



DrumBeat: October 6, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on October 6, 2007 - 9:22am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Lester R. Brown: The Nature Of The New World](#)

If recent environmental trends continue, the global economy eventually will come crashing down. It is not knowledge that we lack. At issue is whether national governments can stabilize population and restructure the economy before time runs out.

[Brownback on the Record](#)

"America is on the verge of an energy crisis," Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) warns on his presidential campaign website, blaming "years of neglect and shortsighted domestic policies."

His solution? Incentivize the marketplace to develop more nuclear power, more renewables, plug-in hybrids, better biofuels, and other homegrown energy sources and technologies. Brownback has been a big advocate of ethanol and other biofuels throughout the decade he's spent representing Kansas in the U.S. Senate -- no surprise, considering that he hails from the heartland.

[ANALYSIS-Russian gas pipeline more likely than EU's Nabucco](#)

A major Kremlin-backed gas pipeline may have a better chance of supplying Europe with new gas than the much-touted EU-backed Nabucco project, designed to ease the bloc's dependence on Russia, analysts say.

Although both projects are riddled with problems and may not move off the drawing board, the main question behind long-delayed Nabucco is whether it can secure enough Caspian and Middle East supplies to fill the pipe.

[Norway sees gas output jump in 2008, less oil](#)

Norway's gradual shift from oil to gas production will push up natural gas sales by 23 percent next year while oil output drops to levels last seen in the early 1990s, the

government's 2008 budget draft showed on Friday.

[Lithuanian energy summit to court Caspian oil](#)

The leaders of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Poland will try to revive a long-delayed plan to ship Caspian Sea crude to world markets bypassing Russia when they meet next week, a Lithuanian official said on Friday.

[High oil prices prompt move to drill in Falklands](#)

BHP Billiton's decision to drill at least two exploration wells in the Falkland Islands was just a matter of time as record oil prices reinvigorate interest in one of the world's least explored oil provinces.

[France can't ignore Iran energy deals-Iran minister](#)

Iran's oil minister on Saturday brushed aside calls by Paris for French firms to avoid Iranian energy deals, saying the world's fourth largest oil producer was too attractive for them to ignore, a news agency reported.

[Broken robots: technology reconsidered](#)

I might as well be honest - my iPod Mini is falling apart. The aluminum case has been banged up for a while now, and the battery life has been steadily declining. Recently the plastic panel on top came off, and I figured it might be time for an upgrade. But then I had second thoughts: if I shell out 200 bucks for a shiny black Nano, I won't just be buying an mp3 player. I'll also be buying the toxic chemicals used to make it, the cardboard used to package it, the oil used to ship it from China. Suddenly, keeping the old Mini around didn't seem so bad, after all.

[UN backs organic farming](#)

Nadia Scialabba, an FAO official, defined organic agriculture as: "A holistic production management system that avoids the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, and genetically modified organisms, minimises pollution of air, soil and water, and optimises the health and productivity of plants, animals and people."

[Automobile buyers fall for the small](#)

U.S. compact- and subcompact-car sales hit a record 2.7 million units in 2006, and experts expect even better results this year despite a broad auto-market slowdown.

“The things that have fueled (small-car sales) are really not going away: Gas prices, the housing market (and) the fashion aspect of these cars,” said Jesse Toprak of auto site Edmunds.com.

[College students thumbing rides online](#)

Virginia Tech freshman Amanda Thompson needed to get home for fall break this weekend. But before her journey started, she faced one hefty roadblock: finding a ride.

So Thompson, a communications major without a car on campus, did what all savvy college students do: She scoured Facebook for a ride. The social-networking site is filled with people looking to share fuel costs, which average about \$2.68 per gallon this week, according to AAA.

[Fuel's gold](#)

From road tax to parking and congestion charges, motorists face a whole range of new penalties based on the fuel consumption and carbon emissions of their cars, such that a single extra gramme of CO₂ could cost hundreds of pounds per year. But does anyone really believe the figures on which the charges are based?

[Little Debbie raises prices](#)

"Anything made with corn is more expensive now," Gloekler said.

But it's quite a leap to blame the Little Debbie price increase on higher corn costs, according to the National Corn Growers Association.

Things such as plastic packaging, made from petroleum, are more likely to be the culprit in some higher food prices, said Lou Malnassy, association spokesman.

[Steve Andrews on upcoming Houston ASPO conference](#)

Steve Andrews of ASPO-USA talks with GPM's Julian Darley at the 6th Annual International ASPO Conference in Cork, Ireland. Andrews recaps the peak oil events of the last year and discusses the upcoming 2007 Houston World Oil Conference, happening October 17-20, 2007.

Speakers at the 2007 Houston World Oil Conference include T. Boone Pickens, Matt Simmons, Henry Groppe, Chris Skrebowski, Roscoe Bartlett, Robert Hirsch, Roger Bezdek, David Hughes, Peter Tertzakian, Debbie Cook, Stuart Staniford and many more. For more information, visit the [ASPO USA website](#).

[Book Review: Peak Everything](#)

Heinberg sets the context of Peak Oil as being the fundamental issue of a time in which we will see many resources and conditions essential for modern society peak, including fish stocks, many essential metals, uranium, arable land and fresh water per capita. Heinberg links these all to the fundamental and issue of cheap fossil energy, but also invites us to consider what may not be peaking- including community, creativity, leisure time, happiness and beauty.

[Officials hope voters might favor gas tax boost to fight warming](#)

Regional officials are taking a close look at trying to increase the Bay Area's gasoline tax by as much as 10 cents a gallon and believe voters might agree to it as a way to help combat global warming, The Chronicle learned Thursday.

[Tim Flannery: we have to stop our emissions](#) (podcast)

Tim Flannery, one of Australia's top scientists and author of *The Weather Makers: The History and Future Impact of Climate Change* talks to Andi Hazelwood of Global Public Media about his suggested mitigations for climate change on the heels of the alarming new report from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Flannery also discusses Australia's drought and food crises, relocalization and Bjorn Lomborg's skeptical new book on global warming.

[China to raise coal output, open 'super' mines](#)

Energy-starved China will boost coal output by 400 million tonnes a year by 2010 by streamlining the industry and opening a string of new "super" pits, state media reported Friday.

[Dragonflies, open water reveal rapid Arctic change](#)

Changes to the environment and climate are usually imperceptible and are visible only when the increments build up over time and result in a trend. But in the summer of 2007, both anecdotal and quantifiable evidence emerged that showed dramatic changes are taking place in the Far North at a faster pace than anyone imagined.

[North Dakota: Diesel supplies low during peak use season](#)

Rosemary Patrick, whose family farms in the Wilton area, said they were surprised Tuesday when they went to fill up on diesel at the local station and were told the station was out.

Although the Patricks are done harvesting, they were getting ready to fertilize, which requires the use of a tractor. Which, of course, requires diesel.

[Governor: North Dakota to get diesel shipment](#)

A 2 million gallon shipment of diesel is due in North Dakota next week to help ease a shortage of the fuel in the state, Gov. John Hoeven said.

[Gas-price rise puzzles drivers, energy officials](#)

"I don't know where the market is going," said Tom Robinson, president of Robinson Oil. "With the easier winter specs coming, and since this is often a slower gas time, and heating oil demand hasn't started yet, prices should be softer, but they are going up. It's hard to know."

[Lincoln County Food Share faces shortage](#)

Why did this shortage take place?

Smith explained that USDA commodities have declined 52 percent in the past four years. Also, food-industry donations have decreased due to a strong consumer market, high commodity prices, increased bio-fuel demand, increased efficiency in food manufacturing and international markets draining both national and local sources.

[Asian Fuel Oil Rises to Record as Iran Cuts Exports](#)

Dubai crude jumped \$2.05 a barrel, or 2.8%, to \$74.60 a barrel, Bloomberg data showed. Iran has cut fuel oil exports to Fujairah, the Middle East's biggest bunkering port that sells around 700,000 metric tons a month, to as low as 180,000 tons in August from typical monthly shipments of around 300,000 tons, traders said.

The lack of supplies at Fujairah prompted traders to import fuel oil from Asia and Europe, pushing prices in those regions higher.

[Cabinet may decide on petrol prices after October 7](#)

: The Union Cabinet meeting next week is likely to take a decision on various options, including price revision, to bail out loss making oil firms, a top petroleum ministry official said on Saturday.

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[Philippines: Oil firms hike fuel, LPG prices once more](#)

or the third straight week, oil firms raised gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by P0.50 a liter and of liquefied petroleum gas by P1.12 per kilogram, all inclusive of the 12-percent value-added tax.

[Zambia: Motorists Abandon Work as Fuel Shortage Worsens](#)

THE acute fuel shortage that has hit the Copperbelt and various parts of the country yesterday worsened forcing some Ndola motorists to abandon their work spending long hours on queues in a bid to buy the commodity.

[Wanted: High-Octane Expertise](#)

It's a sort of vicious cycle: Crude oil costs more because it is becoming harder to find and produce. That powers up demand and prices for oil and gas field equipment and services, putting pressure on oil companies to lift crude prices.

The result: field services giant Schlumberger SLB finds itself in a light, sweet spot.

[Pemex Obtains \\$2.5 Billion Bank Credit at Lower Rate](#)

Petroleos Mexicanos, the Mexican state-owned oil monopoly, obtained a \$2.5 billion standby bank loan at a longer maturity and lower rate than two existing credit lines.

[Pemex, Nexen sign collaboration agreement](#)

Despite the fact they can't directly invest in Mexican oil and gas, foreign energy companies are nurturing good relations with Pemex in case there is a loosening of restrictions under conservative President Felipe Calderon who has pushed two key economic reforms through Congress in under a year.

Analysts see Pemex under pressure to develop deepwater operations in the Gulf of Mexico as yields decline at its main shallow water oil field Cantarell, but say it is hard pushed to do so alone.

[Gore discusses global warming in Mexico](#)

Global warming isn't a popular topic in Mexican political circles, but Al Gore traveled to Mexico on Thursday night for the second time in two months because he has found a receptive audience in President Felipe Calderón.

[Where Has All The Oil Gone?](#)

Since summer, one of North America's most important oil towns has witnessed a disappearing act.

The mammoth storage tanks that blanket the rolling grasslands around this remote prairie town had been filled to the brim with crude oil. They aren't anymore. Since May, millions of barrels of crude have been sold off, and Cushing's inventory has fallen by nearly 35%.

Oil traders around the globe obsess about inventory. Storage levels have fallen, not just in Cushing, but in other oil depots as well. Fearful that the U.S. cushion of spare fuel could hit a low by year-end, traders drove prices to a record of nearly \$84 a barrel last month. On Friday, oil closed at \$81.22 on the New York Mercantile Exchange, up 33% this year.

[Toward Zero and Beyond with Steven Strong](#)

Steven Strong says our two 800lb gorillas are obvious - Peak Oil and Climate Change. Peak oil is compounded by population growth, which Steven says is an inevitable "train wreck" which only a good "12-step program" can help us avoid. Our current "Mythical Cornucopian Energy Economy" would have environmentalists get out of the way so we can keep consuming the resources we obviously have and, are told we need. The effects of climate change are far reaching but can be summed up pretty easily in the mounting costs of natural disasters. During the 1990s insurance companies paid out \$439 Billion, more than the cumulative totals of all previous decades.

[Report from Nobel Conference - Heating Up: The Energy Debate](#)

I attended the two-day event, which delivered in its round-up of impressive energy and global warming experts: Nobel Laureate in Physics Dr. Stephen Chu, biofuels expert Dr. Lee Rybeck Lynd, peak oil expert Ken Deffeyes, economist Paul L. Joskow, polar explorer Will Steger, hydrogen expert Joan M. Ogden, and James Hansen, Director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

While at times the science got a bit thick, the message from all of the lecturers was clear: Global warming is urgent, we need to do something NOW, and many different solutions will get us there.

[China to invest in Chad refinery](#)

The Xinhua news agency reported CNPC, China's largest oil producer, and its wholly-owned subsidiary Engineering Ltd., have signed an agreement with the government of the landlocked oil-producing central African country to invest in a refinery north of the capital N'Djamena.

[Italy suspends BG's Brindisi LNG project](#)

The ministry said in a statement late on Friday it had agreed with the Economic Development Ministry to suspend the authorisation of BG's long-contested project until a study of the environmental impact of the terminal is completed.

[Greens warn oil transfers open to legal action](#)

UK Government ministers were today urged to act over controversial plans for ship-to-ship oil transfers in the Forth.

[Gulf currency revaluation risk could 'squeeze dollar further'](#)

The broadly declining dollar could come under further pressure should Gulf Arab states decide to revalue their currencies and remove pegs to the greenback, prompting a flight out of US assets by oil-rich Middle East countries.

Speculation about the dollar peg hogged the headlines in recent sessions after Saudi Arabia kept interest rates unchanged despite the Federal Reserve slashing benchmark rates by a half percentage point last month.

[Iran says OPEC may review oil cut after Nov](#)

Iran's oil minister said on Saturday OPEC could revise a decision to boost crude production from November if that increase pushed prices lower than was economical for producers, an Iranian news agency reported.

[It's not just Alberta, it's the whole country](#) (Review of *Stupid to the Last Drop*)

But let's begin with Marsden's intelligently quirky narrative on energy and destiny. The investigative reporter starts off with a curious yet true story about plans to nuke the tar

sands, the world's second-largest source of oil after Saudi Arabia. But separating tar from sand in the boreal forest has always been a messy job. The good folks at Richfield Oil and the Alberta government figured out that a couple of atomic warheads might speed up the process in the 1950s.

[EU Receives Assurances from Ukraine for End to Gas Row](#)

EU energy commissioner Andris Piebalgs said he has received assurances from Ukraine of a solution to Russia's dispute with Kiev over unpaid debt for gas supplies by Nov 1.

[Ukrainian gas to be transferred to Gazprom](#)

Natural gas to be transferred to Russia's Gazprom will count as \$600 million in credit against the more than \$1.3 billion debt owed by Ukraine, a report said.

The debt was incurred as companies working in Ukraine failed to pay Gazprom for natural gas stored in Ukrainian underground tanks, Ukrainian Fuel and Energy Minister Yuri Boiko said in a interview Saturday.

[Ecuador Unveils Plans to Extend Control Over Oil Industry](#)

Ecuador's government surprised private-sector oil companies late Thursday by unveiling dramatic plans to tighten its grip on the oil sector.

President Rafael Correa late Thursday signed an executive decree raising the state's share of oil revenues, while the country's top energy official said the government wants to take back full ownership of oil resources and production.

[Automakers to appeal emissions ruling](#)

Automakers on Friday said they would appeal a ruling by a federal judge in Vermont that said states could regulate greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.

The industry, represented by the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, has argued that federal law pre-empts state rules in the regulation of fuel economy standards and the technology cannot be developed to meet the tough standards pushed by California and others.

[Peak Oil Passnotes: Where Peak Oil Is Wrong](#)

For regular readers of this column, you will know we take a strong middle line on the subject of peak oil. We think it is like death: At some point it is going to arrive, rather unfortunately, and the consequences of it do not appear to be favourable. It is what we do before it arrives that makes the aftermath more bearable.

[South Korea eyes North Korea's oil](#)

Seoul has a keen interest in joint development of North Korea's oil fields. With the prospect of rich oil reserves and increased inter-Korean cooperation, the South proposed to launch joint oil and gas development projects at the the second inter-Korean summit, which took place from October 2 to 4. The North, however, seems to have little enthusiasm for the idea and the prospect could be further hindered by China, which already has a development deal with the North.

[BP to double fuel oil capacity in Singapore](#)

BP is doubling its fuel oil storage capacity in Singapore to about 600,000 cu m, to help keep its trading edge over rivals who are snapping at its heels, industry sources said yesterday.

[Heavy oil may soon prove profitable](#)

The Ugnu deposit presents technological and economic challenges, however. BP will test a technology called cold heavy oil production with sand, or CHOPS, that is being adapted from techniques used with similar heavy oil deposits in Canada, Suttles said.

[Water companies need to adapt to climate change: experts](#)

Water management companies will face huge challenges due to climate change and need to start adapting their strategies, experts warned in Amsterdam on Friday.

[World moves into the ecological red](#)

The world moved into 'ecological overdraft' on Saturday, the point at which human consumption exceeds the ability of the earth to sustain it in any year and goes into the red, the New Economics Foundation think-tank said.

Ecological Debt Day this year is three days earlier than in 2006 which itself was three days earlier than in 2005. NEF said the date had moved steadily backwards every year since humanity began living beyond its environmental means in the 1980s.



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