

NATION/WORLD

Ex-Officer Testifies In Military Gay Policy

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP) — A former Air Force officer who was discharged for being gay has taken the stand in the federal trial of a lawsuit challenging the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Former Maj. Mike Almy testified Friday that he was an award-winning communications officer who served alongside foreign forces that have openly gay members. Almy says the gay troops were absolutely no detriment to the mission of his unit, which accepted them. The lawsuit being heard by a U.S. District Court judge in Riverside, Calif., was brought by the Log Cabin Republicans, a gay rights organization. The suit seeks an injunction to halt use of the policy. The lawsuit puts the government in the position of defending the policy even as President Barack Obama is pushing Congress to repeal it.

U.S. Israel Rocket Shield Will Work

WASHINGTON (AP) — A senior State Department official says Israel's new air defense system designed to protect its residents from rocket attacks will work. Andrew Shapiro, an assistant secretary of State for political and military affairs, told an audience Friday that Israel has thoroughly tested the system, dubbed the "Iron Dome." He says the U.S. has conducted an evaluation of its own and is confident it will provide improved air defense for Israel. The system is designed to protect Israeli towns from rockets launched from the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. The administration has asked Congress to authorize \$205 million to help Jerusalem accelerate its development.

In Spy Case, Man Gets Life, Wife 81 Months

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge has sentenced a former State Department worker to life in prison without possibility of parole for spying for Cuba and sentenced the man's wife to 81 months behind bars for helping her husband steal U.S. secrets. U.S. District Judge Reggie Walton said Kendall and Gwendolyn Myers betrayed the United States and should receive heavy punishment for having done so.

Medical Marijuana Shortage In N.M.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico has been so cautious in licensing and regulating growers under its 3-year-old medical marijuana law that the small number of providers can't grow enough, creating a shortage that has forced some patients to the street buy illegal drugs. The dilemma could have ramifications elsewhere because the state's program has been held up as a national model, with other states looking to replicate its strong regulatory structure to avoid the chaos that has prevailed in places like California. State Health Secretary Dr. Alfredo Vigil says he must balance patients' needs against preventing so much legal pot from being grown that it ends up in the illegal market.

Palin Paid \$75k To Speak At University

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — California State University, Stanislaus officials say the foundation arm of the cash-strapped public university paid Sarah Palin \$75,000 to speak at their 50th anniversary gala. The former Alaska governor's speech last month at CSU drew intense criticism and scrutiny and also attracted sizable donations for the public school. Officials refused to divulge the terms of her contract or her speaking fee until Friday. Additional details only came to light after students fished part of what appeared to be Palin's contract from a rubbish bin. That prompted California Attorney General Jerry Brown to launch an investigation into the finances of the university's foundation arm and allegations that the nonprofit violated public disclosure laws.

China Reduces U.S. Treasury Debt

WASHINGTON (AP) — China reduced its holdings of U.S. Treasury debt in May as total foreign holdings of government debt posted a slight increase. The Treasury Department says China's holdings fell by \$32.5 billion to \$867.7 billion. Total foreign holdings edged up a slight \$5.8 billion to \$3.96 trillion. The drop in China's holdings and the weak showing overall was a surprise. Analysts expected a sizable gain because they thought foreign investors would seek the safety of U.S. Treasury debt, responding to fears over the European debt crisis.

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Tests From Well Not As Good As Hoped

BY COLLEEN LONG AND HARRY R. WEBER
Associated Press Writers

NEW ORLEANS — Pressure readings have been less than ideal from the new cap shutting oil into BP's busted well, but the crude will remain locked in while engineers look for evidence of whether there is an undiscovered leak, the federal point man for the disaster said Friday.

Retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen said on a conference call that pressure readings from the cap have not reached the level that would show there are no new leaks in the well.

Allen said BP's test of the cap, which started 24 hours previously by shutting three valves and stopping the flow of oil into the water, would continue for at least 6 hours. It was scheduled to last up to 48 hours.

He said the developments were "generally good news" but needed close monitoring.

Allen said there are two possible reasons being debated by scientists on the project for why the pressure hasn't risen as high as desired: The reservoir that is the source of the oil could be depleting after a three-month spill, or there could be an undiscovered leak somewhere down in the well.

"We don't know because we don't know the exact condition of the well bore," Allen said.

He said the test will go ahead for another 6-hour period before being reassessed to see if BP needs to reopen the cap and go back to piping some of the oil to ships on the surface.

If it were reopened, Allen said, "There's no doubt there would be some discharge into the environment."

Pressure readings after 24 hours were about 6,700 pounds per square inch and rising slowly, Allen said, below the 7,500 psi that would clearly show the well was not leaking. He said pressure continued to rise between 2 and 10 psi per hour.

He said a seismic probe of the surrounding sea floor found no sign of a leak in the ground, one of the major concerns because oil erupting into the surroundings would be harder to contain and could weaken the well before it is plugged for good.

The cap is a temporary measure. Even if it holds, BP needs to plug the gusher with cement and mud deep underground, where the seal will hold more permanently than any cap from above could.

Kent Wells, BP PLC vice president, earlier said readings after the first 17 hours showed no signs that oil was escaping through unknown breaches farther down in the well piping that leads deep under the sea floor to the oil reservoir.

Wells also said work would resume on a relief well, the oil giant's more permanent solution meant to plug the leak for good underground to end one of the nation's worst environmental catastrophes.

That's also a sign that things were going well. Engineers had stopped drilling one of the wells Thursday in case that bore hole deep underground could be affected by the oil cap effort.

BP finally stopped oil from spewing into the sea Thursday for the first time since an April 20 explosion on the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon oil rig killed 11 workers and unleashed the spill 5,000 feet beneath the water's surface.

Iroquois Bows Out Of Tournament

BY FRANK ELTMAN AND EVA DOU
Associated Press Writers

NEW YORK — Time ran out on Friday for a team of Iroquois lacrosse players who have been blocked from traveling to a tournament in England because of a passport dispute.

The 23 members of the Iroquois Nationals — whose ancestors helped invent the sport as much as 1,000 years ago — refuse to use U.S. or Canadian passports, and the United Kingdom won't recognize their passports issued by the Iroquois confederacy.

After a week of appeals to British officials, the answer was

still "no." The team decided Friday to bow out of the tournament because there was no longer time to get to the games, manager Ansley Jemison said. The Nationals already missed their first scheduled game of the World Lacrosse Championships and were bumped to a lower division.

"There comes a time when we finally have to pull the plug," Jemison said.

The team has been camped out in a New York hotel in limbo this week, but Jemison said players will now be returning home.

The U.S. initially barred the team from traveling, saying the Iroquois passports lacked the necessary security features for

border crossings. After Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton intervened, the team got a one-time waiver, but the British government still refused to budge.

Team representatives had requested a face-to-face meeting with British consular officials. The National Congress of American Indians, a large tribal advocacy organization, wrote to British Prime Minister David Cameron, asking him to intervene.

But the players received a letter from British officials, reaffirming that they would not be issued travel visas based on their Iroquois documents.

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