From: Marcia K McNutt [mcnutt@usgs.gov]
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To: Kenneth Salazar; SCHU
Subject: Way forward

Evidence from the top kill operation strongly suggests that the original blast ruptured the 18" rupture disks in the 16" casing, which means that the mud pumped in the top kill is merely escaping into shallow formations well above the reservoir. This means that a top kill is not only not possible but that any attempt to shut in this well from above strongly risks over pressuring deep formations with the hydrocarbons and causing an uncontainable blowout to the seafloor.

The best way forward is flow containment and bottom kill.

Interestly, had the BOP properly functioned to shut in the well from above after the explosion ruptured the 18" disks, rather than dealing with trying to contain a leak from one well we might instead be faced with an uncontrollable hydrocarbon blowout along geologic fractures.

Marcia