

**NATION/WORLD DIGEST**

**North Korea Severs All Ties With South Korea**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Relations on the divided Korean peninsula plunged to their lowest point in a decade Tuesday when the North declared it was cutting all ties to Seoul as punishment for blaming the communists for the sinking of a South Korean warship.

The announcement came a day after South Korea took steps that were seen as among the strongest it could take short of military action. Seoul said it would slash trade with the North and deny permission to its cargo ships to pass through South Korean waters. It also resumed a propaganda offensive — including blaring Western music into the North and dropping leaflets by balloon.

North Korea said it was cutting all ties with the South until President Lee Myung-bak leaves office in early 2013, the official Korean Central News Agency said in a dispatch monitored in Seoul late Tuesday.

The North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification said it would expel all South Korean government officials working at a joint industrial park in the northern border town of Kaesong, and South Korean ships and airliners would be banned from passing through its territory.

The North's committee said it would start "all-out counterattacks" against the South's psychological warfare, and called its moves "the first phase" of punitive measures against Seoul, suggesting more action could follow.

**Stocks Plunge Early, Then Bounce Back**

NEW YORK (AP) — A rally pushed the Dow Jones industrials back over 10,000 after the stock market sank to its lowest level of the year Tuesday. The late-day rebound did nothing to erase lingering worries about Europe's debt crisis.

The Dow plunged more than 250 points after the opening bell and stayed under 10,000 most of the day, then charged back to finish down only 22 when signals from Washington suggested banks would not be forced to sell their lucrative derivatives units as part of financial reform. The Standard & Poor's 500 index even managed a slight gain.

But investors are still concerned about European debt, and that's likely to mean more turbulent days like Tuesday. The market worries that even austerity measures by governments there will not be enough to fix the problem and fight off a prolonged economic slump in Europe, or even another global recession.

"It seems like the Europeans are playing 'tag, you're it' — first it was Greece, and now it's maybe Spain or Portugal," said Jonathan Corpin, a New York Stock Exchange floor trader and president of Meridian Equity Partners.

"We know someone else is next. The problem is that it seems like every plan in place isn't going to satisfy the needs," he said.

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**Proposal To Lift Military's Gay Ban Now In Doubt**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A lukewarm endorsement from Defense Secretary Robert Gates and opposition among some lawmakers cast doubt Tuesday on whether Congress this week would lift a 17-year-old ban on gays serving openly in the military.

Gay rights' groups predicted that the bill might pass the House but face a tough road in the Senate.

"The door isn't closed, but it's barely cracked," said Aubrey Sarvis, executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network Executive Director.

A compromise was struck on Monday by the White House and a small group of Democrats who fear that repeal efforts will be doomed if Republicans regain control of one or both houses of Congress after fall elections.

The plan would overturn the "don't ask, don't tell" law but still allow the military to decide when and how to implement any changes to accommodate the new policy.

Gates has said that he supports repeal but would prefer that Congress wait to vote until he can talk to the troops and chart a path forward. A study ordered by Gates is due on Dec. 1.

Some lawmakers took a similar stand. "I see no reason for the political process to pre-empt it," Sen. Jim Webb, a conservative Democrat from Virginia, said of the military study.

On Tuesday, Gates said he would support the White House compromise but wished it didn't have to happen now.

President Barack Obama has vowed to help repeal the 1993 law, which prohibits the military from asking service members whether they are gay, bans homosexual activity and requires that gay troops not discuss their sexual orientation.

Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, say they agree that the ban should be lifted but want time to complete a wide-ranging study on how to do so without causing turmoil.

With the political clock ticking, several lawmakers were planning this week to push for an immediate suspension on military firings related to sexual orientation.

In a deal brokered by the White House on Monday, Sens. Carl Levin, D-Mich., and Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., and Rep. Patrick Murphy, D-Pa., announced they would introduce repeal legislation that would require military approval before it would take effect.

"They say they favor repeal," Levin said of the administration on Tuesday. "There's no reason why (Congress) should not have that same kind of expression."

**IMMIGRATION**

**Obama To Send Troops To Border**

Critics Say 12,000 Members Of National Guard Not Enough For Security

BY ERICA WERNER AND JACQUES BILLEAU  
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON — Under pressure to take action, President Barack Obama on Tuesday ordered 1,200 National Guard troops to boost security along the U.S.-Mexico border, preempting Republican efforts to force a congressional vote to send the troops.

Obama will also request \$500 million for border protection and law enforcement activities, according to lawmakers and administration officials.

The president's action comes as chances for comprehensive immigration reform, Obama's long-stated goal, look increasingly dim in this election year. Obama has been all but compelled to do something since Arizona's passage of a tough illegal-immigration law thrust the border problem into the public spotlight.

Indeed, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer credited her signing of the controversial new law for compelling Obama to act. Signing the law, Brewer said in a statement, "clearly ignited the talk of action in Washington for the people of

Arizona and other border states."

The National Guard troops will work on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support, analysis and training, and support efforts to block drug trafficking. They will temporarily supplement Border Patrol agents until Customs and Border Protection can recruit and train additional officers and agents to serve on the border, according to a letter Tuesday from top administration security officials to Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich.

In 2006, President George W. Bush sent thousands of troops to the border to perform support duties that tie up immigration agents. But that program has since ended, and politicians in border states have called for troops to be sent to curb human and drug smuggling and to deal with Mexico's drug violence that has been spilling over into the United States.

The White House released the letter signed by national security adviser James Jones and White House counterterrorism chief John Brennan not long after Obama met at the Capitol with Republican senators who pressed him on

immigration issues, including the question of sending troops to the border.

Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jon Kyl have been urging such a move, and Republicans planned to try to require it as an amendment to a pending war spending bill.

In a speech Tuesday on the Senate floor, McCain said the situation on the U.S.-Mexico border has "greatly deteriorated." He called for 6,000 National Guard troops to be sent, and he asked for \$250 million more to pay for them.

"I appreciate the additional 1,200 being sent ... as well as an additional \$500 million, but it's simply not enough," McCain said.

McCain's amendment would direct the defense secretary to deploy the National Guard troops. The letter from Jones and Brennan took scathing aim at that approach.

A military official said Tuesday that details were still being worked out on the troops' orders and destinations, adding that the timing of their deployment was not yet clear. Also undetermined was which units from which states would deploy.

**Government: 89 Deaths Tied To Toyota Acceleration**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unintended acceleration in Toyota vehicles may have been involved in the deaths of 89 people over the past decade, upgrading the number of deaths possibly linked to the massive recalls, the government said Tuesday.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said that from 2000 to mid-May, it had received more than 6,200 complaints involving sudden acceleration in Toyota vehicles. The reports include 89 deaths and 57 injuries over the same period. Previously, 52 deaths had been

suspected of being connected to the problem.

Toyota Motor Corp. has recalled more than 8 million vehicles worldwide since last fall because of problems with gas pedals, floor mats and brakes. The Japanese automaker paid a record \$16.4 million fine for its slow response to an accelerator pedal recall and is facing hundreds of state and federal lawsuits.

Toyota said in a statement that it "sympathizes with the individuals and families involved in any accident involving our vehicles. We are making an all-out effort to

ensure our vehicles are safe and we remain committed to investigating reported incidents of unintended acceleration in our vehicles quickly."

The automaker said "many complaints in the NHTSA database, for any manufacturer, lack sufficient detail that could help identify the cause of an accident. We will continue to work in close partnership with law enforcement agencies and federal regulators with jurisdiction over accident scenes whenever requested."

In the aftermath of the recalls, Congress is considering upgrading

auto safety laws to stiffen potential penalties against automakers, give the government more powers to demand a recall and push car companies to meet new safety standards.

Toyota's U.S. sales chief, Jim Lentz, told Congress last week that dealers have fixed nearly 3.5 million vehicles under the recall and the company and its dealers have conducted 2,000 inspections of vehicles. Lentz said there was no evidence that electronics are to blame for the sudden acceleration reports.



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