# **Oil Spills Add-On**

#### **Embargo prevents access to US oil technology and expertise. This makes spills likely.**

Davenport 2011 energy and environment correspondent for National Journal.

[Coral Davenport July 28, 2011 Cuba is about to drill for offshore oil with “second-tier parts” because of the trade embargo. That’s not good news for U.S. beaches.<http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/will-sloppy-drilling-off-the-coast-of-cuba-threaten-florida-gulf-beaches--20110728>)]

Sometime over the next three months, if all goes according to plan, Cuban workers on a Chinese-built, Spanish-owned rig will start drilling for oil in the mile-deep waters just off the north coast of Cuba, 70 miles from the Florida Keys. If the drill hits a major oil deposit—and all geologic signs indicate it will—the discovery will unleash a cascade of developments with profound political, environmental, and economic consequences. The Cuban government has long wanted to extract the rich reserves of oil and natural gas believed to lie off its shores. Estimates for oil range from 5 billion to 20 billion barrels, while the estimate for natural gas is 8.6 billion cubic feet. Unlocking that oil could jump-start a nascent Cuban offshore-oil industry—and free the island nation from its energy and political dependence on Venezuela, from which it imports 60 percent of its oil today. A newfound independence from its socialist neighbor and its mercurial president, Hugo Chavez—coming at a time when the Cuban leadership is facing change with the eventual demise of Fidel Castro—is an appealing prospect to the United States. But the potential of a closer relationship with Cuba comes with a terrifying specter: An oil blowout in Cuban waters could reprise the nightmare that was last year’s Gulf of Mexico oil spill, and send crude spewing to the beaches of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. And the likelihood for such a disaster is very real, say oil industry experts, thanks in part to Washington’s 49-year-old embargo on Cuba. Because of the embargo, U.S. companies cannot drill in Cuba, supply equipment to Cuba, have any say over safety regulations in Cuba, or even take part in helping control a blowout and spill in Cuba. As the island prepares to begin offshore drilling, it has signed contracts with oil companies from Brazil, India, Italy, Russia, and Spain—and is in talks to lease major portions of its coastal water to Chinese companies (continuing China’s pattern of pursuing oil exploration in countries where U.S. drillers aren’t welcome). Under the embargo’s terms, the oil drilling and safety equipment used by those companies must be less than 10 percent U.S.-made. But all of the most technologically advanced equipment for drilling and preventing or stopping oil spills is made in the United States or by U.S. companies. “There are not international suppliers of this level of equipment. They will have to buy copycat or second-tier parts,” Lee Hunter, president of the Houston-based International Association of Drilling Contractors, told National Journal. Hunter and other experts say that, to date, it appears that the Cuban government, fearful of the devastation an oil spill could wreak on its economy, wants to use the lessons learned from the BP oil disaster to develop a rigorous safety and oversight program. But it will be nearly impossible for drillers in Cuba’s waters to legally use the safest equipment. “The Cubans want to use good technology; they want to drill safely,” Hunter said. “But … their ability to drill safely is extremely compromised.” Also deeply compromised is their ability to respond to a disaster should it occur. Even if oil from a Cuban spill laps at Florida’s shores, the U.S. agencies and oil companies that have all-too-hard-won expertise in wrestling a spill—the Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Interior Department—would be banned from crossing into Cuban waters to help. And experts say that the Cuban oil industry and government don’t yet have a fraction of the resources and expertise they would need to deal with such an event on their own.

#### **Delayed response to Cuban oil spills guarantees environmental catastrophe.**

Bert and Clayton ‘12

[Captain Melissa Bert, USCG, 2011-2012 Military Fellow, U.S.Coast Guard, and Blake Clayton, Fellow for Energy and National Security 2012 Publisher Council on Foreign Relations Press Release Date March 2012 Addressing the Risk of a Cuban Oil Spill Policy Innovation Memorandum No. 15 (<http://www.cfr.org/cuba/addressing-risk-cuban-oil-spill/p27515>)]

An oil well blowout in Cuban waters would almost certainly require a U.S. response. Without changes in current U.S. law, however, that response would undoubtedly come far more slowly than is desirable. The Coast Guard would be barred from deploying highly experienced manpower, specially designed booms, skimming equipment and vessels, and dispersants. U.S. offshore gas and oil companies would also be barred from using well-capping stacks, remotely operated submersibles, and other vital technologies. Although a handful of U.S. spill responders hold licenses to work with Repsol, their licenses do not extend to well capping or relief drilling. The result of a slow response to a Cuban oil spill would be greater, perhaps catastrophic, economic and environmental damage to Florida and the Southeast.¶ Efforts to rewrite current law and policy toward Cuba, and encouraging cooperation with its government, could antagonize groups opposed to improved relations with the Castro regime. They might protest any decision allowing U.S. federal agencies to assist Cuba or letting U.S. companies operate in Cuban territory.¶ However, taking sensible steps to prepare for a potential accident at an oil well in Cuban waters would not break new ground or materially alter broader U.S. policy toward Cuba. For years, Washington has worked with Havana on issues of mutual concern. The United States routinely coordinates with Cuba on search and rescue operations in the Straits of Florida as well as to combat illicit drug trafficking and migrant smuggling. During the hurricane season, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides Cuba with information on Caribbean storms.

### **Oil Spills Coming**

#### **Cuba drilling risks oil spills**

Bert and Clayton2012

[Captain Melissa Bert, USCG, 2011-2012 Military Fellow, U.S.Coast Guard, and Blake Clayton, Fellow for Energy and National Security 2012 Publisher Council on Foreign Relations Press Release Date March 2012 Addressing the Risk of a Cuban Oil Spill Policy Innovation Memorandum No. 15 (http://www.cfr.org/cuba/addressing-risk-cuban-oil-spill/p27515)]

The imminent drilling of Cuba's first offshore oil well raises the prospect of a large-scale oil spill in Cuban waters washing onto U.S. shores. Washington should anticipate this possibility by implementing policies that would help both countries' governments stem and clean up an oil spill effectively. These policies should ensure that both the U.S. government and the domestic oil industry are operationally and financially ready to deal with any spill that threatens U.S. waters. These policies should be as minimally disruptive as possible to the country's broader Cuba strategy.

#### Oil spills spread fast and could travel all the way to Florida.

NOAAA 2012

[APRIL 27, 2012 Getting Ready for Offshore Oil Drilling in Cuba and the Bahamas

<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/about/media/getting-ready-offshore-oil-drilling-cuba-and-bahamas.html>)]

APRIL 27, 2012 -- For the past year, NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard have been studying the possible threats that new offshore oil drilling activity near the Florida Straits and the Bahamas pose to Florida.¶ For example, the proximity of Cuba's oil fields to U.S. waters has raised a lot of concerns about what would happen if a spill like the 2010 Deepwater Horizon/BP oil well blowout happened.¶ If a large oil spill did occur in the waters northwest of Cuba, currents in the Florida Straits could carry the oil to U.S. waters and coastal areas in Florida. However, a number of factors, like winds or currents, would determine where any oil slicks might go.¶ NOAA's National Ocean Service has more information about how we're preparing for worst-case scenarios there:¶ The study focuses on modeling the movement of oil in water to predict where, when, and how oil might reach U.S. shores given a spill in this region of the ocean.¶ Models help to determine the threat to our coasts from a potential spill by accounting for many different variables, such as the weathering processes of evaporation, dispersion, photo-oxidation, and biodegradation—all of which reduce the amount of oil in the water over time.¶ Currents and winds also play a role in determining where oil will move in water. For example, there are three major currents that would dominate movement of spilled oil near the Florida Straits: Loop Current, Florida Current, and the Gulf Stream.¶ If oil did reach U.S. waters, marine and coastal resources in southern Florida could be at risk, including coral reefs and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, located north of the Cuban drilling sites. We'll be watching the drilling activity there very carefully. If a spill does happen, NOAA will be ready to share our scientific expertise on oil spill response with the U.S. Coast Guard.

### Oil Spill Impacts

#### Oil spill would devastate Florida’s economy and key coral reefs.

Newswise ‘12

[Nova Southeastern University 1/30/2012 Long-Term Response Plan for Cuban Oil Spill (http://www.newswise.com/articles/long-term-response-plan-for-cuban-oil-spill)]

Newswise — FT. LAUDERDALE-DAVIE Fla. — Nova Southeastern University (NSU) and Florida International University (FIU) researchers have drafted a plan to best prepare South Florida for an oil spill off the coast of Cuba.¶ The proximity of intended Cuban oil drilling and production puts the U.S. coastal zone at risk from Florida to the Carolinas and northward. Oil from a spill would quickly enter the Gulf Stream and reach Florida's shores in hours or days with potentially devastating effects on the densely populated South Florida coastline and its coastal ecosystems. South Florida's accounts for 3.4 million jobs and 45 percent of the $587 billion contribution to Florida's GDP generated by coastal and ocean economic activity.¶ A likely first impact of a major spill would be the iconic and economically valuable Florida Reef Track, a coral reef ecosystem that stretches from the Dry Torgugas in the Keys to Palm Beach County. Effects could be devastating to the ecology of the reef, Florida's beaches, coastal property and South Florida’s economy.¶ The sustainability plan calls for a partnership between the U.S. Coast Guard, other federal agencies, and a consortium of South Florida academic institutions, including Nova Southeastern University’s Oceanographic Center, Florida International University, other schools, and private industry. The Coast Guard is the designated operational leader in any response to a Cuban oil spill.¶

#### Oil spills devastate the environment.

Weber andCrew 2000

[J. M. Weber University of Kaiserslautern, Germany and R. E. Crew, Jr Deterrence theory and marine oil¶ spills: Do coast guard civil penalties¶ deter pollution?¶ J. M., Jr Journal of Environmental Management (2000) (<http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0301479799903262/1-s2.0-S0301479799903262-main.pdf?_tid=22c20598-ddd9-11e2-afcb-00000aab0f26&acdnat=1372193723_e832ee536908d9fa2114f5c01a283d79>)]

Oil pollution continues to play a prominent role in degradation of the marine environment, both in the United States and elsewhere. Catastrophic oil spills such as the 11 million gallon discharge by the tankship Exxon Valdez in 1989 (ARLIS,¶ ¶ 1997a) have immediate environmental consequences. While there is no conclusive estimate of the impact of this spill on marine life, popular and scientiﬁc research suggests an enormous loss. In addition to the immediate closing of the Alaskan commercial salmon ﬁsheries, an estimated 300 harbor seals, 2800 sea otters, 250 000 seabirds and possibly 13 killer whales were lost (ARLIS, 1997b). Other major oil spills have taken somewhat similar tolls on the environment. (National¶ ¶ Research Council (NRC), 1985) As devastating as these one-time events are, however, they should not divert attention from the routine oil spills that strike the environment every day. The long-term¶ ¶ impacts of such spills can have huge consequence for marine ecosystems. In 1985, the¶ ¶ US National Research Council estimated that¶ ¶ 73% of oil spilled in marine transportationcomes from sources other than tankships.¶ ¶ (NRC, 1985) This means that a substantial¶ ¶ volume of oil is spilled into the marine environment from sources that gather little public¶ ¶ or media attention. While society can and¶ ¶ should expend effort to prevent the Exxon¶ ¶ Valdez-type oil spills, it should be just as¶ ¶ vigilant in reducing the chronic pollution of¶ ¶ smaller vessels and land-based facilities.¶ ¶ The US government has long been engaged in efforts to prevent oil spills.

### AT: Deepwater Horizon Empirically Denies

#### **South Florida spill would have a far greater impact than Deepwater Horizon.**

Sun Sentinel 2012

[Sun Sentinel New oil spill plan needed April 22, 2012 http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2012-04-22/news/fl-cuba-oil-editorial-dl-20120422\_1\_deepwater-horizon-oil-spill-oil-spill)]

There's little debate that a major oil spill off the coast of Cuba could be a disaster for Florida. What's up for more serious discussion are plans to contain the spill, and to minimize the ecological damage from an oil spill reaching our shores.¶ Setting up booms and dropping dispersants onto massive oil slicks threatening South Florida's shores would be a painful reprise of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon debacle that devastated the Gulf Coast.¶ Such tactics, however, are really the last line of defense in bulwarking shorelines and waterways against unwanted oil. And, unfortunately, they are susceptible to winds, currents and tides— and aren't guaranteed to succeed.¶ The first line of defense begins with a proactive policy of environmental and safety cooperation between the United States, Cuba and the foreign companies operating the platform. Exploratory drilling in an area that is said to contain over 5 billion barrels of oil and 8.6 billion cubic feet of natural gas has already begun, and time is of the essence since chances for major mishaps in deepwater operations usually occur during exploratory drilling.¶ What's problematic for many environmentalists and U.S. policymakers is that the sites of these new wells are less than 60 miles from Key West. Their being so close to Gulf Stream means an oil rig mishap could produce an ecological disaster along hundreds of miles of Florida coastline.¶ The good news is there has been progress in forging a working relationship, and a plan of action, to bolster environmental cooperation.¶ That's a major accomplishment given the past bitter political history — and current friction — between the United States and Cuba. In the past, Washington and Havana have found ways to cooperate on immigration issues and curbing drug trafficking. Protecting the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico from a blowout is no less important.¶ The initial oil-spill containment plan unveiled recently by the U.S. Coast Guard emphasizes shielding inlets and intracoastal waterways to protect more vulnerable parts of South Florida's coastlines over the region's beaches. That approach won't sit well with local businesses and interest groups that rely on the beaches to fuel the region's vibrant tourism industry.¶ The dismay among tourist officials is understandable, but putting priorities on Florida's most sensitive environs is necessary. The region's bays, lagoons and mangrove forests are far more susceptible to the toxic impact of an oil spill. Those ecological nooks and crannies, and spawning zones, would be more difficult to clean than a beach.¶ In an ideal world, the federal government would muster all the resources at its command to protect all of South Florida's rich and diverse environment from a massive spill. The real world is a very different place.¶ Credit the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Coast Guard for their work with the Cuban government on a comprehensive disaster response system that hopefully will never have to be used.

#### Oil spills would damage beaches and key turtle habitats – Deepwater Horizon was just likely timing.

Gibson 2012

[William E. Gibson, Washington Bureau sun-sentinel Drilling off Cuba prompts disaster plan¶ Officials stress inlets, not beaches¶ April 15, 2012 (http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2012-04-15/news/fl-cuba-oil-drilling-local-spill-plan-20120415\_1\_inlets-and-intracoastal-waterways-deepwater-horizon-oil-spill/2)]

WASHINGTON -- U.S. officials, game-planning for a potential oil spill off the shores of Cuba, are preparing to leave South Florida's beaches exposed while shielding inlets and intracoastal waterways to protect the most vulnerable parts of the state's coastline.¶ http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/images/pixel.gif¶ Two years after the Deepwater Horizon disaster underscored the damage to marine life and tourism of a massive oil spill, Cuban-sponsored drilling less than 60 miles from Florida has raised new alarms. In response, the Coast Guard has devised an elaborate plan to contain the damage if an oil slick rushes north on the Gulf Stream, the powerful current that runs along the East Coast.¶ Broward and Palm Beach county officials feel better prepared because of lessons from the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, which erupted on April 20, 2010. But they are not so confident that their beaches, reefs and bays -- and the tourism dollars they generate -- can be fully protected.¶ "If we do have a large spill, I'm not sure we have the capability of intercepting all of it," said Eric Myers,[Broward County](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/broward/)'s natural resources administrator. "It will go to the beaches. And quite honestly, I think that most of the plans assume that a lot of oil can be collected from the beaches, which is what they did in the upper Gulf Coast."¶ U.S. officials are increasingly confident that Cuban authorities would allow Americans to enter Cuban waters to help contain a major spill at its source. They plan to skim oil from the ocean surface, contain it, burn it or disperse it with chemicals before it comes near land.¶ But if a slick heads for South Florida, the Coast Guard plan calls for a series of booms to block surface oil from entering inlets and intracoastal waterways, especially near Port Everglades, Hillsboro Beach,[Boca Raton](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/community/news/bocaraton?track=tax-bocaraton), [Boynton Beach](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/community/news/boyntonbeach?track=tax-boyntonbeach) and Jupiter. Officials would not try to screen off beaches, which are much harder to protect but easier to clean up.¶ "We're telling people not to expect a cocoon around the coast of Florida, because it's not practical. And with the fast currents we have here, booms all along the beaches really wouldn't be that effective," said Capt. John Slaughter, chief of readiness at the Coast Guard's 7th district in South Florida.¶ "Our priority is going to be to protect the inlets," he said. "The beaches are incredibly important to us, but inlets are what allow water to get into inland areas where the most sensitive environmental areas are."¶ The Coast Guard plan focuses on protecting bays, mangrove forests and lagoons – rich spawning grounds, where oil would cause great damage and be very difficult to remove. Local officials generally support the plan but say they can only hope to minimize damage if a slick arrives.¶ "We've looked at their [Coast Guard] response capabilities, which honestly are somewhat limited," Myers said. "The main thing they have the ability to do is to boom certain areas and try to deal with floating near-surface oil. Anything that's down deeper than that, nobody seems to have a way to manage that much volume of water."¶ "I would hate to see our beaches covered with tar balls or oil," he said. "We know that if that were to occur it would be a real mess for our whole tourism and recreation interest."¶ Plans include rounding up hundreds of volunteers to clean up beaches if they are slathered. Both counties are updating computer lists of those who offered to help when the Gulf spill raised fears that a slick would ride the Loop Current through the Florida Keys and up the southeast coast.¶ In fact, oil streamers were headed for the Keys but were shut off by eddies, smaller cross-currents.¶ "We got lucky that time," said Dan Bates, deputy director of the Department of Environmental Resources Management in [Palm Beach County](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/palmbeach/). "Deepwater Horizon was a wake-up call for many folks who didn't realize that what may happen a long distance away could have dramatic effect locally."¶ "If it happens during sea-turtle nesting season, that's a huge potential impact," he said. "That's an endangered species, and we're one of the primary nesting habitats in the world. In shore, we have all the nursery habitats we've worked very hard to enhance. Many tens of millions of dollars have been spent on that habitat, and we certainly want to protect that investment." Cuban drilling plans raised new alarms because the sites are much closer to Florida and very near the Gulf Stream. Frosty relations between the United States and Cuba have complicated contingency plans. Repsol, a Spanish company that has contracted with Cuba, has been using a new self-propelled rig called the Scarabeo 9 to search for oil since January. The company hopes to tap a reservoir before turning the rig over to a Malaysian company, Petronas, to dig exploratory wells in Cuban waters farther west, probably in late May or June. The exact location has not been disclosed.¶ Repsol has been delayed by minor equipment problems on the new rig and has not hit the expected reservoir, said Jorge Pinon, a former oil executive and energy expert at the University of Texas, who is familiar with the drilling operation. The Petronas site, he said, is farther from Florida but closer to currents that flow toward the state.¶ http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/images/pixel.gif¶ "If you move that prospect further west, a greater area could be impacted, including Florida Bay and the Florida Keys," he said.¶ To coordinate emergency-response plans in the Caribbean, U.S. officials met in Jamaica last week with energy experts from Cuba and Mexico, as well as from the Bahamas and Jamaica, which are considering offshore drilling. Slaughter, who attended the meetings, was hopeful that Cuba would allow a multi-national response in case of disaster.¶ "I certainly can't speak for Cuba," Slaughter said, "but I would say they understand that a spill of Deepwater Horizon magnitude is beyond one country's ability to address."¶ "I think Deepwater Horizon really opened everybody's eyes to the magnitude of the challenges," he said. "We have to set a lot of things aside to make sure the response is done to protect everybody's interests. Based on the vibes I've gotten from the meetings, everybody feels that same way."

### Removing Embargo Solves Oil Spills

#### Embargo prevents safe drilling with the best tech from U.S. companies.

Helman 12/12/11 (Christopher-Forbes Staff, “U.S. Should Drop Cuba Embargo For Oil Exploration”, http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2011/12/12/u-s-should-drop-cuba-embargo-for-oil-exploration/)

This wrong-headed policy represents a dangerous threat to the environment and a huge missed opportunity to the U.S. oil industry. The U.S. embargo will do nothing to prevent oil drilling from taking place in Cuban waters. But it will prevent that work from being done by the most experienced companies with the highest-quality equipment. Norway’s Statoil is a proven operator with a long history in the North Sea and the Gulf. The rest of those companies are just getting started offshore.

A group of U.S. lawmakers in September urged Repsol (ticker: REPYY.PK) to call off its Cuba plans or face the threat of U.S. lawsuits. Repsol wisely called that bluff.At least the Obama administration is doing something to ensure that Repsol’s drilling rig is up to snuff. According to an excellent article from Bloomberg today, Repsol’s Chinese-built Scarabeo 9 rig will soon by boarded by four U.S. inspectors (two from the Coast Guard, two from the Dept. of Interior) who will do what they can to check out the rig and watch some drills. But, according to the article, there will be real limits to what the inspectors can inspect. They won’t get to check the rig’s all-important blowout preventor, or the well casing or drilling fluids that are to be used. Though the U.S. inspectors will discuss any concerns they have with Repsol, they will have no enforcement authority.

Although the offshore industry’s best service companies and parts manufacturers are right here on the U.S. Gulf coast, Repsol will have to train its people and scrounge for spare parts from the rest of the world.

#### The embargo prevents effective oil spill clean up.

Bert and Clayton2012

[Captain Melissa Bert, USCG, 2011-2012 Military Fellow, U.S.Coast Guard, and Blake Clayton, Fellow for Energy and National Security 2012 Publisher Council on Foreign Relations Press Release Date March 2012 Addressing the Risk of a Cuban Oil Spill Policy Innovation Memorandum No. 15 (http://www.cfr.org/cuba/addressing-risk-cuban-oil-spill/p27515)]

Deep water drilling off the Cuban coast also poses a threat to the United States. The exploratory well is seventy miles off the Florida coast and lies at a depth of 5,800 feet. The failed Macondo well that triggered the calamitous Deepwater Horizon oil spill in April 2010 had broadly similar features, situated forty-eight miles from shore and approximately five thousand feet below sea level. A spill off Florida's coast could ravage the state's $57 billion per year tourism industry. Washington cannot count on the technical know-how of Cuba's unseasoned oil industry to address a spill on its own. Oil industry experts doubt that it has a strong understanding of how to prevent an offshore oil spill or stem a deep-water well blowout. Moreover, the site where the first wells will be drilled is a tough one for even seasoned response teams to operate in. Unlike the calm Gulf of Mexico, the surface currents in the area where Repsol will be drilling move at a brisk three to four knots, which would bring oil from Cuba's offshore wells to the Florida coast within six to ten days. Skimming or burning the oil may not be feasible in such fast-moving water. The most, and possibly only, effective method to respond to a spill would be surface and subsurface dispersants. If dispersants are not applied close to the source within four days after a spill, uncontained oil cannot be dispersed, burnt, or skimmed, which would render standard response technologies like containment booms ineffective. Repsol has been forthcoming in disclosing its spill response plans to U.S. authorities and allowing them to inspect the drilling rig, but the Russian and Chinese companies that are already negotiating with Cuba to lease acreage might not be as cooperative. Had Repsol not volunteered to have the Cuba-bound drilling rig examined by the U.S. Coast Guard and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement to certify that it met international standards, Washington would have had little legal recourse. The complexity of U.S.-Cuba relations since the 1962 trade embargo complicates even limited efforts to put in place a spill response plan. Under U.S. law and with few exceptions, American companies cannot assist the Cuban government or provide equipment to foreign companies operating in Cuban territory.

#### The embargo stops oil spill clean up-Lack of US equipment and supplies.

Randy Grice 2013

[Randy Grice reporter for the Miami times: Critics say spill could cause irreparable harm

Monday, June 24, 2013( http://miamitimesonline.com/cuba-to-start-oil-drilling-next-month/)]

http://miamitimesonline.com/cuba-to-start-oil-drilling-next-month/

This December, exploratory oil drilling is set to begin off the coast of Cuba — a mere 90 miles away from Florida’s most southern point. Repsol oil company, based in Spain, will be doing the first round of offshore exploration. And while U.S. officials say they are focusing on making sure the drilling is done safely, Paul Schuler, president/CEO of Clean Caribbean and Americas (CCA), a Fort Lauderdale-based oil-spill response consortium funded by oil companies, admits that there are potential dangers connected to drilling.¶ “When you think about it, South Florida in about the same amount of danger as Louisiana is in the Gulf of Mexico,” he said. “If there were a blow out [oil spill] in Cuba, there could be a big problem. I think everyone is concerned about what could happen during drilling. When you have a disaster like what happened in the Gulf everyone is looking a little closer at what is going on.”¶ Schuler’s organization, which responded to the 2010 BP (British Petroleum) spill in the Gulf of Mexico, has been involved in Cuba since 2001, when Repsol and Brazil’s Petrobras first began working there.¶ Jorge Piñon, a former Amoco executive and a visiting research fellow with Florida International University’s Latin American and Caribbean Center’s Cuban Research Institute, warns that if a spill were to occur, politics could play a major roll in containing the situation.¶ “The danger that Florida faces is the lack of an oil spill agreement between the U.S. and Cuba,” he said. “Due to the embargo, the lack of access to U.S. equipment and supplies by international oil companies drilling in Cuba in case of an accident, would hinder cleanup efforts. It seems to me that some South Florida politicians are more focused on keeping their South Florida Cuban constituency content, than safeguarding the economic survival of Florida’s tourism industry which would impact all 19 million Florida residents.”¶ This past May, BP was held responsible for allowing close to 200,000 gallons of oil to contaminate the ocean as a result of an explosion at an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico. A recent estimate of the cost to clean up BP’s oil spill was around $4 billion — just slightly higher than the cost of rebuilding New Orleans and its environs after Hurricane Katrina.¶

#### The US is missing oil opportunities in Cuba

[Christopher Helman](http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/) 2011 Forbes Staff

(U.S. Should Drop Cuba Embargo For Oil Exploration 12/12/2011¶ (http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2011/12/12/u-s-should-drop-cuba-embargo-for-oil-exploration/)]

In a few months Spanish oil company Repsol will start drilling for oil off the coast of Cuba, in a spot just 70 miles south of Key West. Soon Repsol–and its JV partners Norway’s [Statoil](http://www.forbes.com/companies/statoil/) and India’s ONGC–will be joined by rigs from PetroVietnam, Malaysia’s Petronas and Venezuela’s PDVSA. But you won’t see any U.S. companies there. Inexplicably, the U.S. maintains its economic embargo against the Castro regime.

This wrong-headed policy represents a dangerous threat to the environment and a huge missed opportunity to the U.S. oil industry. The U.S. embargo will do nothing to prevent oil drilling from taking place in Cuban waters. But it will prevent that work from being done by the most experienced companies with the highest-quality equipment. Norway’s Statoil is a proven operator with a long history in the North Sea and the Gulf. The rest of those companies are just getting started offshore.

Embargo prevents oil spill cooperation.

LaGesse 2012

[David LaGesse Journalist for national geographic For [National Geographic News](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/) Published November 19, 2012 Cuba's Oil Quest to Continue, Despite Deepwater Disappointment (http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2012/11/121119-cuba-oil-quest/)]

But an energy-poor Cuba also has its risks. One of the chief concerns has been over the danger of an accident as Cuba pursues its search for oil, so close to Florida's coastline, at times in the brisk currents of the straits, and without U.S. industry expertise on safety. The worries led to a remarkable series of meetings among environmentalists, Cuban officials, and even U.S government officials over several years. Conferences organized by groups like the nonprofit[Environmental Defense Fund](http://www.edf.org/oceans/us-and-cuba-seek-common-ground) (EDF) and its counterparts in Cuba have taken place in the Bahamas, Mexico City, and elsewhere. The meetings included other countries in the region to diminish political backlash, though observers say the primary goal was to bring together U.S. and Cuban officials.

EDF led a delegation last year to Cuba, where it has worked for more than a decade with Cuban scientists on shared environmental concerns. The visitors included former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator William Reilly, who co-chaired the [national commission](http://www.oilspillcommission.gov/page/commission-members) that investigated BP's 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster and spill of nearly 5 million barrels of crude into the Gulf of Mexico. (Related Quiz: "[How Much Do You Know About the Gulf Oil Spill?](http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/energy/great-energy-challenge/gulf-oil-spill-anniversary-quiz/)") They discussed Cuba's exploration plans and shared information on the risks.

"We've found world-class science in all our interactions with the Cubans," said Douglas Rader, [EDF's chief oceans scientist](http://www.edf.org/people/douglas-n-rader). He said, however, that the embargo has left Cubans with insufficient resources and inexperience with high-tech gear.Although the United States and Cuba have no formal diplomatic relations, sources say government officials have made low-profile efforts to prepare for a potential problem. But the two nations still lack an agreement on how to manage response to a drilling disaster, said Robert Muse, a Washington attorney and [expert on licensing](http://www.robertmuse.com/) under the embargo. That lessens the chance of a coordinated response of the sort that was crucial to containing damage from the Deepwater Horizon spill, he said.

"There's a need to get over yesterday's politics," said Rader. "It's time to make sure we're all in a position to respond to the next event, wherever it is."

In addition to the environmental risks of Cuba going it alone, there are the political risks. Piñon, at the University of Texas, said success in deepwater could have helped Cuba spring free of Venezuela's influence as the time nears for the Castro brothers to give up power. Raúl Castro, who took over in 2008 for ailing brother Fidel, now 86, is himself 81 years old. At a potentially crucial time of transition, the influence of Venezuela's outspoken leftist president Hugo Chávez could thwart moves by Cuba away from its state-dominated economy or toward warmer relations with the United States, said Piñon.

#### The embargo complicates oil spill cleanup

Allen 2012

[Greg Allen NPR's Miami correspondent U.S. Watches Closely As Oil Drilling Begins Off Cuba February 13, 2012 4:24 PM Embargo Could Complicate Cleanup

(<http://www.npr.org/2012/02/13/146635957/u-s-watches-closely-as-oil-drilling-begins-off-cuba>)]

Complicating matters is the fact that this new well is being drilled in the waters of a country that's under a strict U.S. embargo. Unless they apply for and receive special permission from the government, U.S. companies are banned from doing any work on the well — even if there's a spill.¶ Jorge Pinon, a former oil company executive and now a research fellow at the University of Texas, says if there's a blowout, the U.S. president is sure to immediately lift the embargo for companies that respond.¶ Pinon also says the Spanish company doing the drilling, Repsol, has a lot of experience with deep-water drilling in the Gulf. And, he says, the company has upgraded its procedures to incorporate lessons learned in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill.¶ But Pinon sees another problem. Because of the 50-year-old embargo, the U.S. and Cuban governments have almost no contact. "There is no agreement of cooperation of who's going to do what during an incident like this," he says.¶ After the Deepwater Horizon blowout, Pinon notes Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen was put in charge of the cleanup — coordinating industry and government efforts.¶ "That's not going to be the case here," Pinon says. "And here particularly, it's between two countries that have not spoken to each other in 50 years."

### Embargo Deters Investment

#### Embargo deters international investment in Cuban oil

Krauss 11/10/12 (Clifford- Authour for the New York Times, “Cuba’s Prospects for an Oil-Fueled Economic Jolt Falter With Departure of Rig”, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/10/world/americas/rigs-departure-to-hamper-cubas-oil-prospects.html?\_r=0)

The potential for Cuba’s oil reserves, like nearly everything involving Cuba, has been a matter of dispute. Cuban officials had predicted that oil companies would find 20 billion barrels of oil reserves off its northern coast. The United States Geological Survey has estimated Cuban oil reserves at 5 billion barrels, one quarter of the Cuban estimate.

The best-case scenario for production, according to some oil experts, would be for Cuba to eventually become a medium-size producer like Ecuador. But as the three dry holes showed, far more exploration effort would be needed, and that presents a challenge for a country with limited resources and the hurdle of American sanctions. There are many offshore areas that are competing with Cuba for the attention of oil companies, particularly off the coasts of South America and East and West Africa.

In Cuba’s case, the American embargo makes it far more difficult for companies seeking to explore Cuban waters. The Scarabeo 9, the rig set to depart, is the only one available that is capable of drilling in deep waters and complies with the embargo. To get it built, Repsol, the Spanish oil giant, was forced to contract an Italian operator to build a rig in China to drill exploration wells.

Cuban officials have also run into environmental concerns in the United States. The prospect of drilling only 50 miles from the Florida Keys had worried ocean scientists, who warned that if the kind of blowout that occurred on the BP rig in 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico was repeated in Cuban waters, it could send oil spewing onto Florida coastlines in as little as three days. If the oil reached the Gulf Stream, the powerful current that passes through the area, oil could flow up the coast to Miami and beyond.

Still, Cuba has been bullish about oil since plans for the rig’s arrival were first made several years ago. Cuba produces a small amount of oil and relies on Venezuela to provide around 115,000 barrels a day at highly subsidized rates, in exchange for the services of Cuban doctors and other professionals. Venezuelan production has been sliding steeply in recent years, and Cuban officials have been unnerved by the health problems of Venezuela’s president, Hugo Chávez, a crucial ally for the island.

### Oil – L.A. Relations Internal Link

#### U.S.-Cuban oil cooperation spurs U.S.-Latin American energy cooperation.

Benjamin November 2006 (Jonathan- Professor at University of Nebraska Omaha, “The Current Status and Future Prospects for Oil Exploration in Cuba: A Special

Report for the Cuban Research Institute, Florida International University, <http://cri.fiu.edu/research/commissioned-reports/oil-cuba-alvarado.pdf>)

Finally, the cost is significant and it stands to reason that the longer one waits to

address the challenge at hand the higher the cost of modernizing the energy sector. For

this reason alone, the American role in assisting Cuba in this effort will be significant and

every day that the task is put off, it increases the long-term cost of the effort. This should

serve as an obvious point of entry into cooperation with the Cuban government and

perhaps can serve as a catalyst for promoting confidence, trust and cooperation in this

critical issue area across the region.

### Oil Cooperation Solves U.S. –Cuba Relations

#### US companies looking to invest in Cuba.

Frank 1/17/12 (Marc, author at Financial Times, “US frets at Cuba oil exploration”, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ed255d6a-4129-11e1-8c33-00144feab49a.html#axzz2XLf7HYli>)

Despite the sanctions, Washington has engaged both with these foreign companies and the Cuban government after the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling recommended such co-operation to protect “fisheries, coastal tourism and other valuable US natural resources”.

US officials inspected the rig in Trinidad and Tobago this month before it left for Cuban waters, and in December held talks with Cuba, Mexico and the Bahamas in Nassau on emergency planning in the gulf. A second round of talks is scheduled for February.

Experts are divided on whether significant oil discoveries would spur or slow Cuban economic reforms.

“With or without oil, the Cuban economy sorely needs an environment in which businesses and individuals feel confident to invest,” said Arturo Lopez-Levy, a Cuban academic at the University of Denver.

But most agree the prospect has brought Havana and Washington closer as they look to safeguard their mutual economic and environmental interests.

“The meeting between US and Cuban officials on environmental co-operation ... is an example of new bridges of communication, which if it wasn’t for oil and gas development would not have happened,” said Jorge Piñón, former president of Amoco Corporate Development Company Latin America and now a research fellow at Florida International University.

Just as “ping-pong diplomacy brought the US and China together, oil might very well bring Cuba and the US together”.

#### US investment in Cuban Oil can improve relations

Miroff 5/16/2009 ( Nick-Washington Post Staff Writer, Cuba's Undersea Oil Could Help Thaw Trade With U.S.”, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp> -dyn/content/article/2009/05/15/AR2009051503416.html)

Deep in the Gulf of Mexico, an end to the 1962 U.S. trade embargo against Cuba may be lying untapped, buried under layers of rock, seawater and bitter relations.

Oil, up to 20 billion barrels of it, sits off Cuba's northwest coast in territorial waters, according to the Cuban government -- enough to turn the island into the Qatar of the Caribbean. At a minimum, estimates by the U.S. Geological Survey place Cuba's potential deep-water reserves at 4.6 billion barrels of oil and 9.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, stores that would rank the island among the region's top producers.

Drilling operations by foreign companies in Cuban waters are still in the exploratory stage, and significant obstacles -- technological and political -- stand between a U.S.-Cuba rapprochement eased by oil. But as the Obama administration gestures toward improved relations with the Castro government, the national security, energy and economic benefits of Cuban crude may make it a powerful incentive for change.

Limited commercial ties between U.S. businesses and the island's communist government have been quietly expanding this decade as Cuban purchases of U.S. goods -- mostly food -- have increased from $7 million in 2001 to $718 million in 2008, according to census data.

Thawing relations could eventually open up U.S. investment in mining, agriculture, tourism and other sectors of Cuba's tattered economy. But the prospect of major offshore reserves that would be off-limits to U.S. companies and consumers has some Cuba experts arguing that 21st-century energy needs should prevail over 20th-century Cold War politics.

### Cuban Oil Reserves Large

#### Cuba has large oil reserves.

Carroll 10/17/08 (Rory, Latin America correspondent, “20bn barrel oil discovery puts Cuba in the big league”, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/oct/18/cuban-oil)

Friends and foes have called Cuba many things - a progressive beacon, a quixotic underdog, an oppressive tyranny - but no one has called it lucky, until now .

Mother nature, it emerged this week, appears to have blessed the island with enough oil reserves to vault it into the ranks of energy powers. The government announced there may be more than 20bn barrels of recoverable oil in offshore fields in Cuba's share of the Gulf of Mexico, more than twice the previous estimate.

If confirmed, it puts Cuba's reserves on par with those of the US and into the world's top 20. Drilling is expected to start next year by Cuba's state oil company Cubapetroleo, or Cupet.

"It would change their whole equation. The government would have more money and no longer be dependent on foreign oil," said Kirby Jones, founder of the Washington-based US-Cuba Trade Association. "It could join the club of oil exporting nations."

"We have more data. I'm almost certain that if they ask for all the data we have, (their estimate) is going to grow considerably," said Cupet's exploration manager, Rafael Tenreyro Perez.

Havana based its dramatically higher estimate mainly on comparisons with oil output from similar geological structures off the coasts of Mexico and the US. Cuba's undersea geology was "very similar" to Mexico's giant Cantarell oil field in the Bay of Campeche, said Tenreyro.

A consortium of companies led by Spain's Repsol had tested wells and were expected to begin drilling the first production well in mid-2009, and possibly several more later in the year, he said.

Cuba currently produces about 60,000 barrels of oil daily, covering almost half of its needs, and imports the rest from Venezuela in return for Cuban doctors and sports instructors. Even that barter system puts a strain on an impoverished economy in which Cubans earn an average monthly salary of $20.

Cuban oil reserves could decrease U.S. dependence on Middle East.

Carroll 10/17/08 (Rory, Latin America correspondent, “20bn barrel oil discovery puts Cuba in the big league”, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/oct/18/cuban-oil)

"This news about the oil reserves could not have come at a better time for the regime," said Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado, a Cuba energy specialist at the University of Nebraska.

However there is little prospect of Cuba becoming a communist version of Kuwait. Its oil is more than a mile deep under the ocean and difficult and expensive to extract. The four-decade-old US economic embargo prevents several of Cuba's potential oil partners - notably Brazil, Norway and Spain - from using valuable first-generation technology.

"You're looking at three to five years minimum before any meaningful returns," said Benjamin-Alvarado.

Even so, Cuba is a master at stretching resources. President Raul Castro, who took over from brother Fidel, has promised to deliver improvements to daily life to shore up the legitimacy of the revolution as it approaches its 50th anniversary.

Cuba's unexpected arrival into the big oil league could increase pressure on the next administration to loosen the embargo to let US oil companies participate in the bonanza and reduce US dependency on the middle east, said Jones. "Up until now the embargo did not really impact on us in a substantive, strategic way. Oil is different. It's something we need and want."

### Licensing Oil Companies Solves

#### Licensing US oil companies for Cuban operations would improve US influence, helps contain Venezuela, and limit Russian influence.

Pascual 2009 vice president and Director of Foreign policy The Brookings institution

[Carlos Pascual Report of the Brookings Project on US Policy Toward a Cuba in Transition, 2009, Cuba: A New Policy of Constructive and Critical Engagement

<http://www2.fiu.edu/~ipor/cuba-t/BrookingsCubaReport-English.pdf>]

Licensing U.S. companies to provide services for ¶ ¶ the development of Cuban offshore oil and gas ¶ ¶ would provide benefits to the United States and ¶ ¶ Cuba. (At this point it should be noted that the ¶ ¶ Secretary of Treasury has always had and continues to have the authority—as embodied in OFAC ¶ ¶ regulations—to license any transaction found to ¶ ¶ be in the U.S. national interest. This power has ¶ ¶ been used over the past fifteen years by various ¶ ¶ republican and Democratic administrations to ¶ ¶ license a variety of commercial transactions between the United States and Cuba). The following ¶ ¶ are some of the reasons we might wish to become ¶ ¶ engaged in developing Cuba’s offshore oil and ¶ ¶ gas. First, if U.S. and other reputable companies ¶ ¶ are involved in Cuba’s offshore oil development ¶ ¶ it would reduce Cuba’s dependence on Venezuela ¶ ¶ for two-thirds of its oil imports. Second, it is preferable that U.S. oil companies with high standards ¶ ¶ of transparency develop these resources rather ¶ ¶ than, for example, russia’s notoriously corrupt ¶ ¶ oligarchy. Third, U.S. influence in Cuba is likely ¶ ¶ to increase if U.S. companies have an economic ¶ ¶ relationship on the ground. Fourth, U.S. companies have the technology and expertise to develop ¶ ¶ Cuba’s offshore oil and gas. ¶ ¶

#### The US is key to oil spill clean up in Cuba-with out the US oil spills have greater environmental consequences.

Homeland Security News Wire 2011

[Homeland Security News Wire Emergency cleanup plans for potential Cuban oil spill¶ Published 12 September 2011 http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/emergency-cleanup-plans-potential-cuban-oil-spill)]

With Cuba set to begin offshore drilling, the former head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is pressing the United States to immediately begin developing emergency plans to assist Cuba in the event of a major oil spill. “It seems to me to be profoundly in the interest of the United States to ensure that, if there should be a spill in Cuban waters, all efforts are undertaken by both government and private entities in the United States to assist in responding,” said William Reilly, the administrator of the EPA under President George H. W. Bush and the co-chair of the commission that examined the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.¶ Reilly warns that ostracizing Cuba as it readies the launch of its first offshore oil rig could jeopardize environmental safety along the coast of the United States.¶ The remarks come after a meeting with Cuban officials last week. Cuba is determined to begin offshore drilling and Reilly said officials there are looking to obtain expertise and technology from the United States.¶ Respol, a Spanish oil company, has plans to dig at least one oil well off the coast of Cuba in November using a Chinese-built rig. Currently Cuba produces about 50,000 barrels of oil a day and imports nearly 120,000 barrels from Venezuela, so a discovery of significant oil reserves could greatly change Cuba’s economic fortunes. Reilly visited Cuba as part of a delegation organized by the Environmental Defense Fund and the International Association of Drilling Contractors who worry about the prospects of Cuba beginning to drill without proper access to safety equipment.¶ Members of the delegation are particularly concerned about how drilling companies working in Cuban waters will obtain safety equipment like capping stacks or blowout preventers from the United States to prevent spills or mitigate their effect.¶ The U.S. Treasury Department has said that it will allow American companies to operate in Cuba despite the economic embargo, but it will only issue licenses to do so on a case-by-case basis. Industry experts say the licenses need to be broad in their scope.

# Oil Spills - Neg

#### The US will help in case of an oil spill

[Christopher Helman](http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/) 2011 Forbes Staff

(U.S. Should Drop Cuba Embargo For Oil Exploration 12/12/2011¶ (http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2011/12/12/u-s-should-drop-cuba-embargo-for-oil-exploration/)]

Although the offshore industry’s best service companies and parts manufacturers are right here on the U.S. Gulf coast, Repsol will have to train its people and scrounge for spare parts from the rest of the world.

But here’s something that completely blows my mind. The administration, again, according to the Bloomberg [article](http://fuelfix.com/blog/2011/12/09/cuba-oil-drilling-tests-u-s-on-protecting-florida-or-embargo/), has granted some U.S. companies the license to respond to an oil spill were it to occur in Cuban waters. The government won’t say how many companies have that license or who they are, but there’s at least two of them: Wild Well Control and Helix [Energy](http://www.forbes.com/energy/) Solutions Group. Helix plans to stage a subsea containment cap on the U.S. coast so it can quickly respond to any Cuban blowout.

Of course it’s smart and safe for the U.S. government to put defensive measures in place in the event of a spill, but the message to the industry is clear: we refuse to give superior U.S. operators the license to drill for oil in Cuba, but we want to make sure you’re ready to clean up any problems.

#### Biodiversity loss not unique – million species will die in the next 50 years.

Suurkula 2004

[Jaan Suurkula doctorate at Gothenburg University, February 6, 2004 World-wide cooperation required to prevent global crisis; Part one— the problem, Physicians and Scientists for Responsible Application of Science and Technology, <http://www.psrast.org/globecolcr.htm>)]

The world environmental situation is likely to be further aggravated by the increasingly rapid, large scale global extinction of species. It occurred in the 20th century at a rate that was a thousand times higher than the average rate during the preceding 65 million years. This is likely to destabilize various ecosystems including agricultural systems.¶ …In a slow extinction, various balancing mechanisms can develop. No one knows what will be the result of this extremely rapid extinction rate. What is known, for sure, is that the world ecological system has been kept in balance through a very complex and multifaceted interaction between a huge number of species. This rapid extinction is therefore likely to precipitate collapses of ecosystems at a global scale. This is predicted to create large-scale agricultural problems, threatening food supplies to hundreds of millions of people. This ecological prediction does not take into consideration the effects of global warming which will further aggravate the situation.¶ Industrialized fishing has contributed importantly to mass extinction due to repeatedly failed attempts at limiting the fishing.¶ A new global study concludes that 90 percent of all large fishes have disappeared from the world’s oceans in the past half century, the devastating result of industrial fishing. The study, which took 10 years to complete and was published in the international journal Nature, paints a grim picture of the Earth’s current populations of such species as sharks, swordfish, tuna and marlin.¶ …The loss of predatory fishes is likely to cause multiple complex imbalances in marine ecology. Another cause for extensive fish extinction is the destruction of coral reefs. This is caused by a combination of causes, including warming of oceans, damage from fishing tools and a harmful infection of coral organisms promoted by ocean pollution. It will take hundreds of thousands of years to restore what is now being destroyed in a few decades.¶ …According to the most comprehensive study done so far in this field, over a million species will be lost in the coming 50 years. The most important cause was found to be climate change.¶

#### U.S. will clean up in the case of a Cuban spill.

Pittman 2011

[Craig Pittman, Times Staff Writer for the Tampa Bay Times Tuesday, December 20, 2011 11:01am Coast Guard plans to use dispersants if Cuban drilling produces oil spill

<https://mail.google.com/mail/ca/u/0/?shva=1#inbox/13f8c01079ba8c76>)]

As Cuba prepares to begin allowing a Spanish company to drill for oil less than 100 miles from the Florida Keys next year, U.S. Coast Guard officials say they have learned from the Deepwater Horizon disaster and will be prepared should a spill occur.¶ ¶ "We will attack it quickly, aggressively and as far from our shores as we can," Rear Adm. William Baumgartner told reporters during a news conference Tuesday.¶ ¶ Attacking an offshore spill from Cuba would include flying out to the scene and spraying dispersants such as Corexit on any oil slick, to break it up and make it degrade more quickly, Baumgartner said.¶ ¶ "We will use every tool at our disposal," said the admiral who commands the 7th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami. "Aerial dispersants are going to be an effective tool. Undispersed oil is more damaging to natural resources than dispersed oil."¶ ¶ The use of Corexit during last year's Deepwater Horizon cleanup — sprayed from above as well as underwater — proved to be controversial, especially after scientists from the University of South Florida and other institutions reported finding underwater plumes of dissolved oil droplets they feared would affect marine life. Environmental activists are already questioning whether using such dispersants would be a good idea. They noted the proximity of sensitive areas such as the Dry Tortugas National Park, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the National Key Deer Refuge and John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.¶ ¶ "Just because it disappears doesn't mean it's not there," said Jonathan Ullman of the Sierra Club's South Florida office.¶ ¶ David Guggenheim of the Ocean Foundation, a marine scientist who has explored Cuba's undersea world, warned that dispersants should not be used lightly because there are still questions about the health effects from spraying Corexit during Deepwater Horizon.¶ ¶ Baumgartner said his goal in blocking the spread of a spill is not to protect Florida tourist-attracting beaches so much as it is to protect natural areas that are important to marine life, particularly coral reefs, mangroves and sea grass beds.¶ ¶ He said he expects the currents that flow through and near the Keys — the gulf's Loop Current, the Florida Current and the Gulfstream — will help buffer Florida from contact with most of any oil that might be spilled in Cuban waters.¶ ¶ But he conceded eddies are likely to break off and carry some of the oil close enough to taint the shore. That's why he wants to attack it before it ever arrives.¶ ¶ In addition to dispersants, Baumgartner said he would use skimmer boats, booms and controlled burns to stop the spill. However, a report on the Deepwater Horizon cleanup found that those tools did little to stop BP's spill, with only five percent of the oil burned and three percent skimmed off the surface.

#### **Cuba and the U.S. will coordinate spill response – U.S. companies and the Coast Guard will coordinate.**

KAY 2012

 [Jennifer Kay of The Associated Press Cuba factors into U.S. oil spill plan The Associated Press March 22, 2012, 8:30 http://www.nola.com/news/gulf-oil spill/index.ssf/2012/03/cuba\_factors\_into\_us\_oil\_spill.html]

If a future oil spill in the Caribbean Sea threatens American shores, a new federal plan obtained by The Associated Press would hinge on cooperation from neighboring foreign governments. Now that Cuba is the neighbor drilling for oil, cooperation is hard to guarantee. The International Offshore Response Plan draws on lessons from the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 and was created to stop offshore oil spills as close to their source as possible, even in foreign waters. The plan dated Jan. 30 has not been released publicly. The AP obtained a copy through a Freedom of Information Act request. ¶ After crude oil stained Gulf Coast beaches, state and federal officials are eager to head off even the perception of oil spreading toward the coral reefs, beaches and fishing that generate tens of billions of tourist dollars for Florida alone. ¶ The plan comes as Spanish oil company Repsol YPF conducts exploratory drilling in Cuban waters and the Bahamas considers similar development for next year. Complicating any oil spill response in the Florida Straits, though, is the half-century of tension between the U.S. and its communist neighbor 90 miles south of Florida. ¶ Under the plan dated Jan. 30, the Coast Guard's Miami-based 7th District would take the lead in responding to a spill affecting U.S. waters, which includes Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The district's operations cover 15,000 miles of coastline and share borders with 34 foreign countries and territories. Repsol's operations in Cuban waters are not subject to U.S. authority, but the company allowed U.S. officials to inspect its rig and review its own oil spill response plan. "We've demonstrated already and we continue to demonstrate that we're a safe, responsible operator doing all in its power to carry out a transparent and safe operation," Respol spokesman Kristian Rix said Thursday.¶ Rix declined to elaborate on the company's response plans, but he did say two minor recommendations made by U.S. officials inspecting the rig were immediately put in place. If an oil spill began in Cuban waters, Cuba would be responsible for any spill cleanup and efforts to prevent damage to the U.S., but the Coast Guard would respond as close as possible. Though a 50-year-old embargo bars most American companies from conducting business with Cuba and limits communication between the two governments, the Coast Guard and private response teams have licenses from the U.S. government to work with Cuba and its partners if a disaster arises.¶ The U.S. and Cuba have joined Mexico, the Bahamas and Jamaica since November in multilateral discussions about how the countries would notify each other about offshore drilling problems, said Capt. John Slaughter, chief of planning, readiness, and response for the 7th District.¶ He said channels do exist for U.S. and Cuban officials to communicate about spills, including the Caribbean Island Oil Pollution Response and Cooperation Plan. That's a nonbinding agreement, though, so the Coast Guard has begun training crews already monitoring the Cuban coastline for drug and migrant smuggling to keep an eye out for problems on the Repsol rig.¶ William Reilly, co-chairman of the national commission on the Deepwater Horizon spill and head of the EPA during President George H.W. Bush, said the Coast Guard generated goodwill in Cuba by notifying its government of potential risks to the island during the 2010 spill.

#### Status quo multilateral cooperation between US, Cuba, and Mexico solves.

Bromwich 2011

[Statement of Michael r. Bromwich director bureau of safety and environmental enforcement united states department of the interior house natural resources committee, subcommittee on energy and mineral resources hearing on north American offshore energy: Mexico and Canada boundary treaties and new drilling by Cuba and Bahamas November 2, 2011 (<http://www.bsee.gov/uploadedFiles/BSEE/Newsroom/Congressional_Testimony/HNRTestimonyFINAL.pdf>)]

Status of Response Capability and Readiness in the Gulf of Mexico DOI and BSEE are working closely with other federal agencies to address the threat of an oil spill in neighboring parts of the Gulf of Mexico that could affect U.S. waters, shores and interests. Several other countries on or near the Gulf of Mexico are expected to ¶ ¶ proceed with offshore drilling in their exclusive economic zones (EEZ) in the near future. ¶ ¶ As you know, the Spanish oil company Repsol has announced its intent to drill offshore wells in Cuba’s waters using a newly constructed mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU), ¶ ¶ the Scarabeo 9. In the near future, there also likely will be offshore drilling activity in the ¶ ¶ EEZs of the Bahamas and Jamaica and continuing offshore activity in Mexico’s EEZ,¶ ¶ including possible activity along the U.S.-Mexico maritime boundary pursuant to a ¶ ¶ transboundary agreement between the two countries, which is currently under ¶ ¶ negotiation. Formal negotiations of the agreement, which would advance the shared commitment of Presidents Obama and Calderon to promote the safe, efficient and equitable development of transboundary hydrocarbon reservoirs, began in August 2011. ¶ ¶ Multiple rounds of negotiations have followed, and the parties hope to have a final ¶ ¶ agreement by the end of the year.¶ ¶ The U.S. government is taking steps to protect U.S. waters and environmental and economic resources by promoting drilling safety to prevent spills in the first place and by preparing response contingencies in the event of a spill. These activities include: (1communicating with Repsol to encourage its compliance with U.S. safety and environmental standards; (2) cooperating with our regulatory agency counterparts in the region, including Mexico, through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms to develop common safety standards; and (3) taking steps to ensure that U.S. resources are available to respond to a spill. ¶ ¶ 1. Engagement with Repsol ¶ ¶ While BSEE does not have regulatory authority over Repsol’s activities in Cuba, ¶ ¶ beginning in February of this year, Repsol has voluntarily provided us information ¶ ¶ regarding its plans related to drilling and oil spill response. In our numerous ¶ ¶ communications with Repsol, we have made clear that we expect it to adhere to industry and international environmental, health, and safety standards and to have adequate prevention, mitigation, and remediation systems in place in the event of an incident. Repsol officials have stated publicly that in carrying out its exploratory drilling plans in ¶ ¶ Cuban waters, it will adhere to U.S. regulations and the highest industry standards. ¶ ¶ Repsol has offered U.S. agencies an opportunity to board the Scarabeo 9 rig that Repsol ¶ ¶ intends to use in Cuban waters to inspect the vessel and drilling equipment and to review ¶ ¶ relevant documentation.

#### Repsol already passed a oil spill response test no risk of impact.

Bolstad 2011

[Erika Bolstad environment, food safety and agriculture for McClatchy Newspapers, based in Washington, D.C. December 12, 2011 Cuba shows U.S. its response plans in case of oil spill McClatchy Newspapers (http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/12/12/132877/cuba-shows-us-its-response-plans.html#.Udsfrz7wIlU)]

WASHINGTON — As Cuba prepares to embark on a new round of exploratory offshore drilling, U.S. officials are slightly more enlightened about the island nation's plans in the event of a catastrophic oil spill on the scale of last year's Deepwater Horizon explosion. Several Caribbean countries — including the United States and Cuba — met last week in the Bahamas to talk about response plans. U.S. officials got an opportunity to see the Cuban disaster-response plans; Cuba already has participated in a mock response drill in Trinidad with the Spanish oil company that's doing the first round of drilling. That company, Repsol, also agreed to allow U.S. inspectors from the Interior Department to look at the rig that will be doing the drilling.¶ Sarah Stephens, the executive director of the Center for Democracy in the Americas, said she was encouraged that Cuban and American officials had met, along with other nations that have an interest in regional oil production.¶ "There should be a lot more direct conversation and collaboration between the U.S. and Cuba and others about the rig, because it's inevitable," she said.¶ U.S. officials say their priority is mitigating any potential threat to the United States and its territorial waters from oil drilling in Cuban waters. They say they've done nothing to facilitate oil drilling in Cuban waters, and that their main goal is to be prepared for the possibility of a spill and how they'd respond to it.¶ "The United States will continue to engage multilaterally to advance regional collaboration and to ensure responsible stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea," the State Department said in a statement issued before the meeting in the Bahamas

### Oil – China DA Links

#### China investing in Cuban Oil.

Bosquet 12/7/10 ( Earl, author at China.org.cn, gets news from China, “China's refinery deal helps Cuba's oil exploration”, <http://www.china.org.cn/business/2010-12/07/content_21495604.htm>)

It was announced this week that China's National Petroleum Corporation had signed a US$6 billion agreement for an oil refinery important to Cuba's drilling explorations.

The refinery, located in Cienfuegos province, is jointly owned by Cuba and Venezuela.

Caribbean analysts see the latest Chinese investment in Cuba as another example of the increasing role China has been playing of late in the search for oil in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the past two years, Chinese investments have also financed energy projects and formed joint ventures in Venezuela, Brazil and Ecuador.

In addition, China has leased a petroleum storage facility on St Eustatius in the Netherland Antilles, the Dutch-speaking Caribbean islands.

There have also been reports in the Caribbean and US press that China's national oil corporation has been having talks with the Texas-based refining giant, Valero, about purchasing its refinery on Aruba, another Dutch island.

But these China initiatives are only a few of the many being undertaken in the Caribbean and Latin America by international oil giants and rising oil companies.

In the Dutch Antilles, the US-based Hess Oil Corporation and Venezuela's national oil company Petroven jointly run a major oil facility in Curacao, the main island in the Dutch chain.

In the English-speaking Caribbean, oil-rich Trinidad & Tobago continues to extend and expand its exploration and extraction activities as researchers start to warn that reserves could start dwindling.

### Adv CP

#### Spill early warning system solves oil spills.

Newswise ‘12

[Nova Southeastern University 1/30/2012 Long-Term Response Plan for Cuban Oil Spill (http://www.newswise.com/articles/long-term-response-plan-for-cuban-oil-spill)]

Because an oil leak originating in Cuban waters will very quickly enter Florida waters, research, planning and preparation activities must be undertaken in advance of an accident so that authorities can respond effectively.¶ The conceptual plan ---- a collaborative effort completed by Richard E. Dodge, Ph.D., dean of NSU’s Oceanographic Center, and John R. Proni, Ph.D., executive director of FIU’s Applied Research Center and others – was presented Monday in Sunny Isles Beach to the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. At the hearing, Proni provided oral and written testimony which contained the elements of the plan.¶ The following were the recommendations that were highlighted: • Implement an oil spill early-warning monitoring system using acoustic, geophysical, satellite and other relevant methods. • Baseline assessment of the status of coral reef and associated ecosystems in the likely spill path (Straits of Florida, SE/E Florida coast) to prioritize areas for spill response and to set restoration targets should a spill occur. • Ocean observations for description of the physical oceanography and current movements to have more complete knowledge of the ocean hydrodynamic movements of the Gulf Stream and Loop Current, shallow to deep, from the Yucatan Channel to the Southeast/East coast of Florida. • Oil and dispersed oil toxicity characterization and toxicity studies to determine effects on a range of coral reef ecosystem and other organisms to develop risk assessments. • Modeling for prediction of ocean dynamics for spill movement prediction over time and space both in the vertical and horizontal. • Modeling for prediction of ecological /biological effects under various spill and response scenarios. • Modeling to assess the potential impact of different observing strategies on baseline data collection, analysis of information, and data required for response and mitigation.¶ If this NSU-FIU long-term oil spill sustainability plan were to be implemented, it would involve the following elements:¶ 1. Inviting and integrating other federal agencies, in addition to the Coast Guard, into a Cuban oil drilling/production effort for response to a Cuban oil spill. 2. Establishment of a partnership between the U.S. Coast Guard and a consortium of South Florida institutions having the in-depth experience, local knowledge, data, and expertise to be most effective in our unique oceanic and coastal environments. 3. Jointly planning a system for gathering operational data and concurrently for gathering research data with quick payoff for operational activities, e.g. real-time current information for transport calculations and modeling. 4. Jointly planning and implementing a system to gather data which will be of use in longer term damage and impact issues such as oil characterization (both at well site proximity and U.S. coastal water locations), eco-toxicological impacts, coral reef, inlet and port and spatial coastal planning impacts. 5. Evaluating the use and need for, and implementing as necessary, a non-intrusive monitoring system utilizing water borne and bottom borne energies originating at the Cuban oil operation sites. 6. Utilizing/developing systems and platforms, including optical, acoustical, and sampling systems --- both manned and autonomous --- that is capable of detecting, mapping and sampling subsurface oil. About NSU’s Oceanographic Center: A world leader in marine biological research with focus on coral reef science and shark conservation, Nova Southeastern University’s Oceanographic Center has been at the forefront of graduate and undergraduate marine science education and oceanographic research for over 48 years. Students, scientists, faculty and staff come to the Center from all corners of the globe, with the common goal of learning from the ocean’s living classrooms — in one of the most diverse ecosystems known to man.