



DrumBeat: January 16, 2007

Posted by [threadbot](#) on January 16, 2007 - 10:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Satellite gap alarms Earth scientists](#)

The U.S. satellite system that monitors Earth's environment and climate needs an urgent upgrade or scientists will lose much of their ability to predict events like hurricanes, according to a report released by the National Research Council on Monday.

The report said maintaining current observation and predictive abilities will cost about \$3 billion a year from 2010 to 2020 if its recommendations are carried out, but action needs to be taken soon.

[The Cheap Oil Mirage - Kunstler](#)

The American public is understandably happy to see the bottom fall out of the oil futures market. But temporary circumstances are only sending them another false signal that everything is perfectly okay on the oil scene. And it only reinforces the foolish belief that when prices go up it is solely because corporate finaglers tweak them up on purpose. In fact, these days it's the other way around: often prices go down because corporate finaglers are tweaking the markets, dumping positions, playing shorts rather than acting like real oil users bidding on real contracts for delivery for real purposes like making gasoline. When oil goes up, as it certainly will again, it is primarily because of geology -- what's left in the ground -- and secondarily because of geopolitics -- where it's left in the ground (and what's happening there).

[Wrong Turn Amigo](#)

The answer to this problem is abundantly clear.

It's called the free market, and unlike its socialist counterpart, it works like a charm. It's not to be feared, as Chavez claims, but embraced-especially if your goal is to maximize your oil production.

[Bolivia gambles on energy and wins - for now](#)

When President Evo Morales ordered Bolivia's energy fields nationalized last May and sent federal troops into its abundant gas fields to make his point clear, critics warned that he would isolate Bolivia and choke off its main source of revenue.

But with Morales about to celebrate his first anniversary in office Jan. 22, most Bolivians regard the nationalization as a tremendous victory.

[Iraqis will never accept this sellout to the oil corporations](#)

The US-controlled Iraqi government is preparing to remove the country's most precious resource from national control.

[Oil firms face Latin American woe](#)

US oil companies have said they will stay in Honduras, despite the state saying it will temporarily seize control of oil storage containers.

The Honduran move, made on Friday, will affect firms such as Chevron and Esso.

The news comes as Venezuela refused to negotiate with foreign oil firms over its wider nationalisation plans.

[We're #2! UAE Tops U.S. for Energy Demand](#)

When it comes to squandering the earth's natural resources, residents of the United Arab Emirates, a desert land of chilled swimming pools, monster 4x4s and air-conditioned malls, are on a par with even the ravenous consumption of Americans, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

[Forecourts: France authorizes biofuel but more carrot needed](#)

France has joined a number of other countries in approving the commercial sale of biofuels, with the French government stating that it hopes to see biofuel's share of total motor fuel consumption rise to 7% by 2010. However, legislation alone is not enough. Given the need to convince retailers to provide biofuels, and the attendant costs, the uptake of biofuels also needs to be consumer-driven.

[Lukoil Set to Revive Saddam-Era Oil Deal](#)

Lukoil, the Russian oil company, is poised to resurrect the \$4-billion (GBP2-billion) contract it signed with Saddam Hussein's regime to develop one of Iraq's largest oil

fields.

The company's US rival, Conoco-Phillips, will also benefit as it has a stake in the joint venture with Lukoil to develop the West Qurna-2 field, which holds up to 16 billion barrels of oil.

[Is Russia-Belarus Friendship Over?](#)

Lukashenka's strategy of relying on benevolence and subsidies from Russia, long regarded as the natural ally, is over. Possibly Moscow was irked by the patriotic content of Lukashenka's 2006 election: a platform of "For Belarus." The Kremlin may also be concerned by the close links between the Communist Party of Russia and the Lukashenka regime with a Russian parliamentary election in the offing. Analyst Andrei Suzdaltsev remarked that Belarus is a cordon sanitaire that divides Russia from the West: it excludes Russian business, the joint defensive system is a myth, and Belarus can freely confiscate Russian transit goods. "Lukashenka has exhausted the trust of the Russian leaders" (RIA-Novosti, January 11). Lukashenka has become, from Moscow's viewpoint, expendable.

[Indonesia inks oil contracts to boost reserves](#)

Indonesia signed new production sharing contracts with three global energy firms -- ConocoPhillips, CNOOC Ltd. and Premier Oil -- on Tuesday to boost reserves, the oil minister said.

[South Korea shifts focus to proven oil, not exploration](#)

South Korea will change tactics in its increasingly urgent quest for overseas energy assets this year, targetting more costly but proven oil reserves after years of pursuing high-stakes exploration acreage.

[Petrobras Says Domestic Reserves Stable in 2006](#)

Domestic oil and gas reserves of Brazil's state-run oil firm Petroleo Brasileiro SA (PBR), or Petrobras, remained almost stable in 2006, but overseas reserves fell due to write-offs in Venezuela.

[£3m energy centre will boost Scotland's economy](#)

Scotland's first state-of-the art renewable energy park is expected to inspire new businesses and create 1350 jobs over the next 25 years.

[The Balkans and the Eastern Leg of Europe](#)

The former republics of Yugoslavia will play a key role in Germany's EU presidency and Europe's ability to resurrect an age-old empire.

[India: Govt to cut distribution losses in power sector](#)

The 11th Plan would set a target of bringing down distribution losses in the power sector to 15% from the current level of 38% for the country, deputy chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia said on Monday.

[Nigerians groan as fuel scarcity bites harder](#)

As a result of the scarcity of petroleum products and the attendant traffic jams, many workers could not get to their offices. Some enterprises opened late for business and some others stayed shut.

Reports from across the country indicated that the fuel situation in Lagos is replicated in other places, with petrol being hawked in cellophane bags at prohibitive prices in some parts of the north where the product can be found.

[Nigeria clashes leave a dozen dead](#)

PORT HARCOURT, Nigeria - Royal Dutch Shell evacuated staff from two oil installations in southern Nigeria and the military boosted troop levels in the volatile area Tuesday after community clashes left a dozen community chiefs dead, officials said.

Bisi Ojediran, a spokesman for Shell PLC, said only a skeleton crew remained at the two evacuated pipeline hubs in the Niger Delta region, a vast area of mangrove swamps where all of the crude in Africa's largest producer is pumped.

[Science and faith join forces](#)

Some leading scientists and evangelical Christian leaders have agreed to put aside their fierce differences over the origin of life and work together to fight global warming.

[Prices at pump likely to fall more](#)

Gasoline prices dropped over the holiday weekend and are likely headed lower. But drivers who expect gas prices to fall as sharply as oil prices in recent weeks will likely be

disappointed.

[PetroChina Reports Record Oil, Gas Output in 2006](#)

The annual oil and gas output of PetroChina Company Limited amounted to 1.06 billion barrels, up 5.2 percent from a year earlier, it announced on Monday.

[Warming trend visible in the trees](#)

Rising temperatures are allowing Southern trees to thrive farther north and stressing trees used to colder weather, according to new national guidelines issued by planting experts.

[Oil falls \\$1, Saudi says no need to panic](#)

Oil prices fell more than a dollar to below \$52 a barrel on Tuesday after Saudi Arabia's oil minister said OPEC production cuts were working well and there was no need for an emergency meeting of the producer group.

[Nigerian oil minister says no decision on OPEC meeting](#)

[Environment ministers lack clout on global warming](#)

Environment ministers are sometimes rising stars -- German Chancellor Angela Merkel had a stint in the 1990s -- but are often far less experienced than cabinet colleagues in charge of issues such as defense, health or education.

[Alaskan villagers get Citgo oil vouchers: "Devil, angel, whoever gave it to us, we're grateful."](#)

[When Big Oil Buys Out the Big Diggers](#)

Like all oil companies, BP must work harder and harder to find new reserves. The company has also raised its profile in alternative energy technologies. Yesterday it announced five North American wind-power projects to deliver a combined 550 megawatts of energy in California, Colorado and North Dakota. It will be interesting to see if its interest in alternative energy lasts. If oil prices remain at this level or go lower, how many alternative projects will be shelved? Will consumers care about going green if the black gold doesn't put them into the red?

[Kinder Morgan to buy rest of Canadian NGL pipeline](#)

[Water leak at Japan nuclear plant](#)

The country is reliant on nuclear power to meet its energy needs, but its shaky safety record has fuelled popular opposition to the plants.

[Tests Show 'Artificial Sun' Is Reliable](#)

Designed to replicate the sun's energy generating process, the Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak fusion reactor recently garnered positive results in tests being conducting at China's Institute of Plasma Physics, the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported.



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