



DrumBeat: April 23, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 23, 2007 - 9:10am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Farther, faster? Not anymore](#) - *Progress in transportation is stalling as technology lags and suburban sprawl ties things up.*

This is progress?

The morning train ride from Chestnut Hill to Center City takes 34 minutes today. Fifty years ago, it took 28 minutes.

Today, a United Airlines flight from Philadelphia to Los Angeles takes 6 hours, 1 minute. Forty years ago, the trip took 5 hours, 5 minutes.

...After centuries of ever-faster travel, the triumph of technology over time seems to have stalled. The expectation that each generation will be not only more upwardly mobile, but also more rapidly mobile, has died, apparently of congestion of the arteries.

[UK Treasury Committee concerned about falling UK North Sea oil revenues](#)

The UK's Treasury Committee said it is concerned about the 'very significant' downward revision of forecast North Sea oil revenues in this year's budget, and warned this could pose a risk to overall future tax revenues.

[Crunch time for Hitler's fuel](#)

Supporters of 'liquid coal' tout homegrown benefits as Congress weighs energy bills, but questions remain.

[Ethanol is a waste of energy](#)

Despite mounting evidence that ethanol is about as useful as a flux capacitor, Gov. Bill Ritter is ensuring that Colorado will become dependent on this "alternative" energy.

No need for debate. No need to heed the market. No need to explore viability or consequences.

Executive orders will do the trick.

[You Are What You Grow](#)

A few years ago, an obesity researcher at the University of Washington named Adam Drewnowski ventured into the supermarket to solve a mystery. He wanted to figure out why it is that the most reliable predictor of obesity in America today is a person's wealth. For most of history, after all, the poor have typically suffered from a shortage of calories, not a surfeit. So how is it that today the people with the least amount of money to spend on food are the ones most likely to be overweight?

Drewnowski gave himself a hypothetical dollar to spend, using it to purchase as many calories as he possibly could. He discovered that he could buy the most calories per dollar in the middle aisles of the supermarket, among the towering canyons of processed food and soft drink. (In the typical American supermarket, the fresh foods — dairy, meat, fish and produce — line the perimeter walls, while the imperishable packaged goods dominate the center.) Drewnowski found that a dollar could buy 1,200 calories of cookies or potato chips but only 250 calories of carrots. Looking for something to wash down those chips, he discovered that his dollar bought 875 calories of soda but only 170 calories of orange juice.

[Oil industry problems could affect gas prices](#)

The oil market is as tight as it has been in a long time and it does not have any wiggle room, either on the crude oil supply, which provides the raw material for gasoline, or the refining side, which actually produces and distributes gasoline.

"We are driving a car with worn out shock absorbers and we are feeling every bump," said Anne Korin, co-director for the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, a think tank that focuses on energy, at the conference.

[Four Futures for the Earth](#)

The four future scenarios are:

- Dodging a Bullet
- Teaching the World to Sing
- Geoengineering 101: Pass/Fail
- Say Goodnight

[Fuelled by the oil sands, a new rift over royalties](#)

Alberta's budget painted a bleak outlook for the future of the province's oil and natural gas royalties. Specifically, the province's take from its massive oil sands was projected to fall by half within three years, even as production is surging and energy companies are booking their best-ever profits.

[OIL DATA: China Confirms March Crude Imports 13.9 Tons, +8.8%](#)

Imported volumes of crude were 8.8% higher than in the corresponding month of 2006, the data showed.

China's crude exports slumped in March - down 83.2% at 218,988 tons.

[Nigeria: Militants Brace For War In Rivers](#)

DESPITE the heightened security activities in Rivers State, one of Nigeria's major oil and gas-producing states in the Niger Delta region, ahead of this Saturday's presidential polls, there is still an air of uncertainties in the state. Militants on Thursday said they can no longer guarantee the safety of electoral officials in the state.

[India to keep energy demand growth below GDP pace](#)

India expects its energy demand to remain strong, but increased energy efficiency may keep the pace of consumption growth below economic expansion, a senior government official said on Monday.

[GM's New Fuel-Cell Car](#)

The flexible electric car platform is innovative, but the fuel-cell version is freighted with hydrogen's flaws.

[Sainsbury's delivers a greener van fleet](#)

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The supermarket chain has ordered an initial eight Edison electric vans for its Sainsbury's Online fleet. This is part of a green commitment, which aims to switch 20pc of urban deliveries to electric vehicles by September 2008.

[Indian solar energy project wins world award](#)

The prestigious Energy Globe award for promoting sustainability energy has been won

by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) for helping 100,000 people in 18,000 Indian villages finance the purchase domestic solar systems.

[We can't go on living like this](#)

The fundamental cause of the big global problems threatening us now is simply over-consumption. The rate at which we in rich countries are using up resources is grossly unsustainable. It's far beyond levels that can be kept up for long or that could be spread to all people. Yet most people totally fail to grasp the magnitude of the over-shoot.

[Consume Like There's No Tomorrow](#)

Would someone please tell the Sierra Club Exec Board that the idea of an "environmentally friendly car" makes as much sense as a "non-violent death penalty?" While the vast majority of those concerned with global warming consider reduction of unneeded production to be at the core of a sane policy, the Sierra Club has endorsed a plan that includes virtually no role for conservation.

[China Says Global Warming Threatens Development](#)

Global warming could devastate China's development, the nation's first official survey of climate change warns, while insisting economic growth must come before greenhouse gas cuts.

[Running on E: Industry reflects on Ontario fuel capacity](#)

The crackspread -- the difference between the rack-wholesale price and the price of crude (and where oil companies' profit margins lie) -- is at all time high, explains Rosnak. "So do they get on the bandwagon and build a refinery or do they say to themselves 'what happens if there are too many refineries? We're enjoying a crackspread we haven't seen before.'"

[Project Energy: How Far We've Come](#)

The United States is going through one of the most rapid makeovers in its history. It seems everyone is talking about energy, efficiency and the environment.

Monday marked a full year of "Project Energy" reports on WCCO-TV, with a pledge to keep telling the story of the fast-changing global landscape.

[Private Sector's Role in Saudi Arabia's Mega Projects Close to 70%](#)

Private sector role in mega economic, industrial and infrastructure projects across the Kingdom is expanding year after year, lessening the burden on the government, a recent report issued by the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CSCCI) said.

[Biodiesel will be the answer](#)

The problem, Tilman says, is that the fossil fuel energy required to produce one gallon of corn ethanol only yields 20 percent new energy. For soy bean biodiesel, the new energy yield is only slightly better at 48 percent. And the energy expelled to create those marginal numbers contaminates the air.

Using prairie plants, however, furnishes a 190 percent new energy gain, he says.

[Abe, Bush to work on post-Kyoto strategy](#)

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President George W Bush are set to agree in their summit next week to boost cooperation to fight global warming beyond the 2012 timeframe set under the Kyoto Protocol, Japanese government sources say.

[India: Global warming will devastate coast](#)

Towns and cities along India's eastern coast will be devastated with global warming intensifying cyclones and rising sea levels eroding vast stretches of the shoreline, a climate official said yesterday.

Experts warn that as temperatures rise, the Indian subcontinent - home to about one-sixth of humanity - will be badly hit with more frequent and more severe natural disasters such as floods and storms and more disease and hunger.

[Gasoline at \\$4 Coming to a Pump Near You, Unfazed by Rising Tab](#)

Whether it's \$50 to fill up your Prius or \$130 for the Ford Expedition, \$4-a-gallon gasoline is coming to a pump near you.

Fuel prices are rising at a pace not seen since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita knocked out a third of the U.S. oil refining industry in 2005. Gasoline consumption is climbing twice as fast as last year and will accelerate when summer travel begins late next month.

"What we're surprised by is the increased demand," said James Mulva, chief executive officer at ConocoPhillips, whose refineries from California to New Jersey produce 56 million gallons of gas a day, enough to meet 14 percent of the country's needs. "Even

though the price of gasoline is up, the demand is up," he said in an April 12 interview in Houston.

Another article on that "We're preparing for a crisis" peak oil game:

[A world without oil, in a game](#) - *A San Jose designer is trying to solve a crisis before it can happen.*

In a matter of days, gas prices will skyrocket, a dwindling food supply will rot, and the oil crisis will literally stop Americans in their tracks.

How can you and your loved ones survive a crippling breakdown?

(And yes, it is getting federal funding. It's being produced, at least partially, by PBS.)

[The answer isn't oil, either](#)

Retired petroleum engineer Michael Kasnick ("The answer isn't ethanol," April 5) seems to think the best way to address possible gas shortages is to provide more sweetheart deals to the oil companies, what he calls "increase[d] access to our domestic oil and gas resources." Since oil companies are free to drill on private land at any time, he can only be referring to lands owned by the public. Perhaps he missed the December 2006 report from our own Interior Department -- withheld for more than a year -- showing that:

- Massive subsidies to oil companies for drilling in public waters are yielding almost no results
- Even if they did succeed, these efforts would produce oil costing approximately \$80 per barrel.

[Building a wall around oil](#)

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Two news reports from Iraq caught attention this week with ominous consequences. First, we learned that American military units were building a three-mile-long wall to separate one of Baghdad's Sunni enclaves from surrounding Shiite neighbourhoods, ostensibly to provide for sorely needed security. Second, a scientific study concluded that Iraq's oil reserves could be twice as large as previously estimated, with the new reserves mostly in Al Anbar province.

[Russian Economic Forum opens under boycott cloud](#)

Gazprom's dramatic entry into the giant Sakhalin-2 energy project has raised serious questions about the safety of foreign investments in Russia, analysts contend.

They believe that the state mounted a campaign to force Anglo-Dutch energy giant Royal Dutch Shell to relinquish its grip on Sakhalin-2, using a series of tough environmental checks as a negotiating weapon.

[Why I'm Bullish On Coal Stocks](#)

As prices for crude oil, natural gas and even uranium have risen more than 100% in the last year, coal and coal stocks have not been part of this rally. However, I think that coal and coal stocks will not have to wait much longer for their turn to run.

[Chinese automakers showcase eco-cars](#)

One experimental clean-energy car runs on natural gas. Another uses ethanol distilled from corn. A third has a zero-emissions electric motor powered by a hydrogen fuel cell.

These alternative vehicles were created not by a global automaker but by China's small but ambitious car companies, which displayed them Sunday alongside gasoline-powered sedans and sport utility vehicles at the start of the Shanghai Auto Show.

[Global warming imperils Himalayan glaciers](#)

"If the rate of temperature rises does not change, glaciers on the Qinghai-Tibet plateau will rapidly shrink, perhaps from 500,000 square kilometres in 1995 to 100,000 square kilometres in 2030," Wu Shaohong of the Chinese Academy of Sciences told a news conference.

Glaciers across the Himalayas and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau are a major source for key rivers, such as the Yangtze in China, the Mekong in Indochina and the Ganges in India.

[India, Japan sign pact on global warming](#)

Japan signed a deal Monday to help fast-growing India fight global warming as the two countries look ahead to a framework after the landmark Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012.

Under the agreement, Japan will invest in India's energy industry and transfer energy-saving technology.

[McCain: Energy, warming are twin threats](#)

Republican presidential hopeful John McCain is calling the United States' foreign-oil reliance and global warming twin threats the country must aggressively confront.

"National security depends on energy security," the Arizona senator says in a speech he is to give Monday in which he suggests the country can't achieve either if it remains dependent on oil-rich Middle Eastern nations linked to terrorists.

[Pricey oil won't hurt Asia](#)

Despite the current high oil prices, Asian economies will continue to book high growth and drive the world's economy with their massive resources, according to experts attending the Boao Forum for Asia here.

[Is There Really an Energy Crisis?](#)

The world is not about to run out of oil, but the price is likely to remain where the Saudis and other oil producing nations want it, knowing that too high a price retards the billions that must be invested to find new reserves and then extract, transport and refine it. They know that the world is growing hungrier for oil as nations like China and India industrialize and become major economic centers.

[Iran needs several years to make nuclear fuel](#)

"We have reached the industrial stage, but we need several years to create an industrial unit capable of producing fuel for our power stations."

[China is finding it hard to get enough uranium to fuel nuclear plants](#)

China is finding it hard to obtain enough uranium to fuel the nuclear power reactors it plans to build, according to the country's top energy official.

The comments by Chen Deming, a vice chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission, came just months after China signed a deal with Australia giving it access to yellowcake from Australia, which has about 40 percent of the world's recoverable uranium reserves.

"Where are the materials? I still have no answer now and am searching for materials in other countries, including Australia," Chen said Saturday at the annual Boao Forum for Asia on the southern island of Hainan.

[Growing nuclear club](#)

BEHIND the heightened tension with Iran lies a wider problem that world leaders must swiftly and substantively grasp. The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), drawn up in 1968, needs to be re-written to make it both workable and acceptable to nations who view it as outdated and unfair.

Over the next generation, as the scramble for energy gathers pace, many more governments will announce plans to build uranium-enrichment facilities. Some will be friendly to US interests, some hostile. Some may switch alliances with time.



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