syria's ambassador to the U.N., Bashar Ja'afari, criticized the "glaring contradictions" between the talk about letting the Syrian people decide their fate and what he called interference in his country's sovereignty by talking about replacing Assad.

At an earlier ministerial meeting, Ban said he urged the government and opposition to implement confidence-building measures, including a halt to the use of barrel bombs and other indiscriminate weapons against civilians, as well as granting unconditional access to aid convoys, lifting restrictions on the delivery of medical aid and releasing all detainees.

Ministers said they would meet again in January, and de Mistura is now tasked with pulling together a final negotiating team for the Syrian opposition.

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Christmas & New Year Holiday Deadlines

The Press and Dakotan will be closing at noon Thursday, Dec. 24, and closed all day Friday, Dec. 25.

The Press and Dakotan will also be closed Thursday, Dec. 31 at 3:00 pm and closed all day Friday, Jan. 1.

Publish Date	Deadline Date
Sat., Dec. 26	Tues., Dec. 22
Mon., Dec. 28	Tues., Dec. 22
Out On The Town	Wed., Dec. 23
Tues., Dec. 29	Wed., Dec. 23
Wed., Dec. 30	Thurs., Dec. 24, Noon
FRIDAY DEC. 1 - NO PAPER	
Sat., Jan. 2	Tues., Dec. 29
Mon., Jan. 4	Tues., Dec. 29
Out On The Town	Wed., Dec. 30
Tues., Jan. 5	Wed., Dec. 30
Wed., Jan. 6	Thurs., Dec. 31, 3pm

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