

Joint Industry Blowout Control Report: DEA-63 (1991)



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FINAL REPORT

JOINT INDUSTRY PROGRAM for FLOATING VESSEL BLOWOUT CONTROL

DEA-63

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6.3 BOUNDARIES OF POLLUTION STUDY

6.3.1 Scope of Study. This analysis is an introductory study as defined by the overall scope of the total project. It is not intended to be a rigorous analysis of pollution control methods and equipment. Instead, the concepts behind existing techniques have been analyzed for their applicability to deepwater blowout situations.

This review is intended to provide a perception that will lead to new designs and improved technology for handling deepwater blowout situations. Current technology and equipment is considered inadequate to combat an open sea spill. Existing pollution control countermeasures are discussed briefly.

TREX -11625.332

Sections 6.7 and 6.8 detail concepts and designs presented in these studies. It seems the next logical step in assessing plume dynamics and in providing a measure of protection against environmental damage from a subsea blowout would be to implement one of these designs. This has not been done as yet. High cost associated with these precludes the likelihood that they will be implemented in the future.

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6.8 SUBSURFACE CONTAINMENT/COLLECTION

6.8.1 Introduction. The most logical approach to controlling pollution from a subsea blowout is to contain and collect the blowout effluent at the source of the spill. If it is contained, it cannot enter the water column, nor can it spread on the surface of the sea. The introduction of the oil into the environment is curtailed.

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New technology has not been developed in the past several years owing largely to the absence of a severe subsea blowout. Since no deepwater blowouts have occurred, there is no perceived basis to justify preparedness measures. Thus, the first line of defense in the event of an offshore blowout is still the rapid deployment of surface countermeasure devices.

The recent failure of containment and cleanup measures on the large surface spill in Alaska are of great concern, not to mention the high cost of such countermeasures. Subsea containment and collection of blowout effluent may become more popular as drilling extends into deeper water.

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