

From: Cook, Kevin RADM
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2010 5:30:15 PM
To: Little, Patrick CAPT; Gautier, Peter CAPT
CC: Landry, Mary RADM; Watson, James RADM
Subject: RE: ISPR

Pete, I'll be back in the office fri & would like to discuss. I'm not sure the govt technical input had much standing at this point in the response. -ksc

-----Original Message-----

From: Little, Patrick CAPT
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Gautier, Peter CAPT
Cc: Landry, Mary RADM; Watson, James RADM; Cook, Kevin RADM
Subject: RE: ISPR

Pete ... the NIC's link to Houston started when RADM Cook went to Houston for the top kill, but took a little bit of time to develop. I was not privy to the detailed planning discussions for top kill, so I don't know how sensitive the operation was to flow rate. However, BP did have good data on pressure differentials and cross-sectional area, and apparently felt comfortable that they had sufficient capacity (i.e. pressure and volume) to overcome the flow rate. r/ pel

-----Original Message-----

From: Watson, James RADM
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2010 11:17 AM
To: Gautier, Peter CAPT
Cc: Landry, Mary RADM; Little, Patrick CAPT
Subject: RE: ISPR

Thanks Pete. We were receiving telcon and email info from NIC just fine as I recall. I just can't recall specifics for 27 May. Probably doesn't matter.

Wrt my email to you on Sean Smith's proposed statement for 14 June, after holding that for an hour or two, I resolved my concern and agreed to the statement. This was all unrelated to FRTG numbers, but is evidence of the comms being active prior to national level announcements.

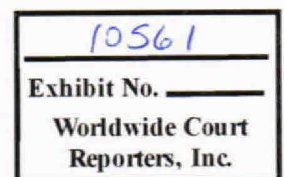
RADM Jim Watson
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<http://cglantareadirectorofoperations.blogspot.com/>

-----Original Message-----

From: Gautier, Peter CAPT
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2010 10:46 AM
To: Watson, James RADM
Cc: Landry, Mary RADM; Little, Patrick CAPT
Subject: RE: ISPR

Sir,

I was thinking about this after the call too. We didn't have a formal process...these updates were communicated via email to ALCON and circulated thru our respective information officers and the JIC. Looking at some of my email files, I don't think we had an issue getting the latest information out, but you would have a better perspective being on the receiving end.



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TREX 010561.0001

I don't recall a flow rate upper bound for top kill decision making either. In fact, my view is that the only significance was with respect to containment capacity for top hat, etc. (see attached email that discusses your directing BP to provide greater capacity given new flow rate estimates). FRTG announcements had little impact on response operations since these were centered on oil observations, operational feedback, etc. However, I really didn't become aware of the intricacies of decision making in Houston until we installed the Science and Technical Team and we started doing the NIC directives in June. As you alluded, the NIC link to BP/Houston (except for personal NIC contacts to BP leaders) was thru UAC or the CG team in Houston. Perhaps the upper bound was a criteria for BP that we weren't aware of. Pat, any thoughts?

v/r

Pete

-----Original Message-----

From: Watson, James RADM
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2010 10:24 AM
To: Gautier, Peter CAPT
Cc: Landry, Mary RADM; Little, Patrick CAPT
Subject: RE: ISPR

Pete

Of note from Carl Moore this am is his conclusion that the lower range flow rate interpretation at the BP Houston/UAC ICs level would have affected the decision to approve the Top Kill. For my particular interest, do you recall how FRTG #s were communicated to Houston and the UAC during that period? I don't recall any discussions or reference to a flow rate "boundary" level that would have set a go-no go criteria for the Top Kill. I recall digesting the FRTG work as primarily for the purpose of providing an official estimate in light of all the wild estimates being made at the time and to begin to establish an amount for CWA liability purposes and mass balance to assist responders and NRDA.

Conversely, were the DOE, CG, DOI or BP folks in Houston having as much comms with the NIC in late May as they had later in say late June? If so, do you recall hearing a Top Kill flow rate limit from them? I don't. Perhaps RADM Landry or Pat Little recall this. It's very likely I signed BP's Top Kill procedure as deputy FOSC. (Note, for RADM Landry and Pat, see below that at least one of the FRTG members has indicated to the study group that the numbers provided were "low end")

Jim

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-----Original Message-----

From: Gautier, Peter CAPT
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2010 8:27 AM
To: Neffenger, Peter RADM; Candcmoore; Watson, James RADM
Cc: Holt, William CTR
Subject: RE: ISPR

Admiral Moore,

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Attached are two documents that can help inform our call this morning. The first is a summary from the FRTG provided to us 27 May and the second is a press release communicating the flow rate information in the first attachment. It explains why the NIC announcement on 27 May has 25K bbls/day as an upper limit.

Adm Neffenger won't be able to call in and has asked me to discuss this from the NIC staff perspective. Look forward to speaking to you shortly.

v/r

Pete

-----Original Message-----

From: candcmoore@sbcglobal.net [mailto:candcmoore@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2010 1:59 PM
To: James.M.Watson@uscg.mil; Neffenger, Peter RADM
Cc: Roger Rufe; Holt, William CTR
Subject: ISPR

Jim/Peter:

Please excuse the joint email, but I wanted each of you to know that I have contacted the other for information. We are trying to complete our field research for the ISPR process by the end of the month. November will be dedicated primarily to writing and review.

As we mentioned earlier, the quantification issue has received much attention throughout the field research phase, and seems to be of special interest to the Presidential Commission. Yesterday, we completed the final planned interview on the quantification issue with a member of the Flow Rate Technical Group. During that interview, we received information that we cannot corroborate elsewhere, and I am looking to you (collectively) for help. Below are excerpts from the Los Angeles Times involving the sequence of events that involve my question:

May 27: Dr. Marcia McNutt heads up the Flow Rate Technical Group which developed an "...independent, preliminary estimate of the amount of oil flowing from BP's leaking oil well." They provide a range of 12,000 to 19,000 bbls per day. In a press conference about the same period, NIC releases a range of 12,500 to 25,000 bbls per day.

June 10: Once streaming video is available to the FRTG, they increase their estimate to a range of 20,000 to 40,000 bbls per day.

June 15: FRTG changes their estimate again stating that the flow rate could be as much a 60,000 bbls a day.

My question is not why the FRTG came up with different figures for different dates (we have that explanation), but during the interview, the representative for the FRTG stated that when they gave these figures to the Coast Guard, they told the Coast Guard that they were "low end" figures. Said another way, the estimate they provided on 27 May was really meant to be read as: The discharge is at least 12,000 to at least 20,000 bbls/day. And the same for subsequent revisions of their estimates over time. This changes everything in terms of public perception, and even response planning and scaling of response operations.

I have reviewed all of the documentation that we have on the quantification issue and find no mention of the "lower end" concept. I personally viewed ADM Allen when he released the first "range" on national TV, and there was no mention of "lower end". What was your understanding

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when you received flow rates from the FRTG?

I know that both of you have better things to do, and are very busy, but I would appreciate your help with this issue.

If you have any questions, or are in need of additional detail, please give me a buzz: 916-844-4965.

Many thanks,

Carl