

## NEWS IN BRIEF

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ON APRIL 10, RICK SANTORUM SURPRISED MANY BY ABRUPTLY ANNOUNCING HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARIES. His decision to end his campaign has cleared the way for Mitt Romney, who is expected to be the presidential candidate for the Republican party in the coming elections. "This has been a good day for me," Romney said to the *New York Times*. "Senator Santorum has decided not to proceed with his campaign, and I had the chance to speak with him this morning. We exchanged our thoughts about going forward, and we both have a great deal of interest in seeing the country taken on a very different path." Santorum has yet to fully endorse Romney, and there are some who remain skeptical that Romney will be able to win over many of Santorum's supporters. "After having destroyed every conservative that came on the scene, you can't say 'You have to line up behind me.' No, no, no," said Santorum supporter Richard Viguerie of Romney's campaign. "Conservatives are not going to jump until they hear where Governor Romney wants to take everybody."

ON APRIL 11, SUDAN ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD MOBILIZE ITS ARMY TO DEFEND AND RETRIEVE AN OILFIELD IN HEGLIG, NEAR ITS BORDER, WHICH SOUTH SUDAN HAS INVADDED AND CURRENTLY OCCUPIES. South Sudan, in turn, claims that Sudan responsible for bombing a village on the border, BBC reports. After the tenuous split between Sudan and South Sudan, the countries' relations have been characterized by tensions over territory and resources. As each country continues to push the boundaries and borders to the limit, the global community fears this could escalate into full-out war. The African Union has called for South Sudan's immediate withdrawal and is pushing for dialogue between the two countries.

IN WHAT CHINA IDENTIFIES AS "THE BIGGEST SCANDAL WE CAN THINK OF" IN THE LAST 30 YEARS, CHINESE OFFICIAL BO XILAI WAS DISMISSED FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY, AFTER EVIDENCE IMPLICATED HIS WIFE IN THE DEATH OF A UK BUSINESS MAN. Once pegged as China's next big leader, Xilai is now being universally renounced by Chinese officials. "Bo has seriously violated the party discipline, causing damage to the cause and the image of the party and state," said an announcement by state news agency Xinhua. "Whoever has broken the law will be handled in accordance with law and will not be tolerated, no matter who is involved." According to BBC, China's Internet censorship has ramped up since the event and is filtering all queries and posts containing the words "Bo Xilai."

## Escalation in the Syrian rebellion: United States and other countries come to aid

By Alex Lindberg  
STAFF WRITER

"The world must judge Assad by what he does, not what he says, and we cannot sit back and wait any longer," said Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the Friends of Syria conference.

Shortly afterwards, she announced the United States' intention of donating \$12 million to the Syrian rebels cause. Despite the ceasefire agreement that comes into effect April 10, it seems that both sides are readying for a civil war.

The promised support to the rebels coupled with a U.N. ultimatum for President Bashar al-Assad to withdraw troops seems to have escalated the violence.

Just a few days ago, Assad ordered troops to fire on any protesters in the city of Damascus and Homs. Thousands are now trying to flee the country for nearby Lebanon and the hope of safety.

"With an increase in the bombardment of Homs in the past three days, our figures have now exceeded 27,000 refugees" said Hassan

Al Sabeh, country director for Islamic Relief, to *The Independent*. "We're getting new cases in continually — 34 families just came across the border in the past half an hour."

Many suspect that the increased violence is because Assad wants an advantage when the ceasefire starts. According to CNN, he is currently trying to focus on areas where rebels are known to be hiding; the issue is that there are also many civilians residing in the targeted zones. Already the U.N.-Arab League has reported a staggering 9,000 civilians killed since the start of this conflict, reports *Gulf News*.

Already several rebel leaders have asked for support from several allied nations, with little to no results.

"You know, we have a real revolution in Syria. And no support," said Abdullah Awdeh, a former lieutenant of the Syrian army before joining the rebel cause, at the conference. "We communicate with walkie-talkies. The regular army can monitor us, but we are lucky because we stay one step ahead of the regime."

Despite issuing the ceasefire ultimatum,

the U.N. has been hesitant in siding against President Assad and has taken little action to stop the conflict. Many countries have expressed criticism over the way the U.N. has handled matters, and talk about military action has begun as analysts continue to predict that Assad will not back down.

"If the U.N. Security Council fails once again to bring about its historic responsibility, there will be no other choice than to support the Syrian people's right to self-defense," said Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to CBS.

However, not everyone believes that there should be involvement in the Syrian rebellion. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov believes that arming the Syrian rebels will only lead to more violence and an escalation in the rebellion.

"If the opposition is armed to the teeth, it will not defeat the Syrian army," said Lavrov to BBC news. "Instead, there will be slaughter for many, many years — mutual destruction."

Many agree that Lavrov has a point, and that arming the Syrian rebels may show Assad that there is no peaceful option. The

question then is should the U.S. assist in a rebellion if it comes to that?

"The tension will continue whether the U.S. is involved or not," said Max Carter, director of Friends Center and campus ministry coordinator. "Our history of involvement in the Middle East is one of constant 'unintended consequences.' We are already deeply involved in the Middle East — too often for the wrong reasons; this will certainly maintain our record there."

"We are talking about a dictator who is slaughtering his people," said senior Peace and Conflict Studies major Ben Heide. "It is our responsibility as humans to stop this. Should this become an open civil war, there is no reason why [the U.S. and other allied countries] shouldn't assist in the rebellion."

Right now, it is just a matter of whether President Assad will withdraw his troops out of the cities by the deadline. If he does not, a new civil war in the Middle East is a possibility. But, for now, only time will tell.

"He has shown no willingness to 'back down' yet, and I doubt this will be the final push," said Carter. "Dictators go down hard."