



DrumBeat: March 10, 2007

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[The Hydrogen Hoax](#)

It certainly sounds great. Hydrogen, after all, is “the most common element in the universe,” as Secretary Abraham pointed out. Since it is so plentiful, surely President Bush must be right when he promises it will be cheap. And when you use it, the waste product will be nothing but water—“environmental pollution will no longer be a concern.” Hydrogen will be abundant, cheap, and clean. Why settle for anything less?

Unfortunately, it’s all pure bunk. To get serious about energy policy, America needs to abandon, once and for all, the false promise of the hydrogen age.

[The Cavalry Stays Home](#)

When confronted with the indisputable reality of the peaking and decline of the world’s top-producing oil fields, the cornucopian camp points to new projects as the cavalry that will ride in and save the day. High crude prices, they argue, will make formerly marginal oil projects profitable and encourage the development of new oil fields.

But given recent events, it seems their faith in the Invisible Hand is ill-placed.

[Ambalat Block Dispute Heats Up](#)

Reports of Malaysian aircraft and ships intruding the air space and waters off Indonesia have prompted the Indonesian Air Force to patrol the waters over the Sulawesi Sea where the two countries are disputing the boundary lines.

[Gas price "outrage" - Another 20- to 30-cent hike expected in next few days](#)

The reaction at the pump: predictable.

"I am outraged," said Todd Carey, a 30-year-old product support specialist at Horizon Navigation in Santa Clara. "Where do they get off raising prices so much so fast?"

[The Treehugger Index](#)

It works a bit like a stock market index, except that instead of tracking stocks, it tracks mentions of certain key green phrases in the media. It's a way to gauge how much mindshare certain concepts have and see if they are gaining or losing ground compared to last week. Not very scientific, but lots of fun!

100 Things you can do for Peak Oil: [Part 1](#) (Home, Garden and Clothing) and [Part 2](#) (Community, Family, Transportation, Etc.)

[Cuba-Venezuela: Making Biofuels Without Wasting Food](#)

The governments of Cuba and Venezuela are planning to move forward together on biofuels production, but they will rely on producing alcohol from sugarcane, in order to spare food crops.

[Fuel Lines](#) A review of Lisa Margonelli's *OIL ON THE BRAIN: Adventures From the Pump to the Pipeline*. Includes the first chapter from the book.

[Chávez: Venezuelan oil sales to US will continue to fall](#)

Venezuelan oil shipments to the United States will continue to drop as Venezuela continues to diversify its economy, and an example is the negotiations currently under way with China, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez told an Argentinean TV channel.

[Garden Girl's peak oil video blog](#)

[Revving Up the Rails](#)

States are ready to put up big bucks to speed up passenger rail service--if someone would just push freight trains out of the way.

[High Demand X Low Supply](#)

When two causes collide, the resulting effect can become much greater than the sum of its parts. Such is proving to be the case in regard to world oil demand. We don't really have to "run out." There just needs to be enough doubt in people's minds regarding predictable pricing and the reliability of supply to create an extended crisis atmosphere.

[Peoples Gas files rate hike request](#)

"This is horrible timing," said Jim Chilsen, a spokesman for the Citizens Utility Board. "Illinois consumers are facing an energy crisis. Natural gas costs are climbing and electric bills are skyrocketing."

[Petroleum piggybank?](#)

The idea of turning the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge into a petroleum piggybank for the nation is gaining momentum in Washington.

Senator Lisa Murkowski is working on legislation that would authorize the U.S. Department of Energy to contract with oil companies to conduct seismic and other preliminary work to prepare the 1.5-million acre coastal plain for oil development in case of an energy crisis.

[Solar Energy: New power source in Jigawa](#)

The village health clinics now benefit from solar energy. Lights enable health officers to see patients at night for the first time, vaccine refrigerators allow more people to be vaccinated at greater frequency and fans increase the comfort level of staff and patients alike. Village primary schools now have, at least, two illuminated classrooms and teachers report that they are being heavily used in the evenings for adult education and as places for children to come and do their lessons. Each school has also been provided with a computer and computer instruction for the teachers. These are the first computers in the project villages and there are plans to eventually hook them to the internet via the state's broadband system – a process that can literally open the village to the rest of the world for healthcare, education and commerce.

[Electric-powered Trucks in Russia](#)



These days there are many talks on converting fuel cars to some new sources of power: hydrogen or electrical driven, many hybrids appear which use both electricity and fuel. But not many know that already 60 years in some Russian cities there are even big trucks are go solely on electricity without a drop of fuel. The only problem with them they are wired. Yes, connected to the wires which cover all the major streets of the cities so that such trucks and some passengers trolleybuses (which don't use rails like trams but go just on any surface) are connected.

['Coal rush' pits utilities against Congress](#): *Growing energy demand collides with desire to cut pollution levels*

The coal rush in America's heartland is on a collision course with Congress. While lawmakers are drawing up ways to cap and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, the Energy Department says as many as 150 new coal-fired plants could be built by 2030, adding volumes to the nation's emissions of carbon dioxide, the most prevalent of half a dozen greenhouse gases scientists blame for global warming.

[Why Hybrids Are Such A Hard Sell](#)

Given all the buzz about hybrids, not to mention the greening of the citizenry, you'd think they would be easy to sell. They're not. After growing nicely through much of 2006, hybrid sales began to slow early this year. The gasoline-electric vehicles now make up 1.8% of all vehicle sales, says Edmunds.com, down from a peak of 2.1% in October.

[New technology outsmarting "peak oil"?](#)

But the development of the new technology was itself spurred by high prices (so much for "objective" science), which were in part driven by "peak oil" fears. Which deepens our suspicions that the "peak oil" hysteria was instrumented by the oil industry all along....

[Shell contains Nigeria oil spill](#)

Royal Dutch Shell said on Friday that it has successfully contained a major oil spill in a production facility in southern Nigeria but yet to regain output loss of 187,000 barrels per day.

[Travellers at risk from global warming on Tibet railway](#)

Experts have voiced fears that parts of the track could become unstable, triggering derailments if warm weather melted frozen ground under the railway route.

[Magazines go green with global warming issues](#)

Some sports fans may now know as much about global warming as they know about women's swimwear: Sports Illustrated this week tells readers how a warming world is going to change the state of play.

[Al Gore's Outsourcing Solution](#)

TerraPass charges \$1,247.50 for one year of carbon offsets for a home like Mr. Gore's, the price including a refrigerator magnet proclaiming the home "carbon balanced." Initially I found it hard to believe anyone could counteract Mr. Gore's prodigious energy lust for just \$1,247.50, since planting about 20,000 trees would be required to neutralize even half his house's carbon footprint.

[Global Realignment and the Decline of the Superpower](#)

The United States has been defeated in Iraq. That doesn't mean that there'll be a troop withdrawal anytime soon, but it does mean that there's no chance of achieving the mission's political objectives. Iraq will not be a democracy, reconstruction will be minimal, and the security situation will continue to deteriorate into the foreseeable future.

[An Inconvenient Despair](#)

The *Toronto Star's* Peter Howell has panned the just released Peak Oil movie, "A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash." Noting its depressing no-light at the end of the tunnel undercurrent, Howell concludes: "A movie this grim risks switching off the very minds it seeks to engage."

...The challenge for environmentally conscious movie makers is how to educate their audience and instruct them as well. If we cannot take any hope away with us from the theatre, then what's the point?

[Peak Oil Passnotes: Markets Don't Work Anymore](#)

Even those people with a casual acquaintance of the markets should be interested in the way we have seen a multiple change in the way equities and energy inter-react. Normally if stocks went down for a non-energy reason such as panic, the price of energy would follow. The idea is that weaker companies will breed weaker performance, resulting in lower consumption. This is no longer the case.

[Fashioning a future](#)

...I've been mulling it over ever since and I have reached this one: fashion as we know it doesn't have a future.

It doesn't have a future any more than the internal combustion engine does. I don't know how long it will take for the current fashion system to become unworkable, but I'm certain it will happen. Just call me Pradadamus.

[Not-So-Perma Frost](#)

Daniel Fortier spends his summers studying the permafrost on Bylot Island, high in the eastern Canadian Arctic. While hiking there early in the 1999 field season, he distinctly heard the sound of running water yet saw no streams nearby. "I thought to myself, 'Where is this sound coming from?'" says Fortier. "So, like a good researcher, I started to dig."

[Coal India now digs the world for mines](#)

After oil expedition, it's time for a global coal hunt. The government has decided to acquire coal mines in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Australia, Indonesia and South Africa to secure India's energy needs.

[Chinese lawmaker suggests developing nuclear energy in inland areas](#)

Development of nuclear energy in China's inland areas is not only feasible but necessary, said a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), the top legislature of China.

[Beyond oil - Reappraising the Gulf States](#)

Falling per capita oil and gas production: The pace of reform in the GCC has been uneven. States with relatively low ratios of oil and gas production to the number of citizens will find it increasingly difficult to sustain standards of living for their people.

[China: Offshore oil projects opening up](#)

Foreign giants are gearing up to further tap China's offshore reserves since the country's top offshore oil firm opened an unprecedented number of blocks for international collaboration.

[South Africa: Gore Urged to Put Brake on Biofuel Production](#)

An international coalition has appealed to former US vice-president and environmental campaigner Al Gore to take up their concerns about the world's rapidly developing biofuels industry.

They have told him that large-scale biofuel production and new incentives to promote biofuels, based on "energy-crop monocultures", are having a devastating impact on biodiversity and contributing to global climate change.



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