

Candidates Moving In Opposite Directions

WASHINGTON (AP) — After a pivotal week, the presidential race has become a tale of two parties on sharply different trajectories: Hillary Rodham Clinton has tightened her grip on the Democratic nomination while Republican concern is reaching new heights. Some officials are even considering what could turn into a GOP civil war to stop Donald Trump — with no fallback option.

Clinton took what was essentially a victory lap on Friday, cheered by excited Democrats a day after her strong performance during an 11-hour Republican-led probe of the 2012 Benghazi attacks. The former secretary of state's high marks for the congressional hearing capped a week in which three of her five Democratic rivals bowed out of the race — none more important than Vice President Joe Biden who said he wouldn't be getting in.

"She's gone in the course of two weeks from being a wobbly front-runner to the almost-certain nominee," said Fergus Cullen, a former New Hampshire Republican Party chairman. The GOP field, Cullen said, is more splintered than ever.

As Democrats showered a confident Clinton with fresh praise, one-time Republican front-runner Jeb Bush announced deep cuts to his campaign staff. The former Florida governor slashed the payroll by 40 percent and downsized his Miami headquarters in a move that sounded alarms for GOP officials who long assumed Bush would shake off his slow start and ultimately emerge as their party's nominee.

The fresh evidence of Bush's struggles only darkened the clouds of uncertainty over the party's field.

Soldier Joined Kurdish-IS Firefight

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. soldier fatally wounded in a hostage rescue mission in Iraq heroically inserted himself into a firefight to defend Kurdish soldiers, even though the plan called for the Kurds to do the fighting, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Friday.

"This is someone who saw the team that he was advising and assisting coming under attack, and he rushed to help them and made it possible for them to be effective, and in doing that lost his own life," Carter told a Pentagon news conference.

Carter applauded Army Master Sgt. Joshua L. Wheeler, 39, of Roland, Oklahoma, who died of his wounds Thursday.

The defense chief gave the most extensive public description yet of what transpired during the pre-dawn raid on an Islamic State prison compound near the town of Hawija. About 70 people, including at least 20 members of the Iraqi security forces, were freed. It was the first time U.S. troops had become involved in direct ground combat in Iraq since the war against the Islamic State was launched in August 2014, and Wheeler was the first U.S. combat death.

Carter said he expects U.S. forces to be involved in more such raids against Islamic State targets, describing it as part and parcel of what the Pentagon calls a "train, advise and assist" mission in support of Iraqi forces. At one point he said, "It doesn't represent assuming a combat role" — but later, in noting that it is difficult to see the full picture of what happened during the Hawija raid, he said: "This is combat. It's complex."

Feds Confiscate Lethal-Injection Drugs

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — Compounding the nation's severe shortage of execution drugs, federal authorities have confiscated shipments of a lethal-injection chemical that Arizona and Texas tried to bring in from abroad, saying such imports are illegal.

The Food and Drug Administration said Friday that it impounded orders of sodium thiopental, an anesthetic that has been used in past executions in combination with drugs that paralyze the muscles and stop the heart. The anesthetic currently has no legal uses in the U.S.

"Courts have concluded that sodium thiopental for the injection in humans is an unapproved drug and may not be imported into the country," FDA spokesman Jeff Ventura said in a statement.

Arizona paid nearly \$27,000 for the sodium thiopental, which federal agents intercepted when it arrived at the Phoenix airport in July, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press.

Texas and FDA authorities gave fewer details about the confiscation there. Texas is the nation's busiest death penalty state, with about 250 death row inmates and 530 executions carried out over the past four decades. It has used sodium thiopental in recent years.

Patricia Slams Mexico Pacific Coast As Category 5 Hurricane

BY CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN
Associated Press

PUERTO VALLARTA, Mexico — Hurricane Patricia roared ashore in southwestern Mexico as a Category 5 storm Friday, bringing lashing rains, surging seas and cyclonic winds hours after it peaked as the strongest storm ever recorded. Forecasters said it had potential to do "catastrophic" damage.

There were early reports of flooding and landslides, but no word on fatalities or major damage. TV news reports from the coast showed some toppled trees and lampposts and inundated streets.

Patricia's center made landfall in a relatively low-populated stretch of the Jalisco state coast near Cuixmala. The nearest significant city, Manzanillo, was about 55 miles (85 kilometers) southeast and outside the extent of the storm's hurricane-force winds.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said the storm that had 200 mph (325 kph) winds earlier in the day had weakened some, but remained a very dangerous Category 5 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 165 mph (270 kph) at landfall.

Patricia's projected path headed over a mountainous region dotted with isolated hamlets that are at risk for dangerous mudslides and flash floods. The storm was expected to rapidly weaken

over the mountains and dissipate Saturday, but was still capable of soaking the region with heavy rain.

Residents and tourists hunkered down in shelters and homes across a coastal stretch dotted with sleepy fishing villages and gleaming resorts, including Manzanillo and the popular beach city of Puerto Vallarta.

In Puerto Vallarta, residents had reinforced homes with sandbags and shop windows with boards and tape, and hotels rolled up beachfront restaurants.

At a Red Cross shelter, some 90 people waited anxiously in the heavy, humid air, including senior citizens in wheelchairs and young children snuggled between their parents on mattresses on the floor.

Carla Torres and her family sought refuge there in the afternoon, fearful of what Patricia might do to her home just two blocks from a river in an area vulnerable to high winds.

"Here we are with those who can give us help," Torres said.

Patricia formed suddenly Tuesday as a tropical storm and quickly strengthened to a hurricane. Within 30 hours it had zoomed to a record-beating Category 5 storm, catching many off guard with its rapid growth.

By Friday it was the most powerful hurricane on record



Mexican officials declared a state of emergency in dozens of municipalities in Colima, Nayarit and Jalisco states, and schools were closed. Many residents bought supplies ahead of Patricia's arrival. Authorities opened hundreds of shelters and announced plans to shut off electricity as a safety precaution.

According to the 2010 census, there were more than 7.3 million inhabitants in Jalisco state and more than 255,000 in Puerto Vallarta municipality. There were more than 650,000 in Colima state, and more than 161,000 in Manzanillo.

One of the worst Pacific hurricanes to ever hit Mexico slammed into the same region, in Colima state, in October 1959, killing at least 1,500 people, according to Mexico's National Center for Disaster Prevention.

Earlier in the day, Roberto Ramirez, director of Mexico's National Water Commission, which includes the nation's meteorological service, said Patricia's winds could be powerful enough to lift automobiles, destroy homes not sturdily built with cement and steel, and drag anyone caught outside.

A steady rain fell in Puerto Vallarta in the evening, but there was no sign yet of the storm's vicious winds. Streets were deserted except for police patrolling slowly with their emergency lights on.

Student Shooting Survivors Leave Hospital; Suspect At Large

BY TRAVIS LOLLER
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Two student passersby injured in a late-night shooting at Tennessee State University were released from the hospital Friday as neighbors mourned the loss of a 19-year-old man who was killed and police searched for the shooter.

The shooting happened in an outdoor courtyard during an argument over a dice game about 10:50 p.m. Thursday, Metro Nashville Police Spokesman Don Aaron said. The victim was identified as Cameron Selmon, of Memphis. He was not a student at the school, Aaron said.

Three women, all 18-year-old students, were passing by the courtyard when they were injured by the gunfire.

One of the three women was grazed and did not require hospitalization. The other two were treated at Vanderbilt



University Medical Center and released on Friday. Police have not released the students' names.

Police continued to search for clues as to the shooter's identity on Friday.

Several students used their phones to record the fight. Police said they have obtained some video, but they encouraged other students who scattered when the shooting began to come forward with further recordings and information.

"The person who fired those shots put innocent persons in extreme danger," Aaron said.

A neighbor of Selmon's family in Memphis said residents were saddened and shocked by his death. She said she had known him since he was a young boy.

"He had good parents — good, loving parents," Harriett Freeman said by telephone. "He was always very respectful, saying, 'Yes, ma'am' and 'No, ma'am.' ... 'My heart goes out to his family.'"

The shooting comes just over a week after three people were wounded by gunfire at an off-campus party across the street from the university.

Speaking at a Friday afternoon news conference, Nashville Mayor Megan Barry and TSU President Glenda Baskin Glover said they believe the TSU campus is safe.

Glover said the campus has spent \$1 million in the past year to hire new police and security officers and improve fencing and lighting on the urban campus.

As a temporary measure, Nashville police officers will patrol the campus on foot at night.

The North Nashville neighborhood where TSU is located has largely been left out of the city's recent development boom. Mayor Barry, who took office in September, said she wants to change that by investing in and revitalizing the neighborhood.

"Tennessee State University and the community that surrounds it is an incredibly important part of the fabric of our city," she said.

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