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U.S.A.

Monday 15 June 2009

International

ISRAEL, Ramat Gan - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded on Sunday to uncommon pressure from Washington by finally giving his endorsement -- with conditions -- to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

AFGHANISTAN, Kabul - Afghanistan's interior minister said on Sunday the Taliban have stepped up their attacks in many parts of the country and warned the Islamist militants would attempt to sabotage an August 20 presidential election.

PAKISTAN, Islamabad - Pakistan has ordered the military to carry out an offensive against Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud and his fighters, a provincial governor said on Sunday.

IRAN, Tehran - Defeated candidate Mirhossein Mousavi demanded the presidential vote be annulled and urged more protests, while tens of thousands of people hailed the victory of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

RUSSIA, Moscow - The rift between Russia and Belarus deepened on Sunday when Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko snubbed a security summit in Moscow in protest at Russia's "trade war" against his nation.

YEMEN, Sanaa - Yemen has arrested a man described as al Qaeda's top financier in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Separately, a government source said nine foreigners, including seven Germans, were kidnapped in the Saada area of north Yemen.

Sport

BASEBALL - The New York Yankees pummeled Mets pitcher Johan Santana for a career-high nine runs in three-plus innings and crushed their New York rivals 15-0 to win baseball's interleague Subway Series on Sunday.

GOLF - U.S. Tour rookie Anna Nordqvist held off a late charge by Australian Lindsey Wright and won the LPGA Championship going away, taking a four-stroke victory at Bulle Rock Sunday.

TENNIS - US Open - Trevor Immelman, last year's U.S. Masters champion, has withdrawn from next week's U.S. Open because of tendinitis in his left wrist and elbow, organizers said on Sunday.

BOXING - Floyd Mayweather Jr. suffered a rib injury during training and will be unable to fight Juan Manuel Marquez next month, the fighter said on Sunday. The eagerly awaited fight had been due to take place on July 18 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

BOXING - Puerto Rico's Miguel Cotto retained his World Boxing Organization welterweight title with a grueling split decision win over Joshua Clottey of Ghana at Madison Square Garden.

LACK OF VOTES SEEN FOR OBAMA HEALTHCARE PROGRAM

President Barack Obama's health secretary on Sunday pushed for a new government-run healthcare program, an idea facing skepticism even in his own party, and a senior Senate Democrat flatly said votes are lacking in Congress for the proposal. In addition, Vice President Joe Biden opposed proposals being discussed by some lawmakers to tax health insurance benefits provided to people by employers as a way to pay for an overhaul of the \$2.5 trillion U.S. healthcare industry. Obama, aiming to get healthcare costs under control and ensure that the 46 million Americans who are uninsured can get health coverage, wants a new public program to compete with private insurers.

CIA CHIEF BELIEVES CHENEY ALMOST WANTS U.S. ATTACKED

CIA director Leon Panetta says it's almost as if former vice president Dick Cheney would like to see another attack on the United States to prove he is right in criticizing President Barack Obama for abandoning the "harsh interrogation" of terrorism suspects. Cheney, who was a key advocate in the Bush administration of controversial interrogation methods such as waterboarding, has become as a leading Republican critic of Obama's ban on harsh interrogations and his plan to shut the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In a blistering May 21 speech, Cheney said Obama's reversal of Bush-era policies were "unwise in the extreme" that would make the American people less safe.

TEST AWAITS OBAMA THIS WEEK ON FINANCIAL REFORMS

The Obama administration on Wednesday will unveil its long-awaited plan to tighten U.S. financial regulation, marking a test of its resolve to seize political opportunity and face down powerful interests. Banks and financial firms are pushing hard in Washington to soften the plan, which has been under debate for six months in response to a severe credit crisis and a deep recession that is already going a long way toward reshaping capital markets. Political realities on Capitol Hill, where the industry is deeply entrenched and lawmakers protect their turf, have already tempered some approaches for bringing the antiquated U.S. regulatory system into the 21st century. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner is scheduled to testify in congressional hearings about the plan on Thursday.

MICHELLE OBAMA FINDS A NEW FRIEND IN QUEEN ELISABETH

If Michelle Obama ever needs a place to stay in London, she could do worse than call on Queen Elizabeth. The two women met at the G20 summit in London in April and have kept in touch since then, royal sources said on Sunday. When Michelle Obama made a private visit to the London last week with daughters, Malia, 10, and Sasha, 8, they were given a private three-hour tour of Buckingham Palace, including a meeting with the queen. According to the sources, the queen and Michelle Obama have exchanged letters and spoken by telephone since that first meeting. The visit last Wednesday was organized as a treat for Sasha, who turned 8 that day. Despite their age difference, the two women are said to share a number of interests, including the countryside, gardening and clothes.

In Brief

SUPREME COURT - U.S. Senate Republicans are in a quandary over the Supreme Court nomination of Sonia Sotomayor, aiming to raise pointed questions about her record without angering increasingly influential Hispanic voters.

FOREIGN POLICY - U.S. Vice President Joe Biden on Sunday cast doubt on the reelection of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, saying Tehran's actions against dissent suggest the results may not be clear-cut.

TOBACCO REGULATION - A landmark bill giving the U.S. government broad regulatory power for the first time over cigarettes and other tobacco products won final approval in Congress on Friday, and President Barack Obama said he would quickly sign it into law. The bill allows the FDA to put stringent new limits on the manufacturing and marketing of tobacco products but stops short of banning cigarettes or their addictive ingredient nicotine.

HEALTHCARE REFORM - President Barack Obama on Saturday proposed an additional \$313 billion in cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and other programs to pay for health-care reforms expected. Obama wants a health-care reform bill on his desk by October, but faces opposition from Republicans who oppose creation of a government-run insurance plan to compete with private insurers.

BUSINESS - Pfizer Inc, the world's largest drugmaker, is looking to conclude deals in emerging markets over "few months" to raise its share of a market estimated at about \$80 billion. Pharmaceutical companies are increasingly turning their attention to developing nations as they face tougher conditions in more mature markets.

BOX OFFICE - Hollywood nursed another big weekend hangover. The Warner Bros. comedy "The Hangover" hauled in \$33.4 million to remain the top box-office draw for a second-straight weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

ANIMAL CRUELTY - A teenager has been arrested in a string of cat killings and mutilations that horrified residents of Miami's southern suburbs. Tyler Weinman, 18, of Cutler Bay, Florida, was charged with 19 counts of animal cruelty, 19 counts of improperly disposing of an animal body and four counts of burglary.



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