

BRIEFLY

London police fatally shoot suspect in attack that killed 2

LONDON — A man wearing a fake explosive vest stabbed several people Friday in London, killing two in what police are treating as a terrorist attack before being tackled by members of the public and then fatally shot by officers on London Bridge.

Metropolitan Police Chief Cressida Dick said two stabbing victims had died and three injured people were being treated in hospitals after the attack, which unfolded just yards from the site of a deadly 2017 van and knife rampage.

Health officials said one of the injured was in critical but stable condition, one was stable and the third had less serious injuries.

Dick said police were working “at full tilt” to determine whether anyone else was involved in the attack. She would not say whether the suspect was known to police, noting it was “a very fast moving, dynamic investigation.”

British media including BBC and Sky News, citing security sources, said the attacker was an ex-prisoner with links to Islamic extremist groups. *The Times of London* said he stabbed people at a criminology conference in London that he was attending.

Trump visits troops in Afghanistan, reveals U.S.-Taliban talks

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — President Donald Trump paid a surprise Thanksgiving visit to Afghanistan, where he announced the U.S. and Taliban have been engaged in ongoing peace talks and said he believes the Taliban want a cease-fire.

Trump arrived at Bagram Air Field shortly after 8:30 p.m. local time Thursday and spent 3½ hours on the ground during his first trip to the site of America’s longest war. He served turkey and thanked the troops, delivered a speech and sat down with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani before leaving just after midnight.

As per tradition, reporters were under strict instructions to keep the trip a secret to ensure the president’s safety in the country. About 12,000 U.S. forces remain in Afghanistan.

Traveling with Republican Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming and a small clutch of aides, including his acting chief of staff, press secretary and national security adviser, Trump appeared in good spirits as he was escorted around the base by heavily armed soldiers, as the smell of burning fuel and garbage wafted through the chilly

air. Unlike last year’s post-Christmas visit to Iraq — his first to an active combat zone — first lady Melania Trump did not make the trip.

Hong Kong police to end siege, return campus to university

HONG KONG — Police in Hong Kong were preparing Friday to reopen access to a university campus after blocking it for 12 days to try to arrest protesters holed up inside.

A team of about 100 officers had almost completed a 1½-day operation to collect evidence and remove gasoline bombs and other dangerous items from Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Assistant Commissioner Chow Yat-ming told reporters.

“Later on we will hand over the campus to the university,” he said.

They found 280 gasoline bombs Friday morning, on top of 3,800 removed the previous day.

Police did not encounter any protesters. One masked protester told media the night before police came in that about 20 people were still hiding to avoid arrest.

40 Iraqi protesters slain in 24 hours as violence spirals

BAGHDAD — Security forces shot dead 40 anti-government protesters during 24 hours of bloodshed amid spiraling violence in the capital and Iraq’s south, security and medical officials said Thursday, one day after an Iranian consulate was torched.

Iran condemned the burning of its consulate in the holy city of Najaf as violence continued into the night across southern Iraq, where security forces had killed 36 protesters and wounded 245 since Wednesday evening, the officials said. Another four protesters were shot dead in the capital. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Police and military forces were deployed across key oil-rich provinces to reopen roads closed off by demonstrations.

The escalating violence and heavy response against demonstrators by a largely Iran-backed government threatened to intensify tensions, especially if efforts to implement electoral and anti-corruption reforms fail to placate protesters.

Crisis committees were created to enhance coordination between Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi and governors in provinces affected by the protests “for the importance of controlling security and enforcing the law,” said a statement from the joint operations command.

—Associated Press



AP Photo/Alex Brandon
President Donald Trump gives thumbs up as he steps off Air Force One, accompanied by Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., at the Palm Beach International Airport on Friday in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Trump to decide if he wants lawyers at impeachment hearings

By ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee asked President Donald Trump on Friday to say whether he’ll send his attorneys to participate in impeachment proceedings before the panel.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler also is asking Republicans on his committee which witnesses they plan to ask permission to subpoena.

The letters from the New York Democrat came as the House impeachment probe enters a new phase with a hearing next week on whether Trump’s actions might constitute impeachable offenses.

Two weeks of Intelligence Committee hearings produced a mountain of testimony but didn’t seem to move the needle on Capitol Hill, where not a single House Republican supported establishing the chamber’s impeachment process.

Nadler instructed Trump and top panel Republican Doug Collins of Georgia to respond by the end of next week. The Judiciary Committee meets Wednesday in an informational hearing to examine the “constitutional grounds for presidential impeachment” and could move some time after that to hearings where witnesses testify about Trump’s actions with Ukraine.

Trump has labeled the proceeding by House Democrats a sham, in part because he could not have his lawyers cross-examine intelligence committee witnesses during hearings and depositions.

The intelligence panel is slated to issue a report of its findings next week that are intended to form the basis of hearings at the Judiciary Committee, which would be responsible for drafting any articles of impeachment for a vote by the full House.

The panel can also seek further testimony. Nadler can deny witnesses sought by Republicans, who are likely to want subpoenas compelling testimony from Hunter Biden and the anonymous intelligence community whistleblower whose complaint sparked the impeachment proceedings.

At issue in the impeachment probe is whether Trump abused his office by pressing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate the Bidens and baseless allegations that Ukraine interfered with the 2016 election.

Hunter Biden served on the board of a Ukrainian energy company when his father, then-Vice President Joe Biden, had some responsibility for the Obama administration’s Ukraine policy.

Earlier scrutiny by Ukrainians uncovered no wrongdoing by the Bidens, but Trump, in July, asked Zelenskyy for an investigation as a “favor,” while holding up military aid to that country for several months.

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