

Decision 2016

Democrats Poised For First Debate

Second-Tier Candidates Seek Breakout Showing

BY CATHERINE LUCEY
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Stuck far behind Hillary Rodham Clinton and Bernie Sanders in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, Martin O'Malley needs a breakout moment in the party's first debate to catch up to the front-runners.

And he knows it. "This will really be the first time that nationally voters see that there's more than one alternative to this year's inevitable front-runner, Secretary Clinton," O'Malley said.

"It's a very, very important opportunity for me to not only present my vision for where the country should head, but also 15 years of executive experience, actually accomplishing the progressive things some of the other candidates can only talk about," he said.

The former governor of Maryland and mayor of Baltimore got into the race

at the end of May, after telegraphing for some time his plans to seek the White House in 2016. The entries of the two others who will be onstage Tuesday night in Las Vegas, former Virginia Sen. Jim Webb and former Rhode Island Sen. Lincoln Chafee, were surprises to most.

But all three have one thing in common — an inability so far to generate any of the enthusiasm among voters that has pushed Sanders into and kept Clinton at the top of the field. All three poll in low single digits in early preference surveys, well below even Vice President Joe Biden, who has yet to say if he'll make a late entry into the race.

O'Malley has been openly critical of the Democratic National Committee and the decision to hold six primary debates, with four scheduled in early primary states before the Iowa caucuses on Feb. 1. He has mounted a push for the party to expand the number, even encouraging protests in front of Democratic Party headquarters.

O'Malley also touts his executive experience in dealing with issues such as gun control, in which Sanders' record matches more with his largely rural home state than his place in the race as a liberal firebrand promising political revolution. "We have to draw contrasts," O'Malley said. "I think we can do it in a respectful way."

Expect Chafee, the former senator and governor from Rhode Island, to go after Clinton for her 2002 vote to authorize the war in Iraq. Chafee, at the time a Republican, opposed the invasion and he's said Clinton's support for the war, which she has more recently called a "mistake," is at the center of his decision to run.

Webb, a Vietnam veteran and former Virginia senator, has deep experience on military issues and foreign policy and has been critical of Clinton's handling of the conflict in Libya. Last year he said the Obama administration's unilateral decision to use military force in Libya was improper.

After Deadly Attacks, Turkey Faces New Period Of Instability

BY SUZAN FRASER
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — The suicide bombings that ripped through a rally promoting peace in Turkey's capital have magnified the political uncertainty ahead of a key election Nov. 1 and raised fears that the country may be heading toward an extended period of instability.

The blasts — Turkey's bloodiest in years — have further polarized the country as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan tries again for a ruling majority in parliament. And with political winds blowing against the ruling party, the election could create new power struggles just as the country grapples with more than 2 million refugees and tries to avoid being drawn into the chaos in neighboring Syria and Iraq.

This is a dramatic and dangerous time for the mostly Muslim nation and NATO ally, so often cited as an example of stability in a tumultuous region.

"We are now facing uncharted waters in terms of deadly violence in Turkey," wrote Omer Taspinar of the Brookings Institution in Today's Zaman, an opposition newspaper. "We are also in uncharted waters in terms of political polarization in the country."

Turkey has suffered a spiral of violence since July, when a similar suicide bombing killed 33 Turkish and Kurdish activists in a town near the Syrian border, ending a cease-fire. Kurdish rebels blamed Turkey's government, and hundreds have been killed since then in the renewed conflict with security forces.

No one has claimed responsibility for Saturday's explosions at the Ankara peace rally, which killed at least 97 people and wounded hundreds.

Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said Monday that the two bombers exploded about 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of dynamite each, and that authorities have detained "a large number" of suspects.

Investigators are close to identifying those responsible, and believe they likely infiltrated Turkey from a neighboring country, he said.

Kurtulmus called for unity and solidarity in response to these attacks, which he said were aimed to sow discord and create "deep fissures" within Turkey.

Indeed, the attack in the heart of the capital — far from the conflicts bleeding over Turkey's southern borders — is rattling nerves around the nation and beyond.

Amid the turmoil, the Turkish lira is losing value and interest rates are spiking, making it more difficult for Turkey to finance its looming short-term debt. Persistent instability also could harm tourism, an important source of revenue and foreign currency.

"These attacks won't turn Turkey into a Syria," Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said.



TUMAY BERKIN/ZUMA PRESS/TNS) The family of Korkmaz Tedik, who was killed during the bomb attack in Ankara, mourn at the funeral as thousands of people gathered in the centre of Turkey's capital to mourn the victims of twin bomb blasts which killed at least 95 people Sunday in Ankara.

Davutoglu also denied accusations that Turkey's growing involvement in the war in Syria will drag the country into the Middle Eastern quagmire.

But Turkey's government, which is openly hostile to Syrian President Bashar Assad, has struggled to avoid getting pulled into the chaos, and not just because Syrian and Iraqi refugees are flooding across its border.

Government security forces also have fought for decades to put down a rebellion in southeast Turkey, home to ethnic Kurds whose lands also straddle Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Since 2012, Turkey's Kurdish rebels have been engaged

in a peace process, and their influence has grown since their kinsman became allies in the U.S.-led coalition's fight against the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq.

Analysts say the bombings inside Turkey could only make the parliamentary election results less conclusive, meaning government stability will depend on the political parties' ability to form coalitions and cooperate — an elusive capacity as the country becomes more and more polarized.

"The optimistic scenario is that a broad based government will emerge and that it will re-establish stability and revitalize the peace process with the Kurds," said Sinan Ulgen, who runs the Istanbul-based EDAM think tank.

"The other possibility is that the same picture will emerge, that a coalition won't be formed, leading Turkey into an even more tumultuous point," Ulgen said.

For more than a decade, Turkey has been led by a single party, which Erdogan founded and continues to run behind the scenes. Disregarding rules requiring him to be neutral, Erdogan campaigned for a supermajority for the ruling party, which would have allowed it to change the constitution and give his presidency more powers. That backfired and electoral gains in June by Turkey's pro-Kurdish party left the ruling party without even a parliamentary majority.

Arab Lawmakers Accused Of Incitement

JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinians carried out three stabbings Monday in Jerusalem, leaving a teenage Israeli boy in critical condition, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu angrily accused the country's Arab leaders of helping incite weeks of violence. Two of the attackers, both teenage boys, were killed.

In a fiery speech at parliament, Netanyahu accused Arab parties of "undermining" the country. He called on Israel's Arab citizens to "kick out the extremists among you."

Netanyahu spoke on another bloody day, the latest in a monthlong wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

In a new setback for efforts to restore calm, the Quartet of Mideast mediators — the U.S., the U.N., the European Union and Russia — postponed a trip to the region. Edgar Vasquez, a spokesman for the State Department's Bureau of Near East Affairs, said it was at the request of the Israeli government due to the circumstances.

Israeli police reported three separate stabbings across the city, including an assault by two attackers in the east Jerusalem area of Pisgat Zeev. Police said the pair seriously wounded a 20-year-old man before attacking a teenage boy on a bicycle.

Putin Craze Takes Hold In Middle East

BEIRUT (AP) — Amid the ornate walls of Damascus' famed Omayyad Mosque, preacher Maamoun Rahmeh stood before worshippers last week, declaring Russian President Vladimir Putin a "giant and beloved leader" who has "destroyed the myth of the self-aggrandizing America."

Posters of Putin are popping up on cars and billboards elsewhere in parts of Syria and Iraq, praising the Russian military intervention in Syria as one that will redress the balance of power in the region.

The Russian leader is winning accolades from many in Iraq and Syria, who see Russian airstrikes in Syria as a turning point after more than a year of largely ineffectual efforts by the U.S.-led coalition to dislodge the Islamic State militants who have occupied significant parts of the two countries.

The reactions underscore that while the West may criticize Putin for supporting Syrian President Bashar Assad, there is some relief in the region at the emergence of a player with a coherent — if controversial — strategy.

"Putin does more than just speak," said Sohbhan Elewi of Damascus, summing up the views of Syrians on opposing camps who regard U.S. policy in Syria and Iraq as fumbled and confused.

Princeton Economist Wins Nobel Prize

NEW YORK (AP) — Angus Deaton has dug into obscure data to explore a range of problems: The scope of poverty in India. How poor countries treat young girls. The link between income inequality and economic growth.

The Princeton University economist's research has raised doubts about sweeping solutions to poverty and about the effectiveness of aid programs. And on Monday, it earned him the Nobel prize in economics.

For work that the award committee said has had "immense importance for human welfare, not least in poor countries," Deaton, 69, will receive a prize of 8 million Swedish kronor (about \$975,000) from the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Deaton's research has "shown other researchers and international organizations like the World Bank how to go about understanding poverty at the very basic level," said Torsten Persson, secretary of the award committee.

He becomes the sixth scholar affiliated with Princeton to win the Nobel in economics since it was first given in 1969.

US Dentist Is Not Wanted For Killing Lion

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe is no longer pressing for the extradition of James Walter Palmer, an American dentist who killed a well-known lion called Cecil, a Cabinet minister said Monday.

Palmer can now safely return to Zimbabwe as a "tourist" because he had not broken the southern African country's hunting laws, Environment, Water and Climate Minister Oppah Muchinguri-Kashiri told reporters in Harare on Monday. Zimbabwe's police and the National Prosecuting Authority had cleared Palmer of wrongdoing, she said.

Through an adviser, Palmer declined comment. Palmer was identified as the man who killed Cecil in a bow hunt. Cecil, a resident of Hwange National park in western Zimbabwe, was well-known to tourists and researchers for his distinctive black mane.

Muchinguri-Kashiri had said in July that Zimbabwean police and prosecutors would work to get Palmer returned to Zimbabwe to face poaching charges.

Evidence Mounts For Strong El Nino


LOS ANGELES (AP) — Evidence is mounting that the El Nino ocean-warming phenomenon in the Pacific will spawn a rainy winter in California, potentially easing the state's punishing drought but also bringing the risk of chaotic storms like those that battered the region in the late 1990s.

In the clearest warning yet that Southern California could be due for a deluge, meteorologists said in a report last week that the already strong El Nino has a 95 percent chance of lasting through the winter before weakening in the spring.

"This is as close as you're going to get to a sure thing," said Bill Patzert, a climatologist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, calling this El Nino "too big to fail."

"In the abstract," he said, "El Nino seems like our savior." But if floods and mudslides develop, it's "not going to look like the great wet hope charging across the landscape on a white horse."

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