



DrumBeat: August 14, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 14, 2008 - 10:12am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Conflict in Georgia threatens U.S. effort to secure access to Central Asian energy](#)

NEW YORK: When the main pipeline that carries oil through Georgia was completed in 2005, it was hailed as a major success in the U.S. policy to diversify its energy supply. Not only did the pipeline transport oil produced in Central Asia, helping move the West off its dependence on the Middle East, but it also accomplished another American goal: It bypassed Russia.

U.S. policy makers hoped that diverting oil around Russia would keep it from reasserting control over Central Asia and its enormous oil and natural gas reserves, and would provide a safer alternative to Moscow's control over export routes that it had inherited from Soviet days. The tug-of-war with Moscow was the latest version of the Great Game, the 19th-century contest between Imperial Britain and Czarist Russia for dominance in the region.

A bumper sticker that U.S. diplomats distributed around Central Asia in the 1990s summed up Washington's strategic thinking: "Happiness is multiple pipelines."

Now energy experts say that the hostilities between Russia and Georgia could threaten U.S. plans to gain access to more of Central Asia's energy resources in a year when booming demand in Asia and tight supplies helped push the price of oil to records.

[Russia-Georgia conflict raises worries over oil and gas pipelines](#)

Russia's invasion of neighboring Georgia has raised doubts about the security of oil and gas pipelines that cross through the former Soviet republic and the wisdom of further investment in the transport lines.

The foray also put an emphatic stamp on Russia's growing influence over the region's natural resources and, by proxy, over Europe.

[Korean consortium loses rights to Russia oilfield: official](#)

SEOUL (AFP) - A South Korean-Russian consortium has lost its licence to explore and

develop a huge offshore oilfield in Russia's west Kamchatka, a state petroleum company said Wednesday.

The Korea National Oil Corp (KNOC) said the Russian government last month rejected a request to extend a five-year licence granted to the consortium led by KNOC and Russia's state-run Rosneft.

[Utah: 17,000 state workers move to four-day weeks](#)

In a one-year experiment, the state moved most of its employees -- those working in non-emergency services -- to the four-day week August 4. By closing 1,000 state buildings an extra day per week, it hopes to save about \$3 million in utility costs during the trial.

It also hopes employees will save on fuel costs by driving to work one less day per week.

[The secret cause of high oil prices](#)

I do not know what the degree of influence speculators have on oil prices. It is probably small over periods of a year or more, given the relatively smooth rise in prices from \$20 since 2001. However, the fundamentals -- supply and demand for oil -- provide a simple explanation for the rise in oil prices.

Causes of rising prices

1. Twenty years of low prices caused massive underinvestment, since the oil crash in the early 1980's. The return on investment for oil exploration was negative by the late 1990's.
2. Rapid growth in global gdp, the fastest since 1980 - perhaps the fastest since the invention of agriculture (we can only guess at growth before the 1970's).

These two factors affected the entire commodity sector, explaining why commodity prices have risen so far from their lows in the late 1990's.

[Russia: 'Forget' Georgian territorial integrity](#)

GORI, Georgia - Russia's foreign minister declared Thursday that the world "can forget about" Georgia's territorial integrity, and officials said Russia targeted military infrastructure and equipment - including radars and patrol boats at a Black Sea naval base and oil hub.

Two American military planes delivered cargos of aid - including food and medicine - to Georgia's wounded and refugees. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he sees no need

to invoke U.S. military force in the war between Russia and Georgia. He warned, however, that U.S.-Russian relations could suffer for "years to come" if Moscow doesn't retreat.

Russia's president met in the Kremlin with the leaders of Georgia's two separatist provinces - a clear sign that Moscow could absorb the regions. And the comments from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov appeared to come as a challenge to the United States, where President Bush has called for Russia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia."

[Russian court ousts TNK-BP chief](#)

British oil company BP PLC said Thursday that a Russian court has barred the head of its troubled Russian joint venture from office for two years.

"We are very disappointed with this decision," said BP spokeswoman Sheila Williams. "However, Robert Dudley remains CEO of TNK-BP pending completion of an appeal process."

[Pickens says oil won't go below \\$100](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Texas oil billionaire T. Boone Pickens said on Thursday crude prices may soon fall as low as \$110 a barrel amid falling gasoline demand, but should not sink below \$100 because the United States depends heavily on oil imports.

"I don't think it'll drop below \$100," Pickens told Reuters in a telephone interview. "I would say \$110 is where it might go, something like that."

[Nigeria warns oil firms to share gas or be punished](#)

ABUJA (Reuters) - Nigeria's government on Thursday threatened to impose stiff penalties against foreign oil companies that fail to provide a certain amount of natural gas to the domestic market by the end of the year.

President Umaru Yar'Adua, under increasing pressure to rehabilitate a shoddy power sector, indicated he will soon declare a power emergency that would oblige international oil companies to share more of their gas.

The power crisis is one of the biggest brakes on growth in Africa's most populous country.

[Peak Oil Reader: Where To Start Learning About Peak Oil](#)

Scientists have developed a myriad of peak oil forecasts. Some believe that the oil industry already peaked while others claim that it will happen within several decades. Currently, researchers struggle to find techniques to harvest oil from remote areas in order to prevent the peak oil crisis.

[Past and Present: 'Malaise' and the Energy Crisis](#): *Jimmy Carter's speech is remembered for something he never said—we should recall what he did say*

What Carter really did in the speech was profound. He warned Americans that the 1979 energy crisis—both a shortage of gas and higher prices—stemmed from the country's way of life. "Too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does but by what one owns," the president said. Consumerism provided people with false happiness, he suggested, but it also prevented Americans from re-examining their lives in order to confront the profound challenge the energy crisis elicited.

"We've always believed in something called progress," Carter explained. The simple version of this big idea was the faith that "piling up of material" goods would ensure a better life. Carter condemned the idea's naiveté and warned his fellow Americans that they could not live in a world without limits. Selfish individualism (what he once called "me-ism") wouldn't pull us through the crisis.

[Oil-addicted world faces crude awakening](#)

As petrol prices reach record levels, the maker of an award-winning Swiss film on peak oil talks to swissinfo about an issue which is affecting everyone, everywhere.

Described as "one of the most frightening films you are ever likely to see" by British newspaper The Guardian, A Crude Awakening is essential viewing for anyone wanting to understand the current crisis and why the future is far from rosy.

[Automakers fret over resale values of trucks, SUVs](#)

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Phil Awker's ad for a used 2004 Chevrolet Suburban has been languishing in an online classified for more than two months, even though it's priced \$6,000 less than book value.

Billy Roach's 2002 Jeep Wrangler has been up for a month on Philadelphia's Craigslist. He just wants to pay off his loan, Roach says, and he's hoping to get about \$10,000 for it. Book value is about \$2,000 less than that.

Such situations are popping up all over the country, and automakers worry that declining residual values — how much vehicles are worth for resale — will embitter their customer base.

[Georgia Says Russian Missiles Struck BP Pipeline](#)

(Bloomberg) -- A BP Plc-operated oil pipeline that passes through Georgia to the Black Sea port of Supsa was struck by Russian missiles yesterday, the Georgian government said.

A second link that carries oil from Azerbaijan to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, known as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan or BTC pipeline, will reopen in a week after a fire earlier this month, according to Turkey's Energy Ministry.

[China Industrial-Output Growth Slows on Export Orders](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China's industrial-output growth cooled in July to the slowest pace since February 2007 on weaker export orders and factory shutdowns to clear the air for the Olympic Games.

[Exports Account for One-Third of China's Emissions](#)

As Chinese manufacturers feed a growing global appetite for cheap goods, these exports account for a rising share of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, a new study reveals.

Exports are now responsible for one-third of China's emissions, according to a study that will appear in the journal Energy Policy. The researchers describe their analysis as the most systematic study of the subject to date.

[Population Bomb Author's Fix For Next Extinction: Educate Women](#)

It's an uncomfortable thought: Human activity causing the extinction of thousands of species, and the only way to slow or prevent that phenomenon is to have smaller families and forego some of the conveniences of modern life, from eating beef to driving cars, according to Stanford University scientists Paul Ehrlich and Robert Pringle.

[OPEC crude oil output rises 300,000 b/d to 32.77 million barrels per day in July](#)

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) 13 members boosted their collective crude oil production by 300,000 barrels per day (b/d) in July to average 32.77 million b/d over the month, according to a Platts survey of OPEC and oil industry officials just released.

Excluding Iraq, the 12 members bound by output agreements produced an average 30.31 million b/d in July, or 330,000 b/d more than June's 29.98 million b/d and 637,000 b/d in excess of their 29.673 million b/d target, the survey showed.

[Oil and economy on the devil's seesaw](#)

Oil's rocky ride to the stratosphere seems to be over. The world price, which flirted with \$150/b altitude in July, hesitated for a while, then turned around and began to tumble back to Earth like some disabled wreckage.

But this is not the development everybody hoped for -- the healthy, market-induced lessening of demand for an increasingly expensive resource, substituting away from it. The mainspring behind the turnaround is a worldwide slowdown. Recovery of lost momentum would redirect prices upward again.

We are witnessing the end of the beginning of the world's oil problem and not vice versa.

[Iran aims to boost oil sales to China, India](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - The world's fourth-largest oil exporter Iran plans to boost shipments to fast-growing energy consumers China and India and may reduce the flow to other buyers, a top Iranian oil official said on Thursday. The United States has sought to isolate Iran over its nuclear programme, which Iran says is for purely peaceful purposes.

State-run companies of Asian economies keen to secure future energy supplies are less susceptible to U.S. pressure to stay out of the Islamic Republic and are taking a bigger role in its energy sector.

[Greer: Idols of the marketplace](#)

Just as it's clearly not true that the unregulated market automatically brings prosperity – the invisible hand, it turns out, is quite capable of giving us the finger – the issues raised in the last two posts suggest that it's also not true that all economic activity ought to be subject to the market's vagaries. Economies outside the market system could play a large role in helping to balance out the market's wobbles. The household economy is one potential balancing force; another could come from local economies driven by the very different forces of reciprocity and custom, in which surplus products are exchanged as gifts between neighboring families. Other economies beyond the market also deserve exploration.

[Canada: Shortage puts gas stations in a bind](#)

More Petro-Canada stations are running dry in Calgary, forcing some retailers to wait for crucial deliveries which could be driven by truck drivers flown in from Ontario.

At least six of the company's approximately 30 Calgary service stations had run completely empty as of Wednesday, and it's expected they won't be the last.

"There's going to be more that run out over time than there are today," said Petro-Canada spokeswoman Kelli Stevens.

[Garcia says Peru not in midst of an energy crisis](#)

LIMA (Reuters) - Peruvian President Alan Garcia worked to calm concerns about the country's growing, if temporary, energy shortage on Wednesday, saying Peru is not in the midst of a crisis.

In the last two weeks, Peru has experienced two blackouts as spiking demand, a shortage of rains and poor infrastructure have combined to crimp power supplies. Garcia has met with energy industry leaders to discuss the problem.

"There is no energy crisis. What happened is that it rained less this year -- so the growth in electric energy created with gas has to compensate for electric energy produced by hydro power," Garcia told reporters.

[Bosnia Faces Fuel Shortage](#)

Sarajevo _ Bosnia is facing a growing shortage of fuel after several big regional suppliers were reported to have reduced shipments to the country.

Without any oil production of its own, Bosnia depends for supplies on large regional oil companies such as Croatia's Ina, Hungary's Mol and Slovenia's OMV and Petrol. But those companies have all reduced shipments, the Bosnian media reported on Wednesday.

The main reason for the disruption seems to be increased demand for fuel across the Mediterranean region, especially in Turkey and Croatia, mostly due to the summer vacation season and a large influx of tourists.

[Kenya mired in energy crisis, seeks investment](#)

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Kenya is suffering an energy crisis and desperately needs to boost "dismal" private investment in the sector, the east African country's prime minister warned on Wednesday.

Like many nations on the world's poorest continent, Kenya has been battered by record

oil prices this year that pushed up transport and food costs and ate into government spending plans.

[Pelosi calls on Bush to open oil reserves](#)

SAN FRANCISCO (KGO) -- Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi recently pitched a plan to bring down gasoline prices by dipping into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, showing a shift in Democrats' response to the energy crisis.

[Democrats distort oil drilling debate](#)

The issue isn't about lowering gas prices today but securing oil supplies for the future.

[Udall reverses opposition to offshore drilling](#)

Battered on the energy issue for weeks, Democratic Senate candidate Rep. Mark Udall moved Wednesday to close the distance with his Republican opponent on the issue, calling for more domestic drilling and reversing his long-standing opposition to drilling off America's shores.

Both were sharp turnarounds for a man who has made the expansion of renewable energy a cornerstone of his career and who has consistently dinged the aggressive drilling policies of the Bush administration during this campaign.

[Converting gas-powered cars to electric](#)

Both Horsley and Kennington are fed up. They're among a growing number of Americans who are refusing to wait for big-car manufacturers to deliver mainstream electric vehicles, called EVs. Not only have they rebelled against the status quo by ripping out their gas-guzzling engines and replacing them with zero-emission electric motors, they say just about anyone can do it.

[Farmers on the Cutting Edge of Energy](#)

TRIMONT, Minn. -- One would hardly know it driving down Main Street, but this tiny prairie town surrounded by corn and soybean fields is at the forefront of America's fight to wean itself off oil.

Long before gas topped \$4 a gallon or Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens embraced renewable energy, a group of farmers here banded together to build a massive wind farm.

Today their vision is paying off.

[Michael Klare - Russia and Georgia: All About Oil](#)

In commenting on the war in the Caucasus, most American analysts have tended to see it as a throwback to the past: as a continuation of a centuries-old blood feud between Russians and Georgians, or, at best, as part of the unfinished business of the Cold War. Many have spoken of Russia's desire to erase the national "humiliation" it experienced with the collapse of the Soviet Union 16 years ago, or to restore its historic "sphere of influence" over the lands to its South. But the conflict is more about the future than the past. It stems from an intense geopolitical contest over the flow of Caspian Sea energy to markets in the West.

[Saudi Arabia Energy Brief: Largest Producer; Fastest Growing Consumer](#)

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest producer and exporter of total petroleum liquids and is currently the world's second largest crude oil producer behind Russia. Saudi Arabia's economy remains heavily dependent on oil and petroleum-related industries, including petrochemicals and petroleum refining. The International Monetary Fund reported that in 2006, the last available data, oil export revenues accounted for around 90 percent of total Saudi export earnings and state revenues and above 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

[Energy Watch Part II: Refining Woes Remain](#)

And the situation won't improve. The EIA projects declines in US petroleum consumption through the end of 2009. So, what are the refiners doing to deal with this situation? They're either trying to sell some of their refineries or they're trying to figure out a way to ride out the tide of high crude prices. As the price of crude has fallen over the past few weeks, refining stocks have recovered a bit but all are still quite near 52-week lows.

[Psychologists determine what it means to think 'green'](#)

Those who make human behavior their business aim to make living "green" your business.

Armed with new research into what makes some people environmentally conscious and others less so, the 148,000-member American Psychological Association is stepping up efforts to foster a broader sense of eco-sensitivity that the group believes will translate into more public action to protect the planet.

"We know how to change behavior and attitudes. That is what we do," says Yale

University psychologist Alan Kazdin, association president. "We know what messages will work and what will not."

[In The Event That: You're Having Trouble Turning Cookie Sheets Into Solar Panels](#)

When peak oil is 50 years past and global warming has brought humanity to a standstill, you'll wish you had started your own sustainable collective. The best time to dig in, of course, is not post-apocalypse — it's right now. This evening, Scott Kellogg, one of the founders of the Rhizome Collective in Austin, Texas, will lecture on the merits of sustainable collectives and give advice on how to start your own.

Good news is, you don't have to move out to the country to create a new eco-village; you can do it right here in Philly. Although the Rhizome model is applicable to any setting, it's designed for urban areas, which are home to more than 50 percent of the world's population. "A lot of people want to go off and create separate sustainable communities," says Kellogg. "But cities create a lot of waste products that can be used to create fertility. There's so much existing infrastructure that can be worked with."

[How much less can Americans drive?](#)

It seems that there is little political will to curb America's car culture. Even as record ridership is straining mass transit, transportation officials seem more concerned about maintaining roads. In late July, amid worries that decreased driving is depleting federal funding for road upkeep, Transportation Secretary Mary Peters proposed a short-term solution of borrowing money from mass transit funding.

[Trains, trams and automobiles: getting our priorities right](#)

IT IS about time that Melburnians began to confront the sausage rather than the sizzle in the transport debate. Rapid population growth (due to high immigration) and rising oil prices (due to peak oil) mean that public transport will have to bear an increasing share of the burden of providing personal mobility if this city is to remain liveable.

[The old future's gone: Progressive strategy amid cascading crises](#)

We're in trouble, on all fronts, and the trouble is wider and deeper than most of us have been willing to acknowledge. We should struggle to build a road on which we can walk through those troubles -- if such a road is possible -- but I doubt it's going to look like any path we had previously envisioned, nor is it likely to lead anywhere close to where most of us thought we were going.

Whatever our individual conception of the future, we all should re-evaluate the assumptions on which those conceptions have been based. This is a moment in which we

should abandon any political certainties to which we may want to cling. Given humans' failure to predict the place we find ourselves today, I don't think that's such a radical statement. As we stand at the edge of the end of the ability of the ecosystem in which we live to sustain human life as we know it, what kind of hubris would it take to make claims that we can know the future?

[Climate at 'a critical point,' scientist says](#)

The global warming debate, a top NASA scientist says, is over. Now, he adds, the issue has turned urgent.

"We have reached a critical point," NASA scientist James Hansen said Tuesday in an interview. "If we don't get on a different path within the next several years, then we're going to pass tipping points in the climate system with large consequences that will be felt especially by our children and grandchildren."

[The Peak Oil Crisis: The Washington Post Meets Peak Oil Lite](#)

For those who aren't ready to buy into the concept of world oil production going into decline in the next few years, there is a less worrisome subset making the rounds known as "peak oil lite."

Those adopting this outlook have rightly noted that gasoline is selling for unheard of prices and don't subscribe to the idea that evil speculators, evil oil companies, or evil OPEC is the cause of this unfortunate happenstance. They also correctly recognize demand for oil, especially from China, India and oil producing states, has outstripped the ability of the oil industry to increase supplies fast enough.

Notably absent from peak oil lite, however, is the notion world oil production has not increased appreciably in the last 3 or 4 years and is poised to start dropping very soon. Thus "peak lite" believers readily acknowledge there is a supply/demand problem pushing up prices, but do not go so far as to internalize the serious consequences of declining world production.

[BP says it has reopened gas taps into Georgia pipeline](#)

LONDON (AFP) - Energy giant BP said on Thursday that it had resumed pumping gas into the South Caucasus pipeline in Georgia and that the Baku-Supsa oil link remained shut.

[Oil edges above \\$116 after rise on U.S. data](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Oil rose above \$116 a barrel on Thursday, extending gains after a \$3 rise the previous session following a larger-than-expected drop in U.S. crude and gasoline inventories.

Concerns about the security of energy transit routes through the Caucasus also provided some support, although analysts said the mood was still predominantly bearish.

[Nigeria to leave oil-rich Bakassi](#)

CALABAR, Nigeria (Reuters) - Nigeria will relinquish control of the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula to its neighbour Cameroon on Thursday despite fears the handover will provoke attacks from local armed groups opposed to the change.

[Gazprom may have to share export pipelines - paper](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's anti-monopoly agency is proposing to change legislation on gas exports that would force gas monopoly Gazprom to share export pipelines with independent producers, a newspaper reported on Thursday.

[Japan interested in oil projects in north-east Russia](#)

YAKUTSK (RIA Novosti) - Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC) has said it plans to join oil deposit exploration and development in the Republic of Yakutia in north-east Russia, the republic's administration said Thursday.

[Natural Gas: Clean Fuel with a Dirty Little Secret](#)

The natural gas market has a dirty little secret: **The U.S. natural gas market is currently massively oversupplied.**

[At Long Last, Twin Breakthroughs On Energy](#)

Two big facts emerged recently in the national debate over energy, one pleasing to the Increase Supply people and the other equally satisfying to the Decrease Demand folks.

The two facts are these: Americans favor drilling for more domestic oil supply, and lowering demand really does bring prices down notably and quickly.

[Raymond J. Learsy: Why Does Abiotic Oil Theory Ignite Peak Oil Theorists' Fulminations??](#)

Abiotic Oil, calling into question the overarching theory that the origins of fossil fuel are of biological/organic origin was touched upon in my previous post, "Oil's Big Dirty Secret as Producers Rake in Hundreds of Billions".

The comments to the post were wide ranging and the Peak Oil missionaries were apoplectic that one dared question their gospel intoning the sanctity of the biological origin of fossil fuels and its rapidly diminishing availability. Clearly the words "Abiotic Oil" stir up heated passions and clear concern among those in the oil patch who would be impacted were the theory to take hold.

[Inflation fastest in 17 years; index jumps 0.8% in July](#)

Prices were up 5.6% from a year ago, sharpest year-over-year rise since 5.7% in January 1991 and well above the 5.1% increase that economists had forecast.

Energy prices rose 4% in July after a 6.6% June gain and were up 29.3% on a year-over-year basis. Food costs rose 0.9% following a 0.8% June increase and put food costs 6% higher than a year ago.

[Airlines embrace oil decline, but no time to party](#)

CHICAGO/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A 23 percent drop in oil prices since mid-July brightens the outlook for troubled airlines, but clouds remain thick over the industry, with little hope that carriers will scale back downsizing plans or repeal unpopular fees.

The U.S. airline industry has fallen on hard times, as rising fuel prices have far outpaced a series of fare hikes that began in 2006. Economic weakness, meanwhile, threatens to erode demand and rob carriers of the pricing power they reclaimed in the wake of a low-fare war with newer, leaner airlines.

[Automotive 2020 Global Study: New Breed of Consumers Seek Intelligent, Connected and Hybrid Vehicles in 'Virtual Garages'](#)

TRAVERSE CITY, MI, Aug 13, 2008 (MARKET WIRE via COMTEX) -- The IBM Automotive 2020 Study, based on a global collaboration with 125 automotive industry leaders, today revealed an industry grappling with significant change driven by increasingly sophisticated consumers.

As these consumers seek out a comprehensive mobility experience, industry experts predict that flexible transportation services will replace the purchase of personal vehicles for multiple uses, and intelligent vehicles will cater to consumer demands for greater information, safety, and environmental responsibility.

[Automakers scramble to offer more fuel efficiency](#)

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich (Reuters) - Chrysler LLC on Wednesday outlined plans to launch a new car-based SUV modeled after the Jeep Cherokee, as other major automakers took the spotlight at an industry conference to pitch their own hurried responses to the surging demand for more fuel-efficient cars.

A senior Ford Motor Co executive said the No. 2 U.S. automaker expects small car sales to increase sharply and achieve double-digit growth in profit margins on a class of fuel-efficient vehicles U.S. automakers had long neglected in their home market.

[China raises tax on big cars to curb pollution](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - China said on Wednesday it would raise taxes on large passenger vehicles and cut the tax on small cars from next month to cut pollution and fuel use.

But the policy may only have a limited impact on boosting fuel efficiency in the world's second-largest oil user, as majority of the cars will be spared the tax hike as Beijing seeks to prevent more damage to an already slowing auto market.

[Genomics Of Plant-based Biofuels](#)

Genomics is accelerating improvements for converting plant biomass into biofuel—as an alternative to fossil fuel for the nation's transportation needs, reports Eddy Rubin, Director of the U.S. Department of Energy Joint Genome Institute (DOE JGI), in the journal Nature.

[Ethanol industry improves product and PR efforts](#)

NEW YORK (Associated Press) - Ethanol producers on Wednesday railed against what they described as a smear campaign by opponents who have branded the industry responsible for rising food prices.

"Today, we face strong opposition, and their weapon primarily is the press," Bob Scott, president of the American Coalition for Ethanol, told hundreds of producers gathered in Omaha for the group's trade show.

[Environment? Economics? Hydro-Québec project fails grade](#)

The EIS reveals that by 2020, Hydro-Québec will increasingly need power from the Romaine to satisfy domestic needs. That's Hydro-speak for the hundreds of new

megawatts the Charest government recently promised Alcan and Alcoa. The utility insists the Romaine project's environmental impact remains slight compared to similar-sized hydro complexes. Still, mercury embedded in the soil will enter the river once the land is flooded, likely making fish from the Romaine inedible for at least two decades. The Rivers Foundation, a Quebec environmental group, also fears the dams will destroy spawning grounds for Atlantic salmon and slow the flow of nutrients to sea life in the St. Lawrence estuary. Forests flooded by the project will destroy the habitat of several species, especially woodland caribou, and release millions of tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere.

Indeed, while hydroelectricity has been promoted as a cleaner alternative to greenhouse gas-producing coal- and gas-generated power, its image has been tarnished in recent months as international attention increasingly focuses on the impacts of China's vast Three Gorges dam-building exercise and plans in Chile to erect five dams on two pristine rivers in Patagonia.

[As energy demands grow, nuclear deserves new look](#)

Remaining nuclear skeptics — including Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama — insist that safety and waste disposal issues be resolved before the nation builds more nuclear plants. That seems like a disingenuous prescription for deferring new plants indefinitely.

At the same time, though, nuclear cheerleaders such as Republican presidential candidate John McCain, who has called for building 45 plants by 2030, are overlooking nuclear's more serious problem. At as much as \$12 billion apiece, the plants are breathtakingly expensive to build, and even with substantial government subsidies, utilities are wary.

[A risky technology](#)

For several years, the nuclear industry has been touting nuclear power as a major solution for global warming. In fact, an increase in U.S. nuclear capacity could help reduce global warming — but it could increase threats to public safety and security at the same time.

Nuclear power is an unforgiving technology that requires vigilance by reactor operators and federal regulators. A large-scale release of radioactive material — triggered by an accident or terrorist attack — could kill thousands of people from radiation poisoning within weeks and tens of thousands from cancer within decades, and cause hundreds of billions of dollars in damages.

[Scorching summer days to sizzle even more in 2100: Study](#)

OSLO - Dangerously hot days are set to become more scorching by 2100 because of climate change with the U.S. Midwest or the Mediteranean region sizzling well above 40 degrees Celsius, Dutch scientists said on Wednesday.

They said the likely jump in temperatures on the hottest summer days would far outpace the average of year-round global warming this century projected by the U.N. Climate Panel. Heatwaves can be a big threat to human health.



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