



DrumBeat: August 25, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 25, 2008 - 10:15am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Abandon 19th Century Fuels and Move Toward 21st Century Responses \(Calif. Dem. Candidate Debbie Cook\)](#)

Every American needs to understand that the world has now experienced three years of flat oil production and during those three years, another 230 million energy consumers were added to the population of the world. It is obvious to any observer that oil production, for whatever reason, whether geologic or geopolitical in nature, is not going to keep up with demand. Fifty-four of the 65 oil-producing nations have entered irreversible production declines. This is a matter of fact, not opinion. We can either continue to debate and watch opportunities pass us by or develop a sustainable future that reduces world tensions and our energy vulnerability.

Just because oil is found on American soil, does not make it American oil. Unless America is preparing to nationalize its resources, that oil will belong to an oil company. And that oil will go into a world market that we do not control—a market that is subject to the whims of OPEC, terrorists in Nigeria, Russian bullying, China roaring, and our own wasteful energy habits.

Many of the claims made by politicians and pundits can be tested against the Energy Information Agency's database. How many times have we heard that American oil technologies would turn around the sagging oil production of nationalized oil fields in Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela. If these technologies are so wonderful, how do you explain US production figures. After the US peaked in 1970 there was a huge spurt in drilling activity as evidenced by the gold line in the following chart...

[Analyst warns of looming global climate wars](#)

The prospect of global wars driven by climate change is not something often discussed publicly by our political leaders.

But according to one of America's top military analysts, governments in the US and UK are already being briefed by their own military strategists about how to prepare for a world of mass famine, floods of refugees and even nuclear conflicts over resources.

Gwynne Dyer is a military analyst and author who served in three navies and has held academic posts at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and at Oxford.

Speaking about his latest book, *Climate Wars*, he says there is a sense of suppressed panic from the scientists and military leaders.

...In *Climate Wars*, even the most hopeful scenarios about the impact of climate change have hundreds of millions of people dying of starvation, mass displacement of people and conflict between countries competing for basic resources like water.

[Study Gauges Meadowlands Sea-Level Rise ; 7 Stations Set Up in Region](#)

Scientists are setting up monitoring stations throughout the Meadowlands to chart rising sea levels and prepare for flooding that could result from global warming.

Information gathered from the seven stations will eventually show which marshes, neighborhoods and business areas are most susceptible to rising waters.

Water levels in the Meadowlands have risen on average 1.7 to 1.8 millimeters each year for the last 15 years, said Francisco Artigas, director of the Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute.

"It will only continue unless we reduce our carbon emissions," Artigas said.

[Russia's Achilles Heel](#)

Russia understands that power in a large swath of the world — Europe, the former Soviet Union and parts of the Middle East — can be exerted from control of oil and natural gas pipelines. That's how the U.S. has inserted its power into Russia's backyard — through the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline that crosses the country of today's conflict, Georgia. Now, Vladimir Putin intends to build on Russia's restored power by erecting two gigantic new natural gas pipelines into Europe, which already relies on Russia for almost a third of its gas.

Here's where the Achilles Heel comes in. One of these pipelines — South Stream — would pass through nations like Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia and Austria. These are countries in which the U.S. has influence.

[OPEC likely to keep output steady in Sept: Source](#)

DUBAI: OPEC is likely to keep oil output policy unchanged at its meeting in September as prices remain high despite a sharp fall from July's peak, an OPEC source said on Monday.

[Venezuela says advancing in talks with Conoco](#)

CARACAS (Reuters) - Venezuela is advancing in talks with U.S. oil giant ConocoPhillips and will meet with the company next week to discuss the 2007 nationalization of its assets, a Venezuelan official said on Monday.

Conoco has filed arbitration proceedings against Venezuela for last year's nationalization of heavy oil projects in the Orinoco Belt, but has maintained simultaneous discussions to reach an out-of-court compensation settlement.

[Utah: Mileage vs. safety? Number of natural gas car conversions explodes](#)

Many of the vehicles - including the nearly 700 that earned one-time tax breaks last year - are professionally equipped, safe and certified by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Others are backyard jobs with worn tanks and faulty exhaust systems, endangering both motorists and the Wasatch Front's air, Clean Cities Director Robin Erickson said. Those who buy old tanks or don't install kits properly are creating car bombs.

[The man who saw the future](#)

This is Arcosanti, 70 miles from Phoenix, Arizona. It's a curious taste of what an environmentally friendly US town could look like, but probably never will. It was designed by Paolo Soleri, an Italian-born architect, who originally came to Arizona to work for Frank Lloyd Wright, but soon set off on his own idiosyncratic path. Soleri is a genuine visionary architect. In the early 1970s, his designs and fantastical writings made him a big-hitter in architectural circles, up there with other postwar sci-fi modernists such as Buckminster Fuller. Then he all but disappeared, becoming, for the past 30 years, little more than an obscure curiosity. Yet today, as the world wakes up to the grim realities of climate change, peak oil and sustainability, Soleri's path looks less idiosyncratic. In fact, he's now something of a guru: in demand on the lecture circuit and, recently, offering sage advice in Leonardo DiCaprio's "how can we save the world?" documentary The 11th Hour.

[Bolivian Oil, Gas Installations under Military Protection](#)

La Paz (Prensa Latina) The Bolivian government put all oil and gas installations under military protection after opposition groups threatened to cut supplies to Brazil and Argentina.

Cabinet spokesman Ivan Canelas said President Evo Morales had ordered the Armed forces to protect oil wells, gas plants and pipelines.

Authorities from Chaco, southern Bolivia, had announced they will close gas valves to Argentina and Paraguay on Monday.

The government regarded the announcement as extreme.

[Oil Companies Win \\$1 Billion Reimbursement Over Drilling Leases](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Devon Energy Corp. and Anadarko Petroleum Corp. were among a dozen oil companies that should be reimbursed more than \$1 billion they paid the U.S. for leases to drill off the California coast, an appeals court ruled today.

The companies or their predecessors bought three dozen leases from 1968 to 1984 to explore for and develop oil and gas resources in the outer continental shelf off California. Laws passed by Congress to limit energy production near U.S. coastlines violated the lease terms, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims ruled in a 2002 lawsuit.

[High gas prices drive down traffic fatalities](#)

WASHINGTON - Roll back the clock to 1961: John F. Kennedy was inaugurated president. The Peace Corps was founded. The Dow Jones industrials hit 734. Gasoline reached 31 cents a gallon.

And the number of people killed in U.S. traffic accidents that year topped 36,200.

This year, gasoline climbed over \$4 a gallon, and the traffic death toll — according to one study — appears headed to the lowest levels since Kennedy moved into the White House.

[Russia recognises Georgia rebel regions](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's parliament unanimously approved resolutions on Monday calling for the recognition of two rebel regions of Georgia as independent states, a move likely to worsen already strained relations with the West.

Both houses of parliament, which are controlled by Kremlin loyalists, swiftly approved non-binding resolutions calling on President Dmitry Medvedev to recognise the pro-Moscow breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

[Saving money by driving diesels](#)

With soaring gas prices prompting more Americans to look for alternatives at the pump, the federal government is extending tax credits to the option least favored by drivers: diesel.

[TVA fertilizer technology used worldwide - but few new products since 1970s](#)

About 75% of fertilizers and fertilizer technology used around the world today were developed or improved during the 1950s to 1970s by scientists and engineers at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the United States, says John Shields, a former TVA official. Shields is now Interim Director of IFDC, An International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development, based in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

"An investment of \$41 million in fertilizer research through 1981 returned an incredible \$57 billion to U.S. agriculture," Shields says. "That doesn't include benefits of the technology to the rest of the world."

But inadequate public funding caused closure of the TVA fertilizer research program in the early 1990s. Today, publicly funded fertilizer research and development has essentially ceased—and so has the flow of new and more efficient fertilizers and fertilizer manufacturing technologies.

[Iran launches submarine production line](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran has launched a submarine production line to ensure its forces are equipped to maintain security in the vital oil shipping route, the Strait of Hormuz waterway, the defence minister said on Monday.

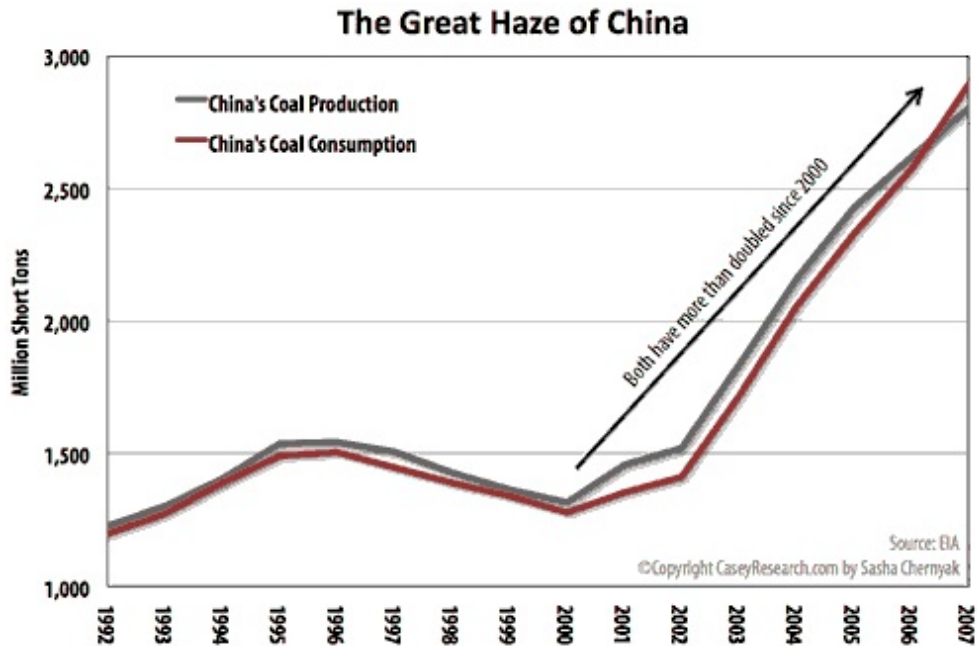
[Michael Klare: Past Its Peak](#)

Unlike the oil 'shocks' of the 1970s, the current energy crisis is almost certain to be long-lasting. None of the quick fixes proposed by pundits and politicians – drilling in protected wilderness and maritime areas, curbs on commodity speculators, pressure on members of Opec to increase output – is likely to have much impact. In 1973-74 and again in 1979-80, events in the Middle East led to a sharp reduction in the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, causing a contraction in global supplies and a rise in energy prices, and thus sparking a global recession. But when equilibrium of a sort was restored to the region, the oil began to flow again and the crisis passed. Now, however, the imbalance between supply and demand is largely due to factors inherent in oil commerce itself – and so is less easily solved.

[Raymond James Warns Any 'Meaningful' Oil Disruptions Will Cause 'Significantly Higher' Prices](#)

"The world now has a precariously balanced oil market that cannot withstand any meaningful oil supply disruptions without significantly higher oil price implications," warns a new report from Raymond James & Associates, the investment banking firm.

[The Great Haze of China](#)



Coal production in China has more than doubled over the last seven years, reversing the decline seen from 1996 to 2000. In 2007, China consumed 2.9 billion short tons of coal, representing more than one third of the world total. As you might have guessed, this makes it both the world's largest consumer and producer of coal.

Even though internal demand has been skyrocketing, China has been able to dig into its massive coal reserves and remain a coal exporter – until last year. In 2007, China's growth finally outpaced its ability to produce, making it a net importer of coal.

[Kuwait pumps 2.5 million bpd of oil](#)

KUWAIT — OPEC-member Kuwait is pumping around 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil and aims to boost capacity to 3 million bpd in the first half of 2009, a top oil official said on Monday.

The world's seventh-largest oil producer is sticking to the production target of 2.53 million bpd set by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and has about 200,000 bpd to 300,000 bpd of spare capacity, said Saad al-Shuwaib, the chief executive of state oil firm Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC).

[OPEC to seek to curb oil price fall in Sept-Iran](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran's oil minister said on Monday he expected OPEC to work on preventing the falling trend in crude prices and would also study oversupply in the market, the oil ministry's news website, SHANA, reported.

It seems that OPEC's member states are intending to prevent the declining trend in oil

prices,' Oil Minister Gholamhossein Nozari was quoted as saying about the September meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

[TNK-BP downstream head resigns](#)

MOSCOW (RIA Novosti) - TNK-BP announced on Monday the resignation of its Executive Vice President for Downstream, Anthony Considine.

"Mr. Considine tendered his resignation in a letter dated August 25th. His resignation will be effective from September 15th," the Russo-British oil venture said in a news release.

[Venezuela, S. Africa to sign energy deal](#)

CAPE TOWN — Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is expected to sign a bilateral energy agreement with South Africa next week paving the way for state-owned oil company PetroSA to acquire an oil-producing asset in Venezuela.

[Nigerian gunmen hijack oil supply vessel in delta](#)

LAGOS (Reuters) - Gunmen hijacked an oil supply boat with eight Nigerian crew members, the latest attack in Nigeria's restive Niger Delta region, military and private security sources said on Monday.

[Petrobras Falls on Concern Brazil May Raise Oil Taxes](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA, Brazil's state-controlled oil company, fell the most in a week in Sao Paulo trading after Itau Corretora said the government is likely to raise taxes on existing oil concessions in the so-called pre- salt fields once production begins.

[Norway eyes eco investment role for wealth fund](#)

STAVANGER, Norway (Reuters) - Oil-rich Norway is pushing ahead with plans to use part of its \$400 billion sovereign wealth fund to invest in renewable energy development, a deputy finance minister said on Monday.

[Australia: Tyranny of distance fuels rising grocery prices](#)

REMOTE towns in NSW - not only Aboriginal communities - are struggling with grocery

prices pushed higher by rising freight costs.

In Tibooburra they pay \$4.75 for two litres of milk, which Sydneysiders can buy at a supermarket for \$2.59.

"The freight prices we have to pay to get the bare necessities up is unbelievable," said Cindy McGeorge, who owns Corner Country Store in Tibooburra, in north-western NSW.

[German Churches Set Up Energy Firm to Fight Rising Fuel Prices](#)

To counter rising fuel prices, a group of Catholic and Protestant Churches in southern Germany has set up its own one of a kind non-profit energy company to supply gas to parishes and charitable institutions.

[Dark days ahead?](#)

The energy-rich Gulf faces a power shortage of unprecedented proportions, as rapid growth in consumption has left producers unable to keep up with demand.

[Tennessee Valley Authority boosts rates 20 percent](#)

KNOXVILLE — TVA electricity rates will jump another 20 percent in October, a move Tennessee Valley Authority officials say is necessary to absorb more than \$2 billion of increased costs for coal, natural gas and purchased power in the next year.

TVA directors approved a \$12.6 billion budget Wednesday that includes its biggest single-rate increase in more than three decades, reflecting both a fuel-cost adjustment and an increase in TVA's base rates.

[Maasai 'can fight climate change'](#)

Africa should make more use of the skills of its nomadic peoples to help combat the challenges of climate change, the aid agency Oxfam says.

Pastoral communities such as the Maasai in Kenya and Tanzania could pass on survival skills, says a new report.

The Maasai have learnt over generations how to farm in deserts and scrublands.

Instead of being respected, though, the pastoralists have been marginalised politically, their way of life deemed out-dated and irrelevant, Oxfam says.

[Growing green in Detroit](#)

“Food is essential to daily life,” says Ashley Atkinson, director of urban agriculture for the Greening of Detroit, which started in 1989 as a reforestation program for the city’s neighborhoods, boulevards, and parks.

Today, with 25 percent of the land in the city vacant due to the removal of many residential and commercial buildings, Ms. Atkinson has been instrumental in developing gardening and youth education programs to help stabilize and redevelop neighborhoods.

[Iran Plans to Boost Crude Exports to China, India](#)

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iran is likely to cut crude exports to some global buyers in a bid to increase sales to China and India, an Iranian oil official said.

"China and India have growing economies and it is completely clear that they need more energy resources," the head of International Affairs department of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), Ali Asgar Arshi, said.

"We will open offices in Bombay and Beijing where they will be concentrating on contracts with the purpose of increasing the crude oil sale. If the levels of oil sale to these countries increase then oil sales to certain other countries will fall and supply to the free market would, also, decrease," he added.

[Prof. Harold Hill's America](#)

Despite the widespread criticism of McCain's claims about drilling, his proposal seems to have lifted him in the polls. Members of the peak oil movement take note! Gloomy Gusses have a hard time elevating dopamine levels in people. For the few who will listen, careful explanation and credible evidence will overcome those increased dopamine levels and provide appropriate perspective on these dubious claims. But when it comes to mass communication with millions who are barely paying attention, promises of relief will get the pleasure centers going even without anyone actually delivering that relief. And, if McCain gets elected, he might very well be forgiven when he can't deliver on his promise just as Harold Hill was. But, of course, McCain provided some uplift when people needed it. That will seem more important to many compared to his incompetence when it comes to energy policy.

The lesson is this: Those intent on spreading the truth about our oil predicament will need to study Harold Hill's techniques which are widely used by the likes of Daniel Yergin and other oil optimists. With brain chemistry working against you, it won't be easy to figure out how to counter them.

[Paving work delayed as price of blacktop soars](#)

The price of asphalt, which is mixed with stone or gravel to form blacktop, has nearly doubled since the start of the year. That has translated into a near doubling of the price area pavers pay for blacktop.

For the first time that longtime buyers like Lancaster Highway Superintendent Richard L. Reese Jr. can remember, it also translated into a shortage of blacktop.

“I’ve been here 11 years, and there was never a problem with me calling up a day in advance and saying, ‘I need a ton of material,’ ” he said.

But for about three weeks last month and early this month, area suppliers rationed the amount provided to Reese and other blacktop buyers.

[Californians Facing Tough Choices: Learning to Better Weather the Fuel Shortage Storm](#)

Who could have ever predicted the price of gasoline surpassing the \$4 per gallon mark? No one, until maybe just recently, that is. Are \$5 per gallon petrol prices just around the corner?

Due to mushrooming population numbers, worldwide oil demand continues upward even though supplies are trending oppositely. What we’re all now facing and feeling is the effect of this dichotomy and it hurts. Everyone should be aware it doesn’t need to be this way. It really doesn’t.

[Money is main roadblock for expanding area transit](#)

Transportation and public transit advancements in the New Orleans metropolitan area will be slow to come by as one major factor — money — is lacking.

Fears over fuel price increases and Americans’ growing awareness of the country’s dependence on a finite energy resource has many citizens nationwide examining their gasoline usage. Some have flocked to public transit, joined carpools, decided to drive less or made no changes at all.

With very limited public transit options in the New Orleans area, particularly after Katrina, are state, city and regional transportation officials strategizing for transportation infrastructure of the future?

[Cheap-to-run scooter replacing second car](#)

Some two-car households in Canberra are walking away from their second car and buying \$5000 motor scooters to escape rising fuel prices.

Sales are up 20per cent at Motorini in Phillip, where principal Nico Wright is about to double the size of his lease and employ extra staff because he believes high petrol prices are here to stay.

[PTC India Seeks Coal Supply to Spur Power Trading](#)

(Bloomberg) -- PTC India Ltd. plans to start importing coal to supply power stations in return for electricity to defend its position as the nation's biggest energy trader.

PTC has agreed to supply 1.5 million metric tons of coal by December 2009, Chairman T.N. Thakur said in an interview in New Delhi. The company plans to invest in mines in Indonesia and India to secure as much as 15 million tons, equivalent to three- quarters of India's annual imports, he said.

[India: Plan panel expert warns of coal shortage](#)

India needs to concentrate more on nuclear and solar energy, for efficient energy usage and consumption, since the coal reserve of the country will be depleted within the next 45 years.

[Uganda: Diesel thermal generators to be phased out next month](#)

All diesel thermal generators will be phased out with effect from next month (September) as government battles the power shortage that has led to endless load shedding. The government can no longer afford to run the expensive generators, which have apparently not created any impact as far as bridging the power supply gap is concerned.

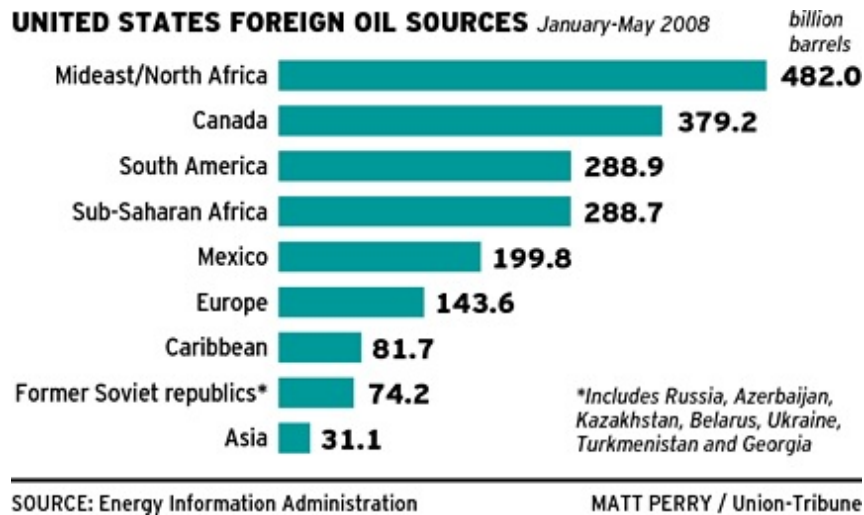
[Tackling the global fertilizer crisis](#)

Worldwide fertilizer crisis is getting worse, with no sign of dramatic resolution to this crisis or downwards trend of the price of fertilizer. Even several months back, price of each ton of Urea was below US\$ 400, but now, anywhere in the world, it is above US\$ 600 [of course FOB price]. Various large stock holders are offering Urea to potential customers at the rate of US\$ 700-720 per ton, while there are some fake suppliers, who wish to cash the letter of credit and disappear. Thos fake suppliers are offering FOB price of Urea at US\$ 200-250 per ton. Meanwhile, taking the advantage of global crisis of fertilizer these rackets have cashed a few hundred million dollars already by fooling the customers. Reality is, any company offering Urea at price below US\$ 500 for FOB are simply frauds. They are not suppliers indeed.

Here we have some very recent news from the South Asian nations on how fertilizer

crisis is creating series of serious problems...

[Foreign oil producers have U.S. over barrel](#)



Every time you fill your gas tank, you're participating in what Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens describes as “the largest transfer of wealth in the history of mankind.”

On average nationwide, roughly 38 percent of the cost of gasoline is tied to foreign-produced petroleum. Every time Americans spend \$50 at the pump, they're sending about \$19 abroad.

From January through June, the United States spent \$172 billion on crude-oil imports, compared with \$103 billion in the first half of 2007. Many economists describe that money as a “foreign tax” on the U.S. economy, because much of it goes directly into state-owned oil monopolies or government coffers.

[Why doesn't U.S. join Law of the Sea treaty?](#)

Not only does every other Arctic nation know that the melting ice caps are opening up new resources in these waters, but they all have done at least something about it, staking their claim in some way to what many believe is an economic treasure chest of energy reserves. That is, every nation except the United States. Shockingly, the United States remains the only major industrialized nation that has not signed the Law of the Sea treaty. As a result, we do not have a seat at the table, or a say in other nations' efforts to extend their continental boundaries in the Arctic and elsewhere. This prevents us from laying a legitimate claim to our share of valuable resources. And despite an unprecedented level of diverse bipartisan support to sign this treaty, the United States still can't seem to commit.

[Argentina's power troubles](#)

Consultancy Fundelec knows Argentina's power business like no other. The power consultancy's monthly report on the country's energy sector is hotly anticipated in the industry, especially now Argentina is suffering an energy crisis.

The latest issue showed the country saw new record power demand in the month of June. The news came as Argentina's government said it was ready to increase regulated rates 20%. Local press has also reported the country will spend 2% of its GDP to subsidize cheap energy in the country.

[Lessons from Apollo apply to energy crisis](#)

To solve our energy crisis, we need to do a systems engineering approach, as we did with Apollo, and develop all of these resources and systems. Unlike the Apollo moon project, which depended on all systems coming together and functioning simultaneously, the systems needed to solve our energy crisis can come into play at different times.

[Pelosi on Natural Gas: Fossil Fuel or Not?](#)

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's message on energy, already evolving in recent weeks, might have to evolve a little more.

On NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday, the speaker twice seemed to suggest that natural gas – an energy source she favors – is not a fossil fuel.

"I believe in natural gas as a clean, cheap alternative to fossil fuels," she said at one point. Natural gas "is cheap, abundant and clean compared to fossil fuels," she said at another.

[Denver gets convention rolling with bike-sharing program](#)

DENVER -- Mayor John Hickenlooper, who kicked off a free-bicycle program at the Democratic National Convention by leading a ride through the city's downtown Sunday, said he knows Denver has a long way to go before it matches Portland's bike culture.

However, Hickenlooper boasted to a visiting Portlander, "Someday, we're going to catch you because we have 300 days of sunshine a year," hundreds of miles of bike trails and a city government newly determined to encourage people to bike.

[Out of Energy](#)

Colorado's \$23 billion-a-year oil and gas industry is keeping the state's economy afloat, but Governor Bill Ritter and his fellow Democrats are promoting new rules and tax hikes

that would drive business elsewhere. As the Democrats descend on Denver for their convention, John McCain should be drawing attention to Ritter's wrongheaded policies. They exemplify the Democrats' reflexive opposition to domestic energy exploration and present a great target for McCain to exploit.

[Key Mexican party moves to OK private energy deals](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - A key Mexican opposition party scrapped an internal ban against private investment in the state-run oil business, moving lawmakers closer to approving a government plan to overhaul the energy sector.

[Plenty of air time for college football travel plans](#)

Hawaii isn't alone. Many are battling with the questions ahead this season. Will the high cost of travel not only break the budgets of schools, but also leave behind fans who just can't afford the rising bill to travel from state to state to cheer on their favorite teams?

[No diesel shortage, says Aramco official](#)

RIYADH – There is an abundant supply of diesel fuel and there was no cause of concern on the issue, Engineer Ahmed Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Saadi, Executive Director for Distribution and Ports Works in Saudi Aramco, said here Sunday.

Diesel fuel is available at all Aramco petroleum products distribution stations in the Kingdom, he said. "The company has not reduced quotas for authorized clients."

He said the shortage in supplies of diesel fuel at gas stations on Riyadh-Taif Expressway has been taken care of as the company has boosted its supplies to Northern Riyadh by transporting additional quantities of different petroleum products from other nearby distribution stations, the Saudi Press agency (SPA) said.

[India: No immediate relief in sight for fuel consumers](#)

The fall in crude prices is undoubtedly a big relief for New Delhi, which is contending with a double-digit inflation and the slowing down of the manufacturing sector.

But as our oil subsidy bill was \$8.7 billion last year, largely on account of diesel and cooking gas, and is to rise further this year, Deora is not ready for a rollback in petro products prices yet.

[China's energy pricing makes for problems](#)

From the early 1990s, Beijing started progressively liberalizing the prices of primary energy products, such as coal and crude oil, allowing the prices of some output to be determined by market forces. However, it maintained tight control over end-user prices for oil products and electricity, to protect households, farmers and state-owned companies.

[Venezuela Inflation May Rise to 27%, Rodriguez Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Venezuelan inflation may accelerate to 27 percent in 2008, above the government's 19.5 percent target, as rising consumer demand continues to outpace supply in the oil exporting economy, Finance Minister Ali Rodriguez said.

[China damned over floods](#)

CHIANG MAI - As Mekong River floodwaters in Laos and Thailand recede, indignation with China for its lack of transparency on upstream dam developments is on the rise. China has recently pursued a friendly policy of economic integration with Southeast Asian neighbors but in relation to Mekong River development it has taken what many see as a covetous and less than neighborly approach.

[War in the Caucasus and the Global Repositioning of China, Germany, Russia and the US](#)

A geopolitical convulsion measuring six points on the Richter scale is bound to produce aftershocks. The reverberations of the conflict in the Caucasus are beginning to be felt. We may be unwittingly bidding farewell to the "war on terror". In any case, the international community has lost interest in Osama bin Laden.

The United States has spotted a promising new enemy on the horizon and an engrossing war may be offering itself, with infinite possibilities.

[High winter heating bills may burn through wallets](#)

WASHINGTON — Consumers may be enjoying some relief at the gasoline pump, but another energy shock likely is just around the corner.

Winter bills for heating oil, natural gas and electricity are expected to soar to records, putting a renewed crimp on household budgets.

...If government predictions come true, homeowners will spend \$22 billion more to heat their homes this winter than they did last year, estimates Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com.

That could cut gross domestic product by 0.3 percentage points at the end of 2008 and into 2009 at a time when "the economy will be struggling to remain in positive

territory," Zandi says.

[Oil tops \\$115 after last week's steep slide](#)

LONDON (Reuters) — Oil rose above \$115 a barrel on Monday as some investors saw buying opportunities after prices posted the biggest one-day percentage slide since 2004 the previous session.

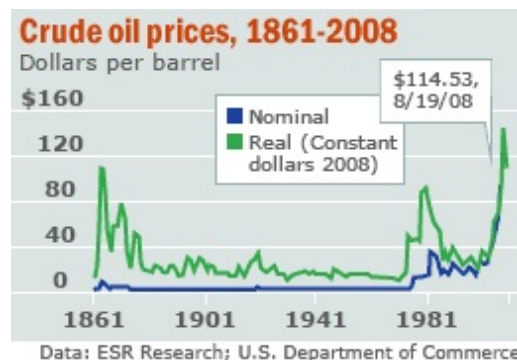
Analysts said tensions between the West and Russia over Georgia would lend prices support. Moscow's military intervention in Georgia has disrupted some shipments of Azeri oil through Georgia.

[SocGen lowers oil price forecasts](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Societe Generale has cut its 2008 and 2009 crude oil price forecasts, joining other banks in trimming estimates following a drop in prices from a record high hit last month.

The bank expects U.S. crude to average \$113.78 a barrel in 2008 and \$120.42 in 2009, it said in a research note dated August 22. The previous forecasts were \$124.78 and \$128.75 respectively.

[Is oil headed for a fall?](#)



NEW YORK (MarketWatch) -- Is the oil price spike over? And if the recent increase in oil prices hurt the economy, how much did the two-decade decline in oil prices help it?

[Is the commodity bull-run really over?](#)

Common laws of mathematics and economics tell us that increasing demand and diminishing supply means rising prices. Yet analysts call tops on black gold fairly frequently since the recent bull run started in 1999. Oil has been exhibiting a pattern of

two steps forward and one step backwards, leaving the larger bullish trend intact.

[Natural Gas Supply Booms And Prices Crash: Is Oil Next?](#)

Thanks to a new technology for extracting natural gas trapped in shale, US domestic gas production has recently boomed: up 8.8% in January-May versus last year, the largest increase in roughly 50 years. Consequently, natural gas prices have fallen far more than those of oil and other supply-constrained commodities: down 42% since early July.

This, of course, is exactly what some observers expect to happen with oil once new extraction technologies are brought to bear--in contrast to the position taken by the peak-oil crowd. Even if it doesn't, however, the gas trends could help ease the energy crisis.

[Iran mulls production sharing contracts for Caspian oil: report](#)

TEHRAN (AFP) - Iran might for the first time offer production sharing contracts to develop its Caspian Sea oil fields, in a bid to attract foreign investors to a region with high exploration costs, a report said on Monday.

[A tough choice on oil](#)

It's time either to get serious about developing alternatives to fossil fuels or to make nice with the government entities that now control most of the world's oil supplies and are reluctant or simply unable to develop them.

[Why Should I Own Gold?](#)

I understand why oil, for instance, is (or at least was) going up; be it because of speculators, supply/demand, or whatever... I get that, even if peak oil isn't right, there is no doubt that at some point there will be less oil available than there is now. Oil, however, is an input commodity; **gold, while pretty and shiny, doesn't have a significant practical demand.** Huge amounts of gold are produced, and I just don't get where it all goes, except into storage via things like GLD and around Michael Phelps' neck.

[Oil change](#)

It may cost a lot up front, but as prices rise, more are considering switching to gas heat.

[I.O.U.S.A.: Documentary Worth a Peek](#)

The second astounding part of the film - to me - is its lack of virtually any reference to oil as a problem, other than in general terms as contributing toward the trade deficit. But there is no mention of the impending Peak Oil problem. The fact that at the same time that Social Security turns cash flow negative in 2015 the country will also be fighting the gigantic problems caused by Peak Oil (which looks to be here sometime in the 2010 - 2012 time frame) is perhaps too much reality even for this film to contemplate. Or maybe Peterson does not understand Peak Oil. But for those of us who are focused on the impact of Peak Oil, the meaning of Peterson's film is even more trenchant.

[Looming Financial Catastrophe: A Real Inconvenient Truth](#)

I agree that we must utilize all possible supplies of oil and gas, but it will be like pissing in the ocean. We must accept the fact that worldwide oil production has peaked and will inevitably decline over the long-term. New supplies will be discovered, but they will not be enough to replace the supplies being used. Matt Simmons, the man who put forth the Peak Oil concept many years ago and author of *Twilight in the Desert – The Coming Saudi Oil Shock & the World Economy*, is warning that we must act now or the inevitable decline in oil supply will lead to World War III over resources. This is not as far fetched as it sounds. When industries must shut down and gasoline rationed, anger will rise. Countries will use their military to acquire the precious remaining supplies.

[Why Thursday is the new Friday](#)

Other state and local governments across America, including New Mexico, Virginia, and Washington, are also following suit - hoping to conserve energy, reduce fuel consumption, and alleviate congestion.

The federal government also wants to put its weight behind this four-day work week bandwagon.

[First mass U.S. crossing for hydrogen cars completed](#)

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Hydrogen fuel cell cars from nine automakers completed a 13-day cross-country trip this weekend, in the first such mass U.S. crossing for vehicles powered by a zero-emission technology still in its infancy.

[Australia: Means test didn't cut solar panel demand](#)

Means testing the solar panel rebate scheme has failed to dent demand for the program, a Senate inquiry has found.

The Rudd government introduced a means test in its first budget in May, limiting the \$8,000 rebate to households earning less than \$100,000 a year.

The decision angered the solar industry, which warned of job losses and company closures, and environmental groups which said it sent the wrong message about the need to reduce carbon emissions.

But a Senate committee has found that applications for the rebate have actually risen since the introduction of the means test.

[Biofuels, food crops straining world water reserves: experts](#)

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Burgeoning demand for food to feed the world's swelling population, coupled with increased use of biomass as fuel is putting a serious strain on global water reserves, experts said

"If we look at how much more water we will need for food and how much more for biomass for energy going forward ... it is quite worrying," said Jan Lundqvist, who heads the scientific programme at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

Global food needs are expected to roughly double by 2050, at the same time as climate change and dwindling oil reserves are pressuring countries to set aside ever more land for producing biomass to replace greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuels.

[Can a dose of recession solve climate change?](#)

Logically, if the obsession with growth at all costs has increased emissions to the point where rising temperatures pose a threat to mankind's existence (as many experts believe) then a prolonged period of slow or negative growth will limit the damage to the environment. At the very least, it would provide a breathing space to come up with an international agreement on how to tackle the problem.

[What God Thinks About Anthropogenic Global Warming](#)

People still claim global warming is a threat when the earth is now in a decade old cooling cycle. Many forget the passage in Genesis (8:21) when God told Noah after the flood, "Never again will I doom the earth because of man..."

[Global warming time bomb trapped in Arctic soil: study](#)

PARIS (AFP) - Climate change could release unexpectedly huge stores of carbon dioxide from Arctic soils, which would in turn fuel a vicious circle of global warming, a new study warned Sunday.

And according to one commentary on the research, current models of climate change have not taken this extra source of greenhouse gas into account.



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