

Eye on the World

July 10–11, 2010

This collection of short news items is from the “Eye on the World” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s Web site, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of July 10–11, 2010.

Compiled by Dave Havir

An article by Moni Basu titled “Death by Stoning Imminent for Iranian Woman, Attorney Says” was posted at cnn.com on July 4, 2010.

It said: “Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, a mother of two, is waiting to die in Iran by a method of execution described by her lawyer as ‘barbaric’—stoning.

“She will be buried up to her chest, deeper than a man would be, and the stones that will be hurled at her will be large enough to cause pain but not so large as to kill her immediately, according to an Amnesty International report that cited the Iranian penal code.”

The 42-year-old woman was convicted of adultery in 2006.



An article titled “Alleged Adulteress Escapes Death in Iran” was posted at aol-news.com on July 9, 2010.

It said: “An Iranian woman sentenced to death by stoning for adultery will escape that punishment, Iranian state media reported today.”

It later said: “But it’s unclear whether the 43-year-old Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani will avoid the death penalty altogether, or be killed by another method Iranian executioners use, like hanging or beheading.”



A Reuters article titled “Beijing Renews Google’s Operating License” was posted at france24.com on July 9, 2010.

It said: “After months of uncertainty due to tensions over government censorship, the Internet search giant Google says Beijing has renewed the company’s license, permitting it to continue Web operations in China.”

It later said: “China Internet analysts and industry watchers welcomed the move as a positive sign but cautioned against heady optimism.”



An Associated Press article titled "At Least 220 Dead in Congo Oil Tanker Explosion" was posted at cbsnews.com on July 3, 2010.

It said: "A fuel tanker flipped over and exploded into flames in eastern Congo overnight, killing at least 220 villagers and wounding more than 100—many of whom had rushed to siphon leaking liquid from the vehicle illegally, the U.N. and local officials said Saturday."



An article by David Masters titled "Methodists Boycott Israeli Settlements" was posted at digitaljournal.com on July 4, 2010.

It said: "The Methodist Church this week announced a boycott on all goods produced in Israeli settlements and called for an arms embargo against all sides in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

"Delegates at the Methodist Conference in Portsmouth, England, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the boycott following calls from Palestinian Christians, the World Council of Churches, and a growing number of Jewish groups. The vote makes the Methodist Church the first in the UK to boycott Israeli settlement goods."



An article titled "Norway Arrests 'al-Qaeda Plot' Men" was posted at aljazeera.net on July 8, 2010.

It said: "Norwegian police have arrested three people suspected of planning a 'terrorist attack' and of having links to al-Qaeda."

It later said: "Norwegian police said two of the individuals were apprehended in Oslo, Norway's capital, and one was apprehended in Germany with the co-operation of the German police."



An article by Hana Levi Julian titled "Ahmadinejad's Mission: Save America From Obama" was posted at israelnationnews.com on July 6, 2010.

It said: "In a speech replying to a message by U.S. President Barack Obama to Iran's opposition Green movement, Ahmadinejad explained that he was on a mission to 'liberate' Americans from Obama's 'dictatorship.' The speech was translated by MEMRI, the Middle East Media Research Institute."



An article by Jason Mattera titled "Video: Bolton—'Arab Countries Would Support Attack On Iran' " was posted at humanevents.com on July 7, 2010.

It said: "In a *Human Events* exclusive, former UN Ambassador John Bolton argued that a preemptive military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities would privately have the full backing of many Middle East countries."

The article quoted Mr. Bolton as saying: "The Obama Administration does not manifestly understand [that] an Israeli attack against the Iranian nuclear program would be supported in the Arab world. It would be supported by the Arab states in the Persian Gulf region. It would be supported by Egypt and others who don't want Iran to have nuclear weapons any more than the Israelis do."

Mr. Bolton also expressed his view that such an attack should be led by the United States because "we could do it a lot better."



An article titled "US Pushes Direct Middle East Talks" was posted at aljazeera.net on July 7, 2010.

It said: "The US president has called for direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians to be restarted before a partial suspension on the construction of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land expires in September."

It later said: "A big question is whether Netanyahu will extend the partial settlement expansion suspension that he accepted only under heavy pressure from Obama—a move that could widen cracks in Netanyahu's governing coalition, dominated by pro-settler parties, including his own Likud."



An article titled "Obama: Israelis Suspicious of Me Because My Middle Name Is Hussein" was posted at haaretz.com on July 8, 2010.

It said: "U.S. President Barack Obama told Channel 2 News on Wednesday that he believed Israel would not try to surprise the U.S. with a unilateral attack on Iran."

It later said: "During the interview Wednesday, when confronted with the anxiety that some Israelis feel toward him, Obama said that 'some of it may just be the fact that my middle name is Hussein, and that creates suspicion.' "



An article by Maayana Miskin titled "Abbas to Arabs: We'd Support a War Against Israel" was posted at israelnationalnews.com on July 8, 2010.

It said: "Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas told Arab leaders that the PA is ready to wage war on Israel if the rest of the Arab world does, according to the PA daily *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* as translated by Palestinian Media Watch."



An article titled "Clinton Gets Earful From Moscow On 'Occupation' Remarks" was posted at en.rian.ru (RIA Novosti) on July 7, 2010.

It said: "Moscow dismissed on Wednesday the U.S. state secretary's remarks about Georgia's occupation by Russian troops as 'baseless.'

Hilary Clinton had said on Monday that Moscow should honor its commitments, "including ending the occupation and withdrawing troops from South Ossetia and Abkhazia to their pre-conflict positions."



An article by Pia Malbran titled "TSA to Block 'Controversial Opinion' on the Web" was posted at cbsnews.com on July 2, 2010.

It said: "The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is blocking certain websites from the federal agency's computers, including halting access by staffers to any Internet pages that contain a 'controversial opinion,' according to an internal email obtained by CBS News."

Five specific categories were mentioned in the email. The other four were: (1) criminal activity, (2) extreme violence (including cartoon violence) and gruesome content, (3) gaming and (4) chat/messaging.



An article by Joseph Weber and David R. Sands titled "TSA Drops Policy Blocking 'Controversial' Sites" was posted at washingtontimes.com on July 6, 2010.

It said: "After an uproar from conservative bloggers and free-speech activists, the Transportation Security Administration late Tuesday rescinded a new policy that would have prevented employees from accessing websites with 'controversial opinions' on TSA computers at work."

It later said: "The policy itself became controversial as the Drudge Report and a number of conservative bloggers highlighted the possibility that the policy could be used to censor websites critical of the agency or of the Obama administration in general. The American Civil Liberties Union also questioned the language."



An article titled "The Obama Tax Trap" was posted at wsj.com (*The Wall Street Journal*) on July 2, 2010.

The article began by mentioning a recent quote by Barack Obama: "Next year when I start presenting some very difficult choices to the country, I hope some of these folks who are hollering about deficits step up. Because I'm calling their bluff."

The article continued: "That was President Barack Obama, the heretofore unknown deficit hawk, all but announcing the other day the tax trap that he's been laying for Republicans. From what we hear about intra-GOP debates, more than a few will be happy to walk right into it.

"You don't need a Mensa IQ to figure this one out. Mr. Obama's plan has been to increase spending to new, and what he hopes will be permanent, heights. Then as the public and financial markets begin to fret about deficits and debt, he'll claim that the debt is 'unsustainable' and that the only 'responsible' policy is to raise taxes."

It later said: "Voila, Mr. Obama will have established a new spend-and-tax policy architecture that has the feds taking from 25 percent to 30 percent of GDP, up from the roughly 21 percent modern average.

"This strategy explains why Mr. Obama is now starting to fret in public about deficits and debt. This week he even said reducing the debt will be 'our project.' Funny how debt seemed a lower priority when he was urging Congress to pass \$862 billion in stimulus and \$1 trillion in new health-care subsidies."



An editorial by Nile Gardiner titled "America Is Sinking Under Obama's Towering Debt" was posted at telegraph.co.uk on July 2, 2010.

The article gave the following quote from the "Congressional Budget Office Long-Term Budget Outlook": "As a result of those deficits, the amount of federal debt held by the public has surged. At the end of 2008, that debt equaled 40 percent of the nation's annual economic output (as measured by gross domestic product, or GDP), a little above the 40 year average of 36 percent. Since then, large budget deficits have caused debt held by the public to shoot upward; the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that federal debt will reach 62 percent of GDP by the end of this year—the highest percentage since shortly after World War II."

The article later said: "The CBO assessment is probably the most important economic report the President of the United States will read this year. And it should be a huge wake-up call for the Obama administration, which has so far adopted a policy of sticking its head in the sand in the face of an impending Greek-style financial crisis in the very near future.

"In striking contrast, the New British government has acknowledged the scale of the debt crisis in the UK, and has launched a tough austerity package to deal with it. The White House needs to wake up to reality, and aggressively reduce borrowing, cut down on public spending, and dramatically reduce the size of the federal government. If he doesn't, there will be devastating implications for the United States as the world's only superpower.

"With his reckless big government policies, Barack Obama threatens to run his country into the ground, with American decline the inevitable end result. It is not too late to reverse course, but so far there is not a shred of evidence that the president is willing to do what is necessary. Not only will the United States suffer from this kamikaze-style approach, but the world will too."



An article by Michael W. Savage titled "Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah May Follow Arizona's Lead on Immigration Law" was posted at washingtonpost.com on July 8, 2010.

It said: "Attention is focused on Arizona and the federal government's challenge to the state's strict new immigration law, but three other states could adopt similar legislation next year.

"Lawmakers in Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah, which have already taken steps against illegal immigration, say that Arizona-style measures have a realistic chance of passing when their legislatures reconvene in 2011."

It later said: "Legislators in at least 17 other states introduced bills this year similar to the Arizona law, which allows officers to question anyone they suspect of being in the country illegally. But most of those measures are not considered likely to be adopted or signed by governors."



An editorial by Andrea Tantorás titled "Obama vs. Arizona: The President Is Fighting a Reckless War That Will Backfire Politically" was posted at nydailynews.com on July 8, 2010.

[Eye on the World comment: Although Ms. Tantorás may correctly size up the intention of the administration, she may be underestimating the tenacity of the administration, the liberal bias of much of the mainstream media and the passivity of the electorate.]

The Obama administration is getting quite the reputation for bucking the wishes of the people. From pushing through an unpopular health-care bill to imposing a moratorium on offshore drilling that's costing the already-suffering Gulf region precious jobs, it has refused to back down when it comes to the will of the masses.

Now President Obama's Justice Department has decided to sue the State of Arizona over its new law targeting illegal aliens, when a majority of the public favors the legislation, leaving many to wonder if the increasingly detached White House has gone too far.

The administration says its lawsuit is all about the law; Arizona, it says, is trying to enforce immigration statutes—which is the federal government's job alone.

It's hard to believe from a President who has already shaken the finger of moral disapproval at the bill.

Rather, anyone with basic political sense can see the move for what it is: a purely political maneuver intended to invigorate Hispanic voters—a key piece of the Democratic base—in time for the November elections. Obama is hoping that a bloody judicial showdown on immigration will translate into high

turnout for Democrats. And that could be enough to sustain Democratic majorities in Congress.

Don't count on it. For the strategy to work, registered Hispanic voters would need to turn out in droves over what essentially boils down to a nuanced debate between federal versus states' rights.

While some legal Latinos will buy the concern that the bill could lead to racial profiling—an outcome the Arizona law strictly forbids—most likely voters are overwhelmingly against illegal immigration. Even if some find the Arizona law abhorrent, it won't likely be enough to counter the majority of Americans who side with the Grand Canyon State and would favor a similar law in their own states.

According to a Pew Research Center poll conducted May 6 to 9, nearly six in 10 voters favor the Arizona legislation, the broadest support in favor of the requirement that people produce documents verifying their legal status. A whopping 86 percent of Republicans, 65 percent of Democrats and 73 percent of independents back that provision.

When it comes to immigration, most Americans want the border secured first and foremost. But securing the border would take the immediacy of the immigration issue off the table. You see, Obama needs the border as a carrot to pass a larger bill in Congress that gives amnesty.

Think about it. What sounds better: "The Protect Our Borders Now Act" or the "Amnesty for Everyone Bill"? Without serious provisions that address border security, any such legislation is unlikely to pass, particularly if the GOP gains seats in the fall or takes control of the House of Representatives, something Obama is expecting, with the help of Hispanics, not to happen.

And so, in an effort to maintain and expand the Democratic base, Obama risks support within it. A sharp divide among the unions could ensue as it did in 2007 during the last immigration fight if blue-collar workers believe Obama is favoring illegal aliens who take their jobs and refusing to stand up for the suffering American worker.

With unemployment hovering at almost 10 percent, a bitter battle between two levels of government is unprecedented and unnecessary. Voters want action on the economy, not more federal government overreaching. A very public power struggle between the President and one of the states in the Union is not likely to play well, especially because it's Washington that has dropped the ball when it comes to tackling the out-of-control issue of illegal immigration.

Declaring war on the State of Arizona is one thing. Declaring war on the State of Arizona while the economy is on the verge of bankruptcy and a double-dip recession is another. Restoring jobs and economic and national security should be the President's top concerns. If he doesn't change course, it'll be him who is on trial next in the court of public opinion.



An article titled "Barack Obama's 'Politics As Usual' Revealed by Rod Blagojevich" was posted at telegraph.co.uk on July 3, 2010.

It said: "In a year when Americans are arguably more cynical and disillusioned about politics than at any time since Watergate, the corruption trial of Rod Blagojevich is a sobering reminder of how its practitioners operate.

"Although 'Blago,' the foul-mouthed bouffant buffoon, is the main attraction of the Chicago production, the former Illinois governor's reluctant co-star is Barack Obama. The President forms part of the proceedings each day even though the judge has spared him a personal experience."

It later said: "Illinois, of course, is the state that gave us President Obama. It is where he cut his teeth as a community organizer and where he first began to ascend the greasy pole of politics by taking his seat in the state senate.

"At issue in the Blago trial is whether the then governor was trying to sell the United States Senate seat that Obama ascended to in 2004 after his initial Republican opponent imploded.

"Blago had the power to appoint a new Senator when the seat was vacated because of Obama's presidential election victory in November 2008."

It later said: "That choice, the trial has confirmed, was Valerie Jarrett, who now rejoices in the title of senior White House adviser and Assistant to the President for Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs."

The article described the role of Tom Balanoff, president of the Service Employees International Union's powerful Local 1 branch, as "emissary."

The article described the participation of Rahm Emanuel, incoming White House Chief of Staff.

The article quoted messengers telling Blagojevich personnel: "The president-elect would be very pleased, if you would appoint Valerie and he would be, uh, thankful and appreciative."

The article said: "The gratitude of a President, however, is no small thing and who knows what favour Blago might have found coming his way in due course had he appointed Jarrett.

"That, of course, is how Chicago politics works—mutual back-scratching, a nudge and a wink. Blago's problem, if the allegations prove to be founded, is that he took a much cruder and more literal approach to such matters.

"It has also become clear from the trial that Obama wanted to make sure that Emil Jones, then President of the Illinois State Senate and the man Obama referred to as his 'political godfather,' [was] out of the seat."

The article concluded: "Quite why the President who promised hope, change and transparency thought it proper to have been trying to ease his friend into his old Senate seat just days after he had won the White House has not been answered.

"There is no suggestion that what Obama was doing was anything illegal, improper or even out of the ordinary, at least in Illinois. He was simply engaging in politics as usual.

"Unfortunately, politics as usual is what Candidate Obama promised to bring to an end."