



Courtesy of China Post

Cold front sweeps through Europe

BY: CARL YIN

An extreme cold wave has been ravaging Europe, bringing many parts of the continent to a standstill. Temperatures as low as -31 degrees Fahrenheit and as much as 5 feet of snowfall have been recorded.

These extreme conditions have persisted for several weeks and continue to trouble Europe. So far, the death toll has exceeded 450; meanwhile tens of thousands of rural villagers in mountainous regions are still trapped by severe snowfall.

However, the group of people most affected by the cold front is the homeless. With temperatures repeatedly dropping to the negatives each night, national governments have had to provide emergency housing and supplies for the homeless.

In spite of these emergency measures, the homeless make up the majority of the death toll.

In Turkey, the situation is even direr. With a recent earthquake having left over 140,000 people homeless, the government can only provide shelter to a very small group of citizens. Temperatures in the quake zone of Turkey have dropped to as low as -4 degrees Fahrenheit, which, when combined with nearly a foot of snow, has made life for the homeless in Turkey especially difficult.

The cold front has even affected parts of Africa. In Algeria, a blanket of snow covered grounds and led to chaos in various roadways around the region.

Rivers and lakes across Europe have also frozen over due to the severity of the cold wave. The Danube River, which flows across Central Europe and is key in the transportation of goods, has frozen over for the first time in 25 years.

This has cost shippers

millions of dollars, as the shipping of goods has been curtailed by the frigid winter weather. In parts of the Danube, shipping has even been completely halted. Transport by train and car have also been affected, as snow has made many roads dangerous and inaccessible.

It does not appear as if the cold front will be ending anytime soon. More damage is caused everyday by the front. However, conditions in Europe seem to be improving.

Temperatures have been rising, but only marginally. Countries across Europe await the end of this cold front, as supplies are diminishing. Forecasters predict the cold front to weaken, as a gradual rise in temperatures has been projected for Europe over the next 10 days.

For now, Europe can only hope that these predictions hold true.

Protests delay Internet piracy legislation

BY JARET DAWSON

The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and PROTECT IP Act (PIPA) met considerable online protest on Jan. 18, 2012, causing Congress to delay the vote on the two acts.

Many major websites went inactive during the "blackout" across the nation, including Wikipedia, Reddit, and Craigslist. Google was also one of the major supporters, asking visitors to its home page to sign an electronic petition opposing the two bills.

SOPA and PIPA are the House and Senate versions, respectively, of a bill that was conceived to end copyright infringement on the Internet. A copyright holder would be able to seek a court order against an infringing

Free-speech activists both nationally and internationally supported the blackout. The main concern of these activists was the wording of the bill. Entire sites could be shut down for just being associated with copyrighted material. In particular, social media sites could be at risk due to just one link posted on the site. This would mean the shutdown of sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google.

Top computer scientists have spoken out against Domain Name System (DNS) blocking, the proposed method for closing off websites. DNS blocking would work on some of the most fundamental levels of the



website that, if granted, would immediately shut the website down. Not only would the infringing content be removed, but the website itself would be entirely shut down.

The shutdown of a website would involve termination of payments to the website, the removal of the website from search engines, and the website's Internet Service Provider (ISP) no longer hosting the website. All of this could be done without a defense from the website itself.

Internet, disconnecting URLs with their associated website.

Randall Munroe, author of the webcomic xkcd, former NASA employee, and avid programmer, included a hidden message in his January 18 xkcd strip that warned Congress, "If you break this Internet, we are not making you a new one."

Following the massive online protest, many Congressmen revoked their support for SOPA and PIPA. The votes on the two bills have been postponed back indefinitely.

Republican candidates vie for nomination

BY JORDAN HARRISON

With the North Carolina Republican primary election only three months away, the Republican candidates are vying for public support.

During an election year, it is more vital to be informed about life outside the bubble, even if you can't vote or aren't voting in the primary.

Ron Paul

Paul represents the 14th Congressional District of Texas and, known as the libertarian candidate, advocates for limited constitutional government.

Paul plans to cut one trillion dollars in spending by cutting five cabinet positions—the Departments of Energy, Education, Commerce, the Interior, and Housing and Urban Development—the TSA, repealing ObamaCare, and stopping foreign aid and foreign wars.

Paul would also abolish the estate tax and extend Bush-era

tax cuts.

Paul says he is pro-life as a result of his experiences as a practicing obstetrician/gynecologist. He wants to end birthright citizenship and more strongly enforce border security.

Paul also supports the gold standard and reform of the Federal Reserve. He believes that the states, not the federal government, should enact laws concerning marriage equality and the legalization of marijuana.

Adapted from www.ronpaul2012.com

Mitt Romney

Former Massachusetts Governor Romney also supports ending the estate tax and extending Bush tax cuts.

Romney believes taxes "should be lower for all Americans", he wants teachers unions to have less power, and he opposes any cap-and-trade legislation to reduce global

warming.

Romney "supports a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as between a man and a woman", but would recognize domestic partnerships.

As governor, Romney signed into law private health care reform that mandates everyone in Massachusetts to have a minimum level of health insurance.

Adapted from www.mittromneycentral.com and The Huffington Post

Rick Santorum

Santorum, who recently won the Missouri, Minnesota, and Colorado primaries, is a former Senator from Pennsylvania.

Santorum supports drilling for natural gas and would remove bans on drilling for oil, both onshore and offshore.

Santorum wants to bolster the economy by passing a Balanced Budget Amendment

to the Constitution that caps government spending at 18% of gross domestic product (GDP), simplifies the tax code, and cuts the corporate income tax from 35% to 17.5%, making the business industry more competitive.

Santorum would eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood as he is strongly anti-abortion, having worked on legislation outlawing partial birth abortion earlier in his career.

Santorum also plans to repeal ObamaCare and substitute a market-based health care bill for the American people.

Adapted from www.ricksantorum.com

Newt Gingrich

Gingrich, former Speaker of the House, has a plan called the "Day One" plan, in which he will issue executive orders intended to create jobs starting on the first day of his presidency. These orders will come partially

from suggestions made by the American people.

Gingrich's plans for immigration reform intend to control borders, institute a more efficient visa system, create a "path to legality" but not citizenship for immigrants already here illegally, and encourage immigration of highly skilled professionals. This goal differs largely from the view of the other Republican candidates.

Gingrich's energy proposals include lifting the ban on oil shale development, funding cleaner energy research with new oil and gas royalties, and replacing the EPA with an agency less focused on regulating energy prices.

Gingrich would reinstitute the "Mexico City Policy", which prohibits tax dollars from going to support abortions overseas.

Adapted from www.newt.org