

## NATION/WORLD DIGEST

### BP Points Finger For Oil Spill

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — BP took some of the blame for the Gulf oil disaster in an internal report issued Wednesday, acknowledging among other things that it misinterpreted a key pressure test of the well. But in a possible preview of its legal strategy, it also pointed the finger at its partners on the doomed rig.

The highly technical, 193-page report attributes the worst offshore oil spill in U.S. history and the rig explosion that set it off to a complex chain of failures both human and mechanical. Some of those problems have been made public over the past 4 1/2 months, such as the failure of the blowout preventer to clamp the well shut.

The report is far from the definitive ruling on the cause of the catastrophe. For one thing, government investigators have not yet begun to fully analyze the blowout preventer, which was raised from the bottom of the sea over Labor Day weekend.

But it provides an early look at the company's probable legal strategy — spreading the blame among itself, rig owner Transocean, and cement contractor Halliburton — as it deals with hundreds of lawsuits, billions of dollars in claims and possible criminal charges in the coming months and years.

Critics of BP called the report self-serving.

### Castro: Economic Model Doesn't Work

HAVANA (AP) — Fidel Castro told a visiting American journalist that Cuba's communist economic model doesn't work, a rare comment on domestic affairs from a man who has conspicuously steered clear of local issues since stepping down four years ago.

The fact that things are not working efficiently on this cash-strapped Caribbean island is hardly news. Fidel's brother Raul, the country's president, has said the same thing repeatedly. But the blunt assessment by the father of Cuba's 1959 revolution is sure to raise eyebrows.

Jeffrey Goldberg, a national correspondent for The Atlantic magazine, asked if Cuba's economic system was still worth exporting to other countries, and Castro replied: "The Cuban model doesn't even work for us anymore" Goldberg wrote Wednesday in a post on his Atlantic blog.

He said Castro made the comment casually over lunch following a long talk about the Middle East, and did not elaborate. The Cuban government had no immediate comment on Goldberg's account.

Since stepping down from power in 2006, the ex-president has focused almost entirely on international affairs and said very little about Cuba and its politics, perhaps to limit the perception he is stepping on his brother's toes.

### Consumer Borrowing Falls Again

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumer borrowing fell again in July as households cut back on their credit card use for a 23rd consecutive month, adding more drag on an economy struggling to mount a sustained rebound.

Borrowing dropped at an annual rate of \$3.6 billion in July, the Federal Reserve reported Wednesday. That marked the 17th drop in credit in the past 18 months.

Americans did boost borrowing for auto loans in July but this gain was offset by further reductions in the category that includes credit cards.

The latest drop in overall borrowing was slightly higher than economists' expectations and followed a \$1.02 billion decline in June, which was revised from an initial estimate that total credit had dropped by \$1.3 billion that month.

Analysts said that consumer credit is continuing to be constrained by all the problems facing households including tighter lending standards on the part of banks struggling with high loan losses.

### Google Revs Up Search Engine

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google is accelerating its search engine by displaying the results as soon as users begin to type in their requests.

The new "Instant Search" introduced Wednesday means people will start to see an ever-evolving set of results in the middle of the page with each character they type into the search box.

The new feature will gradually roll out throughout the rest of the day.

Instant Search grew out of Google Inc.'s quest to deliver search results as quickly as possible. Google believes this feature will enable its search engine to anticipate what a person is looking for with just one key-stroke.

Google is counting on the latest innovation to help maintain its dominance of the lucrative search market as rivals Yahoo Inc. and Microsoft Corp. join forces.

### Odd Hump Found On Dino's Back

WASHINGTON (AP) — The weird world of dinosaurs has just gotten a tad more bizarre. Scientists found a nearly complete fossil of a new dinosaur that sports a noticeable hump, maybe as possible advertising.

The hump on the dinosaur's back, which was at least 16 inches tall, may have been used to help this meat-eating theropod communicate among its own species, scientists theorize. Discoverer Francisco Ortega of Spain named it Concavenator corcovatus which means "the hunchback hunter from Cuenca."

Ortega said the hump could have been used to store fat or regulate body temperature, but there is also the distinct possibility that it was used by concavenators to somehow differentiate themselves or communicate with each other.

But with only one of these dinos, it's only speculation and is hard to figure out what the humps were meant to convey if they were tools of communication, he said.

In a neighborhood nearby, firefighters were asking homeowners if anyone had been swept away by the creek's fast-moving waters, which turned an open field of wild grass and flower into a temporary lake. The waters carried away trampolines and storage sheds, knocked down fences and retaining walls and uprooted trees, which could be heard cracking in the nearby woods.

The creek appeared to be about 15 feet above its normal levels, nearly overflowing a four-lane bridge and flooding a park. A paved walking path through the park ended abruptly in the water.

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# Obama Firm, Won't Yield On Tax Hike

BY JULIE PACE AND TOM RAUM  
Associated Press Writers

CLEVELAND — Politically weakened but refusing to bend, President Barack Obama insisted Wednesday that Bush-era tax cuts be cut off for the wealthiest Americans, joining battle with Republicans — and some fellow Democrats — just two months before bruising midterm elections.

Singling out House GOP leader John Boehner in his home state, Obama delivered a searing attack on Republicans for advocating "the same philosophy that led to this mess in the first place: cut more taxes for millionaires and cut more rules for corporations."

Obama rolled out a trio of new plans to help spur job growth and invigorate the sluggish national economic recovery. They would expand and permanently extend a research and development tax credit that lapsed in 2009, allow businesses to write off 100 percent of their investments in equipment and plants through 2011 and pump \$50 billion into highway, rail, air-

port and other infrastructure projects.

The package was assembled by the president's economic team after it became clear that the recovery was running out of steam. There was a political component, too: With Democrats in danger of losing control of the House in November, Obama is under heavy pressure to show voters that he and his party are ready to do more to get the economy moving and get millions of jobless Americans back to work.

However, none of Wednesday's proposals, nor Obama's call for allowing tax rates to rise for the wealthiest Americans, seems likely to be acted on by Congress before the elections, reflecting the battering Obama and congressional Democrats have taken in public opinion polls.

Obama made one of his strongest appeals yet to allow the tax cuts passed under President George W. Bush — in 2001 and 2003 — to expire at the end of the year on schedule, but just for individuals earning more than \$200,000 annually or joint filers earning over

\$250,000. The changes would affect dividend and capital gains rates and various other tax benefits as well as income from wages and salaries.

The president's strategy — pushing for legislation to save some tax cuts but not all — carries its own risks. Since all the tax breaks would expire automatically at the end of the year if Congress failed to act, that could result in sweeping increases for taxpayers at every income level — a major blow to recovery hopes and a colossal dose of blame for voters to parcel out to lawmakers and the White House.

Some influential Democrats, and Obama's own former budget director, Peter Orszag, have suggested a compromise might be necessary — one to temporarily extend all the tax cuts, perhaps for a year or two — given the current election-year animosity between the two parties.

But in his remarks in Cleveland, Obama strongly signaled he wasn't about to sign off on any such deal.

"Let me be clear to Mr. Boehner and everyone else. We should not hold middle class tax cuts hostage any longer," the president said. The

administration "is ready this week to give tax cuts to every American making \$250,000 or less," he said. It was a slight misstatement of his own position, since the \$250,000 would apply to household income. The threshold for individuals would be \$200,000.

White House officials said Cleveland was picked as the speech site expressly because Boehner, who probably would become House speaker if Republicans take back control of the chamber in November, laid out his party's economic agenda here in a fiery Aug. 24 speech.

At that time, the Ohio Republican called for Obama to fire key economic advisers and to support an extension of all the Bush tax cuts.

Boehner kept up the attack on Wednesday. "If the president is really serious about focusing on jobs, a good start would be taking the advice of his recently departed budget director and freezing all tax rates, coupled with cutting of federal spending to where it was before all the bailouts, government takeovers and 'stimulus' spending sprees," he said after Obama spoke.

# Fla. Pastor On Fringe Of Christian Life

BY RACHEL ZOLL  
AP Religion Writer

NEW YORK — The Florida pastor who plans to burn the Quran on the anniversary of 9/11 is rooted in Pentecostal tradition that believes Christians are engaged in a modern-day spiritual battle with evil.

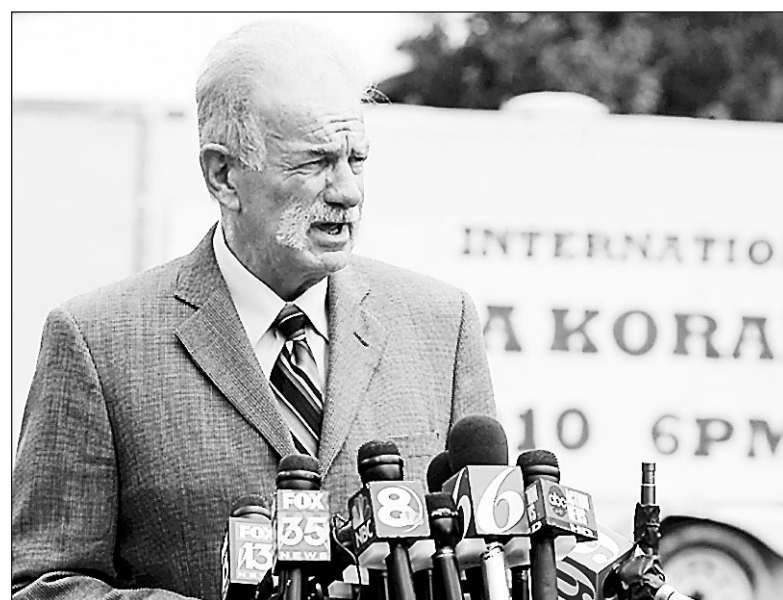
For Terry Jones and his Dove World Outreach Center, Islam is that evil, a world view drawn from his politics and theology — as well as an apparent thirst for publicity for his tiny, independent church.

"Our burning of the Quran is to call the attention that something is wrong," Jones said Wednesday at a brief news conference outside his Gainesville church. "It is possibly time for us in a new way to stand up and confront terrorism."

Jones is under worldwide pressure to drop his plan to burn copies of the Muslim holy book Saturday. Condemnations have poured in from Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; the Vatican; and elsewhere.

"As of this time, we have no intention of canceling," Jones said. Conservative Christians have taken pains to distance themselves from the event.

The National Association of Evangelicals, an umbrella group for



STEPHEN M. DOWELL/ORLANDO SENTINEL/MCT  
Pastor Terry Jones tells members of the media he plans to go forward with plans to burn Qurans at the Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, Wednesday, September 8, 2010. Church members plan to burn copies of the Quran on September 11.

theologically conservative Christian churches nationwide, issued a statement July 29 urging Jones to cancel the burning "in the name and love of Jesus Christ."

The Rev. Richard Land, head of the public policy arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, the

largest Protestant group, called the plan abhorrent. George Wood, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, one of the largest and best-established Pentecostal denominations, warned of damage to Christian-Muslim relations.

Yet, there is no sign that Jones

will be persuaded by other Christians. He is as critical of them as he is of Islam, calling other pastors failed religious warriors in what he considers a secular world bent on silencing Christians.

"The real problem is not the politicians or even Islam," Jones said, in his YouTube video series called "The Braveheart Show," inspired by the Mel Gibson movie. "The real problem is our educational system that wants to remove God from every part of our society. The problem is the church has laid down. The church has given up."

Jones' road to notoriety began in 1986 in his living room, where he founded Dove World Outreach Center, which operates out of a sprawling property in Gainesville. Despite its impressive name, the church has only about 50 members.

Its property has served as a sometime storage site for Jones' furniture business, a violation of Dove's tax-exempt status that was punished with a county fine and partial loss of nonprofit standing. The Gainesville (Fla.) Sun reported Jones previously founded a small church in Germany, the Christian Community of Cologne, and was accused by his daughter and a former church elder of using donations to enrich himself, the Sun reported.

## Hermine's Remnants Flood Texas

BY JEFF CARLTON AND JAY ROOT  
Associated Press Writers

ARLINGTON, Texas — The remnants of Tropical Storm Hermine caused widespread flooding in northern Texas and began buffeting southern Oklahoma on Wednesday, killing at least two people and submerging low-lying pockets of Arlington under several feet of water.

Firefighters used trucks and ladders to reach residents of one Arlington apartment complex who were stranded on the upper floors of their homes by murky water that suddenly surrounded them. The sudden deluge, which surprised many residents because of the relatively weak punch the storm packed when it made landfall Monday night, sent at least one vehicle floating across the complex's parking lot.

In a neighborhood nearby, firefighters were asking homeowners if anyone had been swept away by the creek's fast-moving waters, which turned an open field of wild grass and flower into a temporary lake. The waters carried away trampolines and storage sheds, knocked down fences and retaining walls and uprooted trees, which could be heard cracking in the nearby woods.

The creek appeared to be about 15 feet above its normal levels, nearly overflowing a four-lane bridge and flooding a park. A paved walking path through the park ended abruptly in the water.

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