Two United States Government Reports On the Gulf Oil Spill

First Report

Deep Water: The Gulf Oil Disaster and the Future of Offshore Drilling

Report to the President
National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon
Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling

January 2011

Foreward, page vii:

"As a result of our investigation, we conclude:

- The explosive loss of the Macondo well could have been prevented.
- The immediate causes of the Macondo well blowout can be traced to a series of identifiable mistakes made by BP, Halliburton, and Transocean that reveal such systematic failures in risk management that they place in doubt the safety culture of the entire industry.
- Deepwater energy exploration and production, particularly at the frontiers of experience, involve risks for which neither industry nor government has been adequately prepared, but for which they can and must be prepared in the future.
- To assure human safety and environmental protection, regulatory oversight of leasing, energy exploration, and production require reforms even beyond those significant reforms already initiated since the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster. Fundamental reform will be needed in both the structure of those in charge of regulatory oversight and their internal decision making process to ensure their political autonomy, technical expertise, and their full consideration of environmental protection concerns.

- Because regulatory oversight alone will not be sufficient to ensure adequate safety, the oil and gas industry will need to take its own, unilateral steps to increase dramatically safety throughout the industry, including self-policing mechanisms that supplement governmental enforcement.

- The technology, laws and regulations, and practices for containing, responding to, and cleaning up spills lag behind the real risks associated with deepwater drilling into large, high-pressure reservoirs of oil and gas located far offshore and thousands of feet below the ocean's surface. Government must close the existing gap and industry must support rather than resist that effort.

- Scientific understanding of environmental conditions in sensitive environments in deep Gulf waters, along the region's coastal habitats, and in areas proposed for more drilling, such as the Arctic, is inadequate. The same is true of the human and natural impacts of oil spills."

Full Report in PDF files available at: http://www.oilspillcommission.gov/final-report

Second Report:

U.S., Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement

Report regarding the causes of the April 20, 2010 Macondo well blowout

September 14, 2011

Page 6, Executive Summary:

"At the time of the blowout, both BP and Transocean had extensive procedures in place regarding safe drilling operations. BP required that its drilling and completions personnel follow a "documented and auditable risk management process." The Panel found no evidence that the BP Macondo team fully evaluated ongoing operational risks, nor did it find evidence that BP communicated with the Transocean rig crew about such risks."

Page 191:

"XVI. Conclusions Regarding Involved Companies' Practices

"BP, Transocean and Halliburton each had "stop work" programs. The Panel found no evidence to suggest that the rig crew members were aware of the multiple anomalies that occurred on April 19 - 20. The failure of the rig crew to stop work on the *Deepwater Horizon* after encountering multiple hazards and warnings was a contributing cause of the Macondo blowout. The Panel found no evidence that BP performed a formal risk assessment of critical operational decisions made in the days leading up to the blowout. BP's failure to fully assess the risks associated with a number of operational decisions leading up to the blowout was a contributing cause of the Macondo blowout.

"Many of the decisions made leading up the *Deepwater Horizon* blowout – including the timing of the installation of the lock - down sleeve, the conducting of multiple operations during mud displacement, and the use of lost circulation material pills as spacer lowered the costs of the well and increased operating risks. These decisions were not subjected to a formal risk assessment. BP's cost or time saving decisions without considering contingencies and mitigation were contributing causes of the Macondo blowout.

"Multiple decisions (the number of centralizers run, the decision not to run a cement evaluation, the decision not to circulate a full bottoms - up, and others) were in direct contradiction with the DWOP guidance to keep risk as low as reasonably practical. BP's failure to ensure all risks associated with operations on the *Deepwater Horizon* were as low as reasonably practicable was a contributing cause of the Macondo blowout."

Report: http://www.deepwaterinvestigation.com/go/doc/3043/1193483/