

Turkey Says Syria Faces Test Of Goodwill

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey's foreign minister says Syria faces a test of goodwill over Arab League demand to allow an observer mission.

Ahmet Davutoglu says Friday Syria "must open its doors to observers."

Syria has already slammed the Arab League's ultimatum to agree by Friday to allow an observer mission into the country or face sanctions.

Davutoglu says the patience of Turkey and Arab countries is "running out over the bloodshed in Syria."

He spoke during a joint news conference with Italy's new Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi in Istanbul. Terzi described the situation in Syria as a "worrying tragedy."

U.S. Awaits Release Of Cairo Protesters

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Family and friends of three American students arrested during a protest in Cairo waited anxiously Friday for news that they had been released from police custody.

Derrick Sweeney, Luke Gates and Gregory Porter, who attend the American University in Cairo, were arrested on the roof of a university building near Cairo's iconic Tahrir Square on Sunday. Officials accused them of throwing firebombs at security forces fighting with protesters.

A court in Egypt ordered the release of the students, a lawyer in Philadelphia confirmed Thursday.

Attorney Theodore Simon, who represents Porter, a 19-year-old student at Drexel University in Philadelphia, said he spoke by phone with Porter, describing the student's demeanor as "calm and measured, demonstrating a maturity well beyond his 19 years."

"He was extremely thankful and appreciative for our efforts and the unconditional support of his mother and father," Simon said.

No Survivors After Plane Crashes Near Phoenix

PHOENIX (AP) — Crews hunted through crags and outcroppings of a mountaintop area just east of Phoenix, searching for victims of a fiery plane crash that killed all six people aboard, including the pilot and his three young children.

The family and two other adults were headed for Thanksgiving weekend in southeastern Arizona when the twin-engine plane traveling at 200 mph slammed into a sheer cliff in the mile-high Superstition Mountains an hour after sundown Wednesday, authorities said.

The aircraft exploded in flames, split apart and scattered burning debris.

"No one could have survived that crash," Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu said Thursday.

The body of one child was recovered and dozens of sheriff's search and rescue personnel worked Thursday to recover the remains of the other victims.

Drought Causes Problems For Tree Farmers

NEW CANEY, Texas (AP) — Dry, brown grass crunches underfoot as David Barfield walks through his 45-acre Christmas tree farm pointing at evergreens covered with brittle, rust-colored needles.

"Dead tree, dead tree, dead tree," he says, shaking his head at dry timber he hoped would be chopped down by parents with excited children.

Instead, Mother Nature delivered the Grinch in the form of a historic drought that has killed thousands of trees across Texas and Oklahoma. Some died of thirst. Others were destroyed by wildfires, whose breadth and intensity were magnified when wind swept the flames across parched landscape.

Most farmers plan to import trees from North Carolina to supplement any they have left, said Marshall Cathey, president of the Texas Christmas Tree Growers Association. They say they aren't planning to raise prices because consumers are reluctant to pay more than \$40 or \$50 for a Christmas tree, especially in the poor economy.

But families hoping for a homegrown tree to cut down will have a harder time finding one, and dozens of farmers are struggling. Possibly most painful for these growers are the deaths of the youngest saplings, which guarantee the drought's effect will be felt for years to come.

Occupy Movements Celebrate Thanksgiving

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Anti-Wall Street demonstrators in encampments around the country spent Thanksgiving serving turkey, donating time in solidarity with the protest movement and, in some cases, confronting police.

In San Francisco, 400 occupiers at a plaza in the financial district were served traditional Thanksgiving fixings sent by the renowned Glide Memorial Church to volunteers and supporters of the movement fighting social and economic inequality.

"We are thankful that we are, first and foremost, in a country where we can protest," said the Rev. Cecil Williams, the founder of Glide and a fixture in the city's activist community. "And we are thankful that we believe that there are things that could be worked out and that we have a sense of hope. But we know that hope only comes when you make a stand."

EGYPT

Military Pressured By Protesters, U.S.

BY HAMZA HENDAWI AND SARAH EL DEEB

Associated Press

CAIRO — The U.S. increased pressure Friday on Egypt's military rulers to hand over power to civilian leaders, and the generals turned to a Mubarak-era politician to head a new government in a move that failed to satisfy the more than 100,000 protesters who jammed Tahrir Square in the biggest rally yet this week.

The demonstrators rejected the appointment of Kamal el-Ganzouri as prime minister, breaking into chants of "Illegitimate! Illegitimate!" and setting up a showdown between the two sides only three days before key parliamentary elections.

The size of the rally and the resilience of protesters in the face of the violence used by security forces in this week's deadly street battles have won back for the movement much of the strength it projected during the 18-day uprising that ousted President Hosni Mubarak in February.

Showing the sort of resolve from the earliest days of the Arab Spring, the protesters say they will not leave the iconic square until the military rulers led by Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi step down and a civilian presidential council is formed to run the country until a new leader is elected.

"They stole our January revolution because we did not agree on who should represent us. We shouted 'erhal' (leave) but did not shout the name of the person we want."

SEDEEQAH ABU SEADAH

"They stole our January revolution because we did not agree on who should represent us," said activist Sedeeqah Abu Seadah. "We shouted 'erhal' (leave) but did not shout the name of the person we want."

The military's appointment of el-Ganzouri, its apology for the death of protesters and a series of partial concessions in the past two days suggest that the generals are struggling to overcome the most serious challenge to their nine-month rule, with fewer options now available to them.

Significantly adding to their predicament, the Obama administration brought its position on the crisis in Egypt closer to the protesters' demands, urging the military to fully empower the next interim civilian government.

"We believe that Egypt's transition to

democracy must continue, with elections proceeding expeditiously, and all necessary measures taken to ensure security and prevent intimidation," the White House said in a statement.

"Most importantly, we believe that the full transfer of power to a civilian government must take place in a just and inclusive manner that responds to the legitimate aspirations of the Egyptian people, as soon as possible," it said.

The adjustment in the Obama administration's approach is significant because the Egyptian military, the nation's most powerful institution, has in the past 30 years forged close relations with successive U.S. administrations, receiving \$1.3 billion annually in aid. It followed the public U.S. endorsement of the military's original timetable for the transfer of power by late 2012 or early 2013.

The military inadvertently sparked the ongoing unrest by pushing plans for a political "guardianship" role for itself and immunity from civilian oversight even after a new parliament is seated and a new president is elected.

The last straw came when the military ordered the use of force against a small protest in Tahrir Square last weekend and then launched a failed, joint army-police raid to evacuate a larger crowd. Nearly 40 protesters have died in the past week.

GOP Field Likely To Remain Crowded

BY MIKE GLOVER

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — They are barely blips in presidential polls and their campaign cash is scarce. Some are running on empty, fueled mainly by the exposure that comes with the blizzard of televised debates in this election cycle and interviews they eagerly grant to skeptical reporters.

Yet the second-tier candidates for the Republican presidential nomination soldier on. They argue that the race is far from over and that anything can happen with polls showing a wide-open race in Iowa five weeks before the Jan. 3 caucuses.

Former Sen. Rick Santorum is typical when he resists the conventional wisdom that only candidates with a lot of cash and a big campaign can win.

"I feel like I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing and I feel like I'm making a difference in the race," said Santorum, who barely registers in state surveys despite having campaigned in Iowa for more than a year. "I absolutely believe our time will come and we'll have the opportunity to have the spotlight turned on us."

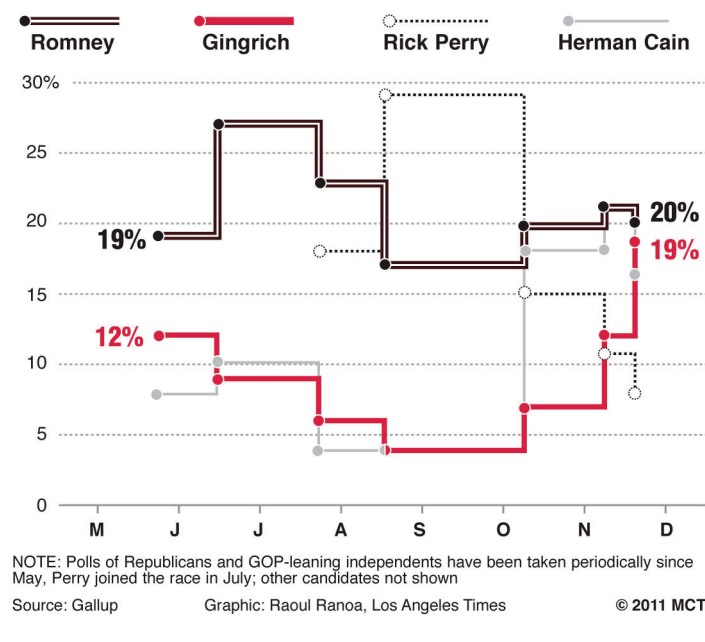
Santorum, who represented Pennsylvania in Congress for 16 years, frankly acknowledges the possibility of a different outcome.

"If it doesn't, you know, it doesn't," he said.

Even more than energy and determination, also-ran candidates rely on particular issues, free media and prospects for the

Gingrich gains on Romney

Solid debate performances have helped presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich close in on Republican Party front-runner Mitt Romney in a recent Gallup poll.



future to drive them to keep their small-scale operations going.

With polls and money putting candidates like Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich and Herman Cain atop the field of Republican rivals, there's a crop of others likely to remain in the race until voters have their say. One force in that dynamic is the fluidity of this year's contest.

Rep. Michele Bachmann, the Minnesota congresswoman, was among the many candidates who surged when they got into the race but then plummeted in the polls. She's gotten feistier as her

fortunes have sagged.

"I guarantee you, with everything within my being, I have the backbone," Bachmann said. "I'll put my backbone up against any other candidate in the race."

That includes Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who is adamant that he's not giving up, even as his campaign flails and his once-flush bank account suffers following a series of debate missteps that has some of his fundraisers questioning his viability. He, like Bachmann, Santorum and former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman, are barely blips in many surveys.

Moroccans Hold Election Inspired By Arab Spring

BY PAUL SCHEMM

Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco — Moroccans voted for a new parliament Friday in Arab Spring-inspired elections that are facing a boycott by democracy campaigners who say the ruling monarchy isn't committed to real change.

A moderate Islamist party and a pro-palace coalition led by the finance minister are competing for the top spot, but a key test for the authorities' legitimacy will be how many voters cast ballots.

The king amended the constitution over the summer giving the prime minister new powers, including the ability to dissolve parliament and make certain appointments, in response to pro-democracy protests. But the ultimate authority remains with the king.

As the polls closed Friday night and the counting of ballots began, Morocco's U.S. and other Western allies were closely watching for the results to see how this North African kingdom is navigating its own Arab Spring. The election also was being monitored by the many European tourists who cherish Morocco's beaches and resorts.

In the affluent Agdal neighborhood of Rabat, a steady stream of professionals lined up early in the morning at a polling station to vote before work.

"I've always voted, but this time it is more important," said Dr. Mohammed Ennabl. "Before it was the king who chose, now it is the people who choose."

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