# INTERNATIONAL

# Obama shackles McCain to Bush's shattered economic legacy

AFP. Denver

Barack Obama took aim at John McCain before record crowds on Sunday after his rival acknowledged sharing the same Republican party George W. Bush.

dential election, Democratic candidate Obama again attempted to shackle McCain to Bush's shattered economic legacy and tried to rebut attacks on his own tax policy.

flocked to two Obama rallies on the campaign trail in Colorado, with a record crowd of more than 100,000 in Denver listening as the Illinois support of Bush.

McCain said that actually he and government sits on a huge surplus President Bush 'share a common and our economy is in crisis." philosophy," Obama said.

"That's right, Colorado. I guess that was John McCain finally giving philosophy as unpopular President us a little straight talk, owning up to the fact that he and George Bush Just eight days before the presi- actually have a whole lot in common," Obama said.

Obama then listed what he saw as deficiencies of the McCain-Bush philosophy, which encapsulated his main campaign themes head-More than 150,000 people ing into the election on November 4 as America battles its deepest economic crisis since the 1930s.

He said "the Bush-McCain philosophy" gave tax breaks to the senator tore into McCain for his wealthy and corporations and justified spending 10 billion dollars House.

"Just this morning, Senator a month in Iraq "while the Iraqi

"We can't have another four years that look like the last eight. It is time for change in Washington," Obama said.

Obama spoke on the second day of a swing through vital western battleground states Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada, after a short break from the campaign trail to visit his ailing grandmother in Hawaii who turned 86 on Sunday.

If he can win all the states that Democrat John Kerry captured in his unsuccessful 2004 presidential bid and peel the three western states away from the Republicans, Obama will be assured of the White

#### Financial Times endorses Obama

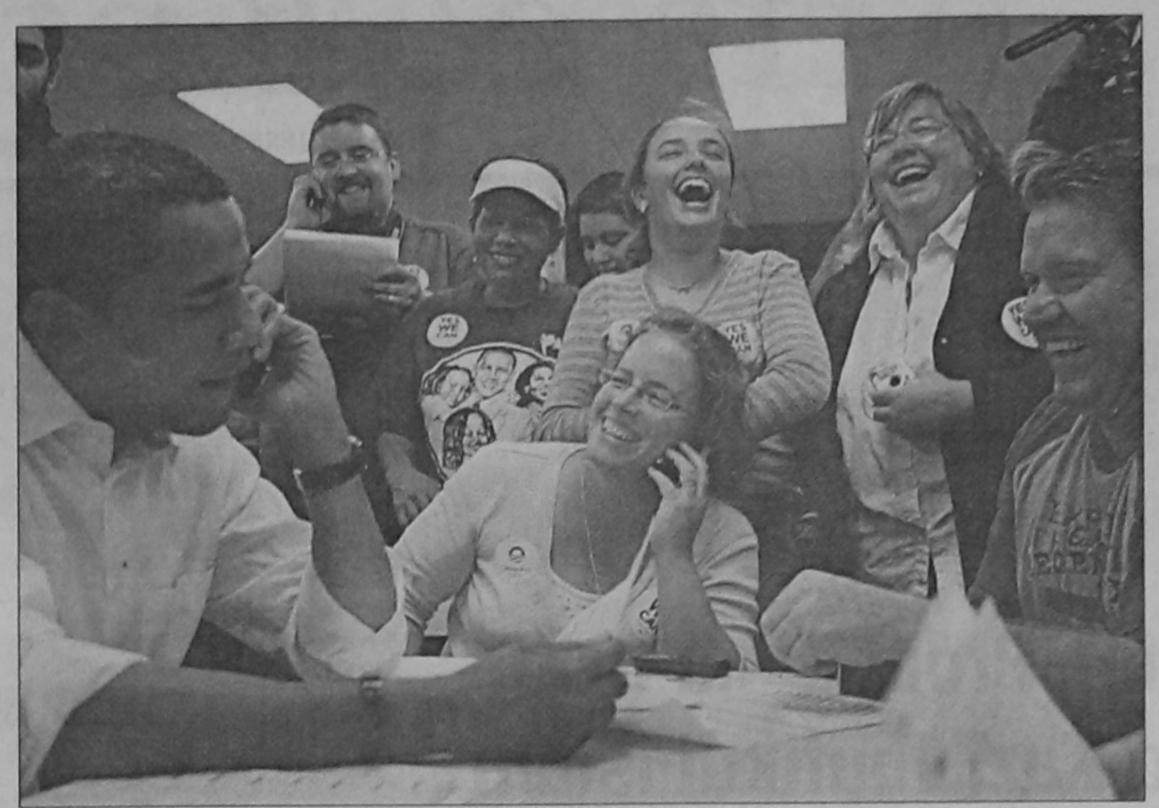
AFP, London

The Financial Times, the respected business daily, endorsed Barack Obama on Monday to become the next US president, even though it prefers the trade policies of his Republican rival John McCain.

The newspaper, which has a daily readership of about 1.3 million worldwide according to its parent company Pearson, said the Democrat's policies blended the "good, not so good and downright bad" but he was "the right choice".

Just over a week before the November 4 election, Obama has been leading McCain by more than 10 points in some national and state polls.

The FT said the Democrat had run his campaign "superbly", and while not the same as governing, this was a "test of leadership". By contrast, McCain's campaign "has often looked a shambles", it said in an editorial.



US Democratic presidential candidate Illinois Senator Barack Obama helps make phone calls with volunteers to gather votes at his campaign office in Brighton, Colorado on Sunday.

This image grab taken from the official Syrian television channel yesterday, shows a survivor of the US military attack on a building site in the Syrian village of Al-Sukkiraya, near the Syria-Iraq border. She was talking to a reporter about her devastating experience from a hospital bed.

line for elections in 14 provinces,

excluding oil-rich Kirkuk and the

three northern Kurdish prov-

But the leaders from the

Christian and other minority

communities had protested

against the law, saying it ignored

Under the UN plan, Christians

would have seven seats, includ-

ing three in the council of

Baghdad, three in the northern

#### Iraq hopes Syria raid won't harm relations

AP, Baghdad

A senior Iraqi official says Iraq hopes that an alleged US raid into Syria will not harm Baghdad's relations with Damascus.

The Syrians say US military helicopters launched the attack Sunday on Syrian territory close to the border with Iraq, killing eight people. Damascus condemned the raid as "serious aggression."

Foreign Ministry undersecretary Labib Abbawi says the Iraqis hope the raid "does not impact negatively" on relations with Syria. He also said Monday that Baghdad is "trying to contain the fallout" from the "regrettable" incident.

Abbawi says the Iraqis are seeking more information from the US

US officials have complained that Sunni insurgents use Syria as a base for sending fighters and weapons into Iraq.

### ME peace efforts teetering, warns Palestinian PM

AFP, Ramallah

Salam Fayyad warned on Monday that peace efforts with Israel based on a two-state solution are teetering because peace alongside Israel. of Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank.

solution based on the 1967 borders is teetering and risks collapsing under the weight of 170 settlements and nearly half a million settlers," he said at a conference in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

pressing, as far as such a solution is concerned, with every

The two-state solution, Palestinian prime minister backed by the international community, entails the creation of an independent, viable Palestinian state living in

The current peace talks were relaunched at a US-hosted "Unfortunately a two-state conference in November 2007, but have made little visible progress since. They have been further

affected by the political crisis in Israel, which is heading for elections early next year after Prime Minister Ehud Olmert "Time has become more stepped down amid claims of corruption.

Exasperated by the lack of brick added to the settlements, progress in negotiations, sevevery new road built for the eral Palestinian leaders have settlers and every stone length- suggested the two-state ening the (separation) wall," he scenerio might have to be aban- not enough," Fayyad said.

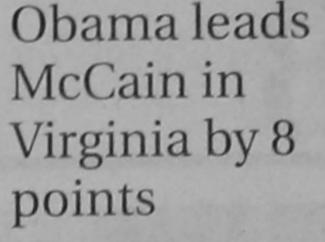
doned. Israel rejects any suggestion that Israelis and Palestinians could share a single state because such a state would no longer be Jewish.

Fayyad stressed that he still

hoped an agreement based on the two-state formula could be reached, but only if Israel "changes its behaviour in the

He also urged the international community to "play an active role and confront Israel with its responsibilities."

"We want the world to take concrete measures to make it possible to create a Palestinian state. Waving the threat of a condemnation of the settlement activities is absolutely



AFP, Washington

Democrat Barack Obama has opened up an eight-point lead over his Republican rival John McCain in Virginia, a key battleground state in this election campaign, according to anewpoll released Monday.

The Washington Post survey showed the Illinois senator now leads his colleague from Arizona in the state 52 percent to 44 percent.

The result represents a big gain for Obama. A similar poll conducted by the Washington Post and ABC News late last month showed Obama only with a slim three-percentage-point edge among likely Virginia voters.

Two-thirds of Virginia voters now have a favorable impression of Obama, the poll found. About half also have a favorable view of McCain, but his unfavorable rating stands at 45 percent, which is 15 percentage points higher than Obama's.



#### World's heaviest man marries

AP, Monterrey

The world's heaviest man has tied theknot. Manuel Uribe, who hasn't left his bed in six years, married his longtime

girlfriend Claudia Solis Sunday in northern Mexico. Wearing a white silk shirt with a sheet wrapped around his legs, Uribe smiled as Solis, 38, walked down a

flight of stairs wearing a strapless ivory dress, a tiara and hot-pink He later broke into tears as a

notary declared the couple husband and wife in a civil ceremony attended by more than 400 guests. For the traditional first dance as newlyweds, Uribe and Solis held hands and swayed to a romantic ballad.

### UN proposes more representation for Iraqi minorities

AFP, Baghdad

The United Nations on Monday proposed that 12 seats be reserved on Iraqi provincial councils for minority communities in elections to be held by the end of January, an Iraqi official said.

UN envoy Staffan de Mistura them by failing to offer enough submitted the plan, which will seats to represent them in the effect three of the 14 councils proposed new local administrabeing elected, during a meeting with the parliamentary speaker, his deputies and political party leaders, the parliamentary official said.

Parliament last month province of Nineveh and one in adopted a provincial election law Basra, in the south, the official that set January 31 as the dead- said.

Taiwan to produce 300 cruise missiles

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan plans to manufacture up to 300 cruise missiles, despite warming ties with rival China, it was reported Monday.

"President Ma Ying-jeou has given the order for the production of 300 Hsiungfeng 2E cruise missiles," the Taipeibased China Times said, citing what it said was an unnamed

authoritative military source. However, the paper said it was not clear when the mis-

siles would be put into service. Taiwan's defence ministry declined to comment on the

### 2 Koreas hold military talks amid tension

AP, Seoul

Working-level military officers from North Korea and South Korea met Monday to discuss improving their lines of communication amid strained ties between the divided nations, officials said.

It would be the second official talks between the rival Koreas since a pro-US, conservative govern-February with a pledge to get later in the day. tougher on the North.

The first meeting also was held between the countries' military officers in early October but ended without much progress. The North used the meeting to criticise South Korean civic activists for sending Korean border, threatening to Defence Ministry.

expel South Koreans working at joint projects in the North in retali-

On Monday, the sides met in a location inside the demilitarised zone bisecting the Korean peninsula, said Won Tae-jae, a spokesman at the South Korean Defence Ministry, during a media briefing. He did not provide details, saying he would ment was inaugurated in Seoul in brief the results of the meeting

> Earlier Monday, ministry officials said the sides planned to discuss how to overhaul and upgrade military communication lines between the countries.

The two Koreas have operated nine military hot lines but some of propaganda leaflets critical of its them are now out of service for communist regime across the technical reasons, according to the



In a handout picture released by the Lebanese photo agency Dalati and Nohra yesterday, Lebanese Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah (L) and Lebanese parliamentary majority leader Saad Hariri (R) smile during their first meeting in more than two years at an undisclosed location.

Congolese army soldiers withdraw from Kibumba about 35km north of the provincial capital Goma yesterday. Thousands of Congolese fled to Goma from Rugari and from the Kibumba Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) camp after violence started between forces loyal to renegade general Laurent Nkunda and the Congolese army.

### Thousands of protesters attack UN in E Congo

AP, AFP, Goma

Thousands of protesters attacked the United Nations' eastern Congo headquarters yesterday, expressing anger that a UN peacekeeping force has been unable to protect them from a rebel attack that has forced tens of thousands to flee.

Protesters lobbied stones and rocks over the wall surrounding the UN offices in the provincial capital of Goma. UN spokeswoman Sylvie van den Wildenberg said cars were being damaged and windows were being shattered. Meanwhile, soldiers fled fight-

ing in what appeared to be a major retreat of government forces being attacked by rebels of renegade Gen. Laurent Nkunda.

Reporters watched the soldiers struggle to make a way through thousands of refugees also fleeing along the main road south from a major army base seized by rebels toward Goma.

Back-to-back wars in Congo spilled into half a dozen neighbouring countries and destroyed much of Congo itself by 2002. But fighting has continued in the east, where several militias operate.

Earlier rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo were reported Sunday to have seized a national park in the east of the country that is home to more than a quarter of the world's surviving mountain

## Israeli president clears way for snap polls

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli President Shimon Peres said on Monday that efforts to form a new government had failed, paving the way for snap elections that could turn on the future of the Middle East peace process.

Peres formally cleared the way for an election by announcing that replace the coalition headed by outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who is stepping down to battle corruption allegations, had failed.

"After having consulted with representatives of all parliamentary factions I would like to inform you that I see no possibility of forming a government," Peres said in a letter he delivered to parliament speaker Dalia Itzik.

Lawmakers now have three weeks to agree on a date for the election, after which parliament will be automatically dissolved and efforts to set up a government to a vote held three months later in party to discuss a date for the February 2009.

The governing Kadima party, the left-of-centre Labour and the right-wing Likud were already mapping out the outlines of their party's conditions. \*

political agendas for a campaign that will likely focus on the future of the Middle East peace process.

"We have been in a period of uncertainty for several months and therefore the elections should take place as soon as possible," Foreign Minister and Kadima chairman Tzipi Livni told parliament ahead of Peres's announcement.

Livni said she instructed her vote with other factions after abandoning efforts to form a coalition because she would not cave in to the religious Shas

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### Ethiopia agrees to Somalia 2009 Calendar pullback deal

AFP, Addis Ababa

Ethiopia's foreign ministry on Monday vowed to comply with a UN-sponsored deal signed a day earlier by rival Somali factions for a phased withdrawal of Ethiopian

troops in Somalia. "We will respect this encouraging decision reached by the transitional government of Somalia and the ARS (Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia)," Wahide Belay, a foreign ministry spokes-

man, told AFP. "The agreement is in line with the Ethiopian position on orderly troop withdrawal," he said.

The Somali government and erscontrol the areas.

moderate Islamist opposition. the ARS, on Sunday agreed to implement a dormant ceasefire reached in June, paving the way for pro-government Ethiopian troops to pull back from the country.

According to the agreement reached at UN-mediated talks in Djibouti, Ethiopian forces are to start pulling back from positions in Mogadishu and the garrison town of Beledweyne on November 21. leaving the areas under control of African Union peacekeepers.

According to the deal, the Somalia government and the ARS are to assemble a 10,000-strong police force to help the peacekeep-

