



## DrumBeat: May 8, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on May 8, 2007 - 8:57am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [U.N.: Not so fast with ethanol, other biofuels](#)

Biofuels like ethanol can help reduce global warming and create jobs for the rural poor, but the benefits may be offset by serious environmental problems and increased food prices for the hungry, the United Nations concluded Tuesday in its first major report on bioenergy.

...“Unless new policies are enacted to protect threatened lands, secure socially acceptable land use, and steer bioenergy development in a sustainable direction overall, the environmental and social damage could in some cases outweigh the benefits,” the report stated.

### [Want a green house? Prepare to be confused](#) - *Several groups battle over standards, certification as market expands*

Want to go green? Take your thoughts off that gas-guzzling SUV for a moment and consider this: The average U.S. home causes twice as much greenhouse emissions as a single car.

### [Switch to organic crops could help poor](#)

Organic food has long been considered a niche market, a luxury for wealthy consumers. But researchers told a U.N. conference Saturday that a large-scale shift to organic agriculture could help fight world hunger while improving the environment.

### [Expert says India will export around 1.5 million b/d of oil by 2010](#)

Fereidun Fesharaki, a well-known expert on energy questions and CEO of FACTS Global Energy, recently told a conference in Dubai, that India would become an oil exporter of around 1.5 million barrels a day (b/d) by 2010, which could rise to 1.65 million b/d by 2012.

### [Massive project gets started in oil sands](#)

Total SA took the first step yesterday toward building a multibillion-dollar bitumen upgrader near Edmonton, a construction project that will require 4,000 workers - about what it took to build the iconic Hoover Dam.

### [Silence on geothermal deafening](#)

Today, natural gas is burned to produce the hot steam that's needed to extract bitumen from the tar sands. Alberta's world-famous sands are already the fastest-growing source of greenhouse gases in the country, and on the current growth path, emissions are expected to jump more than four-fold over the next 10 years.

Replacing much of this natural gas with clean, emission-free heat under the Earth's crust, a completely feasible option according to a recent research report out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, would go an enormous way toward achieving a halt, and eventually a decline, in Canada's carbon emissions.

### [A Pending Bust for Ethanol?](#)

With some analysts warning of an oversupply of the corn-based fuel later this year, concern is growing among farmers and investors.

### [The Cost Of Coal On The Environment](#)

A worldwide rush to use "cheap" and dirty coal to supply power is threatening to impose huge costs to the environment and the global economy.

### [Binge-flying culture is just beginning. The only way to stop it is a severe tax](#)

Almost all of us are hypocrites on climate change. We will not quit our aviation habit until it really hurts our pockets.

### [Pushing the planet to its limit](#)

North Americans may use a disproportionate amount of the world's resources, but if we push the planet beyond its sustainable limits, we will all go down together, just the way the first-class cabins on the Titanic went to a watery grave just as quickly as the steerage cabins.

### [Citigroup commits \\$50B to green initiatives](#)

Citigroup said Tuesday that it plans to commit \$50 billion to environmental projects over the next decade, the largest commitment from Wall Street to address climate change.

### [Ecosystems are capital assets argues report](#)

"We must urgently expand the climate debate beyond reducing greenhouse gases to focus on how climate change is altering ecosystem services," said Jonathan Lash, president of the World Resources Institute. "Lima in Peru, for example, is entirely dependent on water from glacial melt. The glaciers will be gone in 20 years. Their options range from energy intensive desalination to a pipeline to the Amazon River - also threatened by climate change. Such decisions have huge implications for people and ecosystems."

### [GAO's John Stephenson discusses effects of severe weather on private, federal insurers](#) (video and transcript)

With weather-related events costing the nation billions of dollars in damages over the past decade, private insurers have reacted to this increased liability by adjusting policies for many storm-prone areas in the United States. But according to a recent report by the Government Accountability Office, federal insurers have not adjusted their practices based on this increased risk.

### [For Energy Wasters, the Heat Is On](#)

A British company called Hotmapping has been doing thermal surveys of local districts using spy planes. The results are being posted on the web by district councils, with the upshot being that you can now see which houses are leaking heat. Blue houses are cool; red houses are taking their energy dollars (or pounds, in this case), and spewing them into the atmosphere.

### [Arctic Ice Melts Create New Land Rush](#)

Recent news reports state that global warming and the shrinking Arctic icecaps are opening new sea lanes and making barren islands suddenly very valuable. In fact, the international community might experience a new race of exploration, conquest and acquisition for this "new world" -- these newly available lands and sea routes. Conflicts could arise over shipping lanes, islands, fish stocks, minerals and oil that are now becoming accessible and commercially exploitable.

### [Grand strategy for the Middle East](#)

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has returned from a five-country tour of the Middle East. Ostensibly, Mr. Abe was focusing on energy security but his visits encompassed much more than that. Mr. Abe was raising Japan's diplomatic profile in a region that is vital to its national security — and that of the entire world. Implicit in his conversations was the message that Japan seeks a higher diplomatic profile and is ready to play a larger role in that region's turbulent politics.

### [Fire at Kuwait's Burgan Oil Field Under Control](#)

Kuwait Oil Co., the state oil producer, has brought under control a fire that broke out at the country's giant Burgan oil field, state news agency Kuna reported Monday.

### [Walking a Slick Tightrope](#)

Between them, Venezuela and Nigeria export about 4.5 million barrels of oil daily. This says nothing about the 2.4 million barrels each day coming out of obstreperous Iran, or the 1.5 million barrels being shipped from war-torn Iraq. It doesn't even address the 7.2 million barrels a day being exported by OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia, whose royal family isn't immune to geopolitical or religious treachery.

So, Fools, watch these unstable situations carefully. And as I've advised you repeatedly, please don't operate without energy representation in your portfolios.

### [Spain balks at corrupt urbanization](#)

Thousands protested urban development this weekend as concern over corruption and environmental degradation rises.

### [Scientists look high in the sky for power](#)

Scientists are eyeing the jet stream, an energy source that rages night and day, 365 days a year, just a few miles above our heads. If they can tap into its fierce winds, the world's entire electrical needs could be met, they say.

### [Saudis reject supply fears but won't increase output](#)

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf producers have assured Asian countries their oil supply is secure at a recent meeting in Riyadh. But Middle East oil ministers attending warned they would not increase output to ease high prices.

### [Nigerian Protesters Force Chevron Facility Closure](#)

Protesters armed with machetes occupied a Chevron Corp. (CVX) oil installation in southern Nigeria Monday, forcing the facility to be temporarily shut down and causing a small cut in production, officials said.

### [America's 'Energy Policy': It's Still All About Oil](#)

And then there's America's energy policy, and it's generous to use the word "policy" in describing it. The transition of our nation from a manufacturing to a service economy may be nearly complete, but it's certainly not reflecting in our continued demand for oil, which is greater than ever.

### [Saudi govt plans spending checks to curb inflation](#)

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, said it plans to control government spending in a bid to limit inflation that rose to at least an 11-year high in 2006, spurred by rising food prices and rents.

### [Nigeria: Fuel Scarcity Hits North](#)

Scarcity of petrol has hit northern parts of the country, as speculation emerged of an impending fuel price hike by the authorities.

### [Dhaka to import diesel from Assam refinery](#)

Bangladesh has decided to import diesel from the Numaligarh Refinery in Assam following acute shortage of fuel, officials said Tuesday.

### [Gazprom Urged to Revise General Plan](#)

RAO UES first drew attention to the energy shortage past fall and forecasted it to increase. Gazprom fired off by denying the lack of gas in Russia's power engineering and accused RAO UES of inability to match the consumption of gas and black oil.

### [Power to the people!](#)

There is one more power generation alternative that deserves our attention. A coal-fired system is low tech and easy to maintain-easy, fast and cheap to build, and produces inexpensive electricity. There are plentiful and cheap supplies of coal fairly close to us in Papua New Guinea and huge, cheap supplies in China. We could buy a cargo ship and deliver our own supply as well as help our island neighbors build coal-

fired plants. By delivering coal to them too, we would reduce our own cost even further by selling some to them. Since we live on a small island with constantly blowing trade winds we need not worry about air pollution. Perhaps the single greatest advantage to coal power after it's cheap cost is that it can be built quickly and could be up and running before the other alternatives were even out of their planning stage. We should look very seriously at this alternative.

### [Fire at Whiting's BP plant fuels gas hikes](#)

When drivers across the nation agonized over a record \$3.07 average per gallon at the pump this weekend, it was partly because of a March fire at BP's Whiting plant.

### [Sen. Kerry Seeks to Block Bristol Bay Leasing Plan](#)

Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) introduced legislation Friday to block Interior Department plans to sell oil and gas leases in Alaska's Bristol Bay, joining several House lawmakers trying to thwart the plan.

### [Turn Eco Responsibility Into Economic Opportunity](#)

Builders hear the term "green building" constantly. Integrators, meanwhile, don't hear a lot about "green integrating." Maybe they should.

### [Printing Solar Cells as Fast as Your Sunday Paper](#)

In 1997, Clayton Christenson coined the phrase "disruptive technology" to describe a phenomenon that has occurred throughout human existence.

The term describes how, every once in a while, an innovation comes along that uproots and replaces an existing technology.

For instance, muskets replaced longbows, changing the face of warfare forever. And certainly cars replaced horses as the primary means of transportation.

Well, today we're seeing a similar situation with alternative energy.

### [Nigerian oil bombings cut output](#)

Nigerian rebels blew up three oil pipelines in the Niger Delta on Tuesday, forcing Italian oil giant Eni to halt production of 150,000 barrels per day (bpd) feeding its Brass export terminal, a source at Eni said.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which has now shut down more than 30 percent of Nigerian oil output, said in an e-mail it bombed the pipelines to embarrass President Olusegun Obasanjo in his last days in office.

The MEND vowed to carry out more attacks in the world's eight-largest crude exporter, where about 700,000 bpd, or a quarter of total capacity, were already being lost before the latest attacks.

"If those two pipelines have been blown up then there is zero production. They are the only two pipelines that carry all our production," said an Eni source, asking not to be named.

### [Saudi pare crude prices to the west](#)

Saudi Arabia has cut the price of all its June-loading crude oil to Europe and the United States, while raising all prices to Asia, traders said yesterday.

### [Fuel Prices Increase in Nicaragua](#)

The director of the Nicaraguan Energy Institute (INE), David Castillo, declared that the institution he heads cannot stop the escalation of fuel prices, which are subject to market laws.

### Costa Rica: [Central Valley Residents, Businesses to Pay An Average 4% More for Electricity](#)

ARESEP recently rejected a request from the Costa Rican Electricity Institute (ICE) of an average 23% rate increase in electricity rates. This rejection came in the midst of a national energy crisis that forced the country to deal with scheduled power outages

### Uganda: [Museveni orders probe on fake diesel](#)

"We have received reports that petrol stations are mixing diesel with paraffin. "The President is concerned. He directed us to investigate the matter and report back to him," Deusdedit Mubangizi, the UNBS quality assurance chief, said.

He attributed the practice to the scarcity of diesel which recently pushed pump prices to more than 2,000 a litre in the city and up to sh3,000 a litre in upcountry areas.

### [NPP is insensitive to Ghanaians plight](#)

The United Kingdom & Ireland Secretariat of the Convention People's Party has

lambasted the ruling government over the recent increases in the prices of petroleum products.

### [New plan to avert future energy crisis in Ontario](#)

A 'real world' plan designed to help Ontarians make the right decisions concerning the future of electricity will be unveiled today at a speech to the Economic Club of Toronto. Developed by the Society of Energy Professionals, representing more than 7,000 engineers, scientists, supervisors and IT professionals working in almost every facet of the energy industry, the plan "Getting it Right - A Real World Vision of Ontario's Electricity System in 2025" was a year in the making and developed by a team of scientists, engineers and IT experts who know the electricity system inside and out.

### [Movin' Out](#)

An Australian dedicated to American values, Andrew Liveris, the CEO of Dow Chemical, has been shifting plants overseas as U.S. natural gas prices make domestic manufacturing uncompetitive.

### [Eyes Eternally On The Prize](#)

The struggle over Iraqi oil has been going on for a long, long time. One could date it back to 1980 when President Jimmy Carter—before his Habitat for Humanity days—declared that Persian Gulf oil was "vital" to American national interests. So vital was it, he announced, that the U.S. would use "any means necessary, including military force" to sustain access to it. Soon afterwards, he announced the creation of a Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, a new military command structure that would eventually develop into United States Central Command (Centcom) and give future presidents the ability to intervene relatively quickly and massively in the region.

### [Hard to Deny: Iraq Is All About the Oil](#)

How the U.S. is working to secure Iraq's oil -- one of the most important sources of petrochemical energy on the planet -- and how the Iraqis are resisting.

### [Experts plan greenest town around](#)

Bill Hammond, Rick Joyce, Carol Newcomb-Jones, Larry Peterson and Greg Rawl are advising Kitson about wildlife corridors, green-space restoration, energy efficiency, alternative means of transportation and water quality.

"I don't know of any other developer that's doing this — creating an internal (environmental) team," Hammond said.



## [Right Now - Kunstler](#)

Now, I happen to think that oil production probably peaked about a year ago, but we are still so close to it that the net available energy remains immense. Even if 2007 averages out to 83.5 million barrels a day instead of 84 million, it will still seem like a lot. Markets may be dumber than we think. All they see is a vast amount of cheap energy for manufacturing plastic salad shooters, for powering tourist jet charters to Cancun, for running WalMart, Walt Disney World, and Taco Bell. All that energy is here *right now*.

Among the many tragic elements in the human condition is this tendency toward short-term thinking, the inability to imagine how our arrangements will work in a time that is *not right now*.

## [Members tackle EU's energy goal](#)

Reasons cited for the push for renewable energy and wind power included Saudi Arabia having passed its peak oil production in 2005, climate change and growing population, said Michael Mueller, parliamentary state secretary of the Ministry for Environment, Conservation and Nuclear Safety in Germany. Europe has also nearly reached the peak of its hydroelectric capacity.

## [Gas prices may have hit peak for now](#)

This could be the peak or near it because:

- Refinery problems that caused a backlog of oil waiting to be turned into gasoline, a disruption widely blamed for price increases, are being fixed. More gasoline will flow soon, Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman says.
- History, though short, says \$3 doesn't last. In 2005, the first time that barrier was crossed, it dropped below \$3 the next week. In 2006, the average was \$3 or more for four consecutive weeks, peaking at \$3.038 Aug. 7, Energy Information Administration data show.

## [Putrid Economics at a Terrible Price](#)

"Reporting from the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston, Byron tells us that countries with nationalized oil programs like Canada, Norway and Brazil have made technological and financial leaps that bring them toe-to-toe with the world's Big Oil giants."

### [Biodiesel fuels enthusiasts vowing a 'revolution'](#)

More than 1,300 people -- some shouting "revolution" -- took over Fisher Pavilion at the Seattle Center on Sunday. Look what's happening out in the streets, they said: Biodiesel is coming of age. It's all the rage.

### [Early Beijing summer indicates climate change](#)

Beijing is experiencing its earliest summer in more than 30 years, state media reported on Tuesday, in the latest climatic sign that China is bearing the hallmarks of global warming.

### [Those Mysterious Oil Reservoirs: Should we trust the opinions of amateur oil industry watchers?](#)

Q: A recent series of posts at [www.theoil Drum.com](http://www.theoil Drum.com) attempt to divine the current status and future prospects of Saudi Arabia's Ghawar field, the world's largest. Your thoughts?

A: I am amazed at the energy and diligence which the authors exhibit in carrying out their analyses. It is tragic that the Saudis won't release more detailed performance data and their own analyses which would show the situation more clearly. It seems likely to me that the conclusion that Ghawar is in decline is correct. But it's a big step to conclude that its decline will be steep. Oil companies employ reservoir engineers and reservoir geologists to deal with just the situation we have here: "a mature field is showing signs of declining production with its current development, what can we profitably do that might change this situation?"

### [Negligence blamed in gas pipeline blast](#)

Negligence was to blame for the explosion of a natural gas pipeline that supplies Russian gas to Europe, Ukraine's top prosecutor said Tuesday.

...Prosecutor General Svyatoslav Piskun said that shifting soil led to a break in the pipeline. He said officials should have been able to spot the natural changes occurring and taken action to build up the soil around the pipeline.

### [Iraq's oil production falls short of goals](#)

Here's a bit of good news about Iraq and oil: The Al Basrah Oil Terminal finally can work at full speed. This giant H-shaped tanker loading platform, located in the Persian Gulf off Iraq's southeastern coast, is one of the country's most important pieces of economic

infrastructure. Thanks to US-funded reconstruction, all four of its berths now are in operation for the first time in many years.

Now the bad news: There's not much else good about Iraqi oil to report. Despite years of rebuilding, petroleum production continues to fall short of targets, due to insurgency vandalism, poor field management, and corruption. Proposed Iraqi legislation on oil revenue distribution – a measure deemed crucial by the White House – remains the subject of bitter sectarian debate.

### [Investigative journalist reports peak oil by 2020](#)

Experts predict that oil production is about to peak, plateau and then fall, creating a demand that will be greater than supply that will result in oil shocks and economic consequences that will affect all.

### [Peak Oil or Dependence on Russian Gas – Which is more important for Turkish Public?](#)

Peak oil is a hot subject, but hardly any Turkish energy discussion involves it. It is more about market, sales, new investments, doomed scenarios regarding the energy dependency to regional countries. But in America, peak oil is much more debated than Turkey.

### [Fiddling with figures while the Earth burns](#)

If you want to get some idea of what much of the Earth might look like in 50 years' time then, says James Lovelock, get hold of a powerful telescope or log onto Nasa's Mars website. That arid, empty, lifeless landscape is, he believes, how most of Earth's equatorial lands will be looking by 2050. A few decades later and that same uninhabitable desert will have extended into Spain, Italy, Australia and much of the southern United States.

“We are on the edge of the greatest die-off humanity has ever seen,” said Lovelock. “We will be lucky if 20% of us survive what is coming. We should be scared stiff.”



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).