



Ted Cruz, right, makes a point as Donald Trump reacts during the CNN Republican presidential debate Tuesday in Las Vegas.

Cruz, Rubio spar in debate

LAS VEGAS (AP) — In a presidential race reshaped by national security fears, Sens. Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio clashed over U.S. military intervention, government spying on Americans’ communications and immigration Tuesday night, as front-runner Donald Trump defended his provocative call for banning Muslims from the United States.

Struggling former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush found his footing in trying to discredit Trump’s qualifications for the White House, chiding the brash billionaire for trying to “insult your way to the presidency.”

Tuesday night’s debate was the first for Republicans since the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California, which heightened fears of terrorism in the United States. The attacks have ignited a political debate about President Barack Obama’s campaign to defeat the Islamic State in the Middle East and the nation’s security posture in preventing attacks in the U.S.

Trump’s call for temporarily banning Muslims from the U.S. — a proposal roundly criticized by his rivals — dominated much of the discussion heading into the debate. He said he wasn’t seeking to discriminate against Muslims.

“We are not talking about isolation; we’re talking about security,” he said. “We are not talking about religion, we are talking about

security.”

Bush dismissed the proposal as unserious, saying “Donald is great at the one-liners, but he’s a chaos candidate and he’d be a chaos president.”

He was largely spared from criticism by Cruz and Rubio, who said they understood why Trump had raised the idea of banning Muslims. Instead, they focused on each other, engaging in lengthy debates over their differences on national security and immigration, one of the most contentious issues in the Republican primary.

Rubio defended his support for eventually providing a pathway to citizenship for some people in the U.S. illegally, an unpopular position within the Republican Party. Rubio was a co-author of comprehensive Senate legislation in 2013 that would have created that pathway.

Seeking to draw a sharp contrast with Rubio, Cruz went further than he has previously in opposing legalization for people in the U.S. illegally. He declared: “I have never supported legalization and I do not intend to support legalization.”

The two senators — both Cuban-Americans in their 40s — have been sparring from afar for weeks, and their rivalry could become one of the dominant forces in the race as the first voting contests in February draw near. The Texas senator is on the rise, particularly in Iowa’s kickoff caucuses.

NY, LA schools receive same email threat

LA shuts down entire district

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The nation’s two biggest school systems — New York City and Los Angeles — received threats of a large-scale attack Tuesday with guns and bombs, and LA reacted by shutting down the entire district, while New York dismissed the warning as an amateurish hoax and held class as usual.

The shutdown was a rare example of big city closing its entire school district because of fears of an attack. The decision also reflected lingering unease in the aftermath of the shooting that killed 14 people at an office holiday party less than two weeks ago in nearby San Bernardino.

In LA, the threat came in the form of an email to a school board member. Authorities in New York reported receiving the same “generic” email that was sent to other cities around the country. They decided there was no danger to schoolchildren, with Mayor Bill de Blasio concluding the threat contained “nothing credible.”

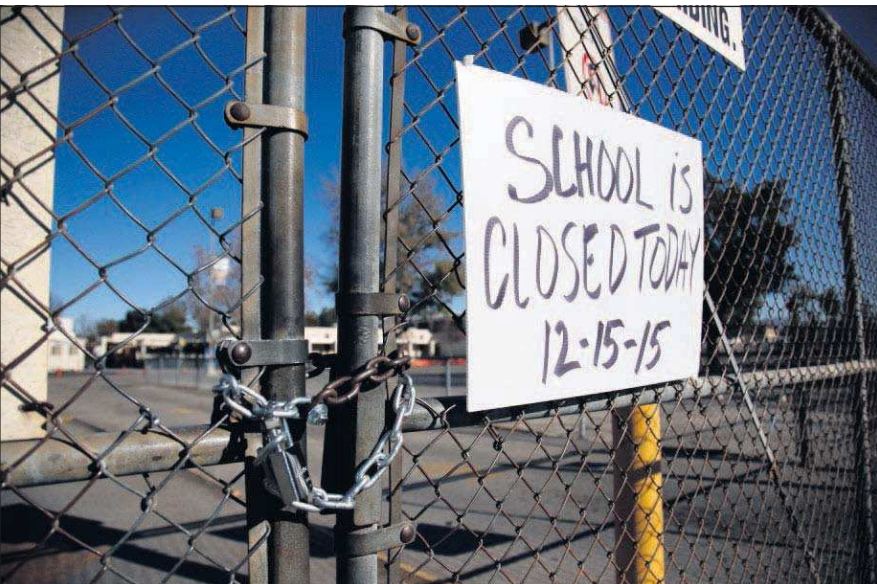
“It was so outlandish,” he said. The shutdown abruptly closed more than 900 public schools and 187 charter schools attended by 640,000 students across Los Angeles.

The threatening email sent to the New York City school superintendent warned that schools would be attacked with pressure cooker bombs, nerve agents and machine guns. It claimed the writer and “138 comrades” would carry out the attack.

Students “at every school in the New York City school district will be massacred, mercilessly. And there is nothing you can do to stop it,” the message said.

The anonymous writer claimed to be a student at a district high school who had been bullied.

A law enforcement official with access to the document provided the



AP Photo/Danny Moloshok

A gate to Birmingham Community Charter High School is locked with a sign stating that school is closed, Tuesday, in Van Nuys, Calif.

email to The Associated Press. The official was not authorized to disclose details of an ongoing investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The person who wrote the note also claimed to be a jihadist but made errors that suggested the writer was really a prankster, including spelling the word “Allah” with a lowercase “a.”

The threats came in simultaneously to New York and LA school officials at about 1:20 a.m. EST Tuesday, or about 10:20 p.m. Monday in Los Angeles.

The decision to close Los Angeles schools was announced at 6:25 a.m. PST, well after NYC had already concluded the threat was a hoax and decided to keep schools open.

Los Angeles Superintendent Ramon Cortines said every campus would be searched before schools reopened.

Hours later, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee said the threat was believed to be a hoax.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said he would not second-guess

the decisions made in Los Angeles or New York.

The LA schools commonly get threats, but Cortines called this one rare and said the San Bernardino attack influenced his decision to close the entire district.

The threat “was not to one school, two schools or three schools,” he said at a news conference. “It was many schools, not specifically identified. ... That’s the reason I took the action that I did.”

The superintendent said the district police chief informed him about the threat shortly after 5 a.m.

The person who sent the threat used an “anonymizer,” which uses a proxy server to mask the origin of Internet traffic, and the email was routed through a German IP address on its way to the school board member’s email box, according to a law enforcement official briefed on the investigation. The official, who was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation, spoke on condition of anonymity.

Parents grapple with talking to scared kids after threat

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After receiving word that all Los Angeles schools would shut down Tuesday because of a threat of possible attack, many parents’ first thoughts were about how to discuss the scary situation with their kids.

Lupita Vela’s 8-year-old daughter enjoys attending Eagle Rock Elementary on the city’s northeast side, and Vela was worried about her daughter feeling unsafe in class.

“I don’t want this to be in the back of her head,” she said. “Who knows what it does psychologically to kids? Is this going to cause her some kind of trauma so that she’s not going to feel safe at school?”

Parents should first reassure themselves by getting as much information as possible about potential risks, according to Dr. Jason Hershberger, chair of psychiatry at Brookdale University Hospital in New York. Then sit down with the child and find out his or her specific fears, he said.

“Each kid has a different relationship with school, with teachers, with other kids in class. So their fears can be very unique,” Hershberger said. “Ask them, ‘What is the thing you’re most afraid of?’”

It’s important to emphasize to children that while there are dangers in the world, there are also plenty of ways to deal with them and stay safe.

“There are police, there are teachers, there are parents. When bad things happen, good people get together and figure out how to face it,” Hershberger suggested telling frightened children.

The decision to close the Los Angeles district disrupted the morning routines of many families who found themselves suddenly facing discussions about fears rather than what cereal to eat.

Bobby Kim, co-founder of LA streetwear brand “The Hundreds,” was making breakfast for his children when they learned of the closure.



AP Photo/Ringo H.W. Chiu

Parents take their children return home from school early Tuesday in Los Angeles.

“It’s a strange thing to have to explain to your kids, but I guess that’s the world we live in,” Kim said.

Vela, who also has a son who is a high school senior, called the threat “absolutely terrifying” in light of the San Bernardino attack, which killed 14 people earlier this month. She got an automated phone call informing her of the closure.

“I know the kids are anxious,” she said. “Of

course they’re texting all their friends. Their phones are blowing up.”

Communication between kids and their friends is important, and parents should resist the urge to shield young people from scary news, said Dr. Karen Rogers, a child psychologist at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles.

She suggested comparing the shutdown to preparations for earthquakes — a practice

“It’s a strange thing to have to explain to your kids.”

— Bobby Kim, Los Angeles parent

familiar to every California schoolchild.

“Earthquakes are a risk, but they don’t happen very often,” Rogers said. “A threat like this is no different. It’s about being prepared, taking precautions.”

Many parents were supportive of school officials’ approach.

Kim said he was “appreciative for the prompt response and closures” but he hoped the “heightened terrorism climate” wouldn’t become a major worry for his kids.

Lucrecia Santibanez, whose son attends a Los Angeles school, agreed.

“The one thing I’m afraid of is now anyone can call in with a hoax and send everyone scrambling for options for their children,” she said.

BRIEFLY

Freddie Gray jurors deadlocked, judge says keep deliberating

BALTIMORE (AP) — Jurors said they were deadlocked Tuesday as they weighed manslaughter and other charges against a police officer in the death of Freddie Gray. The judge told them to keep deliberating and they went home for the night without reaching a verdict.

The jury reported its difficulty in a note to Baltimore Circuit Judge Barry Williams after about nine hours of discussions over two days. It wasn’t clear if they were stuck on one or more of the four charges Officer William Porter faces. He is the first of six officers to stand trial.

Armored vehicles and police were stationed around the city, and officials promised they were prepared for any unrest. Parts of the city burned last spring after Gray’s death triggered frustration over the department’s alleged mistreatment of black people, and authorities were determined to prevent a repeat.

Earlier Tuesday, jurors requested highlighters, an easel and sticky notes, suggesting a businesslike approach to assessing Porter’s role in Gray’s arrest and death. They also received computer speakers to improve the sound quality of recordings in evidence, including Porter’s videotaped interview with Baltimore police detectives, police radio transmissions on the day Gray was arrested and cellphone videos made at two of the wagon’s six stops.

If the jury remains deadlocked, a mistrial would be declared and prosecutors would have to decide whether to put Porter on trial again.

Backlash begins over Missouri protest response

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Two Missouri legislators propose that universities revoke the scholarships of athletes if they go on strike. Another proposes mandatory classes on free speech for all students. And state legislative leaders say funding for the University of Missouri could be cut.

Those are a few examples of the backlash after members of the university’s football team threatened to strike and joined protests over the administration’s handling of racial tensions on campus. Top university officials later resigned.

Last month a graduate student went on a hunger strike, the football team supported the student and the head football coach backed his players. The next day former university system President Tim Wolfe stepped down. The Missouri protests prompted demonstrations of support at universities around the country.

The upheaval shocked and embarrassed some alumni, as well as members of the state legislature.

The university “coddled the students and gave them everything they wanted,” said Republican Rep. Kurt Bahr, who co-sponsored the bill on student athletes’ scholarships. He said the university should have revoked football players’ scholarships if they didn’t practice or play.

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