



## DrumBeat: August 13, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 13, 2007 - 9:10am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [NHC Tracking Atlantic Tropical Depression Four](#)

A tropical depression in the eastern Atlantic Ocean off the coast of northwest Africa could develop into a tropical storm and possibly a hurricane in the next few days, say forecasters at the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

Tropical Depression Four, which is causing thunderstorms and strong winds, is currently located southwest of the Cape Verde Islands and is expected to travel west, reaching the Windward Islands in the southern Caribbean in the next few days, the NHC predicted.

U.S. energy markets are eyeing the depression closely, amid concern that if it strengthened into a tropical storm or hurricane headed for the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, it could disrupt oil and natural gas production there.

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### [Peak Oil and Peak Investment Constraining Production Levels](#)

Although peak oil theories have been largely flawed by their main incapacity to take into account future technological developments and the effects of high crude oil prices, current production situation looks like a precursor of production plateaus.

Several peak oil protagonists have been lately hitting the headlines, showing their willingness to support the theory that production levels have peaked and doomsday scenarios have at last become a reality. The latter, based on current E&P technology, seismic technology and the fact that there are still vast portions of land unexplored - just think about Russia's drive towards the North Pole lately - is, however, not the main reason for current high oil prices. It seems at present, as even the International Energy Agency (IEA) indicates, that high crude oil prices are the main constraining factor in increased global production levels. The latter is not only the case with crude oil production but increasingly with natural gas and LNG operations. The high levels of liquidity currently amassed by oil producing countries and the oil and gas majors has not yet led to a situation that there is a booming E&P sector showing a continuous upward potential the coming years.

### [Nigeria: Crisis - Oil Workers Threaten Pull-Out From Niger Delta](#)

A major crisis loomed in the nation's oil and gas industry yesterday as senior workers threatened to withdraw from the Niger Delta if the current spate of killings in the region continues.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) which issued the threat also charged the Federal Government to summon enough political will to tackle increasing violence in the region.

### [UAE to Shut in 0.28M b/d Lower Zakum Oil Output](#)

The United Arab Emirates is to shut down the Lower Zakum West field, which produces 280,000 barrels a day of crude oil, in late October for between 17 and 25 days, officials said Monday.

"There will be a total shutdown of Upper Zakum West from Oct. 26 for tie-ins of a new gas (reinjection) facility," a planning official at Abu Dhabi Marine Operating Co., or ADMA-OPCO, responsible for developing Abu Dhabi's offshore oil and gas reserves, told Dow Jones Newswires by telephone. "It is a debottlenecking project to increase production of oil," he said.

### [Peak phosphorus](#)

Peak oil has made us aware that many of the resources on which civilization depends are limited.

### [An electric car for the common man](#)

One company is hoping to bring a \$30,000, 80-mph battery-powered sedan to the market by 2009.

### [Russia's defense banks on oil and gas exports](#)

Russia's naval chief said recently that his fleet would get six new aircraft carriers with nuclear propulsion in the next 20 years as part of a major expansion and modernization of Russian maritime power.

Admiral Vladimir Masorin added that three of these carriers and their naval escorts would be assigned to Russia's Pacific fleet while the remainder would serve with the Northern Fleet in European waters.

While some analysts dismiss such talk of rebuilding a Soviet-type force with global reach as nationalistic bluster ahead of parliamentary elections in Russia later this year and a presidential poll in 2008, Moscow's plans for a stronger navy appear serious. They will

have repercussions in Asia, not least in China where debate in high-level political and military circles over whether to go for aircraft carriers -- the most visible and impressive form of maritime power projection -- has been underway for some years.

### [Blackmail, Sex & Corporate Secrets](#)

Browne had his critics outside the oil industry too. The company was accused of committing human rights violations while building a pipeline in Colombia, and concerns were expressed about North Sea pollution. Greenpeace selected Browne for its Best Impression of an Environmentalist award. Matt Simmons, whose Houston-based Simmons & Co. is one of the largest investment-banking businesses serving the energy sector, was deeply skeptical of Browne's 1999 prediction that, because of a worldwide market glut, oil prices would never reach \$40 a barrel. "There was a vision of unreality in John Browne's business plan," Simmons says. "That generally works until you slip up."

### [Chrysler chemist lashes out](#)

A senior management figure at Chrysler has hit out at five groups he sees standing in the way of alternative fuels.

### [The Grim Reaper pays a visit to Wall Street](#)

Congress should initiate a program of incentives for reopening American factories and provide generous subsidies to rebuild US manufacturing. The emphasis should be on reestablishing a competitive market for US exports while developing the new technologies which will address the imminent problems of environmental degradation, global warming, peak oil, overpopulation, resource scarcity, disease and food production. Offshoring of American jobs should be penalized by tariffs levied against the offending industries.

The oil and natural gas industries should be nationalized with the profits earmarked for vocational training, free college tuition, universal health care and improvements to the nation's infrastructure.

### [The Pillars of the Next Real Revolution](#)

I will do each of them a disservice by trimming them down to a few sentences, but the 8 basic pillars of the next real revolution are:

- 1- the End of the Oil Age
- 2- the End of the Hospitable Climate

- 3- the End of the Human Population Boom
- 4- a Narrowed Circulation of Money
- 5 - a Suddenly Endangered Superpower
- 6- the Scary Are Becoming Powerful
- 7- the Rise of Hard-core Fundamentalism
- 8- an Increasingly Toxic Planet

### [Kurds refuse to allow oil fields to lie fallow](#)

Although the Iraqi Cabinet approved draft legislation in June, Kurds and Sunnis have rejected it as giving too much power to a yet-to-be-established national oil company. Kurds want greater control over their own fields - not surprising since they could be some of the richest in the world.

"It's very high quality," expert Leslie Blair says of the Kurdish oil found so far. "You can almost put it in your car."

### [Iran investment woes are its fault](#)

The United States is on a concerted campaign to discourage foreign energy companies from doing business in Iran. But analysts say Iran's investment woes are its own fault -- it could dodge international pressure and attract more foreign money by simply offering better deals.

### [Turkey heading toward electricity crisis at full speed](#)

As electricity consumption continues to increase with the extreme heat, the Energy Ministry seems willing to try almost anything to get power to the people.

### [Centrica plans east England gas fired power plant](#)

The country's biggest energy supplier, Centrica, plans to build another big gas fired power plant at one of its existing sites in East Anglia, a spokesman for the company said on Monday.

### [Kazakh stake in nuclear company](#)

Japanese firm Toshiba has sold a 10% stake in its majority-owned nuclear firm Westinghouse to uranium maker Kazatomprom for \$540m (£268m).

The Kazakh firm hopes the investment will help it to expand. Toshiba aims to gain access to key uranium sources.

### [Bridges to somewhere](#)

Just raising the gas tax, without locking the money into bridge maintenance and safety repairs, would be a mistake. President Bush is right about that. A good chunk of it would get diverted to new interchanges and highways that will make well-connected developers rich and to other home-state boondoggles, like our own Bridges to Nowhere. But the talk in Washington these days is about a small tax boost, 5 cents a gallon, that would be dedicated to maintenance and repairs -- period. Such a small increase would hardly be noticed if gas prices continue to bounce up and down as much as 50 cents a gallon.

### [Venezuela to Extract Off-Shore Oil in 2007](#)

Petroleos de Venezuela state oil company -PDVSA- confirmed that the first off-shore oil barrels in the country's oil history will be extracted by the end of 2007, VEA daily published on Sunday.

### [China's CNOOC wins bid to explore for oil in Australia](#)

China National Offshore Oil Corp, the parent of CNOOC Ltd, has won a bid to begin oil exploration in Australia, the Ministry of Commerce said.

CNOOC will initially invest 81.3 mln aud to conduct 3-D seismic survey and drill five wells on an oil field in the Bonaparte Basin, in coastal waters off the north coast of Australia, it said.

### [Alberta's oil sands seem as strong as ever - until you dig](#)

Now the oil sands outlook has darkened. Alberta is wracked by a labour shortage, its jobless rate hitting a historic low of 3.4 per cent last year. The Conference Board of Canada predicts that, by 2025, Alberta will be short as many as 330,000 workers; other forecasts are more dire, envisioning a demand for 400,000 more labourers by 2015. (So frustrated are some by a lack of bodies that, in an interview with Maclean's, one observer charged Dave Bronconnier, the mayor of Calgary, with throwing too much manpower at the city's current infrastructure works.) Above those local considerations, prices for raw materials jumped worldwide. Driven largely by insatiable China, steel prices, for example, rose by 70 per cent in the past five years.

The result has been oil sands overruns -- and even the occasional surrender to circumstance. Capital costs have tripled in a decade, and doubled in the last three years.

### [Global economic expansion hinges on oil](#)

August 1 marked a significant date in the history of oil prices. It was on that day that sweet crude oil futures for September delivery traded at a record \$78.77 a barrel in New York.

### [Sugar-fuelled superpower](#)

Brazil might already be heading for Saudi status were it not for America's 54-cent tax on Brazilian ethanol. But in March George Bush and his Brazilian counterpart, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, agreed to promote ethanol's wider use. Brazil could become a crucial exporter of energy.

And yet, in Brazil, all the talk is of a looming energy crisis. Most of the country's power comes from its massive rivers, via hydro-electric dams, supplemented by gas- and oil-fuelled thermal plants. But the economy is growing so fast that these might not suffice in a few years' time.

### [Charcoal - fuel or fertiliser?](#)

"Agrichar" or "biochar" is indeed an extremely interesting process that fixes carbon in the soil for a very long time. It does so with what I call a catalyst-fertiliser. Furthermore it provides an energy source that is an alternative to fossil fuels. These researchers tell us that we can have an alternative fuel source that, instead of increasing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, traps carbon in the earth for an exceedingly long time and also acts as a fertiliser - a negative carbon fuel!

### [Iran oil minister replaced, caretaker picked](#)

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad replaced his oil minister, Kazem Vaziri-Hamaneh, on Sunday, a move some analysts saw as a bid to stamp his control on an industry that is the source for most of Iran's revenues.

### [Foreign Investment in Saudi Arabia Rises](#)

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has attracted SR68.6 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) last year, a recent statement issued by the Saudi Arabian General Investment

Authority (SAGIA) said.

### [Foreign hostage dies in Nigeria](#)

A foreigner taken hostage amid increased lawlessness in oil-rich southern Nigeria died of an illness Sunday while being taken to a hospital, community leaders said.

The man, whose nationality wasn't known, died after he had been released to state officials by the hostage-takers but before he reached the treatment center, said Joseph Benemiesia, a prominent community leader and member of a government team trying to calm the restive Niger Delta.

### [For Nicaragua's Ortega, leading is balancing act](#)

"Nicaragua is a really poor country that is dependent on international assistance. Any president, left or right, has a limited set of choices," Thale said. "While Daniel would like to be independent of the U.S., just because he wants [to be] doesn't mean he can be."

The juggling act has been evident this month as Nicaragua battles an energy crisis that has forced rationing of electricity. Neighborhoods in the capital, Managua, often endure long stretches in the dark, while government offices and factories are forced to interrupt work or rely on pricey generators.

### [Conventional nonsense about unconventional fuels](#)

Among the findings released last week of a long-awaited report from the national Strategic Unconventional Fuels Task Force, is this: "Measured" support from the federal government in assisting the nascent development of a national synthetic fuels industry — i.e., tweaking an environmental dictate here and lowering a regulatory hurdle there — could produce a yield of "several million" barrels of oil a day from shale, tar sands and other unconventional energy sources inside of 20 years.

Well, that is certainly interesting. So interesting is it that we can't help wondering, from what planet did the task force members come to reach that conclusion?

### [Consensus Emerges on Energy](#)

In America's highly polarized political debate, a rare consensus is emerging among presidential candidates that America needs to stop using foreign oil and move on, instead, to other energy sources.



### [Politician And Pundits Look To \\$100 Oil](#)

The question before the House comes down to this. Will troubled credit markets hurt the developed nation economies enough to bring oil down much further or will long term demand and lack of supply growth drive prices up?

### [Cold fusion - The Salvage from the Energy Crisis?](#)

In 1989 the chemistry professors Stanley Pons and Martin Fleishman reported that they had achieved cold fusion in a palladium anode emerged in a solution of sodium deuterioxide in heavy water D<sub>2</sub>O. Due to a bad exactness of their report, only few other scientists managed to replicate their findings in the first place. The findings were then dismissed as due to misunderstandings and bad scientific practice, and the matter of cold fusion has since been regarded as a taboo area.

However, some scientists did manage to replicate the findings, and quietly an enormous amount of positive research findings based on experiments of a lot better quality have been published. The phenomenon is again becoming accepted as a legitimate field of research by steadily more scientists.

### [Heat on Australia PM over climate skeptic MPs](#)

A report questioning climate change and calling global warming a "natural phenomenon" on Monday led to accusations Australia's Prime Minister John Howard was a climate skeptic, possibly denting his re-election hopes.

A group of four government lawmakers -- two of them former ministers -- said climate change had been observed on other planets and moons including "Mars, Jupiter, Triton, Pluto, Neptune and others."

### [Zerocarbonbritain – a new energy strategy](#)

Britain must eliminate all carbon emissions within 20 years by halving energy demand and installing massive renewable energy generation, according to a new report from the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT).

The UK Government's target of 60 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 is one of the strictest emissions targets in the world. But if we are to avoid uncontrollable 'runaway' climate change, we need to make bigger cuts faster, according to the Zerocarbonbritain report.

### [Scientists try new ways to predict climate risks](#)



Scientists are trying to improve predictions about the impact of global warming this century by pooling estimates about the risk of floods or desertification.

"We feel certain about some of the aspects of future climate change, like that it is going to get warmer," said Matthew Collins of the British Met Office. "But on many of the details it's very difficult to say."

"The way we can deal with this is a new technique of expressing the predictions in terms of probabilities," Collins told Reuters of climate research published in the journal Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A.

### [Trees Won't Fix Global Warming](#)

The plan to use trees as a way to suck up and store the extra carbon dioxide emitted into Earth's atmosphere to combat global warming isn't such a hot idea, new research indicates.

Scientists at Duke University bathed plots of North Carolina pine trees in extra carbon dioxide every day for 10 years and found that while the trees grew more tissue, only the trees that received the most water and nutrients stored enough carbon dioxide to offset the effects of global warming.



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