

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

AP Interview: Iraqi leader predicts IS collapse in Mosul

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi says Islamic State group fighters lack the courage to put up long-term resistance in Mosul, despite unleashing hundreds of car bombs that have killed and maimed Iraqi soldiers and civilians as the fight for Iraq's second-largest city appears set to extend well into next year.

"We have seen the whole organization collapsing in terms of standing in the face of our own armed forces," al-Abadi said. "The success of liberating a huge area indicates that Daesh does not have the gut now or the motivation to fight as they were doing before," he added, using the Arabic acronym for the extremist group.

In an interview Monday with The Associated Press, al-Abadi said Mosul was now completely encircled and that the speed with which the area was secured surpassed his expectations. He declined to say how many Iraqi troops have been killed since the operation began six weeks ago but said the rate of battlefield losses was "sustainable."

The prime minister said he expects the incoming Trump administration to grant Iraq a greater degree of logistical support in its war on terror, and dismissed suggestions by Donald Trump in the election campaign that he would seize some of Iraq's oil production as a kind of "reimbursement" for U.S. efforts in Iraq.

Trump said in September that he would "take the oil" from Iraq, claiming that the Iranians would step in otherwise.

Trump summons Romney for second look as staffers squabble

NEW YORK — Donald Trump's hunt for a secretary of state is veering into dramatic terrain, with the president-elect summoning Mitt Romney back for a second look as a top aide leads a public pressure campaign against the pick.

Trump has a follow-up meeting today with the 2012 GOP presidential nominee, who has become a symbol of the internal divisions agitating the transition team. He also plans to sit with Tennessee Sen. Bob Corker, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. On Monday, Trump spent an hour with retired Gen. David Petraeus, a new contender.

Aides were divided over Trump's choices, particularly the prospect that Trump could tap Romney for the top-tier diplomatic post. In an unusual public airing of internal machinations, Trump senior adviser Kellyanne Conway on Sunday warned that the president-elect's supporters would feel "betrayed" if he tapped Romney as secretary of state.

Exiting Trump Tower on Monday night, Vice President-elect Mike Pence simply teased "a number of very important announcements tomorrow."

One announcement expected today was Georgia Rep. Tom Price to lead the Department of Health and Human Services. Trump has selected Price for the role, according to a person familiar with the decision. The person was not authorized to discuss the nomination publicly ahead of the announcement and so insisted on anonymity.

Young immigrants who came forward worried about future

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of thousands of young immigrants living in the country illegally willingly came out of the shadows and identified themselves to the Obama administration on the promise that they'd be safe from deportation and allowed to work.

Some may now regret that decision.

President-elect Donald Trump has promised to immediately scrap the program that protected these immigrants. If he does, it's not clear whether he would take action against the more than 741,000 participants. But if he decides to pursue them, the government now has their addresses, photographs and fingerprints.

Twenty-year-old Nancy Villas was among the first to apply for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in the summer of 2012, waiting in line hours at a sign-up site at Chicago's Navy Pier. Since then she's been working part time at a child care center to pay for college classes. Now she's worried she may eventually be forced to return to Mexico, a country she left when she was 9.

"I knew it was the only way to have better opportunities," Villas said. "I took the risk without thinking that somebody would want to take it away."

Ohio State attack: Terrorism eyed as police seek more info

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Investigators are looking into whether a car-and-knife attack at Ohio State University that injured 11 people was an act of terror by a Somali-born student who had once criticized the media for its portrayal of Muslims.

The attacker, identified as Abdul Razak Ali Artan, plowed his car into a group of pedestrians on campus shortly before 10 a.m. Monday, and then got out and began stabbing people with a butcher knife before he was shot to death by a campus police officer, authorities said.

A motive was not immediately known, but police said they were investigating whether it was a terrorist attack.

Artan was born in Somalia and was a legal permanent U.S. resident, according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the case and spoke on the condition of anonymity. The FBI joined the investigation.

Ohio State University police Chief Craig Stone said Artan deliberately drove his small gray Honda over a curb outside an engineering classroom building and then began knifing people. Officer Alan Horujko, 28, who was nearby because of a gas leak arrived on the scene and shot the driver in less than a minute, Stone said.

Trek to Castro's final resting spot traces revolution's past

HAVANA — After his band of bearded rebels won power in 1959, Fidel Castro embarked on a victory tour delivering speeches to cheering crowds stretching from the eastern Cuban city of Santiago to Havana. Starting Wednesday, his ashes will retrace that journey in a solemn procession to his final resting spot.

The trip is fraught with symbolism as the island nation prepares to bury the only leader it has known in 57 years besides his younger brother, Raul Castro. The six-day Caravan of Freedom that Fidel Castro led in 1959 was among his most triumphant moments. As Castro's remains are prepared for the return to Santiago, the state is rekindling images of a younger Castro whose legacy they vow to keep alive.

"Fidel will always be that restless youth and tireless revolutionary, who attacked the Moncada, arrived aboard the Granma yacht to forge the path to freedom, fought like a lion in the Sierra Maestra and crossed the country in the Caravan of Victory," proclaimed an article in Granma, the official Communist Party newspaper, a day after Castro's death.

Free swim: Kids take lessons seriously

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Oller, who left behind a \$4.5 million bequest when she died in 2010, with express instructions that it be used to provide the opportunity for locals to swim.

Oller's will provided money for building a pool, but not for insuring it, maintaining it or employing people to run it. Oller's will also stated that if the city didn't build the pool within five years, the trustees should fund another project that would increase local access to swimming education, thus paving the way for the deal with the aquatic center. A similar arrangement with also made with the smaller Dunes pool in Klipsan.

A really positive thing

"All the kids are all different levels when they come in," explained Genesee Dennis, the interim supervisor at the Astoria Aquatic Center. "Some are blowing bubbles, some are not even comfortable putting their face in the water. We break them up into groups and work to improve on their skills."

According to fourth-grade teacher Rose Nisbet, there was another important component.

"There was a day designated for safety," she said,



Damian Mulinix/For EO Media Group

Caiden Burke and Marcus Chatfield of Naselle School swim with their classmates during a recent lesson at the Astoria Aquatic Center. The kids seem to take the lessons seriously.

during the final lesson last week. "So let's say there's a kid in the river and he needs to be pulled out, how are you going to pull that child out? We live on the Naselle River, so they felt it was pretty important to have a day dedicated to that."

And it seems the kids take the lessons, and the opportunity, pretty seriously.

"The kids really seem to enjoy it, and the kids tend to be on their best behavior," said Donlon. "Some kids might be

having a bad week, but when that swim day comes up they don't want to be in the office with me. It's a really positive thing for them."

And the kids seem to agree.

"We learned how to do the dolphin thing. Where you move like a dolphin in the water. I just can't do it," said fourth-grader Kennedy Penn-tilla. "I learned how to jump in without breathing in the water or plugging my nose."

Fourth-grader Audrey

Muessig said the swim instructors were "really, really nice," and said she learned something called "chicken, airplane, soldier." After a brief demonstration from one of her friends, it was clear she was describing a way of remembering the proper form for doing a type of swim stroke.

Donlon said he expects the lessons to continue going forward, but does not see it expanding to include other grades.

Seaside: Appointment may happen on Dec. 12

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Within the ranks

Johnson, council president and representative of the city's Ward 3, indicated his willingness to serve the unexpired term.

A councilor since 2002, Johnson was upset in the November election to Horning, a geologist who ran on the issue of emergency preparedness.

"Having lost the election, I still feel I am qualified to be mayor," Johnson said at the workshop.

Johnson pointed to his own 12 years experience on the Planning Commission and 16 years on the City Council.

"I feel I've got a strong relationship with the city staff and with the councilors," Johnson said. "Every time I've been asked as council president to run the meeting, I've always brought everyone into the fold, and always listened to what they've had to say. I think I've worked well, I think I've been a good leader and I love this city."

If appointed, he said he intended to step down at the end of the term. "I feel 16 years



Don Johnson



Jay Barber



Tom Horning

on the council and two years as mayor — that's more than plenty."

Barber, a retired college president, foundation director and ordained minister, served as a councilor and two-term mayor in Red Bluff, California, a position which, he said, gave him experience dealing with the public.

He and his wife Jan have lived full-time in Seaside since 2006.

Barber was selected in 2009 to fill the unexpired council term of the late Gary Diebolt. Barber won election for Ward 1 in 2010 and again in 2014.

His "good working relationship" with the city manager would be an asset as mayor, Barber said. "That cannot be overstated in terms of its value.

If the mayor and city manager don't have a positive working relationship, nothing ever gets done in a progressive way."

Councilor Dana Phillips said she "highly respected" Johnson, but in the aftermath of Johnson's election defeat, she urged the selection of Barber for the city's top spot.

Should Johnson be appointed mayor, "I'm not sure what we're saying to your constituents that voted somebody else in to fill your position," Phillips said.

New name surfaces

At the council's regular meeting, Horning's name was added to the mix.

John Dunzer, a perennial candidate for county and Seaside offices, including Sea-

side mayor, chided councilors for failing to look outside their ranks.

Horning's election to the council was not a "repudiation" of Johnson, but a public endorsement of Horning's message of emergency preparedness, Dunzer said.

Horning received 58 percent of the vote to Johnson's 41 percent.

"I look at all the people up here and all of you were running on the Don Johnson ticket and not on the on the platform of Mr. Horning," Dunzer said. "It would be my hope you would all get behind Mr. Horning, who has somewhat of a mandate from the people of Seaside of what the hell they want to have happen."

"I don't really care who you select or what you do," Dunzer added. "I just want you to get behind this mandate to get things moving on emergency prep. If we would just put our heads together, there are a lot of things we can do to save people's lives."

A mayoral appointment could be made by a council motion at the Dec. 12 meeting, Winstanley said.

Review: Unclear if an oversight or not

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While state officials who designed the scope of work for the audit included a question about how conflicts are identified, they did not ask for an assessment of how much weight ODOT employees give conflicts in the process of recommending contractors to the Oregon Transportation Commission, which officially hires the contractors.

It's unclear whether the omission was an oversight or was discussed and then rejected, said Bret West, acting chief administrative officer at the Department of Administrative Services. West, who has overseen the ODOT audit for the state since May, said he was not involved in shaping the original work plan for the audit.

Other questions in the work plan dealing with communication processes and transparency may help to reveal whether there are problems with conflicts of interest, West said.

In September, the state awarded a nearly \$1 million contract to New York-based McKinsey & Company to conduct the audit.

Before McKinsey won the contract, state officials had hired John L. Craig, a former ODOT contractor, to perform the audit. Ironically, the state later revoked Craig's contract after revelations about his close ties with ODOT and an unearthed email showing he had sought to replace the agen-

cy's director, Matt Garrett.

Addressing the weight ODOT gives conflicts in hiring contractors should have been part of the plan, said Mike Hollern, a member of an oversight committee that helped shape the audit's scope of work.

"In one of the early drafts, there was some discussion, and I think some of the concerns from some of the legislators

perhaps had to do with conflicts of interest being a seriously-investigated, dealt-with issue," said Hollern, who also is a former state transportation commissioner.

In another example of conflicts at ODOT, an agency trucking official Gregg Dal Ponte took a job with a firm that sells products to the industry he regulates, according to a

report in June by the Portland Tribune.

Dal Ponte headed the agency's motor carrier division while working for a New Zealand corporation called ERoad. ODOT officials insisted the arrangement complied with state ethics law, but the practice has raised questions about the agency's credibility, the Portland Tribune reported.

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