



## Drumbeat: August 19, 2013

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 19, 2013 - 8:04am

### [10 Years After Record Blackout, is U.S. Any Better Prepared?](#)

Electricity grid operators knew hours before the Northeast power failure at 4 p.m. on August 14, 2003, that things were going badly. One called his wife, predicting accurately that he would have to work late, and another complained it was "not a good day in the neighborhood."

The largest blackout to hit North America left 50 million people without power and largely without communications, but some engineers knew that the blackout could have been prevented.

As the official report from the crisis makes clear, troubles were building up during the day with computers, communications and coordination. The August 2003 blackout culminated from control systems that were out of service, inflexible schedules at generators and a grid operator who was unable to require necessary flexibility from market-based electricity providers.

### [Saudi Arabia and Iraq Cut Oil Exports in June: JODI Data](#)

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, shipped less crude in June and exports also slid in fellow OPEC members Iraq, Kuwait and Nigeria, according to official data.

The kingdom delivered 7.32 million barrels a day, down from 7.79 million in May, according to figures the governments filed with the Joint Organizations Data Initiative. Daily Saudi production fell by 20,000 barrels in June to 9.64 million.

### [WTI Crude Fluctuates as Goldman Raises Brent Forecasts on Supply](#)

West Texas Intermediate oil swung between gains and losses near a two-week high. Goldman Sachs Group Inc. raised its price forecasts for Brent, citing supply disruptions in Libya and Iraq.

Futures fluctuated in New York after capping the longest rising streak since April last week as unrest in Egypt fanned concern that Middle East shipments may be at risk. Defense Minister Abdelfatah al-Seesi said yesterday the military won't allow the country to be destroyed after a week of violence left hundreds dead. Global oil inventories have "tightened substantially," according to Goldman Sachs. U.S. refinery

rates fell in the week to Aug. 9, a fourth weekly drop.

“Brent is still supported by supply disruptions and geopolitics,” Andrey Kryuchenkov, an analyst at VTB Capital in London, said in an e-mail. The drop in U.S. refinery runs shows “summer demand is easing,” he said.

### [Militants kill 25 Egyptian policemen execution-style](#)

CAIRO — At least 25 policemen were killed Monday when assailants ambushed two mini-buses carrying security personnel in Egypt's North Sinai Peninsula, which shares a border with Israel and the Gaza Strip and has been a restive center for militant activity.

The attack is among the deadliest in the peninsula since the 2011 overthrow of former president Hosni Mubarak and part of a larger backlash against the state over what militants view as a slew of injustices.

### [Yemen Says 18 Foreign Oil Firms Qualified to Bid for 20 Blocks](#)

ADEN, Aug 18 (Reuters) - Yemen has allowed 18 international oil firms to bid for 20 onshore and offshore blocks in the sixth auction issued by the Oil Ministry, the state news agency Saba said on Sunday.

### [OMV Pays Record \\$2.65 Billion for Statoil North Sea Oil, Gas](#)

OMV AG, the biggest central European energy company, paid \$2.65 billion to Statoil ASA (STL) in its largest deal on record for stakes in four North Sea oil and gas fields as it seeks stable output after disruptions in Libya and Yemen.

The deal includes 24 percent of Statoil's Gudrun and 19 percent of its Gullfaks field, and options on 11 exploration licenses, the companies said today in separate statements. Statoil seeks to free up cash to invest in new developments.

### [Exclusive: Indonesia oil regulator suspends energy tenders amid graft scandal](#)

JAKARTA (Reuters) - Indonesia's energy regulator has suspended all oil, condensate and natural gas sell tenders as it reviews internal procedures after its chairman was caught taking an alleged bribe from an oil trader last week, an agency official said on Monday.

The suspension is the first evidence that the graft scandal engulfing SKKMigas is starting to impact day to day operations for Indonesia's huge oil and gas industry.

### [Fracking live: latest news as UK protests spread](#)

- Protests continue in Balcombe
- Cuadrilla's offices in Lichfield shut down
- Activists unveil banner outside Cuadrilla PR firm Bell Pottinger

### [Emirates powers ahead with the nuclear dream](#)

As Japan continues to struggle to contain radioactive water leaking out of its Fukushima nuclear plant following the 2011 meltdown, confidence in atomic energy across much of the world is at a low ebb.

The UAE, however, is among the few countries bucking the trend as it advances its bid to become the first Arab nation to safely harness atomic energy for peaceful means on a commercial scale.

### [Nuclear reactor building in the United States stagnates as costs clog the machine](#)

"The only reason the share of energy produced by nuclear power over the last 20 years is that a few reactors have been decommissioned and no new ones have been built while other [energy] generation sources have grown," says Gerry Runte, the managing director of Worthington Sawtelle, an energy-focused consultancy.

"Proliferation of reactor designs and the nuclear regulatory review process exacerbated the cost equation," he adds. "Nuclear power plant construction is not very efficient in competitive markets, especially in the US, even with government support and subsidy."

### [Fukushima and Chernobyl haunt atomic future](#)

In the long shadows of Chernobyl and Fukushima lurks lingering uncertainty over the global nuclear energy sector as arguments rage about safety and cost-effectiveness.

Europe has been severely affected by a reluctance to invest as concerns grow about the reliability of some nuclear plants and the hefty costs of construction, operation and waste disposal.

### [Trash Into Gas, Efficiently? An Army Test May Tell](#)

The centerpiece, a waste gasifier that's about the size of a shower stall, is essentially a modified blast furnace. A chemical reaction inside the gasifier heats any kind of trash — whether banana peels, used syringes, old iPods, even raw sewage — to extreme temperatures without combustion. The output includes hydrogen and synthetic natural gas that can be burned to generate electricity or made into ethanol or diesel fuel. The FastOx is now being prepared for delivery to Sierra Energy's first customer: the United

States Army.

### [US fuel retailers call for lower biofuel mandate](#)

The US is in the grips of a biofuel dispute, as the American Petroleum Institute (API) calls for a halt to a federal biofuel mandate increase for 2014, expressing concern that the policy could cause serious economic problems.

### [Source of Boy's Mysterious Lead Poisoning Was in an Unlikely Place](#)

The pellets likely came from the geese the boy's family regularly hunted and ate, they later told the doctors. The boy and his siblings said they had been eating the pellets as part of a game the played, to make the pellets disappear.

..."One important question to ask is, why not use copper pellets?" Zardawi said. The pellets used to kill the birds usually stay inside the animal, and the lead can be dangerous to other animals and to whoever eats the meat. The whole family had high levels of lead, he said.

### [Bare Trees Are a Lingering Sign of Hurricane Sandy's High Toll](#)

In storm-damaged neighborhoods throughout the city, where homes have been repaired, furnishings have been replaced and millions have been spent on recovery, another toll of Hurricane Sandy is becoming starkly clear. Trees, plants and shrubs are dying by the thousands.

### [We Need a War on Coal](#)

Worldwide, the poor leave a very small carbon footprint, but they will suffer the most from climate change. Many live in hot places that are getting even hotter, and hundreds of millions of them are subsistence farmers who depend on rainfall to grow their crops. Rainfall patterns will vary, and the Asian monsoon will become less reliable. Those who live on this planet in future centuries will live in a hotter world, with higher sea levels, less arable land, and more extreme hurricanes, droughts, and floods.

In these circumstances, to develop new coal projects is unethical, and to invest in them is to be complicit in this unethical activity. While this applies, to some extent, to all fossil fuels, the best way to begin to change our behavior is by reducing coal consumption. Replacing coal with natural gas does reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, even if natural gas itself is not sustainable in the long term. Right now, ending investment in the coal industry is the right thing to do.

### [China's shift may mean coal's days are numbered](#)

China's renewal of its carbon reduction targets, as well as reports that it is clamping down on coal production, has led analysts to turn bearish on the outlook for coal, claiming that peak demand for the fossil-fuel could be behind us.

### [Brazil And Germany Help Poor Communities To Become More Resilient To Natural Disasters](#)

DHAKA – More than 10,000 people in the poorest and most disaster-prone areas of Bangladesh will be able to participate in training that will help them, their families and communities become more resilient to natural disasters and the effects of climate change, thanks to a contribution of 895 metric tons of rice (valued at US\$430,000 / BDT3.3 crore) from the Federative Republic of Brazil to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

Programme participants, 70 percent of whom are women, will receive 22.5 kg of rice and BDT650 in cash per month in exchange for the time and effort invested in training sessions on disaster preparedness and response, hygiene, sanitation and nutrition.

### [Old permafrost carbon released](#)

Using indicator molecules, a team of researchers headed by ETH Zurich demonstrates that carbon stored in the Arctic permafrost is being mobilised in Eurasian river basins.

### [Increased flooding may cost the world \\$1 trillion by 2050](#)

Flood damage in the world's major coastal cities may top \$1 trillion a year by 2050 due to rising seas and subsiding land, according to a new study.

The startling figure is "not a forecast or a prediction," but rather a means to "show that not to adapt and not to improve protection is impossible," Stéphane Hallegatte, a senior economist with the World Bank in Washington, D.C., and the study's lead author, told NBC News. "We have to do something."

### [Task force: Coasts should prepare for rising seas](#)

NEW YORK (AP) -- A presidential task force charged with developing a strategy for rebuilding areas damaged by Superstorm Sandy has issued a report recommending 69 policy initiatives, most focused on a simple warning: Plan for future storms in an age of climate change and rising sea levels.

The report released Monday by the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force says coastal communities should assume floods are going to happen more frequently and realize that spending more now on protective measures could save money later. It calls for development of a more advanced electrical grid less likely to be crippled in a crisis, and the creation of better planning tools and standards for communities rebuilding

storm-damaged areas.



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