

Basking in Halliburton's Glow Once Again

Written by Alex Baer

Sunday, 16 September 2012 19:30

Thank goodness it was a mammoth, well-connected corporation like Halliburton that lost a radioactive device on September 11.

After all, if a small company or a few individuals had been involved, there would have been a need to crank up the manure-blizzard machines, and make sure everyone was socked and clobbered with terrorism charges aplenty, for starters, following such mindless behavior.

As it is, only the -- let's see now -- the NRC, the FBI, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas Department of State Health Services, local law enforcement, and a special National Guard team has so far had their bells rung with this news and been forced to chime in.

Officials say the 7- or 8-inch long stainless steel rod, which is about an inch around and is stamped with the radiation symbol and the words "do not handle," doesn't produce radiation that's "extremely dangerous" -- although, they add, if the device is spotted, it's best to stay back 20 or 25 feet.

Good to know it's not dangerous. Much.

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Upon consideration of this improbable event, you might as well have said Darth Vader slipped on a banana peel and was knocked out cold.

I mean, here we have one of the largest and most hated corporate behemoths in the world today, forced to pause its frenzied pillaging of taxpayer coffers and tone back its bloodlust all because three crew members couldn't remember what they'd done with the radioactive device, or the lock on the truck, or much else?

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(Say -- were these three team members named Moe, Larry, and Curley? Because of their poor memory skills, have they ever testified before Congress before?)

To quote Homer: *D'oh!*

Health officials say you'd have to have the rod in your possession for a few hours before it started to harm you.

On that news, it makes it difficult to know whether to be relieved or disappointed.

On the one hand, Halliburton has such a vile, evil reputation and track record to uphold, it's difficult to imagine any of their team ditching, or pitching, anything off the back of the truck, along the side of the road, that would not in fact be instantly fatal.

On the other hand, we should be relieved, as Halliburton will doubtless continue to be deeply trusted with all manner of lethal information, processes, and products -- byproducts of their direct and indirect activities in draining the U.S. Treasury -- so there's plenty of time for them to prove their real colors again...

... just as they've so ably and so well demonstrated abroad.

Of course, it's still possible for the radioactive rod to innocently turn up in someone's overall pocket or backpack, having been carried along for the better part of a day or two. That would put Halliburton squarely back in the black again as their rep goes, and out of the gray areas in which they also routinely dwell.

Of the pocket possibility, Mae West would no doubt approve an update of her famous line: "Is that a sterilizing, cancer-causing, death-provoking stainless steel rod in your pocket, or are you happy to see me?"

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And, you know, one never knows if this is just a test-drive by Halliburton, as part of a probing effort to see if there's room in the marketplace for their new STARRRRR (Stupid Acts for Radiation Recovery, Retrieval, Recuperation, and Re-profitization) Program in this country.

It could be Halliburton's hot-new, up-and-coming profit center, now that Iraq is winding down. You just never know about these things -- or about the Pentagon's eager willingness to pay through various orifices for such services -- until you force the issue and try.

Meanwhile, I hope someone is keeping track of the tab on this misadventure of time, trouble, effort, and resources. When it's over, we should bill Halliburton for all the hoopla and mayhem their whopper of an oversight-and-oops has cost us.

Halliburton's bill for this mess -- once discounted for their preferred vendor status, and, after adding in a tip -- should come to just \$4 or \$5 trillion dollars.

Call it a special, hazardous operations, last-minute, emergency-based no-bid contract, with time-and-a-half, that got sprung on *them* this time.

Always a refreshing change, turning the tables on Darth Vader.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-09-13/halliburton-hunting-for-missing-radioactive-probe-in-west-texas.html>

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/49045210/ns/technology_and_science-science/t/halliburton-misplaces-mystery-radioactive-device-do-not-handle/