The Ongoing Administration-Wide Response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

Prepared by the Joint Information Center

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In the Past 24 Hours:

- President Obama visited the Gulf Coast to inspect response operations firsthand, underscoring the administration's all-hands-on-deck response to protect the coastline of the Gulf states. He was accompanied by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security John Brennan and Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Policy Carol Browner.

- NOAA is restricting fishing for a minimum of ten days in federal waters most affected by the BP oil spill, largely between Louisiana state waters at the mouth of the Mississippi River to waters off Florida's Pensacola Bay. The closure is effective immediately. This order balances economic and health concerns and only closes those areas affected by oil. Details can be found here.

- BP is now accepting claims for the Gulf Coast oil spill. Please call BP's helpline at 1-800-440-0858. A BP fact sheet with additional information is available here. For those who have already pursued the BP claims process and are not satisfied with BP's resolution, can call the Coast Guard at 1-800-280-7118. More information about what types of damages are eligible for compensation under the Oil Pollution Act as well as guidance on procedures to seek that compensation can be found here.

- Secretaries Janet Napolitano and Ken Salazar spoke by conference call to Governors Haley Barbour (MS), Bob Riley (AL), Rick Perry (TX), Charlie Crist (FL) and the Deputy Chief of Staff to Gov. Bobby Jindal (LA). Gov. Jindal was with President Obama. They briefed the Governors on the ongoing response to the BP oil spill in the gulf. They spoke specifically about efforts to stop the oil leaks and mitigating the oil's impact on the shorelines of their states. Additionally, they spoke about ways to enhance what has been strong cooperation between the federal government and the states. The Secretaries and Governors agreed to speak again on May 4.

- Response crews continue to test a new technique to break up the oil before it reaches the surface—a remotely operated underwater vehicle dispensing sub-surface dispersant at a rate of nine gallons per minute. BP and NOAA are evaluating the results of the test procedure to determine its feasibility for continued use.

- EPA last night posted on its dedicated response website the first air monitoring data it's collected in the area—with no red flags at this time.

- BP has indicated it will reimburse volunteers at the rate of $10 per hour. Contractors are also hiring people to support shoreline clean up. Contractor rates go as high as $18 per hour for supervisors.

By the Numbers to Date:

- Personnel were quickly deployed and nearly 2,000 are currently responding to protect the shoreline and wildlife.

- More than 100 vessels are responding on site, including skimmers, tugs, barges, and recovery vessels to assist in containment and cleanup efforts—in addition to dozens of aircraft, remotely operated vehicles, and multiple mobile offshore drilling units.

- Hundreds of thousands of feet of boom (barrier) have been deployed to contain the spill—more than 500,000 feet is available.

- More than 1 million gallons of an oil-water mix have been recovered.

- More than 156,000 gallons of dispersant have been deployed—an increase of more than 13,000 gallons since yesterday. An additional 75,000 gallons are available.

- Seven staging areas (Biloxi, Miss., Pensacola, Fla., Venice, La., Pascagoula, Miss. and Theodore, Ala., Port Fourchon, La., and Port Sulphur, La.) were set up to protect sensitive shorelines.

- 2,000 volunteers have been trained to assist in the response effort to date—an increase of 1,400 since yesterday.

Websites and Hotlines:

- For information about the response effort, visit www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com.

- To volunteer, call 1-866-448-5816.

- To report oiled wildlife, call 1-866-557-1401. Messages will be checked hourly.

- To report spill related damage, please call 1-800-440-0858.

- For information about validated environmental air and water sampling results, visit www.epa.gov/bpspill.

- To file a claim, call BP's helpline at 1-800-440-0858. A BP fact sheet with additional information is available here. For those who have already pursued the BP claims process and are not satisfied with BP's resolution, can call the Coast Guard at 1-800-280-7118. More information about what types of damages are eligible for compensation under the Oil Pollution Act as well as guidance on procedures to seek that compensation can be found here.

Coordinated Interagency Asset Deployment and Response:

- The Department of Defense is fully integrated into the DHS-led team and fully supportive of all response activities. The Coast Guard and Department of Defense continue to work closely together, anticipating requirements, identifying response options, and rapidly providing response support.

- The Minerals Management Service remains in contact with all oil and gas operators in the sheen area. Two platforms have stopped production and one has been evacuated as a safety measure. Approximately 6.2 million cubic feet of natural gas is shut-in—less than one-tenth of a percent of daily gas production in the Gulf of Mexico.

- As the nation's leading scientific resource for oil spills, NOAA has been on the scene of the BP spill from the start, providing coordinated scientific weather and biological response services to federal, state and local organizations. NOAA spill specialists are advising the U.S. Coast Guard on cleanup options as well as advising all affected federal, state and local partners on sensitive marine resources at risk in this area of the Gulf of Mexico.

- Two Modular Aerial Spray System (MASS) aircraft flew from Stennis International Airport in Mississippi in support of the incident in the Gulf of Mexico. Both aircraft have multiple missions scheduled daily moving forward. These aircraft can dispense the same dispersant chemical being used by BP and the federal responders. Each system is capable of covering up to 250 acres per flight with three flights per aircraft per day.

- A C-17 aircraft carrying pollution response boom components for support flew from Travis AFB in California and has arrived at Mobile International Airport.

- In direct support of the Coast Guard under an existing pollution clean-up and salvage operations agreement, the Navy is providing a variety of oil pollution control equipment. The Navy has sent thousands of feet of inflatable oil boom with mooring equipment, several skimming systems, related support gear, and personnel to support oil spill response efforts. Naval Air Station Pensacola is serving as a staging facility for Coast Guard contractor-provided equipment.

- In response to the BP oil spill, the Secretary of Defense has authorized under Title 32 the mobilization of the Louisiana National Guard to help in the ongoing efforts to assist local communities in the cleanup and removal of oil and to protect critical habitats from contamination. As the responsible party in this incident, the government will hold BP accountable for the costs of the deployment.

Spill of National Significance & National Incident Commander:

- Secretary Napolitano announced that this incident is a Spill of National Significance on April 29, the Department of Interior has announced that they will be sending SWAT teams to the Gulf to inspect all platforms and rigs, and the EPA is conducting air monitoring activities to gather information on the impact of the controlled burn on air quality.

- As part of the designation of the BP Oil Spill as a Spill of National Significance, Secretary Napolitano announced that U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thad Allen will serve as the National Incident Commander on May 1 for the administration's continued, coordinated response—providing additional authority and oversight in leveraging every available esource to respond to the BP oil spill and minimize the associated environmental risks.

- As National Incident Commander, Admiral Allen will continue to work closely with Coast Guard Rear Admiral Mary Landry, the federal on-scene coordinator, and the Departments of Homeland Security, Defense, Interior and Commerce, the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal departments and agencies as appropriate—as well as BP, the responsible party in the spill—to ensure the efficient continued deployment and coordination of vital response assets, personnel and equipment that were activated immediately after the spill began.

Joint DHS-DOI Investigation:

- Early on, the President directed responding agencies to not only devote every resource to respond to this incident but to also determine its cause.

- Secretary Napolitano and Secretary Salazar signed an order establishing the next steps for a joint investigation that is currently underway into the causes of the explosion of the drilling rig Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and the Minerals Management Service (MMS) share jurisdiction for the investigation.

- The joint investigation, which began on April 21, will have the power to issue subpoenas, hold public hearings, call witnesses, and take other steps that may be needed to determine the cause of the incident. It is proceeding under a Joint Statement of Principles and Convening Order, which convenes the formal joint investigation, and a Memorandum of Agreement, which lays out roles and responsibilities that relate to each agency's area of expertise.

Fishing Restrictions

- NOAA is restricting fishing for a minimum of ten days in federal waters most affected by the BP oil spill, largely between Louisiana state waters at the mouth of the Mississippi River to waters off Florida's Pensacola Bay. The closure is effective immediately. This order balances economic and health concerns and only closes those areas affected by oil. Details can be found here.

- Statement from Harlon Pearce, Chairman, Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board: "The precautionary closure of the federal waters off the coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and part of Florida is a necessary action to insure the citizens of the United States and abroad that our seafood will maintain the highest level of quality we expect from the Gulf of Mexico. As chairman of the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, I applaud Dr. Lubchenco's decision to insure everyone that all seafood in the Gulf is of the highest quality and is safe to eat."

- Statement from Ewell Smith, Executive Director, Louisiana Seafood Board: "We Support NOAA's precautionary closure of the affected area so that the American consumer has confidence that the seafood they eat is safe. It is also very important to underscore the fact that this closure is only the affected area of the Gulf of Mexico, not the entire Gulf. The state waters of Louisiana West of the Mississippi River are still open and the seafood coming from that area is safe. That portion of waters represents about 77% of Louisiana seafood production of a 2.4 billion dollar economic impact to the state."

Response Actions:

- The response to the BP Oil Spill began as an emergency search and rescue mission by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Navy and other partners on April 20.

- The President immediately began actively monitoring the incident. The President has been in contact with all the governors of the states that may be affected and ordered that the administration use every single available resource at our disposal.

- Concurrently, command center operations were stood up immediately in the Gulf Coast to begin also addressing the environmental impact of the incident and coordinate with all state and local governments.

- The morning after the explosion, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar deployed Deputy Secretary David J. Hayes down to the gulf to assist with coordination and response to the incident.

- When the drill unit sank, the Administration immediately and intensely investigated by remotely operated vehicles the entire 5,000 feet of pipe that's on the floor of the ocean. In that process three leaks were identified, the most recent coming on the evening of April 28.

- The Administration immediately began holding regular calls with BP leadership and numerous senior-level meetings have been held between the administration and BP to discuss BP's response effort and federal oversight and support.

- The National Response Team (NRT), an organization of 16 federal departments and agencies responsible for coordinating emergency preparedness and response to oil and hazardous substance pollution incidents was quickly activated and a coordinated group of federal partners-including the United States Coast Guard, Departments of Homeland Security, Commerce, Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency-immediately began directing and overseeing BP's response.

- The President dispatched Secretary Napolitano, Secretary Salazar, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Policy Carol Browner and NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco to the Gulf Coast to ensure all is being done to respond to this oil spill.

- EPA posted on its dedicated response website the first air monitoring data it's collected in the area—with no red flags at this time.

- President Obama visited the Gulf Coast to inspect response operations firsthand, underscoring the administration's all-hands-on-deck response to protect the coastline of the Gulf states. He was accompanied by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security John Brennan and Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Policy Carol Browner.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

To report oiled shoreline or request volunteer information: (866)-448-5816

To submit alternative response technology, services or products: (281) 366-5511

To submit your vessel as a vessel of opportunity skimming system: (281) 366-5511

To submit a claim for damages: (800) 440-0858

To report oiled wildlife: (866) 557-1401

To contact the Deepwater Horizon Joint Information Center: (985) 902-5231

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TOP ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS DISCUSS ONGOING OIL SPILL RESPONSE WITH BP LEADERSHIP

WASHINGTON—Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano, Secretary of the Interior (DOI) Ken Salazar, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson and Secretary of Energy Stephen Chu today met with BP CEO Tony Hayward and BP American Chairman and President Lamar McKay to discuss ongoing, coordinated response efforts and receive an update on BP's spill mitigation plans for potentially affected Gulf Coast states.

Secretary Napolitano, Secretary Salazar and Administrator Jackson and other senior Administration officials requested an update on how BP plans to ensure an effective response in all potentially affected Gulf Coast states, including Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.

The administration—including the DHS, DOI, the Departments of Defense and Commerce, and the Environmental Protection Agency—has launched and coordinated an all-hands-on-deck, relentless response to this crisis from day one in order to mitigate the spill's impact on public health, the environment and the economy.

As President Obama has made clear, BP will be held accountable for the costs associated with this tragic event.

Today's meeting was the most recent in a series of ongoing coordination and communication activities between top administration officials and BP leadership.

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Participants in today's meeting representing the administration included:

Secretary Napolitano
Secretary Salazar
Administrator Jackson
Secretary Chu
Jane Holl Lute, Deputy Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
David Hayes, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior
Bob Perciasepe, Deputy Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Larry Summers, Director, National Economic Council
Joe Aldy, Assistant to the President for Energy and the Environment
Carol Browner, Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Policy
Heather Zichal, Deputy Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Policy
Richard Reed, Special Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Senior Director for Continuity Policy

Heidi Avery, Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security
Cecilia Rouse, Member, Council of Economic Advisers
MaryAnn Wolverton, Member, Council of Economic Advisers
Peter Orszag, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Jeff Liebman, Associate Director, Office of Management and Budget
Melody Barnes, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
Heather Higginbottom, Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
Liz Sears Smith, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Nancy Sutley, Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality
Mike Boots, Associate Director for Land and Water Ecosystems, White House Council on Environmental Quality
Rod O'Connor, Chief of Staff, Department of Energy
John Sandweg, Counselor to the Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
Jane Lubchenco, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Jay Reich, Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of Commerce
Lois Schiffer, General Counsel, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
David Kennedy, Director, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
Rear Admiral Sally Bryce O'Hara, Deputy Commandant of Operations, U.S. Coast Guard
Rear Admiral Brian Salerno, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Stewardship, U.S. Coast Guard
Greg Nelson, Associate Director, Office of Public Engagement
John Holdren, Advisor to the President for Science and Technology, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Co-Chair of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology
Shere Abbott, Associate Director of Environment, Council of Advisors on Science and Technology

CNN'S "STATE OF THE UNION"

MAY 2, 2010

SPEAKERS: CANDY CROWLEY, HOST

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN (USCG), COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR KEN SALAZAR

SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY JANET NAPOLITANO

[*] CROWLEY: The simple truth about the oil threatening the Gulf Coast is no one knows for sure where we are headed, and no one has from the start. The first day was all about search and rescue. Eleven workers died in the explosion on the oil rig 40 miles offshore. By day three, there were reassuring words about what was not happening beneath the water.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REAR ADM. MARY LANDRY, U.S. COAST GUARD: I am saying that. There is no crude oil at this time leaking from the well head. There is no crude oil leaking from the riser.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CROWLEY: Day four.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LANDRY: What we now know we are dealing with, in addition to that, is oil emanating from the well. That is a big change from yesterday.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CROWLEY: Day eight.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LANDRY: NOAA experts believe the output can be as much as 5,000 barrels.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CROWLEY: And yesterday, The Wall Street Journal reported: "Industry experts examining satellite data say they believe oil may be leaking at a rate of 25,000 barrels a day. That's five times the Coast Guard estimate.

What is going on here?

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CROWLEY (voice-over): To sort out the story on the Gulf Coast, we are joined by two cabinet secretaries sent to the scene. The secretary of homeland security, Janet Napolitano.

NAPOLITANO: We will work to make sure that British Petroleum meets its financial obligations.

CROWLEY: And secretary of the interior, Ken Salazar.

SALAZAR: British Petroleum has a massive spill for which they are responsible. CROWLEY: And the commandant of the Coast Guard, Thad Allen.

And then, the outsider who seized Florida's Republican mantle from Governor Charlie Crist, Marco Rubio.

I'm Candy Crowley, and this is STATE OF THE UNION.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

CROWLEY: I'm joined here in Washington by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. And joining us from New Orleans is the commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen, whom President Obama named yesterday to lead the clean-up effort.

But before we go to the problems in the Gulf, we want to get an update on the story that everyone woke up to today, what seemed to be an attempt at a car-bombing in New York Times Square.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

RAY KELLY, NYC POLICE COMMISSIONER: NYPD bomb technicians have removed and dismantled three propane tanks, consumer grade fireworks, two five-gallon gasoline containers filled, and a -- two clocks, along with batteries in each of the clocks, electrical wire, and other components stored in the rear of the vehicle.

MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG (I), NEW YORK CITY: It was made up of consumer grade fireworks that you can buy in Pennsylvania and drive into New York. And the wiring was nothing that -- it looked amateurish, I think, is a nice way to phrase it.

RALLIS GIALABOUKIS, WITNESS: I just happened to be looking right at the car when it just went up, when it just exploded. And I saw the fire and -- inside the car, I mean, I didn't know what to think, I -- there is no window shattered, I mean, nothing like that.

It was just what you could feel. You could hear it and you could feel it, you know?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So it was a loud explosion, but not powerful enough to do any serious damage to the vehicle?

GIALABOUKIS: Not that one, no. I mean, you don't know if there is another one coming after that. You don't know what to think after that. And that's where all the panic set in and everybody just started scattering.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

CROWLEY: So certainly they found a lot of explosive material in this car. Do you have any reason to believe at this point, Secretary Napolitano, that there are international terrorist ties to this?

NAPOLITANO: Well, we're taking this very seriously with the New York City Police Department, with the FBI, the Joint Terrorist Task Force. We are treating it as if it could be a potential terrorist attack. The derivation of that we do not know. And that's what the investigation will tell us.

CROWLEY: And what have you found so far in the investigation that they've told you about? Are you honing in on suspects or is it still you have a lot nothing at this point?

NAPOLITANO: Well, I would say it's more than a lot of nothing but less than particular suspects. There is a lot of forensic information due in part to the placement of the vehicle, where it was. There are a lot of cameras, a lot of other things in that area that you don't have in some other places. So the forensics are all being worked intensely, and have been being worked intensely overnight.

CROWLEY: And by forensic, do we mean, are there fingerprints in the car, that kind of thing that could be really palpable information?

NAPOLITANO: There is all that. There is forensics about the vehicle, about the tanks, the propane inside. There is forensics in terms of video or possible video that might exist. So there is a lot of evidence being tracked down by a lot of people right now.

CROWLEY: And any sense of how big this might have been had this exploded? Do you know anything about what was in that car?

NAPOLITANO: Yes. I don't have a picture of that right now. Suffice it to say, however, that given that area, there is a lot of people back and forth. It's a very crowded area. So we view this very, very seriously.

CROWLEY: In a moment, we're going to go on to the crisis in the Gulf.

CROWLEY: The oil spreading through the Gulf is like nothing else this country has seen. It's often measured against the Exxon Valdez spill of 1989, the worst in American history. But what is happening now is totally different.

The Valdez spilled heavy crude into a cold environment that devastated wildlife and took four years and $2 billion to clean up. All of that happened in a sparsely-populated area. The Exxon Valdez, with a known cargo capacity, spilled 11 million gallons of oil into Prince William Sound for three months.

What is pouring out now could reach 11 million gallons in a little less than two months. There is no way to know how long it could continue. The open Gulf of Mexico, a completely different setting from that of the Exxon Valdez. That occurred in the closed environment of Alaska's Prince William Sound. It covered about 1,000 miles of shoreline.

This threatens a far larger area subject to all of the vagaries of the weather, which, for the moment, isn't cooperating. The geographic scale is different, the population is different, the economic impact is different. We'll sort that out with our guests in just a moment.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CROWLEY: We are back with Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, and the commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen.

Admiral, let me start with you and just ask you for the situation on the ground. Is it any better than it was yesterday?

ALLEN: Well, we seem to have a holding action with the weather, Candy. The slick in southeast Louisiana is about nine miles offshore. We have pre-stage booming in Plaquemines Parish, and working with Saint Bernard Parish and the other local leaders in Louisiana.

We've been hampered quite a bit by the local weather, which has really kicked up offshore, six- to 10-foot seas, and has made deploying booms somewhat problematic. We have a lot of booms staged down there. And British Petroleum, with the incident commanders, are working very hard with the local community, including involving the fisherman and local personnel down there. And we're standing by at this point.

CROWLEY: How happy are you with the performance of BP at this point?

ALLEN: Well, as I told everybody, BP is the responsible party, and they need to be responsible. The Coast Guard are the people that are accountable for oversight, and we need to be accountable. I spent a lot of time last night with the senior executives talking about the things we need to do.

Trying to protect the wetlands and the resources of the United States when the oil is coming ashore is the last place we want to do this. We have to stop this oil where it's emanating on the sea floor. And they need to move at best speed to do that. And we're looking at all available options to do that.

CROWLEY: Secretary Salazar, let me ask you, because this leads me into one of the questions I have. And that is, you know, one of the reasons we have these deep water wells is people don't want to look at them on the shore. And so they move them out. Have you gone to other places? Have you asked other rigs to look at their mechanisms -- their shut-off mechanisms given that the one that -- on the rig that BP had did not work?

SALAZAR: Candy, there have been about 30,000 wells that have been drilled in the Gulf Coast. We have not only British Petroleum, with their best global experts talking a look at this, but also all of the global oil industry coming to the attention of this crisis and seeing what they can do.

There is no doubt at all here that what has happened is a blowout preventer -- prevention mechanism at the bottom of the well has been -- is defective. And that's what we're trying to do is to control the problem at the source.

CROWLEY: The blowout preventer -- just to interrupt this, is what should have stopped the oil from coming up and leaking all over the ocean, which it is doing right now.

SALAZAR: Absolutely. And while there have been blowouts in the past, we have never seen anything that has been quite at this magnitude. So our job is basically to keep the boot on the neck of British Petroleum to carry out the responsibilities that they have, both under the law and contractually to move forward and to stop this spill.

CROWLEY: But given the performance of the blowout preventer, there are others out there who have blowout preventers, have you asked those under U.S. jurisdiction to take a look at theirs?

SALAZAR: We have indeed. President Obama ordered an immediate inspection and so we are conducting an immediate inspection of all of these blowout preventers. And we have a flotilla of people out in the Gulf making sure that these are safe.

CROWLEY: Secretary Napolitano, I want to play you something real quickly, because it leads to the question that I want to ask you about this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REAR ADM. SALLY BRUCE-O'HARA, U.S. COAST GUARD: We are certainly not at that point now. And I don't imagine, given the professionalism of our partner, BP, and maybe partner with -- let me back up...

(LAUGHTER)

(UNKNOWN): They are not our partner. They are not our partner.

BRUCE-O'HARA: In terms of -- bad choice of words.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CROWLEY: So just an objection to BP being a partner with the federal government on this, who is in charge of this?

NAPOLITANO: Well, I think the commandant stated it very accurately. BP is the responsible party. They are--

CROWLEY: That means they pay for it.

NAPOLITANO: They are going to pay for it. But they are also responsible for getting this well and getting it shut off with oversight by the Coast Guard and by other federal agencies, but primarily the Coast Guard.

As this situation has developed, however, and as we've seen the oil spread and move towards shore, the plain fact of the matter is, is that the United States government, in the face of the Coast Guard, has taken on a lot of the operational actual doing of the -- getting the preparations done.

And in fact, the plain fact of the matter is, is that from day one the Coast Guard has been treating this as an incident, a spill that could ultimately reach shore. And that's why you had 70 vessels already pre-deployed. That's why you had a million feet of boom, et cetera, ready to go.

CROWLEY: Did you rely too much on BP's assessment early on? We first heard, well, everything is fine. And then we're told, well, there's a little leak. Next thing we know it's 1,000 or 5,000 gallons. Do you feel as though the government took too much -- put too much credence in what BP was saying? Did you all try to check somehow how much of a leak was going on?

NAPOLITANO: Oh, yes. That's not the way it happened. What happened first is that there was an explosion. There was immediate deployment of the Coast Guard for search and rescue. And that was really the focus for the first several days.

The rig itself did not sink for two days. And so there wasn't a spill. And even when there was--

CROWLEY: But didn't someone think, wow, there might be a spill too? I mean, I understand they were looking for men and that's the tragedy of this, is that 11 men died in this. But somebody somewhere should have been saying--

NAPOLITANO: Indeed, indeed. And if I might add, that's exactly why from day one they were already pre-deploying vessels and booms and getting ready in case the scenario continued to worsen. That's why you're not waiting for vessels to arrive. They were already there, pre-positioned. That's why you weren't waiting for boom to be sent in from other coasts, you had a million feet ready to go.

That thinking was already under way. But in terms of over- reliance on estimates by BP, no. There was independent modeling being done by NOAA and the Coast Guard, based on what they were seeing coming to the surface of the ocean.

That kept changing, of course, as you know, during the week. And as that changed, of course, preparations began to change to match the situation. But everything was pre-positioned and ready to go.

CROWLEY: Secretary Salazar, do you want to add something there?

SALAZAR: From day one, there has been the assumption here on the worst-case scenario. And so the--

CROWLEY: What is the worst-case scenario, while we're on that?

SALAZAR: The worst-case scenario is we could have 100,000 barrels or more of oil flowing out. And the requirements BP has is to have the capability to respond to that kind of a spill. And

it means doing everything that's going on, including containing the well down at the bottom, mitigating the impacts on the sea, mitigating impacts as things happen on shore.

You're talking about a multi-billion dollar company here who is, I believe, the fourth-largest company in the world. And we will not spare any effort on the part of the United States of America to make sure that all of their resources are brought effectively to address the problem.

CROWLEY: Admiral Allen, just while we have that 100,000 figure, that being sort of disaster, is that something you fear the most? Do you think that could happen?

ALLEN: Well, if we lost the total wellhead, it could be 100,000 barrels or more a day. I think -- just to follow up on what Secretary Napolitano said, this whole thing has been kind of a process of discovery. It wasn't until they remotely-operated vehicles down, were able to survey the entire length of the 5,000-foot pipe-riser that was crumpled on the ocean floor, that we finally found three sequential leaks over a period of about 72 hours.

And as I told some folks, you know, the difference between 1,000 and 5,000 barrels a day, when you look at the potential discharge of 100,000, leads me to believe that there are a lot of inaccuracies associated with trying to estimate flow from a broken pipe at 5,000 feet. That's the reason it's so very, very important we focus on stopping this leak right away.

CROWLEY: Something else that Secretary Salazar brought up, saying, look, BP is a very wealthy company, we expect them to bring everything to the barricades on this. And I want to read you a quote, Admiral. This is from BP's chief operating officer in The New York Times. And he said, quote: "There are not much additional available resources in the world to fight this thing offshore. We've basically thrown everything we have at it."

Given that, it seems to me that right now you're sort of dependent on somebody trying to figure out how to stop this leak. And otherwise you're just going to be standing on the shore, trying to keep this from coming in.

ALLEN: Well, the term "fighting this thing offshore" can mean a lot of things, Candy. I break this down into four discrete segments. The first one is stopping the leak at the source. Absent that, then fighting this thing as far offshore as we can in terms of mechanical removal, in situ (ph) burn, in dispersants to remove the -- to disperse the oil in the water column.

The third thing, when you fall back, is to protect the shoreline. The fourth thing, once it's impacted, you have to recover and to mitigate. And these are things we need to be doing all at once. And when we say fight this thing offshore, the first place we have to fight it is 5,000 feet down.

CROWLEY: And real quickly, has BP thrown everything they've got at this?

ALLEN: They've got remotely-operated vehicles. I think one thing that's not well-understood when you're operating in that environment, which I would actually term "inner space," that's no place where human beings can operate. So everything has been done remotely with ROVs, including the inspection of the pipeline, the survey, and the repair of the hydraulic systems associated with the blowout preventer.

And this is all being done remotely. And that's where ultimately this is going to have to be fixed, or at least held in abeyance until a relief well can be drilled. That's the reason it's so very important to throw all of those assets at it. And the highest technology in the world is being applied at the point discharge.

CROWLEY: Much more with secretaries Napolitano, Salazar, and Admiral Allen when we come back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CROWLEY: We are back with Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, and the commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen.

Secretary Salazar, at this point, does anything say to you, we ought to stop deep-water drilling?

SALAZAR: Thirty percent of our oil comes from the Gulf, that we produce here domestically. And right now our economy is very dependent on having that oil come to our country. I do think that one of the things that this does is it sends out the clarion call that we need to diversify our energy resources. That's why the president has been pushing so hard for renewable energy.

But at the same time we need to go through a transition period. Our economy is very dependent on oil and gas resources, and deep-water oil and gas really has been done safely in the past many thousands of wells that have been drilled without incident.

And so our intention is to move forward thoughtfully, looking at how we can protect the resources of the United States and making thoughtful decisions.

CROWLEY: Secretary Napolitano, can the Navy be of use in this?

NAPOLITANO: Well--

CROWLEY: Is there something the Navy could do?

NAPOLITANO: Indeed. Well, the Navy has been on-site since day one. There is kind of a myth out there that somehow the Department of Defense is now coming in. They actually have been there since day one. CROWLEY: In what form?

NAPOLITANO: They've been there in the form of ship -- and I think perhaps of air. Thad could probably answer that more completely than I right now.

But as we move forward, the Department of Defense, Secretary Gates and I have spoken, has put any resource that could be useful at the behest of the commandant.

CROWLEY: Admiral, let me ask you this. You were there on the ground and -- I imagine that you run over a lot of nightmare scenarios while you are trying to figure out what you will need to do in the future and what you need to do now.

On a scale of 1 to 10, if 9 were the Exxon Valdez, what are we looking at here?

ALLEN: Well, Candy, I think it's important to compare and contrast. The Exxon Valdez spill was 11 million gallons. The difference between the Exxon Valdez and this event is that we had a vessel and once the oil was spilled, we could measure what was left on the vessel and the volume that was left. We knew exactly what we were dealing with in terms of the quantity of the spill.

This spill at this point, in my view, is indeterminate. That makes it asymmetrical, anomalous, and one of the most complex things we've ever dealt with. On a level of complexity, I'd certainly give it a 9.

CROWLEY: And it does make it worse.

Secretary Salazar, I want to ask you in our closing minutes, I mean, when you look at this, is this catastrophic?

SALAZAR: It potentially is very catastrophic. And I think we have to prepare for the worst, as we have from day one. I think Commandant Allen said it correctly, which is if this thing continues to spew out, the ultimate relief here is going to be a relief well that may be 90 days out. And so we have to be prepared to make sure that we're protecting the American public, the American environment, our treasured coastlines on the Gulf Coast. So we are ready to do everything humanly possible to get that done.

CROWLEY: And catastrophic, you are talking wetlands, you're talking wildlife, you're talking shrimp and oysters and fish, all of that. We can see that being disastrous, not to mention birds which are migrating at this point.

SALAZAR: Yes. It is, indeed, a massive oil spill. And our job is to make sure that we do everything we can to try to protect both human life, but also very precious and fragile environment of the Gulf Coast.

CROWLEY: Secretary Napolitano, I want to turn your attention, because you were from Arizona, you were governor of Arizona. And I have to tell you that over the weekend in Los Angeles, a crowd estimated at 50,000, including Catholic Cardinal Roger Mahony and singer Gloria Estefan protesting the new law in Arizona. In Washington, Congressman Luis Gutierrez, Democrat of Illinois, a leading advocate of reform, was one of about three dozen who were arrested. He had a t-shirt on that said, "Arrest me, not my friends."

Governor Brewer, who signed the new Arizona law dealing with undocumented workers, last week had this to say about you. "She obviously is turning a blind eye to Arizona. She understands what the situation is. She wrote numerous letters when she was governor to the administration looking for help and some relief."

Do you understand why in Arizona there was so much support for this law and it was signed into law?

NAPOLITANO: Well, I'll tell you a couple of things. First of all, in terms of the actual numbers, there have been more resources deployed in Arizona in the last 15 months than ever in history, more boots on the ground, more technology, there has been more seizures of drugs.

CROWLEY: It hasn't worked, has it? They are still overrun?

NAPOLITANO: It is working. It is working, that the numbers of apprehensions are down significantly, which means the number of people trying to immigrate illegally is down. The

border has been under more control than ever before. And I have worked that border for a number of years. I have ridden it, I have walked it. I know that border intimately.

What has happened now is that she has signed a law of a type that I used to veto when I was governor, because it's bad for law enforcement, among other things. It takes law enforcement off of the streets and really looking at the crimes they need to prioritize in their own communities and puts everybody at risk.

And so, there was no surprise to me that experienced individuals like the Pima County sheriff, who is the longest standing sheriff in Arizona, he is in Tucson, 100 miles from the border, has said he doesn't want this new law, he doesn't need it, and he is not going to enforce it. It's a shame.

CROWLEY: Secretary Napolitano, Secretary Salazar, and down there in Louisiana, Admiral Allen, good luck down there. It sounds like you've got a real job ahead of you, but I thank all three of you very much.