

May 16, 2010

Obama's Gulf Eco-Catastrophe, Far Worse than Katrina, More Like a Hiroshima; Emergency Legislation Needed

By Rob Kall

History will view Obama's response as too little, too late, too passive. New findings by a research vessel with a grant that ran out today show walls of oil-saturated death, miles long and wide, depleting oxygen from ocean water.

Obama must commandeer BP's resources, pass immediate legislation ELIMINATING all limits on ALL corporate liability for damages, & fund at least a billion dollars of emergency research & science funding for assessing and analyzing all aspects of the gulf catastrophe-- marine, estuary, economic.

On Friday, President Obama lashed out at oil companies for finger pointing and blame passing. The problem is, he's doing the same thing, one iteration higher.



flickr image by [NewsHour](#)

This disaster has been going on for over three weeks. Obama had to know how bad it was, and if he didn't that would have been even worse. There's little doubt that he knew, though, and has known just how bad this was.

When he blamed the oil companies for their failure to take responsibility he was really dumping responsibility on them, trying to avoid taking presidential responsibility.

People have called this catastrophe Obama's Katrina. They're wrong.

It's much worse than Katrina. It's worse, not only because of the damage we'll be seeing as the oil does its damage to sea life, estuaries, breeding grounds, jobs, industries, families and entire ecosystems, but also because of the massive failure of leadership on Obama's part.

Obama had to respond to a disaster quickly. He didn't. He let the perpetrator of the crime try to fix it and also allowed the perpetrator to try to cover it up, to conceal the video evidence. Perhaps he did this because of the misguided idea that he was being sure that BP paid for the cleanup. But that was a mistake. He could have commandeered BP resources and directed to cleanup, rather than just watching.

Obama is still being duped and sabotaged by big oil, directly and indirectly. The government's MMS is riddled with Oil company friendly decision makers. NOAA scientists used a mode of estimating the flow of the out of control undersea gusher that the NY Times discredited as weak science.

Obama is not in charge. BP is. That should not be.

It appears that Obama is not in charge of the use of dispersants. The government authorized the use of them under water. They contain unknown chemicals, unknown because the manufacturers claim proprietary secrets. This is a national state of emergency and Obama should order them to release the ingredients, at least to government scientists. I don't think that's happened. We're dumping the largest amounts of dispersants ever used in one location. It's an experiment. It's another way that could kill the ocean, starting with the phytoplankton that form the base of the food chain. If they are killed, the rest of the food chain could very well be lost.

Walls of Death

Reportedly, there are over 500 vessels involved in the response to the Gulf eco-catastrophe. Yesterday, the [NY Times reported](#) that there are huge, 10 miles long, three miles wide, hundreds of yards thick "plumes" of oil soaked water. Think of them as walls of death. Scientists are seeing 30% decreases in oxygenation near them. If the oil-eating micro-organisms continue to digest these plumes, the oxygen content in the water could drop low enough to produce huge dead zones, as I've written about earlier. This is the science and reality underlying the previously predicted dead zone scenario. A whale or dolphin might be able to swim through these death walls fast enough, but fish and the phytoplankton at the bottom of the food chain will die, asphyxiated or poisoned. It will take longer for these deaths to rise from the bottom up, until the fish commercial fisherman trawl for are hit, but they will be hit. The question is, will they be wiped out? Will the marine ecology, even after the oil is gone, be the same, or will new ecologies develop as bottom up food supply and top down predator balances shift drastically.

Decisive action was key to dealing with the out of control, mile down sea floor gusher. It didn't happen.

Is the Obama Personality That Helped Win Elections Part of the Problem?

I have a theory that the part of Obama's personality that played a big role in winning the presidential election is what's keeping him from dealing effectively with the Gulf Catastrophe. He is a very calm, unruffled man. It's been said that a black president can't afford to be seen as an angry black man.

But Obama has needed to get upset or angry-- angry about the Mitch McConnell and John Boehner and the Republican filibuster machine, angry about BP.

And it's not just anger. Obama may be too calm, so relaxed that his flight of fight nervous system doesn't kick into gear enough. doesn't give him the passion that gets the adrenalin flowing when it is appropriate and needed. .

The Gulf catastrophe is not something to leave to committees or aides or departments. It's something that the president has to fully engage with. And timing is a big part of it.

The time to act has now passed. Any actions Obama takes now are already too late. At some point, he's going to realize, as I've written before, that BP is not trying to save the environment. It's trying to salvage a 40-200 million barrel well worth \$1.6 to \$8 billion.

Obama should be trying to save the ocean and the surrounding states, not waiting for BP to do the job.

Obama should commandeer all the gear and personell BP has been using and other gear from other oil companies. He should be directing all information management BP has access to.

He should be calling in suggestions from all over the world on how to shut the damn well down, not rescue it.

Retroactive Elimination of all limits on Corporate Liabilities

Obama should be calling on congress, immediately, to remove, retroactively, all restrictions on corporate liability, period-- not just for oil companies, for all companies. Why should congress protect companies from damages they cause? Any member of congress who opposes it should and probably will lose their job.

Emergency Researcher Funding

The plumes were discovered by the Pelican research vessel, which is funded by NOAA. That funding runs out TODAY!!. They're hoping for more funding. Congress and Obama should immediately authorize at least a billion dollars in emergency research funding to pay for scientists, vessels and gear to saturate the gulf with observation and analysis systems and programs. These should study the water chemistry, biology, ecology, the estuaries, breeding grounds, beaches, the local economies and impacted industries, the families and the American culture. Yes, the funding should include cultural anthropologists. It should also include emergency disaster workers to treat the psychosocial impact of the catastrophe. Maybe homeland security can rearrange funds to provide for this. Where has Janet Napolitano been, anyway?

We need strong, dynamic leadership now, with vivacity and action, not quiet, wait and see passivity.

No, this is not Obama's Katrina. It is far, far worse, more like Obama's Hiroshima.

Author's Bio:

Rob Kall is executive editor, publisher and site architect of OpEdNews.com, Host of the Rob Kall Bottom Up Radio Show (WNJC 1360 AM), President of Futurehealth, Inc, inventor. He is also published regularly on the Huffingtonpost.com. With his experience as architect and founder of a technorati top 200 blog, he is also a new media / social media consultant and trainer for corporations, non-profits, entrepreneurs and authors.

Rob is a frequent Speaker on the bottom up revolution, politics, The art, science and power of story, heroes and the hero's journey, Positive Psychology, Stress, Biofeedback and a wide range of subjects. He is a campaign consultant specializing in tapping the power of stories for issue positioning, stump speeches and debates, and optimizing tapping the power of new media. He recently retired as organizer of several conferences, including StoryCon, the Summit Meeting on the Art, Science and Application of Story and The Winter Brain Meeting on neurofeedback, biofeedback, Optimal Functioning and Positive Psychology. See more of his articles here and, older ones, here.

To learn more about me and OpEdNews.com, check out this article.

and there are Rob's quotes, here. To Watch me on youtube, having a lively conversation with John Conyers, Chair of the House Judiciary committee, click here Now, wouldn't you like to see me on the political news shows, representing progressives. If so, tell your favorite shows to bring me on and refer them to this youtube video

My radio show, The Rob Kall Bottom Up Radio Show, runs 9-10 PM EST Wednesday evenings, on AM 1360, WNJC and is archived on www.whiterosesociety.org Or listen to it streaming, live at www.wnjc1360.com or download older shows at here.

Or check the archived interviews at: whiterosesociety.org

Follow me on Twitter

A few declarations. -While I'm registered as a Democrat, I consider myself to be a dynamic critic of the Democratic party, just as, well, not quite as much, but almost as much as I am a critic of republicans. -My articles express my personal opinion, not the opinion of this website.

Recent press coverage in the Wall Street Journal: Party's Left Pushes for a Seat at the Table

Back