



DrumBeat: August 26, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 26, 2008 - 10:15am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Hurricane Gustav hits Haiti](#)

Oil investors feared the hurricane could eventually threaten the Gulf's many drilling platforms. Traders on the New York Mercantile Exchange were caught off guard by how fast the storm grew, and the price for a barrel of oil jumped \$5 within minutes Tuesday morning.

"Most indications are that Gustav will be an extremely dangerous hurricane in the northwestern Caribbean Sea in a few days," the Miami-based National Hurricane Center projected.

Forecasts often shift significantly as a storm develops, but longer-term projections show Gustav slicing along the south coast of Cuba during the week and possibly growing into a perilous Category 3 hurricane with 190 kph winds before entering the central Gulf of Mexico on Sunday.

Gustav is "still a long way from oil and gas infrastructure, but gas traders will be keenly focused on direction/magnitude of this summer's first storm to potentially impact energy markets," securities firm Tudor Pickering Holt & Co. told its clients Tuesday morning.

Government warnings to seek shelter went unheeded by hundreds of people in the southern coastal town of Les Cayes, west of Jacmel, who hurled rocks in a protest against rising prices as the storm approached.

['Best Hope At Sustainable Fisheries' Short-changed By Conservation Efforts, Researchers Argue](#)

Small scale fisheries produce as much annual catch for human consumption and use less than one-eighth the fuel as their industrial counterparts, but they are dealt a double-whammy by well-intentioned eco-labelling initiatives and ill-conceived fuel subsidies, according to a University of British Columbia study.

...The average large-scale fisherman receives nearly 200 times the fuel subsidy that the average small-scale fisherman receives.

"This is because small scale fisheries employ more than 12 million people world-wide, compared to half a million in the industrial sector," says Jennifer Jacquet, study co-

author and a PhD Candidate in the UBC Fisheries Centre. "And because small-scale fisheries use less fuel to catch fish."

"Small-scale fisheries use fishing gear that are more selective and far less destructive to deep sea environments," says Jacquet. "As a result they discard very little unwanted fish and almost all of their catch is used for human consumption."

[DOE official cites need for major breakthroughs to cope with climate change](#)

Meeting the world's growing energy needs while responding to global warming during the 21st Century will be one of the biggest challenges humanity has ever faced, Raymond L. Orbach, Ph.D., the U.S. Department of Energy's Under Secretary for Science, says in the latest podcast in the American Chemical Society's Global Challenges/Chemistry Solutions series.

[Mexico's Cantarell oil output falls again in July](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Crude output from Mexico's struggling Cantarell oil field fell for the 10th month in a row in July to 974,000 barrels per day, energy ministry data showed on Tuesday.

The fading jewel of Mexico's oil industry, Cantarell is now producing half what it was yielding at its 2004 peak, pulling down overall output in the world's No. 6 oil-producing nation and threatening Mexico's status as a top U.S. supplier.

The steady decline of around 15 percent annually in the field's output has pressured the divided Congress to tweak laws in the closed energy sector. The government, with backing from centrists, hopes to push a bill through congress to allow more private participation in the state-run oil business.

[Medvedev: We're 'not afraid' of a new Cold War](#) - West fumes as Russian president OKs recognition of rebel Georgia areas

MOSCOW - Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, speaking in the midst of one of the lowest points in the Russia-West relationship since the breakup of the Soviet Union 17 years ago, said Tuesday that his country did not seek a new Cold War — but neither was it afraid of one.

"We are not afraid of anything, including the prospect of a new Cold War," Medvedev was quoted as saying Tuesday by the ITAR-Tass news agency. "But we don't want it and in this situation everything depends on the position of our partners."

[Pinching pennies like your grandparents](#)

In today's fast-paced society, the Hillbilly Housewife Web site — with its traditional recipes for making cornmeal mush and tips for turning leftover rice into breakfast pancakes — would seem to be a relic of a bygone era.

But with food and gas prices rising at a faster pace than most paychecks, the site devoted to frugal ways to feed a family has recently seen traffic increase by a third, to about 300,000 unique visitors a month. Susanne Myers, who took over the site from a friend about a year ago, says she's been deluged with e-mails from people looking for cheap ways to fill their families' stomachs.

[Airline shrinkage to make seats scarce this fall](#)

25,200,124.

If you're thinking of flying this fall, you may want to keep that number in mind. Why? Because, according to data compiled by OAGback Aviation Solutions, that's how many fewer seats will be available on domestic flights during the last four months of the year compared to the same period a year ago.

[Hurricane Gustav aims for U.S. Gulf oil facilities](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Oil companies began early storm preparations on Tuesday as forecasters predicted Hurricane Gustav will enter the U.S. Gulf of Mexico as a major storm by the weekend.

Royal Dutch Shell , one of the largest oil and gas producers in the region, said it would begin evacuating nonessential personnel from offshore facilities on Wednesday as energy prices jumped on the threat.

Other companies operating in the Gulf, home to about 25 percent of U.S. oil production and 15 percent of U.S. natural gas output, were monitoring the progress of Gustav, which was churning off the coast of Haiti as a Category 1 hurricane on Tuesday.

Hurricane forecasters were predicting on Tuesday that Gustav would skirt the western coast of Cuba and enter the Gulf of Mexico as a powerful Category 3 hurricane with winds in excess of 100 miles per hour by Sunday.

"The entire Gulf energy infrastructure is now threatened," wrote Jim Rouiller of forecaster Planalytics, who noted two major hurricane forecasting models predicted the storm making landfall somewhere between Houston and New Orleans, which is home to nearly half of U.S. oil refining capacity.

[Looming Energy Crisis In Mexico Stirs Debate](#)

Just about everyone who has weighed in on the Pemex debate agrees that the Mexican oil monopoly is in crisis.

Production of crude is falling dramatically. In July, output at Mexico's largest oil field, Cantarell, was off 37 percent from the year before.

Pemex's exploration efforts have fallen flat, and by some estimates, what was once the world's sixth largest oil producer could exhaust its current reserves in less than seven years.

[Shortages of fuel and wheat in Armenia](#)

Russia's intervention in Georgia and its deliberate damaging of Georgia's transport infrastructure have caused serious problems to Russia's strategic partner Armenia. That country receives many of its essential goods by cargo through Georgia. The suspension of transit caused by damage to Georgia's transport infrastructure has created a shortage of certain products in Armenia, most importantly fuel and wheat.

To try and alleviate the fuel shortage the Armenian Energy Minister has traveled to Iran, although agreeing to obtain fuel from there would be a difficult step to take as it would be more expensive than getting it through Georgia.

[Russian Chill Weighs On Imperial Takeover](#)

Although one source familiar with the negotiations claimed the drop was due to the fall in oil prices over the past two weeks, there seemed little doubt that rising geopolitical risks in Russia and the Caucasus also put a damper on Imperial's valuation. The political situation grew tenser Tuesday when Russian President Dmitri Medvedev recognized the independence of the breakaway Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

"I certainly think there is a huge amount of risk involved in this now," said Tim Heeley, analyst with Daniel Stewart. "We're talking a matter of weeks: the whole situation has very much swung in the opposite direction."

[Russia Looms Large in Imperial Energy Talks](#)

The company claims that Imperial's proved and probable reserves currently stand at about 920 million barrels of oil equivalent. At \$2.6 billion, that means that ONGC paid around \$2.80 per barrel of oil. Not terrible compared to other acquisitions done lately but certainly on the higher side of things. Meanwhile the Russian government claims the company has only 450 million barrels of proved and probable reserves. That would mean that ONGC paid around \$5.80 a barrel.

It is not clear why there is such a massive chasm between the two numbers. A company is usually in a better off position to know what they have than a state regulator. Nevertheless, Russian authorities have shown their hostility toward foreign oil producers in the past and have forced international oil companies to give reserves back to the state for no justifiable reason.

Russia may be sending a message to Imperial that there is a cap on the amount of reserves that the company can eventually take out of the country. They also may just be using a far more conservative estimate. Either way, it is enough to make a deal with Imperial look a bit risky.

[Norwegian PM defends Snoehvit arctic LNG facility](#)

STAVANGER, Norway (Reuters) - Norway's prime minister on Tuesday defended StatoilHydro's \$10 billion Snoehvit liquefied natural gas facility in the Arctic despite numerous start-up problems and higher carbon emission levels.

"I regret that there have been huge technical problems," Jens Stoltenberg told a news conference at an ONS energy conference in Stavanger on Norway's North Sea coast.

"StatoilHydro is taking this very seriously and is committing big resources to solve the problem," he said about production problems which have lowered output and produced unexpected soot and pollution in the Arctic region.

[China may further increase rate to tackle power crunch](#)

BEIJING: After two tariff increases in as many months totalling 10%, China may have set itself on a fast track to reform the world's second-largest electricity market and end the worst supply crunch in four years.

Within this year and maybe within weeks, the government may announce another hike either on wholesale or retail prices, or both, to lift its generators into the black and curb consumption by power-hungry sectors, analysts said.

[China Faces Obstacles In Nuclear Energy](#)

China is short of uranium, with known reserves of only 70,000 metric tons (or tonnes), or about 1% of the world total. It now produces about 840 tonnes and imports 700 to 800 tonnes per year from Kazakhstan, Russia and Namibia to meet domestic needs. By 2010, it will need nearly 4,000 tonnes. It has been actively exploring domestic mines in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Liaoning and Guangxi, but its ores are of low grade and its production inefficient, and so it looks abroad.

[Volkswagen Denies Suspending Diesel Car Plan in China](#)

lthough Volkswagen is being bothered by China's short diesel oil supply, and unable to smoothly carry out its diesel car plan, Volkswagen Group China still definitely denies the story that it was suspending the diesel car project.

[India: Diesel shortage drives vegetable prices up](#)

CHENNAI: Power outages seem to be having a ripple effect, with generators guzzling diesel and the resultant fuel shortage driving up vegetable prices.

Though without an official announcement, Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) has powercuts from Sunday. Many parts of the city and suburbs did not have power for more than an hour on Monday. "Whenever there is power cut, the IT companies and other commercial establishments start using generators. This adds to diesel shortage and affects prices of vegetables and other commodities," said T Sadagopan, a consumer activist.

[Energy and overpopulation: Man's biggest challenges](#)

The importance of ensuring sufficient energy for the future is almost impossible to overestimate, because energy directly and indirectly affects the price of virtually everything in society. Energy is needed throughout the whole production chain; expensive energy simply means expensive products, food, medicines, pure water and services, and it is also likely to keep wages and salaries down.

Affordable and sustainable energy can allow us to maintain a fair standard of living for the whole of mankind, and thus allow us to focus on preserving our natural environment, biodiversity and even world peace. Massive population growth is the main reason for the exorbitant energy demand. The birth rate must be regulated, otherwise it will lead to further degradation of the environment and a worsening of problems in society, foiling all our other efforts.

[Joe Biden blasts McCain on auto loans](#)

After McCain announced his support for some loan funding on Friday, Barack Obama's campaign said it would back the full \$50-billion request over three years, which would cost the government roughly \$7.5 billion. Automakers plan to press Congress to approve the funds before it adjourns this year.

"John McCain has not only opposed these much-needed loans for our domestic automakers, he has openly criticized and shown disdain for them," Biden said in a statement Monday, two days after he became Obama's running mate.

[Let it grow, let it grow, let it grow](#)

The garden provides opportunities extending beyond simply growing and harvesting food. For example, the garden is tended by people on home confinement and probation.

...Not only does the program use able-bodied individuals to cultivate the crop, but it also serves a dual purpose, helping to feed the hungry.

West Virginia Extension Agent April Roach boxed vegetables Thursday, including peppers, eggplants, and butternut squash to be used by area food pantries. The community garden helps to address a pantry food shortage.

[Former fisherman takes on world's energy woes](#)

Last week in the shed behind his new trailer home, which he moved into last year after he sold the lower-Dularge house he built largely with his own hands, Verret demonstrated how his machine works.

A regular car battery fires up a small electric boat winch – a motor about the size of a cell phone – which is attached to a bicycle chain that runs to a tire. The motor spins the tire, which turns a car alternator set above the wheel. The alternator, in turn, recharges the battery that set the whole process in motion.

[The winds of change in our energy consumption could still be light years away](#)

As much as there's been lots of talk about wind addressing our energy needs in the future, that future would appear to be a long way off yet. Wind accounts for less than 1 per cent of the energy produced in Canada (Ontario is the wind-farm leader). The Canadian Wind Energy Association believes it can be 5 per cent by 2010.

The European Wind Energy Association is predicting that 28 per cent of the European Union's electrical consumption will be supplied by wind turbines by 2030; currently, it's about 3 per cent. In the U.S., they're talking about a target of 20 per cent in 20 years. Now, it's less than 1 per cent.

[No new oil, gas find for Shell Saudi JV-sources](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - A Royal Dutch Shell and Saudi Aramco joint venture has made no new oil or gas discovery in the kingdom's Empty Quarter, industry sources said on Tuesday.

The South Rub al-Khali Co (Srak) was drilling a well where Saudi Aramco had

previously made a hydrocarbon find, but has so far made no fresh discovery, industry sources familiar with Srak's operation said.

[On the Road Again: Pump Prices Revive Appeal of Natural Gas on Capitol Hill and in Detroit](#)

In the early 1990s, all three major American automakers started building clean and efficient natural gas vehicles. But when a new federal law failed to create an expected guaranteed market, the momentum died. Today, only Honda sells a model in the United States -- and in minuscule numbers.

Now, as drivers reel from the shock of high gasoline prices, natural gas vehicles are attracting renewed interest both on Capitol Hill and in Detroit. Proposed legislation and a new impetus at General Motors may bring a modest revival.

[Saskatoon doesn't have to fall into pitfalls of suburbia](#)

Although Saskatoon is beginning to sprawl, it doesn't have suburbs in the true sense of the word. This is likely a good thing, as many thinkers believe North America's suburban experiment has failed.

[Don't panic: oil prices will force us to adapt](#)

Despite their recent slump, high oil prices may turn out to be history's reference card for 2008. Many pundits would happily file it next to 1973 as a watershed in economic history. They claim we have reached a "tipping point" where oil will be permanently more expensive than before because this oil shock is caused by a natural shortage rather than a 1973-style politically created one.

One of the most popular predictions to stem from this observation is that we will be forced to re-create cities without the car as we know it. Canadian cities, it would seem, were built on the premise of affordable energy, and government tax and planning policies have quietly subsidized the cities' far-flung suburbs. Very soon, the arguments run, energy economics will force cities to become more compact so we had better get ahead of the curve now.

However, by changing a few assumptions, the continuation of our lifestyle with private transport (cars of some kind) looks more probable than impossible. While permanent \$4 or \$5 per gallon gas prices are new territory in North America, they are not a "tipping point." New Zealand and Australia, for example, have been dealing with the equivalent of these prices for years and more recently with the equivalent of \$8 or \$9 per gallon gas prices. Suburbia still looks much the same there as it does here.

[Slowing economy, high fuel costs dent China car market](#)

SHANGHAI (Reuters) - China's car market, the world's second largest, is losing speed more quickly than expected due to a slowing economy, rising fuel prices and natural disasters, raising the prospect that sales growth could halve this year.

[Saudi Arabia Looks for Brazilian Land to Feed Saudi Population](#)

Saudi Arabia has reduced its agricultural production with the objective of economizing water and has been seeking land in other countries on which to grow crops.

[UK 'should end biofuel subsidies'](#)

The government should stop funding biofuels and use the money to halt the destruction of rainforests and peatland instead, a think tank has said.

Policy Exchange said the switch would have a bigger impact on climate change because trees and peatland remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

[Could \\$100 oil turn dumps into plastic mines?](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Sparked by surging oil, a dramatic rise in the value of old plastic is encouraging waste companies across the world to dig for buried riches in rotting rubbish dumps.

Long a symbol of humanity's throw-away culture, existing landfill sites are now being viewed as mines of potential which as the world population grows could also help bolster the planet's dwindling natural resources.

[12 states sue EPA over refinery carbon emissions](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - New York and 11 other states are suing federal environmental regulators over greenhouse gas emissions from oil refineries, the New York attorney general's office said on Monday.

The suit, led by New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, charges that the Environmental Protection Agency violated the federal Clean Air Act by refusing to issue standards, known as new source performance standards, for controlling global warming pollution emissions from oil refineries.

[Scrapping fuel subsidies can help climate - UN study](#)

ACCRA (Reuters) - Abolishing subsidies on fossil fuels could cut world greenhouse gas emissions by up to 6 percent and also nudge up world economic growth, a U.N. report showed on Tuesday.

Subsidies on oil, gas or coal are meant to help the poor by lowering the price of energy but the report, issued on the sidelines of a 160-nation U.N. climate meeting in Ghana, said they often backfired by mainly benefiting wealthier people.

[Sea Buries a Ghanan Village, and More May Follow](#)

Abandoned concrete buildings are half submerged under sand. Thatched huts have been repeatedly moved back. And about one mile offshore, an entire settlement lies deep under the water, submerged many years ago. Fishermen say they have to detour around the old underwater buildings which snag their nets.

"Every year the sea comes closer. We keep moving the village and we are being pushed down to the lagoon," said 70-year-old Ebenezer Koranteng. He said he believes the village would become unlivable within five years.

[New US president seen struggling on climate](#)

ACCRA (Reuters) - The next U.S. president will find it hard to curb greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 enough to satisfy many of America's allies, the chief U.S. climate negotiator said on Monday.

"It's going to be a heavy lift ... It takes time in our system" to change course, Harlan Watson told Reuters on the sidelines of 160-nation talks in Ghana working on a new United Nations climate treaty by the end of 2009.

[Norway says oil price still "quite high"](#)

STAVANGER, Norway, Aug 26 (Reuters) - The oil price remains "quite high" despite falling sharply from peaks in July, Norway's Petroleum and Energy Minister said on Tuesday.

Asked if OPEC countries should cut output due to the falling oil price, Terje Riis-Johansen said: "The oil price is still quite high, much higher than we expected for 2008 in Norway. I do not see any reason to do anything special with that now."

[Oil Tankers Resume Loading at BP's Pipeline in Ceyhan](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Tankers at the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan began loading oil from a BP Plc pipeline, three weeks after an explosion on the link disrupted flows of Azeri crude to international markets.

[Vietnam, Venezuela Speed Up Talks on Oil Projects, VNA Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Vietnam and Venezuela accelerated talks on five oil projects, aiming to sign joint-venture agreements in November, Vietnam News Agency reported, without saying where it got the information.

[Modec Wins Petrobras Order for Oil Platform, Storage](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Modec Inc., the world's second- biggest builder of floating oil platform and storage facilities, won an order from Petroleo Brasileiro SA for a vessel for the Tupi field, the biggest discovery in the Americas since 1976.

[Chasing volatility](#)

Financial firms have become the dominant players in commodity markets and their speculative activity has led to the price increases in oil and foodgrains.

[Compressed Natural Gas: Key to American Energy Independence?](#)

So what's the problem then? Why don't we just "gas up" and go, shed our dependence on foreign oil and save money at the pump at the same time? Well, if you're familiar with the "chicken and the egg" syndrome, that axiom applies here precisely.

We have two interrelated problems, if you will. We need cars and trucks that run on CNG (ideally both CNG and gasoline), and we need public filling stations to refuel them. While neither of these difficulties are insurmountable, they will require investments from both automakers and the natural gas industry.

[Precious Metals: Emotions Still Stronger Than Fundamentals](#)

So far we discussed the physical demand. The demand side is still what matters in the general market. It seems that some market participants forgot that a price for goods can also rise on a higher level when demand remains the same: When supply is decreasing.

This is actually a fact since 2001. It is still not a topic in the overall market that we not only have "Peak Oil", we also have "Peak Metals". We could blame the press as they

prefer to write about Peak Oil as this seems to be a hotter topic.

[FPL's St Lucie Florida reactor climbs to 30 pct power](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - FPL Group Inc's 839-megawatt Saint Lucie 1 nuclear unit in Florida, which shut last week due to heavy rain from Tropical Storm Fay, continued to ramp up power early Tuesday, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission said in its power reactor status report.

[US could cut fuel use 50% by 2035](#)

With a vehicle market dominated by lightweight and plug-in hybrid vehicles, the US could cut its current fuel consumption in half by 2035, says a new study from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Energy Initiative. The researchers emphasized a need for government policy supporting independence from large or fast vehicles, and suggested a focus on reducing vehicle weight and size to benefit from cutting greenhouse gas emissions of transportation fuel use in the short term.

[Wind Power Boosted by Utility, Inventor's Air Storage System](#)

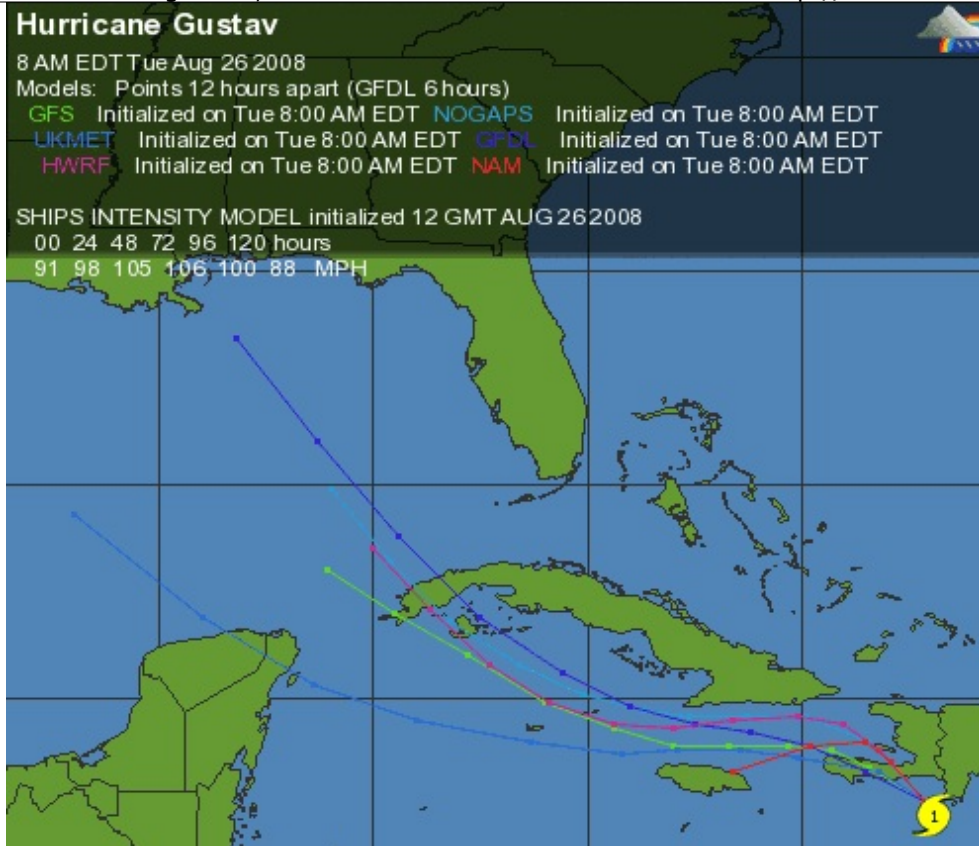
(Bloomberg) -- Public Service Enterprise Group Inc. plans to spend \$20 million to develop devices that compress air to store power, unlocking potential electricity production from wind turbines and solar cells.

[Hurricane Gustav Strengthens, Heads for Haiti, Gulf](#)

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(Bloomberg) -- Hurricane Gustav is forecast to make landfall later today in Haiti and may enter the Gulf of Mexico, home to more than a fifth of U.S. oil production.

...`This time next week it will be somewhere in the Gulf," said Eric Wilhelm, senior meteorologist at private forecaster AccuWeather Inc. in State College, Pennsylvania.
``All the states lining the Gulf Coast of the U.S. will be on the lookout."



[Over a barrel](#)

Surging oil prices feed widespread panic and apocalyptic visions of a world without fuel. But it is not obvious whether speculation, rising demand or supply shortages are to blame.

[Ready for Winter? Home Heating Update & Heads Up](#)

Western oil corporations deny vehemently that the scary “peak oil” scenario is responsible for this decline. Instead, they refer to “geopolitical peak oil”; which means that countries like Venezuela, Russia, and Iraq want to keep their oil profits in their own nations, even if it means having to develop the oil fields themselves and shut out multinational oil corporations.

It is completely understandable why developing nations would want to nationalize their oil profits. What is somewhat harder (for me) to understand is why our own government isn't addressing what could turn out to be a real crisis here in the U.S. should we get hit with a very cold or severe winter.

[Nozone: The end of the world and we knew it](#)

"There are two camps out there," he explains. "One that says we're all going to die very

soon, the other that says we're going to find some kind of miraculous solution that's going to save us all."

Blechman doesn't know which camp is right, and doesn't pretend to have any answers - when asked what the future holds, he simply sighs and says, "I have no idea" - and he knows that some people have already tuned out the peak oil and doom-and-gloom scenarios sometimes trumpeted by environmental activists. Call it global warming fatigue.

[Reducing speed limit not big enough of a solution](#)

Despite acceptance that peak oil is nearing, the notion of curtailing our gaudy lifestyle seems as foreign as the Middle East.

A reduced speed limit isn't a long-term solution to our energy problems. We must continue to work toward alternative energy and improve intrastate mass transportation.

[Sinopec Says 2008 Is Company's Most 'Difficult' Year](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China Petroleum & Chemical Corp., Asia's biggest oil refiner, is facing its most ``difficult" year in 2008 even with state subsidies and higher fuel prices.

The most challenging time will be the third and fourth quarters, Chairman Su Shulin said at a press conference in Hong Kong today. Sinopec will slash its 2008 capital expenditure by 8.2 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion) due to ``severe operating pressures" and ``cash-flow constraints," Su said.

[Petrobras' Drop on Regulation Concern 'Overdone,' Deutsche Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The decline in shares of Petroleo Brasileiro SA shares has been ``overdone" and investors should focus on the company's exploration potential instead, Deutsche Bank AG said.

[Harper Arctic Cabinet Meeting Risks New Russia Cold War for Oil](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Beneath the melting ice of the Arctic Ocean, the world's last great land grab is under way.

Global warming is opening the Northwest Passage that sailing ships sought 500 years ago, and some of the world's biggest oil reserves are becoming accessible under the polar sea. Russia, the U.S., Canada, Norway and Denmark are jockeying for territory in moves

that could end up in clashing claims.

...` `You have the recipe for trouble if there isn't real energy invested early to help resolve some of these issues," said Scott Borgerson, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. ` `You can envisage a future in which all the ice is gone, there is this wild-west environment in terms of lack of respect for whatever national law."

[N. Korea says it has halted nuclear reactor disablement](#)

SEOUL (AP) — North Korea said Tuesday it has stopped disabling its nuclear reactor and will consider restoring the plutonium-producing facility in anger over Washington's failure to remove it from the U.S. list of terror sponsors.

The North's statement marks the emergence of the biggest hurdle yet to the communist nation's denuclearization process and is expected to escalate tension in the nuclear talks involving China, Japan, the two Koreas, the U.S. and Russia.

[More car buyers say: I shouldn't have a V-8](#)

The quarterback of engines, the legendary V-8, is starting to have a hard time making the cut.

Most automakers introducing new V-8s are confining them to trailer-towing trucks and a few premium cars or high-performance sports models — and retreating from putting them under the hoods of family cars.

[Rediscovering bicycles, and her inner kid: She may grump about high gas prices, but they've reunited mother and son -- on two wheels.](#)

In our neighborhood, before the gas crisis, you used to mostly see swarms of cyclists moving down PCH on weekends, but now all types of people ride all types of bikes. Old bikes, new bikes, some riders wearing helmets, most without. Families. One woman on a beach cruiser always seems to have her basket cluttered with books and folders. One elderly gent rides with a yellow Post-it angled over his nose, protecting it from the sun, and yellow dishwashing gloves.

[Wind, solar projects race to finish before tax credit expires](#)

A congressional stand-off that has blocked extension of federal tax credits for renewable energy projects is setting off a boom in the wind and solar industries. Developers and customers are racing to install systems by year's end to qualify for the credits, which can cut the cost of a large commercial system by 30%.

[SKorea announces discounts scheme to fight global warming](#)

SEOUL (AFP) - South Korea on Monday announced plans for a discount scheme to encourage citizens to buy more energy-efficient products.

Consumers who buy such products will receive carbon points that can be used to pay utilities, transport and other bills or to buy other appliances, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy said.



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