

Austria, Germany Will Take Refugees

BICSKE, Hungary (AP) — After misery, delivery. Hundreds of migrants, exhausted after breaking away from police and marching for hours toward Western Europe, boarded buses provided by Hungary's government as Austria in the early-morning hours said it and Germany would let them in.

Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann announced the decision early Saturday after speaking with Angela Merkel, his German counterpart — not long after Hungary's surprise nighttime move to provide buses for the weary travelers from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

With people streaming in long lines along highways from a Budapest train station and near a migrant reception center in this northern town, the buses would be used because "transportation safety can't be put at risk," said Janos Lazar, chief of staff to the prime minister.

Lazar blamed Germany's "contradictory communications" and the European Union for the crisis.

The asylum seekers had already made dangerous treks in scorching heat, crawling under barbed wire on Hungary's southern frontier and facing the hostility of some locals along the way. Their first stop will be Austria, on Hungary's western border, though most hope to eventually reach Germany.

Benghazi Panel Interviews Former Aide

WASHINGTON (AP) — A senior member of Hillary Rodham Clinton's inner circle testified Friday before a House panel investigating the deadly 2012 attacks in Libya as a nasty spat erupted between a Republican staffer and a Democratic lawmaker who insists it's time for the committee to disband.

Jake Sullivan, a former policy director and deputy chief of staff under Clinton at the State Department, was questioned by the panel in a daylong session of testimony behind closed doors.

Sullivan said at the close of the day that he was proud to talk about the "extraordinary service" of his former colleagues at the State Department.

"I was happy to answer every question the committee had and now I'm looking forward to Labor Day weekend," he told reporters, refusing to talk about the session further because of its closed-door nature.

Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., the committee's chairman, said Sullivan was in a "unique position" to talk about how U.S. policy in Libya required the State Department to have a physical presence in the country. Sullivan is currently a top policy aide on Clinton's presidential campaign.

Clerk: The Face Of Christian Persecution?

MOREHEAD, Ky. (AP) — As a defiant Kentucky clerk sat in jail Friday, choosing indefinite imprisonment over licensing gay marriages, her lawyers approached the microphones outside and compared her to Dr. Martin Luther King.

Around the country, other supporters reached for Biblical heroes, comparing her to Silas and Daniel, imprisoned for their faith and rescued by God.

It's precisely the narrative gay rights advocates had hoped to avoid. But as Davis' mug shot rocketed around the Internet, it became clear that the gay rights movement must battle this idea that Christianity is under siege, said Kenneth Upton, senior counsel for Lambda Legal, a law firm specializing in LGBT issues.

"This is what the other side wants," Upton said, pointing to the image of Davis in handcuffs. "This is a Biblical story, to go to jail for your faith. We don't want to make her a martyr to the people who are like her, who want to paint themselves as victims."

Since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in June, Davis and a handful of other clerks and judges, advised by the Christian law firm Liberty Counsel, have refused to comply. They stopped issuing marriage licenses to any couple, gay or straight. Davis was merely the first to be challenged in court.

Jill Biden Said To Share VP's Hesitation

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Joe Biden's reluctance to enter the presidential race centers on his family. His wife, Jill, has never relished political life and is said to share his misgivings about whether the Bidens are emotionally equipped for another campaign.

Those close to the second lady say she won't stand in the way of her husband's political ambitions, but her feelings about a White House bid are a major factor in Biden's decision. Only three months after losing their son, Beau, to brain cancer, the 72-year-old Biden appeared somber and weary at an Atlanta synagogue Thursday night as he pondered his family's readiness. "The honest-to-God answer is I just don't know," he said.

While the vice president's deliberations have played out in semi-public fashion, Jill Biden's have taken place away from the spotlight. She has yet to discuss in detail with her staff her views on a possible presidential run. But she has been looking out for her husband and echoing his concerns about whether he can completely devote himself to a hard-fought campaign, according to several people who have spoken to her in recent weeks.

Some of these people demanded anonymity because they didn't feel comfortable publicly discussing the family's private deliberations.

Sonia Sloan, a Biden family friend since the 1970s who volunteered for his past campaigns, said she saw the Bidens at a mutual friend's funeral a few weeks ago and that their grief was "just written all over them."

CNN Raking In Money For GOP Debate

NEW YORK (AP) — Get in your bids fast. CNN said Friday that only one commercial slot is still available for its coverage of the Sept. 16 debate between top Republican presidential contenders, and it's expected to draw top dollar.

The trade publication Advertising Age reported this week that CNN is asking for up to \$200,000 for a 30-second ad during the debate, a price comparable to slots in popular entertainment shows on the broadcast networks. CNN would not discuss its ad prices.

On a more typical night for CNN, Ad Age quoted media buyers as saying a 30-second ad could cost as little as \$5,000.

Interest was strong among advertisers even before Fox News Channel showed the first debate on Aug. 6, said Allie Bodack, a spokeswoman for Turner network advertising sales.

Last month's debate, however, reached an average of 24 million viewers, by far the most-watched event ever on Fox News Channel and one of the most popular TV shows of the summer. That likely sent advertiser interest in CNN's debate through the stratosphere.

HRC Didn't 'Stop And Think' About Email

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton said Friday her use of a private email system at the State Department wasn't the "best choice" and acknowledged she didn't "stop and think" about her email set-up when she became President Barack Obama's secretary of state in 2009.

The Democratic presidential front-runner said in an interview with NBC News that she was immediately confronted by a number of global hotspots after joining the new Obama administration as its top diplomat and didn't think much about her email after arriving at her new job.

"You know, I was not thinking a lot when I got in. There was so much work to be done. We had so many problems around the world," Clinton said. "I didn't really stop and think what kind of email system will there be?"

But Clinton did not apologize for her decision when asked directly, "Are you sorry?" Instead, she again said she wishes she had "made a different choice" and that she takes responsibility for the decision to use a private email account and server based at her home in suburban New York.

She added it was a choice that should not raise questions about her judgment.

"I am very confident that by the time this campaign has run its course, people will know that what I've been saying is accurate," Clinton said, adding: "They may disagree, as I now disagree, with the choice that I made. But the facts that I have put forth have remained the same."

Iran Deal Still Faces Critics On Many Fronts

BY ERICA WERNER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — White House hopes for stopping a congressional challenge to the Iran nuclear deal and sparing President Barack Obama from using a veto suffered a blow Friday when a key Senate Democrat announced his opposition.

The setback came in the announcement from Sen. Ben Cardin of Maryland, top Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, that he opposes the deal, which he said "legitimizes Iran's nuclear program."

Cardin's move doesn't affect the ultimate outcome for the international accord to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions in exchange for relief from economic sanctions. The White House already clinched the necessary Senate votes to ensure that even if Obama ends up having to veto a disapproval resolution set for a vote next week, his veto would be upheld.

But with that support in hand and more piling up, the White House and congressional backers of the deal had begun aiming for a more ambitious goal: enough commitments to bottle up the disapproval resolution in the Senate with a filibuster, preventing it from even coming to a final vote.

With Cardin's announcement, that goal remains in reach, but it will be tougher to attain.

"This is a close call, but after a lengthy review, I will



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/TNS

President Barack Obama speaks as King Salman bin Abd alAziz of Saudi Arabia looks on during a bilateral meeting in the Oval Office Friday in Washington.

vote to disapprove the deal," Cardin wrote in an opinion piece in The Washington Post. "After 10 to 15 years, it would leave Iran with the option to produce enough enriched fuel for a nuclear weapon in a short time."

Cardin made his announcement as Obama met at the White House with King Salman of Saudi Arabia, in part to offer assurances that the deal signed by the U.S., Iran, Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia comes with the necessary resources to help check Iran's regional ambitions. Saudi officials have cautiously supported the deal but are

worried about enforcement and whether an Iranian government flush with cash after sanctions are lifted will wreak havoc throughout the Middle East.

Before the meeting began, Obama told reporters in the Oval Office that the leaders would discuss "implementing the deal to ensure that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon, while counteracting its destabilizing activities in the region."

At a news conference at the Saudi Embassy, foreign minister Adel Al-Jubeir said his government endorses the Iran nuclear deal, having been assured by Obama that

it will block Iran's path to a nuclear weapon.

"We have looked at the details of this agreement and we have come to the conclusion that this does in fact meet that test," he said. "We believe that this will contribute to the security and stability within the region."

Al-Jubeir said Salman and Obama discussed a plan to improve American military cooperation with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, announced after a Camp David summit in May that Salman declined to attend.

US Jobless Rate Falls To 7-Year Low

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. unemployment fell to a seven-year low of 5.1 percent last month, but hiring slowed — a mixed bag of news that offers few clues to whether the Federal Reserve will raise rock-bottom interest rates later this month.

The Labor Department report, issued Friday, was closely watched because it will be the last snapshot of the job market before the Fed meets in two weeks. And overall, it painted a picture of an economy growing at a modest but steady pace seven years after the Great Recession.

But it wasn't the unambigu-

ous signal many on Wall Street were hoping for.

The unemployment rate fell from 5.3 percent in July to its lowest point since 2008 and is now at a level Fed officials say is consistent with a healthy economy. But employers added a moderate 173,000 jobs in August, the fewest in five months.

"Anyone hoping today's data would clear up the timing of the Fed's first rate hike in years will be sorely disappointed," said Megan Greene, chief economist at John Hancock Asset Management.

Nevertheless, the prospect of higher interest rates

weighed heavy on the stock market Friday, with the Dow Jones industrial average plunging 272 points, or 1.7 percent.

Higher rates rise would most likely push up borrowing costs for mortgages and other loans for consumers and businesses, and some on Wall Street fear that could put a damper on corporate profits and the larger economy.

The Fed cut the short-term rate it controls to a record low of nearly zero in December 2008 to try to stimulate growth during the Great Recession.

For months, Fed officials

have been saying the economy appears to be getting strong enough to tolerate the first increase in interest rates in a decade. They have signaled that they might raise rates at their Sept. 16-17 meeting.

Yet other factors have clouded those predictions lately.

For one thing, there are signs that China's economy, the second largest in the world, is stumbling, which could drag down global growth. The slowdown has already caused violent swings in the financial markets that could undermine consumer confidence.

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