



DrumBeat: April 18, 2007

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Energy diplomacy with attitude](#)

When it comes to oil, Americans let markets and consumption set the agenda. The 1973 shock didn't change behavior in a durable way. Neither did the spike of the early 1980s. The post-September 11, 2001, trajectory saw the price of standard crude oil move from under US\$25 per barrel in September 2003, tripling to around \$80 per barrel last year.

[Ethanol cars may not be healthier](#)

Ethanol vehicles may have worse effects on human health than conventional petrol, US scientists have warned.

A computer model set up to simulate air quality in 2020 found that in some areas ozone levels would increase if all cars were run on bioethanol.

Deaths from respiratory problems and asthma attacks would increase with such levels, the researchers reported in Environmental Science and Technology.

[Brazil Seeks Cut in U.S. Ethanol Import Duties](#)

The United States may ease ethanol import duties by the end of next year, helping Brazilian producers gain access to markets in the world's largest consumer of the fuel, Brazil's top ethanol official said Monday.

[Biofuel Bill to Go to Duma](#)

The Federation Council, with the support of the Agriculture Ministry, has prepared a bill for introduction into the State Duma to lower the excise tax on bioethanol fuel to encourage the development of bioenergy in Russia. Tax breaks are being proposed for oil refineries that add alcohol to their fuel.

[Big biofuel plant to be built on Canadian Prairies](#)

North America's biggest biofuel refinery will be built in central Alberta near the town of Innisfail, and could be producing fuels in the third quarter of 2008, the plant's developers said on Tuesday.

[Africa: Next US Oil War Venue](#)

The Pentagon does not admit that a ring of permanent US military bases is operating or under construction throughout Africa. But nobody doubts the American military buildup on the African continent is well underway.

[Fueling our Future Energy Needs](#)

By 2030, the world will still be grasping for fossil fuels to meet its power demands. And despite the recent clamor for the development of renewable resources, the three major fossil fuels--oil, coal and gas--will be vital to the world's future energy needs.

This is from last year, but I hadn't seen it until EB posted a link yesterday: [Risks of the oil transition](#)

In our view, therefore, the oil transition brings more long-term environmental concerns than long-term economic or security threats because tradeoffs have strong potential to be resolved by accepting increased environmental damage in order to avoid economic or security risks.

[Record profits from oil may soon ooze away](#)

The doubling of oil prices over the past few years has produced enormous windfalls for oil companies. But those record profits are likely to recede in the years ahead - even if oil prices don't - as oil-producing nations increasingly demand a bigger share of the wealth.

[Behind high gas prices: The refinery crunch](#)

When gasoline prices surge, a lack of refining capacity is often blamed. What's being done, and is it enough?

[Where next for crude oil and oil stocks?](#)

The trebling of oil prices in recent years has left both investors and the broader public with the conviction that the world is facing an inevitable energy crisis.

[Armenia, Iran, Russia to open talks on oil refinery](#)

Government officials from Armenia, Iran and Russia will meet soon to discuss an ambitious idea to build a big oil refinery on the Armenian-Iranian border that would cater for the Iranian market.

[Fossil Fuel Watch - Humbugs Along the Potomac](#)

With a track record for erroneous forecasting that verges on the spectacular, why should anyone bother to listen to EIA when more reliable predictions can be found on the daily astrology page? When agency statisticians issue prediction like these, they are going well beyond the cut-and-dried world of extraction volumes, refinery outputs, fuel imports, and implied demand for refined products. Embedded in EIA's monthly prognostications are assumptions regarding, for example, hurricane activity, geopolitical tensions, the structural integrity of key pipelines, and the veracity of OPEC's communiqués. And every month these statisticians peer into the future and conclude, perhaps with the aid of tarot cards and/or tea leaves, that nothing that could go wrong will go wrong.

[Betting on falling oil prices? Bet long](#)

It isn't a scarcity that keeps crude prices elevated. It's an excess of crime and government -- along with, yes, record-setting increases in demand. Prices would nevertheless fall, notwithstanding crime and government, were the supply of oil increased -- and it will most certainly increase. These things take time. In the meantime, producer countries are content, consumer countries are complacent and the big oil companies (who are responsible for only 15 per cent of world oil output) are pleased to reward investors.

[Funny Farms](#)

Ironically, the family farm may become of vital importance just as it sings its swan song. In 1956, geologist M. King Hubbert correctly anticipated that US oil production would peak in the early 1970s. In his recent book, Hubbert's Peak, geologist Kenneth Deffeyes applied his colleague's methods and emerged with an estimate for when world oil production would peak—November 24, 2005, US Thanksgiving. While this date is being debated by oil experts, dire forecasts like Deffeyes' seem plausible in light of oil prices of \$65 US per barrel or more. With rising oil prices comes a renewed focus on localized, organic farming.

[Chavez Says He Won't Kick Out U.S. Oil Companies](#)

President Hugo Chavez on Monday denied that his leftist government plans to expel U.S. oil companies from Venezuela, although he added that "there won't be another

drop of oil" from his country for the United States should Washington launch a "new aggression" against Caracas.

[Does Anyone Really Care About Global Warming](#)

I watched a documentary the other day called "The Great Global Warming Swindle" from the BBC. The basic premise of the documentary was to show that carbon dioxide is not the main cause of global warming, that the sun's energy output is, and it is not the threat that certain political interests would have us believe. The science of the documentary seemed sound and I would be hard pressed to argue against the data without more study. Much of what they said I was already aware of. They also showed how Al Gore had misused data to push a political agenda and a world government imposed solution. They discussed how certain scientists were included as authors in a United Nations report on global warming even though they had asked to be removed from the list of authors. They spoke of how they were not being paid by oil interests. It was all very interesting. They stated that there was no doubt climate change existed and that we were in the middle of it, the doubt was in what the main cause is. They gave me little reason to doubt them until near the very end. That's when their true colors showed. They might not have been paid by oil interests, but they suddenly started advocating coal interests.

[The vast power of the Saudi lobby](#)

The long and corrupt history of American-Saudi relations centers around the kingdom's vast reserves of easily extractable oil, of course. Ever since President Franklin D. Roosevelt met aboard ship in 1945 with King Ibn Saud, the special relationship with the desert kingdom has only grown stronger. The House of Saud is usually happy to sell us oil at a consistent and reasonable price — and then increase production if unseemly market forces drive the world price of a barrel too high for U.S. consumers.

[Sustainable Living Book Helps Families Save Energy, Save Money](#)

Sustainable Living: For Home, Neighborhood and Community is about using less energy, spending less money, and enjoying it more. It's about how neighbors can benefit from working and sharing together. And it's about how all of a community's neighborhoods and residents can benefit from cooperative effort.

[The Airing of "The Green"](#)

Robert Redford chats about the new green programming on the Sundance Channel.

Ghana: [German legislator cautions on nuclear power](#)

A German legislator, Dr Axel Berg, has advised the Kufuor government to be cautious in considering nuclear energy as an option in view of environmental, cost and accessibility implications.

He said maintaining and operating a nuclear grid can be very dear especially considering extending its facility to a vast span of communities in the country.

[Chevron exec: Ethanol means no new refineries](#)

Investment doesn't make sense, despite U.S. need to import gasoline

A top Chevron Corp. executive said Tuesday the push to displace as much as a fifth of the country's gasoline with ethanol will make it less likely the industry will build new domestic refineries.

[Mexico energy minister says no oil privatization](#)

Mexican Energy Minister Georgina Kessel said on Tuesday the country would not privatize its energy sector companies but urged lawmakers from all parties to start a new debate on how to shore-up declining oil output.

...She said 55 percent of Mexico's current oil production comes from fields that are in decline and Mexico's oil reserves as they stand will last just over nine years.

"Even though work on exploration and production has not stopped ... it will not be possible to sustain the production platform at the historical highs registered in previous years," she said.

[Outlook for hybrid sales iffy, polls show](#) - *Incentives boost sales of Prius, but performance questions persist*

The 2007 Prius goes from 0 to 60 mph in a sluggish 10.1 seconds and achieves a top speed of only 105 mph, which could leave many new-car buyers cold.

[Iraqi oil law nears final stage](#)

Iraq's hotly debated draft oil law is to be sent to parliament "within the coming few days if everything goes well," the Oil Ministry spokesman said on Wednesday.

[Governments in the U.S. Prepare for Peak Oil](#)

A recent US Government Accountability Office report says that since most studies

suggest decline of oil within around three decades, the US government must prepare the country for that eventuality. Here are links to this and other reports, plus articles that interpret them.

[Venezuela threatens no oil takeover compensation](#)

Venezuela threatened on Tuesday not to compensate some foreign oil companies in its planned takeover of their multibillion-dollar projects in the OPEC nation's vast Orinoco reserve.

[EU should not discard military to secure oil, expert says](#)

Simon Henderson, director at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said that Europe should assess all options, including military, when looking at its oil-supply security in the 21st century.

[Rebel leader warns foreign firms of exploiting Darfur oil](#)

A Darfur rebel group has warned today foreign oil firms against exploring oil and Mineral in the western Sudan province, saying they would not allow it.

[‘India’s energy use, growth de-linked’](#)

Detailing the steps taken by India towards sustainable development, its United Nations Ambassador Nirupam Sen told the Security Council that it has delivered a GDP growth of 8 per cent with only 3.7 per cent growth in its total primary energy consumption.

[Byron King: Oil booms and busts](#)

When you go to the gas station to fill the tank of your car, do you really think about how it all happens? Do you mentally picture the tanker trucks, the storage terminals, the long-distance pipelines, the refineries, the gathering system that brought the oil ashore or the tankers that hauled the oil from some overseas loading terminal? Do you have a mental image of some oil well somewhere, lifting oil from the depths of the Earth? Do you appreciate that some geologist came up with a prospect and laid his or her reputation on the line to convince a financial backer to fund the drilling of an oil well? The crust of the Earth is, I assure you, pockmarked with the dry holes of failed oil exploration efforts. Like many things in this world, it only looks easy.

[World now faces competition between food and fuel, expert warns](#)

GLOBAL grain yields must rise sharply over the next 50 years to avoid food shortages as an increasingly rich population competes with biofuels for scarce resources, the head of the Scottish Agricultural College has said.

[Report: Global energy axis shifts](#)

International consulting company Deloitte has claimed that the world's energy axis is changing directions and will now point toward such places as Saudi Arabia, the Caspian Sea region, Siberia and Canada.

[The Never-Ending Oil "Conspiracy"](#)

The evil oil companies are at it again. The price of a gallon of gas has jumped by more than 30 cents in the past month. The gasoline gougers are busy reaping windfall profits.

[Imperial Sunset?](#)

A variety of factors have contributed to this question: the military debacle of the U.S. in Iraq and of Israel, its only 100 per cent ally, in Lebanon, which precipitated comprehensive domestic crises of confidence inside both countries; the immensity of U.S. deficits and instability of the dollar as the pre-eminent global currency; the challenges of the famous "pink tide" in Latin America; the resurgence of Russian power and high rates of growth in China and India; "resource wars", that is, the emergence of giant energy producers and consumers on the one hand and, on the other, what Michael Klare calls "energo-fascism" in which, he avers, the Pentagon has increasingly become a "global oil protection service".

[Groups challenge Shell's Alaska drilling plans](#)

Five environmental groups and an Alaska native organization said on Tuesday they were challenging the U.S. government's decision to allow Royal Dutch Shell Plc to explore for oil off the northern coast of Alaska this summer.

[Chrysler set for two new Michigan plants](#)

Chrysler Group is set to unveil plans to build two new factories in Michigan as part of a planned \$3-billion investment in more fuel efficient vehicles, according to state and company officials.

[Security Council tackles climate change](#)

During the first U.N. Security Council debate on climate change, Britain argued that global conflicts are ignited over the issue, while developing nations said the topic didn't belong on the council's agenda.

[Researchers debate warming, hurricanes](#)

The debate over whether global warming affects hurricanes may be running into some unexpected turbulence. Many researchers believe warming is causing the storms to get stronger, while others aren't so sure. Now, a new study raises the possibility that global warming might even make it harder for hurricanes to form.



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