

## Greek PM Says Default Would Lead To 'Chaos'

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greece's future in the eurozone grew increasingly precarious Friday as violence erupted on the streets of Athens and dissent grew among its lawmakers after European leaders demanded deeper spending cuts.

The country's beleaguered coalition government promised Friday to push through the tough new austerity measures and rescue a crucial (euro) 130 billion (\$170 billion) bailout deal, as six members of the Cabinet resigned.

Prime Minister Lucas Papademos promised to "do everything necessary" to ensure parliament passes the new austerity measures that would slap Greeks with a minimum wage cut during a fifth year of recession.

"It is absolutely necessary to complete the effort that began almost two years to consolidate public finances, restore competitiveness and economic recovery," Papademos told an emergency Cabinet meeting.

Debt-stricken Greece needs the bailout money before a (euro) 14.5 billion bond deadline on March 20 and strike a vital debt-relief deal with bond investors.

## Jerry Sandusky Testifies About Using Local Jury

BELLEFONTE, Pa. (AP) — A judge said Friday he would decide soon whether to grant former Penn State assistant coach Jerry Sandusky greater freedom — and visits from his young grandchildren — while he awaits trial on child sex-abuse charges, but prosecutors countered that Sandusky's home is not a safe place for children.

Judge John Cleland set a tentative trial date of May 14 for Sandusky and promised to rule quickly on a number of other issues, including dueling requests for changes to his bail restrictions.

The attorney general's office wants him confined to the inside of his home while on house arrest awaiting trial, while the defense asked that he be allowed out occasionally to help with the case.

Defense attorney Joe Amendola's request that Sandusky, 68, be permitted to see his grandchildren drew strenuous opposition from prosecutors.

"This home was not safe for children for 15 years, and it's not safe for children now," said state prosecutor Jonelle Eshbach.

## Teen Shoots Self In Face In School Cafeteria

WALPOLE, N.H. (AP) — A 14-year-old shot himself in the face in a New Hampshire elementary school cafeteria filled with dozens of students eating lunch, officials said Friday.

The teen, identified by a relative and fellow students as Hunter Mack, was hospitalized after shooting himself around 11 a.m. at Walpole Elementary School in southwestern New Hampshire. Police locked down the school for several hours, but no one else was injured.

"Our hearts go out to the family of this young man and our thoughts go out to all of the students that were in the school at this time," Cheshire County Attorney Peter Heed said at a news conference. He did not say what kind of gun the student used or where he might have obtained it. He also did not offer any information on why the student shot himself.

As of Friday afternoon, the student was in serious condition in the intensive care unit.

"We're all just waiting to hear about our little boy," said Cindy Mack, whose cousin is the boy's father. "He's a wonderful little boy. He's an avid hunter — like his name. He is very smart. He won prizes at school. He shot his first deer last year. He's a great, great kid."

## U.S. To Raise Human Rights When Xi Visits

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said Friday it won't recoil from raising grave human rights concerns during a getting-acquainted visit next week by China's likely future leader.

China's Vice President Xi Jinping's trip would be for him to understand issues that are important to America, including the situation in Tibet, and freedom of speech and religion, said White House senior director for Asian affairs, Daniel Russel.

"We don't sacrifice the important issues for the sake of having a comfortable visit," Russel told reporters.

Xi is slated to succeed Hu Jintao as Communist Party leader this fall, then become the nation's president in spring 2013. Hu made a similar visit to the United States in 2002 before he took the reins of power of the world's most populous nation.

Xi arrives Monday at the invitation of Vice President Joe Biden and will also meet with President Barack Obama in the Oval Office and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta at the Pentagon. He will spend four full days in the United States, also traveling to Iowa and California.

Russel said the visit was unlikely to yield breakthroughs, as Xi is not yet leader, but will build on a three-year effort by the Obama administration to build a cooperative relationship with China.

That would include discussion over the administration's policy to build up its diplomatic and military presence in Asia — that China views as an attempt to contain its rise.

Also on the agenda: North Korea, Iran and Syria, following China's decision last week to join Russia in vetoing a U.N. Security Council resolution pressuring Syrian President Bashar Assad's government over its violent crackdown on opponents.

Of greatest domestic political significance in the U.S. will be talks on economic and trade ties. China is an increasingly important export market for the United States, but trade it still heavily skewed in China's favor.

There is pressure on the administration in an election year to get tougher on China over a currency the U.S. contends is undervalued against the dollar, benefiting Chinese exporters unfairly. The U.S. is also urging China to do more to stop intellectual property theft and to reduce subsidies for its state-owned enterprises.

## Madonna: M.I.A.'s Gesture Messed Up Show

NEW YORK (AP) — The British hip-hop artist M.I.A. has apologized to Madonna for making an obscene gesture during the Super Bowl halftime show.

Madonna said in radio interviews on Friday that she had no idea M.I.A. would extend her middle finger during the performance in front of 114 million people, according to Madonna's spokeswoman, Liz Rosenberg. The singer didn't find out about it until after the show.

"I wasn't happy about it," Madonna told Ryan Seacrest in one interview. "I understand it's kind of punk rock and everything, but to me there was such a feeling of love and good energy and positivity, it seemed negative."

She said it was like something a teenager would do.

"It seemed out of place," she said.

# Obama Adjusts Birth Control Policy

By BEN FELLER  
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Under fierce election-year fire, President Barack Obama on Friday abruptly abandoned his stand that religious organizations must pay for birth control for workers, scrambling to end a furor raging from the Catholic Church to Congress to his re-election foes. He demanded that insurance companies step in to provide the coverage instead.

Obama's compromise means ultimately that women would still get birth control without having to pay for it, no matter where they work. The president insisted he had stuck by that driving principle even in switching his approach, and the White House vehemently rejected any characterization that Obama had retreated under pressure.

Yet there was no doubt that Obama had found himself in an untenable position. He needed to walk back fast and find another route to his goal.

The controversy over contraception and religious liberty was overshadowing his agenda, threatening to alienate key voters and giving ammunition to the Republicans running for his job. It was a mess that knocked the White House off its message and vision for a second term.

Leaders from opposite sides of the divisive



Obama

good first step.

At least one Republican who is hoping to oust Obama from the White House was conceding nothing. Though not mentioning the birth control issue, Newt Gingrich assailed the president's views of religious rights and said "I frankly don't care what deal he tries to cut. ... If he wins re-election, he will wage war on the Catholic Church the morning after he's re-elected."

Obama, acknowledging he wanted a resolution to the controversy, ordered advisers to find a middle ground in days, not within a year as had been the plan before the uproar. He said he spoke as a Christian who cherishes religious freedom and as a president unwilling to give up on free contraceptive care.

"I've been confident from the start that we could work out a sensible approach here, just

as I promised," Obama said. "I understand some folks in Washington may want to treat this as another political wedge issue, but it shouldn't be. I certainly never saw it that way."

Under the new plan, religious employers such as charities, universities and hospitals will not have to offer contraception and will not have to refer their employees to places that provide it. If an employer opts out of the requirement, its insurance company must provide birth control for free in a separate arrangement with workers who want it.

"Very pleased," was how Sister Carol Keenan, president of the Catholic Health Association, reacted in a statement distributed by the White House. Her trade group represents Catholic hospitals that had fought against the birth control requirement, and Keenan said the new arrangement addresses the concerns it had.

In searching for a way out of the crisis, Obama also had to be mindful not to anger many women and fellow Democrats.

Planned Parenthood, a prominent women's health organization, said Obama had reaffirmed his commitment to birth control coverage. The group's president, Cecile Richards, added, though, that it would be monitoring for "rigorous, fair and consistent" enforcement so women get the promised coverage.

## ROWDY REACTION



Protesters shout "No!" as they watch closed circuit television broadcasting the UNC Board of Governors' vote to raise the tuition for all the schools in the 16 university system, Friday, February 10, 2012, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

## Syria Says Suicide Bombers Kill 28 In Aleppo

BY ALBERT AJI AND LEE KEATH  
Associated Press

ALEPPO, Syria — Two suicide car bombers struck security compounds in Aleppo on Friday, killing 28 people, Syrian officials said, bringing significant violence for the first time to an industrial center that has largely stood by President Bashar Assad during the 11-month uprising against his rule.

Anti-Assad activists denied any involvement and accused the regime of setting off the blasts to smear the opposition as government forces pummel rebels in one of their main strongholds, Homs. State media touted the bombings as proof the regime faces a campaign by terrorists, not a popular uprising.

The military stepped up its siege of Homs, where hundreds have reportedly been killed over the past week. Soldiers who have been bombarding the central city made their first ground move, storming into one of the most restive neighborhoods. Satellite image provider DigitalGlobe Inc., based in Colorado, released photos Friday that it said show Syrian army tanks and other armored vehicles near apartment buildings in the city.

Troops and security forces opened fire on anti-regime protesters who streamed out of mosques after Friday prayers nationwide. At least 27 civilians were killed, according to the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The morning blasts in Aleppo, Syria's most populous city, ripped apart the facades of the local headquarters of the Military Intelligence Directorate and a barracks of the Security Preservation forces.

At the Directorate, windows were shattered and a large crater was torn into the pavement outside the entrance. A weeping correspondent on state-run TV showed graphic footage of at least five corpses, collected in sacks and under blankets by the side of the road.

# Santorum And Romney Sell Selves To Conservatives

BY CHARLES BABINGTON  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — GOP presidential rivals made contrasting appeals to conservatives Friday, with Mitt Romney saying he proved his mettle as Massachusetts governor and Rick Santorum saying Romney is so moderate that electing him would be a "hollow victory."

Their speeches to the Conservative Political Action Conference came as Santorum tries to convert his surprising caucus wins this week into a resilient, muscular campaign and Romney seeks to persuade conservatives that he won't disappoint them.

Santorum's tack was unorthodox, and perhaps risky. Facing Republicans who desperately want to replace President Barack Obama, Santorum said it's even more vital to put a conservative crusader into the White House.

"We will no longer abandon and apologize for the policies and principles that made this country great for a hollow victory in November," he said.

If voters see that as a hint that it's more important to be ideologically pure than to oust Obama, Santorum may have to explain more fully in the days ahead.

Romney, speaking a few hours later, said his four-year record in Massachusetts proved that he will fight for conservative values against the toughest odds. "I know conservatism because I have lived conservatism," he said. Veering briefly from his

written text, he called himself "severely conservative."

But Romney skated past details of his administration that trouble some right-leaning groups, including requiring state residents to obtain health insurance.

Without saying Romney's name, Santorum said the former governor's health care record would make it impossible for him to draw needed contrasts with Obama. He said Romney had created "the stepchild of Obamacare."

Saying the Obama-backed 2010 health care law "will crush economic freedom," Santorum urged Republicans not to nominate "someone who would simply give that issue away in the fall."

Santorum warned Republicans against a premature emphasis on moderate voters, who could decide the presidential election in swing states.

"We always talk about, 'Oh, how are we going to get the moderates?'" Santorum said. "Why

would an undecided voter vote for a candidate of a party who the party is not excited about?"

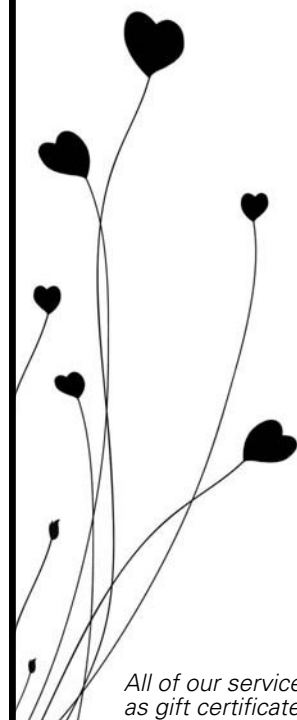
Romney alluded to his rivals obliquely, never saying their names. Presidential leadership "isn't about getting a bill out of subcommittee or giving a speech," he said. "I am the only candidate in this race, Republican or Democrat, who has never worked a day in Washington."

His remarks appeared aimed at former Pennsylvania Sen. Santorum, former House speaker Newt Gingrich and Rep. Ron Paul, all of whom spent years in Congress. Gingrich was scheduled to address CPAC later Friday. Paul was not scheduled to address the conference.

Romney tried to reassure the audience that antipathy to Obama will energize millions of voters this fall, an indirect way of saying the lukewarm reception he gets from some conservatives isn't crucial.

Obama "is the conservative movement's top recruiter," he said.

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