



Drumbeat: May 2, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on May 2, 2009 - 10:13am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[What's ahead?](#)

Political scientist Thomas Homer-Dixon is the editor of *Carbon Shift*, a collection of essays by Canadian academics and journalists, including The Gazette's William Marsden, that address two closely related questions: How do we assure future energy security and how do we act on climate change?

It's a predicament for policy-makers. If the world is running out of conventional oil, as some experts warn, many of the hydrocarbon alternatives like coal and heavy oil would add significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.

Meeting the world's insatiable demand for energy while reducing emissions at the same time seems like an intractable problem. The essayists in *Carbon Shift* can't agree on what the priorities should be - something the reader is likely to find frustrating.

[ExxonMobil Takes Steps to Preserve War Chest As Profit Falls](#)

Exxon Mobil Corp. is taking steps to preserve cash in the market downturn, positioning itself to take advantage of new investments and make acquisitions.

[Mexico's Oil Operations Hum Along Despite Swine Flu](#)

Mexico's state oil industry is still humming along despite a deadly flu outbreak that forced the government to declare a national holiday from May 1 to May 5 to combat contagion.

A Petroleos Mexicanos spokeswoman said Thursday operations are normal and that such strategic activities as oil production are excluded from the government's work stoppage. The company is preparing a statement on how it is handling the flu threat.

[Chrysler aftershocks to hit industry hard](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- The bankruptcy at Chrysler LLC is likely to soon be felt across the auto industry, disrupting production at plants of healthier rivals within a week or two, according to industry experts.

[Kuwaiti Amir to visit China May 10-13](#)

KUWAIT -- Negotiations are ongoing between the two countries for constructing an oil refinery in southern China comprising a refinery and a petrochemical complex at a total cost of USD nine billion, to be completed by 2012, he added.

[Investors see bright future in wind energy](#)

Revenue from solar, wind power, ethanol and biodiesel fuel grew 50 percent to about \$116 billion last year, according to Clean Edge Inc., a research and publishing firm. The spike in green revenue, and the backing of the federal government to explore these energy sources has excited investors.

"They favor green investment right now because they think that's the way the world is going," said David Wood, director of the Institute for Responsible Investment at Boston College's Center for Corporate Citizenship.

[Prius in Seattle](#)

This is the man who still reminisces over his life-long love affair with cars. Photos of his 1950s high school hotrods line the walls of his workshop. Next to them, a picture from his college days, standing proudly in tie-dyed T-shirt beside his '57 Volkswagen Beetle. To this day he bemoans the never-ending repair bills from our series of kid-safe late '70s Volvo station wagons. More recently he's entered a middle-aged phase with a penchant for big trucks and sport utilities.

But the past is past. He now claims our hybrid purchase is the best automobile decision of our lives and I have to agree. Owning a hybrid has been an interesting ride. Re-learning to drive and maximize the gas mileage in "my" new car has become "his" favorite pastime.

[Russian gas output collapse deepens in April](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Natural gas production at Russian gas giant Gazprom fell by a more than a quarter last month to the lowest levels in a decade, continuing its spiral downward in response to plummeting European demand.

Oil extraction, however, continued to climb in April despite concerns that the lower oil price and lagging investment would lead to a repeat of last year's decline, data from the

Russian Energy Ministry showed on Saturday.

In April, Gazprom's gas output was 1.15 billion cubic metres (bcm) per day, 7 percent down from 1.24 bcm in March 2009 and 28 percent down from 1.60 bcm in April 2008, the data showed.

Analysts say such low production levels have not been seen in a decade, but they predict a recovery in the second half when gas prices are expected to catch up with the lower oil price, which they follow after a lag of six to nine months.

[U.S. bill to create clean energy investment agency](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. lawmakers introduced legislation this week that would establish a new independent agency to spearhead government clean energy investments.

The bipartisan bill, introduced by Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Jeff Bingaman and ranking member Lisa Murkowski, would establish a Clean Energy Deployment Administration within the Energy Department.

[Petrobras Pumps First Crude from Massive Tupi Field Offshore Brazil](#)

Brazilian state-run energy giant Petrobras (PBR) celebrated May Day in style Friday, pumping the first crude from the Western Hemisphere's largest oil discovery in 30 years.

[Oil punt makes big bucks but coastlines at risk](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Big international oil companies are making hundreds of millions of dollars storing crude on tankers offshore in a trading play that environmentalists say sidesteps shipping rules and puts coastlines at risk.

The \$100 per barrel drop in crude oil prices since July, to around \$50, has pushed the market into an unusually sharp contango -- a scenario where the cost of oil today is much lower than the price of oil in the future.

[Saudi Aramco strives for lower production costs using new technology](#)

While the demonstrations show promising results and no one doubts that new technology will allow completion of more advanced wells, the Extreme Reservoir Contact wells may not quickly replace existing technology. Even with the generation of electric power by upward fluid flow in the casing of the well, the system may run into limitations

long before fifty laterals can be added.

[New Report Shows Hydrogen Vehicles will Drive Change](#)

Today, the National Hydrogen Association released a new report called the "Energy Evolution: An Analysis of Alternative Vehicles and Fuels to 2100." The Energy Evolution shows that a scenario which initially includes a mix of alternative vehicles, and is later dominated by hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles sales is the only way to simultaneously cut U.S. greenhouse gas pollution by 80% below 1990 levels; reach petroleum quasi-independence by mid-century; and eliminate nearly all controllable air pollution by the end of the century. The report also shows that an expansion of hydrogen stations is more affordable than most people think.

[Bolivia nationalises BP aviation unit](#)

LA PAZ (Reuters) - Bolivian leftist President Evo Morales told hundreds of supporters he nationalised the local unit of BP's aviation division on Friday, further tightening state control over the energy industry.

At a May Day rally, Morales said he signed a decree to take over Air BP, a division of British oil major BP. The poor Andean nation had been in talks with the company over a possible takeover.

"I want to ask the Bolivian armed forces along with (Bolivian state energy company) YPFB to gain control of Air BP, the multinational that sells jet fuel. With this decree Air BP is now nationalized," Morales said in a speech outside the presidential palace in La Paz.

[Hard times for Pdvsa](#)

The board of directors of state-run oil company Petróleos de Venezuela (Pdvsa) has been under pressure as petrodollars continue to decline and financiers in the international markets refuse to fund companies in emerging countries. Therefore, the conglomerate has decided to include Venezuelan banks among its financing options.

[Oman sees oil output up 6%](#)

Oman's oil output in the first two months of 2009 rose by 6.1 per cent on the year to 780,000 barrels per day (bpd), government data published on Saturday showed.

[Energy firm lays off more employees](#)

Halliburton laid off more workers in the Grand Valley on Friday, marking the third time the energy-services company has laid off local employees in the past two months.

[Oil companies push Florida legislature for offshore drilling](#)

Late in the legislative session, a group of mostly anonymous oil and gas companies have hired at least 20 lobbyists to push bills that would allow offshore drilling in Florida.

[“Realists” and “optimists” in the permaculture world](#)

I have a running discussion with one of my best friends (an optimist) concerning the role that hope should play in the way we shape our views, thoughts and subsequent behaviors. He feels that hope is absolutely instrumental in living his life. That is not how I live my life. Hope, for me, is derived from “faith, hope and charity”, which is not a stable foundation upon which to base possible life threatening (or even pleasurable) decisions. I want to know the odds. That chair will probably support me. Less oil with greater demand will probably lead to conflict.

My friend hopes that Obama will pull us through this mess. I perceive that the likelihood of that happening is very low given that the O-man selected and stands behind Timothy Geithner (TG) and Lawrence Summers (LS). Those two guys are major players in the game that got us to where we are now! Trusting them is like believing that democracy should be two foxes and a chicken deciding the dinner menu.

[Book Review - The Party's Over](#)

I went back in time this week (if you can call five years ago back in time) and read Richard Heinberg's, “The Party's Over“. I was curious to see how the thinking about our addiction to fossil fuels and the need to adopt renewable energy has changed. Well, it really hasn't.

[Bipartisan Resolution in Congress Urges Preservation of Single, National Fuel Economy Standard](#)

A single, national fuel economy standard for passenger cars and light trucks will do more to reduce fuel consumption and greenhouse gases than the 14 separate programs sought by California and other states, lawmakers outlined today in a resolution.

The resolution, introduced by Reps. Bobby Bright, D-Ala., and Lee Terry, R-Neb., supports maintaining a single, national fuel economy standard to give the auto industry the regulatory stability and certainty necessary to build the next generation of fuel-efficient vehicles that consumers demand.

[Overselling "Climate Conflict"?](#)

Will global warming turn into global warring?

It's a hot question in need of cool-headed analysis.

The nexus of national security and climate change is a burgeoning field, and one that's coming under some scrutiny at a time when increasingly bigger claims are being made on its behalf.

[Green aspirations](#)

Manhattan's Empire State Building has long been an iconic part of the New York City skyline. But now it is embarking on a quest to become an "icon of sustainability," a showpiece of environmental innovation that will demonstrate to the world — including 3.8 million tourists a year — how retrofitting office towers can significantly reduce carbon emissions and help build an environmentally sustainable future. First Canadian Place, a significant presence on Toronto's skyline, may be a later-generation building, but it's undergoing a major retrofit as well. Here's a comparison of the two projects and what they hope to achieve.

[Sea Salt Holds Clues to Climate Change](#)

(PhysOrg.com) -- We know that average sea levels have risen over the past century, and that global warming is to blame. But what is climate change doing to the saltiness, or salinity, of our oceans?

This is an important question because big shifts in salinity could be a warning that more severe droughts and floods are on their way, or even that global warming is speeding up.

[North-east left to wonder what might have been](#)

AS LONGANNET Power Station looks poised to become the first in Europe to harness carbon capture, those connected with the north-east's biggest generating facility have been left to ponder what might have been.

It looked for years as if Peterhead Power Station was going to become the first in the world to use the potentially planet-saving technology, using a gas separation technique to extract reserves from the Miller oil field.

However, the scheme failed to win the backing of the UK Government and, last year, Energy Minister Malcolm Wicks admitted Labour had torpedoed the plans to save British taxpayers "hundreds of millions of pounds".

[The Dark Lord](#)

Lord Stern came to international prominence in 2006 after writing a blatantly biased review for the British government on the economics of climate change. It was -- hardly coincidentally -- published the same week then-chancellor Gordon Brown appointed Al Gore as an advisor. The report claimed that the likely costs of "business as usual" were horrendous -- the equivalent of both world wars plus the Great Depression -- while the costs of slashing carbon emissions were modest.

[Seeking to Save the Planet, With a Thesaurus](#)

WASHINGTON — The problem with global warming, some environmentalists believe, is “global warming.”

The term turns people off, fostering images of shaggy-haired liberals, economic sacrifice and complex scientific disputes, according to extensive polling and focus group sessions conducted by ecoAmerica, a nonprofit environmental marketing and messaging firm in Washington.

Instead of grim warnings about global warming, the firm advises, talk about “our deteriorating atmosphere.” Drop discussions of carbon dioxide and bring up “moving away from the dirty fuels of the past.” Don’t confuse people with cap and trade; use terms like “cap and cash back” or “pollution reduction refund.”



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