



DrumBeat: September 6, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on September 6, 2007 - 9:04am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Interior rapped for brushing off climate change](#)

Earlier snowmelts, longer summer droughts and bigger Western wildfires on federal lands are being caused more by “climatic conditions than land management techniques,” government investigators conclude.

They fault the Bush administration for not providing managers of national parks, wildlife preserves and marine sanctuaries with better guidance on how to address the effects of global warming.

A report Thursday by the Government Accountability Office found the Interior Department has “not made climate change a high priority,” despite a 2001 order to include climate change in land management planning.

[Smart ForTwo among cheapest cars in America](#)

The Smart ForTwo, a wild-looking two-seat economy car produced by DaimlerChrysler, will go on sale in the United States at a starting price just under \$12,000.

[Russian watchdog warns of bogus oil reserves](#)

Several foreign oil and mining companies operating in Russia have been overstating reserves by as much as 800 percent, the deputy head of Russia's environment watchdog said on Wednesday.

[U.S., Western interests at risk of terror attack in Nigeria, U.S. Embassy warns](#)

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) - The U.S. Embassy said Thursday that American and other Western installations are at risk of terrorist attack in Nigeria, but an embassy official said no specific threat had prompted the announcement.

Nigeria, which has never suffered an attack by an international terrorist organization, is a top supplier of foreign oil for the United States as it seeks alternative sources of crude amid turmoil in the Middle East.

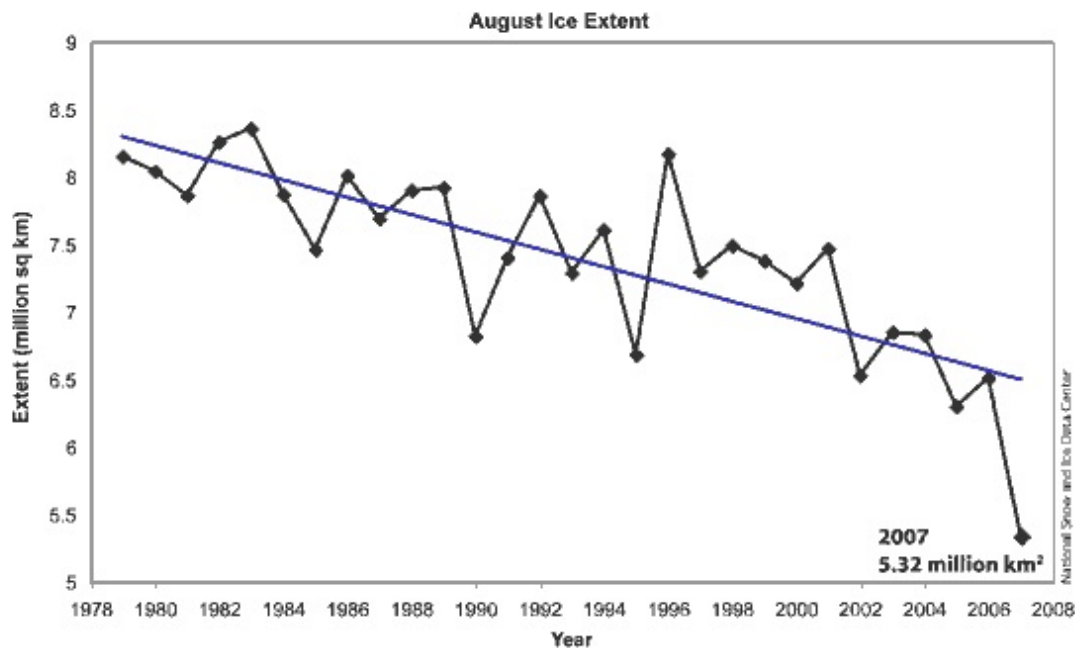
Days ahead of the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terror attacks, the U.S. Embassy said in an e-mail to U.S. citizens here that "the U.S. Mission in Nigeria has received information that U.S. and other Western interests in Nigeria are currently at risk for terrorist attacks."

[Cultivating a Crop of Hope](#)

Researchers across the country think that switchgrass could help supplant corn as a source for the fast-growing ethanol industry. In Virginia, some officials are trying to make the state the Iowa of the new cash crop. They're urging farmers to grow it and envision dozens of refineries that will turn the stalks into fuel.

...But such efforts have hit a snag: Scientists haven't perfected the process that turns switchgrass into ethanol. So for today, the Crop That Could Change Virginia is just hay with better publicity.

[NSIDC: Overview of current sea ice conditions](#)



Sea ice extent continues to decline, and is now at 4.42 million square kilometers (1.70 million square miles), falling yet further below the record absolute minimum of 5.32 million square kilometers (2.05 million square miles) that occurred on September 20–21, 2005.

[Wine: A barometer of global warming](#)

On a cobweb-encrusted rafter above his giant steel grape pressers, Rene Mure is charting one of the world's most-tangible barometers of global warming.

The evidence, scrawled in black ink, is the first day of the annual grape harvest for the past three decades. In 1978, it was Oct. 16. In 1998, the date was Sept. 14. This year, harvesting started Aug. 24 - the earliest ever recorded, not only in Mure's vineyards but in the entire Alsace wine district of northeastern France.

[Big Oil in Iraq: "World Class Racketeering"](#)

Those who want to hold Iraqis "accountable" with a series of benchmarks that are important to Washington fail to understand what those benchmarks are about to begin with.

[Book Review: *The Politics Of Caspian Oil*](#)

Its potential as a source of oil and gas for world energy markets increased international political and academic attention on the Caspian-Caucasus region. It is estimated that the Caspian oil will become the second most important source of oil for the world's industrialised centres in the 21st century.

[ConocoPhillips: Venezuela Agrees to Pay 'Market Value' for Orinoco](#)

ConocoPhillips (COP) said Wednesday Venezuela had agreed to pay "fair market value" compensation for a crude-oil project it abandoned earlier this year.

"Both parties agreed that ConocoPhillips is entitled to fair market value of those assets," said John Lowe, ConocoPhillips' executive vice president for exploration and production. "We have not agreed on what that fair market value is at this point. If we cannot reach agreement through negotiation, then our only course is going to international arbitration."

[Venezuela to Keep Up Demands on Oil Rig Companies](#)

Venezuela has no plans to relax its demands on oil service companies seeking business in Venezuela, even if the country faces a severe oil rig shortage, a PdVSA board member said Tuesday.

[Turkmenistan: "The Most Important Part" in the Energy Great Game](#)

Just next to the western coastal city of Turkmenbashi, the Turkmenbashi State Oil Refinery is a massive, sprawling complex said to be larger than the city itself. It's surrounded by three-meter-high walls topped with barbed wire; every 100 meters or so, stands a guard tower to detect potential intruders. It looks more like a military base than a production facility, and it goes without saying that it's strictly forbidden to take photos.

[Rising oil prices did not affect global economic growth, says UNCTAD](#)

A new report says that oil prices on the increase have not affected negatively global economic growth, on the contrary.

Director, Division on Globalization and Development Strategies, UNCTAD, Heiner Flassbeck told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), that the interesting thing is that high oil prices led to a commodity price boom with revenues that are flowing back into the world economy, the developing and the developed economies alike. He added that this is not like the situation in the 70s, this time it is recycled directly to the goods market all over the world, and this is positive for the developing world and for the global economy instead of having a new shock, because all the negative second ground effects did not appear this time.

[Scotland must plan for renewable energy](#)

IF SCOTLAND is to become a net exporter of energy rather than importer of its future energy needs, then urgent action is required to speed up planning decisions, enlarge the power grid and create partnerships within the industry to encourage the growth of the renewables sector.

[Biotech Will Help China Reclaim Land, Grow Food](#)

Diversion of food crops to biofuels has finally caught the attention of policy makers in China.

Even as the country seeks to use 10 million tons of bio- ethanol and 2 million tons of bio-diesel annually by 2020 to cut its reliance on petroleum, planners are also aware that they have 1.3 billion mouths to feed.

[Big Oil Firms Talk Up Carbon Capture, But Do Little](#)

Major international oil companies say carbon capture and storage is a way to curb carbon dioxide emissions while continuing to burn fossil fuels, but their critics say few are actually investing.

[Nature, terror and oil top US fear list](#)

Natural disasters, international terrorist attacks and a steep rise in oil prices top the list of the biggest near-term risks that concern US business executives, according to a study by Marsh, the insurance broker, that will be released on Thursday,

...Harvey Pitt, former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and a council member of Marsh's newly created Center for Risk Insights, which conducted the survey, called the findings "distressing".

"You get a clear sense from people that there are real problems lurking, and yet the hope for CEOs is 'not on my watch'," he said. "The CEO may be hopeful that he or she can escape [dealing with the issue] but the board of directors, whose intent is to have a lengthy watch, will not be as fortunate."

[Rig Shortage to Persist For Now, Underpinning Oil, Gas Prices](#)

A shortage of deepwater drilling rigs is likely to persist for several years more, hampering oil companies' efforts to find new oil and gas reserves and underpinning prices.

High oil and gas prices and strong demand in recent years have pushed energy companies into exploring for and bringing into production oil and gas reserves that previously were considered too small or uneconomic, or too difficult to extract.

Many of these deposits are in deep offshore waters, and as a consequence demand for specialist rigs that can operate in waters as deep as 4,000 meters has spiraled.

[What Is John Dingell Really Up To?](#)

It's fair to say that during Mr. Dingell's 52 years in the House of Representatives, he has often been the congressman representing the American automobile industry. He helped win a bailout for Chrysler in 1979, and he has fought nearly every regulation you can imagine, be it on air bags, tailpipe emissions or gas mileage. Back in the 1980s, when a senator from Nevada tried to raise fuel economy standards, Mr. Dingell responded by introducing a bill to create a giant new nuclear waste dump in Nevada.

Lately, however, he has been singing a different tune. After years of skepticism, he's started talking about the fact that the planet is getting hotter. Most remarkably, Mr. Dingell — a Democrat and the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee — is promising to introduce a bill in coming weeks that would create a carbon tax.

[Alaska Governor Wants Oil Production Tax Restructured](#)

Gov. Sarah Palin said she wants lawmakers to restructure the state's year-old oil production tax, which she has called a failure and tainted by the federal corruption charges against former lawmakers in connection with the tax.

[Indonesian Clerics Say Nuclear Plant Forbidden](#)

A group of Indonesian Muslim clerics have declared that a nuclear power plant due to be built in Central Java is religiously forbidden because its danger outweighs potential benefits, a scholar said on Monday.

[Days of cheap food are over, say suppliers as ingredient costs soar](#)

Superstore groups prepare to stomach higher prices because of far east demand and biofuel incentives.

[Finding Hope In Permaculture](#)

Permaculture is a design system for sustainable living in which the designer takes a 360-degree view of all natural systems in the desired setting and creates a self-sustaining, nourishing and productive environment. Permaculture views the problem as the solution. You can't have a solution if you don't have a problem. So what's the problem? Well Carolyn enumerates it clearly. Our warped sense of hope stems from our "perception of ourselves as consumers who are entitled to be comfortable and stress-free with access to the latest technological toys which make our lives fun, exciting and painless." That kind of hope has lulled us to sleep, a "Night of the Living Dead" sleep in which we are blinded by empire, obedient to government and "trust in economic, social, and political systems."

[Iran: Foreign Vessel Confiscated in Persian Gulf Waters](#)

A foreign vessel smuggling 300 thousand liters of fuel was stopped and confiscated by Iranian law enforcement police in the country's southern port city of Minab.

[Zimbabwe: People scavenge while fatcats get fatter](#)

Desperate citizens here have become dark-of-night scavengers of coffins, copper electrical cable and even aluminium street signs, now in such shortage that finding an address is a trial.

Zimbabwe's nights are dark indeed: here in Harare, downtown street lights are turned off for hours on end for lack of foreign currency to pay South African and Zambian power suppliers.

[Block Traders Back Up The \(Fuel\) Truck](#)

Crude oil prices have now dropped in the front month from a high above \$78 a barrel to just under \$70. We don't hear much talk now about \$35 to \$40 oil in the future. Most politicians and economists have had their staffs and friends get them educated to reality.

The reality is that every month in 2008 sees enough likelihood of prices at \$80 and above to cause a brisk business in insurance at those levels. In short, the crude oil price picture is one of stability to strength from high levels. As with any natural resource, it's always safer to bet on shortage than oversupply.

[Hawai'i: Gas report has 'very little value'](#)

Gasoline pricing reports prepared from data submitted by the state's oil industry were made public yesterday for the first time.

The report was assailed almost immediately by one critic, who called the information "of very little value" to consumers and lawmakers trying to find out what goes into Hawaii's fuel costs, which typically rank among the highest in the country.

[Maine: Oil dealers criticize discount rates](#)

The Maine Oil Dealers Association and the Maine State Housing Authority are battling over an increase in the discounted rates the state requires oil dealers to provide when they participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

[Dear sheep: The story about gas prices](#)

Meanwhile, the oil companies (which are the exact same companies in the U.S. and Canada) reap maximum profits. Another example: gas in Rouses Point, NY is always 10c more per gallon than gas in Alburgh, Vt. which is exactly three minutes away. For a while, gas was 15c more per gallon. That's when EVERYONE in Rouses Point started driving that extra three minutes to Alburgh to get the cheaper gas. The price difference quickly dropped to around 10c again, and the exodus ended. The oil companies successfully herded their sheep back to their home. And that's really what we are to them, sheep that need to be herded into the right places and habits so they can continue to gouge us and rob us of our hard-earned money.

[Auto sales skidding for county's dealers](#)

Hit by high gas prices, tightening credit and stiff foreign competition, auto sales in San Diego County have dropped nearly 12 percent over the past two years, according to data released last week by the New Car Dealers Association of San Diego County.

Rep. Zack Space, D-Ohio: [Congress should respond to gas costs, 'foreclosure tax'](#)

I also don't have to tell you what gasoline prices have done to our families' budgets. Earlier this summer, prices climbed to \$3.25 per gallon and higher. For most of us who live in rural areas, we have no choice but to pay those prices if we want to continue to get to work and pick up our kids from school.

That is why I announced my plan to introduce the Rural Commuters Tax Relief Act of 2007. This legislation could not be simpler: If your household makes less than the national median income, you drive more than 30 miles to work and you work at least four days per week, then you receive a \$100 tax credit for each month that the average price of gas is more than \$3 per gallon.

[Canada: Drop speeds to 100 km/h](#)

IF MOTORISTS were serious about conserving gas, they'd ease up on the gas pedal. If the province were equally serious about conservation, it would crack down on drivers who don't.

[Nigeria: Energy crisis reduces Dunlop's production capacity by 20%](#)

The lingering epileptic energy supplies in the country has had a toll on Dunlop Nigeria Plc reducing its production and sales capacity by 20 per cent in the first half of 2007.

Chairman of the tyre manufacturing company, Mr. Jabez Lawuyi, who stated this at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos on Tuesday, explained that the management of the firm had to switch to natural gas in the last five years, as an alternative, to power its facilities due to the poor electricity supply. But he regretted that even the switch to natural gas did not prove a better alternative as supplies were to be disrupted due to the crisis in the Niger Delta.

[PetroChina to Buy Up to A\\$60 Billion of Australia LNG](#)

PetroChina Co. agreed to buy as much as A\$60 billion (\$49 billion) of Australian liquefied natural gas in two accords signed this week, as China's demand for the fuel forces it to accept prices that have tripled in five years.

[Kerosene subsidies and price controls 'weigh on LPG lustre'](#)

As economic growth, high demand, and increasing wealth fuel domestic use of liquefied petroleum gas in China and India, kerosene subsidies in the Asian region make LPG uncompetitive, an energy expert has said.

Jason Feer, vice-president and general manager (Argus Media) said though LPG demand was rising in many regions of the world, subsidies continued to distort markets.

[Exxon, Sinopec, Aramco complete \\$4 bln financing for China JV](#)

A refining and petrochemical joint venture between Exxon Mobil Corp., Saudi Arabian Oil Co. and China Petroleum & Chemical Corp., known as Sinopec, said Thursday it has raised around CNY30 billion (\$4 billion) in funding.

[Biodiesel Industry Takes Off in Argentina](#)

Argentina's oil crushing industry is the most efficient in the world. It has a crushing capacity of 160,000 metric tons per day and exports over 90 percent of its production. Thanks to that, the country's biodiesel industry is beginning to take off.

[Jeremy Leggett: Kings of the coal habit](#)

THROUGH his long years of greenhouse denial, George Bush must have been particularly grateful to John Howard. The Australian prime minister was quick to join Bush in refusing to ratify the Kyoto protocol, and has batted for his country's coal interests as trenchantly as Bush has batted for US coal and oil interests.

Now Bush has had to deal with the impact on American public opinion of Hurricane Katrina and Al Gore's movie, and can no longer afford to ignore climate change. Howard, contending with a killer drought, is similarly finding that greenhouse denial is out of bounds. The flow of Australian rivers has fallen by a staggering 70 per cent in recent decades. All Australia's major cities are in drought. The "big dry" in the Murray-Darling basin threatens 40 per cent of food production. Global warming has become an issue in the January elections.

[Peak Oil Crisis: Minimum Operating Levels Redux](#)

Gasoline prices are temporarily lost in the angst of the credit crisis. But this too will end. Sometime in the next few months, some event is likely to set off a spike in gasoline prices. Be it a hurricane, terrorist attack, adverse geopolitical crisis or some credit crisis development, the realization will dawn that we are extremely short of gasoline and have

little hope of remedying the situation over the short term. Then the troubles will begin.

Don't overlook the possibility that someday soon there will be a run on the gas stations. A tank of gas is so important in America today that at the first reports of an impending gasoline shortage many of us will rush to fill our tanks. If we all did this at once, the national reserve would be drained by something on the order of 50 million barrels. A lot of us are sure to be disappointed because there simply is not enough gasoline in the system for this to happen.

[Don't blow it APEC, habitable planets are hard to find](#)

As APEC meets, the good ship "humanity" is steaming into the teeth of a hurricane with our leaders asleep at the wheel, as the great global issues of climate change and the peaking of oil supply converge.

[We must apply the brakes on unrestrained growth](#)

Perpetual growth is clearly unsustainable, but so far no one is prepared to float the idea of a no-growth economy. Are we one human race? Or are we greedy nations doomed to fight for the survival of our own standard of living at the expense of billions of the less fortunate in the developing world?

[Villagers urged to use less fossil fuels](#)

RESIDENTS in Wrington are being urged to become more self-sufficient rather than relying on fossil fuels.

Three events have been held in the village to educate people on the possibility of the world's oil resources depleting and the difficulties that could result.

[For heat's victims, a quiet death](#)

"A lot of these people, the elderly especially. . . they've lived here all their lives and they don't think the heat's going to bother them," Imperial County Deputy Coroner Henry Proo said.

"When your electricity costs as much as your food does, and that's the only amount of money you have coming in, a lot of people around here choose to eat rather than to stay cool," he said.

[UK: Urban Green Fair 9th September](#)

The Urban Green Fair aims to highlight the imminent arrival of peak oil and the opinion of many climatologists that we have 8-10 years to drop our CO₂ emissions by 60% or go over the 20C tipping point, which in turn will lead to runaway temperature increases of 3,4,5oC and risk the collapse of our the neo-liberal economic model.

[Place Matters](#)

Where you live says a lot about how you'll live. That's why more and more young people are settling in or near downtowns like Ann Arbor's – choosing their lifestyle first, then finding a job that will support it.

[Oil price above 76 dollars in New York](#)

The price of New York oil jumped above 76 dollars a barrel on Thursday, with some analysts warning that prices could be heading to new highs.

..."I think oil prices are going to retest recent record highs," Bank of Ireland analyst Paul Harris said Thursday.

..."You've got (US) stock figures out this afternoon which are going to show stocks fell further and reports from independent weather forecasters that they think the hurricane season will intensify," added Harris.

[OPEC president says no shortage of oil](#)

The oil market is well balanced and there is no shortage of crude, OPEC's president said on Thursday, ahead of a meeting of the producer group next week that is expected to maintain supply curbs.

[Kuwaiti heavy oil sales suspended](#)

Kuwait's heavy oil sales had been stopped for three months now due to the laxity of KOC's marketing officials. Informed sources noted that over two million barrels of heavy crude oil had been loaded into vessels and tankers, which in turn, had been docked in Kuwaiti ports waiting to be sold.

The sources added that Kuwait had no proper ports to export this kind of oil due to its hazardous nature. "The only way to export it was through Saudi Arabia by CHEVRON Co.," explained the sources noting that the latter had unexpectedly canceled its contract one year earlier than its expiry date.

[Germany set to buy more coal from South Africa](#)

Germany's plans to phase out nuclear power plants and shut coal mines will increase its dependence on coal from South Africa, the head of a coal trading firm said on Wednesday.

[In France, energy control becomes patriotic](#)

The battlefield is almost ready for the French President's first collision with Brussels, and Nicolas Sarkozy has prepared his artillery to deliver the first barrage. The weaponry is impressive: a €90-billion (\$129-billion) cannon made of the merger of two massive utilities, Gaz de France and Suez. Alongside it, an older but even more impressive gun, Électricité de France, and still in the development stage is Areva, the nuclear power engineering firm.

[In the name of Oil](#)

From the myriad of evils that the Middle East has come to know, no other entity has ever been such a vice, such a tool for the disenfranchisement and vitiation of such an eclectic group of peoples as the curse that is oil.

[Orangutans squeezed by biofuel boom](#)

Naingolan shunts the excavator into high gear and tears into a patch of smoldering forest on Borneo island, clearing the way for yet another palm oil plantation that Indonesia hopes will tap into a surge in global demand for biofuels.

Despite government claims pristine jungles are escaping the effects of the “green solution” to the energy crunch, the boom is threatening the survival of animals like the endangered orangutan and turning the country into a major global warming contributor, environmentalists say.

['Miserable' without electricity](#)

Things looked dark Tuesday for Raymond Fitzgerald. And he was powerless to do anything about it.

"I've called the Department of Water and Power and they say they're doing everything they can. But you'd think after three days they'd have the electricity fixed," said the Los Angeles resident as he checked the ice level in the picnic coolers on his backyard patio.

[Carmakers switching to electric motors](#)

Beneath your car's hood, there are belts hooked to the engine, running the power steering, air conditioning and other items that drag on the engine and cut gas mileage. But as fuel efficiency becomes paramount with high gas prices and pending government regulations, automakers across the world are trying to get rid of as many belts as they can, switching them to electric motors.

[Protests as BBC scraps planned green day](#)

Peter Barron, editor of the corporation's flagship news television programme "Newsnight", said last week it was "not the corporation's job to save the planet" and called for "Planet Relief" to be scrapped.

[APEC rift opens over climate change debate](#)

Leaders at an Asia-Pacific summit appeared deadlocked on Thursday over what their "Sydney Declaration" on climate change and cutting greenhouse gas emissions should say.

China's President Hu Jintao gave only qualified support to Australia's initiative on climate change, while some developing nations criticized Australian and U.S. moves to put climate change at the top of the agenda of the APEC gathering in Sydney.

[Global warming may pose threat to heart](#)

Global warming may be melting glaciers and forcing polar bears onto land, but doctors warn it could also affect your heart.

"If it really is a few degrees warmer in the next 50 years, we could definitely have more cardiovascular disease," said Dr. Karin Schenck-Gustafsson, of the department of cardiology at Sweden's Karolinska Institute.



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