



DrumBeat: October 21, 2007

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Rising seas threaten 21 mega-cities](#)

Of the 33 cities predicted to have at least 8 million people by 2015, at least 21 are highly vulnerable, says the Worldwatch Institute.

They include Dhaka, Bangladesh; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Shanghai and Tianjin in China; Alexandria and Cairo in Egypt; Mumbai and Kolkata in India; Jakarta, Indonesia; Tokyo and Osaka-Kobe in Japan; Lagos, Nigeria; Karachi, Pakistan; Bangkok, Thailand, and New York and Los Angeles in the United States, according to studies by the United Nations and others.

[Are oil prices at their highest?](#)

Pinpointing the all-time inflation-adjusted record for oil prices is nowhere near as exact as it might seem.

[Save the Planet: Vote Smart](#)

People often ask: I want to get greener, what should I do? New light bulbs? A hybrid? A solar roof? Well, all of those things are helpful. But actually, the greenest thing you can do is this: Choose the right leaders. It is so much more important to change your leaders than change your light bulbs.

[Pennsylvania: Drilling swells](#)

Over the past few years, drilling crews have been lighting up the skies with towering rigs used to drill for natural gas.

[Pipeline Attack in Northern Iraq](#)

In the latest bout of violence around the northern oil city of Kirkuk, insurgents blew up

an oil pipeline, battled a convoy carrying bodyguards of a deputy prime minister and ambushed a police chief, Iraqi officials said on Friday.

[Iran's top nuclear negotiator quits](#)

Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, viewed by the West as a moderating influence in Tehran, resigned ahead of crucial talks with Europe this week over Iran's nuclear program, signaling that officials here may have closed the door to any possible negotiated settlement in its standoff with the West.

[One World, Taking Risks Together](#)

The breadth and complexity of today's global markets create risks so great that no group of business leaders — or even a single country — can control them.

[World Bank Report Puts Agriculture at Core of Antipoverty Effort](#)

For the first time in a quarter century, the World Bank's flagship annual report on development puts agriculture and the productivity of small farmers at the heart of a global agenda to reduce poverty. Three-quarters of the world's poor still live in the countryside.

[Jordan's Budget deficit likely to exceed JD800 million - experts](#)

Rising international oil prices are likely to widen the state budget deficit, which analysts expect to reach JD800-JD900 million.

The crude oil prices have hit a record level above \$90 per barrel. As a result, the budget deficit would increase by JD4 million each day until the end of the year, economist Fahed Fanek said yesterday.

[A gaze into the future: Officials offer their forecasts for gasoline, natural gas and electricity bills this winter](#)

Some expenses are easy to cut from the budget.

The weeklong family vacations. The extra trips to the movie theater. The weekend dinners in town.

But one expense is a lot harder to dodge.

Energy prices.

[Mishkin Says Inflation Minus Food, Energy Is a `Better Guide'](#)

Federal Reserve Governor Frederic Mishkin said inflation measures that exclude food and energy costs are a ``better guide" to underlying changes in prices.

[Heating oil aid program in trouble](#)

The Independent Connecticut Petroleum Association is recommending its 530 members refuse to participate in CEAP. Oil dealers must sign a contract to receive payments, but the payments are made at a discount. ICPA wants CEAP to pay retail.

[Higher metal prices make theft attractive](#)

Thieves have stolen ground wires from 5,000 to 10,000 utility poles throughout the state owned by electric utility Westar Energy. Westar corporate spokeswoman Karla Olson said it costs about \$100 a pole to replace the wires.

"We are now replacing ground wires with steel wire coated with copper, which won't bring as much in a salvage yard," she said. "We're hoping that discourages thieves."

[Grain prices take their toll on businesses](#)

Base malts, used to make many of the beers at the pub, have gone up 50 percent. Specialty malts, for finer brews, are up nearly 100 percent.

"This is a worldwide crisis," said Wilson, who recently was hired to take over beer-making at the brewery.

[Del. could learn from N.Y.'s ill wind](#)

With some of the highest electricity rates in the country, wall-to-wall sprawl and congestion on the roads and in the air, Long Island appeared the ideal candidate for an offshore wind farm.

...But re-estimates put construction costs at four times the original price. The power authority's new chief, Kevin Law, said the project is likely to be shelved as his organization considers more affordable renewable-energy projects.

[Delaware: Offshore windfarm numbers might not add up](#)

The developer of the proposed Delaware offshore wind farm says it can beat the costly prices that plagued a Long Island wind farm.

But a Long Island man who has crunched offshore wind farm numbers says it's unclear from Bluewater's financial documents how it intends to accomplish that and remain financially viable.

[New fuel to avoid energy doomsday](#)

Rep. Judy Biggert, a Hinsdale Republican whose congressional district encompasses portions of DuPage and Will counties, got an amendment to legislation approved that would expand research into hydrogen as an energy source. It specifically seeks to expand hydrogen storage options, which Biggert is convinced holds promise after talking with scientists at Argonne National Laboratory near Lemont.

[Ethanol industry growing up](#)

Ethanol producers and industry regulators say the growing pains are ending as the ethanol industry matures and new technology is allowing existing plants to reach peak production levels.

[House passes resolution to increase nation's renewable fuel supply](#)

This past week, the House of Representatives passed a resolution setting a goal of expanding the country's domestic renewable fuel production to 25 percent of its energy supply by 2005.

But with global oil prices nearing \$90 per barrel, a meat industry coalition is looking to get the government out of the renewable fuel industry.

[State considers lifting ban to extract farm's uranium mother lode](#)

As much as 110 million pounds of uranium ore could lie beneath these gentle hills where cattle now graze and tobacco once reigned. The value of this radioactive deposit, based on current market prices: about \$10 billion.

[Uranium worth a fight, Niger nomads say](#)

In the arid moonscape of northern Niger, the light-skinned Tuareg nomads have

launched a fresh rebellion.

...Last year, Niger mined 3,500 tons of uranium, making it one of the world's top producers of the nuclear fuel, and, with global demand and prices rising, the Tuareg find the proceeds worth fighting for.

[Why cities embrace light rail](#)

Fusillades of claims and counter-claims are flying in Charlotte's debate over funding its transit system. "I'm swimming in numbers," as The Observer's Mary Schulken complained in a recent column.

While "numbers games" are being used to sow confusion, establishing truth often depends on numerical data, such as this.

[Insight's resale value a bad sign for hybrids?](#)

The original hybrid gas-electric car, the Honda Insight, is about to have a senior moment that could show us what the future holds for the fleet of hybrids that followed the revolutionary little car onto the road.

[Nitrogen: pricey way to keep tires pumped](#)

The thinking is that nitrogen, which makes up 78 percent of the atmosphere (21 percent is oxygen and 1 percent is other stuff), has larger molecules, which prevents it from seeping out of the tire as quickly as air and thereby maintains stable pressure.

Tires filled with regular air tend to fluctuate in pressure level -- increasing during hot summer months and decreasing during the cold season.

[The Future Is Drying Up](#)

Scientists sometimes refer to the effect a hotter world will have on this country's fresh water as the *other* water problem, because global warming more commonly evokes the specter of rising oceans submerging our great coastal cities. By comparison, the steady decrease in mountain snowpack — the loss of the deep accumulation of high-altitude winter snow that melts each spring to provide the American West with most of its water — seems to be a more modest worry. But not all researchers agree with this ranking of dangers.

[Fight Against Coal Plants Draws Diverse Partners](#)

Environmental groups that have long opposed new power plants are being joined by ranchers, farmers, retired homeowners, ski resort operators and even religious groups.

[New Coast Guard Task in Arctic's Warming Seas](#)

For most of human history, the Arctic Ocean has been an ice-locked frontier. But now, in one of the most concrete signs of the effect of a warming climate on government operations, the Coast Guard is planning its first operating base there as a way of dealing with the cruise ships and the tankers that are already beginning to ply Arctic waters.

[Deforest Your Mailbox](#)

Catalog Choice, which does not charge a fee, helps retailers “to maintain a ‘clean’ list so that they are not mailing to people who don’t want their catalogs,” said Kate Sinding, a senior lawyer for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

[How Green Is My Garden?](#)

IF the government wants to reduce its dependency on imported oil and, in the words of the Department of Energy, “foster the domestic biomass industry,” it has only to stop by my backyard with a pickup. The place is an unlikely but active biomass production center — especially at this season with countless autumn leaves eddying in every nook and cranny — and I’ll happily donate my production to the cause.

[Criminal Element](#)

Reyes found that the rise and fall of lead-exposure rates seemed to match the arc of violent crime, but with a 20-year lag — just long enough for children exposed to the highest levels of lead in 1973 to reach their most violence-prone years in the early '90s, when crime rates hit their peak.

[New Zealand: The fossil fools](#)

Business lobby groups are blowing their last vestige of credibility in their flat-earth rejection of the government's energy and climate change policies.

[New Zealand: Govt energy strategy to change landscape](#)

The Government's attempt to wean the country from fossil fuels, part of its strategy to cut greenhouse gasses, will change the landscape in more ways than just putting legions

of wind turbines on the horizon.

[Higher emissions from coal and gas power stations threaten pollution targets](#)

POLLUTION FROM Scotland's major coal and gas-fired power stations shot up last year, threatening to wreck the Scottish government's plans to combat climate change.

[The heat or eat dilemma](#)

THE ALL-TOO-THIN baby on the pediatric exam table does not know that oil prices recently topped \$80 a barrel. With almost no fat on his malnourished body, he is unable to tolerate for even a brief period being undressed by his doctor.

His mother wonders how she will keep the house warm, food cooked, and lights on through the coming winter for the boy and his sister, while making sure that they have enough to eat. She is not alone in her anxiety. The price of heating oil is projected to exceed \$3 per gallon this winter, and electricity and natural gas costs remain high. Last week, heating oil prices in Massachusetts reached their highest levels ever at \$2.72 per gallon, according to the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. Between March and May, 1.2 million households had their electricity shut off due to last winter's overdue energy bills.

[Pakistan: Petrol pumps, CNG stations suffer losses](#)

The owners of petroleum pumps and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) filling stations suffered huge losses as the sale of various fuels came almost to a halt during the last three days in Sindh.

Petroleum dealers and CNG retailers closed their pumps following the deteriorating law and order condition in the major cities of province following bombing incident in Karachi.

[South Korea: 2nd Oil Shock?](#)

Oil prices have skyrocketed to reach \$90 per barrel, raising concern that they could continue to climb to \$100 in the near future. The situation is all the more gloomy with many experts foreseeing a potential second oil shock once the price goes beyond \$95. Soaring oil prices have been causing anxiety among businesses and people, alike. For a nation that depends entirely on oil imports, high prices have a far-reaching impact upon the country's economy and the livelihood of ordinary citizens, as they will lead to a drastic rise in commodity prices.

[Uganda to get a biofuel plant](#)

A local investor is planning to set up a plant which will use foodstuff like maize, cassava and sugarcane to manufacture oil and gel for lighting and cooking respectively.

[Energy agency helps to revive nuclear power](#)

The U.S. Department of Energy is looking to nuclear programs at the University of Missouri-Columbia and elsewhere to develop the next generation of more efficient, safer and environmentally friendly nuclear technology.

[State set to sue Bush administration for waiver to enforce emissions law](#)

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is expected as early as Wednesday to make good on his promise to sue the Bush administration, accusing the federal Environmental Protection Agency of purposely stalling California's application for a waiver to enforce its greenhouse gas reduction law.

['Oracle of climate science' James Hansen comes to University of Montana](#)

Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, will give a seminar titled "What Determines Climate Sensitivity?" at 3:10 p.m. in Gallagher Business Building, Room 123.

His 8 p.m. lecture - titled "The Threat to the Planet: How Can We Avoid Dangerous Human-Made Climate Change?" - will be at the University Center Ballroom.

[Whistling in The Dark– The New 'Relaxed Attitude' on High Oil prices](#)

By late 2007 oil prices had surely not heard the signal of "seasonal downturn in demand". They therefore did not respond to the usual talk-down mantra of high stocks, falling demand, OPEC pumping almost all it can, not too much geopolitical stress (except for about 1.6 million dead in Iraq since 2003), and warm enough weather – at least in the northeast of the USA – to imagine that Winter will not come. This would allow a remake of the 2006 oil sell-off, culminating on January 18, 2007 with a low of about \$49.50-per-barrel for WTI grade, February delivery. Such was the acclaim and applause this happy feat generated that for weeks finance blogs were stuffed with talk of "30-dollar oil" coming back almost anytime.

[The Tar Sands and Canada's Food System](#)

Tar sands opponents point out that burning natural gas, a relatively clean fuel, to

extract oil will result in massive increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, some experts say the implications of using natural gas go far beyond global warming.

North American agriculture is deeply dependent on natural gas. Nitrogen fertilizer is chemically produced using a process that -- currently -- cannot be conducted efficiently without large amounts of natural gas. This fertilizer, in turn, is an essential nutrient in North America's food production system. "In a fairly direct way," says Darrin Qualman, Director of Research at the National Farmers Union, "natural gas is a primary feedstock for our food supply."

[It's time to heed admiral's 1957 fossil-fuel warning](#)

A half-century ago, Rear Adm. Hyman Rickover, the father of the nuclear Navy, accepted an invitation to speak at the banquet of the Annual Scientific Assembly of the Minnesota State Medical Association in St. Paul. In that speech, before a gathering of physicians, Admiral Rickover raised the specter that easily accessible and economically reasonable supplies of fossil fuels would be in jeopardy - just about now.

['Peak oil' Just how long will it last?](#)

There is a huge debate going on between basically two schools of thought. One is the Cambridge Energy Research Association's thought, which is that we have plenty of oil in the world, and we are good at developing technology. In spite of the fact that energy information agencies are forecasting we will be using another 30 million plus barrels a day of oil in the world between now and 2030, and technology will find a way to do that. That's one school of thought.

Another school of thought says we are at the maximum point of producibility, and so it's decline from here on down. That's the "peak oil" theory.

[7 oil workers kidnapped in Nigeria, official says](#)

Gunmen in speedboats attacked an offshore oil field in the volatile Niger Delta, kidnapping three foreign workers and four Nigerians, Shell officials said Sunday.

The men were taken after a three-hour gunfight at the EA field, operated by Royal Dutch Shell, said Olav Ljosne, a spokesman for Shell in Nigeria.

[Iran says extra OPEC oil unlikely to curb prices](#)

Oil prices are not rising because of a lack of crude in the market and so any increase in OPEC output is unlikely to help bring them down, a senior Iranian oil official was quoted

as saying on Sunday.

"In the current conditions and oil market uncertainties, it is unlikely there will be an increase in OPEC production or that it would have an impact on prices," Javad Yarjani, head of OPEC affairs at Iran's Oil Ministry, told the ministry's news Web site SHANA.

[Nozari says 92 oil companies will be privatized](#)

Iran's Acting Oil Minister Gholam-Hossein Nozari said 92 oil companies would be privatized in line with Article 44 of the Constitution.

"All refineries of the country along with state-run petrochemical complexes excluding the three main petrochemical companies are subject to 'Note A' of the article and 100 percent of their shares will be offered," reported PIN Quoting the caretaker as saying.

[LNG plant should give Sound a wide berth](#)

The dilemma that spins in your head is this: we need the energy.

The country's not getting any smaller, but does the dang plant have to be in Long Island Sound, which god knows has seen its share of pollution and abuse already? Is their no totally unbiased expert somewhere who can give us the straight scoop on this project?

[Hawai'i: The SuperConspiracy](#)

I believe that part of the populist support for the Superferry stems from the inherent understanding of the environmental gloom facing O'ahu and the desire to have free access to the resources and space of the outer islands.

But, solving that problem is the real issue, not getting the Superferry running. If there is any sustainable solution for Hawai'i after the Peak Oil Wave passes over us, it will be founded on the outer islands which are not overdeveloped. There we can grow food and provide resources that will be needed throughout the state. To overrun these islands now with "easy access" and "economic growth" will doom all of Hawai'i.

[Evangelical Christians defend God's creation](#)

Environmental activists are regularly castigated as both crypto-communists and godless heretics:

Why care about the Earth when the droughts, floods, famine and pestilence brought by ecological collapse are signs of the apocalypse foretold in the Bible? Why care about

global climate change when you and yours will be rescued in the rapture? (Moyers, 2005)

This has led to a growing awareness on the part of moderate evangelicals across the US that they have given away far too much of the moral high ground to their more extreme co-religionists, particularly in terms of standing up for God's creation.

[Climate change blamed for fading foliage](#)

Forested hillsides usually riotous with reds, oranges and yellows have shown their colors only grudgingly in recent years, with many trees going straight from the dull green of late summer to the rust-brown of late fall with barely a stop at a brighter hue.

"It's nothing like it used to be," said University of Vermont plant biologist Tom Vogelmann, a Vermont native.

He says autumn has become too warm to elicit New England's richest colors.

[Climate deniers to send film to British schools](#)

Secondary schools across Britain are to be sent copies of the controversial television film *The Great Global Warming Swindle*, as the polemical battle over climate change heats up in the wake of last week's Nobel Peace Prize award to former US vice president Al Gore and the UN's climate change panel.



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