As oil firms grow, response may slow to crises like Gulf oil spill

Shortly before the Deepwater Horizon blowout, Halliburton bought an oil spill prevention firm. The oil-services industry is consolidating, which is not necessarily good news for quality, experts say.

By *Matt Rocheleau*, Contributor / June 18, 2010

Eleven days prior to the April 20 Deepwater Horizon blowout, Halliburton Co., the contractor in charge of cementing the rig's well, agreed to purchase a little-known company.

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The firm, Boots and Coots, focuses on oil spill prevention and blowout response. Now, it is assisting with the relief well work – under contract to BP – to help stop the Gulf oil spill.

What appears to conspiracy theorists as more than a coincidence is nothing out of the ordinary, say oil-industry experts. Increasingly, oil-industry titans are buying up smaller companies that provide all manner of services.

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