



DrumBeat: May 11, 2008

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Don't let rising gas prices push you into panic selling](#)

Logically, the high cost of fuel doesn't justify drastic lifestyle changes, so don't be too quick to dump your SUV or your suburban home.

The rising price of gasoline offers all of us an interesting logic test. What's the right thing to do in response? Should we sell our big vehicles, give up our houses in the suburbs, or spend billions of dollars on a new transit system?

If you checked off none of the above, you're on the right track.

[The End of OPEC](#)

Churchill's assessment applies to the current oil situation: this is the beginning of the end of OPEC. That much is obvious; the more interesting question is "why?"

[Gas prices hit another record high](#)

CNNMoney (NEW YORK) -- Retail gasoline prices jumped to yet another record high Sunday, according to drivers' advocacy group AAA's Web site.

The national average price for a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline edged up to \$3.707, topping the previous record of \$3.671, set on Friday. Gas prices had been hitting almost daily record highs, most recently running up a 17-day streak that ended May 1.

[Greeks queue for petrol as fuel truckers strike](#)

ATHENS (Reuters) - Thousands of Greeks queued for hours at petrol stations to fill up their cars on Saturday as a fuel truck drivers' strike started to hit supplies.

Some 70 percent of stations around the country had run out of petrol, officials said, as the strike to press for higher distribution fees for truck drivers entered its fifth day.

[Beirut Is Quiet, but Fighting Rages in Other Parts of Lebanon](#)

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) -- Heavy fighting broke out Sunday between supporters of Lebanon's Western-backed government and opposition followers in the central mountains overlooking the capital, security officials said.

The violence came after overnight clashes in northern Lebanon left one woman dead, bringing the toll across the country for the past five days to 38 -- the worst sectarian violence since Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war.

[Nigeria: In His First Visit to Niger Delta - Yar'Adua Warns On Future of Oil](#)

Yar'Adua said the Niger Delta region has the potential of becoming the petrochemical power in Africa, as no other part of the continent has the potential, but lamented that the absence of peace has retarded African development in the past 50 years.

He regretted that the increase in world crude oil price is blamed on the situation in Iran, Iraq and the lack of peace in the Niger Delta "because we, ourselves, gave them the opportunity to do so."

[Nuclear Fuel Recycling: More Trouble Than It's Worth](#)

Plans are afoot to reuse spent reactor fuel in the U.S. But the advantages of the scheme pale in comparison with its dangers.

[If Your Appliances Are Avocado, They Probably Aren't Green](#)

I am growing a little cynical about the consumption-oriented part of the movement, the urging to buy our way out of environmental problems. From organic jeans to compact fluorescent light bulbs, it is getting harder and harder to know what represents genuine progress and what is a marketing gimmick.

[The New New World](#)

Yet Zakaria's is not another exercise in declinism. His point is not the demise of Gulliver, but the "rise of the rest." After all, how can this giant follow Rome and Britain onto the dust heap of empire if it can prosecute two wars at once without much notice at home? The granddaughters of those millions of Rosie the Riveters who kept the World War II economy going are off to the mall today; if they don't shop till they drop, it's because of recession, not rationing.

[Low supply means it's the end of the road for cheap oil](#)

Most of the world's large oil basins have been discovered and exploited. The remaining reserves are often difficult to get at, frozen in the Arctic or submerged beneath deep oceans, and tend to be smaller than previous discoveries. As a result, new production has failed to keep pace with the rate of depletion. This gap is only likely to widen.

Half of the world's current oil production comes from 500 fields, most of which are fairly mature and past their point of peak production. The most accessible oil comes out of the ground first, so future production from these fields is more challenging. While there are a number of new projects scheduled over the next seven years, they won't make up for declines in production at existing fields.

[Price of fertiliser soars with food crisis](#)

FERTILISER prices have shot up to record levels as farmers around the world scramble to grow enough to alleviate the world food shortage.

The general manager of distributor AG Plus, Matt Henry, said its two main fertilisers, MAP or monammonium phosphate and DAP or diammonium phosphate, were worth between \$420 and \$450 a tonne two years ago.

"Then last year they got as high as \$780 to \$800 a tonne," he said.

The price is now above \$1400 a tonne.

[Climate change key to future food crisis](#)

But the biggest risk to agriculture may well come from climate change. No one yet knows how climate change will affect agricultural production. It's still guesswork how will it change temperatures, precipitation, the length of growing seasons, and variability of yields.

It may be tough to predict how, and under what circumstances, will climate change increase and/or reduce production. In affected regions, it may not be easy to get farmers to shift to other crops, to adopt new cropping patterns, and to adjust production practices to the new environment.

[Food crisis: Is Lanka sitting on a volcano?](#)

A dramatic unprecedented soar in food prices in the last few years; and in particular most dramatically over the last few months, has provoked riots in many countries,

mainly in the developing world. US wheat export price rose from \$375 in January to \$440 in March, an increase of 17%. In a period of 36 months leading up to February 2008 the world wheat price increased by 181% and overall global food prices rose by 83 %.

According to the FAO, global food prices rose by 40% in 2007, producing the highest food cost level on record making 2007 as a year of food price hyperinflation. The world's most vulnerable millions of people are facing starvation.

[Surging food prices bite across Asia](#)

SYDNEY -- From the rice paddies of Asia to the wheat fields of Australia, the soaring price of food is breaking the budgets of the poor and raising the specters of hunger and unrest, experts warn.

[South Africa: Load-shedding not over yet](#)

Eskom told the Energy Crisis Coping Forum in Durban on Saturday that it would continue what is perceived to be a stranglehold on new developments such as office blocks and housing clusters requiring more than 100KVa (enough to power a small office block).

[Bangladesh: Why this energy crisis?](#)

The people were stunned by the recent very tough decision of the government to restrict the supply of gas to different categories of its users in the country. All concerned are protesting this decision which has been considered suicidal for the economy as a whole.

[Hackers attack Mexican Congress website, opposing oil privatization](#)

The Mexican Congress website was out of service for hours on Friday after being attacked by hackers who opposed the nation's oil industry privatization.

[Why high oil prices are not squeezing us more](#)

Indeed, why isn't the rise in prices we have seen already having more of an effect? For those who were brought up on the rule of thumb that every 10% rise in oil prices led to a 1% drop in global growth, the resilience of economic activity in response to sky-high oil is surprising.

[Obama: Solving energy crisis is going to take time](#)

It isn't right that oil companies are making record profits at a time when ordinary Americans are going into debt just to fill up their tanks. That's why we'll put a windfall profits tax on oil companies and use it to help Oregon families reduce energy costs.

[No quick fix for oil prices](#)

It's easy to blast George Dubya Bush, Congress, Dick Cheney, Halliburton and Big Oil for the price of gasoline as it shoots up seemingly every few days.

They certainly are all at least partially to blame, spending billions a week on war while the dollar slides, jobs are exported and nobody is coming up with a way to keep America powerful as India and China ascend into the middle-class consumerist masses.

But, if you're of a certain age, you either sat in the gas lines of the 1970s or the classrooms where environmentalism rose into the national conscience in the 1970s.

[As U.S. politicians search for a solution to high oil prices, answers evade them](#)

But what can the White House, Congress or competing presidential candidates do to reduce gas prices in the near term? The short answer, alas, is not much.

No industrialized economy is as reliant on oil, or as obsessed with gasoline prices, as the United States, the biggest consumer of oil in the world. But the oil market is largely immune to Washington's machinations, and prices have more than quadrupled over the last six years for reasons that are increasingly disconnected from what happens in the United States.

[Sudan Rebel Leader: Troops In Khartoum: Would Expel China Oil Cos](#)

LONDON -(Dow Jones)- Sudanese rebels have entered the capital Khartoum and would replace Chinese oil companies with Western ones if they were to overthrow the current government, a rebel leader said Saturday.

The threat is bad news for China, which has become the largest buyer of crude and foreign investor in the Sudanese oil industry as it tries to fill its oil needs resulting from its fast economic growth.

[France condemns Darfur rebel attack on Khartoum](#)

"France firmly condemns the armed attack against the Sudanese capital. No

circumstance can justify such actions," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Sudan broke off diplomatic relations with Chad after the attack, which it said was supported by Chadian President Idriss Deby -- an ally of France, which has troops in Chad who have helped Deby defeat Chadian rebels he said were backed by Sudan.

[All Alaskans need immediate energy cost equalization](#)

Like a man dying of thirst in the middle of the ocean, Alaskans are adrift in a sea of state cash while our residents drown in a tidal wave of unjustified costs for heating oil and electricity for homes and businesses.

[Tanzania: Many people caught up in energy use dilemma](#)

Environmental activists may be smiling due to scarcity of charcoal, a source of energy widely used in many urban and rural areas, with producers blaming multiple taxes and other charges imposed on it as well as haulage obstacles -that together raise costs immensely.

But mostly affected are the ordinary people who have been relying on charcoal for cooking. The product has for years remained the only affordable source of energy for domestic use as the price of kerosene- the other option, remains high alongside a world-wide oil price surge.

[David Attenborough: "Wasting energy is an appalling thing"](#)

The main thing is to avoid waste, to recognize that waste is actually sinful, and it is a gross damage to the world's environment from all kinds of points of view. Wasting energy is an appalling thing to do, and the way that we have squandered energy -- and particularly fossil energy -- not knowing what we were doing, is a catastrophe.

[On the Record: Vinod Khosla](#)

Flush with money and determined to save the world, the green-tech industry stands in full flower of its giddy youth.

Venture capitalists are pumping billions into startups trying to create new fuels or energy sources. Politicians are looking to the industry for ways to fight climate change without wrecking the world's economy.

[Interest in nuclear power fuels uranium rush](#)

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, Ariz. - Thanks to renewed interest in nuclear power, the United States is on the verge of a uranium mining boom and nowhere is the hurry to stake claims more pronounced than in the districts flanking the Grand Canyon's storied sandstone cliffs.

[Climate scientist out to change the world](#)

At 63, Ramanathan seeks more than scientific accomplishment. He wants to use his knowledge to help poorer nations improve their quality of life and fight global warming at the same time.

His budding vision is Project Surya – Sanskrit for sun. The idea is to give about 3,500 solar and other “clean energy” cooking devices to families in Mukteshwar, a rural area in the Himalayas, and study if the smokeless cookers effectively slash levels of atmospheric soot.

[Bill McKibben: Civilization's last chance](#)

Even for Americans -- who are constitutionally convinced that there will always be a second act, and a third, and a do-over after that, and, if necessary, a little public repentance and forgiveness and a Brand New Start -- even for us, the world looks a little terminal right now.

It's not just the economy: We've gone through swoons before. It's that gas at \$4 a gallon means we're running out, at least of the cheap stuff that built our sprawling society. It's that when we try to turn corn into gas, it helps send the price of a loaf of bread shooting upward and helps ignite food riots on three continents. It's that everything is so tied together. It's that, all of a sudden, those grim Club of Rome types who, way back in the 1970s, went on and on about the "limits to growth" suddenly seem ... how best to put it, *right*.

All of a sudden it isn't morning in America, it's dusk on planet Earth.

[New NASA research shows inadequacy of Rudd's greenhouse targets](#)

Ground-breaking new research findings posted on the internet in April have confirmed what many scientists and climate activists have already concluded — that the goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions embraced by the European Union and Australia's Labor government are gravely inadequate.

[Global climate change: What it means to Iowa](#)

Fickle weather last year illustrated the potential for trouble, Takle said. In April 2007, a hard freeze followed an unusually warm period in March. That caused heavy damage to tree buds and fruit blossoms.

"It just zapped everything," Takle said. "I looked at a satellite map of plant productivity for the spring season of 2007. It showed a big hole in the middle of the country."

[Green groups urge upholding U.S. tar sands fuel ban](#)

A who's who of major U.S. and Canadian environmental organizations is urging the U.S. Senate to keep in place a rule banning the United States government from buying fuel from Alberta's tar sands on the grounds that it is too environmentally tainted.

[Ease back on the throttle, cash-strapped airlines tell pilots](#)

Airlines are ordering pilots to slow down in a bid to cut fuel bills and reduce emissions. The cost of jet fuel has soared by more than 70 per cent in the past year, prompting airlines to investigate every possible way of reducing their bills.

[UK: Rise in fuel siphoning from cars](#)

Police have reported an increase in thefts from vehicles in Dorset, in particular a growth in fuel siphoning.

[Be on the alert for thefts of fuel, State Police say](#)

Indiana State Police on Saturday asked gas station owners and consumers to be alert for fuel thefts in urban areas and along interstates.

Stealing fuel is a felony punishable by a maximum \$10,000 fine and up to three years in jail, plus a 30-day suspension of the guilty party's driver's license, said Sgt. Rich Myers of the Greencastle post in a news release.

[Australia: Families in west running on empty](#)

SOARING fuel prices are carving into the budgets of car-dependent households in western Sydney, exacerbating problems of insufficient public transport options and long distances to workplaces.

Families in the west are driving up to 20 times the distance of those in the eastern suburbs, inner west and Lower North Shore, according to research by a PhD student at

the University of Technology, Sydney, Peter Rickwood.

With fuel prices at about \$1.50 a litre, households in the city's outer western ring - many of which are struggling with mortgage repayments - are sacrificing more than 6 per cent of their gross household income on petrol, Mr Rickwood's research shows.

[Is oil headed for \\$200?](#)

Twenty short weeks ago, the world was struggling to digest the idea of \$100 US oil.

Today, with oil prices breaching new records almost daily, even ordinarily circumspect soothsayers are talking about the prospect of a super price spike that could cause a run to \$200 -- a concept that would have been virtually unthinkable 12 months ago.

And when some of the finest economic minds on the continent -- people like Daniel Yergin, Matthew Simmons and Jeff Rubin -- are willing to openly discuss the permutations and ramifications of life in the shadow of \$200 oil, it's hard not to think that a scenario that was once a pipe dream may actually be on the horizon.

[Reality Bites](#)

All speculative bubbles eventually burst, but it takes a while-- the real estate boom lasted about ten years, and the tech boom before that about six. There are, however, complications with oil. Effectively, we've reached "peak oil"-- supply might be going up a tad, here and there, but demand is increasing faster--- and it's hard to see how a drop in consumer demand will burst the bubble; while people can do without the internet or even owning their own house, the modern economy can't function without oil, at least until we build alternatives.

[Colorado's oil shale lures Shell](#)

In its quest to remove oil from western Colorado's shale, Royal Dutch Shell has been buying land and water rights in anticipation of what is likely to be a thirsty new industry.

Some officials worry that the demands of the oil-shale industry could drain every drop of the region's remaining water.

[Rockefellers get more muscle in Exxon fight](#)

The Rockefeller family and shareholders pushing Exxon Mobil to focus more on renewable energy now have the backing of a powerful advisory group for institutional

investors.

[South Pars phase to come on stream soon: Iran](#)

TEHERAN - A section of the huge South Pars gas field that is operated by StatoilHydro will start production soon, a senior Iranian energy official said on Sunday, after a two-year delay of the \$2.7 billion project.

[Rejecting Point Thomson leases wrong move](#)

Point Thomson gas is needed for any gas pipeline, whether the Denali project or a separate proposal being made by TransCanada Corp. If there are doubts as to the legal status of Point Thomson, no gas from that field can be committed to a pipeline until the court suits are resolved, which could be years.

[Qatar Airways - Passengers will pay US\\$200 fuel \(audio\)](#)

The rising fuel cost will be transferred to you as a passenger - it's as simple as that' the straight talking CEO, Qatar Airways, Akbar Al Baker. Phil Blizzard looks at the impact on global aviation, should oil reach US\$200 per barrel, with opinions from both Emirates and Qatar Airways, on the high cost of fuel.

[Let farmers take on oil to cut gas prices](#)

According to Merrill Lynch, without the increase in biofuels production, oil prices would have been 15 percent higher. The International Energy Agency has reiterated that biofuels are key to keeping the lid on an overheated transportation fuel market. So, keeping in mind where most of a gasoline dollar ends up, consider the irony of blaming biofuels in general and corn ethanol in particular for supposedly driving up food prices in light of the fact that at today's prices one dollar's worth of cornflakes yields only 3 cents of revenue to an American corn farmer. Increased demand for ethanol is one among several factors that have increased that American corn farmer's revenue by about one cent on every corn-flake dollar. Yes, one cent.

[Competing at the pump with your supplier](#)

A gallon of regular gasoline was selling for \$3.71 late last week at the Sunoco station at 1491 N. Providence Rd. in Media.

About 270 yards away, the Sunoco station at 1300 N. Providence Rd. was selling regular for \$3.68.

The two stations were selling gasoline produced by Sunoco Inc. at one of its three

Philadelphia area refineries in South Philadelphia, West Deptford and Marcus Hook.

The difference? The station at 1300 is owned and operated by Sunoco. The station at 1491 is leased from Sunoco by a dealer who must compete on price with his landlord and sole supplier.

[U.S. security linked to our ability to withstand shortages](#)

Now even Daniel Yergin sees the writing on the wall. Yergin is the chair of Cambridge Energy Research Associates, and he is frequently quoted in the press as an authority on oil price developments. Oddly enough, the press turns to him for predictions despite his dismal track record. He has consistently predicted decreasing oil prices during the last decade, as oil has risen from \$12 per barrel to over \$120. His detractors recently commemorated "Triple Yergin Day," the day that oil first hit \$114/barrel, three times the \$38 mark that Yergin projected in 2005. This week, with \$114 oil in the rear-view mirror, Cambridge Energy issued its first forecast for rising oil prices: the company told "The Wall Street Journal" that the price could rise to \$150 before the end of the year.

[Big oil now seeing green](#)

A television commercial touting Chevron's use of clean, renewable energy ends with the tag line "imagine that, an oil company as part of the solution."

Critics call the campaign lip service. Big oil companies, however, say they are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to research and develop alternative and renewable power sources — not only as part of the green movement, but with serious hopes of cashing in when the technologies are broadly commercialized.

[Energy guru to discuss oil alternatives](#)

Longtime energy insider and alternative-energy proponent S. David Freeman believes the United States can completely wean itself from oil, coal and nuclear energy sources in 30 years, and he says the technology exists to do the job.

[A step toward a more sustainable future](#)

Democrats in Congress have blended a good idea — repealing special tax breaks for oil companies — with a bad one, a punitive "windfall profits" tax on Big Oil.

We simply don't believe in punishing business for success, as the special punitive tax on energy companies would do. But special tax breaks to old-line energy companies don't make sense either. If crude oil prices of \$120 a barrel and pump prices of \$4 a gallon aren't enough incentive to explore for new supplies, then no amount of corporate welfare

from Washington will do the trick.

[Basra, Iran... It all comes down to oil](#)

Behind the recent fighting in Basra, which has halted the further withdrawal of British troops from Iraq, lies a three-letter word - oil. It is no coincidence that the day Iraq's prime minister Nouri al-Maliki ordered the Iraqi army into Basra to fight the militia of Moqtada al-Sadr, negotiations began in Jordan for contracts to repair and upgrade existing oil fields around Basra and exploit three huge new fields in the desert further west.

[Public transport fails 26,000 students at the drive-in uni](#)

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, I left Melbourne University for a job at Monash. "What's it like out there?" my old colleagues asked. "Much the same," I replied. "Students still looking for essay extensions. At Melbourne they always pleaded a sick grandmother; at Monash, it's a sick carburettor."

[American looks to harness car power](#)

ABU DHABI — An American inventor is in the UAE to seek partners for his method and system which, he claims, produces electricity from moving vehicular traffic on the roads.

[Summitgoers push for sustainable cities](#)

Is there life after cars? Could your house be transformed into a unit in a mixed-use, multifamily building with a vegetable garden on the roof? Would you drink "toilet to tap" water - purified, recycled sewage - or would you rather die of thirst?

[A green industrial revolution?](#)

Does it matter if some staples run out, or will the same ingenuity that produced oil refining in the late 19th century and the "green revolution" in the late 20th century save us again in the future?

[Government Energy Plan Political Pandering](#)

Whenever Congress puts together a bill attempting to find a solution to some sort of real or imagined problem, my immediate thought is that the bill do one of four things:

- It will worsen the problem at hand
- It will do nothing to solve the problem but instead create a new problem somewhere else
- It will worsen the original problem and create new problems
- In the very best case it will do nothing at all

[Gravediggers of the world unite! Capitalism Must Die....](#)

Food riots are occurring with increasing frequency around the world, food prices in the US are soaring, and 35,000 human beings starve to death each day. Yet instead of pursuing legitimate alternatives to the Peak Oil crisis, we divert significant volumes of precious sugar and corn to the manufacture of biofuels. Meanwhile, the sector of the power elite that “represents” We the People in Congress allows the major oil companies to keep record profits derived by exploiting their oligopoly on a commodity as essential to human survival as food in an industrialized society. “Our” Congress lacks the spine (or is it the will?) to compel rapacious corporate bastards like Chevron to employ reasonable portions of their staggering profits to innovate alternative energy sources. “Big Oil” has been raping the people and the planet far too long in its relentless pursuit of obscene profits.

[Reduce, reuse ... reboot](#)

This being the 21st century, sharing logic on a laptop may not sound revolutionary. But the computer is among the duo’s few holdings that feed on modern power.

The 54-year-old mother and 21-year-old daughter (along with husband/father Sky Yardley and 17-year-old son/brother Sayer Dwinell-Yardley) not only eat food they grow or buy from producers within a 100-mile radius, but also live comfortably in a self-built home with wood heat, solar hot water and a monthly budget of \$400.



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