

Israel Okays Construction Of West Bank Units

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel on Friday approved the construction of 3,000 homes in Jewish settlements on Israeli-occupied lands, a government official said, drawing swift condemnation from the Palestinians a day after their successful U.N. recognition bid.

The Palestinians reiterated their refusal to resume negotiations with Israel while building continues. With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu apparently poised for re-election to another four-year term and insisting that any negotiations begin without preconditions, prospects for an Israeli-Palestinian partition deal appear to be going into deep freeze.

The United Nations voted overwhelmingly to accept a Palestinian state in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem as a non-member observer state on Thursday, setting off jubilant celebrations among Palestinians.

Israel fiercely objected to the U.N. upgrade, saying Palestinian statehood could only come from direct negotiations and unilateral moves would harm that prospect. The Palestinians said the U.N. recognition of a Palestinian state in the territories captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war was an attempt to salvage a possible peace deal.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has refused to negotiate with Israel while settlement construction continues, saying Israel's settlement expansion on war-won land was making a partition deal increasingly difficult.

After 20 Killed, Syria-Lebanon Tension Higher

MASNA, Lebanon (AP) — Syrian security forces killed as many as 20 Lebanese gunmen who were fighting alongside rebels in Syria on Friday, raising tensions amid mounting fears that the Syrian civil war is engulfing the region.

The Lebanese security officials said the gunmen were killed as they tried to enter the Syrian town of Tal Kalakh, near the Lebanese border. The officials asked that their names not be used because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Syrian state-run media also reported that Lebanese gunmen were killed. But the SANA report said there 17 — not 20 — fighters. The discrepancy could not immediately be reconciled.

The Lebanese gunmen were Sunni Muslims, as are the vast majority of Syria's rebels. Syrian President Bashar Assad — along with his most elite troops — belong to the Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shiite Islam.

Lebanon is particularly vulnerable to getting sucked into the conflict in Syria. The countries share a complex web of political and sectarian ties and rivalries that are easily enflamed. Lebanon, a country plagued by decades of strife, has been on edge since the uprising in Syria against Assad began in March 2011, with deadly clashes between pro- and anti-Assad Lebanese groups erupting on several occasions.

Protesters Vow To Stop Draft Constitution

CAIRO (AP) — Giant crowds of protesters packed Cairo's Tahrir Square and marched in other cities Friday vowing to stop a draft constitution that Islamist allies of President Mohammed Morsi approved hours earlier in a rushed, all-night session without the participation of liberals and Christians.

Anger at Morsi even spilled over into a mosque where the Islamist president joined weekly Friday prayers. In his sermon, the mosque's preacher compared Morsi to Islam's Prophet Muhammad, saying the prophet had enjoyed vast powers as leader, giving a precedent for the same to happen now.

"No to tyranny!" congregants chanted, interrupting the cleric. Morsi took to the podium and told the worshippers that he too objected to the language of the sheik and that one-man rule contradicts Islam.

Crowds of protesters marched from several locations in Cairo, converging in central Tahrir Square for the opposition's second mass rally in a week against Morsi. They chanted, "Constitution: Void!" and "The people want to bring down the regime" as fireworks went off.

The crowd appeared comparable in size to the more than 200,000 anti-Morsi protesters who thronged Tahrir on Tuesday. Tens of thousands more marched Friday in Alexandria and other cities.

3 Dead In Murder-Suicide 2 Killed At College

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) — A man killed one person in a Casper neighborhood before going to a nearby community college campus Friday morning and killing a faculty member and then himself, police said.

Police found the suspect and one of the victims at a science building on the Casper College campus, which was locked down as authorities assessed the situation, Casper Police Chief Chris Walsh said. The other victim was found about 2 miles away.

Authorities say the suspect used a sharp-edged weapon in at least one of the deaths.

The suspect wasn't believed to be a Casper College student, but it did appear there was a relationship between him and the victims, Walsh said. The police chief didn't identify the suspect or victims but said the victims were a male and a female.

"We're locating next of kin and working on notification absolutely as fast as we can," Walsh said.

Mechanic And Wife Missouri Winners Of Jackpot

DEARBORN, Mo. (AP) — Cindy Hill, a laid-off office manager who lives in a small town in Missouri, called her husband Thursday with urgent news that would change everything: "We won the lottery."

"What?" he asked.

"We won the lottery," she repeated. But Mark Hill, a 52-year-old mechanic who works at a meat processing plant, is the kind of person who carefully checks the prices for everything he buys, and he needed proof. This is the "Show-Me State" after all.

He drove to his mother's house, where his wife was waiting with their quick-pick ticket, and confirmed for himself that the numbers matched those drawn for a record \$588 million Powerball jackpot that they'll share with an unknown winner who bought a ticket in Arizona.

Missouri lottery officials officially introduced the Hills as winners Friday in front of reporters and townspeople gathered at the high school in Dearborn, which is about 40 miles north of Kansas City. The announcement was not a surprise. The Hills' name began circulating Thursday, soon after lottery officials said a winning ticket had been sold at a Trex Mart gas station and convenience store on the edge of town.

Senate Votes To Tighten Iran Sanctions

BY DONNA CASSATA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate endorsed stringent new sanctions on Iran's energy and shipping sectors in a fresh attempt to hobble the Islamic Republic's economy and hamper its nuclear ambitions.

Ignoring White House opposition spelled out just hours before the vote, the Senate voted 94-0 on Friday for a package of punitive measures that would end sales and transactions with various Iranian domestic industries.

The sanctions build upon penalties that Congress has passed — and President Barack Obama has implemented — that target Tehran's financial and energy sectors.

Officials in Washington argue that the sanctions have undermined Tehran's economy and robust oil sales, thwarting its suspected pursuit of a nuclear weapon. Iran insists its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

The overwhelming bipartisan vote on an amendment to a sweeping, \$631 billion defense bill reflected fears about the Iranian threat and the United States' unwavering support for its closest Mideast ally Israel.

Shortly before the vote, the powerful pro-Israel lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, urged senators to back the sanctions.

"We must continue to apply unremitting pressure on Tehran until it complies with its international obligations and ends its pursuit of nuclear weapons," AIPAC officials wrote in a letter.

Sens. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., and Mark Kirk, R-Ill., who have shepherded sanctions bills through Congress, sponsored the latest package that also would close a major loophole — the ability of Iran to circumvent

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SEN. BOB MENENDEZ (D-NJ)

sanctions and barter oil for precious metals. Turkey has been bartering gold for oil.

"The most recent sanctions are working toward crippling Iran's economy but Iran hasn't quit trying," Menendez said on the Senate floor.

The sanctions would designate Iran's energy, port, shipping and ship-building sectors as "entities of proliferation" and sanction transactions with these areas. The legislation also would penalize individuals selling or supplying commodities such as graphite, aluminum and steel to Iran, all products that are crucial to Tehran's ship-building and nuclear operations.

In a memo from the National Security Council just hours before the vote, the administration argued that the new sanctions were unnecessary, duplicative and "threaten to confuse and undermine" provisions in current law.

Specifically, the administration complained about the omission of waivers that would give the president more flexibility, ambiguities that would make implementation difficult and requirements for congressional reports on thousands of small and mid-size vessels that dock at Iranian seaports that were too burdensome.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the memo.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich., acknowledged the administration's reservations and said he hoped lawmakers could address those concerns in

crafting the final version of the bill.

The legislation also would designate Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and its president as human rights abusers for broadcasting forced televised confessions and show trials.

The president has 90 days from the legislation's enactment to act. The bill does include the authority to waive the sanctions based on national security.

The overall defense policy bill for next year authorizes money for weapons, ships, aircraft and a 1.7 percent pay raise for military personnel. The total is \$4 billion less than the House-passed bill, and House-Senate negotiators will have to work out the difference in the closing days of this year.

Late Thursday, the Senate revived a divisive debate over civil liberties and the president's powers as commander in chief, voting that Americans citizens suspected of terrorism and seized on U.S. soil may not be held indefinitely.

A coalition of liberal Democrats and libertarian Republicans backed an amendment that said the government cannot detain a U.S. citizen or legal resident indefinitely without charge or trial even with the authorization to use military force or a declaration of war.

The Senate voted 67-29 in support of the measure sponsored by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., chairwoman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and Sens. Rand Paul, R-Ky., and Mike Lee, R-Utah. The strong bipartisan ap-

proval sets up a fight with the House, which rejected efforts to bar indefinite detention when it passed its bill in May.

Ignoring a White House veto threat, the Senate also voted Thursday to add to its restrictions on Obama's authority in dealing with terror suspects.

Lawmakers approved an amendment that would prevent the transfer of detainees held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to prisons in the United States. The vote was 54-41, with several Democrats vulnerable in the 2014 elections voting with Republicans.

Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., argued that the 166 terror suspects, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-styled mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, should remain at the U.S. naval facility and not be transferred to any facility on American soil.

Responding to Ayotte, Feinstein said the United States not only can but has handled terrorist suspects, with 180 now languishing in super maximum prisons. Feinstein complained that the measure would erase the president's flexibility.

In fact, the administration, in threatening to veto the bill, strongly objected to a provision restricting the president's authority to transfer terror suspects from Guantanamo to foreign countries. The provision is in current law.

Last year, Congress' approach to handling terror suspects divided Republicans and Democrats, pitted the White House against lawmakers and drew fierce opposition from civil liberties groups.

No Support For Tough Climate Deal

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — The United Nations climate chief is urging people not to look solely to their governments to make tough decisions to slow global warming, and instead to consider their own role in solving the problem.

Approaching the half-way point of two-week climate talks in Doha, Christiana Figueres, the head of the U.N.'s climate change secretariat, said Friday that she didn't see "much public interest, support, for governments to take on more ambitious and more courageous decisions."

"Each one of us needs to assume responsibility. It's not just about domestic governments," she said.

Her comments came as negotiators from nearly 200 countries were struggling to prepare draft agreements on how to move forward on greenhouse emissions cuts and climate aid for poor

countries.

Some delegates worried that gains made at last year's climate talks in Durban, South Africa, were at risk of unraveling, as rich and poor nations bickered over how to pull the world away from a path of potentially dangerous warming.

"There is a mutual mistrust that is very clear," Brazil's chief negotiator Andre Aranha Correa do Lago. "We need to get back to the spirit of Durban."

The slow-moving U.N. process has failed to deliver a global pact to rein emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases.

Such emissions, primarily from the burning of fossil fuels, have grown 20 percent since 2000, according to a recent U.N. report, which showed the gap is growing between what governments are doing and what science indicates must be done to contain warming.

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