



DrumBeat: April 6, 2008

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Rockets fired at villas housing US oilmen in Yemen](#)



SANAA (AFP) — Three rockets were fired late on Sunday at villas where US oil experts live in Yemen's capital, next to a residential complex for other Westerners, residents said, in the latest attack to hit a country plagued by Al-Qaeda-linked violence.

Security officials confirmed that rockets had been fired but gave few other details. One security official was quoted by state media as saying there were no casualties.

Residents told AFP that three rockets struck near the villas where American oil experts from the former Hunt Oil firm, now called Safer and owned by Yemen, live.

[Wanted: world environmental leader](#)

If you wrap up what all these brains are saying, you'll conclude that we can and must reshape the world from both environmental and economic standpoints. The energy source we have relied on for so long and so much -- fossil fuel -- is getting too expensive to extract. Hence, peak-oil theories will prove out and the world's power source will dwindle even more.

[Asking The Right Business Questions About High Gas Prices](#)

(SAUSALITO, Calif.) - The notion of "peak oil" -- which holds that the world's production of oil is at it's all-time high this year, or within a few years -- has recently become credible in the business community.

While most everybody will agree that petroleum is a depleting resource with a limited supply, the question many now wrestle with is: "How much more oil is there left in the ground?" Considerable debate wages about the real level of petroleum reserves, and how many more years it will last.

Unfortunately this discussion is a distraction from the practical questions that business managers should be asking. A much better question to ask would be: "How much longer will it be before our organization starts to suffer serious adverse impacts because the world supply of oil is dwindling?"

[China denies providing arms to Sudan in return for oil](#)

KHARTOUM (KUNA) -- China anew Sunday denied providing arms for Sudan in return for oil, and asserted that it was complying with international agreements banning this method.

[Cooking up a load of bioethanol](#)

Vast volumes of potential transport fuels are being buried in refuse landfills, says a visiting United States scientist searching for non-food sources of bioethanol for petrol and diesel substitution.

Bill Orts, a Californian-based Department of Agriculture research leader, says a high proportion of cellulose from discarded paper packaging makes municipal refuse a lucrative would-be fuel source.

[A Shift in the Debate Over Global Warming](#)

With recent data showing an unexpected rise in global emissions and a decline in energy efficiency, a growing chorus of economists, scientists and students of energy policy are saying that whatever benefits the cap approach yields, it will be too little and come too late.

The economist Jeffrey D. Sachs, head of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, stated the case bluntly in a recent article in Scientific American: "Even with a cutback in wasteful energy spending, our current technologies cannot support both a decline in carbon dioxide emissions and an expanding global economy. If we try to restrain

emissions without a fundamentally new set of technologies, we will end up stifling economic growth, including the development prospects for billions of people.”

[Iranian Pres. calls for joint OPEC bank, currency](#)

TEHRAN (KUNA) -- President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad Sunday called for a joint bank and currency for member states of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC).

...The Iranian President pointed out that the current situation in the global oil market called for such unification, noting that oil importing states were achieving more financial gain than those exporting the vital energy source.

[China: Building Wonderland](#)

According to the research firm Euromonitor International, the country added 5.5 million new housing units in 2007, nearly four times what the United States built and more than one-quarter of all new housing stock in the world. (Other analysts estimate China built even more units.) The size and value of the average Chinese home still lag far behind its U.S. equivalent. But the pace of change is so fast that China is hurtling through two periods of history at once — the industrialization of the late 19th century and the suburbanization of the mid-20th century.

[Navajo to appeal order accepting Western Refining tariffs](#)

ALBUQUERQUE (AP) - The federal government has rejected claims by the Navajo Nation that the tribe would lose millions in annual revenue because of prices set by Western Refining Pipeline Co. to transport crude oil on a pipeline stretching from West Texas to northwestern New Mexico.

[Sun Is Part of the Plan for Greener Hempstead](#)

THE Town of Hempstead deploys park officials in a fleet of electric cars to patrol its beaches and parks. A windmill atop a landfill-turned-recreation area circulates water in a nearby pond. The town is even testing hybrid garbage trucks to reduce their exhaust.

“We want to go entirely green here,” said Kate Murray, the town supervisor.

But the most ambitious of Ms. Murray’s environmental plans sits right above her head: 256 shiny blue panels on the town hall’s roof. They make up a 40-kilowatt photovoltaic — solar energy — system to power her office and a conference room next door.

[Afghans Complain About Electricity Shortages in World's "Darkest" Capital](#)

The people in Kabul complain about the lack of electricity in the capital. Such complaints are not new and government officials' reasons are repeated. However, this time the people start complaining about the lack of electricity in the first days of the New Year. Last year, at this time, the people were satisfied with the available electricity. However, officials claim that due to the lack of water it is not possible for them to provide round-the-clock electricity in all areas of Kabul.

[Texans Beat Big Coal, and a Film Shows How](#)

HOUSTON — David had only a slingshot. Texans fighting big coal have Robert Redford.

A year after an uproar over pollution forced a turnaround in plans for 19 new coal-fired power plants around the state, the battle has been recounted in a documentary, "Fighting Goliath: Texas Coal Wars," commissioned by Mr. Redford's Sundance Preserve. It spotlights the unlikely coalition of ranchers, big-city mayors and environmentalists that stymied Gov. Rick Perry and spurred the record \$45 billion takeover of Texas's biggest electric company, TXU.

[Idea of gas line has a history](#)

If Enstar Natural Gas Co. and Anadarko Petroleum Corp. successfully build a bullet line from the foothills of the Brooks Range to Anchorage, it would prove up an old oil patch theory.

On and off again for more than 50 years, business leaders in Alaska have wondered whether markets along the Railbelt could justify developing the Gubik gas field.

[For Seattle Shoppers, Paper or Plastic Could Come with a 'Green Fee'](#)

Under a proposal announced this week by Mayor Greg Nickels, shoppers in Seattle would pay a 20-cent "green fee" beginning next year for every new paper or plastic bag they use to carry away goods from grocery, drug or convenience stores. They would be encouraged to bring their own bags for carrying home purchases.

[Amazon's 'Forest Peoples' Seek a Role in Striking Global Climate Agreements](#)

MANAUS, Brazil — Some wore traditional headdresses, and some traveled by riverboat or canoe. But the dozens of "forest peoples" who descended on this capital of Amazonas State last week had a common goal of becoming bigger players in global climate talks.

[Going Green in Australia's Blue Mountains](#)

I am certain, had we ended up in one of the bungalows with a composting, rather than standard, toilet, he would have vacated the premises faster than I could mutter "organic waste." In fact, I wondered if our two-decades-long friendship could sustain this sustainable travel experience when he complained that the solar "light globes" weren't bright enough to read by.

[Dubai power shortage continues to deepen, say reports](#)

UAE: Dubai's decision to open its power industry to foreign investors, ending a 50-year monopoly, is a sign of the Emirate's growing panic that the US\$300 billion construction boom is outpacing supplies of water and electricity.

...Dubai has known for many years that its finite oil and gas resources weren't sufficient to meet the surge in demand for electricity but has done little to address the issue. Now, in the absence of an expected Iranian gas pipeline and other issues, Dubai Electricity & Water Authority is running out of cheap gas to fire its gigantic power and sea-water desalination plants.

[Qatar says it will continue to peg its currency to the falling dollar](#)

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates: Qatar will not depeg or revalue its currency despite increasing pressure on oil-rich Gulf states to sever their links to the falling dollar, Qatar's central bank governor said Sunday.

Oil is priced in dollars on the world market, but many Gulf countries rely on government-subsidized imports priced in euros and other currencies that have been rising against the greenback.

[Iran: OPEC should employ capabilities to preserve exporters rights](#)

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Sunday that it is incumbent upon OPEC to draw up a well-calculated program to preserve the rights of exporting countries.

[Top Asia oil refiner Sinopec Q4 dives two-thirds](#)

HONG KONG (Reuters) - Top Asian oil refiner Sinopec Corp posted a nearly two-thirds fall in quarterly net profit, as high oil prices squeezed its refining business into the red, and it faces an even tougher 2008.

[Railroads are expanding at a record clip](#)

America's railroads are back to laying track.

For decades, freight railroads tore up or sold stretches of rail as they lost cargo to trucking companies. But that downsizing has reversed itself in the past few years. Freight has flowed back to railroads amid the confluence of congested highways, a truck driver shortage and high fuel costs - problems not expected to fade away anytime soon.

[Two bits worth](#)

A "targeted industry analysis" unveiled by the Casper Area Economic Development Alliance last week contains the following observation:

"One interviewee suggested that the energy companies were almost panic-stricken in their desire to do business while the economic conditions are favorable."

Which brings to mind harness makers.

[Malta: MIA and Enemalta blame each other for aviation fuel shortage](#)

Although a fresh consignment of aviation fuel has reached Malta, it will only be towards the end of this month that this can be used by planes refuelling in Malta.

Meanwhile, Enemalta and MIA are still engaged in a war of words, blaming each other for the shortage that made MIA stop trips by huge cargo planes, which were leaving very remunerative revenues in Malta.

[High tide for oil but choppy seas buffet region's shipping industry](#)

When oil prices skyrocket, financial effects go beyond a fill-up at the local service station or the most recent home heating oil delivery.

With oil prices hovering at about \$100 a barrel, one of the state's economic sectors keeping a close watch is the profitable shipping industry.

[Thailand Rules Out Selling Rice From State Stockpile](#)

Rice, the staple food for about 3 billion people, has nearly doubled in the past year on increased imports by the Philippines, the biggest buyer, and as China, India and

Vietnam cut exports. Record food and fuel prices have stoked inflation, contributing to strikes in Argentina, riots in Ivory Coast and a crackdown on illicit exports in Pakistan.

[Bread shortage tries Egypt, shows cracks in political system](#)

Across Egypt this year, people have waited in line for hours at bakeries that sell government-subsidized bread, sign of a growing crisis over the primary foodstuff in the Arab world's most populous country. President Hosni Mubarak has ordered Egypt's army to bake bread for the public, following the deaths of at least six people since March 17 — some succumbing to exhaustion during the long waits, others stabbed in vicious struggles for places in line.

[Gov. Palin will be the one who can unite Alaskans, Big Oil](#)

A leader who has lots of political capital but doesn't use it isn't doing his or her constituents much good.

With that in mind, Alaskans should want Gov. Sarah Palin to consider using her considerable store of political authority to embrace ConocoPhillips, BP and Exxon Mobil if her own path for getting the North Slope natural gas pipeline project reaches a dead end, as a significant number of people think it soon will. To be clear, a sizable number of people have faith in the governor's Alaska Gasline Inducement Act and the single proposal — TransCanada's — it has produced for consideration.

[Fairbanks fuel costs double during last 4 years](#)

It's costing us more to energize our lives these days. Twice as much, to be specific.

An analysis released last week by the Fairbanks North Star Borough estimates it cost Fairbanks residents and businesses two times as much to pay their energy bills — to heat their homes, fuel their cars and pay electric bills — in 2007 than four years ago.

[Turns Out, I Can Drive 55](#)

There's some dispute about how much fuel ultimately was saved. Traffic fatalities did go down. Congress passed fuel efficiency rules, small cars gained stature. But drivers chafed, and as oil flowed and the memory of 1973 faded, speed limits went up. Sammy Hagar hit it big in 1984 with "I Can't Drive 55." In 1987 the federal government raised the limit to 65 (Hagar did a remake of his song, "I Can't Drive 65," but it just didn't seem right) and in the 1990s the federal government gave power back to the states to set speed limits.

[Driving's new reality](#)

Lipsman said Iowa's recent declines suggest that drivers did not change their habits in meaningful ways until the end of last year and the first part of this year. That would make sense, he added, because gas prices did not dip as they typically do over the winter, and in fact have continued to go up.

"If they think (high prices) have been here for five or six months, they're going to do something significant," Lipsman said of drivers.

[Pakistan: Aziz admits energy policy was flawed](#)

NEW YORK: Former prime minister Shaukat Aziz said that energy consumption in Pakistan had increased rapidly and his government could not foresee the huge demand to be created by the growing economy.

In an interview with Dawn during a visit to New York, he attributed the shortage of electricity in the country to "unprecedented huge energy demands".

[Pakistan: Textile exports fell due to energy crisis, riots](#)

KARACHI: Slowdown in Pakistan's textile exports during the current fiscal is a result of energy crisis and violence that erupted in the wake of martyrdom of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007.

[Iran: The challenge of electricity markets' competition](#)

A modern energy service is an essential pre-requisite for increasing productivity and improving people's livelihoods. New approaches are needed to deliver such energy services to meet the needs of the poor and support sustainable development. Policy innovation, technology access, integrated energy and development solutions and new energy investors are all required to overcome energy bottlenecks. Market mechanisms, if properly designed and complemented by regulatory measures can solve energy crisis.

[Do we have the will to address energy crisis?](#)

The Kansan, age 79 but still on the farm, said, "We burn wood for heat." I expressed surprise. "That would take a lot of wood on zero-degree nights."

"Yes," he said softly. "But propane is very high - more than 35 times what I used to pay in 1960."

[Are we letting our opinions block out empiricism?](#)

Is global warming happening? Are humans responsible? In this age of "he said, she said" journalism, when the media present virtually every issue as if there are two or more equally valid sides, how do you know what to believe?

Let's answer a different question first: Should you even have an opinion on these questions?

[OPEC: Most rich nations pocket over 50% of gasoline prices](#)

DOHA: The governments of the UK, France and Italy pocket more than 50% from a litre of gasoline, which confirms Opec's opinion that rising crude oil prices contribute little to motorists' pain at the petrol pumps in Europe.

The UK's tax on a litre of oil was 55% in 2007, while France and Italy ate up 53% each, Germany (49%), Japan (38%), Canada (30%) and the US (26%), Opec said in its 2007 report: 'Who gets what from a litre of oil in the G7'.

It said the British Government received around 1.7 times more from taxation than the Opec got from the sale of its oil and the country also had the highest industry margins among the G7.

[GCC demand to curtail oil exports](#)

Dubai: Spiralling energy demand in the Gulf states, coupled with a gas-supply crunch, might lead to oil exports from the region falling during the summer, according to energy econ-omists.

A Lehman Brothers report puts the possible Gulf export shortfall due to high domestic demand at up to one million barrels per day (bpd).

[Debate to replace Saudi oil with Canadian oil sands](#)

RIYADH: With the world looking to explore new, feasible and sustainable alternatives sources of energy, the ongoing debate -- if the Canadian oil sands is clean enough to be used or not -- has immense connotations for the energy balance of the world.

And interestingly enough, Riyadh is getting dragged, too, in the debate.

[OPEC chief rejects calls for output hike](#)

TEHRAN (AFP) - OPEC Secretary General Abdullah al-Badri has rejected calls from oil consuming states for a hike in the cartel's crude output, saying that non-fundamental factors were to blame for current high prices.

"At the moment there is enough oil in the market and no need to change OPEC's output," al-Badri said in Tehran late Saturday after arriving the day earlier for a three-day visit to the Islamic republic.

[End of the world as we know it](#)

You might feel fine, but high oil cost, scarcity mean American Empire is about to come crashing down.

[Kuwait seeks international avenues for oil revenues](#)

As oil bounces around record highs of above \$100 a barrel, is the industry to blame for manipulating these prices? According to Kamel Al Harami, Kuwait oil industry analyst, the prices are down to the sub-prime crisis, the weak US dollar, and speculators. AME Info talked to Al Harami about the likely effects of inflation on the Kuwaiti economy.

[Kuwait invests \\$800m in Visa IPO](#)

Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), which manages the oil producer's surplus wealth, bought almost \$800 million of shares in the initial public offering of credit card firm Visa, a report said.

[Nigeria: Militants Release 5 Kidnapped Oil Workers](#)

FIVE workers of Express/Shebah Petroleum and Gas Company Limited, kidnapped by militant youths in Ilaje oil rich communities areas of Ondo State, have been released to the state government.

Meanwhile, the state government has read riot act to the militants in the oil rich area of the state.

[New law would recreate Iraqi oil company](#)

BAGHDAD - A parliamentary committee is working on a pair of oil-related draft bills,

one to re-establish the state-run oil company and another to fight oil smuggling, a senior lawmaker said Saturday.

Abdul-Hadi al-Hassani, deputy chairman of the committee on oil, gas and natural resources, said legislation to re-establish the Iraqi National Oil Co., was likely to be presented to parliament on Tuesday.

[Economy Q&A](#)

Inflation in the oil sector is rampant, as there are so many projects under way around the world. That has bid up the price of oil workers, jack rigs and engineers.

Even smoke stacks for refineries are years back ordered. This all adds to the cost of exploration and production.

But the real run-up in prices has to do with the weak dollar and since oil is traded in dollars, producers are demanding more dollars to keep their earning power intact when dollars are converted back to local currency or to euros.

Oil historian Daniel Yergin, who came to our Washington offices recently, refers to oil as the new gold, a place where investors take refuge from both inflation and the weaker dollar.

[Unglamorous but economical](#)

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM — As fuel prices soar to record highs and airlines struggle to maintain profitability, the unglamorous but fuel-efficient turboprop regional airliner is making a remarkable comeback.

The revival of the propeller-driven planes, which typically consume a quarter to a third less fuel than equivalent jets, marks a significant new trend in the industry. Until recently, many commuter airlines had been determined to consign the planes to history and convert to all-jet fleets, which offer greater passenger comfort.

[China's Regulated Electricity Power Squeezed by Surging Coal Prices](#)

China's ever-rising coal prices and the stalled government-controlled electricity price are putting pressure on power generators, and companies are losing money. The five biggest power producers have been urging an upgrading of the coal-electricity linkage policy for some time. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) is said to be studying the question but so far coal goes up while electricity prices remain the same.

[Taiwan: The nation must diversify its coal imports](#)

The Ministry of Economic Affairs said yesterday that since the nation relies entirely on imports for its coal supply, it has to diversify its import sources to ensure smooth operations.

Taiwan also needs to sign long-term purchase contracts to stabilize its coal supplies, ministry officials said.

[Australia Needs to Boost `Frontier' Oil Exploration, Group Says](#)

(Bloomberg) - Australia's oil explorers need to widen their search for discoveries in so-called frontier areas to avoid a A\$28 billion (\$26 billion) petroleum trade deficit within a decade, the nation's oil and gas industry group said.

[South Africa: R2 million to clean up Ulundi sewerage mess](#)

South Africa's sewerage systems could be the next big problem if massive and unplanned power outages continue. In Mpumalanga, several sewerage systems malfunctioned during the recent load shedding. In Mpumalanga last month, several sewerage systems malfunctioned during the recent load shedding as raw sewage spilt into several streams and rivers around Nelspruit. White River was worst affected and the health risk is high.

[Aramco refinery shuts for work](#)

Saudi Aramco will shut down its 100,000 barrels a day refinery in Jeddah for planned maintenance this week. It will be closed for about 20 days.

[Food Prices To Rise For Years, Biofuel Firms Say](#)

LONDON - Staple food prices will rise for some years, but should eventually fall to historical averages as harvests increase, biofuel company executives said on Thursday.

[Seven Heresies in Energy Policy](#)

If you want to understand some of the most challenging issues in debates about energy policy, I highly recommend reading *The Bottomless Well* by Peter Huber and Mark Mills. But if you're looking for doom and gloom, you'll be disappointed.

[It's a Hand-Me-Down World](#)

With gas prices nearing record levels, the dystopian world envisioned in Kunstler's new novel becomes less fiction than forecast. Kunstler plumbed the depths of a world out of oil in his best-selling book, "The Long Emergency," and he has now taken the premise and cast it into a not-too-distant future free of the restraints of nonfiction.

[New Focus on Coal's Part in Warming](#)

James E. Hansen, perhaps the best-known scientific advocate for curbing greenhouse-gas emissions, sent a letter recently to the head of one of the nation's largest power companies, calling on him to confront the role that his coal-fired plants play in global warming. Hansen proposed they meet.

On Wednesday, James E. Rogers of Duke Energy accepted Hansen's invitation, though he made clear he does not foresee calling off plans to build more of the power plants that Hansen considers a main culprit in climate change.

[Tough road lies ahead for global climate deal](#)

BANGKOK (AFP) - There have been numerous disagreements during a week of intense climate change talks in Bangkok but there is one point all sides agree on -- a long, tough road lies ahead.

[Iceland: life on global warming's front line](#)

REYKJAVIK (Reuters) - If any country can claim to be pitched on the global warming front line, it may be the North Atlantic island nation of Iceland.

On a purely physical level, this land of icecaps and volcanoes and home to 300,000 people is undergoing a rapid transformation as its glaciers melt and weather patterns change dramatically.

But global warming is also having a profound effect on Iceland economically -- and in many ways the effects have actually been beneficial.

[Australian doctors warn of health impacts of climate change](#)

SYDNEY (AFP) - Climate change is likely to lead to higher rates of some infectious and respiratory diseases as well as more injuries from storms and bushfires, a report by Australian doctors warned Sunday.

The Doctors for the Environment Australia report found that over the next decade, the

health of children and the elderly would be most at risk from rising temperatures.



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