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A spring of frustration in Spain



JUAN MEDINA/REUTERS

Demonstrators flood Madrid's Puerta del Sol, protesting the handling of Spain's economy — including the European Union's highest unemployment rate — and government spending cuts. The demonstrations began over the weekend, and groups have vowed to occupy central squares in several cities until local elections this weekend.

Obama looks to hone Middle East stance

Stalled peace process, unrest across region loom over address

BY SCOTT WILSON

President Obama is facing pressure from key allies to act more decisively on several volatile issues in the Middle East and North Africa, including the armed rebellion in Libya, the uprising in Syria, and the moribund peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

On Wednesday, the administration sought to address what some allies have perceived as a drift in Obama's policy in the rapidly changing region, after weeks when Osama bin Laden's killing and a domestic debate over the

TURMOIL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SYRIA: Obama imposes economic sanctions on President Bashar al-Assad that target Assad's personal finances and link him explicitly to human rights abuses. **A10**

LIBYA: Four Western journalists who were detained for weeks are released after they were found guilty of illegally entering the country. **A10**

EGYPT: Military leaders say they are not considering an immunity deal for former president Hosni Mubarak. **A8**

OPINIONS: Can the U.S. help shape a new Mideast? **David Ignatius, A19**

national debt took center stage.

On the eve of a major speech meant to define U.S. interests in the Middle East, Obama announced new financial sanctions against seven senior Syrian officials for human rights abuses, naming President Bashar al-

Assad among them for the first time.

Obama's counterterrorism adviser, John O. Brennan, also phoned Yemen's embattled president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to urge him to accept an Arab-brokered agreement that would usher him from office within a month.

And, in a preview of Obama's Thursday address, senior administration officials outlined a number of economic initiatives that the president will announce to encourage democratic changes in the region, including a total of \$2 billion in debt relief and loan guarantees for Egypt's fledgling government.

The speech is Obama's first attempt to place the anti-government demonstrations, which have swept away autocrats in Tunisia and Egypt and threatened several others, in the context of American interests and values.

Administration officials say the

address will not include a host of new proposals but rather will seek to make the broader point that the United States favors democratic reform as something consistent with its long-term security interest in the region's stability. For instance, Obama is not expected to call specifically for Assad's removal as Syria's leader, officials said.

One senior administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the address for reporters, said the speech "comes at a moment of opportunity for the region and for U.S. policy in the region."

"We're obviously coming off a decade of great tension and division across the region," the official said. "Now, having wound down the Iraq war and continuing to do so, and having taken out Osama

MIDDLE EAST CONTINUED ON A10

Amnesty efforts lag in Afghanistan

DEFECTING FIGHTERS LEFT IN LIMBO

Kabul's delays threaten to close a crucial 'window'

BY RAJIV CHANDRASEKARAN

The Afghan government has moved so slowly to recruit Taliban defectors that U.S. and Afghan officials say they are losing an opportunity to capitalize on hard-won military gains and the death of Osama bin Laden.

Interest among war-weary Taliban foot soldiers and low-ranking commanders in switching sides is at an all-time high, the officials said, but the Afghan government's inability to provide safe houses, job-training classes and other services aimed at reintegrating former combatants has prevented local authorities from offering amnesty to many fighters.

In Kandahar province, a hub of Taliban activity that has been a focus of U.S. military operations, the governor is taking the extraordinary step of urging insurgent leaders to delay their surrender.

"We are not prepared the way we should be," said the governor,

Tooryalai Wesa, who has been approached in recent weeks by emissaries for mid-level Taliban leaders. "We are telling them to wait a little bit."

Although much of the problem stems from political disagreements and bureaucratic delays within the Afghan government, the United States has been unable to provide a stopgap solution because of the way the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is interpreting congressional restrictions on the use of reconstruction funds for Afghanistan.

The Kabul government does not dispute that it has been tardy. "Program execution has been slow as compared to the urgency of the needs of the provinces and communities," the national peace and reintegration secretariat wrote this month in a review of its efforts.

Senior U.S. military officials

AFGHANISTAN CONTINUED ON A12

IMF chief, facing sexual assault charge, resigns

Move comes as Strauss-Kahn seeks house arrest in N.Y.

BY HOWARD SCHNEIDER AND ZACHARY A. GOLDFARB

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, who is facing attempted rape charges in New York, announced his resignation late Wednesday night.

In a statement, Strauss-Kahn said he is resigning "with infinite sadness" and in an effort "to protect this institution."

The resignation, while providing clarity to an organization reeling from the accusations facing its managing director, immediately

sets off a scramble about who will lead the powerful organization and what that will mean for the global economy.

Under Strauss-Kahn, the Washington-based IMF has taken a muscular approach toward fixing Europe's financial woes, advocating financial bailouts for ailing nations such as Greece and Portugal. Without Strauss-Kahn at the helm, Europe is at risk of losing a key source of financial support in its efforts to contain the debt crisis buffeting the continent.

The resignation — emanating from a jail cell on Riker's Island, where Strauss-Kahn has spent three nights while he fights to be released on bail — also marks one of the most extraordinary falls from power in recent years. Until

IMF CONTINUED ON A13

When couples say 'I do,' more often it's for keeps

BY CAROL MORELLO

Americans may be postponing marriage, and fewer are wedding at all. But what about the people who do get married? They're staying together longer than they have in years.

Three in four couples who married after 1990 celebrated a 10-year anniversary, according to census statistics reported Wednesday. That was a rise of three percentage points compared with couples who married in the early 1980s, when the nation's divorce rate was at its highest.

One reason for the increase, said demographers and sociologists who study families, is that people are marrying later in life, after they have completed their education. Not only are they more mature, but they also are more financially secure.

3 in 4

Couples who married after 1990 who celebrated their 10-year anniversary.

4 in 10

Marriages nationwide that end in divorce.

"People seem to be finding a new marriage bargain that works for 21st-century couples," said Andrew Cherlin, a Johns Hopkins University sociologist who studies families. "It's based on pooling two incomes, replacing the old breadwinner-homemaker bargain that worked well in the '50s."

Researchers increasingly are finding a connection between marriage and education. In 2009, 31 percent of brides had a college degree, up from 21 percent in 1996.

"Marriage has become a much

MARRIAGE CONTINUED ON A7

Can a Republican moderate survive?

Jon Huntsman is testing the waters before a GOP primary season that promises to lean right

BY NIA-MALIKA HENDERSON

Jon Huntsman Jr. sets off Thursday on his first campaign-style swing through New Hampshire, testing whether his moderate brand of politics can find a place in today's Republican Party.

In a likely presidential bid, he would bring with him a political resume punctuated by his stint as President Obama's ambassador to China and loaded with centrist positions on immigration, cap-and-trade climate legislation, and gay rights.

That could be an uneasy fit in a GOP primary season that is already pushing candidates to the right. So much so that Huntsman's aides reject the suggestion that he is a moderate — one called it the "M-word" — and describe the former Utah governor as a mainstream conservative with a



PHILIPPE LOPEZ/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Former Utah governor Jon Huntsman Jr. will visit New Hampshire this week. Known for his centrist positions, he also served until last month as President Obama's ambassador to China.

solid record of antiabortion legislation and tax cuts.

In an up-for-grabs Republican field, Huntsman would enter as a relative newcomer, with a low national profile and a weak presence in the polls. But he couldn't be dismissed. He is telegenic, has access to a vast family fortune, worked for several presidents and has assembled a team of strategists with national campaign experience — this week he landed a former Mike Huckabee adviser in South Carolina.

Still, Huntsman's path through the GOP primary would require some airbrushing and some work to build a base of moderate supporters in a party that finds much

HUNTSMAN CONTINUED ON A16

Gingrich's missteps: For many, the candidate's rhetoric raises old questions. **The Take, A2**

INSIDE

SPORTS

The other kind of football

Locked out of Redskins Park, wide receiver Anthony Armstrong is spending his time as a soccer coach to 7- and 8-year-olds. **D1**



THE REGION

Some D.C. test scores tossed

An analysis found evidence or a strong suspicion of cheating in a number of classrooms. **A6**

Sharing the road

On the eve of Bike to Work Day, cyclists and motorists alike are reminded about safe practices. **B1**

THE NATION

A close call at O'Hare

Two commuter planes nearly collide in flight amid air traffic confusion after the vice president's visit. **A4**

STYLE

Year of the woman?

At Cannes, Ann Hornaday finds female directors and sensitive portrayals of women in the spotlight. **C1**



LOCAL LIVING

New bedfellows in the garden

Instead of planting this summer flower by the hundreds, try some shade-loving alternatives.

OPINIONS

Tom Coburn: As the debt crisis deepens, the Senate is missing in action. **A19**

Jackson Diehl: Mahmoud Abbas's formula for war. **A19**

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