

Aides say Bradley leaving race

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bill Bradley readied an endorsement of old foe Al Gore on Wednesday, as he scripted his exit from the Democratic presidential campaign. John McCain went home to Arizona, his Republican challenge near an end, voluntarily or not.

Gore and Texas Gov. George Bush, nominees-in-waiting, reached out to their defeated rivals and jabbed at one another as they pivoted toward the general election.

Bush labeled the vice president "an agent of Washington," and Gore returned the insult, saying Bush was too cozy with the "extreme right" as personified by the National Rifle Association and religious broadcaster Pat Robertson.

Bush also appealed to McCain's desire, often stated on the campaign, to deny Gore the White House.

"I would say, 'John, let's team up

and let's win. Let's beat Al Gore," the governor said.

He hastened to add he wasn't extending an offer of the vice presidential spot on his ticket.

Gore offered warm words for Bradley, whom he had attacked repeatedly in debates and advertising when the nomination was at risk.

"Throughout the campaign I've affirmed my belief that he is a good person," Gore said on NBC. "I have worked with him in the Senate."

Advisers to Bradley, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the former New Jersey senator would announce his withdrawal on Thursday and throw his support to the vice president.

Bradley, 56, plans to stay active in public life and is not expected to rule out another presidential run, the advisers said. They also said he has no interest in the vice presidential

spot on the Democratic ticket.

Not that Gore was thinking along those lines. One senior adviser to the vice president, speaking on condition of anonymity, noted that Bradley had not won any contests in his quest for the nomination, and Gore would want someone on the ticket who had demonstrated an ability to carry a state.

A senior aide to McCain, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said a list of all possible options had been prepared for his meetings during the day. These included staying in the race to further his political agenda, getting out and supporting the GOP ticket and leaving to mount a third-party bid. McCain has said previously he would not leave the GOP, and the adviser said he had no reason to believe the senator had changed his mind.

Republican aides said there had

been discussions about how to ease McCain's return to the Senate after a campaign in which he often attacked his own party as beholden to special interests.

The presidential campaign was at a pivot point, but there were still primaries to come, and both Bush and Gore continued to seek votes.

After the virtual nationwide primary on Tuesday, the AP delegate count showed Gore with 1,424 delegates, to 412 for Bradley, out of 2,170 needed for the nomination.

Among Republicans, it was 617 for Bush to 231 for McCain, with 1,034 needed to nominate. Those numbers told the hopelessness of McCain's position. An additional 91 delegates are at stake in Western states on Saturday, and 351 more on March 14 in states across the South, the part of the country where Bush is strongest.

Gunman's ambush kills four, injures one

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Firefighters responding to a house fire Wednesday were ambushed by an off-duty Memphis firefighter who stepped out of the garage and began shooting, authorities said.

Two firefighters and a sheriff's deputy were killed, and a woman was found dead in the garage.

The suspected gunman, Fred Williams, was wounded and was undergoing surgery, Police Director Walter E. Crews said. A bystander also was wounded, but not seriously.

Williams had just returned to work as a firefighter this week after an extended leave on disability, Crews said. The suspect did not work at the same station as the men who were killed, but J.C. Fleming, deputy director of the Fire Department, said they probably knew each other from working the same shift.

"We don't expect this. We're here to fight fires," Fire Chief H.J. Pickett said. "You want to say it's part of the job, but it's not."

Williams did not live in the house, and his relationship to the woman found dead in the garage was unclear, Crews said. Authorities also were

uncertain how the woman was killed and whether the fire was set to cover up her death.

Firefighters were called to the home just before 1 p.m. When they arrived, witnesses said, a man came out of the garage firing a shotgun and shouting, "Get away! Get away!"

Firefighters Lt. Javier Lerma and Pvt. William Blakemore were killed. Sheriff's Deputy Rupert Peete was shot in his patrol car as he responded to the report of the shooting, authorities said. His car crashed through a fence and ended up next to the house.

Memphis police officers then arrived and tried to get the gunman to put down his weapon. When he refused, "one of our officers got into a gun battle and the suspect was shot," Crews said.

The shootings occurred in a neighborhood of mostly one-story brick houses and well-kept yards at the edge of the city. A golf course is a few miles away.

Before firefighters arrived, neighbors reported seeing smoke coming from the house and alerted the suspect, but he said everything was fine, according to authorities.



FUJIFOTOS/NewsMakers

Japanese authorities remove an injured woman from a train collision in Tokyo, Japan, on Wednesday. A rush-hour commuter train derailed and collided with an oncoming train, killing four people and injuring more than 30.

Four killed in Tokyo after train car derails

Police blockade at the busy crossing near station causes traffic jam.

TOKYO (AP) — A Tokyo commuter train peeled away the side of an oncoming train car that derailed during rush hour Wednesday morning, unleashing a shower of glass and metal in an accident that killed four people and injured 33.

"With a 'boom' and an impact, my body was lifted up from the seat and I wondered what happened," passenger Motoshi Yamabe, 30, was quoted as saying in Thursday's (Wednesday CDT) Japan Times. An unidentified woman living nearby told the paper, "I heard a very loud noise, and windows shook like it was an earthquake."

Bloodied garments lay strewn about the scene. Shocked passengers wandered near the ground-level track. A police blockade at the busy crossing near the station caused a huge traffic jam. Metro train service was disrupted for the morning rush.

Of the 33 people injured, several were in critical condition, police said.

The trouble began when a car in the rear of a train emerging from a tunnel derailed on a curve just short of the elevated Nakameguro station in western Tokyo and struck two cars of an oncoming train packed with

1,300 passengers.

One side of the derailed car was ripped away from end to end. Two hundred and forty passengers were aboard that train.

The cause of the accident was not immediately known. An early media report blamed the derailment on an explosion, but officials — including the prime minister — quickly denied it.

All the air was gone from the hydraulic shock absorber under the derailed car, and that may have played a role in the accident, media reports said.

Transport Ministry officials said a possible cause of the derailment was the tracks' sharp curve along a slope, Kyodo News agency said.

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi instructed the Transport Ministry to investigate, spokesman Akitaka Saiki said.

Police were questioning the trains' operators and officials on suspicion of professional negligence, Kyodo said, but police refused to confirm that late Wednesday.

It is believed to be the worst Tokyo rail accident since 1988, when one train rammed into the back of another stopped at a station during rush hour, killing two and injuring 92.

A 1995 sarin gas attack on Tokyo's subway killed 12 people and sickened thousands.

WEATHER	
TODAY	TOMORROW
Windy high 30, low 20	Snow high 35, low 23

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World and Nation Datelines

Israel Palestine, Israel resume peace talks with U.S. assistance

JERUSALEM (AP) — Gritting their teeth, Palestinians and Israelis ended a crisis in the peace process Wednesday by each conceding what had been a cardinal "no": Israelis allowed greater U.S. involvement, and Palestinians accepted territory not abutting Jerusalem.

In a telling sign of the renewed U.S. role, it was President Clinton's top envoy, Dennis Ross, who announced the resumption of peace talks, flanked by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Ross, who said the peace talks would resume in Washington after the four-day Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday beginning March 16, said the sides are committed to "work in the spirit of partnership and mutual confidence."

Mozambique Flood survivors face problems with disease

MACIA, Mozambique (AP) — Olga Timbe waited patiently Wednesday outside a Red Cross medical tent for a doctor to see her baby, Carlos. The 6-month-old boy lay limply in her arms, sick with malaria and facing death unless he receives treatment.

Like hundreds of thousands of other Mozambicans, Timbe and her son Carlos escaped quick death by drowning only to face slow death from malaria, acute diarrhea and respiratory infections bred by the filthy, stagnant water left behind after recent floods.

On Wednesday morning, 105 of the 6,000 displaced people in the Macia camp sought treatment. An equal number were expected in the afternoon, Tamele said.

Chile Pinochet hit with pile of lawsuits at home

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Legal problems for Gen. Augusto Pinochet have begun to mount at home amid a flurry of new lawsuits stemming from alleged human rights abuses during his dictatorship.

With six new lawsuits filed Tuesday, Pinochet faces a total of 72 cases in Chile. He returned to Chile on Friday from his 16-month detention in Britain, escaping attempts by a Spanish judge who wanted to bring him to trial on charges of torture and torture conspiracy.

The most prominent suit Tuesday was filed by Miria Contreras, a former secretary to Marxist President Salvador Allende, who was killed when Pinochet took power in a 1973 coup.

New York Government scholarship letters sent to wrong people

NEW YORK (AP) — Thirty-nine students were told last month they had won prestigious government scholarships for graduate study, only to find out later that it was all a big mistake and they were only runners-up.

"I think my heart snapped in half," a California doctoral candidate wrote her congressional delegation in a plea for help.

Help came Wednesday when the Education Department called the runners-up and said they will get the fellowships after all, as will the rightful winners.

It will cost taxpayers close to \$1 million to fix the error, which the government is blaming on a private contractor that sent the wrong letters.