

Runoff vote no panacea for Afghans or the U.S.

Nov. winner unlikely to be 'credible partner'

BY ANNE GEARAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — No matter who wins the November election runoff that Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai agreed to during pressured consultations with American leaders, the United States is wedded to a shaky government in which corruption has become second nature.

President Obama's relief at the agreement that could quiet the political crisis over Afghanistan's spoiled election masks his predicament as he weighs an expansion of the unpopular Afghanistan war.

The administration says its ambitious plans for Afghanistan rely on a "credible partner" in Kabul. But there is no guarantee that the hastily arranged voting will confer the legitimacy the fraudulent Aug. 20 election lacked.

"This has been a very difficult time in Afghanistan to not only carry out an election under difficult circumstances, where there were a whole host of security issues that had to be resolved, but also post-election a lot of uncertainty," Obama said yesterday.

Obama pointed to the Nov. 7 runoff as "a path forward in order to complete this election process." He said nothing about his deliberations over what could be a huge surge of U.S. armed forces in Afghanistan, a calculation badly thrown off by the botched August voting.

For the U.S., a runoff emerged as perhaps the least bad option to restore momentum and the important perception that Afghans themselves are invested in their government and its success.

"Another election where there's no credible government to operate with" (See VOTE, Page 3)

IN OTHER NEWS

Justices to hear Gitmo case

The issue involves members of the Uighur ethnic group in western China who have been held for eight years. Page 7

WHAT WE NOW KNOW ABOUT SOLOMON DWEK

■ Bankruptcy papers expose an elaborate Ponzi scheme.

■ Government's star informant cheated friends and family.

■ Plus, the tale of \$75,100 in cash left in a garbage bag.



TONY KUROZUK/THE STAR-LEDGER

Failed real estate developer Solomon Dwek is led out of the courtroom after pleading guilty to a \$50 million bank fraud yesterday at the Monmouth County Courthouse.

BY TED SHERMAN AND JOE RYAN
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

The informant who sparked the biggest criminal sting in New Jersey history briefly emerged from federal protection long enough yesterday to plead guilty to a \$50 million bank fraud.

But even as Solomon Dwek stood fidgeting before a judge in a perfunctory 30-minute appearance, explosive details about his private con schemes and his role as the cooperating witness in the ongoing federal corruption investigation were coming to light.

A Star-Ledger examination of court documents shows that before Dwek became an informer for the FBI, he was running a wild Ponzi operation in which one investment was being used to pay off the debt mounting from the last one in the same kind of geometry that eventually exposed financier Bernard Madoff.

The documents also seem to show that once Dwek turned informant, he was so good at his work — money launderer to religious leaders, bribetaking developer to politicians — that some of his targets seemed to be virtually throwing money at him.

In an amended bankruptcy petition, Dwek disclosed almost \$500,000 in 20 separate secret payments:

There was \$75,100 from a former partner, "left in a garbage bag behind his office."

And another \$28,400, labeled as "kickbacks for the sale of Florida properties."

Some \$9,000 in deposits returned on a canceled deal for two condominium units located in Miron, Israel.

(See DWEK, Page 2)

MORE INSIDE

Which side of the case will benefit from the star witness? BOB BRAUN, PAGE 3

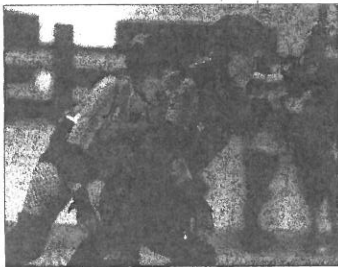
PLUS: A look at the 44 defendants. PAGE 2



Alleged stalking strains the bonds of popular roller derby team

Chris Manzella, a Morristown Madams skater and the team's owner, glides past a Long Island Roller Rebels skater during a match Saturday night at InLine Morristown, a local skating rink.

SAED HINDASHY/THE STAR-LEDGER



BY KEVIN COUGHLIN
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

The Morristown Madams opened their roller derby season last weekend at a local rink managed by a man charged with stalking a former team member.

After Marc Giaquinto, manager of InLine Morristown, was allowed to enter a probationary program for nonviolent, first-time offenders, the woman, at the urging of rink management, was kicked off the team so the Madams could continue using the facility.

Several of the skaters have quit in protest over their teammate's ouster.

"Morally, I couldn't see myself standing for that," said McKenzie May, one of those who quit.

The Madams are fixtures at Morris County parades and festivals. They raise money for charity, including the Jersey Battered Women's Service, and their monthly bouts have become happenings in Morristown.

The alleged stalking victim, a woman in her early 30s who asked not to be identified because she feared for her safety, joined the Madams last year. She said she declined Giaquinto's request for a date last November and made clear her disinterest in him after he

asked her out again.

According to reports the woman filed with authorities, Giaquinto persisted with unannounced visits to her home and workplace bearing flowers and letters.

He dedicated Shakespearean sonnets and personal poetry to her on a website and wrote about her on Twitter. He also violated a "no contact" consent order by showing up at a Madams practice, she said, and unnerved her by showing up at a mall where she was shopping, an event Giaquinto describes as coincidence.

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