



## BP's Deepwater Horizon -Intersection has taken place! - and Open Thread

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on September 17, 2010 - 10:14am

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

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Well, although the Admiral said that the intersection of the relief well with the Deepwater Horizon well would occur within 24-hours of his last press conference, and we are now past that, there has, as yet, been no word of the current status. BP noted that at 11:30 am on Thursday morning (Central) that DDII, who has the BOP on the failed well, has pulled its diagnostic tools from the well, until the interception is completed. Now the nature of those tools has not been explained, they were, if my memory serves, looking to fish out the dropped drill pipe that had been held by the shear rams in the original BOP. However, it isn't clear whether even that operation had been completed. Remember also that if the drill pipe is sitting on the cement rather than in it (a function of when it fell), there is not likely to be enough space for any tools to get down to do anything inside the casing (such as perforate it to [create a circulation path](#)).

While the BP site notes that the DDIII – which is drilling the relief well – is conducting a ranging run, one should remember the Admiral noting that with the new method they are using they can do the ranging without pulling the drill string back the way that they had to do when they were further away. (It should also be noted that it would not be unheard off for the drill to miss on the first attempt).

It could also be that the well has been intersected, but that the condition of the wall of the well has created an unexpected problem (bear in mind that the relief well is trying to drill into the open hole section of the well, where there is no casing or cement liner on the wall, and the production casing is likely set away from the well wall.)

There are a number of things that can be postulated, we will just have to wait for some official word before we can find out what is happening. Even the ROV camera feeds can find nothing more interesting to show than poking the new BOP with a rubber hose.

Apparently I was wrong in my understanding of what is going on with the rescue of the Chilean miners. I had interpreted the intersection of a drill with a rock bolt as meaning that one of the smaller bores, similar to that which found the miners, had been drilling another small access hole for sending down supplies (such as the [empanadas and steaks](#) they will get this weekend to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the country).

However it turns out that there are a couple of other large drilling units on site that are now trying to reach the trapped miners. The one that had the broken bit that took a week to fish from the hole, is being drilled using a T-130 drill, which is reaming one of the supply holes already drilled from 5-inches to 12-inches. That step in the process should be perhaps completed by this weekend, but then the shaft will have to be widened in a second step out to the 28-inch diameter that the miners need to get out.

Reaming the hole in two stages has some advantages, since it does not force the large volumes of debris down the small initial hole,, where larger fragments might jam and stop the advance. The drill is [already at the 1,640 ft mark](#), out of the 2,067 ft needed to reach the miners. The Strata 950 has only reached 1,050 ft.

Meanwhile a third option, [using a oil platform drilling rig \(Rig 422\)](#) has arrived and been set-up. It might be possible for this to drill a larger hole faster, and it is being located so that it has to drill a slightly shorter distance (1,958 ft) to reach the refuge. It can drill at between 65 and 130 ft a day. Apparently the roads over which the parts had to be carried were so bad that several of the haulage trucks arrived on site with flat tires.

And it is worthy of note that the European Union has decided that the last coal mine in Hungary will have to close at the end of this year. Since the mine feeds a [local 240 MW power plant](#), which will immediately begin disassembly, this has implications for both the heating of the community this winter, and for future local unemployment. The argument has been made that because coal mining is subsidized (it used to be in the UK, that coal was subsidized, in part to keep the miners in employment, after the mines were closed unemployment in those regions of the UK was very high for a significant number of years). The mine is currently burning biomass with the coal, in order to reduce pollution, but that is no longer a sufficient justification for its continued operation. It supplies 5% of the energy used in Hungary.

This should be contrasted with plans in the UK to build a new 1.6 GW coal-fired power station [at Hunterston in Ayrshire](#). It is a plan that has led to [strong opposition](#) but in all these debates, it is not clear if the reality of alternate supplies at the levels needed has been adequately considered. Given the strong objections from some locals over the siting of wind farms in South-West Scotland (farms it is actually difficult to see, as I have found), one wonders what source of magical power is expected to replace the diminishing contributions from North Sea oil and gas.

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Last night, we learned that the well intersection had taken place, and that plan was to proceed with the bottom kill. According to Admiral Allen:

"I have received extensive briefings over the last 24 hours regarding the final effort to intercept the Macondo well. Through a combination of sensors embedded in the drilling equipment and sophisticated instrumentation that is capable of sensing distance to the well casing, BP engineers and the federal science team have concluded that the Development Driller III relief well has intersected the Macondo well. This determination was made based on a loss of drilling fluids that indicated communication had been established beyond the relief well, the pressure exerted against the drill bit as it came in contact with the well casing and, finally, an increase in pressure in the choke line of the Macondo well blow out preventer. While each of these indicators taken separately would not necessarily be conclusive, the aggregate data available supports the conclusion that the two wells are joined. It is also important to note that none of the measurements supported a scenario where the annulus of the well is in communication with the reservoir. Accordingly, we intend to proceed with preparation to cement the annulus and complete the bottom kill of the well. Further information will be provided as cementing procedures are completed."

I note that while this says that the annulus is not now in communication with the reservoir, it

The Oil Drum | BP's Deepwater Horizon -Intersection has taken place! - and <http://www.theoil Drum.com/node/6964> does not say that it was not earlier (after the initial cementing of the well).



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