

Climate change for Al and Tipper Gore



Since losing the 2000 presidential race, Gore has been active in environmental causes, but he has also pursued business interests. He co-founded Generation Investment Management, a company that promotes "a new approach to sustainable investing." Gore is also chairman of Current TV, a cable and satellite television network he co-founded. He also serves as a director for Google and Apple Computer.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.-- The 40-year-old honeymoon of former Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper, is over. The couple have separated.

The Gores sent e-mails to family and friends and to the media announcing a mutual decision to separate.

"We are announcing today (Monday) that after a great deal of thought, we have decided to separate," the message said.

"This is very much a mutual and mutually supportive decision that we have made together following a process of long and careful consideration.

We ask for respect for our privacy and that of our family, and we do not intend to comment further."

The Gores were telling friends they "grew apart" and there was no affair involved, according to longtime close associates and family friends. They said the Gores, over a period of time, had carved out separate lives, with the former vice president on the road frequently.

His best-selling book about global warming, "An Inconvenient Truth," was the subject of an Oscar-winning documentary.

After leaving Washington and returning to Nashville, Tipper Gore considered but decided against a run for the U.S. Senate seat in her home state in 2002.

She was co-founder in 1985 of the Parents Music Resource Center, which pushed for parental warning labels on music with violent or sexually explicit lyrics. The group drew the ire of musicians ranging from Dee Snider of Twisted Sister to Frank Zappa, who said warning labels were unnecessary and a danger to freedom.

The Gores were married on May 19, 1970, at the National Cathedral in Washington and crafted an image as a happily married couple during his eight years as vice president in the 1990s and a presidential candidate in 2000. The couple famously exchanged a long kiss during the 2000 Democratic presidential convention.

The couple have four grown children and three grandchildren.

Shear determination, containment cap in place; BP awaits results

VENICE, La.-- BP placed the new cap atop the ruptured undersea well Thursday night and is now waiting to see how effective the operation was. The complex underwater maneuver was applauded by U.S. and BP officials.

The placement was a positive step but not a solution, said Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen.

"It will be sometime before we can confirm that this method will work," said Coast Guard Lt. Commander Tony Russell.

"Even if it is successful, this is only a temporary and partial fix and we must continue our aggressive response."

Robot submarines steered the new cap to the well in the Gulf of Mexico about 10 p.m. Thursday after the company's giant shears sliced off the pipe hours before. But early Friday morning a non-stop cloud of oil was still spewing from the pipe.

BP turned to the shears after a diamond-tipped saw became stuck in the pipe halfway through the job.

BP CEO Tony Hayward announced that the company has crossed a "milestone" earlier in the day by cutting away the remains of the well's damaged riser pipe. That cleared the way for the dome to be lowered down to the well, 5,000 feet below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico. "The next 12 to 24 hours will give us an indication how successful the attempt would be," he told reporters at the company's U.S. headquarters in Houston, Texas.

Allen called Thursday's news "extremely important." But the well may not be completely sealed off until August, when BP hopes to complete a relief well. Hayward said BP will be

working to clean up the mess left behind for a "very, very long time."

Oil hit the barrier islands of Mississippi and Alabama and was only several miles off the Florida Panhandle Thursday evening, state emergency management officials reported.

Currents likely to carry oil along Atlantic coast

A detailed computer modeling study released Thursday indicates that the oil from the massive spill in the Gulf might soon extend along thousands of miles of the Atlantic coast and open ocean as early as this summer. The modeling results are captured in a series of dramatic animations produced by the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and collaborators.

"I've had a lot of people ask me, 'Will the oil reach Florida?'" says NCAR scientist Synte Peacock, who worked on the study.

"Actually, our best knowledge says the scope of this environmental disaster is likely to reach far beyond Florida, with impacts that have yet to be understood."

Ramifications from the spill are also being felt by the oil companies. The Obama administration is blocking all drilling in the Gulf, a day after regulators approved a new permit for drilling in shallow water.

An e-mail Thursday from the Gulf Coast office of the Minerals Management Service says that "until further notice" no new drilling is being allowed in the Gulf, no matter what the water depth.

Japan elects new prime minister



and social welfare can be realized together," he said.

Kan, 63, was finance minister under the unpopular Hatoyama who stepped down Wednesday amid plunging approval ratings over broken campaign promises and a political funding scandal.

As prime minister, Kan faces daunting choices in how to lead the world's second-largest economy, which is burdened with massive public debt, sluggish growth and an aging, shrinking population. He must also rally voter support ahead of the upper house elections next month.

Kan, known for standing up to Japan's powerful bureaucrats, is the country's sixth prime minister in four years.

In addition to serving as finance minister, Kan served as deputy prime minister. Kan will be a rare political breed for a Japanese premier. His family has not produced another prime minister or state minister, which could play well with a Japanese public that has seen several sons and grandsons of foreign ministers in the past years ascending to the premiership, only to step down again a few months later.

TOKYO-- Japan's parliament elected Finance Minister Naoto Kan to be the nation's new prime minister Friday, following the resignation of Yukio Hatoyama earlier this week.

The outspoken populist has the task of quickly reclaiming public support which his predecessor failed to get during his eight months in the post. "The very first thing we must do is to regain the trust of the people," Kan said in a speech to party members before their vote Friday. He promised transparent government and pledged improved policies to boost jobs and reinvigorate society.

"I have confidence that economic growth

Name Yang Guoqiang China's new Consul General to Chicago



Products Import and Export Company from 1977-1985.

He was appointed Deputy Director, Director of the Foreign Affairs Dept., Shanghai Municipal Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Commission from 1985-1992.

In 1992 Yang moved up to President of Shanghai Imports L.A. Inc. and Managing Director for the Board of the Shanghai International Holding Corp. (America). He left in 1996 to assume the role of Deputy Director General of the Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office.

From 2003-2008, he held the position of Director General of the Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office, Director General of the Shanghai Municipal Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office. In 2008 he was appointed Chairman, Shanghai Municipal Foreign Economic Relations Trade Commission, Shanghai Municipal Foreign Investment Commission.

Yang is married and has a daughter.

CHICAGO-- Yang Guoqiang has been named to replace Ping Huang as Consul General of the People's Republic of China to Chicago.

Yang, 56, leaves his post as Vice Chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Commerce.

Born in Shanghai in 1954, Yang had a rapid climb through government ranks, starting his career as an Interpreter, Sales Representative and Deputy Controller for the Shanghai Animal By-

Taliban being trained inside Iran



in Afghanistan, although Washington says it has not been nearly as important a factor as in Iraq.

An American soldier was killed Sunday in a small arms attack in southern Afghanistan. May was the deadliest month this year for U.S. troops with 33 deaths. The month also brought the 1,000th U.S. military death in the Afghan war since it started in 2001.

McChrystal said the Afghanistan fight will extend long beyond July 2011, when President Barack Obama wants to start withdrawing forces. In recent meetings with President Hamid Karzai, Obama "reaffirmed the strategic partnership, which is way beyond 2011," McChrystal said during the press conference.

"I think President Obama's decision to begin the reduction of U.S. forces in 2011 needs to be reviewed in that context."

Iran backed the Northern Alliance in the war against the Sunni Muslim Taliban in the 1990s, but security analysts said Tehran's intelligence services could be helping elements in the Taliban as a tool against the United States.

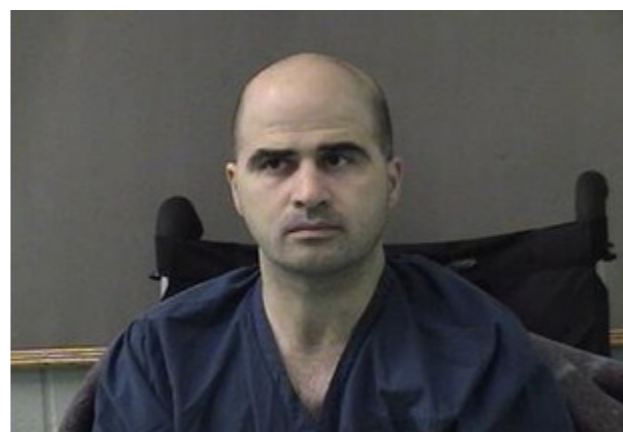
KABUL, Afghanistan-- Iran is training some Taliban fighters inside its country and providing weapons, the commander of U.S. and NATO forces said Saturday.

"There is clear evidence of Iranian activity --in some cases provoking weaponry and training to the Taliban--that is inappropriate," Gen. Stanley McChrystal told reporters in Kabul.

"The training that we have seen occurs inside Iran with fighters moving inside Iran. The weapons we have received come from Iran into Afghanistan."

The United States has frequently accused Iran of providing some assistance to the Taliban

Nidal Hasan Gets First Court Appearance



FORT HOOD, Texas---Maj. Nidal Hasan made his first courtroom appearance Tuesday wearing his Army uniform and sitting solemnly in a wheelchair. The psychiatrist is accused of gunning down 13 people at Fort Hood.

Military police escorted Hasan into the courtroom. His legs were shackled and arms restrained when he arrived. Hasan was paralyzed after being shot by two police officers Nov. 5.

His attorneys sought a delay in his Article 32 hearing because they needed more time to review numerous documents they recently received and still lacked other key documents, including the FBI ballistics report and a government review of the shooting.

"We need to make sure that both sides--particularly the defense--gets all the time it needs

do do this right and in accordance with the law," Hasan's lead defense attorney John Galligan said.

The article 32 hearing, similar to a civilian grand jury proceeding in which a judge hears witness testimony to determine whether the case should go to trial, is set for Oct. 4. Hasan is charged with 13 counts of premeditated murder and 32 counts of attempted premeditated murder in the worst shooting on a military post.

When asked if he understood his rights, if he read the charges against him and if he knew his right to a speedy trial, Hasan answered "yes sir."

Officials had increased security at Fort Hood and had bomb-sniffing dogs search the parking lot. Hand-held metal detectors were used to screen the few people approved to be in the courtroom.

Col. James Pohl, a military judge who is acting as the investigating officer in the case, said he planned to call the 32 injured victims as witnesses. Pohl also said that while authorities have not decided to seek the death penalty, he was asked to investigate whether Hasan's case had any aggravating factors--which are only relevant in death penalty cases.

If convicted, Hasan could be sentenced to death only if military jurors determine there is an aggravating factor.