

May 3, 2010

Was the BP oil platform explosion an accident, or...?

By JR Dieckmann

Maybe it's just me, but I find the devastating explosion of a BP oil rig, and resulting oil spill, in the Gulf of Mexico at this particular time somewhat suspicious. These kinds of explosions are extremely rare. In fact, there have been only two similar incidents in recorded history as far as I can determine.

On July 6, 1988, Occidental Petroleum's Piper Alpha platform suffered a catastrophic explosion and fire, which killed 167 workers and destroyed the rig. The cause of this disaster was human error when workers shut down a pipeline to remove a defective pump, then went off duty before finishing the job.

They had placed a cap on the pipe when the pump was removed, but the workers failed to tighten the bolts — thinking that the pipe would remain out of service until the new pump was installed. Somehow, the paperwork never reached the controller who came on duty with the new shift. He pressurized the pipeline not knowing about the temporary cap and pump replacement work in progress, which resulted in a major gas leak and resulting explosion — destroying the platform.

The other incident was the Petrobras 36 Oil Platform (P-36) off the coast of Argentina, which was the largest floating production platform in the world prior to its sinking March 20, 2001. In the early hours of March 15, 2001, there were two unexplained explosions in the aft starboard column. The cause of the explosions was never determined.

At first, the explosion of the BP Deepwater Horizon drilling platform seemed suspicious with Cap & Trade about to be pushed through the Senate. Cap & Trade is supposedly all about saving the Earth from global warming — caused in part by the burning of fossil fuels, including oil. Of course we know this is a hoax and Cap & Trade is nothing but a huge scam for money and power by the Progressive left.

Last month, as a crumb thrown to Republicans for his Cap & Trade plan, Obama proposed new offshore oil exploration in the Atlantic Ocean from Delaware to central Florida, plus the northern waters of Alaska. Obama also suggested lifting a drilling ban in the oil-rich eastern Gulf of Mexico, 125 miles from Florida beaches.

This hyperbole goes against everything Obama stands for and has done since usurping the presidency. They had to create a reason to renege on this proposal or lose the support of his radical environmentalist base. How convenient that the BP rig would choose this particular time to blow up and cause a massive oil spill. The White House now says it "will not go forward with new offshore drilling until the oil spill cause has been reviewed," and then what?

Obama said he has ordered Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to review what happened and report within 30 days. In the mean time, he has ordered the shutdown of all Gulf oil production rigs. How does \$5.00/gal gasoline for the summer sound to you?

The review will examine what safeguards there should be to prevent future spills. Obama said any new oil drilling leases must have safeguards against accidents. That means, no doubt, that there will be more legislation and more regulations from the government.

Did it ever occur to Obama that the oil companies already have in place every conceivable measure to prevent accidents from happening? They have backup systems to their backup systems. They cannot afford to cut corners on the construction and safety of oil platforms that cost hundreds of millions of dollars to build. These investments must produce profits for decades to come. Deepwater Horizon represented an investment of a third of a trillion dollars by BP in 2001 and would cost twice that today to replace it. Would you take any chances with that kind of an investment to save a couple of bucks?

The government cannot legislate against accidents ever happening. Even if Obama, Schumer and Durban were operating the rig themselves, there would still be accidents. If government could legislate against accidents, then why do we still have auto collisions everyday? Occasionally, airplanes are going to crash, and cranes are going to topple over no matter what the government says or does.

This BP oil rig is state of the art and less than 10 years old. It is a floating rig designed to drill wells in the ocean floor up to 30,000 deep in waters up to 8,000 feet deep. At the time of the explosion, the rig had completed its drilling operations and was being decoupled from the well. It would be moved off and replaced with a pumping and processing platform.

Unfortunately, it never got that chance and 11 drill workers lost their lives. But because of safety measures built into this rig, 115 workers on the rig were saved who wouldn't have been on an older rig. Unfortunately, the 11 killed were in the heart of the explosion and presumed to have died instantly, probably evaporated in the explosion. It is an unfortunate loss of life, but it could have been much worse were it not for the latest safety features built into this rig.

Remember all of those "green energy" commercials British Petroleum was airing last year that ended with the words: "Beyond Petroleum?" I am sure most of us recognized them as just political pandering to environmentalists and global warming wing-nuts, but at the time, BP was a partner in the United States Climate Action Partnership (USCAP), a group that includes chief executives from several corporate giants as well as influential environmental organizations like the Nature Conservancy and the Environmental Defense Fund.

According to the USCAP website: "United States Climate Action Partnership (USCAP) is a group of businesses and leading environmental organizations that have come together to call on the federal government to quickly enact strong national legislation to require significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. USCAP has issued a landmark set of principles and recommendations to underscore the urgent need for a policy framework on climate change."

The climate partnership's Blueprint for Legislative Action, released in January 2009, called for a federal cap-and-trade system, significant allocation of free allowances, carbon capture and storage incentives, and a midterm emissions reduction goal of 80 to 86 percent of 2005 levels by 2020.

Last February, BP America, Conoco-Phillips and Caterpillar announced they were discontinuing their membership in USCAP after becoming aware of the harmful effects Cap & Trade would have on their businesses, and their inability to comply with it while still maintaining a profit margin. BP's "Beyond Petroleum," green energy commercials are no longer airing.

Did that make the BP platform a target of environmental terrorists or the Obama regime in Washington? Was the BP platform intentionally blown up to create negative sentiment against offshore oil production? The answer is a definite "no."

A witness on the platform at the time of the explosion has explained exactly what happened. The explosion was caused by a huge gas bubble that caused a blowout of the riser pipe and enveloped the floor of the rig with highly flammable gas. When it found an ignition source, the whole thing blew up, setting off secondary explosions.

Nothing is beyond the realm of possibility with this Chicago Marxist regime in Washington. There are no coincidences with this regime, and nothing is as it appears. The regime loves a crisis, whether real or manufactured. How convenient to have a major oil disaster in the gulf at a time when Cap & Trade is about to come to the floor of the Senate. Remember what Rahm Emanuel said: "Never let a crisis go to waste. It's an opportunity to get things done you couldn't ordinarily do." But this time, the crisis is real and had natural causes. The gas pressure was simply too strong for the sea water counter-pressure being applied by the rig to contain it.

It is understandable that there would be suspicions about this being an accident or an act of terrorism. Remember what happened last year — the first year of the Obama regime? First, Obama took over GM and Chrysler. The next thing we know is Toyota's accelerator problems are all over the news. The cause of the problem has still not been found. Then, of course, we have the congressional inquisition of Goldman Sachs just as financial reform legislation hit's the floor of congress — even if the Goldman Sachs hearing is nothing more than just a show trial. Coincidences? I don't think so.

Industrial sabotage is certainly not beyond this Chicago cabal now running Washington D.C., nor its leftist allies running the environmental movement. However, the evidence shows that there were no nefarious acts, nor negligence, involved in the Deepwater Horizon explosion. It was an extremely rare act of nature as the rig was working with record depths and pressures. Gas bubbles are not unusual in these operations, but ones of this magnitude are. There was no way it could have been predicted or prevented.

Shrimpers in Louisiana and Alabama have already filed lawsuits against BP and the owners of the Deepwater Horizon rig, each seeking damages of at least \$5 million for anticipated economic losses before they have even happened. The lawsuits also name Cameron International Corp, which supplied the rig's blowout prevention equipment that they claim had failed. It is probable that the blowout valve was disabled by the explosion rather than a fault with the equipment.

Interestingly enough, they have even brought Halliburton Energy Services Inc. into the lawsuit, which was engaged in cementing operations of the well. The claim is that Halliburton did not pour the cement right. Why didn't they name the U.S. Government in the suit as well for issuing the permit for the oil rig in the first place? Wasn't the Interior Department also negligent in knowing that there was a possibility of an accident in spite of everything humanly possible being done to prevent it?

Isn't it amazing that Shrimpers and their lawyers know so much more about how oil rigs are constructed and the cause of this explosion than anyone else? No doubt, Dick Cheney and George W. Bush will be blamed for this as well by the left.

References:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_platform#Risks

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_industrial_disasters

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrobras_36_Oil_Platform

<http://www.us-cap.org/>

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/04/30/axelrod-new-drilling-answers-accident/>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN298848720100430>

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100428/ts_alt_afp/usblastoilenergypollution

<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/16/three-firms-quit-climate-lobby/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deepwater_Horizon_drilling_rig_explosion

© JR Dieckmann

The views expressed by RenewAmerica columnists are their own and do not necessarily reflect the position of RenewAmerica or its affiliates.

(See RenewAmerica's [publishing standards.](#))
