



Drumbeat: April 16, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 16, 2009 - 10:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[The Peak Oil Crisis: Sustainability](#)

Food production is frequently discussed as the key area of human endeavor that will need to become sustainable if we are to continue eating. For the last hundred years agricultural production has boomed as we have dumped vast amounts of petroleum-derived chemicals and pesticides on the world's crops. Then we have piled the resulting crops into fossil fuel powered trains, planes, ships, and trucks and after much energy intensive processing and packaging have delivered them to consumers 1,000s of miles away. This too will have to be phased out as the energy involved in all this becomes so expensive that we can no longer afford to eat. Many see the return to sustainable agricultural practices in the midst of global warming as by far the biggest challenge our descendents will face.

There is, however, more to the sustainability problem than just renewable energy, transportation and food - and that is our infrastructure. Large agglomerations of people living under reasonable conditions in the 21st simply cannot continue in a healthy, sustainable state without clean water, sewage, electricity, communications, a source of warmth and a transportation network to move life-sustaining supplies about. Most of the infrastructure in use today has been built in the last 150 or so years.

Moreover, much has never been rebuilt. There are 100's of thousands of miles of water, sewer, oil, and natural gas pipelines - most in very hard to reach places that are getting very old. In the next 50 to 100 years most if not all of these vital arteries are going to have to be replaced. Then there is the electric grid, parts of which have been around for 100 years, and the roads, bridges, and rail lines that need to be maintained on a sustainable basis.

[Petrobras Talking to Canada, U.S., Denmark for Loans](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA is in talks with countries including Canada, the U.S., Denmark Singapore and South Korea about potential loans to finance suppliers in Brazil's offshore oil industry.

The loans would help Brazil's state oil company, known as Petrobras, to finance suppliers of ships, rigs and oil platforms, Chief Executive Officer Jose Sergio Gabrielli said today at the World Economic Forum in Rio de Janeiro.

[BP shareholders vent fury at AGM](#)

BP shareholders have registered their anger at senior directors' pay and their connections to Royal Bank of Scotland by only narrowly passing the firm's remuneration report.

[Shipston urged to brace itself against climate change](#)

PEOPLE are being urged to help make Shipston and its surrounding villages resilient against the effects of climate change and a predicted worldwide decline in oil production.

Residents, organisations and groups from the Shipston area are invited to attend a public meeting at Shipston High School, Darlingscote Road, at 7.30pm on Wednesday, April 29 to discuss joining Transition Town, a worldwide grassroots movement working to build local resilience against the effects of climate change and peak oil.

[BP 'Trimmed' Oil Refinery Runs as Profit Margins Fell](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BP Plc, Europe's second-largest oil company, is slowing production at some of its refineries, joining other oil companies such as Repsol YPF SA in curbing output as the recession lowers fuel consumption.

"We've trimmed runs in some refineries and brought forward some maintenance in one or two places to take advantage of the timing" of weaker second-quarter demand, Iain Conn, BP's head of refining and marketing, said in an interview in London today.

Refining margins will remain "challenging" this year because of lower demand, he said. Profits for refiners turning a barrel of crude into fuels averaged \$4.60 between April 1 and April 8, about half that of the second quarter 2008, according to data on BP's Web site.

[OPEC set to miss output-reduction target](#)

OPEC will cut crude-oil shipments by 2.5 percent in the four weeks ending May 2, putting the group short of its reduction target, according to Oil Movements.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, producer of about 40 percent of the world's oil, will load about 22.2 million barrels a day in the four weeks ending May 2, down from 22.8 million a day in the month ended April 4, tanker-tracker Oil Movements said today in a report.

[Contractors tighten belts for Saudi refinery bids](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Contractors will have made aggressive cuts to cost estimates in bids due later this month to build a new refinery for Saudi Aramco and Total (TOTF.PA), sources at contracting companies said on Thursday.

Oil's slump to around \$50 a barrel from a peak over \$147 last year has forced cost cutting across the industry, and contractors that were turning down work a year ago now find themselves in a fierce competition for what is left, sources said.

[Russia's Sakhalin-1 2009 budget totals \\$2 bln](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - A group led by U.S. energy giant ExxonMobil will invest about \$2 billion into Russia's Sakhalin-1 oil and gas project this year, the Sakhalin regional government said on Thursday.

Russia approved the Sakhalin-1 budget last week after a prolonged delay which analysts linked to disagreements between Exxon and Russian state gas monopoly Gazprom (GAZP.MM) over the sale of Sakhalin gas.

[War, Oil and Gas Pipelines: Turkey is Washington's Geopolitical Pivot](#)

The recent visit of US President Obama to Turkey was far more significant than the President's speech would suggest. For Washington Turkey today has become a geopolitical "pivot state" which is in the position to tilt the Eurasian power equation towards Washington or significantly away from it depending on how Turkey develops its ties with Moscow and its role regarding key energy pipelines.

[Nigeria tries to settle oil protests](#)

ABUJA, Nigeria — The Nigerian government plans to offer an amnesty to Niger Delta militants in a bid to end the violence that has cut the country's vital oil production by 25 percent.

The new minister for Niger Delta affairs, in an interview with GlobalPost, said the government will open dialogue with the armed gangs and is putting in place a program to disarm them and reintegrate the fighters into society.

[The Salt Mine Solution](#)

In the Salado salt formation a half-mile below the New Mexico desert, WIPP has room

to store all the radioactive waste an expanded nuclear power program could produce. Emphasis on the word *could*.

[Frontline Sees 'Massive' Oil-Tanker Cancellations](#)

(Bloomberg) -- A plunge in supertanker rates to their lowest in at least 11 years will likely spur owners to scrap ships and cancel orders for new ones, according to Frontline Ltd., the world's largest operator of the carriers.

Supertankers are making \$4,335 a day after fuel costs for delivering Middle East crude to Asia and the U.S., according to data from the London-based Baltic Exchange. Hamilton, Bermuda-based Frontline said Feb. 26 it needs \$12,000 to cover costs such as repairs, crew, insurance and lubricants for engines. Interest on loans takes the figure to \$32,100.

"We will see scrapping happening soon, then we will see massive cancellations in the order book," Singapore-based Jens Martin Jensen, temporary chief executive officer of Frontline's management unit, said by phone today. "I don't think this market is going to last until 2011."

[Eyes on dwindling Big Oil reserves after tough quarter](#)

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Investors are looking beyond what was clearly a tough first quarter for major oil companies, and toward how they can ramp up production levels to meet demand whenever the economy bounces back.

Questions about how to replace reserves, whether through projects in the pipeline or acquisitions, loom large for an industry caught between tougher regulations and tax codes at home and the governments that control most of the world's oil and gas supplies abroad.

"They have normal decline rates with existing assets. It's an ongoing struggle for them," said Brian Youngberg, an analyst at Edward Jones. "You're always looking to see can any of these companies break away from the pack, and maybe show that they can do a little bit better over time than their peers."

[Natural Gas Price Swing Unexplained by Fundamentals, FERC Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.S. natural-gas price swings in the first half of 2008 can't be explained by fundamentals alone, the staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission said.

[Norway March oil output falls to 2.15 mln bpd](#)

OSLO (Reuters) - Norway's oil production fell to a preliminary 2.15 million barrels per day on average in March from nearly 2.17 million in February, the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate said on Thursday.

Production of natural gas liquids (NGL) and condensate fell to a preliminary 348,000 barrels per day in March from 399,000 in February, the directorate said in a statement.

[Russia Rearms](#)

Russia's leaders are getting used to cutting budgets this year. As the country sinks deeper into recession — unemployment, according to some estimates, is as high as 12% and the economy is predicted to shrink by about 4.5% in 2009 — the government is slashing spending at most of its ministries. The Energy Ministry's budget is down by 33%, and that of the Transport Ministry by 30%. But there is one hugely expensive project on which President Dmitri Medvedev has vowed to actually increase spending: transforming Russia's creaking Soviet-era defense industry into a modern technological power, and turning the 1.1-million-man Russian army into a leaner but more effective fighting force.

[U.K. village may use potholes for speed control](#)

LONDON - Here's a new road repair plan: Don't bother.

Officials in the small English village of Navestock, some 25 miles northeast of London, are considering leaving many of the town's potholes unfilled as a way to bedevil the speeders who zip through town at a breakneck pace.

[Economic slump provides tinder for global conflicts](#): *With more people pushed into poverty, the probability of armed rebellions increases around the world.*

The new director of the National Intelligence Agency caused something of a stir last month when he warned Congress: "The primary near-term security concern of the United States is the global economic crisis and its geopolitical implications."

On that theme, Hampshire College professor Michael Klare sees the world economic meltdown as already prompting "economic brush fires" around the world and worries whether these could prove "too virulent to contain."

It seems as if the lyrics "trouble, trouble, trouble" from Meredith Willson's "The Music Man" have become too real in today's world.

Last November Robert Zoellick, president of the World Bank Group, noted that the global financial crisis would hit hardest the "poorest and most vulnerable" in the developing world. At that time, Mr. Zoellick calculated another 100 million people around the world had been driven into poverty as a result of soaring food and oil prices.

These prices have eased. Nonetheless, hundreds of millions in poor nations must try to balance household budgets on incomes of \$2 a day or less.

[Oil Unlikely to Surpass First-Quarter Levels, Says BP](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BP Plc, Europe's second-largest oil company, doesn't expect crude prices to trade much higher than levels seen in the first quarter.

Prices are unlikely to be "much firmer" because of the global slowdown, Chief Executive Officer Tony Hayward told an annual meeting of shareholders today.

[US Interior Sec Weighs in on Offshore Drilling in Alaska](#)

Gov. Sarah Palin told the new secretary of Interior on Tuesday that Alaska needs new offshore oil and gas development or risks an early shutdown of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline.

"Once that line shuts down, it will mean the end of oil production on the North Slope," Palin said, adding that plans for a new pipeline to carry natural gas to Lower 48 markets are at stake, too.

[China, Kazakhstan Sign \\$10 Billion Loan-for-Oil Agreements](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China, the world's second-biggest energy consumer, will lend \$10 billion to Kazakhstan in return for a stake in an oil producer in the Central Asian country.

[Holly to Buy Sunoco's Tulsa Refinery for \\$65 Million](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Holly Corp., the owner of oil refineries in Utah and New Mexico, will buy Sunoco Inc.'s plant in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for \$65 million to increase output more than 60 percent.

[Petro-Canada to Cut 200 Employees on Stalled Oil-Sands Project](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petro-Canada, the Canadian oil company being acquired by Suncor Energy Inc. for C\$18.8 billion (\$15.6 billion), plans to fire about 200 employees working on its stalled Fort Hills oil-sands project.

Between 50 and 100 contractors working on the project will also be cut, Ken Hall, a spokesman for Petro-Canada, said today in a telephone interview. The Calgary-based

company shelved the C\$25.3 billion oil-sands mining and refining project in November because of rising costs and plunging oil prices.

[Cheap Gas? Try \\$1 a Tank](#)

Last month I paid a brief visit to Venezuela. Aside from the glorious, 80 degree weather, the most astonishing thing about the country is the rock-bottom price of gas.

It cost \$1 — including tip — to fill up the Subaru Forester that my hosts were driving. Just to repeat: that's \$1 for a tank!

[Energy Stocks Experience Difficult First Quarter](#)

The S&P 500 Index experienced an 11.7% loss for the first quarter of 2009 while the index's Energy sector generated a slightly worse quarterly performance with a 12.1% loss. Of the S&P 500's ten industry sectors, only Technology produced a positive investor return for the first three months of 2009. In looking at the first quarter performance of the industry sectors, it is noteworthy how many of the sectors generated fairly similar returns. While Technology generated positive return, the Materials sector was close with only a 2.8% loss for the quarter. At the other end of the spectrum, Financials and Industrials each reported greater than 20% losses. Of the remaining six sectors, three produced almost exactly the same results of 8.5% losses while the balance of the sectors, including Energy, had losses ranging from 11.3% to 12.1%. The quarterly results were helped considerably by a strong and positive market environment in the closing weeks of the quarter.

[Kepco feels the crunch of Koreans using less power](#)

As Koreans are using less electricity due to the global economic slump, Korea Electric Power Corp., the supplier of almost all of the country's electricity, has posted on-year losses for the first quarter this year, on top of its record loss in 2008.

[Israel faces nationwide blackout over Electric Corp. sanctions](#)

The Israel Electric Corporation is planning to cut power across the country for an hour on Thursday, and has implored consumers to reduce general use of energy-guzzling electrical appliances such as washing machines, ovens, driers and dishwashers.

The IEC said that due to employee sanctions, its generating capacity has been reduced to only 6,300 megawatts - exactly the demand level forecasted for the evening hours.

[Facing down supply-chain threats](#)

A series of ongoing and increasingly more volatile threats across many fronts will face global supply chains and the trucking networks that support them in the years ahead--ranging from high fuel prices and a capacity shortage to cargo theft, terrorism, and the impact freight transportation has on the environment.

[The key to containing Iran's nuclear ambitions is at the gas pump](#)

Despite its prominence as a major oil exporter, Iran has significant energy vulnerabilities. Due to limited refining capabilities, it depends on gasoline imports for 40% of its domestic consumption. Iran is, in fact, the second-largest importer of gasoline in the world, behind only the United States.

Iran's gasoline imports are vulnerable: Tehran relies primarily on five companies for its gasoline supplies: Vitol (Switzerland/Netherlands), Trafigura (Switzerland/Netherlands), Reliance Industries (India), Glencore (Switzerland) and Total (France). Washington and Ottawa should give these companies a choice between providing gasoline to Iran's relatively small domestic market and gaining access to North America.

[Unsure of Saturn's Fate, Dealerships Are Closing](#)

DETROIT — Saturn, one of three brands that General Motors plans to drop, has been running ads that tell skittish car shoppers, "We're still here."

But Saturn is getting harder to find. One of the company's largest dealers shut down four of his six Saturn stores in Wisconsin on Wednesday. After Thursday, Saturn will no longer be in Corpus Christi, Tex. And forget about buying a new Saturn anywhere near Kansas City, Mo., or in any of the 45 cities across the United States where Saturn dealers have closed this year.

[For Young Japanese, It's Back to the Farm](#)

"This is harder than it looks," said Tatsunori Kobayashi, a spiky-haired janitor from Tokyo Disney Resort, as he tromped through a mustard spinach patch with a seed planter, irregular furrows stretching out behind him.

He is part of Japan's 2,400-strong Rural Labor Squad, urban trainees dispatched to the countryside under a pilot program to put Japan's underemployed youth to work tilling its farms.

[John Michael Greer: Some Advice for Distributists](#)

One of the pitfalls that lies in the path of those who try to gauge the outlines of the future in advance, and swallows no small number of them, is the assumption that today's popular beliefs and assumptions are a good guide to tomorrow's. Sometimes, to be sure, this turns out to be the case, and some widespread opinion or other remains glued in place for decades or centuries – though this usually happens to opinions that most sensible people think will soon be abandoned. More often, though, there's no belief less popular at any given time than the most firmly held convictions of the recent past.

[The end of consumerism](#)

Right now there is a terrifying vacuum of values, vision and leadership in our political discourse and from our politicians. And it's hard for business to do the right thing when it's designed to make money and little else, and when the market is set up so perversely. Our politicians are (to borrow a phrase from the wonderful Thomas Homer-Dixon) like drunk drivers in the fog. Harvard Professor John Quelch's 2008 study *Too Much Stuff* says: 'The mass consumption of the 1990s is fast fading in the rearview mirror. Now a growing number of people want to declutter their lives and invest in experiences rather than things'.

And Jeremy Paxman has told us that we are witnessing the 'end of capitalism'. Our current form of corporate-consumer-capitalism has been shown to be what many of us knew it was: a fundamentally flawed system.

[BLIND SPOT: Save A Planet and Live On It!](#)

Hundreds of responses poured into my computer concerning the movie documentary, BLIND SPOT. It's amazing how millions can look at a steam locomotive bearing down on them and continue walking on the tracks away from the train so they won't see it when it runs over them.

And so we find ourselves in our own Blind Spot as a civilization. Since it's not happening to us right now, such as Hurricane Katrina hasn't reached shore yet, so we continue building sand castles on the beach.

[How civilisation will collapse - and when](#)

In Future Scenarios, Holmgren leaves little doubt that the twin threats of climate change and peak oil (in fact, peak energy, because other fossil fuels will run out too) will have a revolutionary effect on the way we live.

Gas shortage And the changes are coming sooner than expected - Holmgren points to a comprehensive study showing that the amounts of energy needed to extract and refine

energy are increasing so fast that by as soon as 2014 the net energy yield from gas in Canada (to name just one major producer) will fall to almost nothing.

"The implications are so shocking that the naive and simplistic idea that we are running out of oil and gas (rather than just peaking in production) may be closer to the truth than even the most pessimistic assessments of peak-oil proponents a decade ago."

Also: [Excerpt from the book](#)

[We are six years away from an energy crisis](#)

For the past two decades we have had ample reserves to absorb the shocks: now the margins are beginning to wear thin. Many of the existing power stations were built in the 1970s or earlier. All the coal-fired stations are more than 30 years old, as are most of the nuclear ones. They are all coming to the end of their lives and their reliability is inevitably beginning to suffer. Although significant numbers of gas power stations have been added, North Sea gas and oil supplies have been depleted at breakneck speed. After decades as an energy exporter, Britain now relies increasingly on imports of gas and coal.

Fast-forward to 2015 and the energy position could be precarious. By then the remaining coal power stations will be facing closure because of the pollution control requirements of the EU directive on large combustion plants. By then all except one of the existing nuclear stations will also be closed or facing closure. Having to replace so much coal and nuclear capacity in such a short period is unprecedented - except perhaps in wartime.

[OPEC sees 'devastating contraction' in oil demand](#)

OPEC again revised down its estimate for world crude demand on Wednesday, saying a "devastating contraction" in consumption would keep prices under pressure in the months ahead.

"In the coming months, the market is expected to remain under pressure from uncertainties in the economic outlook, demand deterioration and the substantial overhang in supply," the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries wrote in its latest monthly report.

[Sandstorm puts stop to Kuwait exports](#)

Opec member Kuwait halted crude and oil product exports this morning due a sandstorm and bad weather, a spokesman for state refiner Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) said.

Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia had no interruptions in its crude flow from its main terminal in Ras Tanura, a shipping agent told Reuters.

[BP says produced just over 4 mln barrels a day in Q1](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - BP produced just over 4 million barrels of oil per day in the first quarter of 2009, the company's chief executive said on Thursday.

[Gazprom Sets Up LNG Marketing, Shipping Unit, Lloyds List Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Gazprom set up a unit to market liquefied natural gas and manage shipments of the fuel, Lloyds List reported, citing the company.

Gazprom has set up Gazprom Global LNG and the company may need as many as 20 vessels for its LNG venture in Shtokman in the Barents Sea, the trade daily said. The marketing unit has contracted two vessels for spot cargo deliveries, according to the report.

[Woodside, Aboriginals, State Reach LNG Access Accord](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Woodside Petroleum Ltd., Western Australia and Aboriginal landowners in the state's far northwest reached a land-access accord that allows development of a natural-gas export hub, said Premier Colin Barnett.

About 90 percent of landowners representing Aboriginal communities in the region voted today in favor of an offer from the state, the federal government and Woodside, giving the company access to James Price Point to build the hub, the Western Australia premier said today in an e-mailed statement.

[Gazprom May Sell Russia's 1st Dollar Bond for 9 Months Tomorrow](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Gazprom, Russia's gas export monopoly, may complete its planned sale of as much as \$2 billion as soon as tomorrow, according to a banker involved in the deal.

The 10-year issue with the option for investors to redeem the notes after three years would be the first by a Russian company in dollars since July and may pave the way for other borrowers to sell foreign debt. Gazprom, Russia's largest corporate, was already the first company to issue foreign-currency bonds this year with its 500 million Swiss-franc (\$436 million) sale of 9 percent two-year notes earlier in April.

[Disused oil rig in Gulf of Mexico to be converted into luxury hotel](#)

Architects want to build more than 300 individual rooms on the deck of the rig and mount wind turbines onboard to provide power.

Guests to the spectacular rig resort will be able to relax at the hotel's on-deck beach or soak up the rays in the sunbathing areas.

[Obama should shift focus to interdependence on oil](#)

When President Obama attends the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago this week, he will have an opportunity to address one of the most pressing issues on his policy agenda — energy.

Yet, as the economic crisis absorbs most of his administration's attention, lower oil prices make alternative energy sources look costlier and U.S. oil demand remains fairly solid despite the recession, an unfortunate reality is setting in. Oil imports, like it or not, will remain a substantial part of the U.S.'s energy base for decades to come.

But there is also good news. The Summit of the Americas provides a forum for Obama to shift focus from energy independence to a more practical and even a more desirable goal — energy interdependence.

[Renewable energy's environmental paradox](#)

WASHINGTON - The SunZia transmission line that would link sun and wind power from central New Mexico with cities in Arizona is just the sort of energy project an environmentalist could love — or hate. And it is just the sort of line the Interior Department has been tasked with promoting — or guarding against.

If built, the 460-mile line would carry about 3,000 megawatts of power, enough to avoid the need for a handful of coal-fired plants and to help utilities meet mandated targets for use of renewable fuel. "We have to connect the sun of the deserts and the winds of the plains to places where people live," Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said recently.

But the line would also cross grasslands, skirt two national wildlife refuges and traverse the Rio Grande, all habitat areas rich in wildlife. The graceful sandhill crane, for example, makes its winter home in the wetlands of New Mexico's Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, right next to the path of the proposed power line. And much of the area falls under the protection of the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

[Government challenges firms to build better batteries](#)

WASHINGTON — The nation's spies and soldiers need new batteries — smaller, longer-lived batteries — and the government is investing tens of millions of dollars in companies that are trying to create them.

Today's intelligence and military missions rely more and more on high-tech gadgetry, such as remote communications and surveillance systems. As a result, the government's investments in companies that develop batteries and other portable, long-duration power sources have skyrocketed.

Much of the bankrolling is being done through companies set up by the government to invest in businesses that are developing technology with national security applications.

[PROMISES, PROMISES: Plug-in cars goal hard to hit](#)

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama's campaign pledge to put 1 million plug-in hybrid cars on the road by 2015 is fraught with difficulties, from technical and engineering hurdles to the realities of the economy and the price of gasoline.

It took eight long years to get 1 million hybrids on the road in the United States, and even a White House task force says one of the leading new plug-in cars being developed is too expensive to gain popularity any time soon.

[First Solar to build Nevada photovoltaic plant](#)

NEW YORK – Solar manufacturer First Solar Inc. said Wednesday it will build the largest photovoltaic power plant in the U.S. near an existing facility in Nevada.

Tempe, Ariz.-based First Solar said the 48-megawatt plant will produce power for roughly 30,000 homes. It will be added to the existing 10-megawatt El Dorado plant run by Sempra Generation in Boulder City, Nev., about 40 miles southeast of Las Vegas.

[Fort Collins Clean Energy Conference hosts RFK Jr.](#)

Anita Burke of the Catalyst Institute was the first speaker of the evening. Burke, a physicist and eighteen year veteran of Shell International, opened by offering that she had worked in the “bowels of the oil and gas industry” and was appearing to provide some context to globe’s environmental crisis. According to Burke, the Earth is guaranteed a four degree rise in temperature, “even if we ‘full stop’ producing carbon today.” She offered a definition of peak oil –the point at which maximum petroleum extraction is reached, after which production begins terminal decline – and maintains the oil and gas industry is near or at this mark. Burke then presented a quick succession of slides that demonstrated an explosion of global consumption since 1950, from oil to international tourism to paper to the number of McDonalds restaurants. For Burke, this

pattern of consumption is leading to “peak everything” and requires bold action, including the elimination of automobiles, stabilization and reduction of the population, an immediate 80% reduction in carbon emissions, and the construction of dykes on our shores reaching two meters above sea level. While predicting a certain level of ecological catastrophe in the coming years, Burke maintains that as a country we are “on the precipice of making elegant choices.”

[Raising technical questions](#)

Some argue that these kinds of knowledge systems, arising out of direct experience with the land and the intergenerational communication of lifeways, are in fact devalued and threatened by the machine-based model of the mind associated with the rise of digital technology. C.A. Bowers’ thought-provoking article, “Using Computers in Native American Classrooms: Trojan Horse or Cultural Affirming Technology?” looks at these issues in more depth.

Others might claim that our relationship with devices like “Sixth Sense” is the modern equivalent of Inuit mapping, helping us navigate the reality we have created now that we don’t live in the kinds of landscapes traditional people inhabited. I would point out that huge portions of the globe still live in something more like the “ancient world,” and only cheap and abundant fossil fuel has enabled us to pretend that we don’t. And who knows how long we can keep it up. We’ve simultaneously created the conditions for global warming and peak oil while losing many of our basic, self-reliance skills. Try as we might to build our bubble of convenience, we still, body and soul, need the planet from which we have sprung, and it needs our care. Dependence on an Internet connection won’t get us everywhere we need to go.

[Nigeria fines Shell for oil spill](#)

LAGOS (AFP) – Nigeria fined Anglo-Dutch petroleum giant Shell one million naira (6,800 dollars, 5,100 euros) for failing to clean up an oil spill within reasonable time, a company official said Wednesday.

[Across the United States, Waters in Crisis](#)

WASHINGTON (OneWorld.net) - Over the last years, up to 60 percent of lakes, rivers, streams, and drinking water sources across the United States have lost crucial environmental protections at the hands of polluters, developers, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Without immediate action in Congress, a generation of progress in cleaning up our nation's waters may be lost," says a new report by seven U.S.-based environmental advocacy groups.

[Rosneft cuts flare deal with World Bank](#)

The World Bank has signed a deal with Russian oil producer Rosneft to cut flaring by making use of gas from the Komsomolskoye oilfield rather than flaring it off, Rosneft said.

Rosneft will cut the equivalent of 5.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in 2008-2012, which can then be sold as carbon offsets, under the Kyoto Protocol, to European countries trying to meet climate targets.

[London's Smoky Outskirts Probed for Moving CO2 to Sea](#)

(Bloomberg) -- National Grid Plc is investigating piping greenhouse gases released by power plants and refineries near London to undersea storage sites so they won't add to global warming.

The manager of Britain's natural gas-delivery network found the Thames Estuary may be suitable for laying pipelines to move carbon-dioxide gas toward depleted offshore wells, Director of Network Operations Chris Train said in an interview. In the north, the Teesside industrial hub also is being considered.

[Australia launches 'clean coal' institute](#)

CANBERRA (AFP) – Australia has launched what it described as a major initiative to develop clean coal technology, saying it could play a major role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said the Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute's launch showed Australia was facing up to its responsibilities as the world's largest coal exporter.

[Third-World Stove Soot Is Target in Climate Fight](#)

While carbon dioxide may be the No. 1 contributor to rising global temperatures, scientists say, black carbon has emerged as an important No. 2, with recent studies estimating that it is responsible for 18 percent of the planet's warming, compared with 40 percent for carbon dioxide. Decreasing black carbon emissions would be a relatively cheap way to significantly rein in global warming — especially in the short term, climate experts say. Replacing primitive cooking stoves with modern versions that emit far less soot could provide a much-needed stopgap, while nations struggle with the more difficult task of enacting programs and developing technologies to curb carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels.

[Organizers call regional emissions plan a success](#)

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – Organizers and participants in the nation's only working cap-and-trade program for carbon emissions called the fledgling attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions a success Wednesday.

[Russia keeps to Kyoto levels](#)

Russia's greenhouse gas emissions rose by 0.3% in 2007, but even with the increase the nation is still keeping to its Kyoto commitment, data submitted to the United Nations shows.

Emissions edged up to 2.192 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2007 from 2.185 billion in 2006, according to official figures filed to the UN Climate Change Secretariat in Bonn.

[‘Catastrophic’ Sea-Level Rise Possible, Reef Reveals](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Fossilized coral reefs formed the last time the Earth was warmer than today show sea levels could rise rapidly by the end of the century if global warming triggers a collapse of ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica.

A “catastrophic” rise in the ocean of 4 meters to 6 meters (13 feet to 19.6 feet) is possible, said Paul Blanchon, a scientist at the National University of Marine Sciences in Cancun, Mexico, whose team studied the fossilized reefs. The death and re-emergence on higher elevation of reefs 121,000 years ago could only result from a rapid increase in ocean levels caused by the breakdown of ice sheets, he said.



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