

DRILLING AHEAD

Think you have it rough? Try this job—managing drilling ops in Iraq

Mike Killalea, Editor & Publisher

IF YOU'RE HAVING a rough day, consider that you could be running drilling operations in Northern Iraq. That's **Farid Jadir's** job as Drilling Manager for **Northern Oil Company**. NOC and its sister company, **Southern Oil Company**, are responsible for Iraq's oil production and delivery. NOC and SOC, along with **Iraq Drilling Company**, are members of IADC.

Mr Jadir, a gracious, soft-spoken man with a resilient streak of steel in him, addressed the IADC International Well Control Conference held in Dubai in early December. The conference was sponsored by **Saudi Aramco, Kuwait Oil Company, ADCO** and **Petroleum Development Oman**.

The Iraqi drilling manager labors under the dual handicaps of managing an operation technologically starved during 15 years of sanctions, coupled with ongoing disruptions from insurgent action. As to the latter, Mr Jadir regrettably declined to discuss the current state of NOC's operations, citing strong discouragement from his government. The rationale for the hush hush is that to air successful ongoing operations is to conveniently identify targets for saboteurs.

NOC once boasted 20 land and 4 workover rigs. However, the war has made short shrift of those assets.

"Most of our requirements have been looted," Mr Jadir noted. NOC's efforts to acquire new equipment had until recently been frustrated by a lack of financing.

However, Mr Jadir was more than happy to outline NOC's drilling plans for 2006. And his ear was regularly bent during the conference by many with commercial capabilities they believed NOC would value.

NOC plans to drill a total of 102 wells during 2005, with combined depth of 202,900 meters. The plan calls for employing some 27 rigs during the year. Some will be those owned and operated by IDC; others will be supplied by contractors.



Farid Jadir, right, soft-spoken drilling manager of Iraq Northern Oil Company, with Norman V Edwards, IADC Director-Middle East & Asia. (Mr Edwards will retire later this year, to be replaced by IADC VP Ken Fischer. See p 57.)

Mr Jadir divided NOC's efforts into four broad areas. For the first, existing tertiary producers and water injectors in developed fields, NOC will drill 28 wells using IDC rigs (1,500 m average depth).

Even more ambitious are NOC's plans for new Cretaceous producers. NOC will contract about 8 outside rigs to drill some 40 new wells in 5 different fields over the next year, each with depths averaging about 1,745 m. NOC has already issued a tender, Mr Jadir said.

While that average depth is perhaps not particularly impressive, Mr Jadir said there will be deep wells among the lot, as well as some horizontal drilling. He indicated that NOC could have some special well-control issues that could demand special technologies.

NOC will drill 30 appraisal wells in undeveloped fields in northern and eastern Iraq. 11 IDC rigs will be used to drill these significantly deeper wells, nearly 2,500 m on average. Mr Jadir explained that high pressures and temperatures will likely be encountered during some of the appraisal drilling.

Finally, NOC plans 4 exploration wells, on average nearly 4,500 m.

Drilling people have a knack for the impossible. A lot hangs in the balance in Iraq. But Farid Jadir is up to the task. And if he is typical, so is the new Iraq.



**Health, Safety
Environment
& Training**

**CONFERENCE
& EXHIBITION**

HSE Best Practices

**Safety Through
Leadership**

**Effectiveness
Training
Distance Learning**

8-9 February

**Omni Houston
Hotel - Westside
Houston, Texas**



**Conference
Sponsored
by:**

NOBLE

**contact Leesa Teel
leesa.teel@iadc.org
713-292-1945**