



DrumBeat: July 15, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 15, 2007 - 9:13am

Topic: [Alternative energy](#)

[Deffeyes: Sunset](#)

The impending doom and gloom from the world oil peak is ominous. There has been so little preparation and yet, if I am correct, the peak is upon us. We're feeling it now. The US government tried to cushion the bad news by introducing a "core inflation rate" which excludes energy and food. Word is getting around. The July 2, 2007 cover of the *New Yorker* shows the Statue of Liberty holding up a torch consisting of a fluorescent light bulb. It looks as if we will go through another US presidential election with no candidate calling attention to the world oil problem, or to the North American natural gas problem. My only hope is that a candidate, who learns from private polls that he or she is behind, will drop the oil bomb into the debate.

[Peak Oil Passnotes: Peak Oil Zombie Attack](#)

As we have made clear many times in this column we hold little truck with many of the whackos who inhabit the wondrous world of 'Peak Oil'. Yes, despite the title of the column. No sooner do people start talking about energy supply crunches, plateauing production or acreage inflection then a host of bedraggled crazies rise forth from their graves to tell us a number of scary items.

Firstly, we are often told humanity is going to "die off." What a great idea. It could almost be a book, or a series of books and a website. Oh wait. It is. Like an energy-related version of the film 28 Days Later. Every lazy person around the planet can argue how many people will be alive in 2050 or 2100 and no one can prove them wrong. Ker-ching!

[North Dakota gas retailers lack answer for high prices](#)

North Dakota gasoline prices are reported among the highest in the country, and retailers say they have no idea how long the surge will last.

"We don't have an answer," said Perry Palm, an operator at the Magellan Pipeline Terminal in West Fargo, which is facing its second shortage of supplies in a month. "At this point, I can't really tell anything."

[Old oil fears don't match 2007 reality](#)

Evidence less than a quarter-century old indicates that years of warnings about the nation's troubling vulnerability to oil price shocks have turned out to be seriously overstated. Consider the most obvious fact: From 2002 through 2006, the price of oil nearly tripled. And what were the observable macroeconomic impacts? What crippling effects did this unprecedented price run-up produce?

[A hot race for cold oil](#)

The only thing standing between the U.S. and access to huge oil deposits far off the coast of Alaska is an unratified treaty.

Russian scientists are hard at work trying to prove that a big chunk of the Arctic Ocean -- and the billions of tons of oil underneath it -- belong to them. The U.S. could counter this claim, but it doesn't have standing to do so because this nation hasn't ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

[Energy price gains curious following bearish inventory report](#)

In spite of what we viewed as a bearish inventory report last week, prices bounced off their intraday lows to post gains late in the week.

The price action is curious. While renewed unrest in Nigeria can prove supportive, as kidnappings go, they don't typically lead to export shut-ins.

[Worse Than Gasoline: Liquid coal would produce roughly twice the global warming emissions of gasoline](#)

Lawmakers of both parties are proposing amendments to the so-called energy independence bill that would massively subsidize the coal industry to produce liquid coal as a replacement for foreign oil.

[Energy: the new cold war](#)

Since the close of the cold war, we have been growing used to threats such as terrorism where the enemy has no state or territory. But soon we will have to get used to new strategic challenges, such as energy security, where fossil fuels will be used as weapons to achieve political ends. Energy security will be synonymous with national security and economic security.

[Iranian economists blame president for economic woes despite huge oil revenues](#)

Iran's state-run television said Saturday the government would soon respond in writing to scathing critics made by leading Iranian economists who blamed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for the country's growing economic woes.

A panel representing 57 economists made its plea for Ahmadinejad to change economic policies during a five and a half hour meeting with the hard-line president on Thursday.

[Iran to sell shares of 17 energy companies](#)

Iran plans to sell shares of 17 energy-related firms on the country's stock exchange, an Iranian official was quoted as saying yesterday, part of a long-running effort to sell off state assets.

[Tehran needs to import fuel with rationing](#)

Gasoline rationing in Iran has dampened consumption but the world's fourth biggest crude exporter will still need to import 10-20 million litres a day at current usage rates, an Iranian oil official said yesterday.

[A Guide to the Struggle Over Iraq's Oil](#)

Your guide to the ongoing dance between Bush, the Congress, and the Iraqi government; an update on the current status of the proposed oil laws; and some steps you can take to stop the hijacking of Iraq's oil.

[North Korea`s reactor produced plutonium, not power](#)

North Korea's Yongbyon reactor was ostensibly built to generate electricity but is reportedly not connected to any power lines.

Instead, experts say, it has produced enough plutonium from its fuel rods for possibly up to a dozen nuclear weapons over its 20-year history.

[Pakistan: More than 60,000 stove devices installed to conserve energy](#)

Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) has so far installed more than 60,000 energy conserving stove devices under its fuel saving technology programme to conserve energy at the domestic level.

[Africa: Following Oil Boom, Biofuel Eyed on Continent](#)

While oil profits have flooded into countries such as Angola and Nigeria in recent decades, some African observers see new potential for the continent in the form of increasingly in-demand biofuels.

[China booms ... we pay the price](#)

ALL OF those cheaply produced goods from China-everything from Nike running shoes to electric kettles - are coming home to roost right here in Britain. As factories multiply there to satisfy the Western world's insatiable demand for consumer goods, they use ever-increasing volumes of fuel.

[UK Energy Strategy Calls For Zero Carbon in Twenty Years](#)

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Snowdonia, Wales has released a position paper and accompanying website titled **zerocarbonbritain**, which proposes and promotes a strategy to halve the UK's energy needs and reduce its carbon dioxide output to zero within two decades via a choreographed combination of policy and technology.

[For those drivers who fall in love, buying and selling Smart car is a lot of fun](#)

The business got its license Friday. The first eight cars hit the lot Saturday. By Monday, Dick Adams Automotive had sold nine Smart Cars into a market hungry for fuel-efficient vehicles.

[For Prius owners, the message is important](#)

A riddle: Why has the Toyota Prius enjoyed such success, with sales of more than 400,000 in the United States, when most other hybrid models struggle to find buyers?

One answer may be that buyers of the Prius want everyone to know they are driving a hybrid.

[Tougher standards](#)

Sick and tired of dumping dollars into your gas tank? A bill before Congress to dramatically increase fuel economy over the next decade for fossil fuel-driven vehicles

probably won't make it any cheaper - most authorities don't expect prices at the pump to drop below \$3 a gallon again - but it could stabilize the cost until alternate fuel technology becomes more widely available.

[BP gets break on dumping in lake](#)

The massive BP oil refinery in Whiting, Ind., is planning to dump significantly more ammonia and industrial sludge into Lake Michigan, running counter to years of efforts to clean up the Great Lakes.

Indiana regulators exempted BP from state environmental laws to clear the way for a \$3.8 billion expansion that will allow the company to refine heavier Canadian crude oil. They justified the move in part by noting the project will create 80 new jobs.

[Smile that spells biofuel](#)

FARMING is in the blood for Stephen Rash. His is the fourth generation to run Hall Farm in Suffolk: 970 acres growing cereals, field beans and oilseed rape in the sleepy parish of Wortham. Rash, 51, describes himself as an eternal optimist but during the last decade it has not been easy to maintain enthusiasm as grain mountains sprouted in Europe and cereal prices plunged. Despite his working sometimes 90-hour weeks, Hall Farm barely scraped a profit.

Now, however, booming demand for biofuels – green fuels that make energy from crushed rape and wheat – has combined with global population growth to generate soaring demand for cereals just as droughts and storms have inhibited global crop production.

[Suddenly, solar's hot](#)

Interest in solar energy seems to be everywhere, from government to commerce to consumers, with new manufacturing and new jobs on Tucson's horizon.

[Sky-high oil prices signal higher rates](#)

Rocketing global oil prices could force the Bank of England to keep interest rates higher for longer to stamp out fears of spiralling inflation, analysts have warned.

[Sustainable Living: Environmental benefits of eating local](#)

What is the single most important thing that one person can do to curb global warming?

Some people might say permanently parking your car. That would stop about a fifth of America's greenhouse gas emissions if we all did that. However, agriculture produces more greenhouse gas emissions than our automobiles. The single most important change we can make is to eat locally. That means eating in season, what is grown and produced locally, including meats and grains.

[Turbine shortage knocks wind out of projects](#)

The race to build new sources of alternative energy from the wind is running into a formidable obstacle: not enough windmills.

[Energy solutions:](#) *We should prioritize nuclear power and clean coal to tackle the energy crisis*

The G8 agreement sounds great in theory. But in practice how can we reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by such massive amounts, while at the same time meeting the ever-growing demand for energy, particularly from the developing world? One important response will be to limit our consumption of energy as much as possible. But it is also essential that we develop environmentally friendly sources of energy and make improvements to those sources that are already in widespread use. This special issue of Physics World examines a few of the areas in which physicists are making – or can expect to make – significant contributions to these challenges, namely by carrying out research into solar and fuel cells, nuclear power, clean-coal technology and energy storage.

[Learning to live with fossil fuels](#)

As much as we welcome this rising tide of global-warming awareness, it is drowning out a disturbing reality: our world's likely dependence on coal, oil and gas for the next 50 years. What's more, our discussions with well-informed people show that most are unreasonably optimistic about the role alternative energy sources will play in the near term.

[US Southern utilities, lawmakers resist call for renewable power](#)

Six of the United States' 10 largest sources of carbon dioxide emissions are coal-fired power plants in the South, but year after year Southern lawmakers balk at pushing utilities toward cleaner renewable energy.

[Climate Change Debate Hinges On Economics](#) - *Lawmakers Doubt Voters Would Fund Big Carbon Cuts*

Because of the enormous cost of addressing global warming, the energy legislation considered by Congress so far will make barely a dent in the problem, while farther-reaching climate proposals stand a remote chance of passage.

[US, China to get unique climate change chance at summit](#)

The world's two biggest polluters, the US and China, will have an unprecedented chance to thrash out action on climate change at an upcoming summit in Australia, Prime Minister John Howard said Sunday.

[Don't drag me down](#)

Any average hump with a decent computer, internet access, a modicum of curiosity, and a willingness to avoid averting their eyes upon reading bad news could have told you years ago that we, the people of the United States, needed to start preparing for a post-petroleum lifestyle, but even amongst those who fancied ourselves as aware, well, at least some of us kinda hoped the worst of it might lie a few years off in the future, sometime later on, maybe after we got the kids through high school and college.

[A Little-Known Group Claims a Victory on Immigration](#)

The organization wants to reduce immigration — as Mr. Beck says in the subtitle of his book — for “moral, economic, social and environmental reasons.”

He contends that immigrants and their children are driving population growth, which he says is gobbling up open space, causing urban sprawl and creating more traffic congestion.



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