



DrumBeat: June 28, 2008

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Civilization's golden era is teetering on collapse](#)

The period from 1950 to 2000 will be remembered as the Golden Era of modern civilization, the pinnacle reached by humans after a million years of evolution. This brilliant half-century was sponsored largely by fossil fuels, especially oil, which brought unprecedented economic growth, plentiful transportation and a rich and diverse lifestyle.

But the new millennium has brought the end of cheap oil, and civilization is suddenly teetering on the edge of collapse. Even if we manage to scrape through (and it would require heroic efforts), life will change. We're at one of the most important turning points in history, yet we persistently ignore the coming meltdown and just want to party on. Nero would be proud.

[Touted US Offshore Oil Drilling Expansion Hinges on High Prices](#)

Energy producers are likely to need years more of high oil prices in order to develop any new reserves opened up by the lifting of offshore drilling restrictions.

[Iran NIOC Official: Oil Prices May Go Even Higher](#)

Both oil producers and consumers are worried about a potential shortage of oil in the years ahead as demand outpaces supply growth, and it is likely prices will go even higher unless the problem of excess liquidity in the U.S. economy is resolved, a top official from Iran's national oil company said Friday.

"If there is any panic in production, and it is not due to a shortage today, it is for the future," Hojjatollah Ghanimifard, executive director for international affairs at the National Iranian Oil Co., told Dow Jones Newswires.

[Pakistan: Protests against prolonged outages turning violent](#)

PESHAWAR: The unscheduled hours-long loadshedding has made life miserable for the people who are resorting to violent protests to register their anger but the elected government as well as Wapda authorities continue to remain unmoved.

The frequent power breakdowns have fuelled protests, even at late night, resulting in the blockades of roads and disruption of traffic. Traffic signals and road/street lights also remain off, making hazardous roads more dangerous to travel. Dinner parties are often held in candlelight. And air conditioners and fans have been just left for only display purposes.

[Bangladesh to buy Kuwait oil at higher premium](#)

Bangladesh will import 1.152 million tonnes of oil from Kuwait for consumption over the July-December period by paying a higher premium, a senior energy official said on Saturday.

[Senators ask for Congress - White House energy summit](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Senators on Friday asked for a national summit between Congress and President George W. Bush to end a partisan stalemate and develop a plan for solving America's ongoing energy crisis.

"We believe it is imperative that Congress work through the entire spectrum of potential solutions and develop policies to improve our national energy security and end our reliance on foreign oil," Republican Sen. Olympia Snowe and fellow Democrat Ben Nelson said in a letter to Senate leaders.

[House Rejects 'Use It or Lose It' Drilling Legislation](#)

Rep. Nick J. Rahall won a majority of votes Thursday on his legislation to force companies to use or lose 68 million acres of federal oil and gas leases, but did not get the support needed to pass the bill in an expedited process.

[The Mixed-Use Mixed Message](#)

Why is it so hard to get Americans to buy into building up, not out?

[We "Deserve" What?](#)

Hey, did you hear? We Americans "deserve" something. Apparently we "deserve relief from high gas and oil prices.

At least that's what a person would figure if they read, listen or watch the news. The papers and airwaves are filled with politicians, in both parties, huffing and puffing and promising Americans they are going to find out who's behind high gas prices and make them stop doing whatever it is they are doing.

[Santa Barbara learns to live with offshore drilling](#)

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (MarketWatch) -- As he looks out on the Pacific Ocean in this picturesque coastal enclave, Bobby Torrez can see a ribbon of golden sand that disappears into a rolling surf, pockets of prone sunbathers and frolicking swimmers, and -- off in the hazy distance -- a series of oil platforms.

[Nuclear's Tangled Economics](#)

John McCain says new plants can help solve the energy crisis and address climate change. It's not that simple.

[Juneau Continues To Conserve](#)

It seems the energy crisis that struck Juneau after the city's hydro dam went off line due to an avalanche, may have had an unexpected and beneficial affect on the city's residents. Despite rates lowering back to a more manageable level, data indicates that the city's populous has continued to conserve energy.

[Fuel-efficient rental cars in high demand](#)

As gas prices continue to rise, rental car agencies in Central Texas and across the nation are having trouble meeting consumer requests for more fuel-efficient cars.

"We have a really high demand for small cars, especially with the cost of gas. But we are unable to get them from the dealers because the automakers have no problem selling them from the lot," said Michael Gant, an independent operator for Avis Rent A Car System LLC in Barton Creek Square mall.

[Neighbors, city still haggling over rail options](#)

While most issues along a 3.2-mile light-rail line in north central Phoenix have been resolved, there are major concerns involving less than a half-mile at the northern end of the Northwest Extension.

Some Royal Palm neighborhood residents, who live on the east side of 19th Avenue

between Butler Drive and Dunlap Avenue, don't want to lose a frontage road and want the city to make changes in the light rail route.

[The nuclear option](#)

Gordon Brown has committed Britain to a nuclear future, but can a new generation of reactors shed their murky, costly image in time to solve the looming energy crisis?

[Answer may be blowing in the wind](#)

Britain aims to meet an ambitious EU target on renewable power - a huge business opportunity, but also a major cost.

[Eco-towns: Britain's brave new worlds?](#)

On Monday, the initial public consultation on 'eco-towns' ends. However, opposition to them is just getting started.

[Oil: The Final Warning](#)

Expensive fuel at the pumps is just the start. These battles over the price of oil could be the harbinger of something even scarier. There is a growing realisation that we are teetering on the edge of an economic catastrophe which could be triggered next time there is a glitch in the world's oil supply.

(There's also an interactive graphic [here](#).)

[Disaster Capitalism on a Grand Scale](#)

As the cost of food and fuel spirals out of control, and the mortgage and credit crises all strike at a global level, one has to ask if this is a “perfect storm” or a manufactured opportunity - or both. In her book, *Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Naomi Klein documents the planned manipulation and creation of disasters as opportunities to advance a corporatized free market environment. While generally operating at a national level, the process has also been utilized at a regional level. For example, the deliberate attack during the Asian market collapse. As I have watched the unraveling of the global economy, I have wondered if the scheme has not moved to a global level.

[Market Madness: How Speculators are Manipulating & Profiting from the Global Food and Oil Crisis](#)

Some involved in the debate today, such as Lester Brown and the World Watch Institute, tread close to the Malthusian line in warning of the “population problem” and arguing that it is a major reason why commodity prices are rising. Despite talk of increased food aid-which involves buying more subsidized Western foodstuffs and dumping them in impoverished countries, thereby further undermining their food security by bankrupting small farmers who can't compete against free foods- there is a willingness to let the poor die en masse in adherence to the neoliberal agenda.

[OIL: Prices Won't Be Falling Anytime Soon](#)

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - Although some policy-makers have blamed producing countries for steadily rising oil prices, many experts say more fundamental factors are a growing demand-supply imbalance, a weak dollar, and market speculation.

"Most members of OPEC are already producing at peak capacity, and Saudi Arabia, which has the greatest spare capacity, has been incrementally increasing its production - -with the result that its spare capacity has been plunging to relatively low levels," Dariush Zahedi, a research fellow at the Institute of International Studies in at UC Berkeley, told IPS.

[Sri Lanka: Soaring fuel prices and challenges to air travel](#)

Two thousand eight (2008) can only go down in the annals of the world economy as a year in which a plethora of negative factors such as rapidly rising fuel prices, liquidity tightening policies due to the sub prime crisis and inflation control policies of many emerging economies impacted economies adversely.

When all is over and done, this slackening in growth will in all probability have resulted in a slowing of the pace of traffic growth throughout 2008. Yet, it is encouraging that the continuing steps initiated by the airlines in earlier years to keep controllable costs in check have paid rich dividends for the airlines.

[Wind: The Power. The Promise. The Business](#)

A partial answer to America's energy crisis is springing up. But the struggle to harness the winds of Kansas shows the difficulty in building an industry that threatens the status quo.

[The key to this future is survival](#)

Cory Doctorow, the uber-blogger and award-winning science-fiction writer, says that all

science fiction is about the present. That truism shows itself repeatedly in "World Made by Hand," a novel by James Howard Kunstler set in a post-oil, post-climate-change, post-pandemic, and post-holy-war future that's not too far off.

[Iran says Gulf oil route at risk if attacked](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - The Revolutionary Guards said Iran would impose controls on shipping in the vital Gulf oil route if Iran was attacked and warned regional states of reprisals if they took part, a newspaper reported on Saturday.

..."Naturally every country under attack by an enemy uses all its capacity and opportunities to confront the enemy," Guards commander-in-chief Mohammad Ali Jafari told Jam-e Jam newspaper in some of the toughest language Iran has used so far.

[Fighting forces get no break on fuel costs](#)

Consumers at the gas pump aren't the only ones suffering sticker shock. Military units in Iraq and elsewhere will see another hike in fuel costs next week, the second increase this budget year because of soaring oil prices.

On July 1, the cost for refined fuel used by troops will jump from \$127.68 a barrel to \$170.94 — an astounding 34 percent increase in just six months and more than double what the Pentagon was paying three years ago.

[What's better -- food or petroleum?](#)

The U.S. government currently has about 700 million barrels of oil in the SPR, but its food cupboard is bare. Both situations -- a full gas tank and an empty cupboard -- are the result of governmental policy and legislation. While not having gasoline is viewed a threat to the economy, not having food seems to be acceptable.

[You may be driving up the price of oil](#)

WASHINGTON - All those speculators getting the blame for driving up the price of oil these days — just who are they? For part of the answer, look in the mirror.

The retirement savings of workers across the country, entrusted to pension fund managers, are being plowed into one of the few investments that has delivered phenomenal returns in recent years.

[It's the End of the World As We Know It \(podcast\)](#)

After a YouTube clip on the subject of Peak Oil, we meet journalist Bryandt Urstadt, author of a Harper's story called "Imagine There's No Oil: Scenes from a liberal apocalypse." Urstadt tells Steve Paulson about the grim future the peak oilers are already getting ready for and thinks we should all buy gold.

[Flat-earthier blind to oil facts](#)

Friedman talks as if he wants the president to be an autocratic dictator. Does Friedman not know that with \$4.50 gas and \$100 oil, a large number of working people will not be able to make ends meet with their current income, or retirees on social security will not be able to heat their homes this winter? Airlines and other transportation companies would face bankruptcy? Does he not know that in a democracy, sustained \$100 oil translates into a serious political problem? The oil problem does not lend itself to simplistic solutions. Yet that is precisely what our flat-earthling proposes.

[Peak Scam](#)

There are many problems, of the conceptual and political kind, with the explanations by the proponents of the idea that the current oil prices and the ongoing wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan are the direct results of having reached a peak in the worldwide oil production. In what follows, I will list five fundamental shortcomings of Peak Oil explanations.

[Lack of Export Infrastructure Hinders Kazakhstan's Bid to Become Oil Power](#)

ASTANA, Kazakhstan -- Kazakhstan, with its vast reserves of hydrocarbons, is on a path to become a petro-power on a global scale. That, at least, is the plan of the Kazakh government, oil companies with access to the rich oil fields of Kazakhstan, and those seeking alternatives to OPEC oil. However, as oil production in the landlocked country increases in the years ahead, Kazakhstan could find itself without viable export routes to bring its hydrocarbon wealth to market.

[Chavez says Venezuela will not raise gas prices](#)

CARACAS, Venezuela - President Hugo Chavez says Venezuela has no plans to raise state-subsidized gasoline prices anytime soon.

Gasoline is cheaper in Venezuela than almost anywhere in the world, selling for as little as 12 cents a gallon.

Chavez on Friday pledged to maintain fuel subsidies as a matter of "sovereignty" for the oil-producing nation.

[Iraq earmarks \\$8 million for new state oil company](#)

BAGHDAD - Iraq's government says it will allocate about \$8 million for a fourth state-run oil company.

Saturday's statement by the government says Maysan Oil Company will manage operations to explore, develop, produce and export oil and gas in the Maysan province.

[Nigerian oil union says suspends strike at Chevron](#)

ABUJA (Reuters) - Nigeria's senior oil workers' union said on Friday it was suspending all strike action at the local unit of U.S. energy giant Chevron after reaching agreement in a labour dispute with the firm.

[LA gas station gets hydrogen fuel pump](#)

While there are few hydrogen powered fuel-cell vehicles on the road now, supporters hope the station will show the public that hydrogen can become a mainstream, eco-friendly alternative to petroleum. State officials see it as part of the "Hydrogen Highway," a developing network of fueling stations to promote commercialization of hydrogen-powered cars.

[North America's 1st carbon tax rolls out under fire](#)

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (Reuters) - Civic leader Scott Nelson says he is as worried as anyone about global warming, but that does not make him happy to be one of the first North Americans to pay a carbon tax to curb climate change.

Nelson, mayor of Williams Lake, British Columbia, says record high energy prices mean that the levy, for all its good intentions, could not come at a worst time for residents in his community, a lumber and ranching town about 525 km (340 miles) north of Vancouver.

"The last thing they need now is a tax on top of these soaring prices to add insult to injury," said Nelson, predicting that a taxpayer revolt will eventually scuttle the new tax, which takes effect on July 1.



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