



## DrumBeat: January 13, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on January 13, 2008 - 10:01am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Oil and the looming threat to Iraq](#)

Access to and control of Middle East oil has figured prominently in the strategic thinking of American policy makers. In the Bush administration, State Department policy planners discussed scenarios for taking over by force the oilfields of the Middle East and internationalising them.

Jane Mayer revealed in the New Yorker that a secret Bush National Security Council (NSC) document dated February 3, 2001, instructed NSC members to cooperate with Vice President Dick Cheney's Energy Task Force for "reviewing international policy towards rogue states" and "actions regarding the capture of new and existing oil and gas fields."

### [Iran warns Turkmenistan to resume gas supplies soon](#)

Iran will stop buying Turkmen gas altogether if its neighbour does not resume supplies cut off two weeks ago, oil minister Gholamhossein Nozari was quoted as saying on Sunday.

### [KazMunaiGas reaches deal with Kashagan partners](#)

Kazakhstan's KazMunaiGas has reached a deal with an Eni-led consortium over developing the giant Kashagan oil field which will give it an equal share in the project with the largest shareholders.

### [New Zealand: Oil firms feel heat as crude price drops](#)

Pressure is mounting on petrol companies to cut near record prices after the cost of crude oil dropped to US\$92.69 a barrel.

But relief for motorists is far from assured, with fuel companies expected to reassess current costs this week and warning world oil prices remain volatile.

### [Speculators drive oil price rise - OPEC sec-gen](#)

Speculators have driven oil prices to record highs rather than any supply shortage and OPEC is ready to boost output when the market needs more, OPEC's secretary-general said in an interview published on Sunday.

A slowing global economy would not impact demand in the short term or lead to a price collapse, OPEC Secretary-General Abdullah al-Badri told Cyprus's Phileleftheros newspaper.

### [Iran Darkhovin oil field at 100k bpd output-report](#)

Oil production from Iran's Darkhovin field has been doubled to 100,000 barrels per day (bpd), an Iranian official said on Sunday, referring to part of a plan to hike output from OPEC's second biggest producer.

### [Sarkozy Confirms Plans For UAE Nuclear Deal: Paper](#)

French President Nicolas Sarkozy confirmed on Sunday plans to sign a nuclear cooperation agreement with the United Arab Emirates amid reports French firms could construct up to two nuclear reactors there.

### [Sarkozy in Saudi Arabia to deepen 'strategic partnership'](#)

With nuclear ambitions, lucrative business opportunities and ballooning petro-dollar budgets, the oil-rich kingdom of Saudi Arabia is attracting world leaders from US President George Bush to his French counterpart, Nicolas Sarkozy. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia - a potentate with increasing regional and international clout - will play host to Sarkozy later on Sunday and to Bush on Monday.

### [Bet your bottom dollar](#)

Vanity, not catastrophe, led to the sale of the first \$100 barrel of oil. But what is really causing price increases, and how bad will it get?

### [Nigerian militant group offers cease-fire for release of imprisoned leader](#)

The main Nigerian militant group in the country's oil region offered Sunday to halt attacks if one of its leaders is released from prison in Angola, where he is being held on arms smuggling charges.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta said it would immediately halt hostilities if freedom was given to Henry Okah, who the Nigerian government is seeking to put on trial.

### [Syria Rebuilds on Site Destroyed by Israeli Bombs](#)

The puzzling site in Syria that Israeli jets bombed in September grew more curious on Friday with the release of a satellite photograph showing new construction there that resembles the site's former main building.

Israel's air attack was directed against what Israeli and American intelligence analysts had judged to be a partly constructed nuclear reactor. The Syrians vigorously denied the atomic claim.

### [Joe Kennedy, Hugo Chavez and that free heating oil](#)

So what if Joe Kennedy and Hugo Chavez get a propaganda bonanza, you may say, so long as poor people are benefiting? Kennedy himself has defended the program as "righteous."

So let's see; the poor should accept charity from a would-be dictator who has formed an alliance with Iran and Cuba, who has denounced the United States as the greatest threat to peace and security in the world and called the U. S. president "the devil" and "a genocidal murderer." "They should permit themselves to be used by a man who attempted to subvert his country's constitution, proclaimed his goal as "socialism or death," and launched the most comprehensive assault on freedom of the press in Latin America this side of Castro?

### [Iran Encounter Grimly Echoes '02 War Game](#)

There is a reason American military officers express grim concern over the tactics used by Iranian sailors last weekend: a classified, \$250 million war game in which small, agile speedboats swarmed a naval convoy to inflict devastating damage on more powerful warships.

### [Bush: Iran threatens world security](#)

President Bush said Sunday that Iran is threatening the security of the world, and that the United States and Arab allies must join together to confront the danger "before it's too late."

Bush said Iran funds terrorist extremists, undermines peace in Lebanon, sends arms to

the Taliban, seeks to intimidate its neighbors with alarming rhetoric, defies the United Nations and destabilizes the entire region by refusing to be open about its nuclear program.

### [Lives of Poverty, Untouched by China's Boom](#)

When she gets sick, Li Enlan, 78, picks herbs from the woods that grow nearby instead of buying modern medicines. That is not a result of some philosophical choice, though. She has never seen a doctor and, like many residents of this area, lives in a meager barter economy, seldom coming into contact with cash.

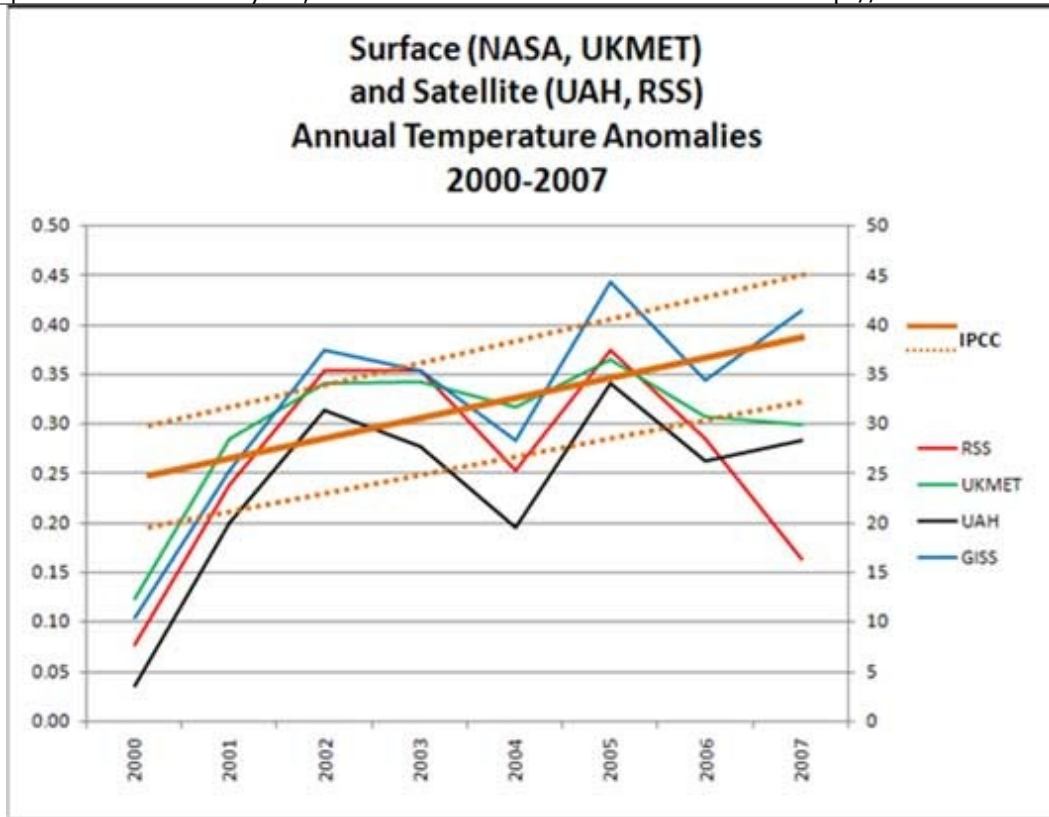
“We eat somehow, but it’s never enough,” Ms. Li said. “At least we’re not starving.”

### [A Long-Dry California River Gets, and Gives, New Life](#)

The river, 2 to 3 feet deep and 15 to 20 feet across, will not be mistaken for the mighty Mississippi. And an economic boon promised to accompany the restoration has yet to materialize.

Yet the mere fact that water is present and flowing in the Lower Owens River entralls residents nearly 100 years after Los Angeles diverted the river into an aqueduct and sent it 200 miles south to slake its growing thirst.

### [A Spot Check of Global Warming](#)



If you've got any thoughts on how to interpret the results on Dr. Pielke's graph — or how to look for other indicators — let me know. I'd be glad to hear suggestions from scientists at the popular Real Climate blog on a short list of variables (beyond temperature and sea ice) that might be used to compare with specific IPCC predictions and point interested readers to where data on them can be found.

### [The Moral Instinct](#)

Which of the following people would you say is the most admirable: Mother Teresa, Bill Gates or Norman Borlaug? And which do you think is the least admirable? For most people, it's an easy question. Mother Teresa, famous for ministering to the poor in Calcutta, has been beatified by the Vatican, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and ranked in an American poll as the most admired person of the 20th century. Bill Gates, infamous for giving us the Microsoft dancing paper clip and the blue screen of death, has been decapitated in effigy in "I Hate Gates" Web sites and hit with a pie in the face. As for Norman Borlaug . . . who the heck is Norman Borlaug?

Yet a deeper look might lead you to rethink your answers. Borlaug, father of the "Green Revolution" that used agricultural science to reduce world hunger, has been credited with saving a billion lives, more than anyone else in history. Gates, in deciding what to do with his fortune, crunched the numbers and determined that he could alleviate the most misery by fighting everyday scourges in the developing world like malaria, diarrhea and parasites. Mother Teresa, for her part, extolled the virtue of suffering and ran her well-financed missions accordingly: their sick patrons were offered plenty of prayer but harsh conditions, few analgesics and dangerously primitive medical care.

## [Moving Billions of People on a Still-Green Planet?](#)

A century or more is the rational time for conceiving a transport system. The infrastructures last for centuries. They take 50-100 years to build, in part because they also require complementary infrastructures. Railroads needed telegraphs, and paved roads needed oil delivery systems so that gasoline would be available to fill empty car tanks. Moreover, the new systems take 100 years to penetrate fully at the level of the consumer. Railroads began in the 1820s and peaked with consumers in the 1920s.

Fortunately, during the next century we may be able to afford green mobility. In fact, we can clearly see its elements: cars, powered by fuels cells; aeroplanes, powered by hydrogen; and maglevs, powered by electricity, probably nuclear. The future looks clean, fast, and green.

## [Pincer movement has Britain in grip of an energy crisis](#)

UK consumers are feeling the pinch from soaring electricity bills as the nation is hit by a double whammy of sky-high oil prices and dwindling North Sea supplies. Richard Wachman explains how it happened.

## [Residents are forced to make difficult choices to keep their homes heated](#)

With the costs of home heating fuel skyrocketing, Bangor Daily News reporters set out to discover the actual difficulties those costs are creating. Many alarming stories emerged, some of which will be told in more detail next week. Some are not being told at all because the victims of \$100-a-barrel oil feel too embarrassed by their circumstances to let us reveal them. Here are some vignettes of Mainers in Crisis.

## [Which bills do I pay?](#)

The rising cost of energy is one factor increasingly putting families into the red.

Gasoline prices bumping up against \$3 a gallon are hurting virtually anyone who has to drive. The cost of natural gas, propane and heating oil continues to rise, making it tough to keep the thermostat up. Residential customers of Delmarva Power in Delaware, who saw electricity bills spike 59 percent after the state removed price caps in May 2006, are finding it harder to pay their bills. By the end of 2007, 11 percent of Delmarva's 467,000 residential customers in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia had fallen behind in their monthly payments, said utility spokeswoman Bridget Shelton.

## [Iran: Oil minister due in Majlis today](#)

Iran's Oil Minister Gholam-Hossein Goudarzi will attend Majlis on Sunday to brief MPs on measures taken by his ministry to supply necessary fuel for people trapped by spreading wave of cold weather, Majlis speaker said.

### [Pakistan: Rickshaw drivers consider switching back to petrol](#)

Twenty-seven-year-old Nasir came to Karachi three years ago, lured by the stories his friends told him about the city being the “Dubai” for auto rickshaw drivers. He bought a rickshaw and had it converted from petrol to LPG just before gas prices increased to Rs 70 per kg, making him reconsider running his rickshaw on petrol.

### [Work on Kenya-Uganda Oil Pipeline will Begin in May](#)

Construction work on a Kenya-Uganda oil pipeline will begin in May, as Uganda seeks to end its over-reliance on road and rail for importing fuel products from Kenya, the Ugandan president said late Sunday.

### [This has been my perfect week](#)

A couple of weeks ago, plans for a wonderful new coal-fired power station in Kent were given the green light and I was very pleased.

This will reduce our dependency on Vladimir's gas and Osama's oil and, as a bonus, new technology being developed to burn the coal more efficiently will be exported to China and exchanged for plastic novelty items to make our lives a little brighter.

### [With nuclear rebirth come new worries](#)

Global warming and rocketing oil prices are making nuclear power fashionable, drawing a once demonized industry out of the shadows of the Chernobyl disaster as a potential shining knight of clean energy.

...However, some countries hopping on the nuclear bandwagon have abysmal industrial safety records and corrupt ways that give many pause for thought.

### [Author takes on oil dependence, U.S. policy](#)

The next “Da Vinci Code”? That is Steve Alten's goal.

With his new book, the author is looking to impact the presidential election and, he says, “change the world.”

Alten figures if his political novel "The Shell Game" is a success, he'll accomplish both of those goals.

### [Energy proposal falls short: West Virginia ignoring sensible solutions](#)

The "plan" totally avoids any mention of the influence of fossil fuel exploitation upon our climate. It has been suggested that the scientific consensus around atmospheric carbon emissions is rivaled only by the consensus on gravity. It is increasingly recognized worldwide — and increasingly experienced locally — that humans are having significant, potentially dangerous effects on their atmospheric and hydrologic environment. We must all make serious adjustments. Rather than going after 15 percent more coal, West Virginia needs to sign on to the Oil Depletion Protocol, which calls for a 2 percent a year reduction in carbon emissions through 2050.

### [Sustainable Futures](#)

The stance of the 'mainstream' is logical and, understandable. They must assume that they will have to give up their positions of privilege under the "new" dispensation. Therefore, it makes sense to gamble on the perpetuation of the existing order for a little longer rather than lose everything now. Notwithstanding all the planning for the future (insurance, savings, etc) that the current world order has engendered, it is essentially a culture based on short term thinking. Thus, even the "long term" thinkers among us rarely think of the future beyond the life of our children till their middle age. Therefore, so long as it seems to them that the current world order can be perpetuated for another 50 years or so there is no (or very little) incentive to abandon it.

Countless debates (and actions) on a host of issues, including, global warming, the mid east conflict, ecological degradation, peak oil, all reflect this mindset. Each of them (debates) ultimately centres around the problem of how to "manage" the perceived crisis. Of course, the overt assumption is that technology will come up with a solution in the meanwhile: solar power, wind energy, hydroponic farming, genetic engineering, and so on. However, it is increasingly obvious that this assumption is fallacious. It is also obvious that even assuming that we will be able to carry on for another 100-200 years by adopting these methods, the price that the inhabitants of this earth (I don't mean humans only) will pay for this perpetuation will be horrendous and, from my point of view, unacceptable.

### [Duality on display at Detroit auto show: Alternative-fuel-powered cars and gas-guzzling trucks](#)

There will be no shortage of alternative-fuel-powered cars, crossovers and compact trucks among the more than 50 new production and concept vehicles being introduced this week.

But high-performance vehicles and big, gas-guzzling trucks will be seen in abundance on



the show floor at Cobo Center.

### [Trucks deliver pedal power](#)

As a former bike messenger and onetime taxi driver, Andrew O. Brown knows how frustrating city driving can be.

And as a practicing psychiatrist, Brown also knows that too much stress and too little exercise can lead to some very unhealthy people.

With his business, The New Amsterdam Project, which uses people-powered "TriCycle Trucks," instead of gas-guzzling cars and trucks, to move merchandise around the city, Brown is trying to curb city driving and improve people's health.

### [Kabul gets only 3 hours of electricity a day, despite millions in U.S. and global aid](#)

Gul Hussein was standing under a pale street lamp in a poor section of east Kabul when the entire neighborhood suddenly went black.

"As you can see, it is dark everywhere," the 62-year-old man said, adding that his family would light a costly kerosene lamp for dinner that evening. «Some of our neighbors are using candles, but candles are expensive, too.

More than five years after the fall of the Taliban - and despite hundreds of millions of dollars in international aid - dinner by candlelight remains common in the Afghan capital of Kabul. Nationwide, only 6 percent of Afghans have electricity, the Asian Development Bank says.

### [Israel: An incompetent bungle from start to finish](#)

After making a dramatic, albeit meaningless, announcement in September that it was declaring Gaza a "hostile territory," the cabinet declared on October 28 that it would cut the exports of regular diesel, industrial diesel and gasoline - paid for by the European Union - and reduce Israel's direct supply of electricity to the Gaza Strip.

More than two months later, it has restored the cuts it made in regular and industrial diesel to pre-October 28 levels and has been unable to implement the electricity cuts at all.

### [Libraries Digging Deep for Geothermal Savings](#)

Nine months after the library opened to great acclaim, staff members are keeping an

eye on the geothermal system, which uses the earth's constant temperature below the frost line to heat and cool the airy 47,000-square-foot building. During a cold spell this month, they had to reduce the intake of fresh air that gets heated by the system because it could not warm up the frigid air fast enough.

### [Global warming is not just about temperature](#)

The world facing such consequences of a globally warmed surface will also be facing another (geological) complication: at some point in our future we can expect the demand for oil to irreversibly exceed worldwide production, as that non-renewable resource is finally and irrevocably depleted. Though the timing of this so-called "peak oil" crisis is disputed -- with some believing it is decades or more away, and others claiming it has already occurred (did you ever wonder why oil-rich countries in the Mideast are building nuclear power plants?) -- the point is that peak oil will represent a tough economic context within which to deal with all the consequences of global warming.

### [Study Says Glaciers Formed During a Very Warm Period](#)

Giant glaciers formed about 90 million years ago during a warm period when alligators thrived in the Arctic, researchers said Thursday, calling into question the belief that all ice melts in a "super greenhouse" climate.



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