

# NATION/WORLD DIGEST

## Republicans Maneuver On Spending Cuts

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional Republicans maneuvered on two fronts Monday in the federal spending showdown, demanding Democrats agree to more than \$33 billion in swift cuts to avoid a government shutdown at the same time they readied a separate plan to slash deficits by a staggering \$4 trillion over a decade. With little progress evident on the first track, President Barack Obama invited key lawmakers to the White House in search of a deal to avoid a partial shutdown Friday at midnight.

"Time is of the essence," said White House press secretary Jay Carney, announcing plans for the Tuesday meeting.

House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio said he would attend on behalf of Republicans. But he also emphasized in a statement that the \$33 billion total often cited "is not enough and many of the cuts that the White House and Senate Democrats are talking about are full of smoke and mirrors."

Boehner has said repeatedly he does not want a shutdown. Yet a new public opinion poll underscored the political dilemma confronting the leader of a conservative majority swept into power with the support of tea party supporters.

## Workers In Japan Dump Radioactive Water

TOKYO (AP) — Workers began pumping more than 3 million gallons of contaminated water from Japan's tsunami-ravaged nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean on Monday, freeing storage space for even more highly radioactive water that has hampered efforts to stabilize the reactors.

It will take about two days to pump most of the less-radioactive water out of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear complex, whose cooling systems were knocked out by the magnitude-9.0 earthquake and tsunami on March 11.

Radioactivity is quickly diluted in the ocean, and government officials said the dump should not affect the safety of seafood in the area.

Since the disaster, water with different levels of radioactivity has been pooling throughout the plant. People who live within 12 miles (20 kilometers) have been evacuated and have not been allowed to return.

## Libyan Forces Push Back Into Brega

BREGA, Libya (AP) — Rebel fighters pushed back into this hard-fought oil town on Monday, seizing half of Brega and pledging to drive out Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's forces in hours in an advance that would open a vital conduit for oil sales by the opposition.

Control of Brega's small refinery and Mediterranean port could significantly boost the rebels' hunt for revenues they can use to purchase heavy weapons for the fight against Gadhafi's better-equipped troops and militiamen.

Lightly armed and loosely organized opposition forces have surged into and beyond Brega several times in recent weeks from their strongholds in eastern Libya, only to be driven out by Gadhafi loyalists exploiting the rebels' inability to hold territory. In recent days the opposition has placed the front lines under the control of former military men, creating a more disciplined advance against Gadhafi's forces.

"We're more organized now, and that's played a big role," said Salam Idrisi, 42, a rebel fighter.

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# Obama Launches Bid For New Term

BY BEN FELLER  
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — No longer the fresh voice of change, President Barack Obama embarked on a bid for re-election Monday by asking a divided, anxious electorate to let him finish the job he won in 2008. He's getting an early start against a Republican field that's still undefined, but he's saddled with an ailing economy that still isn't working for millions of voters.

Obama began with an effort to recapture his outsider's touch of 2008, bypassing a public statement from the White House in favor of an email sent to millions of supporters.

He offered a kickoff video in which official Washington is ignored and even Obama himself only makes a fleeting appearance. What the campaign wanted voters to see instead were people like them speaking of real-life concerns and their faith in Obama, against wholesome backdrops in every clip: a church, a farm, a family in a kitchen, an American flag.

He told supporters later in the day he needs their help again, perhaps more than he did four years ago, because "we may not have the exact same newness that we had in 2008."

"But that core spirit ... is still there and it's still in you and so I hope that even though we're a little older and a little wiser now than we were back in 2007 and 2008, I hope everybody is ready to run that race one more time," Obama said in a conference call with backers.

This time around, Obama carries both the benefits and baggage of being the establishment candidate.

The president now owns an economy that is adding jobs but still leaving millions of people without help or work. As the incumbent, he can blow into town on Air Force One, draw unparalleled free media coverage and command all the other perks of the presidency. But he must also remobilize his coalition and reenergize it, too, including getting back the independent voters who swung Republican in last year's midterm elections. Obama ran once on hope. This time he

will run on his record as well. That means voters will evaluate him on what he has gotten done, including laws to reshape health insurance and Wall Street behavior, and the promises he has not delivered upon, including immigration reform and closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

A huge part of his challenge will be to spark the voter inspiration that often got lost in the slog of governing. His new campaign video gave a nod to the challenge. A woman named Alice from Michigan said: "We're paying him to do a job. So we can't say, 'Hey, could you just take some time off and come and get us all energized?' So we better figure it out."

Obama filed his candidacy paperwork Monday, about 20 months from Election Day, so he can begin raising money in earnest for a potential campaign fund of \$1 billion or more. More than a dozen Republicans are seriously considering trying to unseat him, but none has declared yet.

What comes next is a loud, undefined, unpredictable White House contest. The early party primary voting is not set to begin until next year.

## 9/11 Mastermind To Face Military Commissions

BY PETE YOST AND EILEEN SULLIVAN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Yielding to political opposition, the Obama administration gave up Monday on trying to try 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four alleged henchmen in civilian federal court in New York and will prosecute them instead before military commissions.

The families of those killed in the Sept. 11 attacks have waited almost a decade for justice, and "it must not be delayed any longer," Attorney General Eric Holder told a news conference at the Justice Department.

In November 2009, Holder had announced the plan for a New York trial blocks from where the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks destroyed the World Trade

Center. That idea was thwarted by widespread opposition from Republicans and even some Democrats, particularly in New York.

Congress passed legislation that prohibits bringing any detainees from the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to the United States.

Monday, the attorney general called those congressional restrictions unwise and unwarranted and said a legislative body cannot make prosecutorial decisions.

Although President Barack Obama made a campaign pledge to close the U.S. military prison in Cuba, Holder indicated that isn't going to happen any time soon because of congressional restrictions.

"We must face a simple truth: those restrictions are unlikely to be repealed in the immediate future," Holder said.

## Arizona Inmate Granted Stay

PHOENIX (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court has granted a stay of execution for an Arizona inmate scheduled to die by lethal injection Tuesday.

Monday's ruling means the execution of Daniel Wayne Cook is on hold while the high court considers his lawyers' argument that he had ineffective counsel during his post-conviction proceedings.

The Supreme Court's decision prompted the Arizona Department of Corrections to cancel the execution, which was set for 10 a.m.

Cook's death warrant expires Wednesday morning; if a decision isn't reached in time, a new one must be issued.

Defense attorney Robin Konrad says she's "very happy" with the decision and hopes the court "considers this issue seriously."

Cook was convicted of two counts of first-degree murder in the gruesome July 1987 killings of 16-year-old Kevin Swaney, and 26-year-old Carlos Cruz-Ramos in Lake Havasu City.

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## McDonald's Wants To Fill 50K Jobs

By The Associated Press

McDonald's Corp. will hold its first national hiring day April 19 to fill 50,000 openings at its restaurants nationwide.

The company, based in Oak Brook, Ill., says it is making a concerted effort to add staff as its business improves and as more of its restaurants stay open 24 hours a day.

McDonald's is hiring restaurant crew and management for full-time and part-time positions. The company's hiring goal translates to between three and four new hires per restaurant.

Turnover slowed in the past few years because of the weak economy, the company says. McDonald's sees this event an opportunity to attract employees in a tough job market.

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