



DrumBeat: August 3, 2008

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[No deal on election bill, bomb kills 12 in Baghdad](#)

BAGHDAD (AP) -- Despite intense U.S. pressure, Iraqi leaders failed Sunday to resolve differences over how to govern the oil-rich city of Kirkuk - a dispute that is blocking provincial elections and stoking tension in the volatile north.

Also Sunday, a truck bomb exploded in a Sunni area of northern Baghdad, killing 12 people, wounding 23 and raising concern about a revival of sectarian conflict.

[Krugman: Can This Planet Be Saved?](#)

It's true that scientists don't know exactly how much world temperatures will rise if we persist with business as usual. But that uncertainty is actually what makes action so urgent. While there's a chance that we'll act against global warming only to find that the danger was overstated, there's also a chance that we'll fail to act only to find that the results of inaction were catastrophic. Which risk would you rather run?

[Rising food prices strain family budgets](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture released a report Thursday saying that rising costs

for fuel, feed and fertilizer propelled grain prices to all-time highs in June, raising the overall price of crops and livestock by 16 percent compared with last year.

...With fresh produce and meats becoming more and more like luxury items, the outer shelves that ring the grocery store are being shopped less by marketers, and boxed, canned and preserved goods are filling their carts. Price is taking precedence, and health and quality are taking a back seat.

[The Nuclear Future That Never Arrived](#)

Understanding how the great hopes of early nuclear power advocates eventually turned into great disappointment may shed some light on nuclear power's future.

[SemGroup woes have ripple effect](#)

Numerous Wichita-area and Kansas companies are on the 900-page list of creditors that SemGroup filed with U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware. Company officials said it owes at least \$2.52 billion just to its lenders.

"I think the greatest fear out there is that this is not an anomaly; that it might be the first of more to come," said Ed Cross, executive vice president of the Kansas Independent Oil and Gas Association.

[Bank Tries to Allay Fears of Instability in Venezuela](#)

CARACAS, Venezuela — The central bank sought on Friday to calm fears of faltering banks a day after President Hugo Chávez unexpectedly announced the nationalization of a large Spanish-owned bank, his latest effort to intensify state control over the economy through takeovers of private companies.

The nationalization of the bank would extend to the financial sector a series of takeovers, which Mr. Chávez initiated last year, in industries including oil, telecommunications, electricity and steel-making.

[Blended fuels may spike the price at the pump](#)

Record crude oil costs are largely responsible for today's \$4 gas prices, but regulators continue to study another factor blamed for regional price spikes in the past — the high number of unique fuel blends used to fight air pollution.

[Energy Boom in West Threatens Indian Artifacts](#)

The consequences of energy exploration for wildlife and air quality have long been contentious in unspoiled corners of the West. But now with the urgent push for even more energy, there are new worries that history and prehistory — much of it still unexplored or unknown — could be lost.

At Nine Mile Canyon in central Utah, truck exhaust on a road to the gas fields is posing a threat, environmentalists and Indian tribes say, to 2,000 years of rock art and imagery. In Montana, a coal-fired power plant has been proposed near Great Falls on one of the last wild sections of the Lewis and Clark trail. In New Mexico, a mining company has proposed reopening a uranium mine on Mount Taylor, a national forest site sacred to numerous Indian tribes.

[Weaker oil price won't erode Gulf growth-economists](#)

Kuwait - DUBAI (Reuters) - Recent weakness in oil prices will not dent economic growth in the Gulf Arab states, experiencing both record expansion and inflation as the energy exporters reap windfall profits, economists say.

[Militant turf war kills three in Nigerian oil city](#)

PORT HARCOURT (Reuters) - A turf war between rival gangs in Nigeria's Niger Delta has spread to the main oil city of Port Harcourt, with sporadic gunbattles in its waterfront slums killing at least three people, witnesses said on Saturday.

[Pakistan: Spiralling LPG prices expose govt's authority](#)

LAHORE: Fresh increases in the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) has once again exposed the loose grip of the Petroleum Ministry and sole regulator on fuel commodity, Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), with the rates of gas increased by Rs 5 per kg, Domestic Rs 55 and commercial cylinder Rs 220.

Disturbingly, producers continue to refute such claims, the LPG marketing companies claim provision of gas at a fixed price while gas distributors point out that they have been supplying gas as per the price given to them by the relevant authority.

[Water woes galore as taps dry up](#)

LAHORE: Non-availability of potable water owing to unscheduled power outages has paralysed daily routine of life in the provincial metropolis, The Post learnt Saturday.

[Cord wood becoming premium in NH](#)

LEBANON, N.H. - Rising energy prices is driving up demand for cord wood and creating a shortage in some areas of northern New England.

[Will Americans Accept Greener Hotel Rooms?](#)

SEAN MacPHERSON, the New York hotelier, has been to Europe dozens of times. And he knows that across the Continent, many hotel rooms have master switches that help reduce power use.

Usually, a guest inserts a card into a slot when entering the room to turn on the electricity. Removing the card (which doubles as the room key) on the way out the door shuts off the power.

It is an easy way to conserve energy. Yet it is almost never seen in the United States. Guests who are in a hurry — or simply don't care about saving electricity — leave TVs, air-conditioners and lights on when there is no one in the room.

[Gas costs, environmental worries lead more bike riders](#)

Bicycling for reasons other than health and recreation is one way more and more people are responding to the arrival of gasoline prices that remain near \$4 a gallon. The idea is to leave that car, truck or SUV in the garage more often.

The increase in bicycling is evident at area bike shops, which are having a hard time keeping pace with a surge in sales that operators think is fueled by higher gas prices. Stripped of 2008 inventories, some well-known bicycle brand names are rolling out their 2009 models several months earlier than usual, said Bernie Camp, sales manager at Russell's Cycling in Washington.

[Stinging Tentacles Offer Hint of Oceans' Decline](#)

From Spain to New York, to Australia, Japan and Hawaii, jellyfish are becoming more numerous and more widespread, and they are showing up in places where they have rarely been seen before, scientists say. The faceless marauders are stinging children blithely bathing on summer vacations, forcing beaches to close and clogging fishing nets.

But while jellyfish invasions are a nuisance to tourists and a hardship to fishermen, for scientists they are a source of more profound alarm, a signal of the declining health of the world's oceans.

[A Push to Wrest More Oil From Land, but Most New Wells Are for Natural Gas](#)

With the advent of \$4-a-gallon gasoline has come a bruising debate in Congress over whether to intensify efforts to drill on federal lands, including part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. But while those hoping to lower prices at the pump are clamoring for new oil, most of the new onshore drilling of the past seven years has produced natural gas, not oil.

[Britain's energy crisis: Twisting in the wind](#)

Rocketing gas prices — up 35% last week — have put the spotlight on Britain's looming energy crisis. With North Sea oil and gas running out, we are becoming dependent on imports and risk being left at the mercy of world prices.

The government hopes two new sources of power, wind and nuclear, will bolster Britain's supply and at the same time help to meet ambitious targets to cut greenhouse-gas emissions.

[In the Air: Questions for T. Boone Pickens](#)

Why do you think your energy plan is superior to others' plans?

My dad once said to me, "Son, a fool with a plan can beat a genius with no plan." I've used that here in this plan that I have — I'm the only one with a plan. Nobody else has a plan.

[The Wind Farmers of East 11th Street](#)

FIVE years ago this month, the lights of the city that never sleeps winked out. It was the kind of situation that would have been tailor-made for a group of young architects who, in the 70s, took over a five-story tenement that didn't rely on the city's electrical grid. They lived at 519 East 11th Street, and they got their power from the wind.

[Reducing oil use 'our survival challenge'](#)

Heinberg's lecture, titled "Kiss Your Gas Goodbye," was largely an update, a sort of "I told you so" of a lecture he gave at the same site three years ago that predicted a decline in global oil production and intensifying competition and chaos by nations to get it.

Heinberg said things have changed since then. "Most of what we talked about then is now history," he told the audience.

[Paying the price for energy myopia](#)

For years now, as the end of cheap gas became an inevitability, there have been any number of predictions about what higher prices would mean for people, for society, for the economy, for the environment, for cities, suburbs and neighborhoods.

While gas was under \$2 a gallon, and Hummers roamed I-64, such talk was speculation and theory. No matter how obvious those effects might be, how predictable - there were vast herds of politicians and other oil industry leaders who made fortunes by denying them.

Experts warned that such short-sightedness was a bad idea, but the alternatives were unpopular, and therefore ignored. And so the nation enters this energy crisis entirely unprepared for it.

[At the Dacha: Consumers in Flower](#)

Rolling in revenue from oil and gas, and driven by the national penchant for exaggeration, an ever-growing number of Russians are in eager pursuit of consumer plenty. Land, homes, furniture, holidays, cars, food, fashion, sports, anything signifying success and choice are avidly devoured.

[Harry Reid: Renewable energy will shape future of state, world](#)

The future of Nevada and of our planet depends on realizing the full potential of clean, renewable energy. Nevada's position as a world leader in the coming global clean energy revolution awaits only our action and commitment. We cannot afford to pass by this door of opportunity without bursting through it.

[1988 fires in Yellowstone and the West were harbingers of things to come](#)

Only the snows of November would put out the fires after they had burned through 1 million acres in and around Yellowstone. You might call the 1988 fires in Yellowstone and across the Northern Rockies "signal fires."

They signaled that we would live in a different world in the American West at the beginning of the 21st century. The fires and ecological processes we assumed were natural had already fallen under the influence of our civilization's dependence on fossil fuels. The 1988 fires also signaled that our world was getting drier and hotter. The drought that year across North America was the worst since the 1930s.

[Australia: Six reasons to phase out coal exports](#)

The export of coal is an important issue for climate campaigners to consider. Australia exports more carbon dioxide in the form of coal than its entire domestic emissions of the gas.

[Saudis prepare for post-petroleum era](#)

Cities-from-scratch are the most ambitious projects to date launched by a kingdom enriched almost entirely by oil since its disparate regions were unified more than seven decades ago. In beginning to construct an economy to survive the end of its natural resources, the Saudi government is drawing on lessons learned during a previous oil boom when profits were squandered in part by spendthrift princes and short-term planning that emphasized infrastructure over education.

"The ruling dynasty is under pressure to show its population that the oil money is being reinvested for the good of the people. The al-Sauds have suffered from the image of a ruling family as corrupt and spending lavishly," said Rochdi Younsi, an analyst with the Eurasia Group, a consulting firm that provides political risk analysis of countries around the world.

With oil prices peaking above \$145 a barrel in recent weeks, the kingdom is reaping an unprecedented windfall from its vast reservoirs, which represent a quarter of the world's proven reserves. Saudi Arabia reported oil income of \$200 billion last year and projects \$700 billion in revenue over the next two years. The kingdom earned an average of \$43 billion annually throughout the 1990s.

But Saudi officials have long feared that oil prices too high would push the world toward alternative fuels, a concern captured by one former oil minister's tart reminder that "the Stone Age did not end for lack of stone."

To meet rising demand, as well as to slow the world's rush to develop alternative energy sources, Saudi officials have raised oil production by 500,000 barrels a day since May.

Though increased production means the Saudi reserves will be depleted faster, the government is using a burst of additional capital to develop an economy it hopes eventually will be untethered from the price of oil.

[Indonesia warns oil output to finish in 10 years' time](#)

JAKARTA: Indonesia's oil watchdog, BPMIGAS, warned on Friday that the country's dwindling oil reserves could be exhausted in 10 years' time if no new reserves are found.

Indonesia has struggled to develop its rich energy resources, turning into a net importer of crude oil in recent years.

..."The declining rate in production is between 8 to 10 percent per year. That means production will finish in 10 years' time if we have not found new reserves," Edi Purwanto, deputy chief of watchdog, BPMIGAS, told reporters.

[Kuwait official sees oil staying above \\$100: report](#)

KUWAIT (Reuters) - Oil was unlikely to fall below \$100 per barrel as strong demand from emerging economies such as China and India put a floor under prices, a member of Kuwait's top oil council said in remarks published on Sunday.

[Herding and lack of market information distort oil prices](#)

Dubai: Momentum chasing and lack of investor efforts in diversifying their portfolios amidst market turmoil have led to the big surge in investments in commodities and their prices, Lehman Brothers, a leading Wall Street Bank said in a special report on Saturday.

[Nigerian military: 2 foreign workers kidnapped](#)

PORT HARCOURT, Nigeria: A Nigerian military spokesman says gunmen have kidnapped two more foreign workers in the country's southern oil region.

[Oil, the Dollar and the Media](#)

The battle goes on today – as oil runs out and the US dollar steadily loses value, together driving the price of fuel, and survival itself, through the roof. Today a woebegone global economic system arrives at the point of asphyxiation. Where we do we go from here? There's no helpful answer without the counsel of more history.

[Sounding alarm when pipelines are threatened](#)

A technology used to detect the location of sniper fire in war zones is helping prevent damage to natural gas pipelines.

[Shell's new president planning for future](#)

The new head of Shell Oil Co. sees heightened oil and gas production, increased reliance on alternative forms of energy and conservation as ways of resolving the nation's energy crisis.

[Exxon Mobil says it's not behind Twitter account](#)

According to the online bio, "Janet" at ExxonMobilCorp in Irving was "Taking on the world's toughest energy challenges."

In the brief, 140-character snippets Twitter allows, she points out the oil giant's philanthropic efforts, answers questions about the company's policies and even laments a shortage of caramel apple sugar babies at one Exxon retail outlet.

This foray into the new media frontier for one of corporate America's blue chip companies might seem ground-breaking if it wasn't for one thing:

"That's not us," said Alan Jeffers, spokesman for Exxon Mobil.

[ANR's clamp-down on composting operation inexplicable](#)

Why is the Douglas administration trying to shut down Vermont Compost? The Montpelier small business provides jobs, low-cost processing of food waste, more than 1,000 dozen eggs every month, and high-quality compost and soil products that are in demand both in state and as far away as the Midwest.

[South Africa's ambitious climate change strategy may include carbon tax](#)

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) - South Africa's government has set out an ambitious proposal to deal with climate change in the coming years, including slapping a possible carbon tax on carbon dioxide-spewing industries.

[Global warming shows itself as trees die out, flowers, glaciers fade](#)

No longer is climate change a distant drama of shrinking polar ice caps. As year-round ice fades from the saw-toothed summits of the Sierra Nevada, as Klieforth and others watch a world change in their lifetimes, it's clear an unwelcome reality is at our doorstep: Global warming is local warming.

Just as rising worldwide temperatures are sowing problems in the far north and parts of Antarctica, so, too, are they bringing big changes to our own northern exposure in the Sierra and other mountain regions.



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