"We are closer than ever ecological disaster"
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The explosion on an oil rig Deepwater Horizon. In the film - leakage from the perspective of satellites

Fig.: The United States Coast Guard, the movie: NASA

The giant oil spill on the shores of Nigeria. The stain is almost 200 km - 23-12-2011

Oil spill, which was formed after the spill, which occurred on the platform Tuesday, spread to about 100 nautical miles (approx. 185 km). - It's the biggest leak in this area for 10 years - said on Thursday Peter Idabor, head of the Nigerian management agencies leaks.

Special Reports

Calendar Gear

From an environmental disaster after oil rig explosion BP in the Gulf of Mexico, it's been five years. Without major changes in the oil industry, every day brings us closer to the next - experts.

Five years ago uncontrolled release of oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico caused the explosion. On an oil rig Deepwater Horizon killed eleven workers. However, the damage was even greater. The explosion caused the biggest environmental disaster in US history. In 2010, the oil gushing from the well continuously for almost three months. More than 666,000 of its tons of polluted beaches and marshes from Texas to the Florida.

Today, on the fifth anniversary of the outbreak, the effects are still being felt.

Dolphins die

Cynthia Sarthou, executive director of a project aimed at restoring the natural conditions in the Gulf, says that after five years, more questions than answers about what the lasting effects of the spill could mean for the environment. The balls of tar can still be found on the beach of Grande Terre, an island off the coast of Louisiana. - Dolphins are still dying, oil is still...
on the bottom of the ocean, tar balls continue to be lifted by the water - says Sarthou. - And no one is able to tell you what else we can find in the next five or ten years. It is really sad. Sarthou adds that the pollution is not visible to people, but there is in the marine environment and its potential consequences can haunt us for decades.

**Research**

Scientists from the Institute of Oceanography at the University of Florida conducted a series of tests to determine the impact of the disaster on the lives of marine organisms, such as oysters, shrimp, corals and marine plankton, which are the basis of the marine food chain. The results were published in 2014 in the "Journal of Shellfish Research" and "Bulletin of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology".

- The oil spill could affect marine organisms on many levels. Can produce carcinogenic and mutagenic effects - said Susan Laramore, a molecular biologist at the Institute of Oceanography at the University of Florida. - Deepwater Horizon spill coincided with the spawning of many of these animals - she added. Fishermen say that the oyster population has not returned to the level before the spill. It also affects the coastal food chain and coastal ecosystems. In addition, studies have shown that dispersed oil affects the growth of algae, which can have a negative impact on the stability of the food chain.

**Changes are necessary**

Five years after the accident on the BP platform oil and gas industry did not decrease its impact on the environment. On the contrary - the degree of technological sophistication has increased, making it difficult to predict the complex interactions between the various processes of drilling, the inevitable human errors and the deep-sea environment.

How to write for "The Guardian" András Tilcsik, an employee of the University of Toronto and Chris Clearfield, director of consulting company that focuses on risk management, analysis of the causes of the accident, which initiated an ecological disaster, pointed out three reasons: the complexity and necessity risky drilling systems, human error and organizational and supervision. In the last five years there has been some progress, but still risks of a spill in this area is greater than ever before.

**The largest ecological disaster in history**

According to the information contained in the summary of an internal BP report and the report of the committee formed to investigate, on the night of the accident, operators of critical misread the results of safety tests. They assumed that they would see what they wanted to see. In addition, when the false assumption that everything is fine, BP employees missed the previous test to save in this way, $130,000. As you can see accidents do not happen without a reason. There are places where people are focused on minimizing losses at the expense of safety.

What's more - sea drilling platforms are susceptible to unpredictable technological glitches. Drilling works have a very limited margin for error - the failure of one part of the
system can quickly spread to others. Operators can not simply disconnect the machine while searching for a solution. Unfortunately, as long-term studies indicate sociologist Charles Perrow, serious accidents are inevitable in such systems.

The rush for oil

Before sinking, the platform BP had access to one of the deepest oil and gas wells. This limit has already been exceeded and continues efforts are made to exceed the next. You do not have to look far. In an area where five years ago erupted, now the Royal Duch Shell creates the largest underwater oil field in history. In turn, the Caspian Sea was created a huge mining project on Kashagan oil field, which is an extremely difficult undertaking. Even in the Arctic are still carried out oil exploration, despite the fact that these are the most inhospitable waters in the world.

Ongoing danger

Recent incidents paint a dark picture. In November 2012 there was a deadly explosion and fire on the platform in the Gulf of Mexico. A few weeks later, Shell drilling rig ran aground off the coast of Alaska. Also in 2013 there was an accident. The rig collapsed on the shore of Louisiana.

- No major changes in the oil industry, every day brings us closer to another disaster - think Tilcsik and Clearfield.

Source: The Guardian, npr.org, sciencedaily.com | Author: ab / map