



DrumBeat: April 26, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 26, 2007 - 9:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Colombia in the dark about blackout](#)

A nationwide blackout hit Colombia on Thursday, with authorities struggling to determine the cause of the electrical grid's collapse.

President Alvaro Uribe told journalists in the southern city of Cali that authorities would "know in a few minutes" the cause of the blackout, which took place at about 10:15 a.m. local time.

He said the blackout "appears to have affected the entire country."

[Oil prices expected to drop next year](#)

But there are signs that crude oil may be headed down from its current level of about US\$65 (about P400) per barrel at some point next year. "The fact is that demand is very weak, the non-OPEC supply is catching up, so you're going to see more pressure on OPEC to cut back over time," said Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy and Economic Research Inc.

"That's going to make people feel like there's less of a threat from small places like Venezuela and Iran for political reasons," he added. "I think prices will stay above \$50 for the rest of the year but gradually down to the mid 40s by next year."

[Coal Power Worsening Australia Drought](#)

Australia's coal industry, one of the world's biggest, is aggravating the country's worst drought in centuries, which may raise questions about expanding production, the head of an environmental group said on Wednesday.

[Drought Threatens Australia's Hydropower Scheme](#)

Australia's biggest renewable electricity source, the Snowy Hydro power scheme, may have to shut down major generating turbines due to the nation's crippling 10-year

drought.

In a desperate attempt to keep running, the Snowy Hydro operator said on Tuesday it had turned to cloud seeding to boost water inflows.

[National oil companies lack security knowledge](#)

The awareness of growing risk to energy security and its implications is relatively low among national oil companies (NOCs) that control more than 90 per cent of the world's oil reserves, according to a study released yesterday by Marsh, a global risk and insurance services firm.

[The Other Oil-Rich Gulf](#)

While most media attention on African oil focuses on the sensational, spectacular or just plain lurid, important developments are taking place at sea. Widely considered to be one of the most promising new oil sources in the world, the 34 billion barrels of proven reserves buried in the deep waters off Africa's western coast in a region expected to account for as much as 25 percent of U.S. oil supplies in the coming years represent a critical opportunity for the United States to diversify its energy supplies. But doing so will require being mindful of the considerable security risks and adeptness in engaging in the cut-throat competition for contracts that often makes no accommodation for scruples.

[The Spin Over the "Joint Nuclear Energy Action Plan"](#)

In my over 20 years in journalism -- including a stint as an editorial writer and book editor that blessed me with the trade's brassiest awards, from the Pulitzer Prize on down -- I have never encountered a slicker spin than the administration's announcement today, April 25, of a "joint nuclear energy action plan" between the United States and Japan.

[California Threatens to Sue EPA Over Greenhouse Gas Regulations](#)

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Wednesday said his administration will sue the Environmental Protection Agency if it fails to act more quickly on California's request to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles.

[Greenpeace: China must end its dependency on coal](#)

"The bank, which is mainly supported by the rich countries, must stop financing projects focused on coal," Greenpeace said, denouncing the "hypocrisy" of European countries

which talk about fighting climate change while allowing the bank to continue funding polluting projects.

[Taiwan power outage looms, some fear](#)

China's missiles may not be the biggest danger to Taiwan. A possible power shortage could cause blackouts within three years and weaken the nation's economy.

Power production is failing to keep pace with demand because of a ban on new nuclear plants and delays in completing projects already under way, says Jeffrey Bor, a fellow at the Chung-hua Institution for Economic Research, which advises the government.

[Al Bartlett's resources depletion protocol for a sustainable Australia](#)

In a recent paper, published in the journal of Natural Resources Research, Bartlett criticises the Australian Government's approach to energy resources management (namely, claiming to embrace a sustainable and secure energy policy for the future whilst simultaneously ramping up the exports of Australian fossil fuels). In his classic style, Bartlett uses simple mathematics to demonstrate that our leaders are totally innumerate in thinking that growth in consumption of non-renewable resources can be considered to be a sustainable plan for any useful timeframe.

[Turkey, Iraq strike tentative oil deal](#)

Turkish officials say meetings with Iraqi leaders last week included new oil export deals with Baghdad, bypassing Iraqi Kurds.

Turkey threatened to stop exporting needed fuel products to Iraq after Baghdad told Ankara it would have to deal with the Kurdistan Regional Government regarding shipments. Kurdistan, like the rest of Iraq, faces a shortage of transportation, cooking and heating fuels.

[China's Protein Gap Will Stoke Global Inflation](#)

In 1995, Lester Brown, then president of the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, had seen the avalanche coming in his book "Who Will Feed China?"

Since then, China has done a good job feeding a fifth of the world's population with less than a 10th of global farmland.

What has changed in recent years is the sustained increase in oil prices and the consequent diversion of food crops globally to the production of ethanol.

[Religion and Peak Oil: The City of Progress](#)

When I suggest that our current predicament has its roots in a religious crisis, then, I don't mean to say Christianity has much to do with the matter. In most of the Western world, Christianity in any of its historic forms has been a minority religion for centuries. The illusion that it remained a majority faith rose because a newer faith took over its outward forms, in much the same way that a hermit crab takes over the cast-off shell of a snail and pulls it along behind it through the sand. That newer faith, of course, is the religion of progress, the established church and dogmatic faith of the modern industrial world.

[Richard Bell: House Hearing Puts the Heat on Climate Stagnators](#)

In their opening statements, the panel's Republicans were clear and unequivocal—Select Committee or no Select Committee, they intended to battle on against the threat of godless environmentalism and its fellow traveling sidekick, global warming.

[Frontline: Hot Politics](#)

Examining the politics behind the U.S. government's failure to act on the biggest environmental problem of our time.

[It's still not easy selling green, experts say](#)

Eco-friendliness may make consumers feel good — as long as it comes with other attributes, such as superior performance, cost effectiveness or health benefits, says Stafford, who has done extensive research on the topic.

Tom Whipple - [Peak Oil Crisis: By Order of the Governor](#)

Earlier this month, the Governor of Virginia issued what is sure to be one of many orders, laws and regulations mandating greater efficiency in the use of energy. Although justified in terms of saving taxpayer money, wise use of natural resources and reducing greenhouse gases, the order serves equally well as a preemptory strike against the consequences of peak oil.

Byron King: [Ali Samsam Bakhtiari and peak oil](#)

I HAVE RECEIVED more correspondence from Ali Samsam Bakhtiari of Tehran, Iran. I want to bring Dr. Bakhtiari's important work to the attention of the readers of *Whiskey & Gunpowder*.

[Malaysia's oil output will continue to grow](#)

Malaysia's oil output is forecast to continue to grow in the long-term after a series of world-class deepwater discoveries, an analyst said.

"In stark contrast to the outlook at the turn of the last decade, when production declines from core legacy fields were a major concern, a series of world-class deepwater discoveries have set the scene for a resurgence in output," said Kate Broughton, Head of Oils Research at Wood Mackenzie, an international energy and life sciences consultancy firm.

[Oilsands give a little Texas town its future back](#)

Once-roaring refinery town was 'dying' before Alberta bitumen came along

Pakistan: [Tapping of small gas fields needs incentives](#)

The draft Petroleum Exploration and Production Policy 2007 is devoid of incentives needed to exploit small gas fields, which hold massive reserves but are not being utilised due to low economies of scale, a petroleum expert told The News.

[Uganda: Diesel Crisis Bites](#)

REFUELLING at gas stations countrywide is turning out to be the worst nightmare for motorists.

They have to chase around for hours, for what has surprisingly become the scarcest of commodities - diesel.

As the fuel crisis escalates queues of frustrated city motorists are forming out at fuel-starved stations, rationing has spread, pump prices are shooting through the roof and crooks are taking advantage of the situation. They sell adulterated diesel on the black market.

Ghana: [Sell cement at approved price](#)

The Government has warned that it would not hesitate to institute price controls to protect the interest of consumers if distributors and retailers continued to sell cement at arbitrarily high prices.

...The energy crisis has affected the production of cement, leading to a hike in prices.

Diamond Cement, whose production output stands 95,000 to 100,000 tonnes per month slackened by about 10 percent.

GHACEM also had to cut production in line with the request to all industries to cut their energy usage by 25 per cent.

The shortfall in supply has led to a price hike of the product from about ₦60,000 to between ₦75,000 and ₦90,000 per bag.

[A Livable Future](#)

Competing pressures for land – to grow food, house a burgeoning population and keep people employed – are on a collision course as Greater Vancouver politicians try to cut a new deal to contain the region's growth.

[Will Ethanol Provide Our Daily Bread Or Are We Toast?](#)

There are many unanswered questions regarding the future of the energy industry and any answers you are likely to receive depend largely on who you ask. Ask a vegetarian or environmental campaigner how much oil is used to raise a beef steer and they will probably quote a figure in excess of 280 gallons while some beef farmers claim the real figure is around 14 gallons.

[Bio-fuel 'is no solution'](#)

Bio-fuel crops are environmentally unfriendly and bio-fuel production can lead to increased carbon production, Colin Pritchard of the University of Edinburgh, said on Wednesday.

[Green initiatives lead to survival, prosperity](#)

I am not an environmentalist. I get just as annoyed with peace-sign-tattooed "tree-huggers" as my dad and his dad before him. I am a student of engineering, being trained in the premier innovation center of the world, Silicon Valley. I have no agenda except my future prosperity and the prosperity of my American peers.

That prosperity is being threatened. It is being held hostage by the stubborn voting of our parents and grandparents. We are being held to the ideals and thoughts of two generations that have seen the mechanized forces of American supremacy overcome all threats, survive and thrive. But we have come under a new threat, never before faced by humanity, and the solutions appear radical and dangerous to those that have lived their lives in the blanket of technological comfort and cheap energy bliss.

[Climate change to cost Western Cape billions](#)

Cape Town - The Western Cape is likely to have to fork out billions of rand over the next 20 years to limit and adapt to the effects of climate change.

The Environmental Affairs Department's director for strategic and environmental management, Mark Gordon, told the Cape Argus on Wednesday that the money would be needed for new power stations, desalination of sea water, new dams, changing crop cycles, finding new export revenue streams and the effects on housing and coastal development of possible rising sea levels.

[Ethiopia blames Eritrea for attack](#)

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia - Ethiopia on Wednesday blamed its rival Eritrea for an attack on a Chinese-owned oil exploration field that killed 74 people, raising tensions between the neighbors who have yet to resolve a border issue following the end of a two-year war in 2000.

[Conoco left out of Venezuela's Orinoco deals](#)

Venezuela signed agreements on Wednesday with five foreign oil companies to hand over operations of four massive Orinoco heavy oil projects, with ConocoPhillips alone failing to sign the accords.

[Kuwait: \\$60-plus Oil 'Damaging' in Long Term](#)

Sustained oil prices above \$60 a barrel will deter global oil demand and harm producers and consumers in the long term, an executive of state-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corporation said Wednesday.

"So far, at least in OECD countries, the price of \$60 a barrel has been accepted. I think any increase above that level is damaging," said Jamal A. Alnouri, managing director of international marketing at KPC at the World National Oil Congress in London.

[Exxon Mobil 1Q profit rises 10 percent](#)

Exxon Mobil Corp., the world's largest publicly traded oil company, said Thursday its net income grew 10 percent in the first quarter, as higher refining, marketing and chemical profit margins overcame lower crude oil and natural gas prices.

[New ways to gasify and clean coal emerge](#)

A recent Massachusetts Institute of Technology report said carbon capture and sequestration at the plants could boost power bills by 20 percent.

That leaves opportunities for companies to gasify coal close to where it is mined, send the natural gas via pipeline for home heating or for burning at power plants, and sell the carbon dioxide for pumping into nearby aging oil fields where it can boost production.

[Ice shrinks, birds migrate early in warmer Arctic](#)

A Norwegian glacier has shrunk on an island 1,000 km (600 miles) from the North Pole, a usually frozen fjord is ice-free and snow bunting birds have migrated back early in possible signs of global warming.

[Film on global warming is challenged](#)

A group of British climate scientists is demanding changes to a skeptical documentary about global warming, saying there are grave errors in the program billed as a response to Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth."

"The Great Global Warming Swindle" aired on British television in March and is coming out soon on DVD. It argues that man-made emissions have a marginal impact on the world's climate and warming can better be explained by changing patterns of solar activity.

[British Millennium flora store banks billionth seed](#)

Britain's Millennium Seed Bank filed away its one billionth seed on Thursday in a race against time to save the world's plants from global warming wipe-out.

[Dutch consider tough biofuels criteria](#)

It's the new climate change dilemma: finding alternatives for oil and gas without doing more harm than good.

In the rush to develop biofuels, forests are burned in Asia to clear land for palm oil, and swaths of the Amazon are stripped of diverse vegetation for soya and sugar plantations for ethanol.

On Friday, a Dutch committee will unveil stringent criteria for growing biofuels in ways that don't damage the environment or release more greenhouse gases than they save.

[USDA Research Suggests the Amount of Corn Stover Available for Ethanol Production Must Be Reduced to Preserve Soil Quality](#)

The US Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (USDA ARS) has undertaken a large-scale, five-year project to determine the amount of crop residues (e.g., corn stover, cover crop) that must remain on the land in order to maintain soil organic carbon (SOC) and sustain production.

...Some initial results already suggest that twice as many cornstalks have to be left in the field to maintain soil organic matter levels, compared to the amount of stalks needed only to prevent erosion. In other words, when factoring in soil quality as well as erosion, the amount of biomass feedstock available for cellulosic ethanol production is cut in half.

[The Case for Burying Charcoal](#)

A new research paper published online in the journal *Biomass and Bioenergy* argues that the battle against global warming may be better served by instead heating the biomass in an oxygen-starved process called pyrolysis, extracting methane, hydrogen, and other byproducts for combustion, and burying the resulting carbon-rich char.

[Sandia, A Step Closer to Achieving High Yield Nuclear Fusion](#)

An electrical circuit that should carry enough power to produce the long-sought goal of controlled high-yield nuclear fusion and, equally important, do it every 10 seconds, has undergone extensive preliminary experiments and computer simulations at Sandia National Laboratories' Z machine facility.



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