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TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

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THE SECRETARY IN THE NEWS

New Leadership, Lawmakers Hoping To Reform VA. The [Honolulu Advertiser](#) (4/14, Yaukey) reports, "For years, government care and benefits for veterans were often hard to get because of bureaucratic or geographic hurdles. But that may be changing" because veterans' "advocates -- including lawmakers and the newly appointed leaders of the Veterans Affairs Department -- are pushing sweeping reforms in benefits and management practices to modernize the system." The VA's "new secretary, former Army Gen. Eric Shinseki, has promised to modernize the agency and streamline the delivery of benefits." But "perhaps one of the most daunting challenges the VA faces is providing care to veterans who don't live near

VA facilities." However, Tammy Duckworth, "a helicopter pilot severely wounded in Iraq and now up for a top position in the VA," recently "told lawmakers...that if the VA 'cannot be in every hometown across America, we will find partners who are.'"

Reforms Being Pushed By Officials With Ties To Hawaii. The [AP](#) (4/14), which notes that Duckworth graduated from the University of Hawaii, says, "Sweeping reforms to veteran care are being pushed in Washington by officials with Hawaii ties," including US Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI), chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. Akaka "is promoting legislation that would enhance education benefits, increase access to medical care and raise income ceilings that cut off access to services." Shinseki, meanwhile, who "is from Kauai," has "said one of his top priorities is

expanding education benefits for military veterans who have served since Sept. 11, 2001.”

Obama Supporting Joint Electronic Record For Vets, Increased Budget. The [American Forces Press Service](#) (4/14, Miles) says Shinseki’s “vision of giving back to America’s veterans got a solid endorsement” recently when President Barack Obama “announced a new joint virtual lifetime electronic record that will improve care and services to transitioning veterans by smoothing the flow of medical records between” the Defense Department and the VA. During that announcement, Obama also “said his fiscal 2010 budget request, which represents the largest single-year increase in VA funding in three decades, will help achieve” the goal of providing US veterans with “a 21st-century VA.”

VA Urged To Address Claims Backlog. The [Poughkeepsie \(NY\) Journal](#) (4/14) editorializes, “Years after the problem was first identified, wounded veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan are still facing horrendous waits for their disability claims. This outrage has to end.” And while the recently announced joint electronic record, along with an increased budget for the VA and “about \$1.4 billion for VA projects” to be paid for out of Federal stimulus funds “are positive steps,” the number of vets “waiting for the VA to process their claims” will “increase as more troops return home -- unless the government gets a better handle on the situation now.”

Radio Station Airs Audio Of Incident With VA.

In continuing coverage, Ed O’Keefe reported in his “Federal Eye” blog for the [Washington Post](#) (4/13) that on Monday morning, “Washington public radio station WAMU...aired audio of an exchange that took place last Tuesday night between one of its reporters” and a public affairs officer from the Veterans Affairs hospital in Washington, DC. After noting that the VA was to begin “an internal ‘top to bottom’ investigation of the incident” Monday “to see ‘what lessons can be learned from the experience,’ according to VA spokeswoman Katie Roberts,” O’Keefe linked to WAMU’s audio. The [Radio Business Report](#) (4/13) noted that the review was ordered by VA Secretary Eric Shinseki.

IRAQ/AFGHANISTAN VETS

After Expressing Concern About Returning To Iraq, US Soldier Commits Suicide. The [AP](#) (4/14) reports 28 year-old US Army Spc. Nokware Rosado Munoz, “who had told his family he did not want to return” to Iraq, “apparently killed himself in a Puerto Rican motel days before he was to...head back to the war zone, police” in the US territory said Monday. The “soldier’s mother-in-law, Migdalia Estrada, was quoted by newspaper El Nuevo Dia as saying

that Rosado was receiving psychiatric treatment stemming from a previous Iraq deployment. ‘He had said to my daughter that he didn’t want to go back to Iraq,’ Estrada said. ‘I don’t understand how they can order him back if he was having problems.’” Suicides “in the Army have increased yearly since 2004 as soldiers deal with longer and repeated tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

VA Hospital Using Virtual Reality To Treat PTSD.

The [Grand Island \(NE\) Independent](#) (4/13, Overstreet) said a “cutting-edge mental health treatment is coming to area veterans. Virtual reality equipment was installed last week in the mental health clinic” at the Veterans Affairs medical center in Grand Island. Psychologist Dr. Krista Krebs, “who specializes in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) said the equipment will be used in mid-level PTSD treatments. She and the equipment are part of increases in mental health services the VA has been adding since 2006.” About “50 percent of returning veterans meet the criteria of PTSD or are experiencing its symptoms, Krebs said.”

Technique Helps Troubled Vets Sleep. The [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (4/14, Newhouse) reports, “At a recent mental health conference in the Salt Palace,” Iraq vet Kip Day “described how he finally learned to sleep again. It’s a simple technique” that the VA “has tested in Salt Lake City and found effective for both sleep disorders” and for PTSD. The “mind-body bridging technique,” which was “developed by Dr. Stanley Block and described in his book, ‘Come To Your Senses,’ involves listening, touching, seeing and smelling your environment instead of wrestling with your thoughts.” The “VA in Salt Lake City has begun producing a series of DVDs entitled ‘Come To Your Senses’ that will walk vets through the therapy,” which is also “being used in at least one VA hospital in Massachusetts, said Block.”

Vet Devotes Time To Suicide Prevention. The [Appleton \(WI\) Post-Crescent](#) (4/13, Wideman) profiled 37-year-old veteran Scott Adler, who, over a three-year period, “experienced the suicides of five fellow soldiers, a fall into deep depression, anxiety attacks and, eventually, a 100 percent disability classification” by the VA. In March, Adler traveled to Washington, DC, “where he persuaded” US Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) “to introduce into the Congressional Record a series of proposals to prevent a growing number of military suicides.” Adler currently volunteers at National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Fox Valley, “offering support for a fledgling group of returning war veterans suffering from mental issues. Adler is working with NAMI project coordinator Sandy Pharis to develop a pilot program, to be unveiled in May at a statewide veterans issues conference in Madison, for the state’s 35 NAMI chapters to deal with mental concerns of veterans.” The [Green Bay \(WI\) Press Gazette](#) (4/13) ran the same story.

[WFRV-TV](#) Green Bay, WI (4/13, 5:00 p.m. CT) broadcast that Adler, who “is returning to DC” Tuesday, “wrote and submitted a suicide prevention proposal to the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee last month. This week, he’s fighting for more rigorous crisis intervention training.”

PTSD Debate Said To Be “Roiling Military Culture.”

[Scientific American](#) (4/14, Dobbs) reports that when Matt Stevens returned from his service in Iraq, he “began to have doubts about PTSD,” seeing the diagnosis as “being wildly, even dangerously, overextended” by the medical culture, “especially” in the VA. But Stevens, who “works as a physician’s assistant, is far from alone in worrying about the reach of PTSD. Over the past five years or so, a long-simmering academic debate over PTSD’s conceptual basis and incidence has begun to boil over.” That debate “is now splitting the practice of trauma psychology and roiling military culture.” In fact, a “broad array” of experts, “indeed, giants of psychology, psychiatry and epidemiology,” are asserting that the “diagnostic criteria for PTSD...represent a faulty, outdated construct that has been badly overstretched so that it routinely mistakes depression, anxiety or even normal adjustment for a unique and especially stubborn ailment.”

Remains Of Five US Soldiers Killed In Iraq Arrive At Dover. The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/13, story 8, 0:30, Couric) broadcast that the remains of five “soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division in Fort Carson, Colorado, were flown” Sunday “night to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.” CBS, which showed footage of the arrival ceremony, noted that the soldiers “were killed Friday in a suicide truck bombing in Mosul, the deadliest single attack on US troops in Iraq in more than a year.”

Florida Vet One Of Hundreds At This Year’s Winter Sports Clinic. In continuing coverage, the second story in the [Juneau \(AK\) Empire’s](#) (4/13) “Recognitions” column noted that 39-year-old Douglas Schwarz, “a former Juneau resident and Air Force veteran from Greenacres, Fla., participated in the 23rd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic,” held “March 29 to April 3 in Snowmass Village.” Schwarz, who “receives care at the VA medical facility in West Palm Beach, Fla.” is “among more than 350” US military veterans “and active duty personnel from across the nation who gathered in Snowmass Village to learn or improve upon their skills in winter sports. More than 65 active duty military personnel and veterans from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan” participated in the clinic this year.

More Vets Requesting Hardship Waivers. The [KGTV-TV](#) San Diego (4/13) website reported, “It’s another

sign of the current state of the economy -- more and more military veterans are asking for help.” The staff at the Veterans Affairs medical center in La Jolla “said more veterans are calling because they are finding it tougher to pay for health care because they either cannot afford it or they lost a job and their benefits.” Hospital administrators “said the vets are looking for a hardship waiver, which would allow them to qualify for extra medical coverage from the VA. Last year, only 42 waiver requests were made,” but in the “first four months of 2009, the VA has already received more than 120 requests, and officials said there might be a lot more out there.”

Vets Dealing With Unemployment Concerns.

The [Indianapolis Star](#) (4/14, Higgins) reports, “About 170,000 veterans who have served since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and returned to civilian life” have had difficulty finding a job. Their “unemployment rate averaged 7.3 percent last year, compared with 5.8 percent for the overall population, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The most recent unemployment numbers, for February, are gloomier still: 11.2 percent, compared with 8.8 percent. National Guard soldiers, often called ‘citizen soldiers’ because their primary jobs are civilian, are legally protected from being laid off as a result of absences caused by deployments,” but “they have no immunity from a tanking economy and are as vulnerable to layoffs and plant closings as anyone. Their woes might be particularly acute in Indiana,” where, late “last year, just as the economic free fall accelerated, the Indiana Guard’s 3,300-soldier 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team...arrived home from Iraq.”

“Disgruntled” Vets Noted In DHS Warning About Rise In “Rightwing Extremist Activity.”

The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Hudson, Lake) reports, “The Department of Homeland Security is warning law enforcement officials about a rise in ‘rightwing extremist activity,’ saying the economic recession, the election of America’s first black president and the return of a few disgruntled war veterans could swell the ranks of white-power militias.” The White House “has distanced itself” from the nine-page document that “was sent to police and sheriff’s departments across the United States on April 7. When “asked for comment” on the document, “White House spokesman Nick Shapiro said, ‘The President is focused not on politics but rather taking the steps necessary to protect all Americans from the threat of violence and terrorism regardless of its origins. He also believes those who serve represent the best of this country, and he will continue to ensure that our veterans receive the respect and benefits they have earned.’”

MENTAL HEALTH

Mikulski Asks VA To Upgrade Clinic's Mental Health Services. In continuing coverage, the [AP](#) (4/14) reports US Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) "has asked the Department of Veterans Affairs to upgrade mental health services at its outpatient clinic in Cumberland." Mikulski "released a letter Monday that she sent to the director of the regional VA medical center in Martinsburg, W.Va., seeking action on complaints last week by a Vietnam veterans group" in Cumberland that is "concerned about the VA's decision to stop contracting with a private clinic for mental-health care and add services at the local VA clinic."

HEALTH CARE (LOCAL)

VA Facilities To Receive Stimulus Funds. In continuing coverage, the [New Mexico Business Weekly](#) (4/14) says that according to New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson's office, more than \$5 million in Federal stimulus funds will go to Veterans Affairs projects around New Mexico. The Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center...will receive \$4.8 million" while the Santa Fe National Cemetery "will get \$570,000 for road paving and curb replacement." Another \$75,000 has been "allocated to repair cracks in the Columbaria structure at the site. The Ft. Bayard National Cemetery in Grant County," meanwhile, "will receive \$16,000 for the purchase of equipment."

On its website, [KFSN-TV](#) Fresno, CA (4/13, Osborne) said, "Central Valley Veterans turn to the VA for their varied health care needs." And now, a \$12 million "stimulus windfall," coupled with \$30 million "already in play," will "enhance the care they receive" at Fresno's VA hospital, which is expected to open its renovated emergency "around the end of this year. They say it will be start of the art in emergency medicine."

VA Medical Foster Home Program Expanding. The [Memphis \(TN\) Commercial Appeal](#) (4/14, Powers) reports, "When a doctor delivered the news that frailty and increasingly complicated health problems meant living alone was no longer an option, the Bowlings were distraught." But thanks "to a new Memphis Veterans Medical Center program, she and her 90-year-old husband, Julian, didn't stay long. In January, the Bowlings moved from a Shelby County nursing home into a spare bedroom in the Bartlett home of Linda and Steve Hornaday." The two families had been brought together by the "VA's medical foster home program," which "has expanded to 13 communities in nine states or territories where about 400 veterans now live in private homes, rather

than nursing homes. Plans call for expanding the effort nationwide."

New Program Improves Care For Rio Grande Valley Vet. In continuing coverage, the [KGBT-TV](#) Harlingen, TX (4/13, Avila) website said veteran Fred Hernandez "has traveled from the Rio Grande Valley to San Antonio to receive medical care for years," but "under a new program," he is "getting medical care a lot closer to home." Several "Valley hospitals signed a contract" with the Department of Veterans Affairs in March. Under "the new contract, veterans like Hernandez will have local access to acute surgical care and even mental healthcare eliminating trips to San Antonio. Hernandez said he's 90 percent blind and that the contract is a big victory for him and other Valley veterans with special needs." KGBT added that US Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX) "said he's working to secure funding to build a full veterans hospital in...South Texas."

VA NEWS

WTimes Series On VA Medical Experiment Wins Award. The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Harper) says it "has won the Society of Professional Journalists' Sigma Delta Chi Award for public service, one of investigative journalism's highest honors, for its series entitled 'Disposable Heroes' that disclosed the unethical treatment of war veterans during a Veterans Affairs medical experiment." The award "will be presented to The Washington Times in August" at the society's "annual meeting in Indianapolis."

A similar, later version of this [Times](#) (4/14, Harper) story reports, "The award won plaudits Monday from" US Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA), "the House member who oversees the Veterans Affairs Department. 'We cannot do our oversight job without the kind of investigative journalism exemplified by Audrey Hudson's reporting,'" said Filner.

VA Program Assisting Homeless Vets In Maryland. The [Baltimore \(MD\) Sun](#) (4/14, Hare) reports 54-year-old veteran Keith Church "left the Navy in 1974...and never considered asking for veterans benefits. But in December," Church "was jobless, coping with health problems and on the brink of homelessness...when he turned" to the US Department of Veterans Affairs "for help. Within a few months, he moved into an apartment, thanks to a VA program that started in Maryland this year to help homeless veterans." The "Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program uses vouchers to help homeless veterans move into rental units. 'The whole idea is to take these veterans from poverty and homelessness and give them the health and support they need,' said Patricia Lane, the VA's

coordinator for health care for homeless veterans in Maryland.”

Korean War Vet Buried In Kentucky. The [AP](#) (4/14) reports Dale Stidham, a “young soldier who went missing in action nearly 60 years ago in the Korean War,” was buried with military honors Monday at Camp Nelson National Cemetery “in his native Kentucky.” The Pentagon “confirmed April 3 that it had identified Stidham’s remains and those of three other American soldiers.” The [Lexington \(KY\) Herald-Leader](#) (4/13, Warren) published a similar story.

STATE VA NEWS

Investigations Look Into Gravestones Taken From Nevada Veterans Cemetery. In continuing coverage, the [KLAS-TV](#) (4/13) website reported, “The Attorney General’s Office is now investigating two state employees for taking home 77 gravestones from the Southern Nevada Veterans Cemetery,” which means the internal investigation by the Nevada Office of Veterans Services “now has some powerful company trying to decide if taking the stones is considered a crime.” The employees, Tami and Kevin Jenicke, “admitted they turned” stones meant for destruction into a patio. The state of Nevada “has no policy on how the old stones should be destroyed,” but the Federal government does. The stones “should be ground down and broken apart so they cannot be recognized – the most honorable option available – they say.”

Bell Tower Dedicated At Kentucky Veterans Cemetery. The [Elizabethtown \(KY\) News Enterprise](#) (4/14, White) reports, “A new addition to Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central will literally set the tone for visitors of the place where nearly 800 vets and their families rest. During a brief ceremony held Friday afternoon,” veterans, “dignitaries and families of those who’ve served dedicated a 40-foot bell tower at the cemetery. The patriotic music-playing tower is the second to be installed at Kentucky veterans’ cemeteries, with the first dedicated last year at Kentucky Veterans Cemetery West in Hopkinsville.” Plans “are in the works to soon bring a third carillon bell tower to Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North, at Williamstown, according to Jeff Acob, manager of the three Kentucky veterans’ cemeteries.”

CONGRESSIONAL VA NEWS

Senators Pushing For Veterans Cemetery In Nebraska. In continuing coverage, the [Bellevue \(NE\) Leader](#) (4/13, Glenn) said a bill recently introduced by

Nebraska Sens. Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Mike Johanns (R-NE) “would supercede Department of Veterans Affairs policy” and direct the agency’s secretary to establish a national veterans cemetery in Sarpy County. ‘Our bill will establish a new national cemetery in Sarpy County and ensure that the 172,000 veterans in this region will get the recognition they deserve and the honor of a final resting place in a national veteran’s cemetery,’ Nelson said in a press release.” That 172,000 figure “is significant because it comes from a Metropolitan Area Planning Agency study on eligible veterans living within the VA’s 75-mile threshold distance necessary for establishing a national cemetery. Current VA regulations require at least 170,000 veterans within that 75-mile radius, but a VA estimate identifies only 133,000 eligible veterans within that distance from Omaha.”

EDITORIAL ROUNDUP

Electronic Records System Will Ease Care For Vets. In continuing coverage, an editorial in [Long Island Newsday](#) (4/14) says one “major obstacle” for those transitioning “from warrior to veteran” is “that the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs don’t share a medical-records system.” But last week, President Barack Obama “took a big step toward untangling that complexity” when he “pledged to create a seamless electronic system” containing the administrative and medical information for veterans. The President also “said his budget proposes the largest single-year increase for veterans in decades, and he supported legislation to fund the VA a year in advance, to eliminate the dislocation of late budgets. These actions will go a long way toward honoring the nation’s debt to its veterans.”

Electronic Health Records: Other Perspectives. In a letter to the editor of the [New York Times](#) (4/14), Douglas Migden, a “practicing emergency physician,” says Americans “should demand that the Obama administration and Congress force hospitals and other health care providers to use one nationwide electronic records system, for example, the one used by the Veterans Health Administration, or adequately explain why such a proposition would not work.”

Veterans Deserve Better From VA. In continuing coverage, an editorial in the [Clarksville \(TN\) Leaf Chronicle](#) (4/14) asks, “What’s been going on regarding safety procedures at Veterans Affairs...medical facilities in Tennessee, Georgia and Florida? A failure to properly maintain hospital equipment has led veterans to be exposed to HIV and other potentially fatal diseases” at the facilities.

The Chronicle argues that the Federal government “needs to conduct a thorough review and hold responsible anyone who was negligent.” It “also should recheck all of its other facilities to ensure that nothing similar is happening elsewhere,” and “it should put better safeguards in place.”

VA Care Is Outstanding. A letter to the editor of the [Batavia \(NY\) Daily News](#) (4/14).

Unhealthy Weather. In a [Fort Wayne \(IN\) News-Sentinel](#) (4/13) column noting that a “physician and meteorologist duo from Canada have designed” MediClim.com, “an early-warning system that takes forecasting to a new level by using scientific data to track how weather changes affect our health,” Jennifer Boen pointed out that one “two-year study by the Veterans Health Administration found blood-glucose levels were lowest in August and September and peaked from February through April.”

BRIEFLY NOTED

‘Tea Party’ Location Irks Veterans. The [Pittsburg \(KS\) Morning Sun](#) (4/14, Dalton) says veterans like Bob Roberts have “a problem” with a “Taxpayer Tea Party” scheduled to be held Wednesday “at the Veterans Memorial at Pittsburg State University.” Commenting on the situation, Roberts said the memorial, “as far as I’m concerned, is hallowed ground. To have a partisan, political ‘tea party’ there really offends my sensibilities.” However, “the ‘tea parties’ are being billed as apolitical, non-partisan events.”

US To Pay Off All Pinoy World War II Veterans Within A Year. The [Philippine Star](#) (4/14, Katigbak).

Uncle Charlie’s War. The [WFMY-TV](#) Greensboro, NC (4/13, Wagmeister) website.

A Day In The Life Of A Veteran Services Officer. The [Van Wert \(OH\) Times Bulletin](#) (4/13, Dougal).

Veterans To Gather. The [Mankato \(MN\) Free Press](#) (4/13, Ojanpa).

Once In A Lifetime Trip For WW II Veterans. The [KSLA-TV](#) Shreveport, LA (4/13, Wolf) website.

Shaler Photographer Had Passion For Life, Marines. The [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#) (4/14, Cato).

Stomach Bug Crystallizes A Threat From Antibiotics. The [New York Times](#) (4/14, D6, Parker-Pope).

NATIONAL NEWS

Obama Eases Some Cuban Sanctions. The Obama Administration yesterday eased some travel and gift restrictions on Cuban Americans, generating ample – and largely positive – media coverage that included reports on all three network newscasts. [ABC World News](#) (4/13, story 5, 1:55, Gibson, 8.2M), for example, reported that “Obama traded 50 years of anger towards Cuba for an olive branch,” and added (Kofman) that Miami’s “powerful Cuban American National Foundation supported...Obama’s moves.”

The [Miami Herald](#) (4/14, Clark, 253K) notes that the announcement, which it says “marks the most significant US gesture to Cuba in decades,” was made by “White House spokesman Robert Gibbs...along with special assistant to the president” Dan Restrepo, “who spoke in Spanish.” President Obama “did not take part in the press conference.” Dana Milbank notes in the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A2, 696K) that “White House stenographers transcribed” Restrepo’s “announcement, in its entirety, as ‘(Speaking Spanish),’” though “a revised transcript later added the Spanish words.” Gibbs, [AFP](#) (4/14) reports, described the new steps as an effort “to reach out to the Cuban people to support their desire to enjoy basic human rights and to freely determine their country’s future.” [CNN’s The Situation Room](#) (4/13, Blitzer) showed Gibbs saying, “All who embrace core democratic values long for a Cuba that respects the basic human, political and economic rights of all of its citizens,” and the President “believes the measure he has taken today will help make that goal a reality.”

The Spanish-language Miami daily [El Nuevo Herald](#) (4/14, Bulletin News translation) reports that “the lifting of restrictions will benefit 1.5 million Cubans and Cuban-Americans, who will be able to travel and send money unrestricted to their relatives in the island.” The “transcendental change” comes “just days before the Summit of the Americas.” On its front page, the [Financial Times](#) (4/14, Luce, Dombey) reports that “analysts” said “Monday’s step was the minimum necessary to ensure Mr Obama gets a good response at the summit, where the US will be the only country that lacks full diplomatic relations with Havana.”

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, A1, Silva, Wilkinson, 833K) reports Gibbs said that “the State, Treasury and Commerce departments would lift all restrictions on the visits of family members to Cuba and remittances as a way to ‘help bridge the gap between divided Cuban families.’ The goal, he said, is to promote greater freedom and human rights in

the nation run by the Castros for half a century.” The Times adds that “aides to Obama said relaxing the rules also represented an effort to aid Cubans by making them less dependent on the Castro government, while continuing to hold it to account through the embargo.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, Meckler, Schatz, 2.07M) notes the changes announced by the Administration would also “allow US telecommunications companies to set up shop in Cuba, a step that may be mostly symbolic in the short term,” as American companies “would need the permission of the Cuban government to beam satellite-TV and radio programs onto the island,” and “there was no indication that such permission would be forthcoming.” On its front page, meanwhile, the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A1, Shear, Kang, 696K) reports that “the announcement could open the door for the American information revolution to enter the island nation -- in the form of Howard Stern on Sirius radio, iPhones and Wikipedia.”

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, Pae, Semuels, 833K) reports that “according to 2007 statistics from the International Telecommunications Union, 11% of Cuba’s population subscribes to telephone services, and only about 2% of the population subscribes to cellphone service.” Moreover, “fewer than 1 of every 100 Cubans is a broadband subscriber, even though 12% of the population use the Internet.” Adds the Times, “As a matter of comparison, in the Dominican Republic, 56% of the population subscribed to cellphone service and there were two broadband subscribers for every 100 inhabitants.”

Under the new policy, says the [Miami Herald](#) (4/14, Dorschner, Hatcher, 253K), Americans will “be able to send Cubans cellphones, computers, software and satellite receivers.” In 2008, “the Bush administration authorized Cuban-Americans to send cell phones to family members, but the Obama announcement doesn’t restrict the gifts to relatives.” [Reuters](#) (4/14, Spetalnick), meanwhile, portrays the changes as a departure from Bush-era policies, as does the [AP](#) (4/14, Burns), which says that with the move, US officials also “marked another major step away from the foreign policy priorities of the Bush administration.”

In an analysis piece, the [Miami Herald](#) (4/14, Clark, 253K) says “experts on Cuba-US relations say pressure on the Obama administration from Latin America and Europe to bring Cuba in from the cold, combined with congressional efforts to ease sanctions and Havana’s storied resistance to the United States, may lead Raúl Castro’s government to consider itself in a position of strength.” But “Obama represents a potential challenge for a Cuban regime headed by white septuagenarians. The majority of Cuba’s population is black or of mixed race, and the young US president is popular among everyday Cubans, which may prod Havana into acknowledging, however slightly, his gesture.”

The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Ward, 83K) says “there was general approval of the president’s decision from lawmakers and advocacy groups, a decision that fulfilled a promise made by Mr. Obama during the presidential campaign,” but “disagreement remains over whether to take further action on pulling down travel, trade and business barriers between the US and Cuba.” The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/13, story 5, 0:25, Couric, 6.1M) briefly noted the “big change in US policy toward Cuba,” which according to the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A1, Shear, Kang, 696K) was “hailed by many advocates of greater openness toward the regime, including the business community, which sees new opportunities for commerce,” and “immediately criticized by those on the right and the left who said it either went too far or not far enough.” [USA Today](#) (4/14, Gomez, Jackson, 2.28M) notes “some Cuban Americans, including members of Congress from Florida, said more travel and aid will only embolden Cuba’s communist rulers,” and “a joint statement from Reps. Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart, Florida Republicans who are Cuban American, called Monday’s move a ‘serious mistake.’” The Diaz-Balarts wrote, “Unilateral concessions to the dictatorship embolden it to further isolate, imprison and brutalize pro-democracy activists.”

But before quoting Lincoln Diaz-Balart, [NBC Nightly News](#) (4/13, story 4, 2:25, Mitchell, 8.37M) referred to “a dwindling number” of Cuban Americans who “still argue the Obama White House is only helping Raul Castro and his ailing brother.” [The Politico](#) (4/14, Lee) says that during the 2008 campaign, “Obama avoided taking a hard line on Cuba” and tapped “into the more moderate views of younger Cuban Americans and newer exiles.” And while yesterday’s move “drew strong rebuke from traditional hard line supporters of the US embargo...a CNN poll last week found that two-thirds of Americans think the United States should lift its travel ban on Cuba, and three-quarters support relations with the island.” [The Hill](#) (4/14, Swanson) counts “the Diaz-Balart brothers...among the toughest advocates in Congress of a hard-line approach to Cuba’s government.” Lincoln Diaz-Balart “was born in Cuba and fled the country with his family after Fidel Castro’s revolution.” Democrats “unsuccessfully tried to knock off both GOP lawmakers in last fall’s elections, and the two faced their most serious challenges in years.” [Roll Call](#) (4/14, Kucinich) also reports the Diaz-Balarts’ objections to Obama’s move.

On the other hand, the [AP](#) (4/14, Burns) reports, Obama’s “moves fell far short of the more drastic policy adjustments that some -- including Republican Sen. Richard Lugar -- have argued are required to promote US interests in Latin America and to bring about change in Cuba.” Julia Sweig, director of Latin studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, “described Obama’s changes as ‘teensy, weensy’ and said they appear to be driven more by domestic political

calculations that by foreign policy considerations.” Said Sweig, “This is a cautious first step by a president whose political advisers are looking at the Florida electoral vote.” Jose Miguel Vivanco of Human Rights Watch “welcomed the Cuba announcement but said more should be done.” [The Hill](#) (4/14, Youngman) notes that Obama aide Dan Restrepo yesterday “responded to criticism from some on Capitol Hill that the president's actions don't go far enough to normalize relations with the Communist country by saying that Monday's announcement is ‘the place to start.’” Said Restrepo, “US policy toward Cuba is not frozen in time.”

[AFP](#) (4/14) reports “the administration's actions won applause in US farm states hoping to gain a new markets for their agricultural products.” Sen. Byron Dorgan said, “We should also immediately eliminate the roadblocks that the Bush Administration put in place to make it harder for farmers to sell food to Cuba. ... I also believe the embargo should be ended. When a policy has failed for nearly 50 years, it is time to change the policy.” The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Stolberg, Cave, 1.12M), meanwhile, says that Obama “demonstrated Monday that he was willing to open the door toward greater engagement with Cuba -- but at this point, only a crack.”

Martinez Supports Obama's Actions. The [AP](#) (4/14, Wides-Munoz) reports “US Sen. Mel Martinez is cautiously optimistic about...Obama's plan to ease restrictions on Americans' ability to visit family in Cuba.” He “said he understands fellow Cuban-Americans who oppose opening travel and easing restrictions on remittances but said overall it will be good for Cubans on the island nation.” Said Martinez, “It's going to bring families together,” and “the technology piece is terrific.” However, the senator “said he was also concerned some might abuse the open door travel policy, using family as an excuse to travel frequently on business.”

Meek Disagrees With Obama Position On Remittances To Cuba. The [Miami Herald](#) (4/14, Reinhard, 253K) reports, “At a Monday morning rally for his US Senate campaign,” FL17 Rep. Kendrick Meek “said he supports curbing the amount of money Cuban Americans can send to their relatives because the communist government takes a 20 percent cut. Later Monday, Obama announced that he would allow Cuban Americans to freely send cash to needy relatives, and he called on the Cuban government to confiscate less of the money.” Meek “later issued a statement that said free-flowing remittances would amount to ‘further propping up a regime that suppresses human rights, freedoms and personal mobility. ... To have remittances meant for family members in Cuba siphoned off by the regime in Havana would be a deep insult to Cuban Americans everywhere.’”

US Religious Freedom Watchdog Forced To Cancel Trip To Cuba. The [AP](#) (4/14, Lee) reports, “A planned trip to Cuba this week by a US religious freedom watchdog group

has been canceled after the Cuban government did not issue visas to the delegation, the group said Monday, even as the Obama administration moved to ease sanctions on the communist nation.” The US Commission on International Religious Freedom “said it had been forced to call off the fact-finding visit that had been scheduled to run from Tuesday to Thursday due to the lack of visas. It said the visas had been applied for weeks earlier and it had received no explanation for why they were not granted.” The AP describes the group as “an independent congressionally mandated panel that provides recommendations to the government on religious freedom matters.”

More Commentary. In a “Topic A” survey of opinion on Obama's changes to US policy toward Cuba, the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, 696K) notes comments from a number of experts. Bernard Aronson, “Assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs from 1989-1993,” calls Obama's actions “both welcome and overdue.”

Jorge Castañeda and Andrés Martínez, fellows at the New America Foundation, say that “for once...Obama can't be accused of pushing for ambitious change. The minor adjustments he has made to American policy towards Cuba simply take us back to the days of the Clinton administration.”

Peter Hakim, President of the Inter-American Dialogue, says “the Cuban American community, which has blocked any easing of Cuba policy to date, is politically weaker and more diverse than it once was. Still, its views have to be taken into account.” Hakim adds that “there should be no question about Washington's support for free expression and association, the rule of law, human rights, and competitive elections in Cuba. But a democratic society in Cuba should be the objective of US engagement, not a precondition.”

Wayne S. Smith, “chief of the US Interests Section in Havana from 1979-1982,” says “Restrepo's demeanor reminded me of the Bush administration. If this is all the Obama administration has to offer by way of change in our Cuba policy, the president is in for a difficult time at the upcoming Summit of the Americas.”

Eugene Robinson writes in the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A17, 696K), “The Congressional Black Caucus delegation that visited Havana last week was naive not to notice -- or disingenuous not to acknowledge -- that Cuba is hardly the paradise of racial harmony and equality it pretends to be. Still, that's no reason for the United States to continue the illogical, ineffective, hard-line policies that have produced an unbroken 47-year record of failure.” Obama's action “is barely a start. He should go so far as to actually base our Cuba policy on reality. After all, we've tried everything else.” On the CBC visit, Robinson adds that “the visitors from Washington could have observed that the workforce in Cuba's burgeoning tourism industry -- arguably the most privileged class, since waiters and cab drivers receive tips in

hard currency, which allows them a standard of living far beyond what is possible with Cuban pesos and government rations -- is disproportionately white."

Sebelius Misstated Campaign Contributions From Controversial Donor.

The [AP](#) (4/14, Werner) reports that Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, "President Barack Obama's health secretary, nominee got nearly three times as much political money from a controversial abortion doctor as she told senators." HHS "said Monday that the omission was an oversight that...Sebelius would correct." Gov. Sebelius told the Senate Finance Committee last week "that she received \$12,450 between 1994-2001 from Dr. George Tiller, one of the nation's few late-term abortion providers," but "records reviewed by The Associated Press show that Tiller gave at least \$23,000 more from 2000-2002 to a political action committee Sebelius established while insurance commissioner to raise money for fellow Democrats." HHS spokesman Nick Papas explained, "There was an oversight in the initial answer provided to the committee. ... Obviously donations to the PAC are a matter of public record. The governor is updating the answer to this question and will resubmit it to the committee."

Sebelius Files Amended Kansas Tax Returns.

Kansas' [Topeka Capital Journal](#) (4/14, Carlson) reports that "Sebelius filed amended state tax returns late last month, the White House said Monday." The "forms were necessitated by the adjustments made on her federal tax returns, White House spokeswoman Kate Bedingfield said."

Petrou To Take Over For Childress As HHS Chief Of Staff.

[The Politico](#) (4/14, Brown) reports, "With Kathleen Sebelius on her way in at the Health and Human Services Department, the agency is getting a new chief of staff." Quoting only an unnamed "administration official," the Politico adds that "Laura Petrou, an HHS senior adviser who worked for former Sen. Tom Daschle for 20 years on Capitol Hill, will move this week into the chief of staff job." Petrou will replace "Mark Childress, another longtime Daschle confidant, who has held the post since January in anticipation of Daschle becoming health secretary." Of Petrou, the administration official said, "She has extensive policy experience, extensive management experience. ... She is a great fit." The shift "was not unexpected," the Politico notes.

Swat Valley Deal Seen As Boon To Taliban.

Media reports this morning are casting the recent deal between the Taliban and the Pakistani government over the Swat Valley as a major boost for the militant group. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, Hussain, Rosenberg, 2.07M) reports "thousands of Islamist militants are pouring into Pakistan's Swat Valley and setting up training camps here, quickly

making it one of the main bases for Taliban fighters and raising their threat to the government in the wake of a controversial peace deal." President Asif Ali Zardari "effectively ratified the government's deal with the Taliban Monday by signing a bill that imposes Islamic law in Swat," and "a visit to the Taliban-controlled valley here found mounting evidence that the deal already is strengthening the militants as a base for war." According to "US officials," the pact "has given the Taliban and its allies in al Qaeda and other Islamist groups an advantage in their long-running battle against Pakistan's military." [McClatchy](#) (4/14, Shah), meanwhile, says Zardari "bowed to Islamists' demands Monday," in a move that "increased" the militants' "political clout." The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, 83K) runs a similar report.

Taliban Gaining In Punjab. Under the headline "Insurgents Make Inroads In Key Pakistan Province," the [New York Times](#) (4/14, A1, Tavernise, Opiel, Schmitt, 1.12M) reports, "Taliban insurgents are teaming up with local militant groups to make inroads in Punjab, the province that is home to more than half of Pakistanis, reinvigorating an alliance that Pakistani and American authorities say poses a serious risk to the stability of the country." The Times adds "the deadly assault in March in Lahore, Punjab's capital, against the Sri Lankan cricket team, and the bombing last fall of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, the national capital, were only the most spectacular examples of the joint campaign, they said." The Times adds that residents "complain that landowners and local politicians have done nothing to stop the" militants' "advance, and in some cases, even assist them by giving money to some of the religious schools, or madrassas."

Pakistanis Tell Kerry US Should Not Attach Conditions To Aid Package. [The Hill](#) (4/14, Johnson) reports, "Pakistan warned visiting Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) Monday that Washington should not to attach conditions to the \$7.5 billion in aid proposed by President Obama as part of his comprehensive Afghanistan strategy." Kerry, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "met with Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani in Islamabad on the heels of a visit last week by envoy Richard Holbrooke and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen to discuss Pakistan's effort in fighting extremism."

[AFP](#) (4/14, Jaffry) reports that following the meeting a statement from Gilani's office quoted the prime minister as saying, "The US should not attach conditionalities to the assistance package being presented to the US Congress, as aid with strings attached would fail to generate the desired goodwill and results in Pakistan." But Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi "later sought to downplay Gilani's statement, pointing out that Kerry had yet to present his bill." Said Qureshi, "Nothing is firm yet. It's too early to point out

what is actually going to be in the final bill. We have to wait and see.”

Pakistan Asks UK For Information On Recently-Detained Suspects. The [Financial Times](#) (4/14, Bokhari) reports, “The Pakistani government has asked the UK authorities to share names and addresses of up to 11 men taken into custody during last week’s terror alert in the UK amid reports that Britain is seeking to deport them.” Wajid Shamsul Hasan, who is “Pakistan’s high commissioner to the UK, told the Financial Times that his government promised to protect the rights of any Pakistanis caught in the group.” The Times adds that “western diplomats and Pakistani officials believe deportation would take place only when Islamabad publicly promises to leave the men unharmed should they return to the country.”

NATO Denies Afghan Civilians Were Killed In Monday Strike. The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Opiel, Wafa, 1.12M) reports, “An airstrike by NATO forces early Monday in mountainous eastern Afghanistan killed six civilians, including two children, a local Afghan official said, the latest accusation of civilian casualties leveled against NATO and American forces.” While “NATO officials confirmed the raid,” they “said that only insurgents suspected of planning attacks on the alliance’s outposts had been killed.” The Times adds, “The Afghan official, Zalmay Yousufzai, the governor of Watapor district in Kunar Province, said that NATO helicopters destroyed one house and damaged several others. In addition to the 6 civilians killed, he said, 14 were wounded. Four of the wounded were hospitalized, he said.”

Al Qaeda Group Claims Credit For Killing Five US Soldiers In Iraq. [McClatchy](#) (4/14, Reilly) reports, “A radical Islamist group thought to be a front for al Qaida in Iraq has claimed responsibility for a Friday suicide bombing that killed five US soldiers in the northern city of Mosul.” The attack was “the single deadliest on Americans here in more than a year.” McClatchy adds “the Islamic State of Iraq is regarded by the U.S. as a front group for al Qaida in Iraq, though the group describes itself as a coalition of several extremist organizations. In 2006, it declared an Islamic state in Iraq’s Sunni Muslim areas.”

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, Londoño, 696K) notes the group “also said it carried out a suicide bombing that killed at least eight armed Sunni guards south of Baghdad as they were waiting outside an Iraqi army station to collect their salaries.” The Post adds “US officials say al-Qaeda in Iraq and other Sunni extremist groups have lost the widespread support and financial backing they had had in years past. But the recent spate of bombings that bear the trademarks of the

group have raised concerns about a possible resurgence of violence.”

US Soldier Killed Yesterday. The [AP](#) (4/14, Reid) reports that yesterday, “an American soldier was killed by an armor-piercing bomb south of Baghdad, the US military said. It was seventh combat death suffered by US forces in Iraq since Friday.”

Iraqi Government Criticizes Media As General Sues News Outlets. The [AP](#) (4/14, Reid) reports, “Iraq’s Shiite-led government criticized foreign and Iraqi media Monday for reports about recent arrests of US-backed Sunni paramilitaries, accusing news organizations of stoking religious tension and threatening national unity.” Meanwhile, “Iraq’s military threatened to sanction a major Arabic newspaper and a satellite television station for falsely quoting a spokesman about efforts to arrest former detainees recently freed by the Americans.”

The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Nordland, 1.12M) reports “the top military spokesman in Baghdad, Maj. Gen. Qassim Atta, said he was filing a lawsuit seeking to close the Baghdad offices of the newspaper Al Hayat, one of the most prominent in the Arab world, as well as Al Sharqiya television, a popular Iraqi satellite channel that has been a strong critic of the government.” The lawsuit “was announced on the Web site of the Baghdad Operations Command, which coordinates Iraqi security forces in the capital.” Atta “claimed that the two media outlets falsely quoted him as reporting that the government would re-arrest detainees released by the Americans, and would distribute pictures of them to military and police checkpoints. ‘I haven’t spoken to Al Hayat in six months,’ he said. Al Sharqiya apparently picked up the Al Hayat report.”

US Lawmaker Calls For Probe Into Baghdad Violence Against Gays. Glenn Thrush writes in his blog in [The Politico](#) (4/14), “Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo), returning from his trip to Baghdad last week, is calling for an investigation into a recent wave of bias violence against gays and lesbians in Iraq.” Polis “discussed what he called ‘egregious’ human right violations with US and Iraqi officials during his trip last week following reports that a half-dozen gay men were murdered in the capital in the past month as punishment for their sexual preferences.” Said Polis, “Hopefully my trip and letters to US and Iraqi officials will help bring international attention and investigation to this terrible situation and bring an end to any such offenses.”

Study Urges Administration To Update Nuclear Weapons Policy. The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A15, Pincus, 696K) reports that while “talk of efforts to control nuclear arms typically focuses on sheer numbers of

warheads and their explosive power," a new study "looks beyond simple comparison of numbers and types of weapons to the more harrowing question of just what those weapons are targeted to strike." The study "points out the obvious" -- that "nuclear weapons are horrific things and nuclear war would be an unimaginable disaster" -- but its "main purpose is to propose a new nuclear doctrine for the United States," one it defines as "minimal deterrence." Under the proposed doctrine, "the nation would retain enough nuclear weaponry 'to deter nuclear use in the first place,'" but at the same "lowering their yields -- to a degree."

[USA Today](#) (4/14, 2.28M) editorializes that "President Obama's pledge last week to work toward the eradication of nuclear weapons is a seductive idea." But "as desirable as zero sounds, the difficulties of getting there are nowhere clearer, ironically, than in the thoughtful scenario composed by the group Global Zero, whose bipartisan array of veteran leaders believes it could happen in 20 to 25 years...if Russia and the US developed a verification system ironclad enough to convince both it was safe to give up their weapons; if declared and non-declared nuclear powers Britain, France, China, Israel, India and Pakistan agreed to give up their weapons, too; and if rogues such as Iran and North Korea could be pressured to abandon nuclear ambitions." While such a scenario is "unlikely," USA Today says "getting as close as prudently possible makes all the sense in the world."

"Legal Left" Increasingly Angry At Obama Over Anti-Terror Programs.

[The Politico](#) (4/14, Gerstein) reports, "A growing chorus on the legal left is cooling toward President Barack Obama as a result of recent actions by the Justice Department vigorously defending the Bush administration in what it termed the war on terror." The Politico notes "a large graphic declared over the weekend on the home page of a respected group advocating freedom on the Internet, Electronic Frontier Foundation," which read, "Obama Position on Illegal Spying: Worse Than Bush," and adds the President "has been pilloried by a liberal TV icon who was one of President George W. Bush's most vociferous critics, MSNBC's Keith Olbermann." Obama is also "under withering attack from an attorney who was one of the most widely read critics of Bush's legal strategy in the war on terror, Glenn Greenwald. He recently blasted Obama administration moves as 'extremist' and 'bizarre.'" That "anger could intensify Wednesday when more Bush administration memos are expected to be released in connection with an ACLU lawsuit." While "an earlier release of similar memos put the focus on perceived transgressions of the Bush administration," this time "activists may hone in instead" on the Obama White House.

[Fox News' Special Report](#) (4/13, Angle) similarly reported that "Obama's most liberal supporters are dismayed

and disgusted because his administration is invoking the state secrets privilege just as president Bush did to shield eavesdropping programs from public exposure." Jane Hamsher of Accountability Now: "I wasn't happy when George Bush asserted that he could do these things and I'm not happy that President Obama is now agreeing with George Bush." Kevin Bankston of the Electronic frontier Foundation: "Other than being flat wrong, the Obama administration's position is seriously disappointing to those Americans who listened to candidate Obama's promises of a new era of government accountability and transparency. ... For the Obama administration now to try to have our lawsuit dismissed based on the exact same state secrecy arguments is quite a turnaround." Fox added, "So what happened? Analysts say...Obama got all the details and changed his mind. ... Analysts say Mr. Obama's eyes were opened as he learned about the program and now realizes it is both lawful and necessary. But critics don't accept that. They think they have been betrayed by the man they expected to reverse almost every policy of the Bush years, especially this one."

On [MSNBC's Rachel Maddow Show](#) (4/13), Host Rachel Maddow said the "next big test comes Thursday when the Administration will announce whether or not it's going to declassify a set of Bush-era memos on interrogation techniques and torture." Newsweek's Michael Isikoff said, "A lot is at stake in this one. This is a key test of the Obama Administration on transparency. Eric Holder, the Attorney General, and Greg Craig, the White House Counsel, have signed off on these memos," but "the intelligence community has fought back fiercely saying this would create huge problems for the intelligence -- our cooperation with foreign intelligence services, it could produce huge reactions around the Arab world. ... One thing worth pointing out, some of the top people at the CIA were involved in these interrogations. So a lot is riding on that decision on Thursday."

CNN Poll Finds Most Americans Believe Obama Has Made Them Safer.

[CNN's The Situation Room](#) (4/13, 4:23 PM EST, Blitzer) reported, "We have poll numbers now on how the American public rates Mr. Obama when it comes to national security, numbers that we came up with before this pirate drama actually played out. ... Do the American people trust that the President is doing everything to keep the country safe?" CNN's Bill Schneider answered, "Yes they do, although Republicans are not convinced. ... Do the American people believe President Obama's actions have increased the chance of a terrorist attack, no, by nearly 3-1 in a CNN Opinion Research poll. Republicans agree with Dick Cheney that President Obama's policies have made the country less safe, but they are alone in that view." Schneider added that President Obama "has rallied some support for the war in Afghanistan, a narrow majority of Americans now favors it. This time, it's Democrats who are isolated. Majorities of

Republicans and independents favor the war. Most Democrats don't." Schneider noted that "most of the polling was done before the North Korean missile launch and the pirate crisis. Both situations brought President Obama praise for his coolness and his resolve. And most likely, they strengthened the public's view that he will keep the country safe."

DOJ Says US Undecided On Specific Fate Of Gitmo Detainees. The [Miami Herald](#) (4/14, Rosenberg, 253K) reports, "The Obama administration said Monday it has made no decisions on how many of the 240 or so Guantánamo detainees will be moved to US soil, and whether they will be scattered around lockups throughout the United States or concentrated in one place." Dean Boyd, a Justice Department spokesman, "also declined to say whether any sites had been ruled out as possible lockups for the" detainees.

Napolitano Tours LAX, Southern California Ports. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, Watanabe, 833K) reports DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano toured Los Angeles International Airport and Southern California's bustling ports Monday, "as local officials plied her with requests for financial help to upgrade potentially vulnerable facilities." Speaking in a news conference at the US Coast Guard station on Terminal Island, Napolitano said, "It would be hard to identify a more critical area of the country in terms of the impact on infrastructure and on commerce than this area of Southern California." Napolitano was joined by Rep. Jane Harman, who "said she and other local officials outlined other critical security upgrades in need of federal financial aid, including \$60 million to complete the airport's border fence."

Government Report Warns Of "Rightwing Extremist Activity." The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Hudson, Lake, 83K) reports the Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis has issued a warning to "law enforcement officials about a rise in 'rightwing extremist activity,' saying the economic recession, the election of America's first black president and the return of a few disgruntled war veterans could swell the ranks of white-power militias." The report includes a footnote defining "'rightwing extremism in the United States' as including not just racist or hate groups, but also groups that reject federal authority in favor of state or local authority." The Times says "the White House has distanced itself from the analysis," and notes that DHS spokeswoman Sara Kuban "said the report is one in an ongoing series of assessments by the department to 'facilitate a greater understanding of the phenomenon of violent radicalization in the US.'"

Stephens Urges Devoting Greater Resources To Cybersecurity. Noting the Journal's recent reporting on cyberattacks targeting the nation's electric grid, [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M) columnist Bret Stephens writes, "The general perception of cyberattacks is that they amount to so much mischief-making by bored and spiteful 20-year-old computer geeks." He notes that "under President George W. Bush, Congress secretly approved \$17 billion in cybersecurity spending. President Barack Obama's 2010 budget calls for an additional \$355 million, and that's on the public side. Maybe it's helping. Then again, personal data involving 49,000 people was recently stolen from a Federal Aviation Administration data server, while the Los Alamos National Laboratory reports 13 computers lost or stolen and another 67 missing in the past year. Yes, it's that Los Alamos. Plainly, we have a problem." Stephens warns that "as we consider ever-more elaborate defenses for our vulnerable networks, here's a modest suggestion: Gently alert our non-NATO 'partners' that we might be in their electricity grids, too."

Obama Says Stimulus Work "Ahead Of Schedule And Under Budget." The [AP](#) (4/14, Elliott) reports, "President Barack Obama said Monday the \$787 billion economic stimulus plan is beginning to take hold and that work is coming in 'ahead of schedule and under budget.'" The President, "standing alongside Vice President Joe Biden and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood at the agency, Obama highlighted the administration's 2,000th project funded through the \$48.1 billion part of the program allocated specifically to transportation infrastructure projects." Obama also "asserted that the package is 'beginning to work,' crediting with spurring a rehiring of workers at clean energy companies, police departments canceling planned layoffs and clinics planning to expand health care."

[Reuters](#) (4/14) runs a similar report, while the [Detroit News](#) (4/14, Shepardson, 186K) notes the President also announced that "the 2,000th road project funded by the \$787 billion federal stimulus bill is in Portage, Mich." Said Obama, "Just 41 days ago, we announced funding for the first transportation project under (the stimulus bill) and today we're approving the 2,000th project." The News adds "the \$68 million project involves the widening of Interstate 94 from two lanes, both eastbound and westbound, to three lanes. It will improve safety and ease congestion by providing a more efficient interchange, the Transportation Department said." Biden "will attend the groundbreaking of the Kalamazoo County project in June. It will create at least 900 jobs and last through 2011, Obama said." The [Detroit Free Press](#) (4/14, Gray, 348K) also notes the Michigan project.

[CNN's The Situation Room](#) (4/13, Blitzer) reported that LaHood "can't hide his pride." LaHood: "Over the last six weeks, the Department of Transportation has moved more

swiftly than people thought possible.” LaHood “says his department has made nearly \$48 billion available for roads and infrastructure, and that bids are 15% to 20% cheaper than the administration expected, making the most of your tax dollars.” Obama: “Competition for these projects is so fierce and contractors are doing such a good job cutting costs, that projects are consistently coming in under budget.” CNN added, “Why all the bragging? The stimulus only works if the money gets out the door fast, and low cost projects leave more money for other jobs. So far, the administration says about a third of all stimulus spending has been spent or promised.”

However, [Fox News' Special Report](#) (4/13, Baier) reported, “Illinois Republican congressman Mark Kirk says the President is declaring victory a little early.” Kirk was shown saying, “We have hundreds of thousands of Americans have been thrown out of work, record levels of unemployment, and the federal government has just barely got started with many of the spending programs approved by the Congress.” The National Republican Congressional Committee “released an ad comparing government spending to an out of control race car.” NRCC ad: “\$24 billion per day – a billion dollars an hour. Now they are spending it even faster. Nancy Pelosi pushed a budget with a trillion dollar deficit.” Fox added that tomorrow the President “will make another address about the economy, but his aides suggest he won't be as upbeat as he was today, focusing less on the promising start the stimulus program has made, and more on the long tough road ahead, warning, his spokesman says, that there will be many more months in which hundreds of thousands of Americans lose their jobs.”

The [AP](#) (4/14, Sidoti) reports that “Obama is trying to strike a careful balance between highlighting economic progress and underscoring continued challenges as he seeks to reverse the recession he inherited but now owns.” Today he is “slated to give an economic speech Tuesday at Georgetown University as his administration nears its symbolic 100-day mark.” The AP adds “aides billed the address as major but acknowledged that it was expected to contain no significant policy announcements.” Instead, the President will “outline the state of the economy when Obama took office in January, steps his administration has taken in its first three months, and what still needs to be done to right troubled sectors, including the housing, banking and financial industries.

Santa Monica Buses Seen As Stimulus Success Story. [ABC World News](#) (4/13, story 8, 2:10, Gibson, 8.2M) reported, “The President says the stimulus projects being submitted are being approved ahead of schedule and are coming in under budget and stimulus spending is starting to show a positive ripple effect across the country when it comes to creating jobs.” ABC (Weir) added, “The ride is about to get cleaner and quieter for those who use mass transit to get

around Santa Monica. The city had scrimped and saved to buy ten new hybrid buses at around \$700,000 a piece. But then came the stimulus money so they ordered six more. ... So you're thinking, I don't ride the bus in Santa Monica, why should I care? Well, the next time you ride any bus, consider how many sets of American hands went into making it.” ABC went on to report that “at least 15 communities across the country plan to spend \$115 million this way. It may be a small percentage of the total stimulus package, but it's a first tangible example of the money working to create jobs now. And a smooth ride later.”

WSJournal Says Stimulus Sets Up “Health-Tech Monopoly.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M) editorializes that the New England Journal of Medicine is “clearly perturbed with the government's new role as the arbiter of health information technology,” with \$19 billion in federal stimulus funds devoted to encouraging “doctors and hospitals to adopt digital recordkeeping,” and a plan to penalize providers “beyond 2015 if they don't.” Kenneth Mandle and Isaac Kohane, “health-tech specialists at Children's Hospital Boston and Harvard Medical School,” wrote “in a ‘perspective’ akin to an editorial” in the journal, that “allowing competition and ‘natural selection’ for high-value, low-cost products” is “key.” But, “this approach contrasts sharply with design of a national system by committee,” they argue. The “implications” of this commentary, the Journal contends, “are obvious,” because “the stimulus hands the Obama Administration the power...to create a health-tech monopoly.” And, in doing so, the government will freeze “out an innovative marketplace.”

“Tea Party” Protests Fueled By Anger Over Stimulus, Bailouts. The [Palm Beach \(FL\) Post](#) (4/14, Bennett, 169K) reports from West Palm Beach, “On the same day federal income tax returns are due, local organizers expect at least 1,000 people to show up for a ‘Tea Party’ protest here to register their opposition to massive federal spending on bailouts and economic stimulus plans.” The event at the Palm Beach County Governmental Center “is one of at least 40 protests scheduled in Florida and more than 600 nationwide on Wednesday, part of a movement that combines local grass-roots activism with national coordination and promotion from big-name conservatives such as radio and Fox News talker Glenn Beck.” The “Tax Day Tea Party group,” adds the Post, is “made up of conservative organizations that include Washington, D.C.-based FreedomWorks.”

Obama Chooses Interim Fannie Mae CEO To Oversee TARP. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, A1, Solomon, 2.07M) reports President Obama “is expected to tap Fannie Mae Chief Executive Herb Allison to head the government's \$700 billion financial-rescue program. ... In

choosing Mr. Allison to head the Troubled Asset Relief Program, the administration is turning to an experienced manager at a time when it is having trouble filling key finance posts. Mr. Allison, 65 years old, is the former chairman of investment company TIAA-CREF and was a Merrill Lynch & Co. executive for years. In September, he agreed to run Fannie Mae after the U.S. took over the mortgage giant and its sister firm, Freddie Mac." Allison "would replace Neel Kashkari, a holdover from the Bush administration."

According to the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A14, Goldfarb, 696K), Allison "has been close to" Treasury Secretary Geithner "for years." Allison "served on an advisory committee to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, of which Geithner was president."

Goldman To Sell \$5 Billion In Common Shares, Repay TARP Funds. [ABC World News](#) (4/13, story 9, 0:10, Gibson, 8.2M) reported, "And there's another sign the banking industry could be turning around. Today Wall Street giant Goldman Sachs announced much better than expected earning, a \$1.8 billion profit in the first quarter. Goldman says it is making plans to repay government rescue funds."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, Craig, Kelly, Solomon, 2.07M) reports Goldman Sachs, "frustrated at federally mandated pay caps, has been plotting for months to get out from under the government's thumb. On Monday, Goldman took fresh steps to break free: It announced, as expected, that it plans to raise \$5 billion by selling new common shares to investors, and that it would like to use the money to repay government bailout money received last year." The Journal notes that Goldman has "a big incentive to escape the state's clutches. Last year, 953 Goldman employees -- nearly one in 30 -- were paid in excess of \$1 million apiece, according to people familiar with the matter. But tight federal restrictions connected to the financial-sector bailout have severely crimped the Wall Street firm's ability to offer such lavish pay this year." At a meeting hosted by President Obama last month, Goldman CEO Lloyd Blankfein "argued that banks needed freedom to repay the loans the U.S. forced them to accept in October. ... 'Those who could pay it back have an obligation to do so,' Mr. Blankfein urged the president, according to attendees."

According to the [New York Times](#) (4/14, Story, 1.12M), last Tuesday, Blankfein "visited Washington to speak before an industry conference, and to meet with...Geithner. Though rumors have swirled about Goldman's payback, it was only last week in that meeting that Mr. Blankfein formally asked to return the money and detailed his plan to raise more private capital. ... Goldman said in a statement on Monday that returning the TARP money depends on the results of a stress test that federal bank examiners are in the process of evaluating for Goldman and other big banks."

[Fox News' Special Report](#) (4/13, Baier) notes, "This is the first big repayment of TARP money that we will see under the program." According to Fox's Peter Barnes, Goldman "is waving the flag on this saying, 'this is our obligation, we need to repay the taxpayers,' but the reality is that a lot of these banks, including Goldman, they're all chafing under these restrictions, under the government scrutiny, the executive pay limits. Goldman Sachs' CEO...made \$70 million in 2007 and only got paid a million for 2008, so Goldman would like to pay this back as quickly as possible."

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, Tse, 696K) adds, "While six smaller banks have returned federal funds, analysts say Goldman's move to exit from the Troubled Assets Relief Program will put pressure on other large banks to follow suit, threatening to diminish the government's efforts to stabilize the financial system and support new lending to consumers and businesses. ... The concern is that healthy banks, by returning government money, could put pressure on less healthy firms to do the same when they should be focused on conserving resources. Federal officials, including banking regulators, also worry that the market may lose confidence in those banks that are unable to repay the money, damaging their prospects further."

The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Story, 1.12M) reports that yesterday, Goldman "announced profits of \$1.66 billion in the quarter or \$3.39 a share, marking a strong comeback from a loss in late 2008. Goldman's profit was propelled by record revenues of \$6.56 billion in its fixed income, currency and commodities unit, where mortgage and other credit instruments are traded. Over all, Goldman's revenues were \$9.43 billion, up 13 percent from the first quarter a year ago. Goldman reported its results a day ahead of schedule, setting a positive tone for a slew of other bank results expected in the coming week."

Community Banks Object To TARP Restrictions. [Fox News' Special Report](#) (4/13, Baier) reported, "There is an interesting phenomenon going on in many banks across the country. Executives are racing to pay back the government money they received through the Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP...it's not as easy as it sounds." According to Fox, bank executives "are feeling the sharp sting of both customers and shareholders after accepting TARP funds even though the...program was intended to help banks that weren't in trouble. ... The funds weren't free. Banks have to pay the government a 5% interest rate on the loan which was not tax deductible." After banks took TARP fund, the Treasury and Congress "changed the rules and restrictions that came along with the loans." Gerry Lipkin, Valley National Bank: "...which now makes the program quite unattractive, quite frankly. Up until last month, we were not restricted in paying our senior officers bonuses. Now all of a sudden that became a dirty word." Fox noted that last month "four small

banks in New York, Louisiana, Indiana and California returned the TARP funds because of similar concerns," but the banks "can't just give it back. They have to ask for permission to do so, something that could end up costing the banks a lot more than they bargained for."

"Bailout Banks" Raise Credit Card Fees, Interest Rates. The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/13, story 4, 2:05, Couric, 6.1M) reported that "some of the banks that were more than happy to take money from taxpayers are now hitting them with higher fees." CBS added, "With the economy in a downturn, there's one thing that's going up, bank fees and interest rates charged to customers, including those charged by bailout banks that have gotten billions from taxpayers. Take Bank of America and JP Morgan Chase. They got a combined \$70 billion in bailout funds, yet since then they've doubled credit card interest rates on some customers. ... That's not all. At JP Morgan Chase, customers who have cards with no annual fee suddenly found themselves charged a \$120 annual fee. Citigroup is advertising loans with annual interest rates of up to 30%." ... Last October, the same month Wells Fargo got \$25 billion in bailout funds, it boosted ATM fees for non-customers by 20% to \$3. Bailout banks are even charging fees for the jobless to get their benefits."

Forced TARP Borrowing Said To Represent Socialization Of US Finance. Jonathan Macey, a law professor at Yale, in an op-ed for the [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M), "Recall that very early in the bailout process, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and...Geithner gathered CEOs of the nation's largest banks into a room at the New York Fed and insisted that they take massive sums of public money by selling preferred stock to the government. Some of these firms, most notably well-managed Wells Fargo, resisted. But they were coerced into taking the money by the farcical argument that if they turned down the money, then the companies that needed a bailout (i.e., Citigroup) would be stigmatized. But how much worse could Citigroup's stigma be? Nobody really believes that the bank is anything but a zombie as it is." According to Macey, "The initial forceful injection of capital into hundreds of financial institutions, however, is another story. It is the first step in an ongoing process to socialize American finance. When this process is complete, every company in the U.S. that needs capital will first have to curry favor with some federal agency or politician."

Allison's Exit Leaves Both Fannie And Freddie Without Permanent CEOs. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, Hagerty, 2.07M) reports, "The likely departure of...Allison from Fannie Mae would leave both" Fannie and Freddie Mac "scrambling to find new chief executive officers at a critical time in the government's efforts to revive the housing market." Freddie "already is headed by an interim CEO, John Koskinen, in the wake of the abrupt resignation in early March

of David Moffett, who held the post for just six months." The Journal goes on to report that "it isn't clear who would succeed Mr. Allison at Fannie. One possibility is that Michael J. Williams, a Fannie veteran who serves as chief operating officer, would temporarily take the CEO position as well."

State Department Refuses To Provide Details On Deputy Secretary's Citi Bonus. The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, McElhatton, 83K) reports, "Shortly before joining the Obama administration, Deputy Secretary of State Jacob J. Lew reported in a little-noticed government filing that he intended to collect a bonus for his 2008 work at Citigroup even though the Wall Street firm had just received a massive federal bailout. Now administration officials - who expressed outrage when other bailed-out firms such as" AIG "awarded bonuses to executives - are steadfastly refusing to say whether Mr. Lew accepted the money in January or how much of his nearly \$1.1 million compensation from Citigroup last year was paid in the form of bonuses. 'Like so many, Deputy Secretary Lew returned to government to serve the public. A review of his public financial disclosure report and his federal salary speaks to that commitment,' State Department spokesman Robert A. Wood said, refusing to answer questions from The Washington Times about the size or date of any bonus." According to the Times, if Lew "accepted bonus payments from Citigroup after the financial services firm was bailed out in November, he might be subject to new rules to force bailed-out Wall Street executives to give up such compensation. ... 'He's a major presidential appointee, and if he got a bonus that was received during the bailout, then the same standard that's being applied to AIG should be applied to him,' said Craig Holman, legislative representative at the nonpartisan watchdog group Public Citizen."

Bonus Controversy Said To Have Undermined AIG's Recovery. The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A11, Dennis, 696K) reports, "The public furor over \$165 million in retention payments at" AIG "has faded in recent weeks. But in its wake, other problems have arisen that conceivably could cost the company -- and U.S. taxpayers -- more than the payments themselves. ... Before AIG can recover the money, it must navigate a maze of tax issues and legal uncertainties, made more complicated because the payments were disbursed to employees across the globe. 'The political headline is over and done,' said Gerry Pasciucco, the current chief operating officer at Financial Products. But 'there's a whole host of issues that have to be parsed through.'" AIG's Financial Products division employees "say that the episode has plunged the firm into uncertainty. They say the bad publicity has further wounded the firm in the eyes of its trading partners. In addition, about 20 people have resigned in

recent weeks, most of them senior managers in the United States, London and Paris. Others, beset by frustration, have been sending out resumes. The potential exodus, employees say, threatens to unravel the firm's \$1.6 trillion of outstanding trades."

Granholm: GM "Surgical Bankruptcy" Might Be Inevitable.

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (4/14, Christoff, Gray, 348K) reports Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm admitted that a "surgical bankruptcy" that makes the domestic auto industry stronger is something that may not be desirable, but inevitable. ... 'If it makes the company strong than I suppose that's something that we can live with,' she said before a town hall meeting to discuss the impact of the federal stimulus package. It's not the solution she wants to see and said continued public discussion about the prospect of bankruptcy for General Motors or Chrysler 'is unhealthy.' Before bankruptcy occurs, however, she wants to see bond holders begin to bargain in good faith with the automakers because a pre-bankruptcy agreement "is going to be better than the haircut that they're going to have to take otherwise."

GM Shares Drop 16.2%. [USA Today](#) (4/14, Carty, 2.28M) reports GM shares "fell 16.2% Monday as fears it will file for bankruptcy protection grew. ... GM's shares closed at \$1.71 Monday, down 33 cents and nearing its 52-week low of \$1.66."

Chrysler Creditors Preparing To Present Treasury With Counteroffer.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, McCracken, Linebaugh, 2.07M) reports Chrysler's creditors "are planning to make a counteroffer this week to the U.S. Treasury, which originally asked lenders owed about \$6.9 billion to accept just \$1 billion to keep the auto maker from liquidating. The lending group is now weighing whether to ask for equity in a company combining Chrysler with potential partner Fiat SpA in exchange for concessions. ... The government's current proposal doesn't include any equity and asks lenders to give up 85% of what is owed them."

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A12, Marr, 696K) notes that by the end of this month, Chrysler "must persuade creditors to trim its massive debt, renegotiate how it will pay for the union's retiree health benefits, battle state franchise laws to quickly close dealerships and complete an alliance with Fiat. Otherwise, the government cuts off its loans. As Chrysler's deadline draws nearer, more and more analysts are doubting that the automaker has enough time to meet those targets. And without federal loans, they say, the automaker will be forced into bankruptcy -- or even liquidation."

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A1, Mufson, 696K), in a front-page article, says Fiat's "engaging" CEO Sergio Marchionne, "after taking the wheel...in 2004....promised analysts he would do 'radical surgery' because 'we've got an

organizational structure that needs to be snapped out of its stupor.' Marchionne purged Fiat's management, bringing in outsiders and ordering up snappier car models that helped double Fiat's market share in four years. ... Now the Obama administration is wondering whether Marchionne can do for Chrysler what he did for Fiat."

Ford Shares Are Up 169% Since February 20. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, Bensinger, 833K) reports that Ford "has long maintained that a bankruptcy filing by one of its Detroit competitors could have disastrous effects on it as well," but Wall Street "seems to think otherwise. With bankruptcy rumors growing ever louder, General Motors Corp. shares have struggled," but Ford "has been steadily climbing, rising 2 cents to \$4.26 on Monday. The stock is up 169% from its \$1.58 close Feb. 20. Standard & Poor's on Monday upgraded Ford's bonds, citing a successful debt swap. The automaker's market capitalization, at \$10.3 billion, is now 10 times that of GM."

GM Dealership Uses Shelby's Criticism In Ads. The [Detroit Free Press](#) (4/14, McGraw, 348K) reports, "At Les Stanford Chevrolet Cadillac in Dearborn, they're fed up with criticism of Detroit automakers and the UAW by Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby. So they've put the Republican to work - selling their cars. The dealership is running TV and radio ads that feature clips of Shelby making anti-Detroit Three comments. 'We're wasting our time trying to keep them alive,' he is shown saying in one ad."

Fed Purchases Boost Treasuries.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, Derby, Barrett, 2.07M) reports, "Treasuries ended strong after the Federal Reserve intervened in the market for government bonds and agency securities. The purchases Monday came as part of the central bank's efforts to lower borrowing costs and increase credit via buying of the two classes of securities. The Fed bought \$7.37 billion in Treasuries and \$5.15 billion in agency debt. That was a fairly weighty haul in a day where there were no reports on economic data and most overseas markets were closed. ... Late in New York, the 10-year note was up 23/32 point, or \$7.1875 per \$1,000 face value, at 99 6/32. Its yield fell to 2.845% from 2.930% late Thursday, as yields move inversely to prices. The 30-year bond was up 1 8/32 points to yield 3.682%."

Columnist Suggests Selling More Long-Term Treasuries.

Fortune's Allan Sloan, in his column for the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A12, 696K), writes, "Here's a modest proposal: The U.S. Treasury should do some fancy financial dancing that would hurt taxpayers today but would save tons of money for taxpayers in the future. How could the government do that? By borrowing as much money as it can by selling long-term Treasury securities before the financial world comes to its senses and rates rise, rather than

continuing to sell shorter-term securities that save us interest today but are likely to cost us much more in the future.”

Larger Tax Refunds Shore-Up Consumer Spending.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, McKinnon, 2.07M) reports, “Individual federal tax refunds are way up this year, helping to buttress consumer spending amid the recession. But the refund-fueled boost could wear off within a few weeks, posing a challenge to recovery. Internal Revenue Service data show that through April 3, total individual refunds were up by about 15%, to \$210 billion, from \$183 billion at the same point last year. That extra money in consumers’ pockets -- coupled with a drop in gasoline prices -- has helped keep consumer spending surprisingly healthy in recent weeks, economists say.” However, according to the Journal, “the refund effect is probably going to begin petering out sometime in May.”

However, according to the [AP](#) (4/14, Ohlemacher), “Hopes for an economic boost fueled by this year’s tax refunds could be dashed as most people say they plan to be frugal with their annual windfalls. ... Thirty-eight percent of those receiving a refund said they intend to spend at least part of it, according to an Associated Press-GfK poll released Monday. But the spending appears to be mostly on basic needs: 17 percent said they would use the money for everyday needs such as food and clothing, up from 7 percent a year ago. The survey found that 54 percent of those receiving refunds said they planned to pay off credit card, utility, housing and other bills. That compares with 35 percent who said the same thing a year ago. Only 5 percent, about the same as a year ago, said they planned to go on a shopping spree.”

Bankruptcies Surge Despite 2005 Congressional Overhaul. The [AP](#) (4/14, Baker) reports, “The number of U.S. businesses and individuals declaring bankruptcy is rising with a vengeance amid the recession, despite a three-year-old federal law that made it much tougher for Americans to escape their debts. ... Nearly 1.2 million debtors filed for bankruptcy in the past 12 months, according to federal court records collected and analyzed by the AP. Last month, 130,831 sought bankruptcy protection — an increase of 46 percent over March 2008 and 81 percent over the same month in 2007.” The AP notes that Congress “voted in 2005 to make bankruptcy more cumbersome after years of intense lobbying from the nation’s lenders, who complained that people were abusing the system. Before the move to change the law, bankruptcies were running at what was then an all-time high of about 1.6 million per year.”

Weak Economy Forces Law Firms To Turn To Layoffs. The [AP](#) (4/14, Holland) reports, “The recession is taking a steep toll on the legal profession, an industry long seen as immune from the ups and downs of the economy.

Trying to weather the financial crisis, the nation’s largest law firms are laying off attorneys and delaying the hiring of others. More than 3,000 lawyers have been laid off in the first three months of 2009.” The Labor Department “said the number of unemployed lawyers jumped 66 percent last year to a 10-year high of 20,000.”

US Stock Indexes Finish Mixed, Almost Unchanged.

The [AP](#) (4/14, Paradis) reports, “Stocks ended mostly higher Monday ahead of a flurry of earnings reports that could determine whether the economy is really getting better. ... The Dow fell 25.57, or 0.3 percent, to 8,057.81. The Standard & Poor’s 500 index rose 2.17, or 0.3 percent, to 858.73, and the Nasdaq composite index rose 0.77, or 0.1 percent, to 1,653.31.”

The [Financial Times](#) (4/14, Gangahar, Mackenzie) notes that ‘some of Wall Street’s biggest names are scheduled to unveil quarterly results this week – including, from the banking sector, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase and Citigroup; Intel, Google and Nokia from the technology arena; and Johnson & Johnson, General Electric and Mattel. In the meantime, shares in Citigroup rose sharply on Monday ending the session up 25 per cent at \$3.80. ... Boeing dropped 5.1 per cent \$37.15 after analysts at Cowen & Co downgraded the jet maker to an ‘underperform’ rating from ‘neutral,’ citing weakness in the ability of airlines to use credit to buy new planes, among other factors.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, McKay, Curran, 2.07M) adds that “money managers said there was a technical factor influencing the trading of Citi’s stock: a delay in filing for a share offering, which will sharply increase the shares outstanding in Citi once cleared by the Securities and Exchange Commission. Fewer-than-expected shares in the market created a shortage of Citi shares available to borrow, which in turn has caused a ‘short squeeze,’ a stampede of short-sellers buying back bets against the stock.”

Oil Prices Fall 4%, But Production Cut May Set Stage For New Jump. The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/13, story 9, 0:10, Couric, 6.1M) reported, “The recession is still giving us a break from high energy prices. Oil fell more than four percent today to just over \$50 a barrel. That followed a prediction that world demand will fall this year. And gasoline prices are holding steady at just over \$2 a gallon.”

In a story highly critical of the oil industry, the [CBS Evening News](#) (4/13, story 10, 3:10, Couric, 6.1M) reported, “Big oil has responded to falling crude prices by slashing investments and halting new production, especially here in the US where a lot of oil rigs are sitting idle. And...that could hurt consumers down the road.” CBS (Keteyian) added that at last summer’s Republican National Convention last summer, with “gas prices soaring to \$4 or more a gallon,” “the call for offshore oil drilling in places previously off limits” was “at a fever pitch. ... But despite making record profits, today

oil companies are drilling on less than one-third of the acreage in this country they have the rights to. ... Bottom line: Oil companies only develop leases when it is most profitable to do so. ... The Interior Department estimates 68 billion barrels of oil lie in areas already accessible to drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska. But today nearly half of the existing rigs sit idle, setting the stage, experts insist, for yet another oil crisis when the economy comes back to life."

Key Economic Data To Be Released In Coming Days. According to the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, Lazo, 696K), "Investors will also get much economic data to pore over. Retail sales for March, to be reported tomorrow, are expected to rise just 0.1 percent, following a 0.7 percent rise in February. Industrial production, to be reported Wednesday, is estimated to have fallen 0.9 percent in March, following a 1.4 percent drop in February. The government will also report wholesale prices tomorrow followed by consumer prices Wednesday, giving economists a read on inflation. The Federal Reserve will also release its 'beige book' on Wednesday, which is its anecdotal reports from businesses across the country."

First Family Welcomes 30,000 To White House Easter Egg Roll. [NBC Nightly News](#) (4/13, story 11, 2:10, Williams, 8.37M) reported, "The nation is still getting to know the First Family and to that end the Obamas had some houseguests over today, by one count just under 30,000 of them. It was to celebrate the Easter holiday. ... The President was in rare form." The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/13, story 12, 0:20, Couric, 6.1M) reported, "Could it be Barack Obama channeling Rutherford B. Hayes? The President today continued a tradition started in 1878, presiding over the annual Easter egg roll at the White House. It drew 30,000 kids and parents from all over the country. Even the President's children Sasha and Malia got into the act." [ABC World News](#) (4/13, story 6, 1:40, Gibson, 8.2M) notes that the First Lady "succinctly described their goal. It is, she said, 'just to have fun.'" ABC added, "The daddy side of President Obama was on display today, with basketball and story telling. But there were politics just under the shell of these festivities. As with so many acts taken by President Obama, there was an effort to make sure even his Easter egg roll was markedly different than President Bush's. About 110 same-sex families with children were expressly invited today through gay and lesbian organizations. ... Military families were also invited today."

The [AP](#) (4/14, Metzler) notes President Obama "initially could only wave to the crowd, thanks to nonworking microphones. He looked around for help, and finally the sound system started working just as Malia leaned into the microphone and asked 'is it on?' The president called her his technical adviser. ... Obama greeted the crowd, extolling the

event as one that 'reminds us that this is the people's house.'" The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, B1, Dvorak, 696K) reports, "This year's event featured musical performances by pop star Fergie, Ziggy Marley and the D.C. Youth Orchestra as well as appearances by beloved children's characters including Clifford the Big Red Dog, and, of course, the Easter Bunny."

First Puppy Moving Into White House Today. The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/13, story 13, 2:10, Couric, 6.1M) reported tomorrow the First Family "will take possession of the new first dog, a gift from Senator Kennedy." CBS added, "Bo has been to the White House exactly once, but the ridiculously adorable six-month-old pup already has the run of the place." [ABC World News](#) (4/13, story 7, 0:25, Gibson, 8.2M) added, "From this picture released by the White House today, even though the puppy might have been promised to Malia and Sasha it's pretty clear Bo and the President will get along just fine."

The [AP](#) (4/14, Theimer), in an article subtitled, "Is Obama Dog A Rescue Or Not?" asks, "Is Bo a rescued dog or not? Did President Obama keep or break a campaign promise in picking the purebred as the family's new pet?" According to the AP, Bo is "a 6-month-old puppy given up by his first owner and matched with the Obamas through his breeders. Because he was given up by his first owner as a poor fit and is now with his second owners, the Obamas, but never spent time in a shelter or with a rescue group, Bo is a 'quasi-rescue dog,' says Wayne Pacelle, chief executive of The Humane Society of the United States." [The Hill](#) (4/14, Johnson) reports, "A quick search of the Petfinder website Monday revealed 14 Portuguese water dogs at shelters across the country, including a female named Pepper being kept at a foster home in the District." [USA Today](#) (4/14, Jones, 2.28M) runs an article titled, "Dog-loving CEOs Have A Few Tips For The Obamas And Bo."

Emanuel Says He Watches FNC's Special Report. [The Politico](#) (4/14) reports Fox News' Bret Baier was profiled on Monday's "[The News & Observer](#), a North Carolina paper. There, he talked about anchoring the 6 p.m. hour, who's watching at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. The anchor of 'Special Report with Bret Baier' recently ran into Rahm Emanuel, chief of staff for President Barack Obama. Emanuel told Baier, a former WRAL reporter, he was doing a great job since replacing Brit Hume as anchor on the Fox News Channel program on Jan. 5. Emanuel told Baier the White House senior staff watches his show every night. 'I said, "Oh come on ...,"' Baier says. 'And he said, "Now sometimes we have the volume down, but we watch it every night."' Baier "found the story funny and gratifying. 'It told me the administration knows we're there,' he says, 'and it's in their best interest to watch us.'"

White House Wants Congress To Set Climate Policy By Year's End.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, A3, Peters, 2.07M) reports, "Climate czar Carol Browner said she wants Congress to establish a broad U.S. greenhouse-gas policy before global climate-change talks near the end of the year." Browner on Monday "said she is confident Congress can move forward on a climate-change policy, citing hearings scheduled for next week on sweeping legislation proposed by Rep. Henry Waxman (D., Calif.) and Rep. Ed Markey (D., Mass)." She "didn't provide a timetable for when she would like to see congressional action, but said advancing climate-change legislation is 'absolutely essential' to what the U.S. can accomplish during" UN talks in Copenhagen this December.

Groups Fear Climate Impact Of Chinese Stimulus.

The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Standaert, 83K) reports, "Environmental groups in China are worried that the country's efforts to stave off the global financial crisis could come at the cost of continued environmental degradation." The environmental budget in China's "China's promised \$586 billion stimulus package" "was cut by 40 percent during a recent revision and now comprises about 5 percent of the total." Environmentalists are "concerned that funds that could have gone to increasing efficiency and reducing pollution might go to high-polluting and energy-intensive industry."

Administration's Student Lending Overhaul Effort Meets Industry Resistance.

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A11, Paley, 696K) reports that the Obama Administration argues a proposal for ED to take over the student lending industry "will save \$94 billion that can be redirected to needy borrowers and help even more people go to college. But the industry and its congressional allies are countering that it would add billions to the national debt, put thousands of industry employees out of work and provide shoddy service for borrowers." A Sallie Mae "proposal would involve private loan companies originating the loans and then immediately turning them over to [ED] for a fee. ... Robert Shireman, a senior adviser to Education Secretary Arne Duncan, said the administration is open to hearing new ideas." However, "Our presumption at this point is the plan that we have laid out is the best plan, and that is what we are moving forward with," Shireman adds.

Labor Leaders To Announce Agreement On Immigration Reform.

The [New York Times](#) (4/14, A1, Preston, Greenhouse, 1.12M) runs a front-page report on an immigration reform agreement between the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win federation that "could give President Obama significant support among unions as he revisits the stormy issue in the midst of the recession." The accord, which will be presented today in outlines from leaders of the two labor

federations, "endorses legalizing the status of illegal immigrants already in the United States and opposes any large new program for employers to bring in temporary immigrant workers, officials of both federations said." However, in what could be a new "fissure" in the coalition that has backed immigration reform, Randel Johnson, vice president of labor, immigration and employee benefits at the United States Chamber of Commerce, "said Monday that the business community remained committed to a significant guest-worker program."

NYTimes: Economy Should Reinforce Push For Immigration Reform.

Calling news of the labor federations' accord "double good news," the [New York Times](#) (4/14, A22, 1.12M) editorializes that the Obama Administration "is saying that it will keep its promise to fix the broken system, even if it means pushing the hottest of hot buttons: legalization, the dreaded 'amnesty' that sets the Republican right wing ablaze and makes many Democrats quiver." Stating that the "bad economy" should make immigration reform a bigger priority, the Times concludes that it "is what the country needs and what American voters elected Mr. Obama to do."

Obama Administration Announces CDC AIDS-Awareness Campaign.

[CQ HealthBeat](#) (4/14, Attias) reports that the "Obama administration is launching a five-year national communication campaign to spread awareness about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the United States." The so-called "Act Against AIDS" campaign "is based on the statistic that someone in America becomes infected with HIV every nine and a half minutes. Data released last year by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 56,000 Americans are newly infected with HIV each year, 40 percent more than previous estimates." The campaign is expected to "receive a CDC budget of approximately \$45 million over the next five years." Kevin Fenton, director of CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention, said, "Reducing the disproportionate toll of HIV in black communities is one of CDC's top domestic HIV prevention priorities" and the "new initiative will further harness the collective strength of some of the nation's leading African-American organizations to reach directly into the communities they serve with critical, life-saving information."

WPost Lauds AIDS Campaign But Notes "More Needs To Be Done."

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A16, 696K) explains the Act Against AIDS campaign, asserting, "We applaud the administration for bringing together 14 African American civic organizations to help highlight the importance of testing and treatment among their memberships." However, the Post argues, "more needs to be done. Many, most notably Robert C. Gallo, one of the scientists who uncovered HIV as the cause of AIDS, have called for a domestic version of the President's Emergency

Plan for AIDS Relief, which has been successful in sub-Saharan Africa.” Meanwhile, “President Obama has charged Jeffrey S. Crowley, his director of the Office of National AIDS Policy, to craft a national AIDS strategy over the next year with three goals: lowering the rate of HIV infections, increasing the number of people in care and reducing disparities in care. For the sake of the nation, we hope the administration maintains its focus on this domestic challenge.”

Senate Expected To Take Action On Tobacco Legislation This Spring.

The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Lengell, 83K) reports that “a long-standing push on Capitol Hill for tighter tobacco restrictions is expected to come to a head when Congress returns from a two-week break Monday.” Earlier this month, “the House quietly passed legislation that would give the federal government key controls over the tobacco industry for the first time. The Senate is expected to take up the measure this spring, though fierce opposition from members of both parties from tobacco-growing states could derail the bill.” The fate of the legislation, which “would give the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to reduce nicotine levels and require larger and more informative health warnings on cigarette packs,” is “less certain in the Senate, as Sen. Richard M. Burr (R-NC) is leading the opposition.” Sen. Burr and Sen. Kay Hagan (D-NC) have introduced “an alternative bill that would put tobacco regulation under the authority of the Health and Human Services Department.”

Rhode Island Increases Cigarette Taxes By \$1. In its Health Care Report, the [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Lengell, 83K) reports that “Rhode Island last week increased its tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$1 in a move praised by health advocacy groups as a way to help reduce smoking rates.” The state’s “General Assembly this month approved the tax increase as part of the state’s 2009 supplemental budget. The tax boost, which took effect last Friday, means that Rhode Island now has the highest cigarette tax in the nation at \$3.46 per pack.” According to the Times, the “long-term health impact savings for the state from the anticipated decline of adult and youth smoking is estimated to be \$160.1 million.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, White, 2.07M) Health Blog notes that “a CDC policy paper in 2007 said that says raising the unit price for tobacco products is among “the most highly effective policy interventions” in driving down smoking rates. And the CDC last month published data analyzing trends between 1998 and 2007 that indicated that smoking prevalence decreased in 44 states.”

Dean Launches Campaign For Universal Healthcare Coverage. [The Hill](#) (4/14, Wilson) reports that former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, “who used health

care reform as a signature issue during his 2004 presidential campaign, is using a call for universal coverage to raise his profile once again.” The former Democratic National Committee (DNC) chair “is using Democracy For America (DFA) -- the organizing group that grew out of Dean’s presidential campaign -- to build a 50-state strategy advocating for public health care.” Dean has “added his name to five DFA emails since the beginning of March, aiming to build a list of grassroots supporters in each state.” Thus far, DFA says it has “gathered more than 250,000 signatures for a petition through a website, [StandWithDrDean.com](#).” The petitions will be delivered to members of Congress “later this year, while list members will be urged to serve as media responders and grassroots activists.”

“Honest” Discussion Urged On Public Health Plan’s Administrative Costs, Value. In a commentary in the [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M), Kerry Weems, an independent consultant and former head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and Benjamin Sasse, former US assistant secretary of health, write that “it appears likely that the budget deal will eventually include a government-run health-insurance option, or ‘public plan,’ to compete with private health insurance under the comprehensive healthcare reform called for by President Barack Obama.” The public plan, however, provides “a false comparison” to “private plans,” because “private insurance tries to manage care,” while “Medicare is mostly about paying the bills,” Weems and Sasse argue. Meanwhile, “many who favor a public plan...dismiss the administrative ‘overhead’ of private plans as having little or no value,” while such expenses actually “represent money well spent.” Weems and Sasse call for “an honest discussion of administrative costs and their value,” concluding that “those who believe that healthcare should have no profit should...not hide behind the false economy of Medicare.”

Blagojevich Camp Was Told Jackson Would Raise \$5M If Appointed To Senate.

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (4/13, Korecki, 291K) reported that ex-Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich’s “camp was told last year that” IL2 Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D) “would raise up to \$5 million in campaign cash for the ex-governor if he was appointed to President Obama’s US Senate seat, the Chicago Sun-Times has learned. The overture came from at least two members of the local Indian community who approached the Blagojevich fund-raising team last fall, sources say. Besides the \$5 million to be raised by Jackson, the proposal also included another \$1 million for Blagojevich’s campaign fund that would come from Indian donors, sources say.” The initial approach to the Blagojevich camp “came from Rajinder Bedi, a state employee who acted as a conduit to the Indian

community for Blagojevich, sources say. Bedi met with the governor's brother, Robert, to tell him that a longtime fundraiser and wealthy health care businessman, Raghuveer Nayak, would help organize fund-raising within the Indian community and that Jackson would raise money as well. Then, at an Oct. 31 planning luncheon...Nayak delivered a similar message to Robert Blagojevich, the Sun-Times has learned. Nayak allegedly identified himself to the Blagojevich camp as a representative of Jackson, sources say."

In a story headlined "Investigators Take Closer Look at Rep. Jackson in Blagojevich Case," the [New York Times](#) (4/14, Saulny, Drew, 1.12M) reports that Jackson met with Blagojevich in December about the Senate seat one day before the Governor was arrested "and accused of trying to sell his appointment to the seat." And "with new indications that federal prosecutors and Congressional ethics investigators are stepping up their interest in Mr. Jackson, a nagging question follows him: Was that December meeting with Mr. Blagojevich a good-faith effort to land the Senate job or a charade to conceal behind-the-scenes maneuvers with Mr. Blagojevich to pay to play?" The Times adds that "transcripts of wiretap conversations released in the Blagojevich criminal case in December revealed evidence that one of Mr. Jackson's fund-raisers, Raghuveer Nayak, had promised to raise money for Mr. Blagojevich in exchange for Mr. Jackson's appointment." And the "transcripts" also indicate that "Blagojevich had been putting pressure on one of his fund-raisers to strike a deal with a person close to Mr. Jackson — assumed to be Mr. Nayak — for a contribution he described as 'tangible' and 'up front' just days before his arrest."

Obama Said Be Providing Recruitment Boost For "Anti-Abortion Movement." [The Politico](#) (4/13, Brown) reported that President Barack Obama's "first 84 days in office have been like an extended recruiting drive for the anti-abortion movement, reinvigorating a constituency he sought to neutralize during the campaign. Activists report a noticeable spike in activity as Obama moves to defend and expand a woman's right to choose an abortion — causing anti-abortion voters to mobilize in ways never needed during the Bush administration." For example, "The Susan B. Anthony List says its supporters sent more anti-abortion-related letters, e-mails and faxes to Obama and lawmakers in the first quarter alone than during each of the last two years," "The American Life League reported a 30 percent uptick in donations over last year," and "More than 261,000 people have signed an online petition calling on Notre Dame to withdraw its invitation for Obama to speak at the Catholic university's May 17 commencement. The petition says Obama has carried out 'some of the most anti-life actions of

any American president,' including expanding taxpayer-funded research on embryonic stem cells."

In RNC Fundraising Letter, Steele Rips "Arrogant" Obama. The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Hallow, 83K) reports that RNC Chairman Michael Steele "has launched a direct attack on the Obama administration in a new party mailing, accusing the president of being part of the 'blame America first' crowd, The Washington Times has learned. Criticized by some Republicans for not taking on" Obama "hard enough or often enough, Mr. Steele took the gloves off in a fundraising letter sent Monday to 12 million party supporters," writing "that President Obama's comments criticizing the" U.S. "on his recent European tour showed 'an absence of wisdom.'" Steele "also slammed" Obama "for saying he was open to possible talks with Iran. 'Apparently, he believes he can make peace with crackpot tyrants and heartless terrorists simply by sitting down and talking,'" Steele wrote. And noting "that Mr. Obama while in Europe said the" US "has displayed 'arrogance' at times in its foreign policy," Steele wrote that it was the President "who was 'arrogant' when he 'boasted his election would be remember[ed] as the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal.'"

Murphy Lead Sliced To 25 Votes In NY20 Special Election. [The Hill](#) (4/13, Blake) reported on its website that Democrat Scott Murphy "lost 10 votes in adjustments made to vote totals in the" NY20 Congressional District "special election Monday morning and now leads" Jim Tedisco "by 25 votes. Murphy gained three votes from some additional re-canvassing of Election Day totals but lost another 13 from the slow trickle of absentee ballots. The addition of about 200 absentee ballots brings the total counted to nearly 1,750 out of more than 6,700. Still to be counted is Saratoga County, which favored Tedisco on Election Day and is the biggest county in the district. ... Two big counties that went for Murphy, Warren and Washington, have also neglected to report much. Warren just registered its first absentees — which went 34-30 for Tedisco — while Washington has yet to report any."

[Roll Call](#) (4/13, McArdle) reported on its website that GOP "officials insist they are doing well in absentee ballots from Saratoga County, which has yet to report any of its absentee numbers. ... Overseas absentee ballots, including those of military personnel, are due in Monday, and the counting of those ballots will begin Tuesday, despite Tedisco's camp and some veterans' groups calling for more time for those ballots to be received."

In a blog posting, [The Politico](#) (4/13, Kraushaar) reported, "Both campaigns have already challenged the legality of around 600 absentee ballots, which have been

pulled aside and not included in the current count. Democrats estimate that the majority of the challenges – about 60 percent – have come from...Tedisco. Indeed, Republicans have been especially aggressive in challenging absentee ballots in Columbia County, which Murphy won on Election Night by more than 1,880 votes. Tedisco has already challenged at least 63 absentee ballots there, and the campaign has flagged around 200 absentee ballots as questionable.” The Tedisco camp “has also challenged several dozen absentees in Dutchess County, another county that backed Murphy. Nearly all of Tedisco’s challenges center on the voters’ residency.”

Judges Rule Franken Winner Of Senate Contest, But Coleman Vows Appeal.

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (4/14, Doyle, 357K) reports that a three-judge panel “soundly rejected” Norm Coleman’s (R) “attempt to reverse” Al Franken’s (D) “lead in the U.S. Senate election late Monday, sweeping away the Republican’s claims in a blunt ruling Coleman promised to appeal.” The judges “dismissed Coleman’s central argument that the election and its aftermath were fraught with systemic errors that made the results invalid. ‘The overwhelming weight of the evidence indicates that the Nov. 4, 2008, election was conducted fairly, impartially and accurately,’ the panel said in its unanimous decision.” The judges “concluded that Franken...‘received the highest number of votes legally cast’ in the election. Franken emerged from the trial with a 312-vote lead, the court ruled, and ‘is therefore entitled to receive the certificate of election.’” However, “Coleman legal spokesman Ben Ginsberg said the ruling denies many valid votes by applying a stricter standard to determining eligible ballots than local officials applied during the recount,” and maintained “that Coleman must appeal to assure that valid votes are counted.”

The [AP](#) (4/14, Bakst) reports, “Coleman has 10 days to appeal to the state Supreme Court. Once the petition is filed, it could further delay the seating of Minnesota’s second senator for weeks. ‘It’s time that Minnesota like every other state have two’ senators, a jovial Franken said,” adding, “I would call on Senator Coleman to allow me to get to work for the people of Minnesota as soon as possible.” Coleman’s attorneys “have said their appeal will mostly center on violations of the constitutional guarantee of equal protection, arguing that counties had differing standards in treating absentee ballots. ... In addition to the appeal, Coleman can also initiate a new action on a federal level. Either side can appeal an eventual state Supreme Court decision to the U.S. Supreme Court or throw the disputed election before the U.S. Senate, which can judge the qualifications of its members.”

[The Hill](#) (4/14, Blake) reports, “Franken is still unlikely to receive the certificate of election he will probably need to be sworn into the Senate. Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R), who is

responsible for signing such a certificate, has indicated that Minnesota law won’t allow him to sign it until Coleman has exhausted his case in state court. If the case goes federal, Pawlenty has left open the possibility that the federal court could delay the signing of the certificate.”

The [St. Paul Pioneer Press](#) (4/14, Stassen-Berger) reports, “Minnesota law, recently affirmed by the state Supreme Court, bars a Senate candidate from getting an election certificate while an undecided election contest is in the state courts. ... Democrats, including Secretary of State Mark Ritchie, who is charged with co-signing an election certificate, have said the law is clear: After the state court process ends, an election certificate should be issued. Republicans, including...Pawlenty, have said it’s not clear. Recently, Pawlenty said he would also weigh the Supreme Court justices’ decision before deciding whether to sign an election certificate. ‘I would look at what the courts did with the case in terms of leaving issues for appeal, the strength of those issues, how directly and effectively they address them,’ Pawlenty said Monday on Minnesota Public Radio.”

[The Politico](#) (4/14, Raju) reports, “Monday’s ruling was a big blow to Coleman, whose legal arguments were roundly rejected. The court went even further by calling on Coleman - - already raising funds for his legal bid -- to pay some of Franken’s fees for his attorney and court expenses. ... Rick Hasen, an election-law expert at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, said the opinion thoroughly considered and rejected Coleman’s arguments in such a ‘detailed and measured’ manner that it is ‘unlikely to be disturbed on appeal by either the Minnesota Supreme Court or the U.S. Supreme Court.’ Hasen added that Coleman’s prospects are so grim that he may decide to concede in the interests of salvaging his political future.” [Reuters](#) (4/14, Melby, Conlon) also reports on the judges’ ruling.

[Roll Call](#) (4/13, Drucker) reported on its website that “Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) signaled Monday evening that he would not move to seat Franken in advance of Coleman’s expected appeal to the state Supreme Court. ‘Tonight’s court ruling acknowledges once again that the people of Minnesota elected Al Franken to its vacant Senate seat nearly six months ago. Minnesotans have waited long enough to be represented by the two U.S. Senators they deserve,’ Reid said in a statement,” adding, “Norm Coleman is entitled to appeal to the Minnesota Supreme Court. If he does so, we look forward to a prompt decision from that court so that Gov. Pawlenty can issue an election certificate and we can finally bring an end to an episode that has left the people of Minnesota without full representation for too long and has cost taxpayers too much money.”

Coleman Has Not Sought FEC Approval To Use Campaign Cash For Legal Fees. In another report on its

website, [Roll Call](#) (4/13, Singer) related that near the end of 2008, “Coleman said that he would seek” FEC “permission to use campaign funds to pay legal bills relating to allegations that a supporter funneled money to the then-Minnesota Senator through his wife.” However, “the campaign has never sought FEC permission to pay legal bills from campaign coffers. ... Campaign law experts said Coleman is under no legal obligation to ask FEC permission to spend donor money on lawyers. If a campaign requests and receives permission for expenditures from the FEC — called “advisory opinions” — the campaign is shielded from any future enforcement based on those expenditures. But if the campaign believes its circumstances are covered by prior FEC opinions, or that the expenditures are clearly within the rules, the candidate may conclude there is no reason to go back to the FEC for a new opinion.”

Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Said To Have Donated To Coleman Senate Campaigns. In a blog posting, [The Politico](#) (4/13, Thrush) reported, “[MyDD](#), which has been examining the composition of the Minnesota Supreme Court ahead of its Coleman-Franken deliberations, finds that the newest member of the court, Chris Dietzen, gave \$500 to Norm's Senate campaigns. ... Another member of the court, it should be noted, has ties to the state's Democratic establishment, although there's no record of any justice having contributed to Al Franken. Helen Meyer, who was appointed by Jesse Ventura, gave \$1,500 to Paul Wellstone in the mid-1990s and contributed \$500 to the DFL, the state's Democratic Party, in 2002, according to records.”

Bloomberg-Backed TV Ad Targets McDonnell On Virginia Gun “Loophole.” The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, B1, Vargas, Kumar, 696K) reports, “Days before the second anniversary of the Virginia Tech shootings, a group backed by New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg plans to launch a TV ad “that questions” GOP “gubernatorial nominee Robert F. McDonnell's opposition to closing a loophole in” Virginia “law that allows some private vendors at gun shows to make sales without background checks. The 30-second commercial, expected to run statewide on cable and broadcast TV for four days starting today, ends with an image of one of the victims of the 2007 campus massacre: Reema Samaha is shown dancing as a child as a phone number for McDonnell appears on-screen. ‘I know that closing the loophole won't bring Reema back, but the question is: Whose sister is next?’ Omar Samaha, Reema's brother, asks in the ad. ‘Ask Bob McDonnell why he's protecting criminals instead of protecting us.’” Noting that McDonnell stepped down “as state attorney general in February to run for governor full time,” The Post adds, that “his campaign decried the commercial as ‘reprehensible’ and ‘misleading,’” saying that “McDonnell supports background checks for all sales at gun

shows made by licensed gun dealers, though not by all private sellers.”

The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Chen, 1.12M) reports that in Arlington, Virginia, on Monday, “Bloomberg, who was flanked by a dozen people, most of them relatives of the Virginia Tech shooting victims, or survivors themselves,” said, “I think governors' races are much more visible. The time to express your views politically is an election.” Yet “whether Mr. Bloomberg's campaign will actually sway any voters here remains to be seen.” University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato is quoted saying, “If national gun-control groups are waiting for Virginia to lead the way in their cause, they are going to have a long wait. The state has moderated on many issues, but not guns, and there is a near-consensus in both parties against any kind of major, or even minor, gun control.”

Lessons Of Columbine Examined Ten Years Later. [USA Today](#) (4/14, Toppo, 2.28M) reports ahead of next week's ten year anniversary of the Columbine shootings “new information -- including several books that analyze the tragedy through diaries, e-mails, appointment books, videotape, police affidavits and interviews with witnesses, friends and survivors -- indicate that much of what the public has been told about the shootings is wrong.” This new information “is perhaps more comforting than the ‘good kids harassed into retaliation’ narrative -- or perhaps not.” Dave Cullen, author of *Columbine*, writes that Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were “a deeply disturbed, suicidal pair who over more than a year psyched each other up for an Oklahoma City-style terrorist bombing, an apolitical, over-the-top revenge fantasy against years of snubs, slights and cruelties, real and imagined.” Psychologist Peter Langman explains, “These are simply not ordinary kids. These are kids with serious psychological problems.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, Simon, 2.07M) reports that “hundreds of millions of dollars flooded into schools after two seniors stalked the halls of Columbine in trench coats, killing 12 students and a teacher before committing suicide in the school library,” but, now, “the money is drying up.” Federal grants for school safety programs have “been cut by a third, a loss of \$145 million. The Justice Department has scrapped the cops in schools program, once budgeted at \$180 million a year. States are slashing spending, too, or allowing districts to buy textbooks with funds once set aside for security measures.” However, “the Federal Government has actually boosted spending on what might be considered the ‘softer’ components of safe schools. Grants for mental health and counseling, for instance, have soared from \$20 million the year after Columbine to nearly \$58 million today.” Officials believe these increases do not “begin to make up for the cuts in other school-safety programs,” but “they are spending smarter.”

WPost Argues For "Sensible" Gun Control Laws.

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A16, 696K) editorializes that on April 16, 2007, "a deranged young man toting semiautomatic weapons slaughtered 32 people on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg." The upcoming anniversary "comes in the wake of a spate of violence that has left more than 50 people dead and scores of others injured or traumatized, including 13 murdered on April 3 at a Binghamton, N.Y., immigration center. Much has been made of why the gunmen acted out: Were they pushed over the edge by tough economic times? Did they crack after wives or girlfriends left them? But does this really matter?" The Post adds, "None of the gunmen could have done as much damage had he not had access to guns -- regardless of his motives. What is needed is more information about when and where they got their weapons and whether the sales complied with applicable laws. Most important, lawmakers must press ahead with enactment of other gun laws to ensure that only law-abiding, mentally competent people get their hands on such weapons."

In Specter-Toomey Clash, Senator's Vote On Stimulus Expected To Be Key Issue.

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A3, Bacon Jr., 696K) reports that Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter's (R) "support for President Obama's stimulus package has recharged a political rivalry, setting up what could be a divisive rematch between one of the GOP's leading moderates and a powerful conservative activist. Pat Toomey, head of the anti-tax Club for Growth, stepped down from the post Monday, the first move in what his aides say is an almost-certain" 2010 primary challenge to Specter, who narrowly defeated the ex-Congressman in a 2004 primary battle. The Post adds, "Specter, one of three Republicans who voted for the stimulus...appeared Monday at a police station in Darby just outside Philadelphia. Officers there praised him for backing the \$787 billion stimulus bill, which will provide the department \$220,000 in funding to buy equipment." But Toomey says "the stimulus vote illustrates why he will win this time: With Obama in the White House and Democrats in charge of Congress, Republicans will want every GOP vote to be a reliable check against the Democrats. 'Senator Specter is outside of the mainstream of the Republican consensus,' Toomey said in an interview. 'Literally every House Republican voted no, and all but three of the Senate Republicans voted no.'"

Chocola Named New Club For Growth President.

Ben Smith writes in his blog in [The Politico](#) (4/14), "Former Rep. Chris Chocola (R-Hoosier) has been named the new president of the Club for Growth, the fiscal conservative group announced this morning." Toomey, "the Club's outgoing president," left his post "to devote his energy to a second primary challenge of...Specter."

Romney: Arbitration Provision In EFCA Is

"Un-American." [The Hill](#) (4/14, Wilson) reports that ex-Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney "is involving himself in the debate over the Employee Free Choice Act." In a "conference call" yesterday, Romney attacked "a little-noticed provision in the bill that would require binding arbitration if a union and a business cannot come to a labor agreement within 120 days, which Romney called 'about as un-American a thing as I can imagine.' 'Legislation of this nature would be calamitous for the U.S. economy, short term and long term,' Romney said. ... 'This act represents an unprecedented attack on the individual rights of American workers and American citizens. 'You're basically saying the workers in a workplace and the management that is running the enterprise will not be able to set their own work rules,'" said Romney, who "called arbitration 'a grab of power by the federal government.'"

Alaska Democrats Hammer Palin Over Planned Out-Of-State Speech.

The [AP](#) (4/14, Thiessen) reports, "Alaska Democrats on Monday accused" Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin (R) "of abdicating her duties with her decision to travel outside the state this week as the state Legislature's session winds down. 'She is putting her national political ambitions ahead of the needs of Alaska,' Alaska Democrat Party Chairwoman Patti Higgins said at a news conference. ... The Legislature must conclude its work by Sunday, with the federal stimulus package and the capital budget yet to be approved. Palin is scheduled to leave the state later this week to attend a right-to-life fundraiser Thursday in Indiana. 'Where is Sarah Palin? She is going to be halfway across the country, she's at a right-to-life fundraiser and another event,' Higgins said. 'We need a full-time governor who is thinking about our issues all the time, who is working and negotiating with the legislators and getting the job done we need done.'"

Palin Sister-In-Law Indicted On Burglary, Theft

Charges. The [Anchorage Daily News](#) (4/13, Hollander, 64K) reported on its website, "A Palmer grand jury has indicted Diana Palin on burglary, theft and trespass charges related to three break-ins at a Wasilla home. Palin, 35, is the half-sister of Todd Palin, Gov. Sarah Palin's husband. Jailed...since Wasilla police arrested her April 2, Palin pleaded not guilty during a brief appearance in Palmer Superior Court this morning." Palin was indicted for a series of break-ins and burglaries of a home "owned by Theodore Turcott."

New Group To Focus On Issues Crucial To Gay Conservatives.

In his [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M) column, William McGurn writes, "Tomorrow morning in Washington," Jimmy LaSalvia (a former officer for the Log Cabin Republicans) "and his allies will launch a new tax-exempt 527 political organization [GOProud] they hope will"

provide a new “voice for gay conservatives.” Quoting LaSalvia as saying, “Most issues that are defined as ‘gay’ issues have been defined by the left. We take a different approach,” McGurn adds, “LaSalvia points out that many gays do not believe their best interests are served by government-run health care.” Instead, “he says, they believe they would be better served by private-run individual accounts that are portable, that put them in charge of their own health care, and that would allow them to designate their own beneficiaries.” McGurn notes, “GOProud springs from a growing dissatisfaction among some gay Republicans that the Log Cabin Republicans, the traditional gay advocacy group within the party, has drifted to the point where its positions are indistinguishable from those of the left.”

OSHA Plans To Fire Employee After 21 Months Paid Leave. The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A15, Davidson, 696K) reports officials in the Labor Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration plans to fire Bob Whitmore, a “37-year Labor Department employee who has been on paid administrative leave,” since he “was sent home a few days after a July 10, 2007, confrontation with his supervisor, but he has continued to collect his \$150,000 annual salary for doing nothing.” A 19-page memo was sent to Whitmore containing the reasons for his termination, but fails to address “why officials allowed the case to remain unresolved for so long, why they allowed taxpayers to pay a senior civil servant to do zip...why they seem to have disregarded notions of fairness to the employee, who was only now given details of the accusations and had just seven days to reply.” The memo cites Whitmore’s “disruptive and intimidating behavior, conduct unbecoming a supervisor and inappropriate conduct in the workplace” as reasons for his “proposed removal.”

Reagan Statue To Be Unveiled In Capitol Rotunda. [Roll Call](#) (4/14, Whittington) reports, “Congressional leaders announced late Monday that they will join former first lady Nancy Reagan for the unveiling of a statue of former President Ronald Reagan on June 3 in the Capitol Rotunda.” Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell “are expected to attend the event.”

MSNBC Developing Show For Chuck Todd. Michel Calderone, in his blog in [The Politico](#) (4/14), notes a [New York Observer](#) reports that “MSNBC is developing a weekend political show to be moderated by Chuck Todd, who currently holds the roles of chief White House correspondent and political director.” The show on MSNBC would “debut in late spring.”

Perino To Join Burson-Marsteller. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, McKinnon, 2.07M) reports, “Dana Perino, President George W. Bush’s last White House press secretary, will join Clinton administration adviser Mark Penn at public-relations firm Burson-Marsteller, where she will be ‘chief issues counselor.’” Penn, who is “the firm’s CEO, said Ms. Perino’s experiences in Mr. Bush’s second term make her a valuable addition to the team of battle-tested public-relations veterans he is assembling. ... Other key members of Burson-Marsteller firm include Don Baer, a former Clinton administration communications director, Josh Gottheimer, a former Clinton speechwriter, and Karen Hughes, Mr. Bush’s counselor who also served as undersecretary of State for public diplomacy.”

Cohen Blasts Bush Presidency. Richard Cohen writes in the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A17, 696K) that “Bush and some of his White House aides are gathering in Dallas this week to plan the future George W. Bush Policy Institute. There, I guess, they will ponder grand themes and marble foyers, but I propose they begin by simply renaming the place. I suggest naming it the ‘George W. Bush Institute of Management Failure’ and dedicating it to studying how this presidency went so wrong -- a task as big as Texas itself. ... If it’s true that we learn from our mistakes, Bush’s eight years represent a bonanza of lessons.” Adds Cohen, “What commends the Bush presidency to further study was its sheer managerial ineptitude,” and that “should keep everyone occupied deep into the night. If it’s not too late -- and especially for those already critical of Barack Obama -- let me suggest dessert. How’s humble pie?”

Justice Thomas Talks To Students About “Proliferation Of Rights.” In his “Sidebar” column for the [New York Times](#) (4/14, A11, 1.12M), Adam Liptak writes about a recent appearance by Justice Clarence Thomas in Washington, DC, responding “to questions from the winners of a high school essay contest.” Liptak writes that the normally reticent justice’s “answers and the remarks that preceded them” at the DC event “provided a revealing look at his worldview these days.” Liptak notes, “The event, on March 31, was devoted to the Bill of Rights, but Justice Thomas did not embrace the document, and he proposed a couple of alternatives. ... ‘Today there is much focus on our rights,’ Justice Thomas said. ‘Indeed, I think there is a proliferation of rights.’ ... ‘I am often surprised by the virtual nobility that seems to be accorded those with grievances,’ he said. ‘Shouldn’t there at least be equal time for our Bill of Obligations and our Bill of Responsibilities?’”

Congress Urged To Continue Funding DC Voucher Program. Former D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams and former D.C. Councilman Kevin P. Chavous write

in an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A17, 696K), "Ensuring that every American child receives equal access to high-quality education represents our last civil rights struggle. By any objective measure, the educational offerings we provide for our children, particularly children of color, do them a disservice." This "led us...to promote the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. ... Preliminary data suggest that the program has been an overwhelming success." However, despite "obvious signs of success," some Congress members "want to end the program." Ultimately, "we cannot afford to lose any more children to bad schooling. ... The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program is a necessary means of educating children who otherwise would be lost."

Obama's Push For Title IX Parity In The Sciences Questioned. American Enterprise Institute Resident Scholar Christina Hoff Sommers writes in an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A17, 696K), "What's good for women's basketball will be good for nuclear physics. To most Americans, that statement will sound odd." However, to President Obama, "it apparently does not. In an October letter to women's advocacy groups, he declared that Title IX, the law that requires universities to give equal funding to men's and women's athletics," could "make 'similar, striking advances' for women in science and engineering." This campaign pledge "is hardening into policy, which ought to give people pause. ... Is it wise, to say nothing of urgent, for the president and Congress to impose an untested, undebated gender parity policy at this time?"

Payday Loan Reform Seen As Based On False Premises. In an op-ed in the [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M) Robert DeYoung, professor of finance at the University of Kansas, writes that the Payday Loan Reform Act "is based on the false premise that consumers take out these loans without realizing how much they are paying." DeYoung writes that critics of payday loans believe that borrowers "could not possibly intend to pay" as high an annual percentage rate of 391% "for an advance on their paychecks, and that the cost alone is evidence of exploitation of the working poor." DeYoung argues that new research shows that "about half of the 1,173 payday borrowers...surveyed considered other credit alternatives...before taking out a payday loan." DeYoung, in criticism of fee caps, references his own research that "found that local markets with more payday stores tend to enjoy lower prices, but that...over time, the longer a price cap remains in place the more borrowers get charged the legal maximum price." DeYoung believes that "the more options we have at our disposal, the better. So long as both sides of the deal have full information, these choices are better left to households and their creditor."

NYTimes Lauds Return Of ABA To Judicial Nominee Vetting Process. The [New York Times](#) (4/14, A22, 1.12M) editorializes, "President Obama has decided to restore the American Bar Association's traditional role in vetting judicial nominees. There is a real value in having knowledgeable lawyers who have firsthand experience with the justice system vetting prospective judges." The Times notes a new study that suggests the ABA "may have a liberal bias. There is little support for this claim. Indeed, there are signs that the group has been cowed by conservative critics in recent years into approving less-than-qualified nominees. The A.B.A. needs to ensure that its evaluators make assessments based on the nominees' merits, not on political pressure."

LATimes Applauds SCOTUS "Third Degree" Ruling. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, 833K) editorializes that "long before 9/11, U.S. citizens suspected of crimes were sometimes subjected to what fans of film noir know as the third degree. Often the success of such interrogation depended on postponing the suspect's arraignment before a judge or magistrate while the police worked him over." A Supreme Court ruling last week "forcefully reminded federal law enforcement agents that they can't stall for time in hopes that a suspect will break." The Times adds, "Whether aggressive interrogations serve the cause of justice is a debatable proposition; some social scientists argue that the combination of harsh measures and young or impressionable suspects often produce false confessions that impede the apprehension of the guilty. But, whatever the effectiveness of the third degree, it's incompatible with the protection for individual rights that distinguishes this nation from so many others."

Obama Hails Military Over Ship Captain's Rescue. President Obama is continuing to receive positive media coverage in the aftermath of Capt. Phillips' rescue from his captors off the Somali coast. [ABC World News](#) (4/13, lead story, 3:35, Raddatz, 8.2M) reported in its lead story, "It was...Obama who authorized the military to take out the pirates, and today, he heaped praise on those involved." Obama was shown saying, "I'm very proud of the efforts of the US military and many other departments and agencies that worked tirelessly to resolve this situation." Roger Simon writes in [The Politico](#) (4/14) that Sunday's "was a heck of a good news cycle for the White House," as "pirates got shot...and Barack Obama got the credit."

Chris Matthews, at the opening of [MSNBC's Hardball](#) (4/13), said, "The ability to make smart decisions, deliver clear orders and back them up when they're carried out...are something a leader needs to show and best show early. We elect our presidents not with a whole lot of patience. We wait

and hope they become our presidents. Kennedy did it when he took full responsibility for the Bay of Pigs. Reagan did it when he fired air traffic controllers. For decades Democrats have carried the burden, fairly or not, of being portrayed as soft on defense. And if the pirate hostage crisis ended badly, who knows how much mileage the Republicans would have gotten at...Obama's expense. But with three pirates dead, a fourth in custody and the captain safe, Obama has won an early and important victory." Also on [MSNBC's Hardball](#) (4/13) Newsweek's Howard Fineman said, "If you're the President and you aim your assault rifle, metaphorically speaking, you better hit the target. He did hit the target. You can't overstate in political terms what a disaster this was the President avoided. The Republicans and conservatives would have been all over him if this thing had been botched in any way."

[CNN's The Situation Room](#) (4/13, lead story, Blitzer) similarly reported, "Some political observers say this was an important military test for the President." Prof. Allan Lichtman of American University was shown saying, "You know, sometimes small episodes internationally can mean a lot symbolically for a president. Think of Ronald Reagan's invasion of Granada, tiny nation, in 1983 -- it was a huge public relations triumph for him even though it didn't mean all that much on the world stage."

[NBC Nightly News](#) (4/13, lead story, 3:20, Miklaszewski, 8.37M) reported that yesterday, "with a successful operation under his belt," Obama "pledged to put a halt to pirate attacks." The President was shown saying, "We have to continue to be prepared to confront them when they arise and we have to ensure that those who commit acts of piracy are held accountable." [NBC Nightly News](#) (4/13, story 2, 3:35, Williams, 8.37M) went on to air an interview with the commander of the Navy destroyer Bainbridge, who "who gave the order to shoot -- who rescued Captain Phillips and took the young Somali pirate prisoner." The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/13, lead story, 3:30, Orr, 6.1M) noted that "the fourth pirate, who left the lifeboat just before the shooting began, now is in custody. It's believed he's between 16 and 19 years of age," and "US law enforcement officials tell us he will come to this country to face charges."

[The Hill](#) (4/14, Youngman) reports that "the White House said Monday that...Obama's loud silence during last week's standoff...was necessary in such a tense situation." White House press secretary Robert Gibbs "said the president, who came under fire over the weekend for staying mum on the drama, did not want to make the situation 'even potentially more dangerous by putting the president out there for the captives to see.'" Gibbs "stressed that Obama was 'actively involved' throughout the ordeal, and there were myriad reasons for not speaking out publicly while Phillips was still being held."

The [AP](#) (4/14, Katz) says "Obama and the US military drew high praise Monday," even as "some military experts fear the fatal shooting of three pirates will lead to an escalation of the conflict off Somalia's coast." Robert Fox, "defense correspondent for London's Evening Standard newspaper," said of the President that he "has won the respect of his allies. ... It was very decisive, very high-risk, and it could have gone badly wrong. But it's an escalation, and it shows that this really is a permanent problem, not just a colorful story, and it will take a substantial amount of work." And "Charles Heyman, a defense specialist and former British army officer, said the Obama administration showed its resolve by refusing to pay ransom for Phillips' release." The [Detroit Free Press](#) (4/14, Gray, 348K), meanwhile, reports that Rep. Peter Hoekstra, the House Intelligence Committee's ranking member, said "Obama, who authorized the action taken against the pirates, should get the credit for the rescue operation. 'Because he'd get all the flack if it didn't go well,' Hoekstra said."

US ambassador to the UN Susan Rice, on [CNN's The Situation Room](#) (4/13, Blitzer), said, "The US has been in the lead for many months in trying to tackle the challenge of piracy off the coast of Somalia. It really has three essential elements. First is prevention. Trying to shrink the space in which the pirates can effectively operate. We have something called Combined Joint Task Force 151, and other members of the global community have committed naval resources to this area and so we have a broad global effort to try to take back as much of that water as we can from the pirates. But that's a major challenge and it's one that we're all going to be investing more in. The second is interdiction, when the pirates actually get on a ship to bring it back safely and rescue the crew members."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, A8, Cummins, Miller, 2.07M) describes the operation that freed Phillips, while [USA Today](#) (4/13, Stone, 2.28M) also recounts the rescue and remarks that "it was a drama that could have been written in Hollywood." USA Today notes that "Sunday's response by the Navy marked the first time an American president had acted against maritime marauders since Thomas Jefferson ordered Marines to the shores of Tripoli to fight the Barbary pirates." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, Barnes, Miller, 833K) also runs an account of the rescue.

The [New York Times](#) (4/14, A8, Baker, McFadden, Shane, 1.12M) cautions that "the operation on the waters off the Horn of Africa may presage a more complicated challenge for a president already trying to end a war in Iraq and win another in Afghanistan," as "Somali pirates have vowed to take revenge on Americans, and they have demonstrated in recent months their ability to seize ships from all sorts of countries with impunity. Even now, pirates in Somalia are holding more than 200 hostages from countries

other than the United States.” [Fox News’ Special Report](#) (4/13, lead story, Baier) reported that “some pirate leaders” are “now branding America ‘enemy number one,’ and threatening new violence and continued hijacking of ships.” On its front page, however, the [Financial Times](#) (4/14, Wright, Sevastopulo) says “Somalia’s pirates have been acting more nervously and co-operating more closely among themselves after Sunday’s killing of three of them by US navy snipers and a French attack on a seized vessel, say people combating the problem.” That may “suggest that pirates fear further US military intervention.”

The [AP](#) (4/14, Gearan), meanwhile, reports that “military officials said the precision of Sunday’s rescue may be a testament to the skill of U.S. forces, but it should not become a rationale for a major expansion of the Pentagon’s role in what is fundamentally a criminal problem.” The AP adds that “one official, reflecting the administration’s view, said bluntly that piracy is a crime, not an act of war or even terrorism. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because no decisions have been made, including about whether to expand or change the military’s current role in fighting piracy.”

Peter D. Zimmerman, “professor emeritus at King’s College London and a former chief scientist of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee,” writes in the [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M), “One way to deal with the threat is to revive convoys,” which “have historically been the antidote to piracy on the open seas, and they can defend against these attacks once again. Modern naval escorts, equipped with helicopters, have the ability to establish a perimeter around the merchant ships, the firepower to stop a pirate, the legal jurisdiction to do so under the Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the ability to deliver their prisoners for trial.”

In an editorial, the [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, 833K) writes that “shipping companies have been unwilling to arm their crews for fear it would put their employees in danger. That’s no excuse for offering pirates a soft, easy target.” Moreover, “the international community must do more to protect shipping in these waters, restore the rule of law in Somalia and improve the economic conditions that make piracy such an attractive profession.”

[USA Today](#) (4/14, 2.28M), meanwhile, editorializes that the rescues of Phillips “could hardly seem more impressive. The incident might not have much impact on the rising piracy problem off of lawless Somalia, but the fact that at least one band of brigands could be disposed of so efficiently -- rather than leaving the world’s navies looking so helpless -- is reassuring.”

Pentagon Ponders Attacks On Pirates’ Land Bases, Aid To Somali People. [Bloomberg News](#) (4/12, Bliss) reports, “The US military is considering attacks on pirate bases on land and aid for the Somali people to help stem ship hijackings off Africa’s east coast, defense officials said.” The

military also “is drawing up proposals to aid the fledgling Somalia government to train security forces and develop its own coast guard, said the officials, who requested anonymity. The plans will be presented to the Obama administration as it considers a coordinated US government and international response to piracy, the officials said.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, A8, Spiegel, 2.07M) reports Defense Secretary Gates said yesterday “piracy off the coast of Somalia will flourish until a stable government is established in Mogadishu.” Gates “said poverty and rampant criminality in Somalia make piracy an attractive option for local youths, and problems there are ‘probably going to get worse.”” [CNN’s The Situation Room](#) (4/13, Blitzer) reported Gates also remarked that “he expects to spend a good deal of time in this administration trying to solve the problem of piracy.”

[USA Today](#) (4/14, Dilanian, 2.28M) reports “a key senator and several regional experts urged his administration to tackle piracy’s root causes by helping Somalia’s weak government gain control of its territory.” Sen. Russ Feingold said, “A modest amount of assistance from the world community could do a great deal to help stabilize this government.”

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A16, 696K) editorializes, “Since the Clinton administration abandoned a UN mission in Somalia 15 years ago, the United States has tried ignoring the chaos there, using proxies to subdue it and targeting its worst elements with airstrikes. ... Again and again, mostly for political reasons, US administrations have refused to absorb the lessons Somalia teaches, in tandem with pre-2001 Afghanistan and the tribal territories of present-day Pakistan. Those lessons are that stateless territories, particularly in the Muslim world, can pose a significant threat to US interests and even homeland security, and that the danger can be adequately addressed only by helping a state authority emerge to fill the vacuum.” Adds the Post, “A coordinated international effort to build up a Somali government and security forces would cost many billions of dollars and take many years to pay off,” but “it is also the only way to end the threats of piracy and terrorism from the Horn of Africa.”

US Lawmaker Safe After Militant Attack At Mogadishu Airport. The [AP](#) (4/14, Hassan) reports, “Assailants fired mortar shells at the Mogadishu airport as a plane carrying an American congressman took off, a police officer said Monday. The plane departed safely, but 19 Somalis were reported wounded in surrounding residential areas.” Rep. Don Payne, “who met with Somalia’s top leaders during his one-day visit, said that he had no idea of the violence until reaching Kenya after the flight from Mogadishu, one of the most dangerous cities in the world and rarely visited by foreign travelers.” The AP adds “the Islamic extremist group al-Shabab later claimed responsibility for the

mortar barrage in a statement posted on a militant Web site, according to the terrorism monitoring group SITE.”

[AFP](#) (4/14, Abdinur) reports that “in Washington, US State Department spokesman Robert Wood said Payne was provided with a ‘very frank and straightforward assessment of the security situation on the ground.’” Added Wood, “My understanding is there are no DS (Diplomatic Security) agents protecting him.” [The Politico](#) (4/14, Barr) notes that in a interview on CNN, Payne similarly said, “We were informed by the State Department that they had not authorized any of their personnel to visit Mogadishu, and we were aware of the threat.” The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A10, McCrummen, Wilgoren, Tyson, 696K), under the headline “Piracy, Mortar Attack Evidence Of Ongoing Chaos In Somalia,” reports that Payne said he “had traveled to Somalia under the protection of peacekeeping soldiers from the African Union, Reuters said, and had held meetings with the interim government’s president and prime minister.” The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Ibrahim, 1.12M), The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, Sanders, 833K), [Roll Call](#) (4/14, Newmyer) and [The Hill](#) (4/14, Johnson) also report on the attack.

US, Allies Ponder Dropping Key Precondition

For Talks With Iran. On its front page, the [New York Times](#) (4/14, A1, Sanger, 1.12M) reports “the Obama administration and its European allies are preparing proposals that would shift strategy toward Iran by dropping a longstanding American insistence that Tehran rapidly shut down nuclear facilities during the early phases of negotiations over its atomic program, according to officials involved in the discussions.” These “proposals, exchanged in confidential strategy sessions with European allies, would press Tehran to open up its nuclear program gradually to wide-ranging inspection,” but “would also allow Iran to continue enriching uranium for some period during the talks, a sharp break in the approach taken by the Bush administration, which had demanded that Iran halt its enrichment activities.” The Times adds that “if Mr. Obama signed off on the new negotiating approach, the United States and its European allies would use new negotiating sessions with Iran to press for interim steps toward suspension of its nuclear activities, starting with allowing international inspectors into sites from which they have been barred for several years.”

Meanwhile, Iran on Monday said it “welcomes nuclear talks with the United States and other countries,” reports the [AP](#) (4/14, Karimi). The nation’s top nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, “made the comments during a telephone call with the European Union’s foreign policy chief, state television reported.” In Washington, State Department spokesman Robert Wood responded to Jalili’s comments saying, “Of course, we welcome the fact that they’re interested in having a dialogue,” but stressed that “Iran needs to show the

international community that its nuclear program is a peaceful one. Right now, the international community is very skeptical about that.”

Moussavi Rules Out Suspending Nuclear Program If Elected. The [Financial Times](#) (4/14, Bozorgmehr) reports, “Iranian presidential hopeful Mir-Hossein Moussavi has ruled out suspension of the country’s controversial uranium enrichment but insisted that he would work to provide ‘guarantees’ that Tehran would not divert its nuclear programme to weapons use.” In “his first interview with the international media, one of the leading rivals to Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, the fundamentalist president, in the June election, told the Financial Times that Iran had a ‘bad experience’ with suspension.” The Times adds “the comments of Mr Moussavi suggest that Iran’s nuclear ambitions and its dispute over them could be little affected by the June poll.”

State Department Probe Criticizes VOA’s Iran Broadcasts. The [Washington Times](#) (4/14, Krlev, 83K) reports, “A State Department investigation has found serious flaws in Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts for Iran, including charges of political bias and cronyism and a management that doesn’t understand Farsi, the language of Iran.” In a report “completed last month, a copy of which was shared with The Washington Times, the department’s office of the inspector general concluded that none of the executive producers at the Persian News Network (PNN) speaks Farsi, also known as Persian, which means content is aired without high-level approval.” The US “has increased spending over the years -- to \$17 million in this year’s budget request -- on broadcasting to Iran and considers it an important tool to influence Iranian public opinion about a variety of issues, from Iran’s nuclear program to abuses of human rights.”

Tensions Rising Between Egypt, Hezbollah.

The [Financial Times](#) (4/14, Fifield) reports, “Tensions between Egypt and Lebanon’s Hizbollah group have escalated after the Shia movement admitted that one of its members had been smuggling weapons from Egypt to the Gaza Strip.” Egyptian “authorities were chasing 10 Lebanese men on Monday, allegedly members of a Hizbollah cell, on the Sinai peninsula, which shares a border with the Gaza Strip, in a crackdown on a group that they claim was planning to attack Egyptian institutions and Israeli tourists.”

The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Worth, 1.12M), meanwhile, reports “four Lebanese Army soldiers were killed in the hashish-growing hinterlands of eastern Lebanon Monday when armed men fired a rocket-propelled grenade at their vehicle, in an apparent escalation of the army’s recent battles with drug dealers and criminals in that part of the country.”

US Professor Provides Personal Insights Into Syrian President.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/14, A1, Daragahi, 833K) reports that David Lesch, a former “Dodgers farm team pitcher who had found his way into academia” as a “respected Middle East scholar,” has formed an unlikely friendship with Bashar Assad, “the ophthalmologist and accidental heir to the Syrian presidency.” The two met when Assad granted Lesch an interview for his book, “The New Lion of Damascus.” During the course of several interviews, Lesch said, “When we used to talk about Syria and Iran, he indicated that it’s an alliance of convenience.” Of a possible deal with Israel, Lesch said, “He doesn’t think they need to be in lock-step. If the Syrian-Israeli track goes faster, that’s OK. But he doesn’t want to be out all by himself making peace with Israel while it is perceived as hostile throughout much of the Middle East.” Although “Lesch acknowledges that he avoided pressing Assad on certain issues, including Syria’s human rights record,” he “bats away suggestions by some in the conservative media that he’s being used as a pawn of the Syrian government.”

Bush 41 Library Releases Documents On US-Saudi Relations.

In his blog for [The Politico](#) (4/14), Josh Gerstein writes that “Monday morning, the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas, released about 800 pages of old White House records having to do with relations between the US and Saudi Arabia. There are no plans to have the records up on the Web anytime soon, I’m told.”

After UN Passes Resolution, North Korea Vows To Boycott Six-Party Talks.

The [AP](#) (4/14, Lederer) reports that “eight days after North Korea’s rocket launch, the UN Security Council on Monday unanimously condemned the action, demanded an end to missile tests and said it will expand sanctions against the reclusive communist nation.” The statement, “agreed on by all 15 members and read at a formal meeting” of the Security Council, was “a weaker response than a UN resolution,” which was sought by Japan and the US but was opposed by China and Russia. Still, US Ambassador Susan Rice “insisted the statement is legally binding, just like a resolution -- a view backed by Russia -- but other diplomats and officials disagreed.” Meanwhile, in Washington, the [AP](#) (4/14) reports separately, President Barack Obama welcomed the Security Council’s action as a “clear and united message” that North Korea’s launch “was unlawful and would result in real consequences,” spokesman Robert Gibbs said.

But early Tuesday, the [AP](#) (4/14) reports North Korea “vowed...to bolster its nuclear deterrent and boycott six-party talks aimed at its denuclearization in protest” of the Security Council’s statement. North Korea’s Foreign Ministry said in a

statement that it “resolutely condemns” the action by the UN, “which it said ‘rampantly’ infringes upon the country’s sovereignty and ‘severely debases’ the people’s dignity.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M), meanwhile, editorializes, “North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il is said to be a film buff, so perhaps he’s familiar with the classic ‘Groundhog Day,’ in which Bill Murray plays a TV reporter who is condemned to relive February 2 over and over again. Kim must figure the members of the UN Security Council have seen it too, since they insist on reliving the same hopeless diplomacy toward his nuclear provocations.” Adds the Journal, “With this wrist slap for Kim, the Obama Administration has now had its first experience with the limits of the UN as the enforcer of global order and nonproliferation. It won’t be the last. See Darfur (feckless denunciation of), and Iran, which just announced it has 7,000 nuclear centrifuges and counting.”

Rice Says UN Statement On North Korean Launch Has “Teeth.”

On [CNN’s The Situation Room](#) (4/13) host Wolf Blitzer noted that “before the North Korean missile launch, the President of the United States was very firm, saying there will be serious, grave consequences if they go forward. They went forward. Now finally, days later...the Russians and the Chinese are still refusing to go along with increased tough sanctions against North Korea. What’s going on?” US ambassador to the UN Susan Rice replied, “Actually, after a week’s worth of very tough negotiation, what we emerged with is a very strong, unanimous binding statement that condemns the launch by North Korea.” When Blitzer interjected that “it was a statement by the President” not “a resolution which would have had a lot more teeth,” Rice maintained that “a resolution in this instance wouldn’t have had the teeth that we sought. We had long said we would have preferred a resolution but what we got is a statement with teeth, that is binding on all members of the council, and that entails strong additional sanctions by strengthening the existing sanctions regime.”

South Korea “Close” To Joining Proliferation Security Initiative.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, A8, Ramstad, 2.07M), meanwhile, reports, “South Korea is about to make it harder for North Korea to ship missiles and components to other countries, a step that may turn out to be the highest price that Pyongyang pays for its test of a long-range missile last week.” South Korean officials “on Monday said they were close to a final decision to become full participants in the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative, in which countries stop suspected transporters of weapons of mass destruction and related technology on land, sea and air.”

Administration Said To “Have Demurred” On Possibility Of Obama-Chavez Talks.

[The Hill](#)

(4/14, Johnson) reports, "Just days away from their first meeting at the Summit of the Americas, Hugo Chavez will have to decide if he'll profess to smell sulfur or roses in President Obama's presence." The Venezuelan leader's "seesawing statements have shown Chavez's sentiments swinging from love to hate to love before Obama has finished his first 100 days." The Hill adds "Administration officials have demurred when asked if Chavez and Obama would meet for one-on-one talks during the summit, saying last week that the president's schedule should include standard, closed-door meetings between all 34 heads of state as well as a few group sit-downs." But "summit adviser Jeffrey S. Davidow said in a State Department press conference last week that meals could also offer chitchat opportunities, without singling out Obama or Chavez in particular."

Aide Says Obama Will Seek To Reengage Latin American Leaders At Summit. The [AP](#) (4/14, Feller) reports the White House on Monday "cast Barack Obama's first presidential trip south of the border as a chance to revitalize relations with an entire hemisphere of nations." Jeffrey Davidow, the President's "principal adviser" for the Summit of the Americas, told reporters, "The perception coming up from the south (is) that in recent years the United States has turned its attention elsewhere, has neglected its relationships in this part of the world." He added, "Whether one agrees with that perception or not, it certainly is a very strongly felt perception. And I think this summit will give him the opportunity to meet with all the heads of state, listen to them, exchange views, and come away with new ideas." In previewing the trip, "White House aides said they could not yet provide details about which leaders Obama would be meeting with one-on-one while in Trinidad. They also said Obama would be heading to the summit with concrete proposals but declined to name what they were." Instead, the White House "spoke of priority themes: rallying support for bottom-up economic reforms, particularly those that help the 'poorest of the poor'; working with other nations to expand renewable energy and reduce global warming; and improving public safety."

Clinton To Visit Haiti, Dominican Republic Before Summit Of Americas. [AFP](#) (4/14) reports the State Department announced Monday that Secretary Clinton will travel to Haiti and the Dominican Republic "later this week before heading to a Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago." The Secretary "is due to arrive in Haiti on Thursday, and go to the Dominican Republic later that day before heading to Trinidad and Tobago on Friday," spokesman Robert Woods told reporters. In Haiti, she will meet with President Rene Preval "to discuss issues of common concern, including stability, security and assistance," Wood said. In the Dominican Republic, Clinton "plans to meet with President Leonel Fernandez and will discuss bilateral

development cooperation and efforts to combat drug trafficking," he added. The Secretary will then join President Barack Obama on Friday for the Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain.

[Reuters](#) (4/14, Maler) reports Clinton's trip to Haiti will come after donor nations gather later today in Washington for a donors' conference to aid Haiti.

US Appears Intent On Boycotting World Conference Against Racism.

The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A4, Fletcher, 696K) reports, "The Obama administration appears to be standing by its decision to boycott the World Conference Against Racism next week in Geneva, despite efforts to focus and tone down language in a draft conference document viewed as hostile toward Israel." The Post adds "the preliminary conference document ran 45 pages and called for reparations for slavery, condemned the 'validation of Islamophobia,' and asserted that Israel's treatment of the Palestinians is grounded in racism." While "the document has since been...shortened and many of its sharp statements have been removed" after "objections raised by negotiators from the Obama" team, the Administration "seems uninterested in attending, stoking frustration among activist groups who have said that it is ironic that the nation's first black president would choose that course."

China Releases Two-Year Plan To Bolster Human Rights.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, Chao, 2.07M) reports, "China issued its first action plan on human rights, vowing to address a host of issues, from torture to the death penalty and the environment." The Journal adds "international rights groups welcomed the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2009-10), but some said the document was too vague and dodged key issues, including curbs on freedom of speech and of religion." The "two-year plan outlines the government's aim for broader access to social security, health care and education. The death penalty will be 'strictly controlled and prudently applied,' it states, adding that defendants will be guaranteed fair trials." The Journal prohibits "forced confessions by torture and the mistreatment of detainees," but "reiterates the longstanding, and much-criticized, position of Beijing that economic rights are paramount in a country struggling to provide jobs and basic welfare."

The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Bradsher, 1.12M) reports "the civil liberties mentioned in the action plan are already guaranteed by Chinese laws or the Constitution. Human rights groups say many are nonetheless ignored or suppressed by the authorities at their own discretion, without any practicable grounds for appeal through the Communist Party-controlled judiciary." Moreover, "the document does not

propose any fundamental reforms of the country's one-party system, like making the courts independent of party control or allowing other parties or political groups to hold power. Instead, it focuses on trying to advance respect for human rights within the existing bureaucracies."

Protests Rage On In Thailand. Under the headline "Thailand Descends Into Chaos," the [Financial Times](#) (4/13, Johnston) reports on its front page, "Dozens of people were injured in Thailand early on Monday morning after troops moved in to disperse anti-government protesters who were blocking a key intersection in the capital Bangkok." The Times adds "the troops were acting under a state of emergency announced by Abhisit Vejjajiva, prime minister, on Sunday." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, Hookway, 2.07M) says "the tough response by the politically powerful armed forces was a boon" to Vejjajiva, "who has been under pressure from protesters to resign. His rival, exiled former leader Thaksin Shinawatra, revised Sunday's call for a full-scale revolution and instead urged peaceful protests." The Journal adds that "by late afternoon Monday, soldiers had seized the momentum, using force to clear most intersections that the red-clad protesters had barricaded with commandeered buses and burning tires."

[AFP](#) (4/14, Konglang) notes that "a spokesman for Bangkok's main emergency service said that over the day of violence, 113 people were hurt in the battles between demonstrators, soldiers and residents. Abhisit said 23 troops were among the injured." The [New York Times](#) (4/14, Mydans, Fuller, 1.12M) and [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A7, Johnston, 696K) also report on the unrest.

Zuma's ANC Party Reaches Out To South Africa's Afrikaners, Minorities. The [Washington Post](#) (4/14, A1, Brulliard, 696K) reports on its front page that "fifteen years after Nelson Mandela negotiated power away from the white Afrikaner government that ruled for half a century by means of a web of racist laws, South Africa's small Afrikaner population now struggles for political clout." And although few Afrikaners "are expected to vote" for Jacob Zuma's African National Congress party in upcoming national elections, "some see a hint of hope in Zuma." The ANC "has been wooing Afrikaners...and other minority groups with renewed vigor." These efforts are seen as "partly a response to a new opposition party that has threatened the ANC's dominance by energizing disillusioned white voters and partly a cynical fanning of ethnic pride. But some say they also reflect a real concern within the ANC...that the party had evolved under then-President Thabo Mbeki into an organization seen as only for blacks."

USAID Report: UN Mishandling US-Funded Infrastructure Programs. [USA Today](#) (4/14, Dilanian, 2.28M) reports that a [study](#) prepared by the US Agency for International Development's inspector general, Donald Gambatesa, found that "two United Nations agencies spent millions in US money on substandard Afghanistan construction projects, including a central bank without electricity and a bridge at risk of 'life threatening' collapse." The report indicates the UN, which "ran a 'quick impact' infrastructure program from 2003 to 2006 under a \$25 million grant from USAID," provided "shoddy work, diverted money to other countries and then stonewalled US efforts to figure out what happened." According to USAID Deputy Administrator James Bever, "USAID has scaled back its dealings with the UN and hired a collection agency to seek \$7.6 million back," however, USAID "hasn't heeded its inspector general's request to sever all ties." In an email, Bever explained, "There are certain cases where working with the UN is the only option available."

WSJournal Accuses Obama Of Lack Of "Transparency" Over IMF Funding. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/14, 2.07M) editorializes, "The US and Europe were widely expected to clash at the G-20 summit in London last month over how to address the global financial crisis. Voila, in just two days the problem was solved with a joint promise to increase International Monetary Fund resources by \$750 billion to a total of \$1 trillion." The Journal adds "the US portion of this new commitment is more than \$140 billion. Yet Congress has debated neither the amount nor the proposed use of the funds. Instead, President Obama and his fellow leaders simply waved their hands, like a Star Trek captain, and said make it so." The funding amounts "to a massive expansion in US foreign aid. We can see why the G-20 applauded," but "this is the opposite of the 'transparency' this Administration has promised, and someone on Capitol Hill should blow the whistle."

NYTimes Hails Fujimori's Downfall. The [New York Times](#) (4/14, A22, 1.12M) editorializes that "it was heartening last week to see a three-judge panel of the Peruvian Supreme Court find Peru's former president, Alberto Fujimori, guilty of human-rights abuses and sentence him to 25 years in prison." Fujimori "systematically abused his power. Among a list of horrifying crimes, the court found him guilty of the murder of 25 people, including an 8-year-old boy, by a military death squad. In 2000, facing corruption charges, Mr. Fujimori fled to Japan. Convinced that he was forever a hero, he flew to Chile in 2005 with plans to make a comeback. Instead, he was extradited to Peru. ... However popular Mr. Fujimori may once have been in Peru, by the end

of his trial, public-opinion polls found that a large majority of Peruvians agreed that he was guilty as charged.”

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