Israel, Hamas To Exchange Soldier, Prisoners

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli and Hamas have reached a deal to free a captured Israeli soldier held in the Gaza Strip in exchange for more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, both sides said Tuesday, capping five years of painful negotiations that have repeatedly collapsed in fingerpointing and violence.

The deal, brokered by the new Egyptian government, would bring home Sgt. Gilad Schalit, who was captured in a cross-border raid in June 2006 by Palestinian militants who burrowed into Israel and dragged him into Gaza. Little has been known about his fate since then.

Hamas and Israel are bitter enemies. Hamas has sent dozens of suicide bombers into Israel, killing hundreds, and Israel blockaded Gaza after Hamas seized power there in 2007, carrying out a large-scale invasion in 2009 to try to stop daily rocket attacks on Israel.

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, convened an urgent Cabinet meeting Tuesday night to approve the deal.

Schools Raise Concerns Over NYPD Spying

NEW YORK (AP) — With its whitewashed bell tower, groomed lawns and Georgian-style buildings, Brooklyn College looks like a slice of Colonial Virginia dropped into modern-day New York City. But for years New York police have feared this bucolic setting might hide a sinister secret: the beginnings of a Muslim terrorist cell.

Investigators have been infiltrating Muslim student groups at Brooklyn College and other schools in the city, monitoring their Internet activity and placing undercover agents in their ranks, police documents obtained by The Associated Press show. Legal experts say the operation may have broken a 19-year-old pact with the colleges and violated U.S. privacy laws, jeopardizing millions of dollars in federal research money and student aid.

The infiltration was part of a secret NYPD intelligence-gathering effort that put entire Muslim communities under scrutiny. Police photographed restaurants and grocery stores that cater to Muslims and built databases showing where people shopped, got their hair cut and prayed. The AP reported on the secret campaign in a series of stories beginning in August.

The majority of Islamic terrorism cases involve young men, and infiltrating student groups gave police access to that demographic. Alarmed professors and students, however, say it smacks of the FBI spying conducted on college campuses in the 1960s. They are calling on college administrators to investigate.

Tymoshenko Found Guilty Of Abuse Of Office

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko was sentenced to seven years in prison Tuesday on charges of abuse of office in signing a gas deal with Russia, a verdict the European Union and the United States both condemned as politically motivated.

Tymoshenko, the driving force of the 2004 pro-democracy Orange Revolution and now the nation's top opposition leader, denounced the trial as rigged by President Viktor Yanukovych to get rid of a political opponent.

The case has galvanized the opposition. A crowd of several dozen angry Tymoshenko supporters clashed following the verdict with helmeted riot policed who flooded the city center, but they were quickly pushed away and it was unclear if the protests would last.

Judge Rodion Kireyev declared Tymoshenko, 50, guilty of exceeding her authority as premier when she signed a natural gas imports contract with Russia in 2009. He also banned her from occupying government posts for three years after the completion of her prison term and fined her 1.5 billion hryvna ($190 million or (euro) 140 million) for the damages her actions cost the state.

Tymoshenko, clad in a beige dress and wearing her trademark blond braid around her head, has called the trial a "lynching." She appeared unfazed by the verdict and began addressing reporters in the courtroom without waiting for Kireyev to finish reading the lengthy ruling.

Indexes End Mixed Ahead Of Slovakia Vote

NEW YORK (AP) — One of Wall Street's quietest days in months ended mixed after investors spent the day waiting to see if Slovakia would block an expansion of Europe's financial rescue program.

Slovakia's decision came after U.S. stock markets closed. That country's parliament rejected a bill to strengthen the powers of a regional rescue fund. The sixteen other countries that use the euro have already signed off on the bill, but the measure requires unanimous support.

There are ways around Slovakia's opposition, but the move temporarily sets back efforts to address Europe's debt jam, which has been the most important issue for financial markets for months. Investors worry that if Europe doesn't contain its debt crisis, a default by the Greek government could deliver a devastating blow to European banks and cause them to freeze up lending.

The Dow Jones industrial average ended down 17 points after moving between small gains and losses throughout the day. The index traded within a range of only 82 points, the narrowest since July 20. The relatively tepid trading came a day after the Dow surged 330 points, its largest increase since Aug. 11.

Christie Backs Romney For GOP Nod

BY STEVE PEOPLES
Associated Press

LEBANON, N.H. — New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie — who spurned repeated calls to run for president himself — endorsed Mitt Romney for the GOP presidential nomination Tuesday, sending a signal to the skeptical GOP establishment to fall in line behind the former Massachusetts governor.

"I'm here in New Hampshire for one simple reason: America cannot survive another four years of Barack Obama and Mitt Romney's the man to lead America and we need him now," Christie said, standing alongside Romney.

The endorsement was a surprise, coming just hours before a GOP presidential debate and just a week after the pugnacious, budget-cutting Christie disappointed party elders and top GOP donors when he decided last week that he wouldn't run for president in 2012.

In the intervening days, Romney and his chief rival, Texas Gov. Rick Perry, have been scrambling to win support from the donors and party elders who had been sitting on the sidelines and waiting for Christie to decide.

It's unclear just how much impact — if any — the endorsement will have with voters less than three months before the primary voting season begins and as Romney tries to position himself as the party's inevitable nominee.

"I'm here in New Hampshire for one simple reason: America cannot survive another four years of Barack Obama and Mitt Romney's the man to lead America and we need him now."

CHRIS CHRISTIE

Voters tend to make up their own minds about who to support.

But Christie's endorsement could influence groups Romney has struggled to win over — a core segment of the GOP establishment that isn't enthused by him, and the tea party, many of whom view him as insincere on issues they hold dear.

In a hastily arranged news conference on the debate sidelines, Christie said the former Massachusetts governor could beat Obama and has the right mix of private sector and government experience to be president.

Christie also addressed what's perhaps Romney's biggest vulnerability — the Massachusetts health care measure that he signed into law and that was a model for Obama's nationwide measure that conservatives detest.

The New Jersey governor said it was "completely intellectually dishonest" to link Romney's measure with Obama's. And Christie added of Romney: "I'm proud of him for doing what he thought was right" on health care in Massachusetts.

Romney, in turn, called Christie a "hero" because of his record of cutting government spending as governor of New Jersey.

Christie has closer ties to the former Massachusetts governor than to other candidates. Romney endorsed Christie when the former U.S. attorney ran for governor in 2009. And in January, he became the first Republican presidential contender to visit Christie at the governor's mansion in Princeton.

Christie's financial supporters had been waiting for him to decide before backing a different candidate. The New Jersey governor's endorsement is a blow to Perry, as it's likely to send much of that cash to Romney. Several top Christie donors, including Home Depot financier Ken Langone, had already announced they would back Romney.

Romney already had an $18 million financial head start over Perry, who couldn't start raising money until August, when he announced his presidential bid. Perry raised more than $17 million in his first six weeks campaigning, showing he can keep pace with Romney's financial resources. Romney is expected to announce he raised more than $14 million between July and September.

Protesters March Past Millionaires' Homes

BY VERENA DOBNIK
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Now it's personal: Hundreds of anti-Wall Street protesters held a "Millionaires March" on Tuesday past the homes of some of the wealthiest executives in America, stopping to jeer "Tax the rich!" and "Where's my bailout?"

Walking two-by-two on the sidewalk because they had no march permit and didn't want to be charged with blocking traffic, members of the Occupy Wall Street movement and other groups made their way up Manhattan's East Side, along streets like Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue where some of the richest 1 percent of the population live in townhouses and luxury apartments.

They paused outside buildings where media mogul Rupert Murdoch, banker Jamie Dimon and oil tycoon David Koch have homes, and decried the impending expiration of New York's 2 percent "millionaires' tax" in December.

"I have nothing against these people personally. I just think they should pay their fair share of taxes," said Michael Pollack, an office worker in a law firm. He held up a sign with a saying attributed to department store founder Edward Filene, "Why shouldn't the American people take half my money from me? I took all of it from them."

Pollack said: "It's time for a new New Deal."

For the past 3 1/2 weeks, protesters have besieged a park in lower Manhattan near Wall Street, denouncing corporate greed and the gap between rich and poor. The uptown march marked the first time the Occupy Wall Street movement has identified specific people as being part of the 1 percent the demonstrators say are getting rich at the expense of the rest of America.

When the march reached Park Avenue and East 93rd Street, protesters stopped in front of a building where they said Dimon, JPMorgan Chase's chairman and CEO, has an apartment. Marchers screamed, "Where's our bailout?" and "How do we end this deficit? End the war, tax the rich!"

JPMorgan was among the banks that received a federal bailout, money it has since repaid.

Dimon got supportive words Monday from Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is himself a billionaire executive but whose East Side townhouse was not on the protesters' list of targets.

Dimon has "brought more business to this city than maybe any other banker in (the) modern day," the mayor said. "To go and picket him, I don't know what that achieves. Jamie Dimon's an honorable person working very hard. He pays his taxes."

CAROLYN COLE/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT
The "Millionaires March" in New York stopped at the home of hedge fund billionaire John Paulson in Manhattan. Protesters delivered a fake check for 5 billion dollars, the proposed amount of tax cuts his company is to receive.

Senators Seek To Alter No Child Left Behind

WASHINGTON (AP) — An outline of a plan by two senators to rework the education law known as No Child Left Behind would put more control over schools in the hands of states.

Democratic Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa released the outline on Tuesday. Harkin and Republican Sen. Mike Enzi of Wyoming have been working behind closed doors for months to rewrite the landmark education law signed in 2002 by President George W. Bush.

President Barack Obama has complained that Congress has failed to rework the law. Obama says that states will be granted waivers around many of the law's unpopular proficiency requirements if the states meet certain conditions.

Harkin chairs the Senate committee with jurisdiction over education. The draft reveals a plan with requirements pretty similar to Obama's.

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