

merce going, unless it's a—[inaudible]—situation.

The President. Now, I was here—they were also saying that a day like today is actually ideal for in-situ burning and skimming. It's hot, and it's calm, which means that a lot of boats are out there right now, and they're in a position where they can help prevent it from getting close to shore.

Some of you guys may have noticed when we were walking up, by the way, there were a couple of dolphins right—just about 50 feet out, maybe 100 yards out. So obviously, there's precious wildlife in this area, even though you see a whole bunch of oil rigs in the background. The parish president said she used to come out here and do a lot of fishing, so we want to make sure that she comes back and can fish again.

All right, thank you, everybody.

Q. Thank you, sir.

Source of Tar Balls on Fourchon Beach

Q. Can you be sure these oil tar balls are from the oil spill? Because when I used to swim on the Gulf in Texas, I'd get tar balls in my bathing suit all the time.

Remarks Following a Briefing on the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters in Grand Isle, Louisiana May 28, 2010

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. I know it's a little warm out here so want to get started. I've just had a meeting with these Governors, Members of Congress, local officials, as well as Admiral Thad Allen, the national incident commander in charge of response efforts to the BP oil spill. Admiral Allen gave us an update, the latest information on both the efforts to plug the well as well as giving us an update on arrangements and coordination that's being made with respect to mitigating this damage that's been done.

He updated us on these latest efforts to stop the leak, mitigate the damage to the great beaches of the Gulf Coast. And I had the chance to visit with Charlotte—the—a beach

Adm. Allen. Some of them are naturally occurring. I think we can say to a high degree of certainty this is from the——

Parish President Randolph. We attribute all of them that we see right now to BP.

Q. Yes. But you do get some occasionally, right, in good times?

Parish President Randolph. Yes, seepage.

Adm. Commander Allen. There's natural seepage from time to time as well.

The President. At some time—at some point, Jackie [Jackie Calmes, New York Times], we'll want to hear more about those tar balls and your bathing suit. [Laughter]

Offshore Oil Royalties

Q. Mr. President, would you support Mary Landrieu's efforts to step up payments of the offshore oil royalties?

The President. You know, we're going to be doing a statement——

Q. Okay.

The President. ——at the next stop.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:07 a.m. on Fourchon Beach. Adm. Allen spoke in his capacity as national incident commander for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

like Port Fourchon that gives you a sense of what extraordinary efforts are being made at the local level, but also the damage that we're already starting to see as a consequence of this spill.

Now, our mission remains the same as it has since this disaster began, since the day I visited Louisiana nearly 4 weeks ago: We want to stop the leak, we want to contain and clean up the oil, and we want to help the people of this region return to their lives and their livelihoods as soon as possible.

And our response treats this event for what it is: It's an assault on our shores, on our people, on the regional economy, and on communities like this one. This isn't just a mess that

we've got to mop up. People are watching their livelihoods wash up on the beach. Parents are worried about the implications for their children's health. Every resident of this community has watched this nightmare threaten the dreams that they've worked so hard to build. And they want it made right, and they want to make it right now.

I just had a chance to listen to Mayor David Camardelle of Grand Island [Isle], our host here, telling us heartbreaking stories about fishermen who are trying to figure out where their—where the next paycheck is going to come from, how are they going to pay a mortgage or a note on their boat. And he is having to dig into his pocket at this point to make sure that some of them are able to deal with the economic impact. So this is something that has to be dealt with immediately, not sometime later. And that's everybody's driving focus—everybody who is standing behind me. This is our highest priority, and it deserves a response that is equal to the task.

That's why this has already been the largest cleanup effort in U.S. history. On the day this disaster began, even as we launched a search and rescue effort for workers on the drilling rig, we were already staging equipment in the event of a larger scale spill. By the time we discovered the third breach, a week after the Deepwater Horizon platform sank, we had already stationed more than 70 vessels and hundreds of thousands of feet of protective boom on site.

Today there are more than 20,000 people in the region working around the clock to contain and clean up this spill. We've activated about 1,400 members of the National Guard across 4 States. Nearly 1,400 vessels are aiding in the containment and cleanup effort. And we've deployed more than 3 million feet of hard and sorbent boom, including an additional 100,000 just yesterday for these parishes in Louisiana that face the greatest threat.

Now, I've made clear to Admiral Allen, and I did so again today, that he should get whatever he needs to deal with this crisis. Whatever he needs, he will get.

Right now we're still within the window where we don't yet know the outcome of the highly complex top kill procedure that the Federal Government authorized BP to use to try to stop the leak. If it is successful, it would obviously be welcome news. If it's not, a team of some of the world's top scientists, engineers, and experts, led by our Energy Secretary and Nobel Prize-winning physicist, Steven Chu, has for some time being—has for some time been exploring any and all reasonable contingency plans.

But our response will continue with its full force regardless of the outcome of the top kill approach, because even if the leak was stopped today, it wouldn't change the fact that these waters still contain oil from what is now the largest spill in American history. And more of it will come ashore.

To ensure that we're fully prepared for that, and in accordance with input from folks down here, I've directed Secretary Napolitano and Admiral Allen to triple the manpower in places where oil has hit the shore or is within 24 hours of impact. This increase will allow us to further intensify this already historic response, contain and remove oil more quickly, and help minimize the time that any oil comes into contact with our coastline. That means deploying more boom, cleaning more beaches, performing more monitoring of wildlife and impact to this ecosystem.

We're also going to continue to do whatever it takes to help Americans whose livelihoods have been upended by this spill. Gulf Coast residents should know that we've gathered all pertinent information regarding available assistance and the Federal response in one place at whitehouse.gov.

We have ordered BP to pay economic injury claims, and we will make sure they deliver. And the parish presidents and Governors here in Louisiana were already giving us some sense of some of the bureaucratic problems that we're going to have to cut through, but we are going to cut through them. And for those who are in economic distress, if you've already filed a claim and you're not satisfied with the resolution,

* White House correction.

then whitehouse.gov will point you in the right direction.

As I said yesterday, the Small Business Administration has stepped in to help businesses by approving loans, but also as important, allowing many to defer existing loan payments. A lot of folks are still loaded up with loans that they had from Katrina and other natural disasters down here, so they may need some additional help.

If you're a small-business owner and you weren't aware of some of the programs that have been put in place or haven't participated, then, again, the White House web site will connect you to the resources you need. And we are making sure that all the parish presidents know, and folks like the mayor, other local officials are going to be aware of how they can get immediate help from us.

What's more, we've stationed doctors and scientists across the five Gulf States to look out for people's health and then to monitor any ill effects felt by cleanup workers and local residents. And we've begun setting up a system to track these efforts—excuse me, to track these effects and ensure folks get the care that they need. And we've told BP that we expect them to pay for that too.

As I've said before, BP is the responsible party for this disaster. What that means is they're legally responsible for stopping the leak, and they're financially responsible for the enormous damage that they've created. And we're going to hold them accountable, along with any other party responsible for the initial explosion and loss of life on that platform.

But as I said yesterday and as I repeated in the meeting that we just left, I ultimately take responsibility for solving this crisis. I'm the President and the buck stops with me. So I give the people of this community and the entire Gulf my word that we're going to hold ourselves accountable to do whatever it takes for as long as it takes to stop this catastrophe, to defend our natural resources, to repair the damage, and to keep this region on its feet. Justice will be done for those whose lives have been upended by this disaster, for the families of those whose lives have been lost. That is a solemn pledge that I am making.

I think I can speak for anybody here and for anybody who has been involved in the response and the cleanup effort and for most Americans when I say that I would gladly do whatever it takes to end this disaster today. But I want to also repeat something that I said to the group as a whole while we were meeting: This is a manmade catastrophe that's still evolving, and we face a long-term recovery and restoration effort.

America has never experienced an event like this before. And that means that as we respond to it, not every judgment we make is going to be right the first time out. Sometimes there are going to be disagreements between experts or between Federal and State and local officials or among State officials or between States about what the most effective measures will be. Sometimes there are going to be risks and unintended consequences associated with a particular mitigation strategy that we consider. In other words, there are going to be a lot of judgment calls involved here. There are not going to be silver bullets or a lot of perfect answers for some of the challenges that we face.

Understandably, the feelings of frustration and anger, the sense that any response is inadequate is—we expect that frustration and anger to continue until we actually solve this problem. But in the meantime, we've got to make sure that everybody is working in concert, that everybody is moving in the same direction. And I want everybody to know that everybody here, at every level, is working night and day to end this crisis. We're considering every single idea out there, especially from folks who know these communities best.

Admiral Allen announced yesterday, for example, that after a bunch of back-and-forth between State and Federal experts, he is prepared to authorize moving forward with a portion of the idea for a barrier island that may stop some of the oil from coming ashore. We had an extensive conversation about this and—to see whether additional steps can be taken on this barrier island idea.

And what I told the parish president, what I told the Governor is that if there is an idea that can be shown to work, then we should move

forward on it, and they deserve quick answers. But I also reminded everybody that we've got to make sure that whatever we do is actually going to work, particularly because we're going to have not unlimited resources, at least not right now. For example, there's a limited amount of boom. We're going to try to get more boom manufactured, but that may take some time, and that means we're going to have to make some decisions about how to deploy it effectively.

The bottom line is this. Every decision we make is based on a single criterion: What's going to best protect and make whole the people and the ecosystems of the Gulf?

And I want to thank everybody in this region who's rolled up their sleeves and pitched in to help, from the National Guard putting their experience to the task to the local officials and every citizen who loves this area and calls it home, every American who's traveled to the region to lend a hand. If every—if any American is looking for ways to volunteer and help, then we've put links to that information on our web site as well; that's whitehouse.gov.

And all these Governors—Bobby Jindal, as well as Charlie Crist and Bob Riley, they want—and I know Haley Barbour is not here, but I think he agrees with this as well—one of the most powerful ways that you can help the Gulf right now is to visit the communities and the beaches off of the coast. Except for three beaches here in Louisiana, all of the Gulf's beaches at this moment are open, they are safe, and they are clean. And so that's always a good way to help, is to come down and provide support to the communities along the coasts.

To the people of the Gulf Coast: I know that you've weathered your fair share of trials and tragedy. I know there have been times where you've wondered if you were being asked to face them alone. I am here to tell you that you're not alone. You will not be abandoned. You will not be left behind. The cameras at some point may leave, the media may get tired of the story, but we will not. We are on your

side, and we will see this through. We're going to keep at this every day until the leak has stopped, that this—until this coastline is clean and your communities are made whole again. That's my promise to you, and that is a promise on behalf of a nation. It is one that we will keep.

And I will make one last point, and I said this to every leader who is here: If something is not going right down here, then they need to talk to Thad Allen. And if they're not getting satisfaction from Thad Allen, then they can talk to me. There's nobody here who can't get in touch with me directly if there is an idea, a suggestion, or a logjam that needs to be dealt with.

So we're in this together. And it's going to be a difficult time, and obviously, the folks down here are going to be feeling the brunt of it, but we're going to make sure that we're doing everything we can to get this solved as quickly as possible.

And I want to again think everybody here for the extraordinary work that they're putting in. You shouldn't underestimate how hard these folks are working, day in, day out, on behalf of their constituencies.

So thank you very much. Thank you, everybody.

Status of Oil Spill

Q. Mr. President, how confident are you that it will be—that the leak will be plugged soon?

The President. All I can say is that we've got the best minds working on it and we're going to keep on at it until we get it plugged.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:56 p.m. at U.S. Coast Guard Station Grand Isle. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Piyush “Bobby” Jindal of Louisiana; Gov. Charles J. Crist, Jr., of Florida; Gov. Robert R. Riley of Alabama; Adm. Thad W. Allen, USCG, in his capacity as national incident commander for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; Charlotte A. Randolph, president, Lafourche Parish, LA; and Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi.

May 28 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Job Growth and Tax Reform Legislation

May 28, 2010

Today the House passed an important package of measures that would bring much-needed relief to our Nation's families and businesses during these hard economic times. The bill extends vital unemployment benefits to help those Americans who are fighting to find a good job and provides tax cuts for individuals and businesses to help support the economic recovery. It helps extend Small Business Administration lending efforts so our Nation's small businesses can get the credit they need to create jobs and grow. And it includes funding to settle the longstanding discrimination claims that African American farmers have had against the Federal Government and to resolve the *Cobell* case, helping address these painful chapters in our history. I am also pleased to see that this bill fully pays for its nonemergency measures by closing loopholes

that allow corporations to avoid taxes by shifting their profits overseas and by ensuring that investment managers pay the same tax rates on their earned income that the typical American worker pays.

While this is one important step forward in getting American families the help they need, Congress must act in the coming weeks on additional measures, including health care benefits for the unemployed, assistance to States to maintain health services and avoid layoffs of teachers, police officers, and firefighters, and proposals I have put forth to support small businesses and help consumers invest in energy efficiency. I ask the Senate for its swift action on this package so I can sign it into law, and I urge Congress to move quickly on additional relief measures.

Statement on Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates's Efforts to Reform Department of Defense Spending

May 28, 2010

As the Congress continues its work on funding bills for the Department of Defense, I want to reiterate my strong support for the reforms Secretary Gates is advancing at the Pentagon. He has kept me fully apprised of his efforts to reform how our military operates and bring needed efficiencies to the Department of Defense. I stand squarely behind Secretary

Gates's position on the JSF second engine and C-17 programs. As the statement of administration policy made clear, our military does not want or need these programs being pushed by the Congress, and should Congress ignore this fact, I will veto any such legislation so that it can be returned to me without those provisions.

Statement on the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference

May 28, 2010

The United States welcomes the agreements reached at the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference to strengthen the global nonproliferation regime.

The NPT must be at the center of our global efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons around the world, while pursuing the ultimate goal of a world without them. This agree-

ment includes balanced and practical steps that will advance nonproliferation, nuclear disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which are critical pillars of the global nonproliferation regime. It reaffirms many aspects of the agenda that I laid out in Prague and which we have pursued together with other nations over the last year and underscores that