



If the Oil runs out- the BBC starts looking at post-peak oil

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on May 30, 2006 - 9:54pm

Topic: [Supply/Production](#)

Tags: [anwr](#), [bbc](#), [cnn](#), [fox](#), [oil storm](#), [peak oil](#), [we were warned](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Well here I am sat by the tele, waiting for the BBC show, [If the Oil Runs Out](#), the facts upon which they base it being given [here](#).

Pause while 3,550,000 barrels of oil are consumed, (the show mentions that) and what did I think?

Well I could begin by suggesting they had the wrong buttons on the drill bit, but that would be a bit facetious. In a very small nutshell, it tracks a family during the time that the first well is drilled in ANWR, (in 2016) at the same time that President Chavez in Venezuela pulls his country out of OPEC, and that Saudi and China get together to do a goods for oil swop. Oil prices rise and the consequences are transiently illustrated through the impact on the family (losing job, long gas lines, food prices up, aspirin (an oil product) out of stock, and the like). The well is being drilled in the purported last hope for oil. And it does not find the 250 m of oil that was anticipated. But seven months later they are through the crisis and into another world.

In some ways it was more like the [Oil Storm](#) that Fox put out in 2005, in terms of the impacts that they showed. But in that regard, as the site has commented many times, expecting that this won't happen until 2016 is way overly optimistic. They had Sheik Yamani and Matt Simmons with quotes, and one of the commentators sounded like Julian Darley, but I didn't see a credit for him. Further, as with Oil Storm, the suggestion was that everything suddenly happens at once. And this was despite the practice, early in the programme, of breaking to recite the facts pertinent to the scene that had just taken place.

There were, however, a number of technical errors relative to the story, particularly in terms of how the rig would be run, and the line about the difficulty in hitting a target 50 m across at a depth of 2,500 m. As a point of reference, at the last Peak Oil meeting in Denver there were a couple of drillers who gave a presentation - they talked about steering a bit down a track within a foot. So, for what it is worth, the drilling section was much more out of [Campbell's Kingdom](#) than the operations of a major oil company in the 21st Century.

The disappointment was, that as with Oil Storm, and the CNN version of the same story [We Were Warned](#), the story sensibly stops at the peak of the crisis and says, "Gee, well seven months later everything is OK again." Gentle Cough! (3 times) Um, no it isn't.

They could have mentioned some of the things that are being put in place to ameliorate some of the problems between now and then, to show that it won't be total global disaster for everyone. They could have mentioned Russia (the second largest current producer of oil), they could have mentioned the problems with NG, well I could go on listing "coulda, shoulda" things but the list would get very long and so I will refrain, and merely suggest that it is, in many ways a very

optimistic view of what will occur in terms of when. On the other hand I thought it overly pessimistic in terms of the speed of the collapse (even though they justified it with shots from 1973 and Sheik Yamani at his peak). I have commented earlier that it might be that way in the future, but I suspect that we are already in the period of adjustment and that a slower transition will reduce the immediate severity of some of the situation. (Though not, I fear for such countries as Bangladesh, where lack of fuel means that the rice did not get planted, and thus there will not be enough food).

But it was at least a start in bringing this to the European public attention, although at 11:20 pm start I am not sure that there was that much of an audience.

In other news, it should be noted that the Japanese and Chinese continue [to talk](#) about collaborating on energy savings, as well as considering their current disagreements.

Japan and China are also locked in a simmering stand-off over developing gas fields in the East China Sea.

The two sides disagree over the position of the border between their exclusive economic zones in the East China Sea, and Japan fears that energy-hungry China's exploitation of the area could tap into resources in its own zone.

"The two countries have agreed that they will seek to resolve the issue by making the East China Sea the sea of cooperation," said Nikai, known for his close ties to China. "I hope the issue will be resolved at an early date through mutual efforts."

Chinese Commerce Minister Bo Xilai said closer cooperation on energy and the environment could vastly improve bilateral ties.

"If we can cooperate well in the fields of energy saving and the environment, the people of the two countries will benefit, and I believe it will push up Sino-Japanese ties to a new stage," Bo told the forum. "China and Japan are eternal neighbours."

Resource-poor Japan, which has been developing energy-saving technology since a global oil crisis in 1973, has been helping China reduce greenhouse gas emissions as a part of international efforts to combat global warming.

Finally traveler notes: some time ago I tried to explain some of the problems at Abqaiq by making reference to floating cream on coffee after dinner, a habit from my decadent student youth. Well, having come back to the part of the world where I learned the habit, it appears to be withering away and impractical since, these days what they serve as cream didn't float in the restaurants at all but one place that I ate at (the exception - [the South Causey Hotel](#)). So maybe no-one understands that analogy - ah, well!

And a couple of pictures to illustrate the post of the other day, first the pit pony in the roundabout.



I will come back to this in a short while in a comment that will relate to recent comments on the EROI of coal. And secondly a picture of the old and the new.



The old pit wheels buried in cement are in the foreground, the new energy is shown by the wind turbines in the background, and the contribution from biofuels perhaps illustrated by the very thin line of yellow rapeseed within the green of the hillside. Note that this was once a mine, and it is just outside the village of Shotton Colliery (which no longer has one).

I am not sure, given the travel of the next few days, that I will be back before next week, though I will try and put in the comment on coal - it depends on how bumpy the flight is later today.



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