



DrumBeat: August 29, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 29, 2008 - 10:13am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Oil's Trouble Spots](#)

At a time of rising dependence on oil and soaring gasoline costs, the potential for supply disruptions for this vital resource and the stability of energy-rich regions pose major concerns. While disruptions can happen anywhere along the supply chain (*New Scientist*), certain areas are particularly vulnerable. Perhaps the best known of these is the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, through which tankers carry 20 percent of the world's oil. But the Russia-Georgia conflict in August 2008 provided fresh concern that even the newest energy corridors – tapping into the Caspian Basin – are vulnerable to geopolitical events. Analysts say the Niger Delta, Iraq, and Venezuela remain significantly vulnerable (PDF) as well. With global supplies of oil already tight, potential supply disruptions could lead to significant increases in already volatile oil prices.

[Brazil Isn't Getting Full Share of Oil Wealth, Mercadante Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Brazil needs new ways to tax oil companies because the current oil-concession auction system isn't providing the government with sufficient revenue from resources, ruling party Senator Aloizio Mercadante said.

[Fusion effort in flux](#)

Researchers have finished the first phase of an unorthodox, low-cost nuclear fusion experiment that has generated a megawatt's worth of buzz on the Internet – and they are now waiting for a verdict from their federal funders on whether to proceed to the next phase.

[Fusion scientist reprimanded for misconduct](#)

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Purdue University has reprimanded a scientist who has been accused of falsifying claims he produced nuclear fusion in tabletop experiments.

Rusi Taleyarkhan made headlines in 2002 when he published a paper in the journal *Science* claiming that he had produced nuclear fusion, long sought as an energy source by scientists, by making tiny bubbles collapse in a liquid.

[Nature and the Altruism Gene](#)

The combination of this wealth volcano with the new selfishness, the new discipline of marketing and the Friedmanite re-thinking of institutions, governments and even nations primarily as businesses first, cultural entities second, led to the sustained purchasing explosion that we know as the modern global economy. Growth is good, we obligingly chant, growth is good.

But what we have elected not to notice is that human growth comes at a cost; the cost being planetary depletion.

[Live architecture: Grow your own home](#)

Tolkien's hobbits would feel right at home in new dwellings made out of living tree roots and designed to protect inhabitants from earthquakes. The homegrown architecture is just one of many eco-structures a new company hopes to roll out worldwide.

[The Myth of the Tragedy of the Commons](#)

The author of "The Tragedy of the Commons" was Garrett Hardin, a University of California professor who until then was best known as the author of a biology textbook that argued for "control of breeding" of "genetically defective" people (Hardin 1966: 707). In his 1968 essay he argued that communities that share resources inevitably pave the way for their own destruction; instead of wealth for all, there is wealth for none.

...Given the subsequent influence of Hardin's essay, it's shocking to realize that he provided *no evidence at all* to support his sweeping conclusions. He claimed that the "tragedy" was inevitable -- but he didn't show that it had happened even once.

Hardin simply ignored what actually happens in a real commons: *self-regulation by the communities involved*.

[Global trends: A perfect storm](#)

We find ourselves in the midst of fundamental changes brought on by trends that are, and will continue to, radically shape the world in which we live. These trends are better described as "meta" trends because as they give rise to changes that are complex, long-lasting, profound and borderless. Among other things, this long list of trends includes the growing scarcity of important resources (water, fuel and food), climate change and population growth.

[Manufacturers pinched as materials costs outrun product prices](#)

Prices of manufactured goods and raw materials rose less in July than in the previous four months but were still far higher, after a record-breaking oil price spike, than they were a year ago, Statistics Canada reported Friday.

The news is grim for Canadian manufacturers because prices they pay for materials are rising much faster than prices they get for goods leaving their plants.

[Russia oil tax cut offer won't meet sector hopes - min](#)

DUSHANBE/MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko said on Friday his staff would soon present new proposals on oil tax cuts to the government, although they would be much smaller than oil companies had hoped for.

[Turkmens set to boost agreed gas supplies to China](#)

Energy-rich Turkmenistan signed a deal Friday to boost its annual delivery of natural gas supplies to China to 40 billion cubic meters, an increase of 10 billion cubic meters (13 billion cubic yards) over the previously agreed amount.

Under the deal, China could start receiving gas deliveries from the Central Asian nation by late 2009.

[Russia's powerful weapon: oil and natural gas](#)

Russia believes that its standing as the world's largest exporter of oil and natural gas is the most powerful weapon in its diplomatic arsenal.

[Newly Discovered Oil Reserves to Benefit All Brazilians](#)

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Thursday that the recently discovered pre-salt layer oil fields are a national asset, which will benefit all the Brazilians.

"Brazil is not to be a mega exporter of crude oil," said the president, "instead, we want to build a strong oil industry in Brazil to add value to our oil and export the byproducts."

[Iraq's oil exports increase in July](#)

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi Oil Ministry says that oil exports in July inched up to 58.8 million barrels — a 0.7 percent increase from the previous month.

[Restrictions on Peru's energy supply - Customers to be compensated for blackouts](#)

Energy shortage is becoming a greater concern in Peru as the country demands more power supply than what poor infrastructures are able to provide.

With demand for electricity growing at a rate of 12 percent a year, power companies are looking for ways to control the increasing number of blackouts.

In an effort to make sure that the Andean country's energy supply can continue meeting demands, the Ministry of Energy and Mines is to control the use of electric power for the next three years.

Energy and Mines minister Juan Valdivia explained Peru had reached its limit and did not have the capacity to produce more energy.

He confirmed that diesel fuel was being used to generate electricity.

[Pakistan: Non-payment of arrears to power companies](#)

PESHWAR: NWFP Information Minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain Thursday billed the Wapda as a criminal institution for not paying arrears to the power supply companies and making life miserable for the people, saying protest against the 'unjust' loadshedding and its other excesses would continue.

[Major miners resisting self-generation, but juniors stepping up to the power plate](#)

Major South African deep-level miners want to stick to mining and avoid generating their own electricity — except when it comes to emergency power.

However, emerging junior miners are taking self-generation in their stride, examples being South Africa's Wesizwe Platinum and Australia's Braemore Resources, which is also JSE-listed.

Braemore goes so far as to accuse South African miners of being "spoilt" and points to the Australian tradition of miners generating their own electricity.

[Petro-Canada refilling its pumps](#)

Motorists will be able to start filling up at closed Petro-Canada stations again, possibly as early as this weekend, as the company's Edmonton gasoline refinery comes back on line.

However, it could be weeks before nearly 90 stations in B.C. and Alberta affected by the shortage will be replenished with fuel.

[Stalemate In Fuel Adjustment](#)

A stalemate of sorts has been hit in a request issued by transportation contractors from the Southern Fulton School District to their administration and board to offset rising fuel costs with the enactment of a fuel adjustment.

No action was taken by the board to offer contractors some financial relief last Tuesday due to a difference in opinion between several board members whether they should act without knowing where the monetary compensation would come from or to review the budget for possible available funding.

[Iran Makes New Stride in Uranium Enrichment](#)

Iran insists that it should continue enriching uranium because it needs to provide fuel to a 300-megawatt light-water reactor it is building in the southwestern town of Darkhovayn as well as its first nuclear power plant in the southern port city of Bushehr.

Iran currently suffers from an electricity shortage that has forced the country into adopting a rationing program by scheduling power outages - of up to two hours a day - across both urban and rural areas.

Iran plans to construct additional nuclear power plants to provide for the electricity needs of its growing population.

[Now would be a good time to end nuclear power war](#)

In September 1941, I returned to school for eighth grade and found Miss McKewen smiling and happy.

"Oh, children," she said, "I have the best news. Oil has been discovered in Arabia and there is enough to last for 200 years."

[NBC, Pickens spar over foreign oil ad](#)

NEW YORK (Adweek) - Texas billionaire T. Boone Pickens doesn't take no for an answer.

At least he didn't when NBC -- and sibling cable networks CNBC and MSNBC -- apparently rejected his latest ad stating the case for the U.S. to decrease its dependence

on foreign oil.

In the war of words that ensued, Pickens won his fight to get the spot on all three nets.

[Retailers say pellet stoves are hot item as customers flee from pricey oil heating](#)

Concern about high home heating prices is again driving consumers to shop for alternatives, particularly wood pellet stoves, according to local retailers.

At Matchless Stove & Chimney in Clifton Park, for instance, 30 pellet stoves sold in July alone. That compares to 20 to 30 pellet stoves sold during all of last year.

[How electric cars get their vroom](#)

Battery life and demands on the nation's electric grid: your questions answered about the coming wave of electric autos.

[California Moves on Bill to Curb Sprawl and Emissions](#)

SAN FRANCISCO — California, known for its far-ranging suburbs and jam-packed traffic, is close to adopting a law intended to slow the increase in emissions of heat-trapping gases by encouraging housing close to job sites, rail lines and bus stops to shorten the time people spend in their cars.

[The fastest way to put the brakes on global heating \(it's not George Monbiot's\)](#)

The fastest way to put the brakes on global heating is to embrace the peaking of world oil extraction and the implications of petrocollapse. As long as we deny there's a terminal outcome for our petroleum-based infrastructure -- and therefore society as we know it - - we will keep dancing around the crisis of climate change. Precious time is being lost while feedback loops strengthen greenhouse gas output. Embracing collapse sounds crazy and, as we all would prefer, hopefully unnecessary. But what if that's your only ticket out of the burning theater and the rafters are about to come down?

[Alaska Natives Watch Traditions Melting Away](#)

The effects of climate change have wreaked havoc with Arctic weather conditions that while always extreme and highly changeable, could be read like a book by Natives with centuries of experience and highly detailed language to describe different types of ice, wind and other climate conditions. Now, indigenous people across the Arctic region say, they can no longer predict important climactic changes and events like they used to,

leading some to freeze to death caught in storms or stranded on ice; or face privation as their traditional hunts are interrupted.

[Hurricanes threaten Gulf of Mexico oil production - supply likely never to reach pre-Katrina levels: CIBC World Markets](#)

With Tropical Storm Gustav bearing down on the Gulf of Mexico and most weather agencies calling for an active hurricane season, American motorists should brace for gasoline to spike to \$5 per gallon as storms threaten to shut down oil production in the region, predicts a new report from CIBC World Markets.

The report notes that oil production in the rig-dotted Gulf, which has been seen as America's best hope for greater energy self-sufficiency, will be increasingly threatened by severe storms that continue to grow in frequency and strength in the region.

"Only three years after hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated Gulf of Mexico oil and gas production, an emerging hurricane storm is tracking another potentially lethal swath through America's energy heartland," says Jeff Rubin, Chief Economist at CIBC World Markets. "And with both oil and gasoline inventories much lower than when Katrina and Rita hit, the price consequences could be even worse this time. Any replays of the 2005 storm season could see gasoline prices soar to \$5 per gallon."

[US to continue conserving gas, even as prices fall](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - American drivers faced with \$4 gasoline have embraced conservation and consumers are unlikely to easily return to their old gas-guzzling ways now that pump prices are retreating from record levels. As U.S. gasoline prices burst above \$4 a gallon this summer, U.S. gasoline demand staged its biggest drop in more than a quarter of a century.

But even with gasoline prices falling to their lowest level in 16 weeks to average \$3.69 a gallon on Monday, Americans will continue to ride public transportation and buy more fuel-efficient cars.

[Why commodity prices are not done rising yet](#)

Many of you were not even born the last time the world discovered a huge elephant oil field. Think about all the elephant fields in the world that you know about. Alaskan oil fields are in decline; Mexican oil fields are in rapid decline; the North Sea is in decline. The UK has been exporting oil for 27 years now. Within the decade, the UK is going to be a major importer of oil again. Indonesia is a member of OPEC. Indonesia is going to get thrown out because they no longer export oil, they are now net importers of oil.

[T. Boone Pickens at the DNC](#)

The oil man has a plan. T. Boone Pickens is in Denver this week to pitch the media and politicians on his "Pickens Plan." He says the plan would reduce dependence on foreign oil by developing wind and solar power and switching to natural gas for vehicles. Pickens predicts ten trillion dollars will be spent on foreign oil in the next decade. And he says that's something we can't afford.

[Take a listen](#) to this excerpt from a talk Pickens gave to bloggers in the Big Tent.

[Oil tycoon Pickens offers pearls of wisdom](#)

HOUSTON (Reuters) - You've seen T. Boone Pickens on "Larry King Live," watched his commercials exalting the "Pickens Plan" to build windmills and listened to him warn of a looming energy crisis.

Now the Texas oil tycoon shares hints at how you can attain a modest measure of his success -- which includes a 68,000-acre ranch teeming with quail and deer and a Gulfstream 550 jet -- and head off an energy crisis while you're at it.

[America Does Have Enough Gas, Oil to Meet Our Needs](#)

America has plenty of oil and natural gas to go around - it is just a matter of the getting Congress and the radical environmental lobby out of the way of domestic production. Another misconception often heard is that it will take 10 years before any oil or natural gas makes it to market.

In the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, and off the coast of Southern California, where energy infrastructure is currently in place, experts have reported that we could produce oil and natural gas within two years. In areas where infrastructure is not in place it could take upwards of 12 years.

[How To Solve Energy Crisis: Blast From Past When Politicians Had Balls](#)

Ford's comprehensive energy policy included:

- more oil drilling
- more use of nuclear power and coal
- forcing Detroit to raise the fuel efficiency of cars
- imposing taxes to assure that the price of gasoline did not fall

- passing a windfall profits tax to assure that the oil companies did not become too rich

The last one is silly (should we put a windfall tax on Google and Microsoft, too?), and high oil prices are doing an excellent job of forcing Detroit to raise fuel efficiency. But diversifying energy sources and taxing gas to encourage conservation and provide price stability are smart.

On the election trail, of course, all John McCain and Barack Obama can talk about it is how to reduce prices at the pump. Let's just hope that even though they can't level with voters about reality, they'll allow reality to dictate their actual energy policies.

[As Biomass Power Rises, a Wood-Fired Plant Is Planned in Texas](#)

The city of Austin, Tex., approved plans on Thursday for a huge plant that will burn waste wood to make electricity, the latest sign of rising interest in a long-dormant form of renewable energy.

[Energy Conversion Goes Local: Implications for Planners](#)

Problem: Emerging energy technologies are bringing planners a new set of issues. The supply-oriented framework from engineering economics within which energy planning has traditionally been conducted may be useful for siting large refineries, power plants, and transmission corridors, but it is not helpful for mitigating conflicts at the site level, encouraging new technology adoptions, managing the demand for energy, or, especially, coordinating the diverse users of smaller, local energy facilities. Purpose: I provide an alternative conceptual framework for thinking about emerging energy planning tasks. I highlight factors not considered in the traditional model, and introduce terminology for characterizing key characteristics of the changing energy economy.

[A Construction Project Bigger Than the U.S. Interstate System](#)

The whole oil and gas infrastructure is a "vast spider web of steel." There are over 335,000 miles of pipelines in the U.S. alone. There are hundreds of refineries in the world, as well as thousands of tank farms, gas stations, and oil and gas wells.

Such infrastructure requires a lot of maintenance, which is not cheap. On the heels of two decades of low oil prices, much of the industry deferred a lot of maintenance. As Simmons says: "The entire value chain is built of steel. Steel begins to corrode the day it is cast."

The risk of failure – of leaks or breakages – is high. "If the world wants to continue using energy, its assets need to be rebuilt. Simple law of nature," Simmons says. "The construction job will rival the combination of building the World War II war machine, the Marshall Plan rebuilding of Europe, and the post-World War II Interstate Highway System."

[Obama Ignored Failing Power System in Convention Speech, Says Galvin Electricity Initiative](#)

/PRNewswire-USNewswire via COMTEX/ -- In Denver last night, Senator Barack Obama talked about energy as a problem, but did not address a viable solution - modernizing the electric grid. According to Kurt Yeager, energy expert and executive director of the Galvin Electricity Initiative, America's real energy problem is its dependency on an unreliable, inefficient, "ticking time bomb" power system. Like the country's dependency on foreign oil, 21st century Americans are slaves to the whims and weaknesses of an obsolete, 1950s-era power system. Modernizing the grid with smart technology can lower energy costs, achieve energy independence and address climate change.

[Hurricanes could push gas to \\$1.75 per litre, CIBC warns](#)

Canadian motorists should brace for gasoline prices of \$1.75 per litre as Tropical Storm Gustav threatens to shut down oil production in the Gulf of Mexico. With weather agencies calling for another active hurricane season, a new report from CIBC World Markets is warning that pump prices could spike if the 2005 storm season that saw Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is repeated. Gustav is expected to reach the Gulf of Mexico by Sunday.

[Punishing Russia could prove costly](#)

Moscow's position is, if friendship with the West can only be bought by standing idly by and ignoring desperate pleas for help from a kindred, ethically affiliated nation, Russia cannot afford such a friendship. Cold war or not, the time of a politically correct, US-style Russia is now over.

Instead, it is the time of a Russia that has restored the dignity of its elected government offices; a Russia that owes nothing to the world financial institutions, and itself holds near US\$100 billion in US agencies' debt; and a Russia that supplies one-third of Europe's total gas. This is a country whose army is, once again, capable of procuring world-class armaments and training soldiers in their proper use.

This Russia is prepared to beef up its military collaboration with China, ensuring comprehensive modernization of the Asian giant's forces. This new Russia has re-established its diplomatic and economic presence world-wide, has friends and partners in both hemispheres, and is capable of influencing geopolitical situations in the areas much further distanced than the neighboring Caucasus.

[Russia is fighting a new Cold War with banks and pipelines, not tanks and warplanes](#)

In classical mythology, Georgia was the land where the Argonauts had to harness bulls

with bronze hooves to win the Golden Fleece. Modern Georgia is the source of a treasure scarcely less precious: oil and gas from central Asia and the Caspian, piped along the only east-west energy corridor that Russia does not control. But whereas Jason and his comrades triumphed, our quest has ended in humiliating failure.

[ScottishPower says 'sorry' for 34% gas bill rise](#)

ScottishPower today became the latest British energy supplier to pile more pressure on shrinking household budgets by increasing gas prices by 34 per cent and electricity bills by 9 per cent.

[E.ON to Appeal Over Scottish Wind Farm Rejection](#)

LONDON - E.ON UK is to appeal against a local government refusal to grant planning permission for a wind farm at Auchencorth Moss in Scotland, the German-owned utility said on Thursday.

[India's nuclear deal headed for fiasco](#)

NEW DELHI - As the tortuous negotiations for the United States-India nuclear deal enters its final stage, it becomes clear that India seriously underestimated the discomfort and opposition the agreement would arouse in many countries because of the special privileges granted to India, largely on New Delhi's terms.

[Australia Approves Uranium Mine Expansion Plan](#)

SYDNEY - Australia, which is looking to sell more uranium overseas to meet growing demand for nuclear power, on Thursday approved a proposal by Heathgate Resources to expand its outback Beverley uranium mine.

The approval, announced by Australia's environment minister Peter Garrett, will allow Heathgate to produce up to 1,500 tonnes of uranium oxide a year.

[Papua New Guinea to Improve Power Supply](#)

Papua New Guinea will draw up a detailed plan to improve power supply in the country where 90% of the population still has no electricity.

The Japan Special Fund, administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), is providing a \$1.2 million grant for Papua New Guinea to prepare a power sector development project design that will increase supply of reliable and sustainable power at reasonable cost. The government will contribute another \$300,000 to the project.

[South Africa: Fuel Price to Fall - By Less Than Hoped](#)

BAD news for motorists: petrol prices could fall less than the widely expected R1 a litre if the minerals and energy department decides to channel some of the money towards what is known as the slate account.

The slate account is kept in terms of an agreement between the government and suppliers to determine compensation that is payable by the government to the suppliers, or by the suppliers to the government, in respect of losses suffered or profits gained by the suppliers because of fluctuations in the purchase price of petroleum products.

[Nigeria: N-Delta Crisis Has Perilous Implications - Anyaoku](#)

FORMER Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, declared yesterday that the current socio-political situation in the Niger Delta was "a major national crisis with potentially perilous implications that will go beyond our national economy if not properly resolved."

...Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan on his part warned that his administration would not welcome any investor wishing to exploit gas in the state without giving equity shares to the host communities.

[Climate fight hit by global slowdown](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - The fight against global warming is in danger of being downgraded on more urgent fears over energy security, heightened by a Russian war with Georgia, and a global economic slowdown.

Added to the mix -- politicians are faced with a rising clamor of complaints from voters over record fuel bills, and racing gas and oil prices have sparked new interest in high-carbon coal as well as cleaner alternatives.

[Shift to two peaks will save the planet](#)

WORKING 9 to 5, what a way to make a living - and what a waste of greenhouse gases, says one architect and urban planner.

James Calder, a director at architecture firm Woods Bagot, said Sydney would be greener and more productive if the working day was split in two: a morning shift of 6am to 3pm and an afternoon shift of midday to 9pm.

['Unbreakable' greenhouse gas meets its doom at last](#)

The war on climate change just got a chemical weapon: a way to destroy the carbon-fluorine bonds that make a class of widely used industrial gases so dangerous in the atmosphere.

[Russia says will ensure oil to flow to Europe](#)

DUSHANBE/MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's energy minister and a top oil company denied on Friday they were preparing to cut oil flows to Europe in response to threatened sanctions, a step Moscow never took even at the height of the Cold War.

As Europe prepared its response to Russia's invasion of neighbouring Georgia, the energy minister said Moscow was doing everything it could to ensure stable oil supplies on its key supply line to Europe, the Druzhba (Friendship) pipeline.

[Russia will still deliver oil says Germany](#)

Germany believes that Russia will stick to its contracts to deliver oil to Europe despite a threat of sanctions from EU nations, a government spokesman said today.

"We firmly believe that the contracts will be fulfilled," Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman Ulrich Wilhelm told reporters at a regular government news conference wrote Reuters.

[Political Debate on Energy: James Woolsey, former Director of CIA Guests](#)

August 29, 12pm PT / 3pm ET (1 hour)

Barack Obama and John McCain have set forth detailed energy policies and made passionate speeches about America's need for energy independence. Guests:

- Jim Woolsey, national security and energy adviser to John McCain, has advocated for plug-in hybrids and biofuels to wean the U.S. off foreign oil.
- Bill Becker is executive director of the Presidential Climate Action Project and former director of the U.S. Dept. of Energy's Central Regional Office.
- Brian Young is communications director for the College Democrats of New York and president of the Binghamton College Democrats.
- Charlie Smith, chairman of the College Republican National Committee, graduated

from the University of Denver in 2007.

[Venezuela state oil company to hire more truckers](#)

Venezuela's state-run oil company plans to hire 2,000 truckers and mechanics currently employed by private companies that will disappear when the government nationalizes wholesale fuel distribution.

[Germany considers creating national gas reserve](#)

BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany is considering setting up a natural gas reserve to reduce its dependency on imports from Russia, a spokeswoman for the Economy Ministry said on Friday.

Germany relies on Russia for about 44 percent of its gas imports, according to government information, and in recent years Moscow has cut off energy supplies to some of its neighbours on a number of occasions.

[Russia remains a Black Sea power](#)

If the struggle in the Caucasus was ever over oil and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) agenda towards Central Asia, the United States suffered a colossal setback this week. Kazakhstan, the Caspian energy powerhouse and a key Central Asian player, has decided to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Russia over the conflict with Georgia, and Russia's de facto control over two major Black Sea ports has been consolidated.

[Toyota's plunge into big pickups veers into a Texas-size ravine](#)

SAN ANTONIO — Until about three weeks ago, workers built pickups by the thousands here at the sprawling Toyota truck factory south of town. No longer.

...Opened with great fanfare only a couple of years ago, the plant halted production on Aug. 8 after demand collapsed for its Tundra full-size pickups, amid sky-high fuel prices and free-falling home values. Production won't restart until at least November.

[Vacationers travel roads closer to home to save the summer](#)

"Staycation" may have been the buzzword this summer, but "nearcation" may better describe what travelers did during prime vacation season.

From Minnesota to Maine, many Americans vacationed closer to home rather than staying at home or traveling longer distances.

[Grandparents help with back-to-school bill](#)

With prices for food, gasoline and home heating up, parents are more willing to let grandparents help with clothing costs, says Dan Butler, vice president of retail operations at the National Retail Federation.

[UK: Should drivers pay more for petrol?](#)

This week a report claimed families in Sussex were paying almost £800 too much in “green taxes”. The Taxpayers’ Alliance called on the Government to cut taxes, especially on the forecourts where soaring petrol prices were crippling drivers financially. Yet should we in fact be paying more for our petrol?

[Power Play](#)

For someone who believes that world oil supplies are about to begin an inexorable decline, possibly dragging down civil society in the process, Rob Hopkins is a rather cheery fellow. Hopkins, a 40-year-old doctoral student at Plymouth University in the United Kingdom, is the founder of the Transition movement, which encourages people to wean their neighborhoods, communities, and towns off oil and nudge them onto a path of self-sufficiency in an increasingly energy-scarce world. “The change we have seen over the past hundred years will be nothing compared with what we will see over the next twenty,” he says. But it’s not a dire warning; it’s an adventure. “This is an extraordinary time to be alive. I feel really fortunate to be around—it’s going to be a fascinating time in history.”

[Israel: Lessons from Climate Camp](#)

This wide gap between the rhetoric and reality of climate change highlights the difficulty that most governments struggle with in addressing the trade-off between economic growth, climate change and peak oil. The general attitude in most of the developed world - Israel included - is that increases in energy demand are a given. All we need to do is throw enough money at new technologies, and human ingenuity will somehow enable us to carry on with our over-consumption of energy without destroying the conditions for our existence on this planet. However, the reality of climate change and peak oil is that we cannot simply continue with business as usual.

[Time for statesmanship, not bluster](#)

Today's world of 'peak oil', the 'war on terror', unprecedented United States budget and trade deficits twinned with an international financial infrastructure tottering from collateralised mortgage crisis reaching across the United States to Europe, the time has surely come for displays of statesmanship, not bluster.

But what is the forum, what is to be the modern day counterpart of post-war Bretton Woods if the United Nations and World Trade Organisation do not fit the bill? And will Brazil, China and India be invited beyond the ante-room to the main banquet hall? Will as some apparently hasty and unthinking pundits suggest Russia be uninvited?

[Taking stock of climate change](#)

Climate change, a large externality bearing down on the global economy, worthy of focus because of the basic fiduciary responsibility to understand risk, was followed by 'peak oil', also a driver of economic change.

Beyond the literal definition of peak oil, the anticipation or expectation of increased price volatility of energy-related commodities was a part of the thinking.

In his two years as chief investment officer at CalPERS, Russell Reed introduced two additional areas of investment focus. One was commodities, and the other was infrastructure.

[Peak oil study essential to Hamilton's aerotropolis future](#)

Developing any future expansion plans for the lands surrounding the Hamilton International Airport shouldn't proceed until the city's peak oil study is completed, says a few members of the liaison committee.

[IAEA: No radioactivity from plutonium leak](#)

VIENNA, Austria: The International Atomic Energy Agency says a plutonium leak at its laboratory earlier this month did not contaminate the environment.

The agency says independent analysis of soil, plant and water samples show that no radioactivity was released into the surrounding area during the Aug. 3 incident.

[Iran agrees Nigeria nuclear deal](#)

Iran has agreed to share nuclear technology with Nigeria to help it increase its generation of electricity.

A senior Nigerian foreign ministry official, Tijjani Kaura, said the technology was not intended for any military use.

[Canada wants more study on polar bear protection](#)

INUVIK, Northwest Territories (Reuters) - Canada, criticized by environmentalists for not adequately protecting polar bears from the effects of climate change, said on Thursday it will take more time to study its next step.

A scientific panel on Thursday released detailed findings of an April review that classified the bear population as a "special concern," but not endangered or threatened with extinction.

[Industry groups file lawsuit over polar bear rule](#)

WASHINGTON - Five industry groups have sued the Interior Department over a rule to protect the polar bear that they say unfairly singles out business operations in Alaska for their contribution to global warming.

Groups representing the oil and gas, mining, and manufacturing industries asked a federal judge Wednesday to ensure that laws designed to protect the bear, which was recently designated a threatened species, are not used to block projects that release heat-trapping gases in the state.

[Carbon clues to when Greenland was a green land](#)

PARIS (AFP) - Climatologists poring over Greenland's ancient past say global cooling, unleashed by a fall in atmospheric greenhouse gases, caused the vast island to ice over around three million years ago.

In a study released Wednesday, the British research team say that for aeons, Greenland was mostly ice-free and may have hosted grasslands and forests before it became smothered in a thick, glacial crust in a relatively short time.

The ice sheet can only be explained by a decrease in naturally-occurring, heat-trapping carbon gases in the atmosphere, they say.



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