

NEWS IN BRIEF

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JAPAN

RADIATION FLOWS FROM PLAN, U.S. AND FRANCE TO AID - Workers struggle to contain contaminated water used to cool nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi plant in Japan, reports The Wall Street Journal. The fear of contaminated water draining into ocean and other waters is the newest concern in the wake of Japan's tragic earthquake and tsunami. In response, France and the U.S. plan to aid in the fight to contain the contamination. According to Reuters News, France flew in two nuclear experts and French President Nicolas Sarkozy flew to Japan Tuesday, March 29, as the first foreign leader to visit Japan since the disaster. The U.S. sent radiation-detecting robots to help in clean-up efforts.



USA

WALMART MAY AVOID CLASS ACTION LAW SUIT - Although a verdict is not expected until June or later, the Supreme Court seems prepared to impede a 10-year-old sex discrimination suit against the Walmart Corporation, reports The Los Angeles Times. Lawyers' arguments made on behalf of female employees seemed contradictory, with one claiming a culture of gender-bias was promoted by the Corporation and another claiming that regional managers were left with unchecked discretion. While justices' views were split largely on gender lines, with female justices acknowledging Walmart's role and male justices questioning the corporation's influence, billions of dollars and the future of class-action claims against large employers are at stake.



MEXICO

MEXICAN YOUTH KILLED BY U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENT - Carlos La Madrid, a 19-year-old Mexican man, was climbing a ladder to cross the border into the U.S. when he was shot three times by a Border Patrol agent, reports MSNBC. Although 48 pounds of marijuana were found in the truck La Madrid was driving, the Cochise County sheriff's investigators have no evidence that La Madrid was assaulting or attempting to assault the agent. La Madrid died later that day at a local hospital.



EGYPT

MUBARAK GROUNDED, SECURITY IMPOSITIONS LIGHTENED - Egypt's military has restricted former President Hosni Mubarak from leaving the country, with trips for medical attention banned as well, reports The New York Times. The announcement, amidst growing discontent and allegations related to Mubarak's secretly visiting Saudi Arabia, was joined by reports that a nightly curfew would be shortened to three hours — 2 a.m. - 5 a.m. — and the country's 30-year police state will be abolished in the coming months. Additionally, upcoming August elections were postponed to allow new political parties time to develop. With no dates specified, speculation and rumor persist.

LIBYA

US involvement in Libya draws criticism

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unique capabilities at the beginning, but this is now a broad, international effort. Our allies and partners are enforcing the no-fly zone over Libya and the arms embargo at sea."

Despite four days of debating, NATO has agreed to enforce the no-fly zone placed on Libya, according to the European Union Observer.

The no-fly zone is "part of the broad international effort to protect civilians against the attacks by the Gadhafi regime," Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the NATO Security General, told the European Union Observer.

The no-fly zone and blockade of many of Libya's major sea ports is causing even more stress on the already beaten and bruised country — the economy is taking a turn for the worse. The Washington Post gave details of a fuel shortage and a drastic rise in food prices.

"If a stalemate continues and there is no regime change, these measures will starve the economy," said David Cortright, in an interview with the Washington Post. Cortright is a scholar at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and Notre Dame University. "Sooner or later, and

probably sooner, Libya will begin to face internal economic difficulties, and therefore, humanitarian difficulties."

Though Gadhafi's forces strike again and again, and though their economy is seeing a decline, Libyan rebels continue to fight for freedom.

The U.S. involvement in Libya is not escaping controversy. President Obama's decision has run into hostility in Congress, and the opposition is across the political aisle, according to The New York Times.

Members in both the House of Representatives and the Senate are citing the Constitution to persuade the president to justify intervention in Libya according to The New York Times.

"While the legislative and executive branches have long grappled over the exact division of powers in times of war, the Constitution grants sole authority to the Congress to commit the nation to battle in the first instance," said Democrat Representative John Conyers of Michigan in a statement reported by The New York Times.

Conyers was referring to the War Powers Act, which was passed in 1973. This piece of legislation forces the president to consult with Congress before military involvement

unless it is an imminent threat, according to the Library of Congress. Prior to the War Powers Act, the Constitution granted the president power to commit militarily without initially consulting Congress.

There is still support for President Obama, despite the criticism.

"He has proceeded in a way that is cautions and thoughtful," said Democrat Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the Armed Forces Committee, according to The New York Times. "He has put the ducks in a row before he decided the United States should take the lead for a short period of time to do what only we could do."

On March 21, President Obama sent a two-page letter to Congress discussing his involvement, according to The New York Times.

"Well, I feel sorry for the guy (Obama)," said Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science Robert Duncan. "He is a little cerebral, he wants to collect all the data, wants to think about it, (and) look at all his options before making a decision."

President Obama's involvement, however, is not being spearheaded by the U.S. He has been consulting with world leaders. According to Duncan, it was a clever move to

wait until there was a coalition. Nonetheless, Duncan said that the U.S. involvement has occurred sooner than such interventions as Kosovo and Rwanda.

Despite Western intervention, Duncan also explained that other Arab nations are capable of intervening. They have their own planes and their own troops.

According to Duncan, if there are mess-ups, then Arab nations may blame and point fingers at the Western nations. This is dangerous to the U.S. because the country is not very popular in the Arab world.

The revolution in Libya is unlike the revolts and reform in more unified countries. The situation, according to Duncan, is that Libya is more tribal and loyal to a tribe or religious affiliation. It is important to have a strong national identity, education and belief in government. Duncan explained that without these aspects there will be no democracy.

The outcome of the revolution is still not certain.

"I don't know how it's going to come out," said Duncan. "Gadhafi very may well survive. (He has) very clever tactics of putting his people into the population, so if you go after his people, you're going to kill innocents ... so he may well survive."