



DrumBeat: December 19, 2006

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Update by Leanan on 12/19/06 at 10:08 AM EDT]

[Wood Boilers Cut Heating Bills. The Rub? Secondhand Smoke.](#)

Their owners proudly proclaim that they reduce dependence on foreign oil — and save thousands of dollars on heating bills each year.

Neighbors say that they create smoke so thick that children cannot play outside, and that it seeps into homes, irritating eyes and throats and leaving a foul stench.

They have spawned a rash of lawsuits and local ordinances across the country. A report last year by the New York attorney general's office found that they produce as much particle pollution in an hour as 45 cars or 2 heavy-duty diesel trucks.

[Merger of Statoil, Hydro to Plant Large GOM Footprint](#)

The merger of Norway's Statoil ASA and Norsk Hydro ASA will create not only the world's largest offshore oil and gas company, but an acquisitive-minded player that is expected to wield a much bigger stick in developing the deepwater Gulf of Mexico (GOM), analysts said Monday. In the past two years, the companies have spent a total of about \$6 billion buying GOM assets.

[Misguided assault on autos won't solve energy crisis](#)

Blaming the auto industry for all things related to global climate change is the thing to do these days, but it's misguided, especially when it targets the failed Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) guidelines. And it ignores other industries, which do their share of dirtying up the atmosphere.

[Texas faces energy crunch](#)

Some Texas business leaders are projecting a shortfall in the state's energy supply as early as 2008 unless Texas invests in new generation capacity to support record population growth.

James Kunstler gets in the Christmas spirit (well, not really): [Not So Wonderful](#)

It's a Wonderful Life, Frank Capra's 1946 Christmas card to America, is full of strange and bitter lessons about who we were and who we have become. It also illustrates the perversity of history -- the fact that things sometimes end up the opposite of the way we expect.

Raymond J. Learsy: [Saudi Realpolitik: Political Blackmail, Oil Price Extortion](#)

If so it would be an exercise of blatant political blackmail threatening the American government with the following Hobson's choice:

A- Either you continue your presence in Iraq at the cost of the lives your soldiers, and at the cost of billions and billions in treasure, or

B- We the Saudis, will initiate policies that will all but guarantee a massive riposte by Iran and the descent of the region into a conflagration of war and savagery. It will certainly result in impaired access to, or possibly even destruction of the regions oil and gas infrastructure and push the world's economies into deep crisis.

[EU risks mini-repetition of last winter's gas crunch](#)

BRUSSELS – With EU gas transit state Belarus and Russia locked in a bitter row over energy prices for next year, some north and eastern EU states risk seeing a mini-repetition of last winter's Ukraine gas crunch.

[Japan banks on energy, environment](#)

TOKYO - The government-affiliated Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), one of the world's biggest international financial institutions, is revving up its energy- and environment-related business activities, apparently reflecting growing government concerns over energy supplies and global warming.

[Biofuel majors: Will exports be profitable enough?](#)

SINGAPORE: Mergers in the booming palm oil sector are creating the biofuel industry's own 'Big Oil' companies, but vertical integration and economies of scale may not be enough to make exports profitable or to replace crude.

[Westinghouse deal kicks off Chinese nuclear energy drive](#)

BEIJING (AFP) - China's decision to buy four nuclear power reactors from US-based Westinghouse represents a major step in an ambitious drive to boost atomic energy production.

[Gulf energy industry leaders call to protect marine environment](#)

[Peak Debt - US Debt & GDP Growth](#)

Economics I am no expert on Peak Oil, but Peak Oil is not the urgent problem that the world faces, economically, or politically. The problems of the supply-demand of oil will play out over a longer period and its effects would be spread over a longer period of time than that of the Peak Debt, which are lot more immediate. As a matter of fact, it has been the rapidly rising debt (racing towards the peak), which in turn has "fueled" a worldwide construction boom, that has resulted in the high prices for oil over the past 4 years and not the realization of the problem of Peak Oil. During the coming global depression, within this decade, the price of crude oil should fall below \$25 a barrel and there will be glut due to sharply falling demand. I realize that these are not the concerns that people have today as long as the American consumer keeps borrowing. But, for how long?

[Big Oil seeks to burnish U.S. image in 2007](#)

WASHINGTON - The U.S. oil industry will launch a multiyear, multimillion-dollar public relations push early in 2007 aimed at bolstering its sagging image.

Japan: [Closing the biofuel gap](#)

Japan is lagging behind several other countries in developing liquid biofuels that serve as alternatives for fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas.

[China looking to expand non-grain biofuels](#)

BEIJING (AFP) - China has launched a series of pilot programs for farmers to plant non-grain crops as raw materials for biofuels, state media has reported, citing a senior government official.

Sorghum, cassava and other biofuel crops will be planted on lands that are unfit for grain production, the China Daily quoted Yang Jian, a director at the ministry as saying.

India: [Promoting renewable energy](#)

NEW DELHI: To promote use of renewable energy, the Delhi Cabinet on Monday approved a scheme for grant of rebate amounting to Rs. 6,000 on installation of Solar Water Heating Systems replacing electric geysers at residences.

[Iran Will Face Sanctions Vote Within Days, U.S. Says](#)

[Global warming is good for Russia](#)

According to the United States Geological Service, about one-quarter of the world's undiscovered energy reserves may be in the Arctic. Earlier this year Russia announced a project to exploit the world's biggest offshore gas field, Shtokman, 300 miles off its northern coast. Russia had been expected to pick partners from among the world's big energy companies, but instead it let Gazprom, its energy giant, go it alone.

...However the sea is divided up, warming is likely to make Russia richer rather than poorer. Which may help explain the reluctance of some Russian members of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the body charged by the UN with establishing the facts on climate change, to accept that global warming is a problem that needs to be dealt with.

[EU trade chief dismisses idea of punitive "carbon tax"](#)

BRUSSELS - EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson opposed the idea of a "carbon tax" on countries which do not ratify the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, as France recently suggested.

[Group offers roadmap to reduce pollution](#)

ROCKPORT, Maine - A regional environmental group Monday released a comprehensive "climate change roadmap" to reduce pollution linked to global warming by 75 percent in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada.

[Green light for world's biggest windfarm](#)

[Algeria strives for oil security](#)

CAIRO, Egypt - Despite a recent attack on foreign oil workers in Algiers, and a government that is struggling after a civil war in the 1990s, world demand for oil and natural gas will likely drive foreign companies to endure risks and remain in energy-rich Algeria.

[The coming fight for oil](#)

"You have two powers competing over the same sandbox," said Gal Luft, a China expert with the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security in Washington. "As a country of China's size grows, there will be a moment when the moment of reckoning comes."

China's energy diplomacy poses an utterly new challenge to the U.S.: a rival that is growing in stature not by seeking to undo the American rules of the game, but by playing the game more and more like Americans.

[Russia may be thankful to OPEC](#)

The crucial thing for Russia, the bulk of whose revenues come from oil exports, is that oil prices should not fall below \$60 per barrel. The Russian budget for 2007 is based on an optimistic forecast for Russian export crude, \$61 per barrel. However, its actual price has been no more than \$56-\$57 since autumn, as its quality is believed to be inferior to that of the world's leading brands.

[Nigerian militants strike oil properties](#)

PORT HARCOURT, Nigeria - Militants seeking a greater share of oil revenues for their impoverished region detonated two car bombs nearly simultaneously Monday in southern Nigeria, the latest in a series of attacks that have cut crude production in Africa's oil giant by one quarter.



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