

Alabama Hostage Situation Hits Day Four

MIDLAND CITY, Ala. (AP) — Authorities have released a photo of a man they say killed a school bus driver and abducted a 5-year-old boy before taking refuge in an underground bunker.

Police on Friday released a photo of Jimmy Lee Dykes. Authorities say Dykes and the kindergartner have been in the bunker since the school bus shooting Tuesday.

Authorities say they have been talking to Dykes through a pipe leading to the bunker, but they have not revealed what the conversations have been about.

There are signs the standoff could go on for some time. The shelter has electricity, food, TV, and police have delivered the boy's medication through the 4-inch-wide pipe.

Obama Offers Compromise On Birth Control

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing a wave of lawsuits over what government can tell religious groups to do, the Obama administration on Friday proposed a compromise for faith-based nonprofits that object to covering birth control in their employee health plans.

Some of the lawsuits appear headed for the Supreme Court, threatening another divisive legal battle over President Barack Obama's health care overhaul law, which requires most employers to cover birth control free of charge to female workers as a preventive service. The law exempted churches and other houses of worship, but religious charities, universities, hospitals and even some for-profit businesses have objected.

The government's new offer, in a proposed regulation, has two parts. Administration officials said it would more simply define the religious organizations that are exempt from the requirement altogether. For example, a mosque whose food pantry serves the whole community would not have to comply.

For other religious employers, the proposal attempts to create a buffer between them and contraception coverage. Female employees would still have free access through insurers or a third party, but the employer would not have to arrange for the coverage or pay for it. Insurers would be reimbursed for any costs by a credit against fees owed the government.

Clinton Has Last Day As Secretary Of State

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton formally resigned Friday as America's 67th secretary of state, capping a four-year tenure that saw her shatter records for the number of countries visited.

In a letter sent to President Barack Obama shortly before she was to leave the State Department for the last time in her official capacity, Clinton thanked her former foe for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination for the opportunity to serve in his administration. Clinton said it had been an honor to be part of his Cabinet.

"I am more convinced than ever in the strength and staying power of America's global leadership and our capacity to be a force for good in the world," she said in the letter.

Her resignation will be effective on the swearing-in of her successor, John Kerry, who was to take the oath of office in a private ceremony later Friday.

Clinton pushed through a throng of American foreign service workers who clamored for handshakes and smartphone photos with her and gave an emotional goodbye speech.

Egyptian Protesters March Presidential Palace

CAIRO (AP) — Protesters denouncing Egypt's Islamist president hurled stones and firebombs through the gates of his palace gates on Friday, clashing with security forces who fired tear gas and water cannons, as more than a week of political violence came to Mohammed Morsi's symbolic doorstep for the first time.

The march on the palace in an upscale district of the capital was part of a wave of demonstrations in cities around the country called by opposition politicians, trying to wrest concessions from Morsi after around 60 people were killed in protests, clashes and riots.

But many of the protesters go further, saying he must be removed from office, accusing his Muslim Brotherhood of monopolizing power and failing to deal with the country's mounting woes. Many have been further angered by Morsi's praise of the security forces after the high death toll, which is widely blamed on excessive use of force by the police.

The day's unrest, however, risked boosting attempts by the government and Brotherhood to taint the opposition as violent and destructive — a tack Morsi supporters have taken for weeks.

In a statement issued amid the clashes, Morsi said "political forces involved in incitement" are responsible for the violence and spoke of an investigation. He called on all factions to condemn what he called an attempt to break into the palace and said security forces would "act decisively to protect state institutions."

More New Federal Rules On School Snacks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Goodbye candy bars and sugary cookies. Hello baked chips and diet sodas.

The government for the first time is proposing broad new standards to make sure all foods sold in schools are more healthful, a change that would ban the sale of almost all candy, high-calorie sports drinks and greasy foods on campus.

Under new rules the Department of Agriculture proposed Friday, school vending machines would start selling water, lower-calorie sports drinks, diet sodas and baked chips instead. Lunchrooms that now sell fatty "a la carte" items like mozzarella sticks and nachos would have to switch to healthier pizzas, low-fat hamburgers, fruit cups and yogurt.

The rules, required under a child nutrition law passed by Congress in 2010, are part of the government's effort to combat childhood obesity. While many schools already have made improvements in their lunch menus and vending machine choices, others still are selling high-fat, high-calorie foods.

Under the proposal, the Agriculture Department would set fat, calorie, sugar and sodium limits on almost all foods sold in schools. Current standards already regulate the nutritional content of school breakfasts and lunches that are subsidized by the federal government, but most lunch rooms also have "a la carte" lines that sell other foods. And food sold through vending machines and in other ways outside the lunchroom has not been federally regulated.

Report: U.S. Job Market Strong

BY PAUL WISEMAN
AND CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON — The U.S. job market is proving surprisingly strong and raising hopes that the economy will be resilient enough this year to withstand a budget standoff in Washington and potentially deep cuts in federal spending.

Employers added 157,000 jobs last month, and hiring turned out to be healthier than previously thought at the end of 2012 just as the economy faced the threat of the "fiscal cliff."

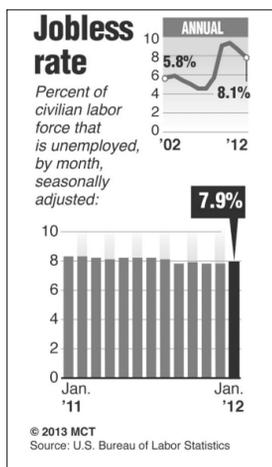
Still, unemployment remains persistently high. The unemployment rate ticked up to 7.9 percent last month from 7.8 percent in December.

Many economists, though, focused on the steady job growth — especially the healthier-than-expected hiring late last year. The Labor Department revised its estimates of job gains for November from an initial 161,000 to 247,000 and for December from 155,000 to 196,000.

The department also revised its figures for all of 2012 upward — to an average of 180,000 new jobs a month from a previously estimated 150,000.

"The significantly stronger payroll gains tell us the economy has a lot more momentum than what we had thought," Joseph LaVorgna, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank, said in a research note.

The government frequently revises the monthly job totals as it collects more information. Sometimes the revisions can be dramatic, as in November and December.



The January jobs report helped fuel a powerful rally on Wall Street. Stock averages all jumped more than 1 percent. The Dow Jones industrial average closed above 14,000 for the first time since October 2007, two months before the Great Recession officially began.

Beyond the job market, the economy is showing other signs of health. Factories were busier last month than they have been since April 2012. Ford, Chrysler and General Motors all reported double-digit sales gains for last month, their best January in five years.

Home prices have been rising steadily. Higher home values tend to make Americans feel wealthier and more likely to spend.

Housing construction is recovering, too. Construction spending rose last year for the first time in six years and is expected to add 1 percentage point to economic

growth this year.

The housing rebound appears finally to be producing a long-awaited return of construction-industry jobs, which have typically help drive economic recoveries. Construction companies added 28,000 jobs in January. Over the past three months, construction has added 82,000 jobs — the best quarterly increase since 2006. Even with the gains, construction employment is about 2 million below its housing-bubble peak of 7.7 million in April 2006.

Health care employers added 28,000 jobs in January. Retailers added 33,000, and hotels and restaurants 17,000. The job growth in retail, hotels and restaurants suggests that employers have grown more confident about consumer spending, which fuels about 70 percent of the economy.

The government uses a survey of mostly large businesses and government agencies to determine how many jobs are added or lost each month. That's the survey that produced the gain of 157,000 jobs for January.

It uses a separate survey of households to calculate the unemployment rate. That survey captures hiring by companies of all sizes, including small businesses, new companies, farm workers and the self-employed. From month to month, the two surveys sometimes contradict each other. Over time, the differences between them usually even out.

The household survey for January found that 117,000 more Americans said they were unemployed than in December. That's why the unemployment rate inched up from 7.8 percent to 7.9 percent.

Some economists had feared

that federal budget standoffs might chill spending, investing and hiring. They worried that companies wouldn't hire and consumers would scale back spending in November and December because big spending cuts and tax increases were to take effect Jan. 1 if the White House and congressional Republicans couldn't reach a budget deal.

It turns out, the fears were overblown. In the midst of the budget fight late last year, employers kept hiring.

And Friday's jobs report showed that average hourly wages — up 4 cents to \$23.78 in January — were staying ahead of inflation. They had generally failed to keep up with prices since the recession ended in June 2009.

The steady hiring gains should help cushion the economic pain from higher Social Security taxes, which last month began shrinking most workers' take-home pay. A person earning \$50,000 a year will have about \$1,000 less to spend in 2013. A household with two high-paid workers will have up to \$4,500 less.

Analysts expect the Social Security tax increase to shave about a half-point off economic growth in 2013, because consumers drive about 70 percent of economic activity.

The hit to consumers is coming at a precarious time. The economy contracted in the fourth quarter of 2012 for the first time in 3 1/2 years. The drop was due mainly to a steep cut in defense spending and declining exports. Most analysts think those factors will prove temporary and that the economy will grow this quarter and the rest of the year.

Suicide Bomber Kills Guard At U.S. Embassy

BY SUZAN FRASER
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — In the second deadly assault on a U.S. diplomatic post in five months, a suicide bomber struck the American Embassy in Ankara on Friday, killing a Turkish security guard in what the White House described as a terrorist attack.

Washington immediately warned Americans to stay away from all U.S. diplomatic facilities in Turkey and to be wary in large crowds.

Turkish officials said the bombing was linked to leftist domestic militants.

The attack drew condemnation from Turkey, the U.S., Britain and other nations and officials from both Turkey and the U.S. pledged to work together to fight terrorism.

"We strongly condemn what was a suicide attack against our embassy in Ankara, which took place at the embassy's outer security perimeter," said White House spokesman Jay Carney.

"A suicide bombing on the perimeter of an embassy is by definition an act of terror," he said. "It is a terrorist attack."

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said police believe the bomber was connected to a domestic leftist militant group. Carney, however, said the motive for the attack and who was behind it was not known.

A Turkish TV journalist was seriously wounded in the 1:15 p.m. blast in the Turkish capital, and two other guards had lighter wounds, officials said.

The state-run Anadolu Agency identified the bomber as Ecevit Sanli. It said the 40-year-old Turkish man was a member of the outlawed Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front, or DHKP-C, which has claimed responsibility for assassinations and bombings since the 1970s.

The group has been designated a terrorist organization by the United States but had been relatively quiet in recent years.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, in her farewell speech to State Department staff moments after she formally resigned as secretary of

state, said "we were attacked and lost one of our foreign service nationals."

She said she spoke with U.S. Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, "our team there and my Turkish counterpart. I told them how much we valued their commitment and their sacrifice."

Sen. John Kerry, the incoming secretary of state, also was briefed.

The U.S. Embassy building in Ankara is heavily protected and located near several other embassies, including those of Germany and France.

U.S. diplomatic facilities in Turkey have been targeted previously by terrorists. In 2008, an attack blamed on al-Qaida-affiliated militants outside the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul left three assailants and three policemen dead.

On Sept. 11, 2012, terrorists attacked a U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, killing U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans. The attackers in Libya were suspected to have ties to Islamist extremists, and one is in custody in Egypt.

Friday's bombing occurred at a security checkpoint at the side entrance to the U.S. Embassy, which is used by staff.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said a man detonated a suicide vest at the checkpoint on the outer perimeter of the embassy compound.

"He came to this first point of access to the compound ... where you have to have your ID checked, you have to go through security," Nuland said.

The guard who was killed was standing outside the checkpoint, while the two wounded guards "were standing in a more protected area," said Interior Minister Muammer Guler said.

The two were treated on the scene and did not require hospital treatment, he said.

"The level of security protection at our facility in Ankara ensured that there were not significantly more deaths and injuries than there could have been," Nuland told reporters in Washington.

"This is one of the compounds where we have been making steady security upgrades

over the last decade," Nuland said. "And in fact, the attack was at one of the exterior compound access sites. So it was far from the main building, and it was a result of the way that was hardened that we only lost the one local security guard. And in fact, there were other security guards inside the building behind the glass who were only shaken up by this."

While praising its security and the response of Turkish authorities, Nuland noted that the embassy in Ankara is due for a completely new compound in future. She described the current main building as a 1950s complex that "needs a full upgrade."

The Hurriyet newspaper said staff at the embassy took shelter in a "safe room" inside the compound soon after the explosion.

Police swarmed the area and immediately cordoned it off. Forensic investigators in white outfits and gloves soon combed the site.

TV news video showed the embassy door blown off its hinges. The blast also shattered the windows of nearby businesses, littering debris on the ground and across the road. The inside of the embassy did not appear to be damaged.

Television video also showed what appeared to be a U.S. guard in a helmet and body armor surveying the area from the roof of an embassy building.

In a statement, the U.S. Embassy thanked Turkey for "its solidarity and outrage over the incident."

Ricciardone declared that the U.S. and Turkey "will continue to fight terrorism together," and described the U.S. Embassy compound as secure.

"From today's event, it is clear that we both suffer from this terrible, terrible problem of today's world. We are determined after events like this even more to cooperate together until we defeat this problem together," he said.

Erdogan echoed that sentiment, saying the attack aimed to disturb Turkey's "peace and prosperity" and demonstrated a need for international cooperation against terrorism.

Fans

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said.

Enfield admitted he wore his Ravens jersey under his dress shirt at the Christmas party. "The game was still in the third quarter when we had to leave for the party, so I kept it on," he said.

Ogstad initially became a 49ers fan as an act of rebellion.

"Both of my brothers liked the Cowboys, so I became a 49ers fan because of it," he said. "But I also liked the 49ers as a team. When I started following them, I really liked their players. Joe Montana was one of my favorite players, and you had quite a few other players over the years like Jerry Rice, Roger Craig and Ronnie Lott."

Ogstad has seen the 49ers play at Kansas City and Minnesota, rare chances at seeing the team in action for a Midwest fan such as himself.

Enfield has taken a winding path to becoming a Ravens fan. A Denver native, he followed the University of Miami as a favorite

football team. In its initial season at Baltimore in 1996, the Ravens drafted Ray Lewis from the University of Miami, and he remains the lone member of the original franchise team.

"Ed Reed also played for Miami and is with the Ravens," Enfield said. "And Vinny Testaverde of Miami was the Ravens' quarterback, so it's perfect."

Lewis announced just before the playoffs that he would retire after this season. The Ravens kept winning, ensuring that Lewis will conclude his career Sunday in the Super Bowl.

"Ray could have waited with his retirement announcement, but he's a showman. His retirement announcement fired up the team," Enfield said. "After all, this guy (Lewis) IS the Baltimore Ravens. He just wants to play the game, which elevates the players around him."

After the Colts' departure, Baltimore fans were left wandering in the desert without an NFL team, Slattery said.

"Believe it or not, we did have a Canadian Football League (CFL) team, the Stallions, for a time and actually won the league championship," he said. "There's a Grey Cup still in Baltimore from

that franchise."

But Cleveland Browns owner Art Modell moved his team to Baltimore in 1996, giving the city an NFL franchise. The team's name came from Edgar Allan Poe's poem, "The Raven," as Poe lived in Baltimore for a time, died there in 1849 and is buried in the city.

"Baltimore is a football town. People live and breathe it," Slattery said. "Baltimore is a blue-collar town, and football is a blue-collar sport. The fans relate to the Ravens."

As part of the effort of getting an NFL franchise in the 1990s, Baltimore fans were asked to buy season tickets as a show of support. Slattery was working as a counselor at the time, and his employer had purchased the coveted season tickets.

"I went to the games for free from 1996 until I left Baltimore in 2000 for the seminary in Portland," he said. "It was great. I was on the 50-yard line and 14 rows up."

When the Ravens played the New York Giants in the 2001 Super Bowl, the Slatterys hosted a party with Giants fans as guests. Baltimore won the game 34-7 for the first Super Bowl title

in franchise history.

"Our guests left at half-time because it was so bad," Slattery said. "When the game was over (NFL Commissioner Paul) Tagliabue handed the trophy to Ray Lewis and Art Modell. Ray Lewis said, in effect, this is for Baltimore, not just the team but the whole city."

Ogstad plans to follow tradition and watch Sunday's game with his parents. He highly anticipates the prospect of the 49ers winning their sixth Super Bowl, matching the record held by the Pittsburgh Steelers.

"It's been really special this season. I really didn't expect this (Super Bowl) to happen. I think the turning point was when they put Colin Kaepernick in as quarterback," he said.

"I was surprised when they switched quarterbacks during the season, but it totally changed their offense and made it so much more dynamic. Before, if the 49ers got behind, they were pretty much behind. With this guy, they can go to something else."

Enfield, like many fans, has taken advantage of satellite television, social media and other avenues for following their favorite

teams in another market. He believes he's one of the few Ravens fans in Yankton and collects the team's memorabilia wherever possible.

"You really can't find any Ravens jerseys or gear around. At the (Hy-Vee) gas station, we get things for the different NFL teams, so I tuck on a custom order for Ravens material," he said.

"My basement looks like a Ravens hall of fame. I have a wall of jerseys. I have a Bryant McKinnie jersey that's huge and goes past my knees."

Slattery is geared up for Sunday's game, receiving shipments of Baltimore favorites including Utz potato chips and Tasty Kakes. He may even indulge in crab cakes.

Where will he watch the big game?

"If the teams playing in the game were anyone else, my family would go to a Super Bowl party," he said. "But for me and my wife, there is something so emotional about seeing Baltimore playing in the Super Bowl, we just want to watch it at home with our family."

Ogstad believes the key to 49ers fortunes lie in the running

game, which would open up the attack.

"I'm optimistic about our chances," he said. "I think the 49ers will give them a good game and come out on top."

Enfield expressed ecstasy in seeing the Ravens play only their second Super Bowl in franchise history. He pointed to a number of story lines.

"Art Modell passed away this past year, you have Ray Lewis retiring, and you have the Harbaugh brothers coaching against each other," he said. "The Ravens bring a lunch pal mentality. They're not flashy. They're going to hit you in the mouth and see if you withstand it."

The Ravens narrowly missed the Super Bowl last year, but they have taken out rivals Indianapolis, Denver and New England during this year's playoff run, Enfield said.

"And the Ravens had never won a playoff game during our Hy-Vee Christmas party, but not this year," he said. "The Ravens seem to be a team of destiny. How can things go wrong?"

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