



DrumBeat: September 21, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on September 21, 2007 - 9:02am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[The Interview: Dr. James Hansen](#) (audio)

Scientist James Hansen has devoted his life to researching climate change.

Over the past 30 years he has repeatedly clashed with American administrations over the action needed to address the problem.

Now, as director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies at NASA, he still feels his message is the most important of our time.

"We have now reached a point where if we don't get on a different course very soon, the planet is in big trouble."

[The war is about oil but it's not that simple](#)

Why are former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan's comments that the Iraq war is "largely about oil" raising eyebrows? Of course the war is about oil – much of our involvement in the Middle East is about oil, while the rest is about Israel and Iraq has posed a threat to both.

That said, let's define "about oil": It is not about seizing Iraq's oilfields. If that was the case, we should have seized Saudi Arabia's and Kuwait's oilfields while we had over half a million troops there in 1991. We could have stayed in oil-rich southern Iraq as well. That was not the policy then, and it is not the policy now.

[Petrologistics: OPEC oil output rises in Sept](#)

OPEC oil output excluding Iraq and Angola is expected to rise in September, led by higher supply from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Nigeria, a consultant said on Friday.

OPEC's 10 members subject to output limits, all except Iraq and Angola, are set to pump 27 million barrels per day, up from a revised 26.9 million bpd in August, said Conrad Gerber of Petrologistics, which tracks tanker shipments.

The estimate indicates that OPEC may be relaxing adherence to supply curbs in response to a jump in oil prices, which hit a record high on Thursday. The group on Sept. 11 formally agreed to lift production from Nov. 1.

"It is creeping up," Gerber told Reuters. "There's a bit more from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Nigeria. Also, Iraq is having a good month."

[To go green, live closer to work, report says](#)

Don't want to fork out for a Prius? Can't see tanking up with ethanol? Can't afford solar panels for your roof?

Not to worry, you can still do something to fight global warming: Live closer to work.

[South Africa: Fuel Supply High and dry](#)

SA's fuel supply infrastructure is on a knife edge. Refineries around the country are working flat out but can no longer satisfy demand. Imports are growing but the ports can't handle the rising volumes indefinitely. The pipeline carrying fuel inland is running at capacity. The growing number of trucks on the roads is not safe, cost-efficient or environmentally desirable.

[The Green-Car Domino Effect](#)

In 2001, when hybrids were barely on the radar screen, Dave Vieau cofounded A123Systems in Watertown, Massachusetts, to build lithium-ion batteries, which can store and deliver more energy than traditional batteries. The first application was in power tools. "But at the end of 2002, we saw hybrids as an opportunity that could be interesting," he says. A123Systems has raised \$102 million in venture capital, and about half its 800 employees are working on hybrid-related projects. "We can improve the energy density, accelerate more quickly, and all without taking up too much space." Translation: a 45-mile-per-gallon hybrid can now get as much as 125 miles per gallon. Today, about three dozen vehicles equipped with A123Systems cells are prowling the cul-de-sacs of chichi suburbs.

[Barclays Capital ups oil forecast to \\$77 for 2008](#)

Barclays Capital has raised its U.S. oil price forecast for 2008 to \$77 a barrel, up \$3.10 from its previous forecast after a rally in prices this week to record highs above \$82. The bank, which also raised its 2007 forecast for U.S. crude by \$2.50 to \$68.80 a barrel, cited a tighter U.S. oil inventory picture and worries re-emerging over OPEC producer Iran's nuclear dispute with the West.

[The Fate of Currencies Pegged to the Dollar](#)

A simple mathematical operation done from the day these countries tied their currencies to the US dollars, will show the extent to which their national currencies were victimized by the "monster currency" over the course of 25 years and how much it has fallen along with it; to the extent that all the oil revenues that are surplus to the needs of the producing and exporting countries, has not exceeded, in buying power, what its levels were since that date, with the exception of what was achieved by increasing the quantity.

[Coal delivery to Europe on the rise](#)

Coal for delivery to Europe next year rose to a record for a fourth consecutive day as power producers sought to expand stockpiles before the winter and rail and port bottlenecks constrained supply.

[Asia LNG imports expected to surge](#)

Asia's imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) may increase by 85 percent to 63 million tonnes (69 Million tons) by 2012, up from 34 million tonnes (37 million tons) in 2006, along with an increase in demand from the Chinese and Indian markets, Chinese officials told reporters during a conference held in Beijing.

[Have oilsands lost their lustre?](#)

Dennis Gartman says he's not bearish on Canada, he is just moving to the sidelines for now thanks to the possibility that Alberta will raise taxes on the oil industry.

[Peak Moment: Post Carbon Cities - Planning for Energy and Climate Uncertainty](#) (audio and video)

Smart municipalities are planning and preparing for energy vulnerability and climate change. Daniel Lerch, manager of the Post Carbon Cities project, has prepared a guidebook including case studies of cities large and small planning how to maintain essential services in the face of energy and climate uncertainty.

[Sunny Outlook: Can Sunshine Provide All U.S. Electricity?](#)

Large amounts of solar-thermal electric supply may become a reality if steam storage technology works—and new transmission infrastructure is built.

[State regulators propose developing energy self-sufficiency by 2020](#)

All new housing developments in California should be so energy-efficient by the year 2020 that they could produce all the power they need on their own, state regulators proposed Monday.

[Iceland phasing out fossil fuels for clean energy](#)

Once Iceland's vehicles are converted over to hydrogen, the fishing fleet will follow. It won't be easy because of current technological limits and the high cost of storing large amounts of hydrogen, but Arnason feels confident it can happen. He predicts Iceland will be fossil fuel free by 2050.

[New Yorkers turning to biodiesel for heat](#)

Mr. Seiden's building joins an increasing number of New York buildings – perhaps numbering in the thousands by this winter – that are turning to biodiesel for heating. Starting next year, the city itself has plans to use a biodiesel blend to heat city-owned buildings. This marks a potential new role for the cleaner-burning fuel, which is currently used mainly as a blend with traditional diesel to cut emissions from trucks. If it helps New York clean up its air – third worst in the nation in terms of airborne particulate matter – other cities such as Boston and Philadelphia may shift over as well, experts say.

[Canada: Wind vs. Water in Giant Dam Dispute](#)

A controversial hydroelectricity expansion project in Quebec has drawn sharp criticism from aboriginal and environmental organisations on both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border.

Hydro Quebec's main purpose for diverting the Rupert River in Northern Quebec is for hydro production in order to sell power to the northeastern United States.

[Scramble for Resources Driving Sudan Conflicts](#)

The new assessment of the country, including the troubled region of Darfur, indicates that among the root causes of decades of social strife and conflict are the rapidly eroding environmental conditions in several parts of the country.

[Analysis: Oil pollution in the Caspian](#)

The Caspian is the world's most easily accessible major oil region yet to be fully developed. Both Western nations and former Soviet republics are rushing to exploit its vast hydrocarbon wealth.

Environmental issues are increasingly moving to the forefront of this exploitation. While nations bordering the Caspian piously insist that environmental worries top their list of concerns, cynics maintain that environmental issues are a facade for the nations to rewrite what they have come to regard as increasingly exploitative production-sharing agreements signed in the heady days following the implosion of the Soviet empire. The truth is probably somewhere in between.

[Drivers test paying by mile instead of gas tax](#)

The nation is reassessing the way it pays for roads and transit. Since 1956, the Highway Trust Fund, financed by the federal tax on gasoline, has been a primary source of money for highway projects. But the National Governors Association and other groups and planners involved in road building have concluded that this method, supplemented by state gasoline taxes, no longer is adequate.

Americans are driving cars that get better mileage, and more are driving vehicles that use fuels taxed at lower rates than gasoline, such as ethanol, or making their own fuel and not being taxed. That means gas tax revenue isn't growing nearly as fast as the number of miles driven.

[Hurricane Dean affects Mexican oil, natural gas production](#)

Hurricane Dean has affected productivity in the oil fields of Mexico's state oil company (Pemex) in the Gulf of Mexico and in Campeche Sound, with a reduction of 10.8 million barrels of crude oil and 10.30 million cubic feet of natural gas.

[Nepal: Black marketeering rife amid fuel crisis](#)

Government apathy to the need to adjust prices has triggered a black market in petrol, the most scarce product these days, forcing consumers to pay as much Rs 150 per liter.

[Design of New Oil Refinery Plant for Azerbaijan in Turkey Launched](#)

Turkey is presently experiencing a shortage of oil refining facilities. According to various data, cited by the source, today, Turkey's needs in oil reaches 32mln tons per year.

The 5 oil refineries presently operational in Turkey may produce up to 26.5mln tons of oil product, and the country has to rely on importing the rest of the 6 -7mln tons of oil products, buying oil refined products from Russian or Italian companies. According to predictions, by 2010, Turkey's oil dependency will increase to 34mln tons and up to

43mln tons by 2012.

[Police: Ammunition Costs More, Shipments Delayed](#)

Another employee at Pruett's shop, Barry Warren, said the increased cost of fuel is also playing a factor.

Leal said its supplier offered to give the Bellaire Police Department a discount if it collected the spent casings from rounds and sent them back, a sign of the shortage of metals like brass, copper and steel.

[Siemens gets large offshore UK wind turbine deal](#)

Siemens said in a statement the deal -- the largest ever for offshore wind turbines -- was for 140 Siemens 3.6 megawatts turbines for delivery in 2009 and 2010.

[Canada: Energy CEOs call for national policy](#)

In Alberta's oil patch, the words "national energy program" are usually uttered as a curse, a reference to the ill-fated 1980s program of oil nationalization and price controls.

But in a possible sign of changing times, several senior Canadian energy executives have used a gathering in London this week to make an unprecedented call for an increased federal role in their industry -- some even daring to call for Ottawa to develop a comprehensive national energy policy.

[Kurt Cobb: The Trouble with Predictions](#)

The trouble with predictions is that they are mostly wrong. But is there a way that forecasting can be used to help us confront climate change, world peak oil production, and other critical environmental policy issues?

[Two barrels of oil are used for each one found. \\$100 oil anyone?](#)

The economists said - and still say - there is no shortage of oil; there is just a shortage of oil at low prices. If the price, say, doubles, the reserves will rise accordingly (though not necessarily on a 1-to-1 ratio). Higher prices means expensive reserves, like Alberta's oil sands, can be commercially produced. Higher prices finance fatter exploration budgets and better oil extraction technology, and lure more talented geologists into the business.

They were right. But maybe the time has come to stop putting so much faith in the economists. As Toronto's Pollitt & Co. said in an investment note this week: "Just because OPEC [the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries] raised output quotas doesn't mean oil wells will respond."

[World oil prices surge in record-breaking week](#)

The price of London Brent oil hit another all-time high Friday on US storm concerns at the end of a record-breaking week which saw New York crude soar beyond 84 dollars per barrel.

The price of Brent North Sea crude for November delivery surged as high as 79.35 dollars per barrel, beating Thursday's record on fears a storm could threaten energy facilities in the US Gulf Coast.

[Venezuela's Chavez urges Brazil to offset US ties](#)

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez urged Brazil on Thursday to accelerate trade and energy integration with his country to help counterbalance U.S. interests in the region.

[Shell, Saudi venture to build top U.S. refinery](#)

Royal Dutch Shell and Saudi Aramco on Friday said they would go ahead with a \$7 billion expansion of the Port Arthur, Tex. refinery that would create the largest U.S. refinery and one of the biggest worldwide.

[The button to hit is 'Start,' not 'Panic'](#)

Don't count me among the "peak oil" theorists who believe that world oil production will reach its ultimate zenith any day now. My guess is that is more likely to happen 25 or more years from now. Nevertheless, we shouldn't be wasting the precious black gold, especially because higher consumption increases air pollution and, most climate scientists believe, contributes to global warming.

So what should we do to diversify our energy supplies, pollute less, reduce our reliance on foreign oil and buy more time before "peak oil" becomes reality?

[Cape Wind Commentary: Rounding up the usual suspects](#)

When the Cape Wind proposal came to light in the fall of 2001, almost everyone in the

Massachusetts political establishment reacted as though the turbines themselves were radioactive. Democrats and Republicans alike backpedaled from this ambitious scheme and dove for cover faster than you can say Senator Larry Craig.

[Unimaginable technologies are coming our way](#)

People in the field of economics often make the mistake of projecting certain prices and trends years into the future, but by assuming that the technology will not change.

Generally speaking, those types of prediction can be guaranteed to be the ones that are wrong. Technology will change to such a degree that any commodity price prediction something like five years into the future, I would suspect, is probably less than 25% probable – like this peak oil thing. I read an article in the press, which predicted a world peak in oil production in the next few years, but I am sure that it ignored all the Canadian oil sands.

[Reid cites other states that are turning away from coal](#)

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., on Friday advanced a new argument in his campaign to block development of conventional coal-burning power plants in Nevada, citing reports that coal-fired plants are being canceled and curtailed in seven other states.

[CO2 flooding could yield 2mb/d - eventually](#) (podcast)

For a senior oilman Gareth Roberts holds some fairly unusual views: peak oil is coming soon; crude oil is too precious to burn as transport fuel; and Big Oil should be investing massively in alternative energy.

But then Roberts is the CEO of Denbury Resources, a rare example of an oil company whose strategy is driven by an explicit recognition of peak oil.

[British sea power](#)

THE British have always looked to the sea to protect them from the earth's dangers. The ocean is a handy deterrent to foreign armies, but it is useful for other things too. In the midst of the energy crisis of the 1970s, there was much talk that marine energy would let its possessors break free of OPEC. With the arrival of North Sea oil, marine energy was forgotten. But 35 years later, with North Sea oil in decline, climate change a big issue and wind farms facing lengthy planning delays, sea power is back on the agenda.

[AlgaeLink launches 2nd generation biofuel equipment at Biodiesel-Expo](#)

AlgaeLink, a subsidiary of the Dutch firm Bioking, will unveil its photo-bioreactors for algae-for-biodiesel production at the UK Biodiesel-Expo and Biofuels Conference, giving the UK its first demonstration of a second-generation biofuel that the conference organizer says “is already getting the bosses at Boeing excited”.

[Britain has plutonium for 17,000 Nagasaki bombs](#)

Britain has amassed a stockpile of more than 100 metric tons of plutonium -- enough for 17,000 bombs of the size that flattened Japan's Nagasaki in 1945, a report from the country's top science institution said on Friday.

The toxic stockpile, which has doubled in the last decade, comes mainly from reprocessing of spent uranium fuel from the country's nuclear power plants, so to stop it growing the practice must end, the Royal Society said.

[Developing nation splits may hinder climate talks](#)

Talks on global warming in the United States next week may be complicated by differences among developing countries as their climate policy positions diverge.

[Virginia Joins the Battle](#)

A NUMBER of states have woken up to the fact that Godot himself might show up and establish residency before the federal government gets around to limiting greenhouse gas emissions. California, Florida and a group of Northeastern and mid-Atlantic states, among others, have set very or fairly aggressive targets to reduce planet-warming pollutants. Now Virginia is starting to move cautiously in the same direction. It should be commended and encouraged to do even more.

[New Zealand announces major scheme to tackle climate change](#)

The New Zealand government said Thursday it would gradually introduce emissions trading from next year to tackle climate change.

Under the scheme, major industries will be allocated a cap on emissions of greenhouse gases. To exceed the cap, polluters will have to buy credits from others who are below their limits or from those planting forests, which absorb carbon dioxide.

[Arctic ice ebbs to record level: scientists](#)

Arctic sea ice melted to its lowest level ever this week, shattering a record set in 2005 and continuing a trend spurred by human-caused global warming, scientists said on Thursday.

"It's the biggest drop from a previous record that we've ever had and it's really quite astounding," said Walt Meier, a research scientist at the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center in Colorado.

[Weather forecasting needs huge boost to tackle climate change](#)

The UN's meteorological agency on Friday called for a multibillion dollar boost for weather forecasting, warning that about 30 percent of economic wealth was directly exposed to the impact of global warming.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).