

February court date set for Bundy standoff case in Nevada

By KEN RITTER
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A federal magistrate judge in Las Vegas set a Feb. 6 trial date for rancher Cliven Bundy and 18 other defendants in an armed confrontation with government officers two years ago.

In a written order filed Tuesday, U.S. Magistrate Judge Peggy Leen declared the case “complex” for tracking purposes, and agreed that it will take time to prepare for a trial involving 19 defendants, more than 30 government witnesses and an exceptionally large amount of evidence.

Last week, she canceled a May 2 trial date as unrealistic.

Leen’s order came after a scheduling hearing last Friday in Las Vegas that put all 19 defendants and their lawyers in one courtroom for the first time. It could mean many months in jail ahead of trial for each man, although

Bundy attorney: Feds turned down proposed plea deal

PORTLAND (AP) — Lawyers for Ammon Bundy say the leader of the Oregon wildlife refuge occupation offered after his arrest to plead guilty if charges against other defendants were dismissed, but the deal was rejected.

The assertion is made in a pre-trial motion filed in federal court on Wednesday.

Bundy was arrested by FBI agents and Oregon state troopers on Jan. 26. More than two dozen people have been arrested for the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge that began Jan. 2 and ended with surrender of the last four on Feb. 11.

Bundy attorney Mike Arnold says his client offered on Jan. 29 to plead guilty to a federal conspiracy charge if charges against the others were dropped, and the proposal was rejected a day before the last occupiers gave up.

several are challenging and appealing detention orders.

The conspiracy, obstruction, weapon, threats and assault charges could get each the equivalent of life in prison for the tense gunpoint standoff in April 2014 near Bundy’s ranch outside Bunkerville, about 80 miles

northeast of Las Vegas.

Leen noted that seven defendants, including Bundy sons Ammon Bundy and Ryan Bundy, face trial Sept. 7 in federal court in Portland, Oregon. The seven are among 26 people accused of taking part in a 41-day armed occupation of a U.S. wildlife

refuge this year.

The Bundy brothers have been returned in custody to Oregon, where Ammon Bundy’s attorneys have filed documents contesting the authority of the federal government to prosecute him for the takeover the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

In an argument echoed by states’ rights advocates, he maintains that the federal government largely lost the right to own land inside Oregon once statehood was achieved.

His father argues in Nevada that the federal government doesn’t have jurisdiction over the public land surrounding the Bundy homestead, where family cattle have grazed for decades.

The federal Bureau of Land Management moved to round up cows on the ranch, obtaining court orders with arguments that Bundy racked up more than \$1 million in unpaid grazing fees and fines.



AP Photo/Michael Conroy
Republican presidential candidate Sen. Ted Cruz joined by former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina waves during a rally in Indianapolis on Wednesday.

Ted Cruz taps Carly Fiorina to serve as running mate

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — In need of momentum after a five-state shutout, Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz on Wednesday tapped former technology executive Carly Fiorina — a woman he said has repeatedly “shattered glass ceilings” — to serve as his running mate.

The Texas senator announced his pick for vice president nearly three months before his party’s national convention, an unusual move for an underdog candidate that reflects the increasing urgency for the fiery conservative to reverse his downward trajectory.

Cruz praised Fiorina’s path from secretary to CEO and her past willingness to challenge GOP front-runner Donald Trump.

“Carly isn’t intimidated by bullies,” he declared at an Indianapolis rally, adding, “Over and over again, Carly has shattered glass ceilings.”

The 61-year-old Fiorina, a former chief executive of Hewlett-Packard, has been a prominent Cruz ally since shortly after abandoning her own presidential bid earlier in the year. She was the only woman in the Republican Party’s crowded 2016 field.

“This is the fight of our time. And I believe Ted Cruz is the man to lead that fight,” Fiorina said at the Wednesday announcement. “And I am prepared to stand by his side and give this everything I have, to restore the soul of our party, to defeat Donald Trump, to defeat Hillary Clinton, and

to take our country back.”

Fiorina’s selection marked another extraordinary development in the 2016 Republican campaign, particularly for a candidate who is far from becoming his party’s presumptive nominee. Cruz was soundly defeated by GOP front-runner Donald Trump in all five primaries contests on Tuesday, and he’s been mathematically eliminated from winning the nomination before his party’s national convention in July.

Some Cruz allies praised Fiorina’s selection, but privately questioned if it would change the trajectory of the race. Trump has won 77 percent of the delegates he needs to claim the nomination, and a win next week in Indiana will keep him on a firm path to do so.

Cruz appeared with Fiorina in Indiana’s capital city, having staked his candidacy on a win in the state’s primary contest next Tuesday. Fiorina’s California ties could also prove valuable in that state’s high-stakes primary on June 7.

“Carly has incredible appeal to so many people, especially in California,” said Doug De Groote, a fundraiser for Cruz based near Los Angeles. “She can really help him here.”

Her first major foray into politics was in 2010, when she ran for Senate in California and lost to incumbent Sen. Barbara Boxer by 10 percentage points. She has never held elected office.

BRIEFLY

Former speaker Hastert sentenced to more than year in prison

CHICAGO (AP) — Dennis Hastert, the Republican who for eight years presided over the House and was second in the line of succession to the presidency, was sentenced Wednesday to more than a year in prison in the hush-money case that revealed accusations he sexually abused teenagers while coaching high school wrestling.

The case makes the former speaker one of the highest-ranking American politicians ever sentenced to prison. The visibly angry judge repeatedly rebuked the 74-year-old before issuing the 15-month sentence, telling him that his abuse devastated the lives of victims and would probably make it harder than ever for parents to trust other adults with their children.

“If Denny Hastert could do it, anyone could do it,” U.S. District Judge Thomas M. Durkin said. “Nothing is more stunning than to have the words ‘serial child molester’ and ‘speaker of the House’ in the same sentence.”

As he did for much of the hearing, Hastert sat unmoving in a wheelchair, peering over the top of his eyeglasses, his hands folded before him.

Earlier this month, prosecutors went into graphic detail about the sex-abuse allegations, even describing how Hastert would sit in a recliner in the locker room with a direct view of the showers. The

victims, prosecutors said, were boys between 14 and 17. Hastert was in his 20s and 30s.

When the judge asked if Hastert wanted to make a statement, Hastert pushed himself up, grabbed a walker and moved slowly to a podium.

“I am deeply ashamed to be standing here,” he said, reading from a statement. “I know why I am here ... I mistreated some of the athletes that I coached.”

He added: “They looked up to me, and I took advantage of them.”

Sanders’ bid reaches turning point after Northeast losses

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bernie Sanders’ movement for a political revolution is reaching a crossroads even as he promises to campaign against Hillary Clinton through the June primaries and into the Philadelphia convention.

The Vermont senator said in an interview with The Associated Press after losses to Clinton in Tuesday’s primaries in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware and Connecticut that he would now seek as many delegates as possible to “fight for a progressive party platform,” acknowledging that he had only a “very narrow path” to the nomination.

Sanders said at a rally at Purdue University in Indiana on Wednesday that he was “in this campaign to win and become the Democratic nominee,” adding, “If we do not win, we intend to win every delegate that we can so that

when we go to Philadelphia in July we’re going to have the votes to put together the strongest progressive agenda that any political party has ever seen.”

Yet the implication of Tuesday’s losses was evident Wednesday, when the campaign said it was laying off “hundreds” of field staffers and other aides to focus on winning the California primary on June 7. The campaign will have gone from a staff of more than 1,000 in January to about 325-350, spokesman Michael Briggs said.

Trump struggles to explain ‘America first’ foreign policy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump strained to lay out a clear vision of his “America first” foreign policy on Wednesday, vowing to substitute hard-headed realism for what he called a post-Cold War era replete with U.S. national security failures.

Yet the Republican presidential front-runner outlined no strategy for how he’d make the United States at the same time a “consistent” and “unpredictable” force in the world. And he didn’t appear to allay the concerns of U.S. and international critics — Republicans at home as well as Democrats — who see him as unfit for the responsibilities of commander in chief.

“‘America first’ will be the major and overriding theme of my administration,” Trump declared, echoing motifs from his campaign that is now close to sealing the

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