



## DrumBeat: April 17, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 17, 2007 - 9:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [U.S. pursues ethanol technology as key to reducing oil dependence](#)

The sun shone brightly on the crowd gathered at the rusting old oil refinery here, as company officials showed off diagrams explaining how they planned to turn weeds and agricultural wastes into car fuel. Government officials gave optimistic speeches.

In the background, workers were preparing a new network of pipes, tanks and conveyor belts.

That was in October 1998, when ethanol from crop wastes seemed to be just around the corner.

It still is. This past February, company officials gathered here once again, to break ground on a plant designed to make ethanol by yet another method.

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### [Chic-onomics: 'value is the new growth!'](#)

We need a new theory. Unlimited growth isn't working. Almost three centuries ago Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* gave birth to economic science: "More is better" was the mantra, "more" made you happier. But today, "more is too much." And soon there may be no more.

### [Opec softens tone on oil supply](#)

Opec, the oil cartel, on Monday softened its policy to withhold oil from the market, saying it would supply more if necessary.

### [China's economy reaching environmental limits](#)

According to high-ranking officials in Beijing, there is simply not enough fuel around on the planet to sustain a Chinese boom using the same energy-intensive recipe that made the western nations rich.

### [Chinese Oil Giants Move to Biofuels](#)

China National Offshore Oil Corporation announced recently that a biodiesel plant with an annual output of 60,000 tons will be built within the year in Dongfang City, Hainan Province. Plans also include planting 100,000 mu (about 25.7 square miles) of jatropha curcas (a tree whose seeds and nuts can be processed to produce biofuel) in Hainan to provide raw material for the biodiesel plant in the future.

### [China to miss target for using natural gas](#)

China will miss a target for increased natural gas use because importers failed to secure enough supplies and energy demand gained more than expected.

### [Russia resumes its power in Europe with natural gas](#)

Russian President Vladimir Putin must be feeling smug. His strategy of using his country's vast natural resources to restore the greatness lost after the break-up of the Soviet Union seems to be paying off. If power is measured by the fear instilled in others -- as many Russians believe -- he is certainly winning.

### [Jeb Bush: Ethanol market to double in five years](#)

The world's production and consumption of ethanol are expected to at least double in the next five years, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush said Monday.

### [Proposed pipeline across Malaysia could cut costs](#)

A proposed oil pipeline project to pump oil across northern Malaysia - bypassing the busy Malacca Strait - could lower transportation costs and avoid risks of pirate attacks on tankers, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak said Tuesday.

### [A car worth a million dollars in India](#)

Riding on high domestic and international demand, this year has been one of the best for the Indian automobile industry. An Indian government mission plan said auto manufacturers are aiming for sales of \$145 billion in 10 years or an average 16% annual growth, up from about \$40 billion now.

### [GM will get plug-in vehicle into production: executive](#)

General Motors Corp. Engineering Chief Jim Queen said Monday that the company is

planning to make its Chevrolet Volt plug-in electric concept car in the future, despite some speculation suggesting the Volt project is little more than an expensive science project.

### [Palm oil industry wary of uncertain futures](#)

Malaysian palm oil futures hit an eight year high last week, as rampant demand by food and biofuels continues to deplete global stocks.

### India: [Food, fuel, water and alternate energy sources](#)

It is only an academic exercise to debate which of the three securities is most important for India: food, energy and water. All of them are equally important. Relatively new and expanding sector of alternate energy sources is forcing us to look at these sectors in an integrated and holistic manner.

### [Plant my roof, stretch my green](#)

The number of buildings with green roofs - rooftops covered in hearty plants like sedum and prairie grass - grew 25 percent last year, according to the industry association Green Roofs for Healthy Cities.

### [Saudi Aramco Says Refining Shortage to Persist on Rising Costs](#)

Saudi Aramco, the world's largest state oil company, said a shortage of refining capacity to process so-called heavy-sour crudes will persist because of rising construction costs.

Rising prices of steel and other construction materials have prompted companies and governments to delay or cancel projects, said Ibrahim Mishari, Saudi Aramco's vice president of marketing and supply planning.

Costs to build new refining units have risen at least 70 percent in the past three years, London-based Merrill analysts Hootan Yazhari, Alastair Syme, Mark Iannotti and Philippe Ziegler said in an April 13 report. Heavy-sour oil contains more sulfur than sweet crudes and requires more processing than light grades to extract the same amount of gasoline.

"Many of these refineries may not materialize," Aramco's Mishari said at the Middle East Petroleum and Gas conference in Dubai. "The downstream bottleneck could remain."

### [Special warns that as dwindling oil feels squeeze, so will we](#)

"A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash" could be the most important program you'll ever see if the experts on the program are right. What's at stake is simply our entire way of living, they say.

The problem is most people won't see the show or won't want to even if they can. It's on from 9:30 to 11 tonight on Sundance. That's a digital channel on Insight 614, which a lot of subscribers have never heard of and most don't get.

### [Simmons to speak in New Hampshire:](#)

Matthew Simmons, a banking and investment advisor to the oil industry for more than 35 years, will speak at the University of New Hampshire at 7 p.m. in the ballroom of Huddleston Hall on Main Street. His talk is free and open to the public.

### [Australia on Track to be a Top Three LNG Exporter in 10 Years](#)

Australia is on track to be one of the world's top three Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exporters within 10 years, as Australia's export capacity grows to meet strong world demand, Australian Resources Minister, Ian Macfarlane, said.

### [U.S. weekly oil and gas rig count up 32](#)

The number of rigs actively exploring for oil and natural gas in the United States rose by 32 this week to 1,758.

### [BP eyes role in Iraq](#)

BP is interested in working on a range of oil and gas projects in Iraq, but is waiting for the country's parliament to pass an oil law and for security to improve before increasing its role, a senior BP executive said on Monday.

### [Carmakers seek green pastures](#)

With close to 150m vehicles on its roads and new car sales alone adding 5-6m a year, China is a test case for global carmakers pushing their clean, fuel-efficient models and technologies.

### [House Natural Resources Panel to Examine Aftermath of 2005 Energy Bill](#)

Two years ago, the GOP-controlled Congress passed an energy bill that reshaped the

rules for oil and gas exploration on federal lands. Now, the Democratic House wants to take a second look.

### [Wanna Bet the Farm on Carbon Capture and Sequestration?](#)

If you want to go on living on the planet Earth, then you'd better learn how to love sequestration. Because if sequestration doesn't work, the planet is toast. Literally.

### [White House Behind the Biggest Bull Market of the Next 25 Years](#)

If ethanol were a crime, Washington would definitely be charged with aiding and abetting. Because let's face it: there's absolutely no doubt that those folks on the Hill are responsible for the ethanol movement.

And when you take into account all the agricultural subsidies and renewable fuel standards, the very thought of ethanol being written off as a temporary fad is ludicrous.

### [Blowing Green Smoke](#) - Kunstler responds to Friedman:

Friedman's invocation of Wal-Mart here offers another layer of misunderstanding from the work he is best-known for, his best-selling book, *The World is Flat*, which asserts that globalism is now a permanent feature of the human condition. I demur from this view. I think we will discover (probably painfully) that globalism was a set of transient economic relations made possible by a half century of cheap oil and relative peace between the great powers, and that enterprises that rely on these transient mechanisms — such Wal-Mart, with its 12,000-mile merchandise supply chain to China, and its "warehouse on wheels" of tractor-trailer trucks circulating incessantly on America's interstate highways — will be on their knees in a few years as we enter the *export crisis* phase of post-peak terminal oil depletion and the great powers of the world act with increasing desperation to compete over the remaining supplies.

### [U.K.: Inflation rate at ten-year high](#)

Mr King said that the rise in inflation was partly due to an "unexpectedly sharp" increase in the domestic energy crisis last year as well as rising food prices.

### [Azerbaijan's share of the world's hydrocarbons](#)

Petroleum Intelligence Weekly has published its annual ranking of the world's 50 largest oil companies, this ranking is the leading source of comparative performance assessments on all the world's oil companies. While Saudi Aramco and Exxon Mobil remain entrenched at the top, mergers, acquisitions and state consolidation continue to

make their mark.

The report states that 20 countries of the world own 94 percent of the hydrocarbon supply, totalling 1.4 trillion barrels. Out of that amount Azeri hydrocarbon supply totals 14 billion barrels (more than 1.9 billion tons).

### [Sinopec earnings to soar](#)

Asia's largest oil refiner Sinopec said its profit will surge over 50 percent in the first half of this year.

### [Greenpeace India seeks ban on incandescent bulb](#)

Greenpeace today launched a national campaign calling for a phase out of inefficient light bulbs in India by 2010. Four Greenpeace activists suspended themselves from the top of the 269 meters high Vikas Minar building at the Center of New Delhi this morning and unfurled a 85 by 45 feet large banner with the message "Stop Climate Change, Ban the Bulb" and the campaign logo.

### [Public funding is missing piece in state green-energy initiatives](#)

Brazil is now largely energy independent because of its aggressive efforts to develop homegrown biomass ethanol to replace gasoline in response to the 1970s energy crisis. Recently, the European Union announced plans to reduce by 2020 its greenhouse emissions to 20 percent below its 1990 levels, while producing 20 percent of its energy through renewable sources. In contrast, an internal draft report of the Bush administration estimates that by 2020, the U.S. will emit 9.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide, an increase of 20 percent over its 2000 level.

### [Conservation is a necessity](#)

Disappointment does not begin to describe my feelings after having read of the passage of a bill in the N.H. House that would promote the construction of wood-fired electric power plants across the state.

### India: [Why get scared of over-capacity?](#)

What happens if, let's say, all these plants come up in the miraculous time frame of four years? Well nothing much, because demand will have far outstripped capacity by several thousand megawatts. And what is being done to prepare for that eventuality? As I can see, next to nothing.

### Ghana: [Anglogold Ashanti to invest \\$700m in mining](#)

He noted that gold price and cost of mining input rose simultaneously, putting pressure on profit margins of industry as a whole but Anglogold Ashanti had long focused on managing down fixed cost base through rigorous savings programme.

...He said the energy crisis was adding additional cost to production and to remain in operation the company was investing 40 million dollars to generate power.

### [Oil chiefs slammed over dwindling supplies](#)

THE Australian Democrats have criticised oil industry executives meeting in Adelaide for failing to discuss the issue of the world's dwindling oil supplies.

The party's Senate candidate in South Australia, Ruth Russell, said some former industry executives and independent commentators believed peak oil could be reached by 2010.

..."It is outrageous that the annual Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association conference, being held in Adelaide right now, does not even list the problem of peak oil on its agenda." she said.

### [Iran, Iraq, Kuwait 'raise May crude oil prices'](#)

Iran and Iraq have raised the May crude oil prices for its three main export products to all markets, while Kuwait upped its export formula for Far East clients, the Middle East Economic Survey reported Monday. The Cyprus-based weekly publication said that for Asian customers, Iranian Light remained unchanged in relation to the average price of Oman and Dubai crudes for May, while Iranian Heavy and Foroozan were raised by 15 cents a barrel.

For May deliveries to north western Europe and South Africa, all three crudes were raised by 1.35 to 1.80 dollars a barrel in relation to the benchmark Brent Weighted Average (BWAVE).

### [Floating nuclear power stations raise spectre of Chernobyl at sea](#)

Environmental groups and nuclear experts fear that floating plants will be more vulnerable to accidents and terrorism than land-based stations. They point to a history of naval and nuclear accidents in Russia and the former Soviet Union, most notoriously at Chernobyl in 1986.

### [Global warming may put U.S. in hot water](#)

As the world warms, water — either too little or too much of it — is going to be the major problem for the United States, scientists and military experts said Monday. It will be a domestic problem, with states clashing over controls of rivers, and a national security problem as water shortages and floods worsen conflicts and terrorism elsewhere in the world, they said.

At home, especially in the Southwest, regions will need to find new sources of drinking water, the Great Lakes will shrink, fish and other species will be left high and dry, and coastal areas will on occasion be inundated because of sea-level rises and souped-up storms, U.S. scientists said.

### [Brazil defends ethanol deal at summit](#)

Brazil is defending its ethanol agreement with the United States, despite efforts by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to undermine the deal using his country's vast reserves of oil and natural gas.

### [EPA chief: Bush climate policy working](#)

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency said Monday the growth of greenhouse gases by less than 1 percent in 2005 shows the administration's program to address global warming "is delivering real results." The pronouncement by EPA Administrator Dave Johnson brought a quick response from some environmentalists.

### [U.S. pump price highest since August](#)

Soaring U.S. retail gasoline prices show no signs of easing, jumping another 7.4 cents over the last week to an average \$2.88 a gallon, the government said on Monday.

### [GM expects rise in China minivan JV's sales](#)

General Motors Corp.'s commercial vehicle venture in China expects to increase sales by more than one-fifth this year and aims to maintain its number-one position in the Chinese market's minivan segment, a senior executive said on Tuesday.

### [Security Council to hold unprecedented debate on climate change](#)

For the first time in its history, the UN Security Council on Tuesday debates climate change, a sign that the burning issue is increasingly being seen as a major threat to



world security.

### [Climate change takes centre stage in Singapore](#)

More than 600 business executives and experts will gather in Singapore this week for a UN-backed meeting to discuss how the corporate world can help tackle the growing threat of climate change.

### [Ex-U.S. military chiefs warn warming worsens security](#)

Global climate change acts as a "threat multiplier" in some of the world's most volatile areas, and raises tensions even in stable regions, 11 former U.S. military leaders warned on Monday.

To combat this, they urged immediate planning and international cooperation without waiting for total certainty on the consequences of global warming.

"We can't wait until we have absolute certainty," retired Gen. Gordon Sullivan, a former U.S. Army chief of staff, said at a briefing where the report was released. "We know that we never have 100 percent certainty and ... if we wait, we might wait too long."

### [The top 12 greenest vehicles of 2007 - Surprisingly, only half of the models making the cut are hybrid vehicles](#)

Half of the cars are just old-fashioned, gas-powered vehicles that happen to be small and efficient, with low emissions.

### [Top Ten US City Use of Renewable Energy](#)

Which of the largest 50 US cities provides citizens with the highest percentage of power produced from renewable energy? SustainLane has the answer:

1. Oakland, CA (17%)
2. Sacramento/SF/San Jose, CA (12%)\*
3. Portland, OR (10%)
4. Boston (8.6%)
5. San Diego, CA (8%)
6. Austin, TX (6%)
7. Los Angeles, CA (5%)
8. Minneapolis, MN (4.5%)
9. Seattle, WA (3.5%)
10. Chicago, IL (2.5%)

\*tied



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