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RUBIO: "I'M DONE" IF IMMIGRATION BILL INCLUDES GAY COUPLE AMENDMENT

June 13, 2013 Yahoo News reported: Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, a co-author and key proponent of the Senate immigration bill, said he will revoke his support if an amendment is added that allows gay unauthorized immigrants to claim foreign same-sex partners as family.

"If this bill has something in it that gives gay couples immigration rights and so forth, it kills the bill. I'm done," Rubio said Thursday during an interview on the Andrea Tantaros Show. "I'm off it, and I've said that repeatedly. I don't think that's going to happen and it shouldn't happen. This is already a difficult enough issue as it is."

The amendment, introduced by Vermont Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy, would grant green cards to foreign partners of gay unauthorized immigrants who seek legal status under new rules in the bill. Leahy originally introduced the measure during the Senate Judiciary Committee markup of the bill, but he withdrew it under pressure from Republican lawmakers who said it would reduce the chance of the bill passing.



JEFF DUNCAN QUESTIONS IRS GUN USAGE

June 13, 2013 WND.com reported: "Rep. Jeff Duncan wants to know why IRS law enforcement agents are training with AR-15 rifles.

As chairman of the House Homeland Security oversight subcommittee, Duncan (R-S.C.) toured a federal law enforcement facility in late May and noticed agents training with the semi-automatic weapons at a firing range. They identified themselves as IRS, he said.

"When I left there, it's been bugging me for weeks now, why IRS agents are training with a semi-automatic rifle AR-15, which has stand-off capability," Duncan told POLITICO. "Are Americans that much of a target that you need that kind of capability?"

While Duncan acknowledges that the IRS has an enforcement division, he questions if that level of firepower is appropriate when they could coordinate operations with other agencies, like the FBI, especially in a time of austerity."..."

CHINA ASTRONAUTS ENTER SPACE MODULE

June 13, 2013 SpaceDaily.com reported: "Three Chinese astronauts Thursday entered a space module after carrying out a successful docking manoeuvre, state media said, two days after the launch of the country's longest manned space mission.

The astronauts entered the Tiangong-1 space module at 0817 GMT, almost three hours after their spacecraft Shenzhou-10 had linked up with the space laboratory in an "automated docking", Xinhua said, citing the Beijing Aerospace Control Center.

The three – who include China's second woman in space – are spending 15 days in orbit as the country's ambitious space programme reaches another milestone.

The docking procedure was the fifth to take place between Shenzhou-type spacecraft and the space module, Xinhua said. Two automated operations were carried out by the unmanned Shenzhou-8 in 2011 and both an automated and manual docking by the manned Shenzhou-9 in 2012.

Last year's manual docking, China's first, tested a technique that is needed to be able to construct a space station, which China aims to do by 2020.

Beijing sees the multi-billion-dollar space programme as a symbol of its growing global stature and technical expertise, and of the ruling Communist Party's success in turning around the fortunes of the once poverty-stricken nation."

FRANCE ISOLATED AS GERMANY DROPS OPPOSITION TO US TRADE DEAL

June 12, 2013 The EU Observer reported: "Germany has dropped its opposition to starting talks on an EU-US free trade agreement, leaving France alone to fight for exemptions for European artists.

"Today, Germany has withdrawn its concerns and will approve a negotiating mandate for the EU commission on Friday," German economy ministry spokeswoman Julia Schwartz said on Wednesday (12 June) at a press conference in Berlin.



EU trade ministers are to take a decision on the Union's free trade blueprint at a meeting in Luxembourg at the end of this week. Schwartz noted that starting the free trade talks is a priority for US President Barack Obama.

She also said that internal US preparations for Washington's side of the negotiations are due to be wrapped up by 18 June, while Obama himself is to visit Berlin on 19 June.

Germany had earlier sided with France in saying that "culture" should be exempt from the new pact, in a bid to protect European film makers and musicians from being gobbled up by US competitors.



Its U-turn leaves France with only the European Parliament on its side. But Paris has signaled it is ready to veto the EU mandate alone if need be.”...”

ELKIN: RUSSIA UNDERSTANDS OUR RED LINES

June 12, 2013 Israel National News reported: “Despite public disagreements over Iran’s nuclear program, Russia and Israel are more or less on the same page, Deputy Foreign Minister Zeev Elkin told Arutz Sheva.

Israel and Russia essentially agree on containing Iran, he said, and disagree only on the preferred method for doing so. Israel believes in taking a firm stance, while Russia prefers to use incentives, he said. But there is definite understanding of our red lines regarding Iran, he added.

The same is true regarding Syria, he said, The Syrians and the Russians both know what Israel considers critical.

Elkin is currently visiting Moscow. When asked about his meetings with senior Russian officials and talks regarding Russia’s weapon sales to Syria, Elkin said, “Things said in closed rooms need to stay in closed rooms, but added, “The dialog has not been in vain.”

Elkin also spoke about his recent visit to Italy. Italian officials were surprisingly sympathetic to Israel’s situation, he said.”...”

TERRORIST ATTACKS IN AFGHANISTAN GET BOLDER

June 12, 2013 Voice of America News reported: Terrorist attacks in Afghanistan appear to be getting bolder in recent days. The Taliban also increasingly is targeting the civilian population, including children.

A suicide bomber blew himself up right outside the Supreme Court building in the capital, Kabul, Tuesday, killing 17 people and wounding almost 40 others. Mohammad Zahir, Chief of the Kabul Police Criminal Investigation Department, said all of the victims were civilians, including women and children.

There are children and women among those who were martyred (killed) and wounded, all the ones who are martyred [killed] and wounded are civilians and there aren’t any military personnel among them, said Zahir

On Monday, Afghan officials said the Taliban beheaded two teenage boys in the southern province of Kandahar for alleged spying.

But the attacks against NATO and Afghan government targets are getting bolder. On Monday, insurgents attacked Kabul’s international airport with rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns.”...”

NEARLY 15 MILLION SIGN ANTI-MORSI PETITION

June 11, 2013 Israel National News reported: “Nearly 15 million people have signed a petition to hold early presidential elections, in a campaign seeking to ‘remove confidence’ in Egypt’s Islamist President Mohamed Morsi, Egypt Independent reported.

Tamarod, the opposition campaign meaning ‘rebel’ in Arabic, was launched in May, attempting to gather 15 million signatures to outnumber the votes gained by Morsi in last year’s presidential election. The opposition campaign is “studying the possibility of confidentially submitting the forms to the Supreme Constitutional Court before June 30” said spokesperson Mahmoud Badr...”

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION CLOSE TO APPROVING ARMS SHIPMENTS TO SYRIAN REBELS

June 10, 2013 Haaretz reports: “The Obama administration could decide this week to approve lethal aid for Syrian rebels and will weigh the merits of a less likely move to send U.S. airpower to enforce a no-fly zone over the nation ripped by two years of civil war, officials said Sunday.

White House meetings are planned as Syrian President Bashar Assad’s forces are apparently poised for an attack on the key city of Homs, which could cut off armed opposition from the south of the country and clear a path for the regime from Damascus to the Mediterranean coast. Officials believe as many as 5,000 Hezbollah fighters are now in Syria helping the regime after it captured the town of Qusair near the Lebanese border last week.

Opposition leaders have warned Washington that their rebellion could face devastating, irreversible losses without greater support. Secretary of State John Kerry postponed a planned trip Monday to Israel and three other Mideast countries to participate in White House discussions, said officials who weren’t authorized to speak publicly on the matter and demanded anonymity.

Any intervention would bring the U.S. closer to a conflict that has killed almost 80,000 people since Assad cracked down on protesters inspired by the Arab Spring in March 2011 and has been increasingly defined by sectarian clashes between the Sunni-led rebellion and Assad’s Alawite-dominated regime...”



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