BLOWOUT PREVENTER STACK LANDING ASSIST TOOL

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0001] This invention relates to a blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured to the lower end of said telescoping joint. Such assemblies commonly are used in offshore oil and gas drilling operations performed from a semisubmersible drilling rig or a drilling platform.

[0002] Offshore oil and gas drilling operations utilize a wellhead housing supported on the ocean floor with a blowout preventer stack secured at its upper end. A blowout preventer stack is an assemblage of blowout preventers and valves used to control well bore pressure within the wellhead housing. The upper end of the blowout preventer stack has an end connection or riser adapter that allows the blowout preventer stack to be connected to a series of pipes, known as riser or riser pipe, connected in end to end relationship to form a riser string. This riser string extends upwardly to the drilling rig or drilling platform positioned over the wellhead housing.

[0003] In order to prevent the riser string from collapsing under its own weight, it is necessary for the riser string to be supported at the ocean surface by the drilling rig. This support takes the form of a hydraulic tensioning system and telescoping joint that connect to the upper end of the riser string and maintains tension on the riser string so it will not collapse. The telescoping joint is composed of a pair of concentric pipes, known as an inner and outer barrel, that are axially telescoping within each other with the upper interior end of the outer barrel sealing against the exterior of the inner barrel. The lower end of the outer barrel connects to the upper end of the aforementioned riser string. The hydraulic tensioning system connects to a tension ring secured on the exterior of the outer barrel of the telescoping joint and thereby applies tension to the riser string. The upper end of the inner barrel of the telescoping joint is connected to the drilling platform. The axial telescoping of the inner barrel within the outer barrel of the telescoping joint compensates for relative elevation changes between the rig and wellhead housing as the rig moves up or down in response to the ocean waves.

[0004] Oil and gas drilling operations as described above occasionally are performed

with multiple wellhead housings positioned in a grid pattern in a supporting structure known as a manifold placed on the ocean floor. In this type of operation it is necessary to lift the riser string and blowout preventer stack upwardly off one wellhead housing to allow the rig to be moved and the riser string and blowout preventer stack lowered onto the next wellhead housing. Current practice has required disconnection of the telescoping joint, tensioning lines and associated piping from the riser string in order to be able to lift the blowout preventer stack high enough to move to another wellhead housing. There is therefore a need for a tool that would allow lifting and moving of the riser string and blowout preventer stack without requiring disconnection of the tension joint, tensioning lines and associated piping from the riser string connection. The blowout preventer stack landing assist tool of the current invention offers such a tool that is easily useable without requiring any of the time consuming and costly disconnection and reconnecting procedures currently required.

2. Description of Related Art

[0005] No related art is known at this time.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The blowout preventer stack landing assist tool of the present invention is designed for use with a standard telescoping joint used in oil and gas drilling operations. The blowout preventer stack landing assist tool includes a main body having a drill pipe sub upper connection for connection to a handling string. An outer body surrounds the main body and has a bore that receives the main body therein. The main body is rotatable within the outer body. A plurality of keys is attached on the exterior of the outer body. A segment carrier body having a tapered outer portion has a thread on its interior that engages a mating thread on the lower end of the main body. A plurality of load segments slidably engages the tapered outer portion of the segment carrier body and are movable between retracted and extended positions by rotation of the main body to cause axial movement of the segment carrier body relative to the outer body and between extended and retracted positions by rotation of the main body in the opposite direction.

[0007] Additionally, a landing tool adapter joint for connection in the riser string between the telescoping joint and depending riser joints is provided. The adapter joint has a bore

that includes a plurality of key slots for receiving the keys secured on the outer body of the blowout preventer stack landing assist tool and a load segment profile complementary to the load segments and receiving the load segments when in their extended position. In an alternate embodiment, the key slots and load segment profiles are machined into the lower interior of the outer barrel of the telescoping joint, thereby eliminating the need for the adapter joint.

[0008] A principal object of the present invention is to provide a blowout preventer stack landing assist tool and landing tool adapter joint for use with a standard telescoping joint used in oil and gas drilling operations that allows lifting and moving of the riser string and blowout preventer stack without requiring disconnection of the telescoping joint, tensioning lines and associated piping from the riser string connection.

[0009] These with other objects and advantages of the present invention are pointed out with specificness in the claims annexed hereto and form a part of this disclosure. A full and complete understanding of the invention may be had by reference to the accompanying drawings and description of the preferred embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] These and other objects and advantages of the present invention are set forth below and further made clear by reference to the drawings, wherein:

[0011] FIGURES 1A and 1B are an elevation view of a drilling rig with a typical riser string and blowout preventer stack used in oil and gas drilling operations connected to a wellhead housing. The riser string is connected to the telescoping joint by a landing tool adapter joint with an internal profile to allow use of the blowout preventer stack landing assist tool of the present invention.

[0012] FIGURES 2A and 2B are a sectional view of the blowout preventer stack landing assist tool as it is being inserted into the landing tool adapter joint.

[0013] FIGURES 3A and 3B are an exploded view of the blowout preventer stack landing assist tool.

[0014] FIGURE 4 is a sectional view of the blowout preventer stack landing assist tool initially landing in the landing tool adapter joint.

[0015] FIGURE 5 is a sectional view of the blowout preventer stack landing assist tool

landed and locked into the landing tool adapter joint.

[0016] FIGURE 6 is a sectional view of an alternate embodiment in which the key slots and load segment profiles of the landing tool adapter joint have been machined in the lower end of the outer barrel of a telescoping joint to eliminate the need for an adapter joint.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0017] With reference to the drawings, and particularly to **FIGURE 1**, an elevation view of a drilling rig with a typical riser string and blowout preventer stack used in oil and gas drilling operations connected to a wellhead housing is shown. Wellhead housing **10** is disposed on the ocean floor with blowout preventer stack **12** connected thereto by hydraulic connector **14**. Blowout preventer stack **12** includes multiple blowout preventers **16** and kill and choke valves **18** arranged in a vertical arrangement to control well bore pressure in a manner well known to those of skill in the art. Disposed on the upper end of blowout preventer stack **12** is riser adapter **20** to allow connection of riser string **22** to blowout preventer stack **12**. Riser string **22** is composed of multiple sections of pipe or riser joints **24** connected in end to end sealing connection that extends upwardly to drilling rig **26**.

[0018] Drilling rig **26** includes moonpool **28** having telescoping joint **30** disposed therein. Telescoping joint **30** includes inner barrel **32** which telescopes inside outer barrel **34** to allow relative motion between drilling rig **26** and wellhead housing **10**. Dual packer **35** is disposed at the upper end of outer barrel **34** and seals against the exterior of inner barrel **32**. Landing tool adapter joint **36** is connected between the upper end of riser string **22** and outer barrel **34** of telescoping joint **30**. Tension ring **38** is secured on the exterior of outer barrel **34** and connected by tension lines **40** to a hydraulic tensioning system well known to those of ordinary skill in the art. This arrangement allows tension to be applied by the hydraulic tensioning system to tension ring **38** and telescoping joint **30**. This tension is transmitted through landing tool adapter joint **36** to riser string **22** to prevent its collapse. The upper end of inner barrel **32** is terminated by flex joint **42** and diverter **44** connecting to gimbal **46** and rotary table spider **48**.

[0019] Referring to **FIGURE 2**, blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50** is shown being inserted or lowered into landing tool adapter joint **36**. Landing tool adapter joint **36** is a tubular member with bore **52** having riser end flange **54** at its lower end and telescoping joint connection flange **56** at its upper end. Bore **52** is sized to be greater than or equal to the bore of riser string **22** and blowout preventer stack **12** to allow full bore access to wellhead housing **10**. Disposed in bore **52** are anti-rotation slots **58** and load segment shoulder profiles **60** to allow landing and operation of blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50** in a manner to be explained hereinafter.

[0020] **FIGURE 2** shows a sectional view and **FIGURE 3** an exploded view of blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50** that includes main body **62** with drill pipe sub **64** threaded into its upper end. Lock pin **66** engages groove **68** on drill pipe sub **64** to prevent unthreading of drill pipe sub **64** from main body **62**. Outer body **70** is a tubular member with bore **72** into which main body **62** fits. Main body **62** has radially outwardly extending shoulder **74** disposed on its exterior that engages radially inwardly extending shoulder **76** of outer body **70** to allow main body **62** to rotate within outer body **70**. Shoulders **74** and **76** are maintained in engagement by retainer flange **78** that is secured to main body **62** by cap screws **80**. Thrust bearing **82** is disposed between shoulders **74** and **76** and thrust bearing **84** is disposed between shoulder **76** and retainer flange **78** to facilitate rotation between main body **62** and outer body **70**.

[0021] Mud return passage **86** extends axially from the lower end of main body **62** to a medial point of main body **62** to intersect a plurality of radially disposed mud return holes **88** that exit main body **62** between retainer flange **78** and drill pipe sub **64** to allow drilling mud within riser string **22** to flow through blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50**. Thread **90** is formed on the lower end of main body **62** and engages mating thread **92** on the interior of segment carrier body **94**. Segment carrier body **94** is a generally tubular member having an expanded or tapered outer portion **96**. Tapered outer portion **96** is surrounded by cup shaped end cap **98** that is retained on the lower end of main body **62** by retainer plate **100** which is secured by cap screws **102**.

[0022] Segment carrier body **94** has position indicator rods **104** threaded into its lower end that extend through holes **106** in end cap **98** when blowout preventer stack landing

assist tool **50** is in its running position. Circumferentially disposed on expanded or tapered outer portion **96** of segment carrier body **94** are a plurality of segment guides **108** that are secured to tapered outer portion **96** by cap screws **110**. Load segments **112** are disposed on segment guides **108** and move radially outwardly when segment carrier body **94** moves axially. Load segments **112** include load shoulders **114** on their exterior that engage load segment shoulder profiles **60** of landing tool adapter joint **36**. Segment guides **108** include lips **109** that engage mating T-slots **113** on the interior of load segments **112** to ensure positive extension and retraction of load segments **112**. Guide rods **116** are threaded into end cap **98** and extend upwardly into the guide rod holes **118** in the lower end of segment carrier body **94**.

[0023] Outer body **70** has key slots **120** formed on its exterior with anti-rotation keys **122** secured to outer body **70** at their upper end by cap screws **124**. Anti-rotation keys **122** act as cantilever beams secured at their upper end by cap screws **124** that can bend and allow lower end profile **126** to move radially and engage anti-rotation slots **58**. Axially disposed splines **128** are formed on the interior of outer body **70** and are engaged by anti-rotation keys **130** secured on segment carrier body **94** by cap screws **132** for purposes to be explained hereinafter.

[0024] Referring to **FIGURES 4** and **5**, a typical sequence of operation for use and operation of blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50** with landing tool adapter joint **36** is shown. Segment carrier body **94** is at the lower end of its travel with load segments **112** disposed thereon in their retracted position. Blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50** is then lowered through telescoping joint **30** on a drill pipe handling string (not shown) into landing tool adapter joint **36**. Lower end profile **126** of anti-rotation keys **122** is sized to allow anti-rotation keys **122** to flex inwardly and ride along bore **52** of landing tool adapter joint **36** until lower end profile **126** reaches an elevation coincident with anti-rotation slots **58**. At this point, the drill pipe handling string is rotated clockwise until lower end profile **126** aligns with anti-rotation slots **58** and then blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50** is lowered approximately 2 ¼ inches to allow full engagement of lower end profile **126** with anti-rotation slots **58** as shown in **FIGURE 5**. The operator then begins rotating the drill pipe handling string counter-clockwise to which main body **62** of blowout

preventer stack landing assist tool **50** is connected. As anti-rotation keys **122** are engaging anti-rotation slots **58**, outer body **70** is restrained from rotation. Simultaneously, anti-rotation keys **130** of segment carrier body **94** are engaging splines **128** on the interior of outer body **70** thereby also preventing segment carrier body **94** from rotating as threads **90** and **92** are engaging. This counter-clockwise rotation of main body **62** for a total of 7.5 turns causes segment carrier body **94** to move axially and urge load segments **112** radially outwardly to allow load shoulders **114** to engage load segment shoulder profiles **60** and thereby securely lock blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50** into landing tool adapter joint **36**. The drill pipe handling string can then be raised to lift riser string **22** and blowout preventer stack **12** to a sufficient height to allow blowout preventer stack **12** to be moved to a new wellhead housing and lowered into position. Once blowout preventer stack **12** is landed on the new wellhead housing, the drill pipe handling string is rotated 7.5 turns clockwise. This rotation causes segment carrier body **94** to move axially downwardly and lips **109** of segment carrier guides **108** to move along T-slots **113** of load segments **112** to provide positive mechanical retraction of lead segments **112** and ensure blowout preventer stack landing assist tool **50** can be released from landing tool adapter joint **36**.

[0025] An alternate embodiment to allow use of the blowout preventer stack landing assist tool of the present invention is shown in **FIGURE 6**. In this embodiment, anti-rotation slots **58** and load segment shoulder profiles **60** of landing tool adapter joint **36** are machined in bore **134** of the lower end of outer barrel **34** of telescoping joint **30**. This type of construction eliminates the need for landing tool adapter joint **36** and allows the lifting and moving of telescoping joint **30**, riser string **22** and blowout preventer stack **12** in a single operation without requiring lengthy disconnection and reconnecting procedures. Bore **134** is sized to be greater than or equal to the bore of riser string **22** and blowout preventer stack **12** as in the first embodiment to allow full bore access to wellhead housing **10**.

[0026] The construction of our blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly will be readily understood from the foregoing description and it will be seen that we have provided a blowout preventer stack landing assist tool that allows lifting and moving of the

riser string and blowout preventer stack without requiring disconnection of the tension joint, tensioning lines and associated piping from the riser string connection. Furthermore, while the invention has been shown and described with respect to certain preferred embodiments, it is obvious that equivalent alterations and modifications will occur to others skilled in the art upon the reading and understanding of the specification. The present invention includes all such equivalent alterations and modifications, and is limited only by the scope of the appended claims

What is claimed is:

1. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, comprising:

(a) a blowout preventer stack landing assist tool, including;

(*i*) a main body having a drill pipe sub upper connection;

(*ii*) an outer body having a bore receiving said main body therein, said main body rotatable within said outer body;

(*iii*) a plurality of keys secured on said outer body;

(*iv*) a segment carrier body threadably engaging the lower end of said main body, said segment carrier body having a tapered outer portion;

(*v*) a plurality of load segments slidably engaging said tapered outer portion of said segment carrier body, said plurality of load segments movable between retracted and extended positions by axial movement of said segment carrier body relative to said outer body; and,

(b) a blowout preventer stack landing tool adapter joint for connection in a riser string between a telescoping joint and riser joints extending below said telescoping joint, said blowout preventer stack landing tool adapter joint having a bore therethrough including a plurality of key slots for receiving said keys secured on said outer body of said blowout preventer stack landing assist tool and a load segment profile complementary to said load segments and receiving said load segments when in their extended position.

2. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 1, wherein:

said blowout preventer stack landing assist tool keys are radially flexible between a first position allowing said keys to move axially along the bore of said blowout preventer stack landing tool adapter joint and a second position wherein said keys engage said key slots in said bore to position said blowout preventer stack landing assist tool and to prevent rotation of said outer body relative to said landing tool adapter joint.

3. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 2, wherein:

said load segments are urged radially into engagement with said load shoulder segment profile by axial movement of said segment carrier body when said main body is rotated.

4. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 3, wherein:

said load segments include a plurality of shoulders on their exterior, said plurality of load segment shoulders engaging a plurality of complementary load segment shoulder profiles in said blowout preventer stack landing tool adapter joint.

5. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 4, including:

a plurality of segment guides disposed on said tapered outer portion of said segment carrier body, said segment guides having plurality of lips; and,

a slot disposed on the interior of said load segments, said load segment slot engaging said segment guide lips and providing positive extension and retraction of said load segments by axial movement of said segment carrier body when said main body is rotated.

6. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 5, including:

an end cap retained on the lower end of said main body by a retainer plate secured to said main body by securing means; and,

said end cap preventing said segment carrier body from unthreading from said main body.

7. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 6, wherein:

said segment carrier body includes a plurality of position indicator rods secured thereto, said position indicator rods extending through said end cap.

8. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 7, wherein:

said end cap including a plurality of guide rods secured thereto, said guide rods extending axially into complementary holes in said segment carrier body.

9. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 8, wherein:

said segment carrier body further including anti-rotation keys secured thereto; and,

said segment carrier body anti-rotation keys engaging complementary splines on

the interior of said outer body to prevent rotation therebetween.

10. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 9, wherein:

said main body including a radially outwardly extending shoulder engaging a radially inwardly extending shoulder formed in said outer body bore with a bearing positioned therebetween; and,

a bearing arranged on the upper face of said outer body, said bearing retained by a retainer cap secured to said main body.

11. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 10, wherein:

said main body further includes a mud return passage extending axially from said lower end thereof to a medial point and intersecting a plurality of radially disposed mud return holes that exit said main body between said main body bearing retainer cap and said drill pipe sub upper connection.

12. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, comprising:

a main body adapted to receive a drill pipe adapter sub at its upper end;

an outer body having a bore receiving said main body therein, said main body rotatable within said outer body;

a plurality of keys secured on said outer body;

a segment carrier body engaging the lower end of said main body with complementary threads, said segment carrier body having a tapered outer portion;

a plurality of load segments slidably engaging said tapered outer portion of said segment carrier body, said plurality of load segments movable between retracted and extended positions by axial movement of said segment carrier body relative to said outer body; and,

a profile formed in a portion of the bore of an outer barrel of a telescoping joint having a diameter substantially equal to the bore of the inner barrel of said telescoping joint, said profile including a plurality of key slots for receiving said keys secured on said outer body and a load segment profile complementary to said load segments and receiving said load segments when in their extended position.

13. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 12, wherein:

said keys are radially flexible between a first position allowing said keys to move axially along said telescoping joint inner and outer barrel bores and a second position wherein said keys engage said key slots in said outer barrel bore to position said outer body and to prevent rotation of said outer body relative to said telescoping joint outer barrel.

14. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 13, wherein:

said load segments are urged radially into engagement with said load shoulder segment profile by axial movement of said of segment carrier body when said main body is rotated.

15. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 14, wherein:

said load segments include a plurality of shoulders on their exterior, said plurality of load segment shoulders engaging a plurality of complementary load segment shoulder profiles in said outer barrel bore.

16. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool assembly, according to Claim 15, including:

a plurality of segment guides disposed on said tapered outer portion of said segment carrier body, said segment guides having plurality of lips; and,

a slot disposed on the interior of said load segments, said load segment slot engaging said segment guide lips and providing positive extension and retraction of said load segments by axial movement of said segment carrier body when said main body is rotated.

17. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 16, including:

an end cap retained on the lower end of said main body by a retainer plate secured to said main body by securing means; and,

said end cap preventing said segment carrier body from unthreading from said main body.

18. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 16, wherein:

said segment carrier body includes a plurality of position indicator rods secured thereto, said position indicator rods extending through said end cap.

19. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 17, wherein:

said end cap including a plurality of guide rods secured thereto, said guide rods extending axially into complementary holes in said segment carrier body.

20. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 19, wherein:

said segment carrier body further including anti-rotation keys secured thereto; and,

said segment carrier body anti-rotation keys engaging complementary splines on the interior of said outer body to prevent rotation therebetween.

21. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 20, wherein:

said main body including a radially outwardly extending shoulder engaging a radially inwardly extending shoulder formed in said outer body bore with a bearing positioned therebetween; and,

a bearing arranged on the upper face of said outer body, said bearing retained by a retainer cap secured to said main body.

22. A blowout preventer stack landing assist tool for use with a telescoping joint having a riser string and blowout preventer stack secured thereto, according to Claim 21, wherein:

said main body further includes a mud return passage extending axially from said lower end thereof to a medial point and intersecting a plurality of radially disposed mud return holes that exit said main body between said main body bearing retainer cap and said drill pipe sub.