

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE BP DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL AND OFFSHORE DRILLING

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OFFSHORE DRILLING

POTENTIAL GENERAL FINDINGS

OCTOBER 13, 2010

Group A

1. The nation is currently and will in the foreseeable future be highly dependent on offshore drilling in the outer continental shelf, including in deep waters.
2. The oil and gas industry developed highly innovative and advanced technologies to explore oil and gas reserves increasingly deeper and further offshore.
3. Offshore production has helped offset declines in production elsewhere in the U.S., moderated dependence on foreign imports, thereby contributing to national security and reduction of the trade deficit.
4. Offshore oil production is part of a broader picture that includes strategies for managing demand, the role of alternative fuels, and the availability of domestic reserves for future generations.

Group B

5. Despite the impressive technology developed for offshore drilling, there were not comparable developments in the technologies that provide safety in the challenging new environments in which the industry operated.
6. Offshore rigs have complex management problems because of the combination of prime operators, subcontractors, and equipment manufacturers needed to make them work.
7. Some companies in the Gulf of Mexico failed to apply process safety measures to provide unified coordination of the range of complex technical tasks on large rigs and the diversity of companies working on them.
8. The entire oil and gas industry failed to provide adequate contingency plans, including the availability of adequate containment systems, for a major well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, or to advance technologies for oil recovery.

Group C

9. The national interest requires the continuation and expansion of a strong offshore drilling program, but one with a better balancing of risk and with greater safety protections for human life, the environment and the economy.
10. The oil and gas industry is planning for exploration and development in frontier areas outside the Gulf of Mexico, including the Arctic, which would introduce new safety challenges, many of which have not been fully analyzed.
11. By forming a Marine Well Containment Company, some in the oil and gas industry are beginning to address the absence of a readily available containment system for the Gulf of Mexico. Many key decisions that will help determine the long-term viability and success of the organization, however, have yet to be made.