

National and World News

FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Obama vows to end war in Iraq

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — Barack Obama suggested Wednesday that Hillary Clinton could not be trusted to end the Iraq War because she only started opposing it when she began her bid for president.

The Democratic presidential hopeful told military families and local officials that the war has emboldened al-Qaida, the Taliban, Iran and North Korea.

Obama used the five-year anniversary of the Iraq invasion to again cast himself as the only true anti-war candidate.

Obama urged to accept primaries

DETROIT (AP) — Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton bluntly challenged Barack Obama to agree to new primaries in Michigan and Florida on Wednesday and said it was "wrong, and frankly un-American" not to have the two delegations seated at the Democratic National Convention.

Obama has yet to declare his support or opposition, although his campaign has raised a number of procedural and legal questions about the most recent proposal for an early June primary in Michigan.

Ruling could expand Sunni presence in Iraqi provincial administrations

BAGHDAD (AP) — Under strong U.S. pressure, Iraq's presidential council signed off Wednesday on a measure paving the way for provincial elections by the fall, a major step toward easing sectarian rifts as the nation marks the fifth anniversary of the war.

The decision by the council, made up of the country's president and two vice presidents, lays the groundwork for voters to choose new leaders of Iraq's 18 provinces. The elections open the door to greater Sunni representation in regional administra-

tions. Many Sunnis boycotted the last election for provincial officials in January 2005, enabling Shiites and Kurds to win a disproportionate share of power at the expense of the Sunnis — even in areas with substantial Sunni populations.

That in turn helped fuel the Sunni-led insurgency and the wave of sectarian bloodletting which drove the country to the brink of civil war before President Bush rushed nearly 30,000 U.S. reinforcements to Iraq last year.

Activists criticize Olympic sponsors

BELJING (AP) — McDonald's, Coca-Cola and other sponsors paid tens of millions of dollars to link their names with the Beijing Olympics. Now they're trying to mollify activists pressing for change on Tibet, Darfur and other issues, without angering China.

The Olympics almost always attract activists interested in leveraging the popular event to publicize their causes. The Beijing Games have generated more heat, in part because of an array of activist groups long critical of China's policies — and newer ones focused on its economic and diplomatic clout.

Swath of country suffers flooding

PIEDMONT, Mo. (AP) — Residents of low-lying towns evacuated Wednesday after a foot of rain pushed rivers and creeks out of their banks in the nation's midsection. At least 13 deaths had been linked to the weather, and three people were missing.

Record or near-record flood crests were forecast at several towns in Missouri. Flooding was reported in large areas of Arkansas and parts of southern Illinois, southern Indiana and southwestern Ohio, and schools were closed in parts of western Kentucky because of flooded roads.

E-MAILS

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crux of the problem because it allows for multiple interpretations of the law. Easley claims that the e-mails he deleted no longer held any value.

N.C. Press Association General Counsel Amanda Martin said documents such as fax cover sheets and hotel reservations are the type eligible for immediate disposal.

"There's nothing in the regulations set out by cultural resources that would suggest that it's just at the whim of the public official," she said.

Easley has also denied telling

other offices to delete their own e-mails. Agencies' public information officers have corroborated his denials, Martin said.

"Even if his interpretation of the cultural resources instruction is accurate in regards to his records, I still don't think it gives him the authority to tell someone else when they have to get rid of their records," she said.

Public records laws are designed to ensure ethical government behavior and public understanding

of government function.

"The law doesn't give you a right to demand answers to your questions. ... It gives you a right to look at documents that might answer your questions," Martin said.

"If those documents are destroyed, then you lose one of the key tools you have to understand the operation of public business," she said.

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