



DrumBeat: July 9, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 9, 2007 - 8:59am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Have we reached the energy tipping point?](#)

So is a critical mass building among Americans and legislators for changes in U.S. energy policy? Or are these efforts simply blips on the radar as Americans continue to drive SUVs and Hummers?

A recent analysis by the Gallup Poll showed energy as Americans' fourth most-important priority for Washington, below Iraq, terrorism and national security, and the economy.

[California to build 'world's largest' solar farm](#)

The 80-megawatt farm is to occupy as much as 640 acres and upon completion in 2011 will be 17 times the size of the largest U.S. solar farm, said Cleantech America LLC, a privately held 2-year-old company.

[Oil prices reach 11-month high](#)

NEW YORK - Oil prices surpassed \$76 a barrel Monday to reach their highest level in nearly a year after a global energy watchdog warned of a looming oil and natural gas supply shortage.

August Brent crude rose 65 cents to \$76.27 a barrel on the ICE Futures exchange in London, its highest point since August 2006.

[Pennsylvania awakes to partial state shutdown](#)

The state museums didn't open Monday. State parks were closed to visitors at the height of the summer tourism season, and many state services were idle because of a government shutdown that kept about 24,000 workers off the job.

Gov. Ed Rendell shut down the Pennsylvania government late Sunday over a budget stalemate with the Legislature that partly hinges on his energy plan for the state.

[Global warring: New study suggests climate change could be the root of armed conflicts](#)

Climate change, and the resulting shortage of ecological resources, could be to blame for armed conflicts in the future, according to David Zhang from the University of Hong Kong and colleagues. Their research, which highlights how temperature fluctuations and reduced agricultural production explain warfare frequency in eastern China in the past, has been published online in Springer's journal *Human Ecology*.

[Big Blue's green machine](#)

IBM is going green in more ways than one. The tech giant said earlier this year that it would commit \$1 billion annually to develop more energy efficient data centers.

As part of that "Big Green" initiative, the company's venture arm is on the look out for the next clean tech start-ups.

[Manhattan: Bike-Sharing Plan](#)

A planning group has begun a test project to see whether New York would be suitable for a bicycle sharing system common in European cities. The five-day project, started yesterday and sponsored by the Forum for Urban Design, makes 20 bicycles free for a half-hour ride after users provide credit card information to ensure their return, said David Haskell, the group's executive director. The bikes have been lined up at a SoHo gallery called the Storefront for Art and Architecture.

[OPEC has little power to ease oil prices - Algeria](#)

Algeria's Energy and Mines Minister Chakib Khelil said on Monday there was "not much" OPEC could do to bring down high oil prices as global crude oil stocks were already sufficient.

"There is plenty of stocks. It's a problem with capacity and refining," Khelil told Reuters ahead of a gas pipeline conference in Brussels.

[Iraq minister: 140,000 Turkey troops on border](#)

Turkey has massed 140,000 soldiers on its border with northern Iraq but so far there have been no violations, Iraq's foreign minister said Monday.

Hoshyar Zebari's comments came amid calls by Turkey's military for the government to

give it the green light to carry out military operations in northern Iraqi against the rebel Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

[Coffeyville assesses damage from flooding and oil spill](#)

The oil that spilled from the Coffeyville Resources refinery coated houses and lawns in a slimy, smelly goo. It prompted a class-action lawsuit in federal court against Coffeyville Resources, said Andrew Hutton, a Wichita lawyer involved in the litigation.

He said that the flood was predictable and that the refinery should have been shut down sooner.

[North Dakota Governor Extends Hours Of Service Waiver For Delivery Drivers To July 19](#)

Gov. John Hoeven has issued an executive order extending service hours for commercial truck drivers providing gas stations with fuel until July 19, 2007. The measure extends an earlier executive order due to expire on July 7.

...Reduced supplies owing to a slow down at a major petroleum refinery in Minnesota, along with a weather-related stoppage at a second refinery in Kansas, have combined with increased fuel demand to create a potential gasoline shortage in North Dakota and regionally.

[Russia announces higher oil exports](#)

Russia's oil exports amounted to 101.562m tonnes in January-May 2007, which is nearly 8 percent more than in the same period a year earlier, the Russian Federal Customs Service reported today. Meanwhile, oil exports grew 4.9 percent to \$40.819bn in money terms.

[Queues resurface as Zimbabwe runs out of fuel](#)

Long fuel queues have resurfaced in Zimbabwe as filling stations ran out of petrol following a government directive to reduce prices by up to 60 percent, APA observed here.

Only few filling stations in the capital, Harare, had fuel Sunday, resulting in long queues by desperate motorists.

[China oil demand seen rising to 9.96 mln bpd by 2012 from 7.59 mln this yr - IEA](#)

The International Energy Agency (IEA) said it expects China's oil demand this year to remain flat compared to its previous forecast at 7.59 mln barrels per day (bpd), before rising to 8.05 mln in 2008 and further to 9.96 mln bpd in 2012.

[China to encourage loans for energy-efficient companies](#)

China, the world's second-biggest oil consumer, will limit loans for industries that are heavy users of energy to reduce waste and improve environmental protection.

[Energy productivity the profitable path to sustainable growth](#)

As global energy consumption soars, and as greenhouse gas emissions grow, the world needs to find realistic ways to cut energy waste and to use our limited resources more wisely. New research indicates that practical investments in energy productivity - the amount of energy required to achieve a given level of economic output - can help the world continue its economic growth and ensure a sustainable energy future. Better still, the research indicates that these investments have a quick economic payoff, producing savings that cover the initial costs and provide an annual rate of return above 10 per cent.

[Arab countries urge solar future](#)

Arab energy ministers and some EU politicians attending a high-level conference in this desert oasis town flanked by the ruins of a vast Roman city, announced support for a revolutionary renewable energy electricity supply system proposed by Germany to link both areas.

['Carbon credit cards' and 'carbon market' on agenda](#)

A "zero carbon" Britain could be achieved by 2027 if a range of measures were brought in by a government with "strong political leadership", scientists said today.

[US leads search for climate solutions](#)

The most striking thing about the Miasole solar cell production plant in San Jose is how much of it is empty.

Probably less than a fifth of the huge production floor is occupied by machines.

But if Miasole's plan comes together, within a couple of years it will house a production line turning out vast rolls of photovoltaic cells, that some believe could help put solar power on a par with coal, gas or oil.

[U.K.: Railways set for a hi-tech revolution](#)

A 30-year plan to transform rail travel with longer trains that can run closer together using biofuels and even hydrogen power will be set out by the government this month.

[Could jatropha be a biofuel panacea?](#)

The wild jatropha bush - spread across the world from Central America by Portuguese settlers in the 16th century - is now being seen as one solution to the world's desperate search for new sources of energy.

Energy giant BP has just announced it is investing almost £32m in a jatropha joint venture with UK biofuels firm D1 Oils.

[Brammo Launches First Production Battery-Electric Motorcycle](#)

Brammo Motorsports announced the Enertia, the world's first production zero-emissions battery-powered plug-in electric motorcycle.

[Volkswagen continues driving towards a green future](#)

The environment is a hot topic today. With more drivers going green and car makers currently focusing on producing environment-friendly cars that will deliver less pollution for the environment, Volkswagen is placing full efforts on reducing emissions and fuel consumption in its models as well as pioneering the recyclability process.

[Kuwaiti MPs want size of oil reserves disclosed](#)

Several Kuwaiti deputies have threatened not to approve this year's national budget if the government fails to disclose the size of its oil reserves, a newspaper reported on Monday.

..."We cannot make the correct future plans without knowing the size of the reserves... so this should be made clear to parliamentarians before the session to pass the state budget," Alam Alyawm newspaper quoted deputy Ahmad Lari as saying.

[Gazprom aims to be first trillion dollar firm](#)

Giant Russian energy firm Gazprom wants to be the world's first firm with a stock market value of a US\$1 trillion (HK\$7.8 trillion), its deputy chief executive told the Sunday Times.

[U.K.: Regulator hints at increase in powers](#)

Regulator Ofgem may be given new powers to tackle Britain's long-term gas and electricity needs and counter the short-termist investment strategies of companies that have been blamed for the UK's energy crisis.

[Expert to UN: Politics an obstacle to global warming](#) - *Oppenheimer questions U.S.'s preparedness for natural disasters*

Michael Oppenheimer, professor of geosciences and international affairs at Princeton University, said at a United Nations press briefing last month that with rising sea levels, drought or excess precipitation and stronger hurricanes, climate change is no longer a dubious issue. The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change, of which Oppenheimer was an author, declared that global warming is "unequivocal" and that human activity has played a significant role in these changes.

[Blueprint for the New American Feudal State](#)

Of course, in the brave new world envisioned by the decadent criminal elite, mere terrorism—raving jihadists, we are told ad nauseam, who want to dirty nuke our cities because they hate our freedom to shop—will pale in comparison to the dire scenarios of melting ice caps, flooded coastal cities, aberrant weather patterns, a Katrina catastrophe or worse every other week, and wars and rumors of wars based on the prospect of diminishing resources, including “peak oil,” all of it designed to prepare us for a dystopian future of slave labor down on the transnational corporate plantation.

[Will We Have Too Much Generation for Renewables?](#)

"When you feed your kid six brownies before dinner, you can't expect him to eat the salad, no matter how good it is." So says Leslie Glustrom, a long term renewable energy advocate. This is her metaphor for why Xcel Energy has been reluctant to pursue Demand Side Management (DSM) and renewable energy projects in Colorado as they have been in Minnesota. Because Xcel is currently constructing 500 MW of new coal-fired generation, and they are also interested in a 300-350 MW IGCC plant by 2013, they may have little demand for new renewable generation.

['Discovery!' is a little jewel](#)

Admirers of Wallace Stegner, a literary icon to numerous Utahns and other Westerners,

will be happy to see "Discovery!" a hidden manuscript now published by Selwa Press. (There will be a hardcover, fully annotated edition in September.)

Stegner is easily one of America's great novelists and historians. I had the pleasure of attending a history workshop he taught one summer when I was a University of Utah graduate student. He was as compelling and charismatic in person as he continues to be in print — a master of language but in a self-effacing, eloquent way.

But who knew that Stegner was the first to tell the story of how Saudis started sending oil to the West? This one got buried. In 1955, Stegner, then a lesser known Stanford University professor of creative writing, was asked to write a history of the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO).

[IEA sees oil supply crunch looming](#)

World oil demand will rise faster than expected to 2012 while production lags, leading to a supply crunch, the International Energy Agency said on Monday.

In its Medium-Term Oil Market Report, the adviser to 26 industrialized countries said demand will rise by an average 2.2 percent a year between 2007 and 2012, up from a previous medium-term forecast of 2 percent.

Michael J. Economides: [Oil Towards \\$75, Again](#)

There is an “economic” side of oil prices, a real one and a silly one.

The economic side which does not work in an increasingly hostile and, at least partially, monopolistic environment, suggests that the “equilibrium” price of oil should be about \$40. This is now purely academic and my students, associates and I have been calculating this for a while. This price could be good if the world oil business were run by all the rules of economics in a perfect competition. It would be the “break even” number, the price at which an honest profit could be made.

[Oil's Not Well](#)

At a national average of \$3 a gallon, it's clear that fewer Americans are complaining about the cost of filling up because we're starting to get used to it. Just like \$4 lattes, half-million dollar Manhattan studio apartments and \$30 restaurant entrees, the sticker-shock has worn off - at least for now.

But that could change by late summer, with prices at the pump pushing closer to the \$4 a gallon level - especially if current trends in the crude market accelerate. At more than \$72 a barrel, crude prices are already up more than 40 percent from their lows earlier this year, and within striking distance of their 2005 post-Katrina high of \$78.

All this, and we haven't even seen the first major hurricane of the season.

[An investment policy](#)

A public policy paper entitled "A Green Paper on the T&T Investment Policy" by the Ministry of Trade and Industry has been put out for public comment. The paper says and I quote: "...oil and gas resources are finite. Consequently the critical issue in respect of sustainable economic development becomes how to increase GDP when oil and gas productions begin to decrease. The solution lies in the sustainable development of the non-energy sector and as a pre-requisite the attraction of investment into this sector."

[Whose bombs?](#)

Bush administration officials have long been aware of the impending oil crisis. Indeed, it was a key factor in Vice President Dick Cheney's formulation of the strategy in Iraq only five months prior to 9/11. Reports like that of BP are designed to misinform, steering public attention away from the real cause of the problem.

[Energy Investors Take Note: The Second Law of Thermodynamics Still Applies](#)

With the recent rise in interest in alternative energy technologies and other breakthrough clean technologies has come the inevitable rise in questionable business ideas promising unbelievable benefits: "free" energy, "free" electricity, etc. Let's just call these the "Huh" companies -- they typically invite people to sign up to be an early customer for free (just, hey, you will need to write a big deposit check, but you know, you'll get that back, no worries...), so what's not to like?

[2 more foreigners kidnapped in Nigeria](#)

Gunmen attacked an oil facility in restive southern Nigeria overnight and took two foreigners hostage, private security contractors said Monday.

[Libya to open up gas fields to foreigners](#)

Libya on Sunday invited international tenders for exploration of its onshore and offshore gas fields covering an area almost the size of Scotland.

[Expert says rising sea levels pose threat to rice](#)

Rising sea levels triggered by climate change pose an "ominous" threat to some of the

world's most productive rice-growing areas, the International Rice Research Institute has warned.

[Global warming: Lessons of history help the future](#)

Experts pondering how to tackle the threat are delving into history, exploring how civilisations of the past, facing similar perils, either coped or were wiped out.

US academic Jared Diamond, author of "Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed," says "ecocide" -- ecological suicide -- plays a greatly under-estimated role in the fall of societies.

[Earth underwhelmed by environment pop extravaganza](#)

U.S. and British media were generally underwhelmed on Sunday by Live Earth, the mega-concert organized by former U.S. vice president and green campaigner Al Gore, which, though built on the model of Live Aid and Live 8, created a less positive buzz.



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