

THE WISHING WELL: IS MACONDO THE MOUTH OF HELL SILENCED?

✖ For the first time since Macondo, the Mouth Of Hell, first blew out in a fiery explosion on April 20, killing eleven men in the process, BP seems to have the well under control and there appears to be no hydrocarbons leaking into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. From Alabama Live (website of the Birmingham News):

A BP official said oil stopped flowing from a well in the Gulf of Mexico at 2:25 p.m. today as testing began on a cap over the leak.

It's the first time oil has not leaked from the well since April.

In a technical briefing, BP Senior Vice President Kent Wells said "it felt very good not to see any oil going into the Gulf of Mexico."

"What I'm trying to do is maintain my emotions," Wells said. "Remember, this is the start of our test."

The procedure – known as a well integrity test – should determine whether the oil can be blocked without damaging the well.

Officials have said the cap could be used to either block the oil or move the oil to containment ships floating on the surface, until a relief well can be completed.

This is indeed positive. And if Macondo really is shut in with no leakage and integrity issues evidencing themselves, BP is, for once, due some congratulations.

Still, I have a nagging question on the

integrity of the well that has neither been answered to date nor put to rest by the seemingly joyous news today. Namely, it is a given from the way it occurred, not to mention subsequently admitted by Thad Allen and BP, that the "Top Kill" process was cut quite short due to inexplicable loss of mud in process indicating a lack of well integrity at some point (or multiple points) in the bore length. There is no reason to believe whatever caused said leakage, and fear leading to the termination of Top Kill, has magically corrected or repaired itself.

As BP's Kent Wells properly noted, the news is good so far, but the test is not complete and the conclusion not yet drawn with finality. So, for now, let us hope and wish the well to be sealed and stable. Consider this thread to be open to any and all discussion on the Macondo experience and anything else for that matter.

[Graphic – BP: Broken Promises. Logo design by Foye 2010 submitted as part of the Art For Change BP Logo Redesign Contest and used with permission]