



DrumBeat: May 31, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on May 31, 2007 - 9:06am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

George Monbiot: [What if the Oil Runs Out?](#)

Motorised transport is a form of time travel. We mine the compressed time of other eras - the infinitesimal rain of plankton onto the ocean floor, the settlement of trees in anoxic swamps - and use it to accelerate through our own. Every tank of fuel contains thousands of years of accretions. Our future depends on the expectation that the past will never be exhausted.

[One Crude Oil Languishes, Another Spikes](#)

Oil prices have held comfortably below \$70 a barrel so far this year _ or have they?

The benchmark oil in the U.S. on the New York Mercantile Exchange has lost some status to other grades of crude, analysts say, as supply issues at home have depressed its price relative to competitor crude oils. Brent crude, for example, topped \$71 a barrel last week.

[Alternative Fuel Vehicles Will Be Tough Sell, But Policy Incentives Will Widen Use](#)

Imagine a vehicle that runs on hydrogen or biofuels and offers the same features, performance and price as today's gasoline vehicle. Will it capture half the market? Not likely, concludes a new MIT analysis of the challenges behind introducing alternative-fuel vehicles to the marketplace. Not even if it's three times more fuel-efficient.

[The Perils of Pushing Atomic Energy as the Climate Change Panacea](#)

Is nuclear power on the verge of a renaissance? Its supporters argue that atomic energy is the only way to satisfy humanity's hunger for more energy without aggravating the effects of global warming. Critics, however, regard the nuclear hype as over-simplistic optimism fueled by an industry in distress.

[Terraform: Building a house out of living trees](#)

Want a treehouse? A New York architect is taking orders for buildings constructed out of—and by—living trees. Mitchell Joachim developed the Fab Tree Hab with some colleagues while at MIT, but now he's gone past the conceptual stage with his nonprofit, Terreform.

[EU, OPEC See World Still Hooked on Oil](#)

Oil will remain the world's major energy source, despite Europe's recent efforts to shift toward renewable energy, the European Union and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said Wednesday.

Despite EU moves to widen the types of energy it depends on and where it comes from, both said they expected no major change to global reliance on oil, and said there was still enough to meet demand.

[Shell Shuts in Production at Bonny Light Terminal Due to Attacks](#)

Oil prices rebounded slightly on news of further militant attacks in key producer Nigeria, after falling sharply yesterday.

Shell announced today that 150,000 bpd of crude oil production has been locked in at its Bonny Light terminal in Nigeria after pipelines were sabotaged.

[Mideast firm makes move into Alberta's oil patch](#)

In a startling reversal of history, a Middle Eastern energy company is pushing into the Canadian oil and gas market looking for secure supplies, and, thanks to a battle with activist shareholders on this continent, it may be getting a good deal in the process.

[Uganda, Congo Border Spat Could Hurt Oil Exploration](#)

A border dispute between Congo and Uganda over the River Semuliki Valley could disrupt oil exploration activities in the Lake Albert Basin, a government official told Dow Jones Newswires Wednesday.

[Sinopec shares jump 9.7 per cent on news of oil find in northwestern China](#)

Shares of China Petroleum & Chemical Corp. jumped 9.7 per cent Thursday, a day after its parent company said Sinopec had found more crude oil in northwestern China.

[Weekly Offshore Rig Review: Angola Activity Accelerates](#)

There is never a lack of activity off Angola, it seems. Both Total and BP announced discoveries on Blocks 31 and 32 recently. Total announced its tenth and eleventh oil discoveries on Block 32 and BP announced its fourteenth discovery on Block 31.

[Oil refinery boom skips U.S.](#)

Investment shifts overseas; domestic community resistance and regulations blamed.

[US motor gasoline demand remains resilient](#)

While US retail motor gasoline prices climbed to new record highs last week, US motor gasoline demand reached 9.4 million b/d, 1 percent higher than year-ago levels.

[Oil-shale effort focused on tech](#)

The last effort to exploit the vast oil-shale fields in western Colorado and eastern Utah foundered in the 1980s after crude prices tumbled 72 percent.

But today, in the high desert near Rifle, workers from the major oil companies are back, trying to develop breakthrough technology that would allow oil to be extracted from the rock.

[BP inks largest exploration commitment in Libya](#)

'This is a welcome return to the country for BP after more than 30 years and represents a significant opportunity for both BP and Libya' said Tony Hayward, BP group chief executive. The acreage awarded is the size of Kuwait.

[Was Iraq invaded to boost oil prices? Value of Exxon reserves rose by \\$666bn](#)

Iraq was invaded in order to limit its oil production and thus keep world oil prices artificially high, a noted investigative journalist reports.

"Iraq's output in 2003, 2004, and 2005 was less than produced under the restrictive oil-for-food program," writes Greg Palast in his new book *Armed Madhouse* (Plume). Oil-for-food allowed Iraq to sell 2 million barrels per day during the 1995 to 2003 period.

[Who Owns the Wind?](#)

With a growing number of wind power stations in Germany, a new kind of legal case is rearing its ugly head. The crime: stealing wind.

[Air-Car Ready for Mass Production](#)

The world's first commercial compressed air-powered vehicle is rolling towards the production line. The Air Car, developed by ex-Formula One engineer Guy Nègre, will be built by India's largest automaker, Tata Motors.

[Energy Efficiency Investments And Renewable Energy Purchases Together Are "Twin Pillars" In Reducing Carbon Emissions](#)

Funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the report examines key synergies between efficiency and renewables, including:

- On hot summer afternoons, efficiency can help reduce peak loads while solar and wind systems can operate at high outputs, reducing the use of high-cost, high-emission peaking generation.
- Where options for renewable sources currently are limited, such as in the Southeast U.S., the emphasis on efficiency should be multiplied.

[China to allow foreign investment in nuclear power plants - report](#)

China is expected to allow foreign and private domestic companies to invest in nuclear power plants, the official China Securities Journal reported, citing an official from the country's Commission of Science Technology and Industry For National Defense (COSTIND.)

[The Misconception About Oil](#)

If access to oil field data were available, then I think we would already have an exact date for peak oil. Unfortunately, major players like Saudi Arabia refuse to disclose that information.

Also, the competition between oil producers has led to suspicious increases in oil reserves. Looking at the chart below you just want to scream one word . . .

[Interview with Thomas Homer-Dixon](#) (podcast)

KMO talks with Thomas Homer-Dixon, author of *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilization* about the fragility of our vast centralized systems, the need for resiliency & diversity, and the possibilities for renewal and reinvention which only present themselves in historical moments of disintegration and collapse.

[Energy wisdom is knowing that you do not know](#)

The great Victorian economist, Stanley Jevons, published an exhaustive study of the coal industry in 1865. An exemplary exercise in applied economics, comprehensive in its analysis of supply and demand, geology and technology, it proved influential. William Gladstone, then chancellor of the exchequer, devoted much of his Budget speech to praising Jevons's achievement and implementing his recommendations.

[Russia to Cut Natural Gas Production Amid Warm Weather](#)

Unusually warm weather this year has forced Russian natural gas producers to lower 2007 production targets by billions of cubic meters, gas industry leaders said after a meeting Wednesday.

[Because we're worth it](#)

The baby-boomers' culture of hedonistic consumerism has left their offspring with the crumbs from their table. And 65% of them say their children's lives will be worse than their own. But are they bothered?

[Going West in China](#)

Every road throughout the nation is being refinished with concrete. From highways to one lane roads that were formerly dirt, nearly every road in every province is being up graded to allow movement of goods and people at a faster pace. This would account for the usage of 45% of the world's cement year upon year. This is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 8.5% (or 90 million metric tons) during the 2006-2007 period.

[The winds of public opinion: Turbines in Brome-Missisquoi](#)

A proposed plan for a wind farm at the western end of Brome-Missisquoi has been modified, but the community remains divided on whether it should exist at all.

[Minerals Management Service Marks Hurricane Season 2007](#)

In preparation for Hurricane Season 2007, which begins June 1, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced operational and administrative improvements that have been implemented to prepare oil and gas infrastructure in the Gulf of Mexico for the possibility of hurricanes this season. Key goals of the enhancements are to promote the nation's energy security, environmental protection and personnel safety.

[Iraq to Set Up National Oil Firm](#)

The Iraqi parliament will vote in weeks on founding the state-owned National Iraqi Oil Company, former Iraqi Oil Minister said on Tuesday.

[Internet to Aid Global Power Crisis](#)

KLG Systel Limited, a US \$100 million company, based out of Gurgaon, has launched a worldwide revolutionary intelligent network, www.connectgaia.com, which according to company sources, is India's answer to the global energy crisis.

[Pain at the Persian Pump](#)

This Tuesday, western news outlets reported the beginning of gasoline rationing in Iran with terse certainty. But the view from Iran is much more complicated, and shows the disarray of oil refining operations in the world's number-three oil producer.

[New energy department not brightest solution](#)

The House Science Committee approved a bill last week that would create a new Department of Energy research branch, modeled after the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, that would focus on energy-technology breakthroughs instead of weapons.

It's a terrible idea.

[Energy Minister: Big Australian Oil Finds May Become Rare](#)

Significant oil discoveries in Australia are likely to become rare in coming years, the country's resources minister said Wednesday, although he expects upstream companies to keep drilling.

[Gas prices drive change for area folks](#)

Wahoo Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Director Doug Watts said that this would not be the case for everyone. While he said most people probably followed through with their Memorial Day Weekend plans, trips scheduled for later in the summer might not fair so well.

"I could see people cutting back on long vacations if they're driving," he said.

[The false hope of a biofuel free lunch](#)

The problem is that policy-makers have forgotten the basic biophysical facts behind the energy in biofuels. Through the miracle of photosynthesis, plants are able to convert the energy of sunlight into chemicals containing energy that can be made useful for humans. Indeed, this amazing process is the source of all the energy in oil, coal and natural gas. However, the wonder of that process does not mean it is sensible to grow corn or other crops and convert that biomass into ethanol to burn in place of gasoline.

[White water torrent to die as nation gambles on huge Nile dam project: Climate change fears dampen hopes of power from tourist attraction](#)

Six miles north of Lake Victoria, the Nile awakens, exploding into a cauldron of white water known as the Bujagali Falls. Offering some of the world's most spectacular rafting, it is one of Uganda's top attractions. Soon it will be destroyed.

After 13 years of seeing plans delayed by corruption allegations, financial strife, obdurate spirits and opposition from environmental groups, Uganda last week authorised an international consortium to begin a 30-metre-high dam across the Nile just below Bujagali Falls.

[Oil traders prepare for bumpy DME ride](#)

The launch of Middle East crude futures may herald a more transparent Asian oil market but before that, physical traders are bracing for a period of uncertainty, prompting them to continue trading under the existing system.

[Saudi Electricity says has Aramco support](#)

Saudi Electricity said on Wednesday it was getting the support it required from Aramco, in response to a report that the utility needed the oil firm's help to avoid a repetition of last year's power cuts.

[Keeping the Lights On in Europe: Brussels bank hopes on technology and open markets](#)

[Pooling rides an option to combat gas prices](#)

Much like the frog sitting in a pot of water slowly coming to a boil, commuters facing increasing gas prices haven't leaped from their sport utility vehicles and trucks.

[10 Years After: Solar-powered vision keeps home off the grid](#)

Perched atop a wooded hillside overlooking a canyon of redwoods, Bob Stayton and Mary Tsalis have created a sun-powered paradise.

Tom Whipple - [The Peak Oil Crisis: Preparing For Depletion](#)

Unaffordable gasoline will affect each of us differently depending on how dependent we are on our automobile and what our alternatives are. In the U.S. we have something on the order of 210 million cars and light trucks in service and, even if the resources are available to replace a fleet of this size, it will be many decades before they can be replaced with vehicles that use little or no gasoline. Worldwide, the situation is even worse.

[A Call To Lower the Speed Limit to 55](#)

Fifty-five! Now there's a number that used to unite the United States. Coast to coast the law of the land was fifty-five miles an hour. Just as patriotic Americans worked together and planted victory gardens to fight food shortages during WWII, in the 1970s, with help from the insightful policies of an enlightened congress, Americans responded to the OPEC energy embargo with character and resolve. We reduced our consumption of petroleum.

[South Korean consortium finds huge oil deposit in Russia](#)

A South Korean energy development consortium said today that it has confirmed the existence of a huge offshore oil deposit in Russia's Kamchatka region.

[Dennis J. Kucinich: It's All About Oil](#)

The Iraqi "Hydrocarbon Law" is an issue of critical importance, but has been seriously mischaracterized and I want to provide the House of Representatives the facts and evidence to support the concerns I have expressed.

[What's behind the 'perfect storm' of rising gas prices?](#)

As gasoline prices surge past the \$3-a-gallon mark, it's tempting to blame "Big Oil" for "price-gouging," the idea being this is all part of a conspiracy to control oil supply.

Price-gouging? Perhaps, and indirectly. I'll touch on that later.

[Scientists warn on biofuels as palm oil price jumps](#)

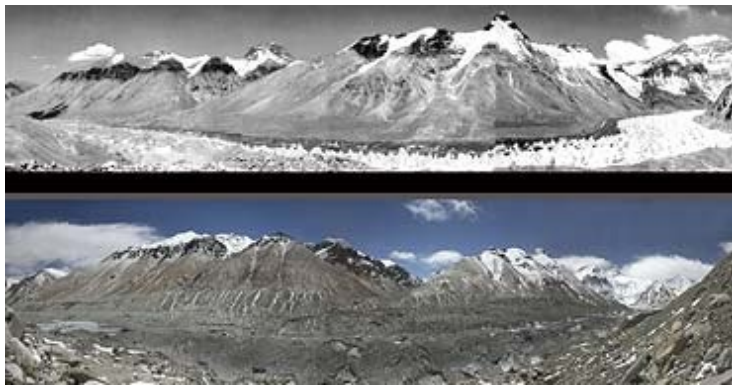
Biofuels are likely to speed up global warming as they are encouraging farmers to burn tropical forests that have absorbed a large portion of greenhouse gases, climate scientists warned.

[4 American hostages released in Nigeria](#)

Four American oil workers abducted three weeks ago in Nigeria's restive oil region were released Wednesday.

As journalists looked on, a judge who mediated in the matter escorted the four men to the governor's office in southern Rivers State and turned them over to authorities. U.S. Embassy officials weren't immediately available for comment.

[Everest ice forest melting due to global warming, says Greenpeace](#)



One of the world's most spectacular ice formations - the towering serac forest near Mount Everest's base camp - is rapidly shrinking as a result of global warming, Greenpeace said today.

Before and after photographs released by the environmental group show how the past 40 years of climate change are transforming the Himalayan landscape as ancient glaciers melt and retreat higher up the slopes.

[Global warming heats up White House race](#)

The 2008 White House race is bringing American global warming politics in from the cold, as candidates churn out complex plans on an increasingly key campaign issue.

[US-Russia clashes sour G8 meeting](#)

A clash between the United States and Russia over a proposed missile shield overshadowed a meeting of G8 foreign ministers Wednesday also marred by differences over climate change and Kosovo.

[Exxon Mobil chief cools global-warming dissent](#)

Global warming was a hot topic at the Exxon Mobil Corp. annual meeting Wednesday, but Chief Executive Rex Tillerson continued his effort to cool some of the criticisms of the oil-industry giant.

[Earth nears tipping point on climate change: A rise of 1 degree Celsius could be enough to trigger 'dangerous' warming, scientists warn.](#)

Dangerous climate change has not yet arrived, but the tipping point may not be far off. And it may be reached with a smaller temperature rise than recent studies suggest.



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