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TITLE: ADJUSTABLE SUB-TENSION HANGER

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION.

The field of this invention relates to devices to tie a casing string back from a mudline hanger anchored at the ocean floor to a wellhead mounted on a platform at the surface.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION.

The distance between a mudline hanger and a seat in the wellhead on which the hanger, at the upper end of the string, is to be landed is fixed. It is necessary to adjust the effective vertical spacing between the hangers at opposite ends of the string in some way in order to suspend it in tension. Various solutions have been proposed to this problem in the past. One is the use of short lengths of "pup" joints in the casing and another solution has been to cut the casing string at the wellhead and suspend the cut end from split-type hangers as is frequently done in the case of land-type completions. Such techniques are time consuming and costly, particularly in off-shore installations.

U.S. Patent 4,794,988 discloses a hanger body which includes a vertically adjustable component. The upper portion is adapted to land on the seat in the head and the lower portion is connected to the upper end of the casing string. During installation a shoulder on the upper part is initially above and then lowered on to the seat in order to support the string and tension. This design required a hanger body of complex and expensive construction and further required the wellhead to be taller than would necessarily be required for a conventional installation. Prior solutions have not offered the use of a straight-threaded longitudinally adjustable sub in the string beneath the hanger because of frequent requirements to rotate the string in opposite directions.

U.S. Patent 4,995,464 illustrates an adjustable sub which is manipulated by a tool lowered through the hanger body and into the sub so as to adjust it from an extended position in which its shoulder is above the seat in the head to a retracted position in which the shoulder is seated on the head and the casing string is placed in tension. The operation of this device is disclosed in Figures 2 and 3 of U.S. Patent 4,995,464. A sleeve 23 is disposed between tubular 21 and the sleeve 23 members 21 and 22. The tubular members 21 and 22 are rotationally locked by lug 24. The sleeve 23 has opposite hand threads on an inner and an outer surface to match corresponding threads on the tubular members 21 and 22. Rotation of the sleeve 23 translates the tubular 21 and the sleeve 23 downwardly to land the shoulder on the seat in the head. The disadvantages of the design in U.S. Patent 4,995,464 are that the sleeve 23 is difficult to manufacture and operate.

Also relevant in this field are U.S. Patents 4,408,783; 4,465,134; 4,653,589; 4,653,778; 4,726,425; 4,239,083; 4,634,152; 4,674,576; 4,714,111; 4,719,971; 4,823,871; 4,836,288; 5,176,218; 5,439,061; 5,607,019; 5,638,903; 5,653,289; 4,757,860.

U.S. Patent 5,524,710 illustrates the use of external grooves and a dog which is insertable into the grooves to maintain tension on the string off of a seat or support shoulder in the wellhead.

U.S. Patents 4,938,289 and 4,794,988 illustrate the use of a lock-ring device to retain tension on the string off of a seat or support in the wellhead after tension is pulled on the string.

Finally, U.S. Patent 5,878,816 shows the same technique as illustrated in U.S. Patent 5,524,710 of putting dogs in grooves to retain tension held on the string so that the string is supported off a support surface in the wellhead for retaining the tension.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION.

A tensioning device is disclosed which brings two tubular segments closer together with an intermediate adjustment sleeve. The sleeve is threaded externally and may be accessed

internally by a tool to rotate it. The threaded sleeve is secured to the upper tubular in a manner that permits relative rotation. Rotation of the sleeve advances it downwardly in the lower tubular, pulling down the upper tubular secured to the rotating sleeve. The upper tubular translates until a load shoulder hits a support surface in the wellhead to achieve the desired tension in the string.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING.

Figure 1 is a sectional elevational view of the adjustable sub-tension hanger of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT.

Referring to Figure 1, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the wellhead has been omitted for clarity and the adjustment device is the only thing depicted. Referring to Figure 1, the apparatus **A** includes a lower tubular **10** and an upper tubular **12**. Secured to the upper tubular **12** is tension hanger **14** which is attached at thread **16**. The hanger **14** has a peripheral tapered shoulder **18** which ultimately engages a mating surface in the wellhead (not shown) when the proper amount of tension has been applied to the tubular string **20** which is connected to the lower tubular **10** at thread **22**. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the tubular string **20** is secured at the ocean floor to a mudline hanger (not shown). Tension is pulled on the string **20** through a tool which engages the tension groove **24**. When an upward tensile force is applied to groove **24**, shoulder **18** moves further away from its mating shoulder in the wellhead (not shown). In order to close that gap and retain the tension applied to the string **20** through groove **24**, an adjustment sleeve **26** is threadly engaged to lower tubular **10** via an internal thread **28** on the adjustment sleeve **26**. One of our grooves **30** are disposed at the lower end of adjustment sleeve **26** to facilitate the insertion of the tool to turn it with respect to lower tubular **10**. A dog which can be a segmented-ring **32** secures adjustment sleeve **26** to the upper tubular **12** while permitting relative rotation between them. A seal **34** is mounted to the upper tubular **12** to seal against lower tubular **10**.

Those skilled in the art can see that with a tensile force applied to the string **20** through tension groove **24**, a tool can be inserted into grooves **30** to rotate adjustment sleeve **26**. Rotation of adjustment sleeve **26** moves it downwardly toward tension groove **24**. Because of the connection at segmented-ring **32**, the downward movement of the adjustment sleeve **26** results in translation of the upper tubular **12** and with it the seal **34**. The segmented ring connection **32** removes the need to rotationally lock the upper tubular **12**. Optionally a rotational lock can be added. Eventually, sufficient rotation of adjustment sleeve **26** is accomplished to bring the tapered shoulder **18** into contact with its mating shoulder in the wellhead (not shown) in order to retain the tension which, up until that time, had been held in the string **20** by a tool inserted into tension groove **24**. The tension tool is removed from groove **24** and the tool to rotate the adjustment sleeve **26** is removed from groove **30** when shoulder **18** lands on its mating shoulder in the wellhead (not shown).

Those skilled in the art can now see that this design is relatively simple and presents a more economical and reliable design than that shown in U.S. Patent 4,995,464. The sleeve **26** only requires a thread on one side as opposed to an intermediate sleeve between the two tubulars with an inside and outside thread as illustrated in the prior art. The use of the intermediate sleeve effectively limits the internal diameter available through the central bore of the prior art device illustrated in the U.S. Patent 4,995,464. This is distinguished from the apparatus **A** of the present invention where the adjustment sleeve **26** has the same internal diameter as the upper tubular **12** and even, perhaps, a greater diameter. This means that the adjustment sleeve **26** does not reduce the minimum diameter through the string **20** or at most reduces it less than a sleeve threaded inside and out.

It should be recognized that while the present invention has been described in relation to the preferred embodiment thereof, those skilled in the art may develop a wide variation of structural details without departing from the principles of the invention. Therefore, the appended claims are to be construed to cover all equivalents falling within the true scope and spirit of the invention.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An assembly for tensioning a tubular string for support from a wellhead support surface, comprising:

a lower tubular member for connection to the tubular string;

an upper tubular member having a shoulder for engagement with the support surface in the wellhead;

an adjustment sleeve further comprising a single thread, said adjustment sleeve connected to said upper and lower tubulars such that when said adjustment sleeve is rotated, relative movement occurs between said upper and lower tubulars.

2. The assembly of claim 1, further comprising:

a connection between said adjustment sleeve and said upper tubular which allows relative rotation as well as tandem longitudinal movement which brings said shoulder toward the support surface.

3. The assembly of claim 2, further comprising:

a seal between said upper tubular and said lower tubular.

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4. The assembly of claim 2, wherein:

said connection further comprises a dog, said adjustment sleeve and said upper tubular comprise opposed grooves, said dog extending in said grooves.

5. The assembly of claim 4, wherein:

said dog comprises a segmented ring.

6. The assembly of claim 1, wherein:

said adjustment sleeve has an outer surface in contact with said lower tubular with said single thread disposed therebetween.

7. The assembly of claim 6, wherein:

said upper tubular is secured to said adjustment sleeve by a dog disposed in opposed grooves in said upper tubular and said adjustment sleeve.

8. The assembly of claim 7, wherein:

said dog comprises a segmented ring.



9. The assembly of claim 8, wherein:

said adjustment sleeve has an internal surface and at least one recess to facilitate its rotation with a tool.

10. The assembly of claim 9, further comprising:

a seal between said upper and lower tubulars.

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11. The assembly of claim 1, wherein:

said upper tubular and adjustment sleeve having a bore therethrough, said bore in said adjustment sleeve is at least as large as said bore in said upper tubular.