

Obama's \$3.8 Trillion Budget Attacked By GOP

WASHINGTON (AP) — Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner told Congress Tuesday that the president's new \$3.8 trillion spending plan would impose new taxes on only 2 percent of the nation's wealthiest families and the alternative would be to seek more painful cuts in other government programs such as defense, Social Security and Medicare.

Geithner defended the new budget plan in the face of intense attacks from GOP members of the Senate Finance Committee. Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah told Geithner that the administration's spending plan would give the country a "permanently larger, European-inspired government."

But Geithner said deeper spending cuts now would damage economic growth and push more Americans into poverty at a time when the economy is still struggling to recover from a deep recession.

Geithner told the committee that the administration hopes to send Congress next week a framework for making changes in the country's corporate tax structure.

He said the administration would not offer detailed legislative language but rather broad principles for corporate tax reform. He said the administration would propose eliminating a number of current business tax breaks in an effort to lower the corporate tax rate.

Funeral For Whitney Houston To Be Held Sat.

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Whitney Houston's funeral will be held Saturday in the church where she first showcased her singing talents as a child, her family choosing to remember her in a private service rather than in a large event at an arena.

The owner of the Whigham Funeral Home said Tuesday that the funeral will be held at noon at Newark's New Hope Baptist Church, which seats up to 1,500.

The family said no public memorial service is planned at this time. Officials had discussed the possibility of holding a memorial at the Prudential Center, a major sports and entertainment venue that can seat about 18,000 people, but the funeral home said it had been ruled out.

Funeral home owner Carolyn Whigham said the church service will be by invitation only, reflecting the family's decision to keep the memorial more personal.

"They have shared her for 30-some years with the city, with the state, with the world. This is their time now for their farewell," she said.

Groups Trying To Use Solyndra Against Obama

WASHINGTON (AP) — If you want a window into how outside Republican groups are likely to assail President Barack Obama's record this year, look no further than how the GOP is lambasting the administration's handling of solar company Solyndra.

Republicans have used Obama's ties to the bankrupt California manufacturer to argue that he plays the same political games that have consumed Washington for generations — and has failed to live up to promises to change the nation's capital. It's the message GOP-leaning outside groups are promoting in advertising campaigns in states critical to the Democrat's re-election race.

"Tell President Obama American workers aren't pawns in your political games," says one ad run by Americans for Prosperity, a conservative group linked to billionaire oil industry executives Charles and David Koch.

Such ads were among the warning signs the Obama campaign saw before it decided to encourage its donors to financially support a Democratic-leaning super PAC, Priorities USA. The announcement came as outside groups supporting Republican Mitt Romney heaped criticism on rival Newt Gingrich before the Iowa caucuses and in early primary states, a preview of what could confront Obama once the GOP primaries are settled.

For Republicans hoping to unseat Obama, Solyndra has become a code word for his handling of the economy.

Mormons Apologize For Posthumous Baptism

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Mormon church leaders apologized to the family of Holocaust survivor and Jewish rights advocate Simon Wiesenthal after his parents were posthumously baptized, a controversial ritual that Mormons believe allows deceased people a way to the afterlife but offends members of many other religions.

Wiesenthal died in 2005 after surviving the Nazi death camps and spending his life documenting Holocaust crimes and hunting down perpetrators who remained at large. Jews are particularly offended by an attempt to alter the religion of Holocaust victims, who were murdered because of their religion, and the baptism of Holocaust survivors was supposed to have been barred by a 1995 agreement.

Yet records indicate Wiesenthal's parents, Asher and Rosa Rapp Wiesenthal, were baptized in proxy ceremonies performed by Mormon church members at temples in Arizona and Utah in late January.

In a statement, the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center denounced the baptismal rites.

"We are outraged that such insensitive actions continue in the Mormon temples," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean at the center.

U.S., Europe Weigh Risky Penalty On Iran

BY JULIE PACE AND ANNE GEARAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States and Europe are considering unprecedented punishment against Iran that could immediately cripple the country's financial lifeline. But it's an extreme option in the banking world that would come with its own costs.

The Obama administration wants Iran evicted from SWIFT, an independent financial clearinghouse that is crucial to the country's overseas oil sales. That would leapfrog the current slow-pressure campaign of sanctions aimed at persuading Iran to drop what the U.S. and its allies contend is a drive toward developing and building nuclear weapons. It also perhaps would buy time for the U.S. to persuade Israel not to launch a pre-emptive military strike on Iran this spring.

The last-resort financial effort suggests the U.S. and Europe are grasping for ways to show immediate results because economic sanctions have so far failed to force Iran back to nuclear talks.

But such a penalty could send oil prices soaring when many of the world's economies are still frail. It also could hurt ordinary Iranians and undercut the reputation of SWIFT, a banking hub used by virtually every nation and corporation around the world. The organization's full name is the Society for World-

wide Interbank Financial Telecommunications.

Meanwhile, violence is increasing. Explosions in Bangkok on Tuesday — Israel's defense minister labeled them an "attempted terrorist attack" — came the day after Israel accused Iran of trying to kill its diplomats in India and Georgia. Those attacks followed the recent killings of Iranian scientists.

In the financial world, the United States can't order SWIFT to kick Iran out. But it has leverage in that it can punish the Brussels-based organization's board of directors. Talks are focused now on having Europe make the first move.

Short of total expulsion, Washington and representatives of several European nations are in talks over ways to restrict Iran's use of the banking consortium to collect oil profits.

The Obama administration is divided over whether the possible gain is worth the risk in trying to threaten SWIFT into kicking out a member country, in part because of concern that it would set back the global financial recovery. Iran remains a global financial player despite years of banking sanctions, and blocking it from using the respected transfer system would be a black mark like no other.

More than 40 Iranian banks and institutions use SWIFT to process financial transactions, and losing access to that flow of international funds could badly damage the

Islamic republic's economy. It would also probably hurt average Iranians more than the welter of existing banking sanctions already in place since prices for household goods would rise while the value of Iranian currency would drop.

Lawyers for SWIFT are holding meetings in Washington. People familiar with the talks say a compromise is possible in which SWIFT would voluntarily bar or restrict Iranian transfers.

But if SWIFT fails to act on its own, the U.S. expects Europe to require it to terminate services for Iranian banks, one Obama administration official said.

David Cohen, the Treasury Department's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, delivered that message to European Union officials in Brussels earlier this month, said the official, who was not authorized to speak publicly and thus spoke only on the condition of anonymity.

Mark Dubowitz, a sanctions expert advising the White House on Iran, said the Obama administration is having detailed discussions on the merits and consequences of forcing SWIFT to block Iranian transactions.

Some in the administration also prefer to give time for new sanctions on Iran's Central Bank, officially enforcement starting just this month, to take hold before layering on a round of even more draconian penalties.

Santorum Revels In New Support

BY STEVE PEOPLES
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho. — The latest Republican to surge in polls, Rick Santorum is trying to turn his newfound strength into something lasting.

Curious Republicans now pack his rallies. Supporters have funneled nearly \$4 million to his formerly empty campaign account over the past seven days. And his staff is plotting an aggressive strategy to challenge Mitt Romney in Romney's native Michigan and beyond.

But things don't look so strong just beneath the surface.

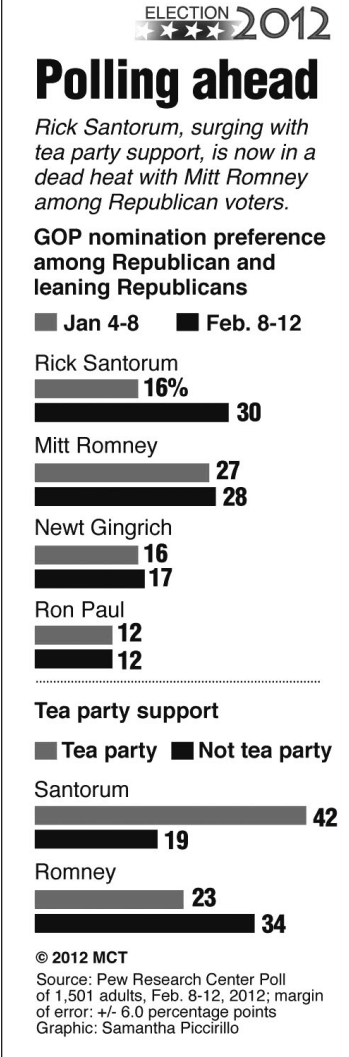
Santorum is underfunded and outmanned. He's still lacking in organization, a month and a half into the primary season. And, after he won three contests in a single day last week, his opponents — on the right and the left — have begun their own efforts to tear him down.

An upbeat Santorum declared "We're building" in a brief interview in Tacoma, Wash., on Tuesday before heading to Idaho for campaign events. "We've got a great volunteer base. In some states we're going to have staff. Other states we aren't. We're going to use volunteers."

His challenges were on display this week in Tacoma, where hundreds of supporters waited on cold, wet cement stairs in the dark to see the Republican presidential candidate with whom they're barely familiar.

"I don't know a lot about him, except I know he's more conservative than some of the other candidates like Mitt Romney," said Tanya Franklin, a 54-year-old airline reservationist, who says she'll probably vote for Santorum in her state's March 3 caucuses.

The former Pennsylvania senator has surged to a virtual tie with Romney in nationwide polling following his surprising sweep in Colorado,



Minnesota and Missouri last week. But, as Franklin suggests, his popularity may have less to do with who he is than who he isn't. Santorum is not Romney. And with Newt Gingrich's recent decline, that's enough for some conservatives — at least for now.

Santorum had 30 percent support to 28 percent for Romney in a national poll released this week by the Pew Research Center. But the same poll said 31 percent of all adults had never heard of or couldn't rate him. That's a significantly higher number than for Romney, Gingrich, or Ron Paul. Even among Republicans, one in five told Pew they didn't know enough about Santorum to rate him.

Israel Blames Iran For Series Of Bangkok Blasts

BY THANARAT DOKSONE AND TODD PITMAN
Associated Press

BANGKOK — Israel accused Iran of waging a covert campaign of state terror that stretched this week from the Middle East to the heart of Asia after a bungled series of explosions led to the capture of two Iranians in Bangkok.

Authorities in Israel ratcheted up security at home and abroad following Tuesday's explosions in the Thai capital, escalating a confrontation over Iran's suspect nuclear program and raising fears of war.

On Monday, an Israeli diplomat's wife and driver were wounded in New Delhi when a bomb stuck to their minivan exploded, and another device was defused on an Israeli Embassy car in Tbilisi, Georgia. Israel blamed Iran for those attacks as well.

Israel has threatened military strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, and Iran has blamed the Jewish state for the recent killings of Iranian atomic scientists.

Iran denied responsibility for the attacks in India and Georgia, which appeared to mirror the killings of the Iranian scientists that used "sticky bombs."

The series of blasts in Bangkok wounded four Thai civilians and blew off the leg of an Iranian who had fled a house carrying what looked like grenades after a cache of explosives ignited there, apparently by mistake.

When police searched the Iranians' home, the bomb squad found and defused two explosives, each made of three or four pounds of C-4 explosives inside a pair of radios, and National Police Chief Gen. Prewpan Damapong said the bombs were "magnetic" and could be stuck on vehicles.

The wounded Iranian was in police custody at a Bangkok hospital and immigration police detained a second Iranian as he tried to board a flight for Malaysia. Security forces hunted for a third Iranian suspect.

Israel's Channel 10 TV quoted unidentified Thai authorities as saying the captured Iranians confessed to targeting Israeli interests. The site of the blast is just a few miles from the Israeli Embassy.

There was no comment from Iranian officials in Tehran on Tuesday's series of explosions in Thailand.

Thai government spokeswoman Thitima Chaisaeng said "we need more analysis" to determine who was behind the attack and whether Iran was involved. She refused to comment on what the Iranians might have been planning or whether targets had been identified.

There seemed to be no doubt in the minds of Israeli officials, who blamed Iran and its Lebanese ally, Hezbollah.

"The attempted terrorist attack in Bangkok proves once again that Iran and its proxies continue to perpetrate terror," Defense Minister Ehud Barak said in Singapore. "The recent terror attacks are yet another example of this."

Iran and Hezbollah are "unrelenting terror elements endangering the stability of the region and endangering the stability of the world," added Barak, who was in Bangkok on Sunday, according to Israel's Defense Ministry.

Added Israeli Public Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonovitch, in an interview with Israel Radio: "We know who carried out the terror attacks, we know who sent them, and Israel will settle the score with them."

IN REMEMBRANCE

George V. Hefner
10:30 AM, Wednesday
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Coleridge

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OBITUARIES

Sharon 'Sherry' Horst

Sharon "Sherry" Horst, 65, of Yankton died Monday, February 13, 2012 at the Yankton Care Center in Yankton, SD.

Funeral services are 11 a.m. Thursday, February 16, 2012 at St John Lutheran Church in Wagner. Burial is in the ZCJB Cemetery, rural Wagner.

Visitation will be an hour prior to services at the church on Thursday.

Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home in Wagner is in charge of arrangements.

Sharon "Sherry" Kay Horst, daughter of Vilmer and Mildred (Kulhavy) Pietz, was born May 28, 1946 at Wagner. She died Monday, February 13, 2012 at the Yankton Care Center in Yankton, SD. Sherry attained the age of 65 years, eight months and 17 days.

Sherry graduated from Wagner High School in 1964. She married Roger Horst on September 5, 1964 in Wagner. Two children were blessed to their union.

In 1966, Sherry and Roger moved to Loves Park, IL, where she worked at Warner/Lambert. They moved back to Bonesteel in 1981 where they owned and operated Horst Machine Shop and Sherry was the bookkeeper. After Roger's death on March 28, 2008, Sherry moved to Yankton later that year. She worked as a greeter at Walmart and loved her job. She retired in the early summer of 2011.

Sherry was a loving and caring mother and grandmother. She enjoyed bowling, dancing, playing cards, dice and marbles. Sherry loved a day at the Casino. She loved spending time with her precious Yorkie, Spud.

Thankful for having shared her

life are her children: Pamela Hemmer and husband Jerry of Yankton; and Randy and wife Sandy Horst of Sioux Falls; three grandchildren: Alisha and husband Bradley Stehr and their son Logan of Creston, IA; Brook and husband Derek Frahm of Smithland, IA; and Michael Horst of Sioux Falls; and two more great grandchildren on the way; her father, Vilmer Pietz of Wagner; her sister, Janice Lipper and husband George of Las Vegas, NV; and relatives and friends.

Sherry was preceded in death by her husband on March 28, 2008; her mother, Mildred Pietz; and her brother, Roger Pietz.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
February 15, 2012

Norbert Bogner

CROFTON, Neb. — Norbert B. Bogner, 97, of Crofton, Neb., died

Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2012, at his son Dick Bogner's residence in Spring, Texas.

Funeral arrangements are pending at Wintz Funeral Home, Crofton, Neb.

Marvin Cleland

BENNINGTON, Neb. — Marvin Cleland, 94, of Bennington, Neb., and formerly of Vermillion, died Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2012 at the hospital in Omaha, Neb.

Funeral arrangements are pending with Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion.

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PRESS&DAKOTAN

2012 Beautiful Baby Contest

where this year, our readers decide!

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http://play2win.upickem.net

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