

US Orders Diplomats Out Of Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — The State Department ordered all nonessential U.S. personnel Friday to leave Lebanon, reflecting fears that an American-led strike on neighboring Syria would unleash more bloodshed in this already fragile nation.

The Lebanese government's top security body held an emergency meeting and the Shiite militant group Hezbollah put its fighters on high alert.

Lebanon and Syria share a complicated history and a web of political and sectarian ties and rivalries. The uprising against President Bashar Assad has intensified divisions among Lebanese religious groups as well as polarization among those who support him and those backing the rebels fighting to topple him.

Lebanon has become completely consumed by the civil war next door. Car bombings, rockets, kidnappings and sectarian clashes — all related to the conflict — have become increasingly common in recent months.

Hezbollah, a staunch ally of the Syrian regime, has sent its fighters to back Assad's forces against the rebels and the militant group's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, has suggested he would do to everything it takes to save the regime.

Ariz. Death Row Inmate Awaits Retrial

PHOENIX (AP) — An Arizona woman who spent more than two decades on death row was released on bond Friday after a judge ruled there's no direct evidence linking her to the death of her young son, other than a purported confession to a detective whose honesty has been questioned.

Debra Milke walked out of the Maricopa County Sheriff's jail after supporters posted \$250,000 bond.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned her conviction in March, stating that prosecutors should have disclosed information that cast doubt on the credibility of a since-retired detective who said Milke confessed.

The 49-year-old Milke has not been exonerated, but a judge said she could go free while preparing for a new trial in a case that made her one of Arizona's most reviled inmates.

Milke was convicted in the death of her 4-year-old son, Christopher, who was allegedly killed for a \$5,000 insurance payout. His mother was accused of dressing the boy in his favorite outfit in December 1989 and telling him he was going to see Santa Claus at a mall before handing him over to two men who took the child into the desert and shot him. She had been imprisoned since 1990.

FDA: Arsenic/Rice Not Immediate Worry

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration says consumers shouldn't worry too much about levels of arsenic in rice — but should vary their diets just in case.

The agency released a study Friday of arsenic in 1,300 samples of rice and rice products, the largest study to date looking at the carcinogen's presence in that grain. Consumer groups have pressured the FDA to set a standard for the amount of arsenic that can be present in rice products.

The study shows varying levels, with the most arsenic in brown rice and the least in instant rice. Infant cereal and infant rice formulas are also at the low end of the spectrum.

The FDA says the amounts are so small that rice is safe to eat and there isn't any concern of immediate or short-term adverse health effects. But the agency said it is still studying the long-term effects of eating rice.

Rice is thought to have arsenic in higher levels than most other foods because it is grown in water on the ground, optimal conditions for the contaminant to be absorbed.

Sept. 11 Museum Nearing Completion

NEW YORK (AP) — Far below the earth where the twin towers once stood, a cavernous museum on hallowed ground is finally nearing completion.

Amid the construction machinery and the dust, powerful artifacts of death and destruction have assumed their final resting places inside the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.

A vast space that travels down to the bedrock upon which the towers were built, the museum winds its way deeper and deeper underground, taking visitors on a journey to the very bottom.

Already on display are several pieces of mangled steel and metal recovered from the World Trade Center towers, each one telling a different story of the terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

The first relics that visitors will see are two massive pieces of structural steel that rose from the base of the North Tower. Now the rusty red columns soar above ground into the sunlit glass atrium that encloses the entrance to the museum.

NASA Launching Lunar Explorer

NEW YORK (AP) — An unmanned rocket is scheduled to blast off late Friday night (11:27 p.m. EDT) from Virginia's Eastern Shore with a robotic explorer that will study the lunar atmosphere and dust. Called LADEE, the moon-orbiting craft will measure the thin lunar atmosphere.

Scientists want to learn the composition of the moon's ever-so-delicate atmosphere and how it might change over time. Another puzzle: whether dust actually levitates from the lunar surface.

Unlike the quick three-day Apollo flights to the moon, the Lunar Atmosphere and Dust Environment Explorer, or LADEE, will take a full month to get there. An Air Force Minotaur rocket, built by Orbital Sciences Corp., is providing the ride from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility.

It's the first moonshot from Virginia. All but one of NASA's approximately 40 moon missions, including the manned Apollo flights of the late 1960s and early 1970s, originated from Cape Canaveral, Fla. The most recent were the twin Galileo spacecraft launched two years ago. The lone exception, Clementine, a military-NASA venture, rocketed away from Southern California in 1994.

Mom Of Sandy Hook Victim Thanks Educators

NEWTOWN, Conn. (AP) — The mother of one of the 26 victims of last December's massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School is wishing educators "courage, faith and love" as they start a new school year.

In a letter published Friday on the Education Week website, Nelba Marquez-Green "relayed how much the teachers and Sandy Hook impressed her by coming back to work after the tragedy."

Marquez-Green's 6-year-old daughter Ana Grace was killed by Adam Lanza during his Dec. 14, 2012, shooting spree. She also has a son who survived the shooting.

She says teachers will have a positive impact on the lives of students, including those like Lanza, who are "left out and overlooked."

She wrote, "Real heroes don't wear capes. They work in America's schools."

AP Survey: House Shows Opposition To Syria Attack

BY BRADLEY KLAPPER AND
STEPHEN OHLEMACHER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Suggesting an uphill fight for President Barack Obama, House members staking out positions are either opposed to or leaning against his plan for a U.S. military strike against Syria by more than a 6-1 margin, a survey by The Associated Press shows. The Senate is more evenly divided ahead of its vote next week.

Still, the situation is very fluid. Nearly half of the 433-member House and a third of the 100-member Senate remain undecided.

By their statements or those of aides, only 30 members of the Republican-led House support intervention or are leaning in favor of authorizing the president to use force against Syrian President Bashar Assad's government in response to a chemical weapons attack last month. Some 192 House members outright oppose U.S. involvement or are leaning against authorization, according to the AP survey.

The situation in the Democrat-controlled Senate is better for Obama but hardly conclusive ahead of a potential vote next week. The AP survey showed those who support or are leaning in favor of military action holding a slight 34-32 advantage over those opposed or leaning against it.

Complicating the effort in the Senate is the possibility that a three-fifths majority may be required, Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky says he is going to filibuster.

Still, Sen. Harry Reid, the Democratic leader, predicted, "I think we're going



MIKHAIL KLIMENTYEV/ITAR-TASS/ZUMA PRESS/MCT
President Barack Obama holds a press conference on the closing day of St. Petersburg G20 Summit Friday. Earlier Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that the U.S. and Russia have not bridged their differences over military action in Syria.

to get 60 votes."

Speaking to reporters Friday after a summit of world leaders in St. Petersburg, Russia, Obama acknowledged the difficulties he faces in seeking support for action. He said he would address the nation on Tuesday.

"It's conceivable at the end of the day I don't persuade a majority of the American people that it's the right thing to do," Obama said. But the president, who again would not say what he would do if Congress rebuffed him, expressed confidence that the

people and their lawmakers would listen to his case.

"Failing to respond," he said, "would send a signal to rogue nations, authoritarian regimes and terrorist organizations that they can develop and use weapons of mass destruction and not pay a consequence."

Whatever Obama might decide, a rejection from Congress would have wide-ranging ramifications in the United States and abroad.

If the administration goes ahead with cruise missile strikes and other limited action against Syrian targets, it

could risk a constitutional crisis with angry lawmakers ahead of other confrontations over raising the U.S. debt ceiling, funding the government, overhauling immigration law and implementing Obama's signature health care changes.

The alternative — that is, stepping back after weeks of war-like threats — could project weakness to an American foe that the U.S. says has repeatedly launched chemical weapons attacks. It also could send a signal to both allies and American enemies that the U.S. is too divided internally to back up its declarations with actions over everything from preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons to containing the threat posed by North Korea's erratic, nuclear-armed dictatorship.

How difficult is Obama's challenge in Congress? Only 21 House members publicly back a resolution to attack Syria, and nine say they are considering giving their support. Some 100 House members oppose Obama's plan, and 92 say they are leaning against it.

Opposition runs deep among Republicans and Democrats. So far, GOP lawmakers stand 148-9 against military action, when accounting for leaners. Democrats are opposed by a tally of 44-21.

For Obama to succeed, he'll have to win about 90 percent of the undecided House members — or change the minds of those who are leaning against him.

Rep. Michael Grimm, R-N.Y., has already changed his mind, but not in Obama's favor.

Freeh: Some Corruption In BP Settlement Program

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — An independent probe led by former FBI Director Louis Freeh found evidence of a lawyers' plot to "corrupt" the BP settlement program but nothing that warranted shutting down payments to victims of the company's 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, according to a report issued Friday.

Freeh, who was appointed by a federal judge to lead an independent review of alleged misconduct by a staff attorney who worked on the settlement program, cleared court-appointed claims administrator Patrick Juneau of engaging in any "conflict of interest, or unethical or improper conduct."

But the former FBI director concluded that top members of Juneau's staff engaged in conduct that was improper, unethical and possibly criminal.

"The nature and seriousness of this type conduct varied in degree but was pervasive and, at its extreme, may have constituted criminal conduct," the report said.

Juneau said Freeh's report validates his team's work and played down the alleged misconduct by two former members of his staff as an "isolated situation."

"We will continue the job of processing claims," he said in a statement. "We welcome the recommendations from the Freeh report and we look forward to working with

him to help improve all aspects of the claims process."

BP spokesman Geoff Morrell said the report "confirms what BP has suspected for some time: there has been fraud and unethical conduct within the facility itself and among various claimants and their lawyers — and immediate steps need to be taken to prevent it in the future."

"The evidence of conflicts of interest and misconduct assembled in Judge Freeh's report is shocking, but it simply underscores that neither BP nor the public has had any idea of what's really going on within the (settlement program)," Morrell said. "Judge Freeh's continued investigation is essential to assuring public confidence in the integrity of the claims process."

Two of the lead plaintiffs' lawyers who brokered the settlement with BP last year said Freeh's report "confirmed what we knew to be true all along: that Patrick Juneau has, for more than a year, led the Court-Supervised Settlement Program with integrity, transparency and objectivity."

"It is a testament to Mr. Juneau's running of the program that Judge Freeh's recommended that the Settlement Program continue paying claims unabated, with Juneau at the helm," the attorneys, Stephen Herman and Jim Roy, said in a statement.

US Restores Some Aid To Mali Cut After Coup

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration is restoring a portion of U.S. assistance to Mali that it suspended last year after a military coup ousted the African country's elected president.

The State Department said Friday that the decision to provide \$97.2 million in development aid was taken after the inauguration this week of a new democratically elected president.

The department says that a resumption in suspended military assistance will come only after an additional review.

Washington Monument Wears Its Scaffolding Well

BY ALEXEI KOSEFF

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The soaring white obelisk is a defining feature of the capital's architectural landscape, but visitors to the Washington Monument this summer may be disappointed that the view of the iconic memorial has been obscured by its renovation. Or not.

Covered by a web of scaffolding and semi-transparent blue scrim to allow repair of the damage caused by a rare East Coast earthquake two years ago, the monument has undergone a modern makeover that has inspired buzz about the 129-year-old edifice — and even some calls to make the look permanent.

The sleek, mechanical scaffolding, which was designed by New York architect Michael Graves and completed in June after four months of construction, exaggerates the pattern of the monument's stone exterior, standing out from the neo-classical memorials and museums that predominate on the National Mall.

"It's a cartoonish addition. It's irreverent," said Kriston Capps, a senior editor at Architect magazine. "We don't see that a lot in the capital city."

Originally commissioned for a 1999-2000 renovation, the stylish scaffolding was meant to dress up the construction but keep the look of the monument, National Park Service spokeswoman Carol Johnson said. It was reused because it received a favorable response the first time and would keep costs down.

The repairs are expected to cost \$15 million, half of which is being paid for by a donation from Washington businessman David Rubenstein, a founder of the Carlyle Group, a private equity firm.

The monument has been closed since August 2011, when a 5.8-magnitude temblor centered in Virginia cracked and dislodged some of the enormous marble blocks that make up the 555-foot structure.

Amid disappointment from visitors — who normally enjoy



BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MCT
The Washington Monument is covered in scaffolding last month in Washington, D.C.

expansive views from the monument's observation deck on the highest structure in the city — the park service has heard overwhelmingly positive feedback about the scaffolding, Johnson said.

"I must admit, they've done a really good job," said Unesh Gandhi, a tourist from Toronto who had not heard about the repairs before he visited Washington. "If you didn't know, you would think it was part of the monument."

The scaffolding is an impressive engineering feat — 6,000 pieces scaling the obelisk's towering height without attaching to it anywhere. It is stabilized in places by wooden boards wedged against the monument.

At night, it is a marvelous

sight, when 488 lamps on the scaffolding illuminate the monument in an ethereal glow visible from much of the city.

"It looks like it should be in Paris," said Joe Plautz, visiting from Wisconsin, who liked that the lights showed off the facade in a different way. "It's not just your typical white stone monument, like everything else."

Thomas Hellriegel, on vacation from Germany, wondered at first whether it was scaffolding or art.

The lights are a small gesture to visitors who can't get the full experience while the Washington Monument is under repair, Johnson said. "It's kind of a promise that we're going to get this done."

The park service estimates

that will be next spring. Stonemasons are using leftover marble from the last renovation to replace pieces that fell off during the earthquake and filling in cracks with epoxy. Once the repairs are complete, the scaffolding will come down and the memorial will reopen.

But some are so enamored of the redesign that they've asked the park service to keep it, Johnson said. Those include Capps, who argued the case in an opinion piece in The Washington Post last month.

In an interview, Capps called the Washington Monument "overwrought" and the most unlightening memorial on the National Mall. The plain, impersonal edifice "doesn't tell us anything about Washington" the man, he said.

The broken monument, Capps said, is a powerful symbol of what he sees as an "unprecedented" level of political dysfunction in the federal government.

"The new look is jarring," he said. "It's a reminder of what we've lost sight of."

Capps admits that the response to his op-ed was mixed; many readers called him an idiot. But though he "might be on a ledge," he's completely serious.

"The Mall needs to update and reflect its time," Capps said. "Everything should be up for revision."

Not everyone is so enthusiastic about the idea. Jocelyn Dennis of Detroit, touring the site with her children, recalled her "profound" experience of seeing the Washington Monument for the first time on a school trip in eighth grade.

The monument is a statement of the country standing strong, she said. "Some things are not meant to be upgraded like that."

Traditionalists need not worry: The National Park Service is not planning to take Capps' advice anytime soon.

"You must understand the mission of the park service," Johnson said. The Washington Monument is "a very important cultural icon, and our job is to conserve that."

US Employers Add 169K Jobs; Rate Falls To 7.3%

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy is producing jobs at a subpar pace — a trend the Federal Reserve will weigh in deciding this month whether to slow its bond buying and, if so, by how much.

Employers added 169,000 jobs in August but many fewer in June and July than previously thought, the Labor Department said Friday. Combined, June, July and August amounted to the weakest three-month stretch of job growth in a year.

The unemployment rate dropped to 7.3 percent, the lowest in nearly five years. But it fell because more Americans stopped looking for work and were no longer counted as unemployed. The proportion of Americans working or looking for work reached its lowest point in 35 years.

The jobs picture is sure to weigh heavily when the Fed meets Sept. 17-18 to discuss whether to scale back its \$85 billion a month in Treasury and mortgage bond purchases. Those purchases have helped keep home-loan and other borrowing rates ultra-low to try to encourage consumers and businesses to borrow and spend more.

Stores

From Page 1A

tered at his Wagner store. His other locations are in Mission, White River, Gregory and Lake Andes.

For Gemar, it marks the end of an era, as his family has owned grocery stores for 65 years. Greg and his wife, JoAnn, purchased the Scotland store from his parents and later purchased the Tyndall store.

The Gemars felt the time had come to retire.

"We did have significant interest (in our stores). It wasn't advertised, per se, but people said, 'We hear that you might be interested in selling.' That's kind of where it started," Greg said. "We were working with a party for quite a while (on a purchase agreement) who backed out. Other people were also interested. When you have that interest, the best time to sell is when you have a buyer."

Buche didn't pursue Gemar's stores at first because he didn't feel the time was right.

"I told Greg, 'Look, I'm just taking ownership of Tripp. I'm not interested in taking on a couple more stores right now, but can we talk after the first of the year?'" Buche said.

"Then I heard some rumblings that Greg had sold the stores. The truth was that he had almost sold them. He asked again, 'Are you sure you don't want to buy them?'"

After his potential purchaser backed out, Gemar continue his effort to sell the stores. He wanted to sell the stores together but was prepared to sell them separately. His preference was to sell Scotland first because it represented more of an everyday commitment for him, whereas Tyndall was run by a manager.

Buche was one of three remaining parties interested in the deal. He knew the window of opportunity might have been closing quickly.

"Greg was just burned out and didn't want to risk losing another buyer," Buche said. "So I asked, 'If I buy both stores, would you sell it to me?' and he said yes."

Buche asked for a timeline on closing the deal.

"I asked, 'When do you want a purchase agreement?'" Greg said, "(Next) Wednesday," and this was the preceding Friday. It blew me away," Buche said. "Actually, it was on the night that we were having our grand opening (in June) for the Tripp store."

Buche was headed to Philadelphia the next day for his board meeting with the national grocers association. He conducted the final details for the Scotland and Tyndall groceries over the phone, then signed the purchase agreement when he arrived home the following Wednesday.

Buche proposed the two-tiered takeover of the stores.

"I just didn't think we had the manpower to take over both stores at one time and do a good job with it," he said. "It wouldn't be good to take over (both stores) during the holidays, and we have our 108th anniversary coming up (for Buche Foods)."

In many ways, the two-step opening will allow a trial run, Buche said.

"As soon as we open Tyndall, we will turn around and do the same things for Scotland," he said. "We are taking it as it comes."

Gemar said he understands the reasoning for taking possession on a staggered basis.

"They could do all the things without major road bumps," he said of Buche's crew. "It's a chance to get Tyndall rolling and to work out issues and details. You can do whatever, and then be able to make some decisions on what is in the best interest for the two stores."

Buche will analyze the stores before making major decisions on which services to offer. However, he plans major remodeling at both stores and a possible addition in Tyndall.

The Tyndall store covers about 7,500 square feet, while Scotland covers about 10,000. For comparison, the Wagner store covers 21,000 square feet and the Tripp store covers about 10,000.

When it comes to personnel, Buche plans to offer employment to current staff at the Tyndall and Scotland stores.

"We are doing a blanket rehire. We want the employees to know they can stay with us," he said. "We will be adding some persons in the future."

Buche also plans to maintain store hours of 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.

Like Gemar, Buche belongs to the Affiliated Foods Midwest network based in Norfolk, Neb. With his bulk purchasing ability, Buche buys large quantities delivered to his Wagner warehouse, then split up and transported to each store.

If a need arises, a supervisor lives within 15 miles of his Tripp, Scotland and Tyndall stores.

Buche said he remains committed to his communities' needs. He plans to continue Gemar's working relationship with the Bon Homme County food pantry.

In selling his stores, Gemar said he was looking for someone not only with the cash but also a good track record in the grocery business and who cares about customers.

"R.F. runs very nice stores and makes a commitment to the communities," Gemar said. "He does things differently than I do, and that will be fine. He has his business model that has worked for him for over 100 years."

Buche said he has inherited a family passion and knack for serving rural communities that has lasted more than a century.

"I'm a small-town guy. I love it," he said. "I think my great-grandpa was also big into small towns and being involved in the community. This is some kind of calling for me and the most comfortable place I like to be."

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at [twitter.com/RDockendorf](#). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net](#).



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