



DrumBeat: July 23, 2007

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Kunstler: Peak Tech?](#)

Go anywhere in America, among any class of people — from the Nascar morons to the Ivy League — and one expectation is pretty universal: that technology will only bring us more wonders and miracles, and it will certainly save-the-day where our energy problems are concerned. This would seem natural for people living in an age when a simple cassette SONY Walkman is superseded by an 80-gigabyte iPod in one generation. But what if this assumption is off? What if peak technology occurs roughly in the same wave as peak energy?

Of course, another nearly universal expectation is that we will go through an orderly transition between the end of the oil fiesta and whatever comes next — implying, naturally, that some new sovereign energy resource is out there in destiny's green room, getting prepped up, waiting to be sent on-stage. The confusion about this, induced by strenuous wishing, is such that most people expect the next energy resource to consist of technology itself.

[Oil falls to \\$77, OPEC wary of high oil prices](#)

Oil fell towards \$77 a barrel on Monday after OPEC expressed concern over near record prices and said it was prepared to pump more crude if needed.

OPEC President and United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Mohammed al-Hamli said on Sunday that oil's strength was a worry but the world economy was still growing in spite of it.

[\\$100 Oil May Be Months Away, Not Years, Say CIBC, Goldman](#)

The \$100-a-barrel oil that Goldman Sachs Group Inc. said would prevail by 2009 may be only a few months away.

Jeffrey Currie, a London-based commodity analyst at the world's biggest securities firm, says \$95 crude is likely this year unless OPEC unexpectedly increases production, and declining inventories are raising the chances for \$100 oil. Jeff Rubin at CIBC World Markets predicts \$100 a barrel as soon as next year.

[Cheap natural gas about to be piped away](#)

Colorado consumers' long romance with cheap natural gas is about to end, thanks to an interloper by the name of REX.

REX, the energy industry's nickname for the \$4.5 billion Rockies Express pipeline, will take some Rocky Mountain natural gas away from Colorado and deliver it to eager customers in the Midwest and East.

Consumers could see heating bills increase as early as this winter.

[Ecuador tries novel balance of oil and environment](#)

Under pressure to preserve the environment while at the same time ease the poverty of his people, Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa has come up with an unusual solution.

Correa wants wealthy nations to pay Ecuador \$350 million a year in exchange for leaving an estimated 1 billion barrels of oil under the ground in the pristine Yasuni rainforest.

[How Big Is The Oil Supply Problem?](#)

How big of a problem is the oil supply situation? The latest report from the International Energy Agency warns that the world will face an oil crunch in five years. IEA said that supply was falling faster than expected in major producing areas while consumption is accelerating thanks to strong economic growth in emerging countries.

To listen to some commentators, the world faces an impending economic cataclysm over what we are told is a major reduction in the available supply of oil. To others, the currently high oil price is a response not so much to actual supply as it is an inefficiency (whether contrived or accidental) in getting oil and its by-products to retail market channels. And yet another theory is that today's high oil price is a hidden "tax" on consumers to help pay for a long-term war effort in the Middle East (with its obvious benefits to the oil oligopoly).

[British National Party: Politicians fret over wrong crisis as Peak Oil looms](#)

In a stunning reversal of its previous dogmatic 'business as usual' stance, the International Energy Agency has belatedly accepted the reality of Peak Oil, and the huge impact the phenomenon is going to have on the entire world.

The crucial and potentially devastating nature of the point at which humanity has used half of the world's oil reserves - with the remaining half being overwhelmingly lower in quality, in smaller and harder to reach fields, and in less stable parts of the world – has been a BNP theme for more than five years.

[Aramco resumes operations after fire](#)

State oil company Saudi Aramco announced on Monday that operations from a fire damaged pier at their export oil terminal had resumed.

Four people died and a further 12 were injured as a result of the fire on Thursday at the world's largest offshore oil export terminal.

"The Ras Tanura North Pier is back in operation, but the two berths affected by the fire are currently not in service," Aramco said in a statement.

[Bangladesh Energy: Poor Policy, Wrong Strategy](#)

The gas sector is more than half a century old yet it does not have a exploration plan, depletion strategy, competent reservoir engineering unit. There is no agreed and authentic reservoir assessment to tell with any degree of confidence the proven, probable and possible reserve of natural gas. Some theoretician based on sketchy and motivated information creates panic off and on and misguide poor attitude and corrupt political leadership. Some opportunist business syndicate avail this confused state and fish in muddy water. This clique systematically destroyed the capacity of Petrobangla and other Petrobangla companies. Bright competent professionals willing to serve the sector with vision, commitment and innovations were not encouraged, regular recruitment of fresh young guns were stopped. There were favoritism and parochial preference for promotion training and prized posting. Evil syndicates involved in theft and pilferage were patronized and favored. Consequently huge brain drain of competent professionals made the sector hollow. BAPEX was crippled deliberately to make the exploration and drilling segment almost barren, no initiative was taken to grow and nourish mining professionals.

[Michael J. Economides: PDVSA's 'Operational Emergency'](#)

There is something really funny that happens all the time after countries go through oil nationalizations or re-nationalizations as Venezuela is re-discovering the hard way. The path is simple. Oil is declared the national treasure that the often hated foreigners, headed by the United States, want. Controlling that oil becomes a symbol of national emancipation and assertiveness.

Then reality sinks in. Oil in the ground might as well be on the moon. It takes very complicated technology to extract it. Pemex, the tightest of all national companies, has discovered it a long time ago. On the Mexican side of the Gulf of Mexico with even

better reservoirs, well depths and sophistication do not come close to the ones on the US side.

[Energy Summit to be held in Manitowoc](#)

The Myths of Energy Summit will be held 8 a.m. Aug. 15 at the Holiday Inn.

The Energy Summit will discuss the future of energy usage and how to help reduce energy use and costs.

The keynote speaker will be U.S. Rep. Roscoe Bartlett, R-Md., who will discuss the topic of Peak Oil and what it means to our future energy needs.

Other topics will include Aldo Leopold Legacy Center Zero Energy Building presented by Tom Kubala of Kubala Washatko Architects; The State of Electricity in Wisconsin presented by Wisconsin Public Service's President Charles Schrock; Bio-Mass-Wisconsin's Diamond in the Rough presented by Judy Ziewacz, Office of Energy Independence; Energy Efficiency — The Real Money Savor presented by Stephen Heins, Orion Energy Systems vice president of corporate communications.

[Cameco Problems Halt Uranium Price Decline](#)

News announcing the facility's closure for two months 'is expected to place significant upward pressure on the spot price,' according to NMR editor Treva Klingbiel. She estimated a 'minimum loss of 2,000 tU of UF₆ production' during the shutdown.

...Soil within the perimeter walls of the plant was reportedly contaminated with uranium and production-related chemicals. Cameco's conversion facility is located about 60 miles east of Toronto near the Port Hope (Ontario) harbor. Cameco Fuel Services, at 1 Eldorado Place, is about one-quarter mile from the shores of Lake Ontario.

[As candidate's look to Iowa, ethanol becomes top issue](#)

As Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton climbed onto a makeshift stage at the Iowa State Fairgrounds and embraced motor fuel from corn as a key to America's future, she completed a turnabout from being an ethanol opponent, a position she held only two years ago.

...Political observers view her about-face as a political necessity, saying Iowa's first-in-the-nation's caucuses -- in which residents of the country's biggest corn-producing state vote their choice for presidential nominee -- makes it politically risky to avoid kneeling at the altar of ethanol-from-corn.

[Milk crates fuel black market](#)

For decades, college kids have used stolen milk crates as the basic building blocks of coffee tables and dorm room shelves.

Now, a new breed of crate rustler is cashing in by swiping thousands of the containers from loading docks and selling them to shady recyclers.

The containers are chopped into bits and shipped to booming factories in China to be made into a variety of products, from pipes to flower pots.

...The crates are made of petroleum-based plastic that has increased in value along with gasoline prices. The material now sells for 22 cents a pound, compared to 7 cents a pound in 2005, said Patty Moore, a recycling consultant in Sonoma.

[Claude Mandil: Industry Can Substantially Save Energy And Reduce CO2 Emissions](#)

Have you noticed odd changes in the behaviour of your friends and family, such as shunning car purchases in lieu of public transportation and taking action to move to a smaller residence? Probably not. Generally, rising incomes translate into demand for bigger homes and more powerful and larger cars. This poses a problem, since it produces direct emissions from consumer use as well as indirect CO2 emissions.

[China June crude oil output up 2.5 pct yr-on-yr at 15.72 mln tons](#)

China's June crude oil output rose 2.5 pct year-on-year to 15.72 mln tons, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said.

China produced 5.06 mln tons of gasoline, 10.69 mln tons of diesel and 1.0 mln tons of kerosene in June, up 12.9 pct, 11.2 pct and 26 pct respectively, the NBS said.

[North Dakota: Gas crunch not likely to end soon](#)

The fuel situation remains tight in North Dakota and the crunch isn't likely to end any time soon.

[Western Slope's study on oil shale delayed](#)

The long-awaited tome of fine print outlining the breadth and depth of future commercial oil shale development and its effect on the Western Slope's water, economy and environment is experiencing more delays.

The Bureau of Land Management told state officials the draft commercial oil shale programmatic environmental impact statement, or PEIS, is slated for release Aug. 7, Assistant Colorado Department of Natural Resources Director Mike King said Monday.

But that date will be pushed back, BLM Washington spokeswoman Heather Feeney said.

[Many question liquid coal](#)

Gov. Brian Schweitzer's Big Idea - to build plants to turn coal into liquid fuel, thus reducing dependence on foreign oil while taking advantage of our coal resources before they are made obsolete by cleaner energy sources - is taking a big beating these days.

The concept, the subject of much recent congressional debate, has a couple of main problems. One is that the huge incentives involved are seen by many as a reckless boondoggle for the coal industry. The second is the fear that carbon dioxide pollution from the process may not be controllable either economically or practically.

[New Zealand: Ready and waiting for the oil boom](#)

The arrival of oil and gas prospectors in the deep south has raised hopes of an energy boom for the Mainland.

[UK: Government is failing on energy saving](#)

The Government has been threatened with legal action for its failure to promote energy saving in millions of homes as required by an Act passed in 2000.

[Taiwan opts for coal-fired power plants](#)

Power demand rose to a record in Taiwan last week, and the country said it would favor plans for coal-fired stations when it awarded permits to build new capacity next year because coal plants are cheaper to run and easier to supply than plants fueled by gas.

[Spain Takes Steps to Curb Energy Consumption](#)

Spanish ministers have approved a batch of urgent measures to curb energy consumption and slow the growth of greenhouse gas emissions, ministers said on Friday.

The central government will set an example by reducing energy consumption in its own buildings, with a goal of saving at least 9 percent by 2012 and 20 percent by 2016.

[New insights on the Soviet Union's collapse](#)

Crude oil prices last week were flirting with a record high. It's great news – for the Russians.

Low oil prices contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. In Russia today, high oil and natural gas prices are, to a large degree, the reason for an economic boom.

[Welcome to Richistan, USA: The American Dream of riches for all is turning into a nightmare of inequality - but a backlash is brewing](#)

It was the same in the late 19th century when the original Gilded Age of conspicuous wealth and deep poverty was spawned by railways and the industrial age. At the same time government has helped by doling out corporate tax breaks. In the Fifties the proportion of federal income from company taxes was 33 per cent, by 2003 it was just 7.4 percent. Some 82 of America's largest companies paid no tax at all in at least one of the first three years of the administration of President George W Bush.

[Russia and US to Square Off Over Energy Reserves](#)

Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President George W. Bush spent most of their time at the “lobster summit” at Kennebunkport, Maine, discussing how to prevent the growing tensions between their two countries from getting out of hand.

[Q&A: ConocoPhillips' chief talks about meeting the demand](#)

What's different now, as we are in 2007, is we don't see necessarily the cycles of the past. It could happen, but we see the demand for energy continues to increase with the population and the development of economies. Our question is: 'Where is all the energy going to be coming from?' It makes all the sense in the world to us to encourage conservation and more efficient use of energy because if we use less, that's the same thing as adding supply. And if we use less energy, it certainly helps with respect to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

[David Strahan: Climate criminals](#)

Mountaineers are a special class of climate criminal. We clearly have a particular moral duty to protect the icy landscapes we enjoy, and most of us like to think of ourselves as environmentally responsible. But the reality is rather different. When it comes to flying, just like the hordes heading off to the beaches of Magaluf, we remain in stubborn denial about the damage our emissions cause, and carry on regardless.

In a recent three page article for The Independent entitled 'The Melting Mountains', Joe Simpson bemoaned the destruction of classic routes in the Alps from melting ice and massive rockfalls, without a single mention of his own airmiles, still less the helicopter fuel used to haul him off the Dru. At a meeting of the Alpine Club last summer, one speaker regaled us with stories from a lifetime of expeditions and slides showing evidence of glacial retreat, without once making the connection.

[The Cold Truth](#)

The crisis presented by global warming demands a response that is simple, comprehensive and effective. A tax on carbon consumption is the only response in sight that both discourages the production of emissions that cause global warming, and finances the rapid transition to a post-carbon economy.

[Climate change fears reach even Formula One racing](#)

Talking about climate change at a Formula One race might at first glance seem like praising celibacy in a brothel.

The world's top motor sport competition is for many the epitome of gas-guzzling wastefulness with powerful engines burning nearly a liter of fossil fuel per kilometer while a vast entourage of people and machines jets to races round the world.

But green winds of change are blowing through one of the world's most popular sports, and a growing number of team bosses say they want to make Formula One a high-tech pioneer and leader in fighting climate change rather than a whipping post.

[Floods force many to face climate change reality](#)

"It would be wrong to deny the possible impact of climate change on flooding because if we (waited for more) statistical proof it may be too late," said Wolfgang Grabs at the World Meteorological Organisation of the United Nations.



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