



DrumBeat: January 22, 2007

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Will oil prices keep falling?](#)

Oil has fallen below \$50/barrel. Will it fall further to \$40/barrel? Or will it rise again to \$75/barrel? Both scenarios are possible. Indeed, both price levels could be reached in the coming year, given the way oil prices see-saw violently.

One thing is clear: the notion that global oil production has peaked and will now fall — a concept called Hubbert's peak — has been proved wrong. Oil production has been rising steadily, to the point where even a substantial cut of 1.6 million barrels/day by Saudi Arabia has failed to stem the slide in prices.

[Ending industrialism](#)

We will have to be much more imaginative as a people if we are to take meaningful action to deal with global warming. It is a simple truth that economic activity that transforms the Earth into consumer products is the main problem.

Yet, hardly anyone is proposing that such activity and products have to be mostly stopped. There is actually some thought along these lines, and there always has been, but it is frowned upon by those with industrial axes to grind or who have bought into "progress" and "growth." So it is hard to publicize the idea of ending industrialism.

[Iraq to refrain from raising oil exports: minister](#)

Iraq will not increase oil exports in support of fellow OPEC member states which want to underpin world crude prices, Oil Minister Hussein al-Shahristani said.

[Bush State of Union to stress energy security](#)

Aides hint of a major pronouncement on energy in the speech before Congress and the nation Tuesday night. Yet the president is expected to take a predictable path, urging expanded use of ethanol in gasoline, more research into cleaner burning coal and on gas-electric "hybrid" cars, and greater nuclear energy.

[Russia and Algeria Sign Energy Cooperation Agreement](#)

Russia and Algeria, Europe's two biggest suppliers of natural gas, signed an energy cooperation agreement that the European Union has pledged to monitor because of concerns it may develop into a cartel-like alliance.

[Russia to cut use of energy transit countries](#)

Russia's President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday that Moscow would reduce its dependence on transit countries, such as neighbouring Belarus and Ukraine, to help guarantee security of energy supplies to Europe.

[Mexico feeling effects of ethanol boom](#)

High corn prices are wreaking havoc on Mexico's inflation rate and forcing shoppers to pay more for eggs, milk and tortillas. But they're a godsend to farmers such as Victor Manuel Amador Luna.

...How long the bonanza will last is anyone's guess. What's clear is that America's thirst for corn-based ethanol is being felt around the globe, delivering fatter profits for grain farmers but higher costs for livestock producers, food processors and consumers.

[Where Is the energy for freedom?](#)

The hydrocarbon law is being sold to the public as a solution to the knotty problem of how to distribute oil profits among the Kurds, Sunnis and Shia in order to contain the growing civil war, but it does much more than that. The most critical part of the law is how it will essentially privatize most of Iraq's oil, granting profits and control to Exxon, Chevron, Shell and other oil companies. The Independent, a British newspaper, obtained a leaked copy of the draft law and reported that its provisions would lock Iraqi oil into 30-year Production Sharing Agreements with private oil corporations on what are absolute beggar's terms.

[Mud Pies and Dunce Caps: Part 1 – Health](#)

We are experiencing an epidemic rise in childhood diseases. What are the implications for their survival as we slide past peak oil and go into permanent energy decline?

[Mud Pies and Dunce Caps: Part 2 – Education](#)

What is the value of our current education system in preparing our children for a future that will be dominated by the impact of peak-oil, global warming and climate change, and other global disasters on the near-term horizon?

Mike Bendzela: [The Iraq War Is Entirely My Doing](#)

I'm still paying a mere 15 cents per cup of gasoline, in spite of declining production in three-quarters of oil producing nations; in spite of the gurgling sounds issuing from the tired, giant fields of the U. S. of A.; in spite of the mounting debt of war.

Somebody must be doing something right.

[7 Ways to Save the World](#)

Forget the old cliché that conserving energy is a form of abstinence—riding bicycles, dimming the lights, lowering the thermostat and taking fewer showers. These days conservation is all about efficiency: getting the same—or better—results from just a fraction of the energy.

[Carbon plans that make you cut down](#)

When Andy Ross weighs up the merits of putting on a woolly jumper or turning up the heating on a cold January morning, his gas bill is not the only consideration; there's also the small matter of the planet to weigh up.

The civil engineer is at the vanguard of a small but growing band of people across Britain who have decided to cut their own carbon emissions rather than rely on the 'green salve' of carbon-offsetting, the merits of which are increasingly questioned by environmentalists.

[Alternative Energy Refueling Systems Act Garners Praise](#)

The American Coalition for Ethanol (ACE), a national industry trade association with nearly 1,500 members nationwide, has praised U.S. Senators John Thune (R-S.D.) and Ken Salazar (D-Colo.) for introducing the Alternative Energy Refueling Systems Act of 2007 -- a bill that would assist gas station owners in installing alternative fuel pumps through federal grants of up to \$30,000.

[Solar energy gets affordable](#)

There's a company that wants to throw solar panels on your house and reduce your

electricity bill -- for free.

Yeah, we didn't believe it at first, either. But Citizenre, a renewable energy corporation based in Delaware, looks like the real deal. Its REnU program (for Renewable Energy Unit) complements your current utility setup to take advantage of the sun's resources and reduce the juice you get from "the grid."

[Battery Breakthrough?](#)

A Texas company says it can make a new ultracapacitor power system to replace the electrochemical batteries in everything from cars to laptops.

[U.S. urged to ramp up geothermal power](#)

Mining heat stored in rocks in the Earth's crust could meet a growing portion of U.S. electricity demand, replacing aging nuclear and coal plants with an environmentally friendly alternative, researchers say.

[New nuclear power 'wave' — or just a ripple?](#)

Buoyed by billions of dollars in subsidies pushed through Congress by the Bush administration, the U.S. nuclear power industry says 2007 is the year its plans for a "renaissance" will reach critical mass.

[OPEC Dumps \\$10.1 Billion of Treasuries as Oil Tumbles](#)

OPEC nations are unloading Treasuries at the fastest pace in more than three years as crude oil prices tumble, sending bond yields higher.

[Many Contracts; but Is There Enough Natural Gas?](#)

In 2005, world gas production has been 2763 bcm(billion cubic meters). The proved reserves of natural gas are 179.83 tcm (trillion cubic meters) according to BP Statistical Review. With 2005 consumption amounts, the natural gas reserves are enough for the next 65 years.

There is more good news; the proven reserves are expected to increase as explorations are extended. So, there will be plenty of reserves around. However, the problem lies somewhere else.

[Iran president wants to budget for lower oil price](#)

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Sunday proposed cutting the oil price on which the next budget is based to protect Iran from "enemies" trying to hurt the economy by lowering international crude prices.

[Gas prices drop nearly 14 cents in 2 weeks](#)

The average retail price for a gallon of gasoline in the United States fell nearly 14 cents over the past two weeks, but the drop may be over, as cheaper gas lures more people to hit the road, according to a leading industry analyst.

[Kurt Cobb: The unknown unknowns](#)

We are frequently assailed with the notion that knowledge is doubling every n-years and that the interval between doublings is shrinking with each doubling. We are even told that knowledge will someday be increasing at a rate that is so fast it will represent a distinct break in human history. After this turning point, often referred to as the singularity, machines will be smarter than humans and launch human society into an unprecedented orgy of invention and progress.

An antidote to this kind of thinking is David Orr's, Ecological Literacy, a compilation of essays that remain as fresh and profound today as they were when they were published in 1992. While Orr would not deny the proliferation of knowledge, he posits an equal and opposite reaction. With each doubling of knowledge, we get a doubling of ignorance.

[Pollution destroying pre-Aztec Mexican ruins](#)

Oil refineries and power stations pumping acid air pollutants along Mexico's Gulf coast threaten to erase carved stone murals at the pre-Aztec ruined city of El Tajin, a scientist said on Sunday.

[Calls to act on global warming precede Bush speech](#)

Environmentalists, evangelical Christians and congressional and corporate leaders have called for action on global warming in the days leading up to President George W. Bush's State of the Union speech.

[The ethical challenges of healthcare and peak oil](#)

An ethical conflict occurs whenever the rights of two or more people, or groups of people, come into conflict. Put another way, it occurs when everyone can't get what they

want, and tough decisions need to be made about the allocation of scarce resources.

[Schreyer leads new oil, gas study group](#)

Former Manitoba Premier Ed Schreyer is leading a new organization that will educate, and warn, Canadians about dwindling petroleum reserves and global warming.

[Play It Again, Sam!](#)

We spent most of the time taking advantage of the drama on the financial news stations in regards to oil. The talking heads have officially gone from bracing us for \$100 oil to an almost palpable sense of disappointment as they start to anticipate the price will drop under \$30? What happened to peak oil? I think the point to take is that watching the news is no way to make money. Folks, wake up and use your charts or go broke!

[South Africa: Power cuts won't hurt economic growth](#)

The power outages that plunged much of South Africa into darkness last week will not hurt economic growth or cost the nation nearly as much as some have predicted, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel said on Monday.

Factories, mines and homes throughout Africa's economic powerhouse lost electricity last Thursday without warning, prompting fears that a looming energy crisis could trim the nation's fast-growing economy.

[Who controls the power?](#)

Perhaps one of the most worrying aspects of last week's power cuts is the level to which South Africans have come to expect them.

Shops, factories, banks, farmers and even small businesses have invested in generators so they can function when the lights go out - yet again.

This is sensible, but also disturbing, as it speaks of citizens who have accepted that the authorities can no longer be relied on to provide the foundation on which modern society is built: electricity.

[Ticking away](#)

Time. It's the focal point in the discussion among the groups opposed to building 18 coal-fired power plants in Texas and those advocating such construction. Opponents say the

governor's executive order putting the plants on a fast-track to gaining a permit doesn't give them sufficient time to conduct testing and raise money to mount a defense. These opponents also say the plants, including one in Savoy in Fannin County, will pollute the atmosphere for up to 50 years. And the plants can't be built in time to solve the energy crunch predicted as early as next year. Opponents have sued Gov. Rick Perry, contending his executive order exceeded his constitutional authority and impinged on the authority of the judiciary.



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