



DrumBeat: December 20, 2006

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Update by [Leanan](#) on 12/20/06 at 12:58 PM EDT]

[Nigeria militants say ransom offer nixed](#)

LAGOS, Nigeria - A militant group in Nigeria's oil-rich river delta region said Wednesday it has turned down offers of ransom for four foreign hostages, reiterating that the captives will only be freed in exchange for imprisoned comrades.

"As earlier stated, the release of these four individuals is tied to the release of four hostages of Niger delta origin in Nigerian government hands," said an e-mail from an address used by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, MEND.

[Feds withdraw rare wildflower proposal](#)

SALT LAKE CITY - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Tuesday withdrew its proposal to list as threatened a wildflower that grows only in areas of Utah and Colorado where oil shale and tar sand exploration are being done.

The decision prompted environmental groups who have fought for the listing of the Graham's penstemon to accuse the FWS and Bureau of Land Management of choosing energy development leases over a threatened species.

[Incentives pushed deep-water drilling](#)

Government incentives played a key role in spurring companies to drill for oil and natural gas in the Gulf of Mexico that might have otherwise been too costly to explore, according to a report prepared for the Interior Department and just made public by the agency.

[Middle East crude's differentials higher](#)

Singapore: Differentials for Middle East crude continued to creep higher yesterday, with medium and heavy sour grades gaining the most on the back of Opec's second supply

cut, traders said.

[Sakhalin-II Stake Sale May Hit Shell's Reserve Replacement Strategy](#)

Given the importance Sakhalin II has in Shell's reserve replacement strategy, any significant loss of future production volumes and reserves under a renegotiated production sharing agreement could be detrimental to Shell's efforts to catch up with its peers in respect of reserve replacement and reserve life, an important parameter to evaluate an oil major's long-term growth prospects.

[The Cultural Economist's Report on Oil Depletion](#)

Of all the issues we confront in the 21st Century, resource depletion promises to have the greatest impact on our economic and cultural destiny. And of our dwindling resources, none will have a greater impact on our future than the decline of oil and natural gas production.

Lester R. Brown: [Why China Is Rising And The U.S. Is Declining](#)

National policy failures such as not adequately supporting the use of renewable energy technologies have contributed to the growing U.S. trade deficit. For example, the United States should be a leading manufacturer and exporter of solar cells and wind turbines, but it has fallen behind both Europe and Japan. The solar cell, invented at Bell Labs in 1954, is an American technology. But the U.S. effort to develop solar energy was so weak and sporadic that both Germany and Japan forged ahead and developed robust solar cell manufacturing and export industries.

[Energy spurs US producer prices surge](#)

US producer price inflation rose at its fastest pace in more than three decades last month as energy and vehicle prices rebounded, helping push wholesale costs higher, government figures showed on Tuesday.

The producer price index rose 2 per cent after a decline of 1.6 per cent in October, the strongest gain since 1974. There was also a sharp rise in core prices – excluding food and energy – which saw the fastest rise in 26 years, with an increase of 1.3 per cent last month.

[ConocoPhillips producing renewable diesel fuel](#)

ConocoPhillips has started commercial production of renewable diesel fuel at the company's refinery in Cork, Ireland. The refinery is currently producing 1,000 barrels

of the renewable fuel, which includes soybean and vegetable oils among its ingredients.

[Sanyo to Spend Y19 Billion to Boost Solar Cell Capacity](#)

[China to limit use of grains for biofuels amid renewed worries over supply](#)

SHANGHAI, China: China will restrict the use of corn and other edible grains for producing biofuel, state media reports said Monday, noting concerns over surging prices despite expectations for yet another bumper harvest.

[Report backs fuel cell ships](#)

[EU tackles aircraft CO2 emissions](#)

[BLM Releases Study of Proposal to Ease Pinedale Anticline Restrictions](#)

The Bureau of Land Management released a study last week of an industry proposal to waive seasonal restrictions on natural gas drilling on Wyoming's Pinedale Anticline, which found that the plan "could cause significant adverse impacts to the human and natural environments."

[Global energy hunger means boom for Norwegian outpost: Barents Sea's possibilities weigh against ecological concerns](#)

[Could Spot Uranium Prices Reach \\$100/pound?](#)

I feel the uranium market right now is the world's most unbalanced commodity market. In a sense, the world, through the nuclear power industry, consumes approximately 172 million pounds of uranium per year, and the world only produces about 92 million pounds of uranium per year. The supply deficit is made up through above-ground inventories, which are being worked down pretty quickly.

[Oil Prices Impact Negatively On Zimbabwe](#)

International oil prices soared in 2006, reaching an all-time high of US\$78,36 per barrel in August impacting negatively on non-oil-producing countries such as Zimbabwe.

[Venezuela's Chavez Offers Malaysia Oil Exploration Stake](#)

Venezuela is ready to jointly explore for oil with Malaysia and help it boost its reserves, President Hugo Chavez said Tuesday.

"We can help over there too. We can explore in Malaysia," Chavez told visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi while touring an oil refinery in eastern Venezuela.

[Nigeria: Biofuel - Nigeria Needs 7bn KG of Cassava Annually](#)

[China to assess the energy consumption performance of real estate projects](#)

Energy-saving initiatives will be obligatory for all real estate investment applications in China from the first day of 2007, as the country moves to boost energy efficiency.

[Is There A Synthetic Fuel In Your Future?](#)

As wider unrest threatens traditional petroleum resources in the Middle East and as industry observers disagree on whether "peak oil" has been reached, the U.S. military is moving forward with plans for half of its turbine fuel to be synthetically derived by the next decade.

[The end of Dollar supremacy](#)

The Iranian government has finally developed a new weapon that can destroy the financial system underpinning the American Empire. The U.S. dollar dominance is coming to an end.

[Rosneft to boost oil production 8% y-o-y in 2006](#)

MOSCOW - Russia's state-run oil company Rosneft will produce 8% more oil by the end of the year than in 2005, the company president said Tuesday.

[Georgia claims energy crisis 'over'](#)

A recent agreement signed with Azerbaijan and Turkey appears to have lessened Georgia's gas woes just in time for the winter. But the country's energy talks with Iran remain a wild card - both in terms of the Georgian government's relationship with the United States, and its ability to do without higher-priced Russian gas.

[Army Engineers Work to Improve Iraq's Oil Export](#)

[Court gives hope to price-gouging case](#)

A federal appeals court on Tuesday revived California's claim for \$1.4 billion in refunds to utility customers for high-priced electricity during and after the 2001-02 energy crisis, saying federal regulators failed to examine whether the state was gouged in long-term energy contracts.

[EU New Joiners to Get Biofuel Crop Cash from 2007](#)

BRUSSELS - The European Union's newest joiners, including Bulgaria and Romania, will receive subsidies starting in 2007 to support them growing more feedstock crops for producing biofuels, officials said on Tuesday.

[Helping America Take the Lead: A Climate Exchange](#) Video clips from a Sierra Club forum on climate change, including one of our pal, Vinod Khosla.

[Oil Rig Shortage Slows Chevron Bid to Tap Gulf of Mexico Fields](#)

A global shortage of deep-sea drilling rigs is costing Chevron precious time as it taps the Gulf, and the equipment deficit may keep oil prices high. A prime example is the \$3 billion field dubbed Jack. Chevron and partner Devon Energy Corp. announced the deepest-ever well test there on Sept. 5. Politicians backing energy independence exulted. Investors sent Devon shares up 12 percent and Chevron's up 2.3 percent.

They didn't know the drilling rig Cajun Express had already plugged the Jack well and moved to another urgent job. Drilling at Jack won't resume until at least July, Thornburg says.

This guy's making a movie about peak oil, and he didn't even link to us. [What a Way To Go: Life At the End of Empire](#)

A middle class white guy comes to grips with Peak Oil, Climate Change, Mass Extinction, Population Overshoot and the demise of the American Lifestyle.

[Gas prices jump in California, U.S.](#)

Retail gasoline prices rose nationwide and jumped substantially in California over the last week, the federal government said Monday, a partial reflection of crude oil prices that have stayed above \$60 a barrel for the last three weeks.

[Auto trade group names Democrat to top post](#)

Major auto companies on Tuesday turned to tech industry lobbyist Dave McCurdy, a former Democratic U.S. representative, to lead their legislative and regulatory initiatives in Washington.

...Automakers in 2007 will be looking for Congress to approve consumer tax breaks and incentives for companies to retool and develop plants for manufacturing more vehicles that run on ethanol and other alternative fuels.

[Honda to invest in eco-friendly cars after record year](#)

[Some European birds delay migration due to warmth](#)

OSLO - Some European birds have failed to fly south for the winter, apparently lured to stay by weeks of mild weather that experts widely link to global warming.

[It is time to accept Interstate 69 and move on](#)

Some argue we don't need a new road between Indianapolis and anywhere. We should be rebuilding the rail system we had back in the 1920s. Sorry, my friends, the automobile is a far superior means of transportation than any train. Most of the people who support mass transit would not ride it even if they had the opportunity. They do not want to wait in the rain, walk significant distances with packages, and be out at night unprotected by steel and a powerful motor.

As for the oil shortage: as the price of oil rises, alternatives will be sought and offered. That's the way the market works. The "peak oil" problem is a crisis that we will never see.

[New Zealand's response to Peak Oil](#)

The Transport and Oil Working Group of the New Zealand Sustainable Energy Forum has just released Peak Oil: A Major Issue for New Zealand [PDF, 60 KB], which is designed as a quick guide for the public and the media on what the Peak Oil issue is about, how it affects New Zealand, and how New Zealand should respond.

[Impeach the President: The Case Against Bush and Cheney, a New Book](#) - Reason #8:

Denying global warming, disregarding peak oil, and placing oil industry profits over the long-term survival of the human race and the viability of the planet.

[Approaching the Year's End](#)

As we approach the end of the year, there will not be a similar energy crisis, because Russia has taken its own lesson from the crisis. At any rate, because it has come to an agreement with the Ukraine, there is no possibility of a crisis emerging. However, it is obvious from now that at the end of this year and the beginning of next year there will be other issues related to natural gas and these will lead to other problems nearby in the region.

[Book Ideas for Christmas](#)

Here's a warning: this generation that is alive now is in for a very rough ride. While the above books are gut-wrenching and entertaining in a reality-TV sort of way, *The Long Emergency* paints an alarming picture of a world filled with catastrophe. Kunstler is an excellent writer, and a very well informed one. Being forewarned with so much insight, and so much sensible detail about the "converging catastrophes of the 21st century" may be depressing for some, I found it very helpful.

[Wind On The Line](#)

Despite the potential of wind as an alternate energy source for Idaho, a recent proposal by Idaho Power Company makes some wind developer plans seem quixotic at best. The state's largest utility wants some of the windmill wild-catters to pay for power grid upgrades to transmission lines and then some.



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