



DrumBeat: June 15, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on June 15, 2009 - 9:47am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[U.S. Energy Secretary wants to cut carbon in the Americas](#)

LIMA (Reuters) - U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu urged officials from the Americas on Monday to throw their weight behind a new initiative to reduce carbon emissions and make cities in the Western Hemisphere more energy efficient.

Chu launched the "Low Carbon Communities of the Americas" program at an event on energy and climate change that was put together after presidents at the Fifth Summit of the Americas in April agreed to collaborate more on green energy issues.

The Obama administration is pushing renewable energy and energy-saving technologies, and Chu encouraged other countries to participate in the new program.

[This Woman Is Redefining Public Transportation](#)

Ask a friend to name a shared transportation option and he'll probably mention that bus that rumbles past on the avenue or the commuter train that all the office jockeys pile into each weekday morning. But Robin Chase thinks the phrase is about to undergo a radical evolution. Almost ten years ago she founded car-sharing service Zip Car, which has proven a smashing success in urban areas across the country and is rumored to be going public next year. Now she's put her visionary zeal behind GoLoco, a social networking site that encourage people to catch rides with each other (they take a 10 percent a fee if you choose to let them manage the financial arrangements.)

Thinking of your friends' and neighbors' cars as a personal transportation resource is the next wave in American mobility, Chase argues — an elegant response to rising costs, congestion and our existing road-heavy infrastructure.

[Australia Warns Oil And Gas Cos to Develop Interests](#)

Australian Energy Minister Martin Ferguson has warned foreign energy companies to develop their oil and gas interests in the nation soon, or risk having them stripped away, the Age newspaper reported on its Web site Sunday.

[Court orders \\$507.5 mln damages in Exxon Valdez spill](#)

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - A federal appeals court on Monday ordered Exxon Mobil Corp (XOM.N) to pay \$507.5 million in punitive damages stemming from the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill off Alaska, plus 5.9 percent interest running from the 1996 trial judgment, the opinion said.

The amount is a fraction of the \$5 billion in punitive damages originally awarded to fishermen, Alaska natives, business owners and other litigants by a jury in 1996, and equals the compensatory damages agreed to in a subsequent settlement, the opinion said.

[Marcellus Shale: A Million Acres of Paydirt?](#)

The next big thing in U.S. energy exploration will be the Marcellus Shale, a vast, underground layer of rock stretching from upstate New York down through Pennsylvania and into Ohio and West Virginia. By some estimates, this formation contains 50 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas, enough to meet two years of gas consumption for the entire U.S. That kind of volume could go a long way to helping the country cut its dependence on foreign oil.

[Survey: Gas prices up 17 cents in two weeks](#)

"It's a direct result of continued increases in the price of crude, with crude oil itself responding to a flight from the weaker dollar on the expectation of rising inflation from federal monetary policy," Lundberg said.

"Demand is not increasing. It is shrinking."

Lundberg said there is no reason to expect gas prices will reach the \$4-plus levels of last summer but "it might certainly feel that high to many consumers, especially those who are unemployed."

[CME Group Ethanol Outlook Report - June 15, 2009](#)

"Peak Oil" but for a different reason -- Proponents of "peak oil," a concept originally developed by M. King Hubbert in 1956, have argued for years that global oil production will soon peak due to depleted reserves, thus leading to soaring oil prices. The theory is based on part on the experience of the U.S., which has seen its domestic oil production fall since 1970 due to the depletion of U.S. oil wells. However, ethanol has helped change the calculus for peak oil. In fact, BP's CEO Tony Hayward said last week that U.S. gasoline demand has "probably peaked" due to increased ethanol blending requirements, higher fuel efficiency standards, and gasoline-electric hybrids (see p. 3).

He added that BP in the 1st-half of 2008 "probably sold as much gasoline into the U.S. as we'll ever sell." "Peak oil" may occur, but not because of supply constraints, but because demand for oil may peak long before supplies run dry, which suggests a bearish long-term case for oil prices.

[Oil should not rise too fast: OPEC Sec-Gen](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Oil prices should not rise too quickly and hurt the world economy, but a price of \$80 a barrel would stimulate investment without putting a brake on growth, OPEC's secretary general said on Monday.

The price of oil hit a 2009 high near \$73 a barrel last week, up from below \$33 in mid-December, and politicians in consumer countries have started to express concern that the rally could threaten their economies.

"Of course we do not want to see oil prices rising too rapidly and certainly not to harm growth in the global economy," OPEC's Abdullah al-Badri said in an email response to questions. "We need a stable oil price."

"Yes, I am concerned that high oil prices will affect the economy but even at \$80 a barrel, I am confident that this will not be the case."

[Town sets off on healthy path practicing 4 keys to longevity](#)

The project's strategies are simple: eat more fruits and vegetables, walk instead of drive, stay productive and social well into old age, and seek inner fulfillment — things we all know will improve our quality of life, but we don't always do, he says.

"Optimizing where you spend most of your day, minimizing the opportunity to eat unhealthy food, and helping people find meaning and purpose is tied to healthier, longer living," he says.

[Regulator slams Cantarell flaring](#)

The head of Mexico's new hydrocarbons agency has shown his organisation has teeth by slamming Pemex's failure to exploit gas from the giant Cantarell field.

National Hydrocarbons Commission (CNH) boss, Juan Carlos Zepeda, claimed Pemex has been flaring up to 70% of the gas from Cantarell, a field which still accounts for almost a third of Mexico's crude output.

[Valero Delays Planned Shutdown of Aruba Oil Refinery](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Valero Energy Corp., the largest U.S. refiner, will delay until July the planned two- to three- month shutdown of its Aruba plant, originally scheduled for June, Bill Day, a company spokesman, said in an interview.

Valero, based in San Antonio, said last week that the shutdown was for “economic reasons” and to make repairs. The length of the closing still will be two to three months, Day said in a telephone interview today.

[Shell raises its fuel storage capacity at sea](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Royal Dutch Shell Plc has increased its floating storage capacity for fuel by about 1.3 million barrels, shipbrokers and traders said on Monday.

The oil major has booked the 90,000 deadweight tonne (dwt) clean petroleum tanker the River Pride for \$2.1 million from June 20, and a second tanker, the Survetta of similar size from June 30, shipbrokers said.

[Ship Tax by Alaska City Voided by U.S. Supreme Court](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The U.S. Supreme Court, siding with a ConocoPhillips unit, struck down a tax imposed by Valdez, Alaska, on oil tankers and a handful of other ships that use the city’s ports.

The justices, voting 7-2, said the personal property tax violated the Constitution’s tonnage clause, which bars states acting without congressional approval from imposing taxes based on a ship’s carrying capacity. The city argued that the tonnage clause doesn’t cover value-based property taxes.

[Thinning ice already allowing more commercial shipping in Northwest Passage](#)

The thinning Arctic ice pack is already producing the much-anticipated surge in commercial shipping through the Northwest Passage.

And as the pace of ice loss accelerates, experts say the federal government is not keeping up to ensure Canadians control it.

[Lousy bumpers smack owners of small cars with huge repair bills in low-speed crashes, study finds](#)

Because of their smaller stance, many minis lack bumpers high enough to engage with the bumpers on other vehicles in collisions, forcing crash energy to be absorbed by body

parts. Another problematic trend among the smaller cars is that the bars underneath the bumper covers aren't long enough to protect the corners of the body. Five out of seven cars in the full-front test and six in the front-corner test required headlight replacement.

"Bumpers are doing their job if the only damage is to the bumper cover. Bumpers aren't doing their job when headlights get knocked out or sheet metal crumples after a low-speed impact," Nolan said.

One reason the Smart ForTwo fared so well in the study was not because of the effectiveness of its bumper in crashes, but because of the affordability of its repairs. The Smart's plastic body parts can be easily replaced. The front and rear bumper come in three sections and are repainted.

[Manure to fill gas grid](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester's toilets will soon be contributing to the local gas network under a green energy project planned by United Utilities Group Plc and National Grid Plc.

In a UK first, the two companies plan to turn a by-product of the wastewater treatment plant at Davyhulme in Manchester, northwest England into gas for the local network and fuel for a fleet of sludge tankers.

['Terrorists' threaten property of power station boss](#)

CANBERRA - The threat by environmental extremists against the head of an International Power coal-fired power station in Victoria must be taken seriously, the state's Energy Minister says.

Police would investigate the letter delivered to the home of Hazelwood power station chief executive Graeme York by the Earth Liberation Front, Peter Batchelor said in Melbourne yesterday.

[Saudi Arabia warns of crude price spike above 2008 record high](#)

Saudi Arabia has warned that oil prices could again surge above the record high level in 2008 within three years unless other producers join the Kingdom and pump sufficient investment into capacity expansions.

The government-owned Saudi Aramco, the world's largest oil exporter, said the collapse of crude prices in the second half of 2008 was only a temporary phenomenon and demand would pick up again in the near future.

"We must recognise that depressed oil prices are not only detrimental to the economies of petroleum producing nations but also to the interests of consuming countries. That may seem counterintuitive, but consider that sustained and timely investments in petroleum projects and infrastructure are essential for maintaining future supplies at adequate levels," said Mohammed Madi, Chief Representative in Beijing of Aramco's Saudi Petroleum.

[Saudi Aramco inaugurates world's largest redevelopment in the desert west of supergiant Ghawar](#)

Khurais oil field has been in the news off and on since its discovery in 1957. The size of the huge field has never been in question but performance has left much to be desired. The field was placed on production in 1963 with the crude oil transported by truck to Riyadh and used as fuel for electric power generation. The field stayed on continuous production until early 1982 at which time cumulative production was 140 million barrels from 33 wells. To arrest declining production, a gas lift system was installed in 1983. Early wells tested the entire stratigraphic column and additional pay zones were found in the Hanifa, some 300 feet below the main formation (Arab Zone). Another pay zone was found in the Fadhili formation. Over time it was realized that the Hanifa and the Arab Zone were connected by vertical faults near the crest of the structure. But the Fadhili, deeper in the column was isolated and during this era, not placed on production. About 100 miles to the north the relatively small Fadhili oil field, discovered in 1949 produced good quality oil at high rates and this gave a clue as to the potential of the formation at Khurais.

[Global economy to get 'shock of its life' when oil hits triple digits](#)

Jeff Rubin says global economy will get the "shock of its life" within 12 months of the end of the recession when oil prices hit triple digits and the age of globalization starts to come to an end.

The former maverick chief economist for CIBC's World Markets for about 20 years and author of the new book *Why Your World Is About To Get A Whole Lot Smaller: Oil and the End of Globalization*, says demand for oil will outstrip supply, food prices will soar, and countries will be shocked into growing their own food, manufacturing their own products, and paying a lot more money for everything.

[For power on a clean, big scale, it's nuclear](#)

Closing the Rancho Seco nuclear reactor near Sacramento was a big mistake. Upgrading the reactor would have been less expensive than spending three times more on new power lines extended to wind and solar farms in remote areas that would damage ecosystems. It was as foolish as removing electric streetcars in the 1930s and 1940s in Los Angeles, only to replace them with gasoline-powered buses.

[Snatching the car battery biz from Asia](#)

Ener1 aims to fuel the car of the future and bring jobs to the Midwest. But the jury is still out on whether or not it can compete against its larger, more established rivals.

[Fresh air to power South Africa?](#)

If Hermann Oelsner had his way, statuesque wind turbines would dominate the landscape of the Western Cape, breathing fresh air into South Africa's beleaguered power industry.

[What if the techno-optimists and cornucopians are half right?](#)

Some days I wake up and wish for the world's techno-optimists and cornucopians (TOCs) to be right. The future would be so much easier for all of us. But perhaps more immediately, the present would become a less worrisome time zone. Those who anguish about peak oil, climate change, water depletion, and the panoply of resource and ecosystem disasters that are already arriving or are in the making would get a pleasant reprieve. And, the vast majority of citizens on the planet who almost never give such things a thought would simply go on as they have been.

[Denver grads create 'bike library' for people in need of a free ride](#)

They're known around the University of Denver campus as "the sustainability duo."

Mary Jean O'Malley and Zoe Turrill, 22-year-old recent graduates of the university, are the masterminds behind a bike-sharing program on DU's campus that will debut this fall.

The "bike library" is a pilot for a citywide bike-sharing program that will launch next spring. Six hundred bikes will be placed in 40 kiosks around the city of Denver, so locals can borrow and return them.

[Lifestyle melts away with Uganda peak snow cap](#)

When Yasamu Maate was a younger man, he could stand in his garden on a clear, cloudless morning and stare at the ice caps on the range.

But on a recent Friday the 87-year-old lamented the loss of those ice caps, which have all but disappeared, as the world around him has gotten warmer.

"We used to use the snow and ice as our guide," he said, sitting on a roadside chair in

Bundibugyo, a village in western Uganda at the base of the Rwenzoris, which run roughly 100 kilometres (60 miles) along the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"We would say if there was a lot of snow on the mountains the rain was coming, but these days we are not seeing it. The coldness has disappeared."

[Forest covers only 5.3 percent of Pakistani land](#)

ISLAMABAD: Forest area, a basic ingredient of clean environment, stood at a mere 5.3 percent of Pakistan's total land area, a report citing the economic survey said yesterday. According to the Forest Wing of the environment ministry, Pakistan has about 3.8 million hectare of rangeland, and the only surviving forests in the country are the alpine grasslands of NWFP, the Northern Areas and the AJK.

"Apart from these relatively intact forests, around 85-90 percent of the country's arid and semi-arid rangeland has been degraded as a result of the five-fold increase in live stock numbers since 1947," the economic survey said.

Due to energy crisis forests are faced with the stress for fuel wood production, the survey also observed that, "it is extremely disquieting to note that the Juniper forests, located in Balochistan, are continuously being cut beyond their regeneration capacity."

[Oil Age still has some time to run](#)

IF you think the running battle over climate change has been a long one, it's a pup compared with the peak oil debate.

Essentially, the question with oil is whether it's going to run out before our need to use it does.

The peak oil brigade say all the big and easy oilfields around the world have been discovered and global oil discovery has therefore peaked, while at the same time oil demand is showing no serious sign of dropping.

They started their campaign, albeit quietly, in the late 1970s, with the debate over the Hubbert curve -- the claim that oil discovery and production had moved in a curve rather than a straight line. Following on from that they posited that what went up must come down, in the form of a normal distribution curve.

BP's new annual tome on the state of the oil industry, the "BP Statistical Review of World Energy for 2009", sits on the fence on that one. It quotes chief executive Tony Hayward saying "the world has enough proved reserves of oil, natural gas and coal to meet the world's needs for decades to come".

[Pump pain: It's back ... but we're not surprised, are we?](#)

EIA has revised its earlier numbers for global crude production looking far ahead to 2030, Klare observes. The EIA prognosticators have backed off earlier predictions that global crude production in 2030 would be 107 million barrels per day. They now say it's likely to be only about 93 million, with the slack taken up by nonconventional sources. The headline here, Klare argues, is that the EIA is finally joining with those who have predicted for years that we have passed the curve of peak oil production and that cheap, plentiful crude is history.

[Rising oil prices will buy off democracy](#)

The swing of effective demand to the emerging countries is not in dispute, but there are different views about an even greater shift in the oil market, so-called "peak oil". That is the point in time when flows of new production are fully cancelled out by declines in existing production. That does not mean that oil is running out; but it does mean that demand will outstrip new supply, as has happened in the North Sea and North America. This time it will be a universal shortfall.

[Oil Falls a Second Day as Stronger Dollar Dulls Hedge Appeal](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Oil fell as the dollar rose the most in a week against the euro, limiting investors' need to use commodities as an inflation hedge.

Crude declined for a second day before a report forecast to show that manufacturing in New York state contracted for a 14th month and as European and Asian equities retreated, compounding speculation that the economic recovery has yet to take hold.

[Inflation alarm after oil surge](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Inflation will be back at center-stage for financial markets next week with oil's surge past \$70 a barrel and rising bond yields rekindling worries about long-term borrowing costs and the fragile housing sector.

[Mexico May 'Go Naked' on Oil Hedges as Crude Surges](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Mexico, Latin America's biggest oil producer, may refrain from hedging against fluctuations in prices for the commodity next year for the first time since 2003 as crude rebounds.

[Russia May Increase Oil Export Duty by 39% on July 1](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russia's government may raise the export duty on crude oil by 39 percent on July 1, the Finance Ministry said today.

The duty will probably increase to \$212.60 a metric ton, \$29 a barrel, from \$152.80, Alexander Sakovich, deputy head of the ministry's customs payment department, said in an interview.

"It sounds scary," Unicredit SpA oil analyst Artem Konchin said by telephone from Moscow. "It is really in line with what oil has done. Oil had gotten ahead."

[North Sea Troll Crude Daily Shipments to Increase 16% in July](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Daily shipments of North Sea Troll crude are scheduled to increase 16 percent next month to the highest in five months

[Eni declines comment on North Sea sale report](#)

MILAN (Reuters) - Italy oil company Eni SpA declined to comment on Monday on a report that it planned to sell most of its North Sea oil fields for more than \$1 billion.

Eni has hired Rothschild to sell the fields, according to an online version of Britain's Sunday Times newspaper. They produce about 20,000 barrels of oil a day and contain 120 million barrels of reserves.

[Sinopec swoops on oil explorer — or does it?](#)

China's resources drive continues apace, despite the resounding failure of Chinalco's bid to acquire a big stake in Rio Tinto. According to weekend reports - initially in the Sunday Times - Chinese state-owned oil group Sinopec is stepping up its race to secure access to global oil reserves with an "audacious" £4.8bn bid for Addax Petroleum, a London-listed group with fields in Iraqi Kurdistan and Nigeria.

[EnCana's post-hedging future](#)

EnCana Corp. has weathered detrimental natural gas prices smoothly, posting healthy cash flow results, thanks to its hedging program. Roughly two-thirds of its production is locked in at US\$9.13 per mcf until October. But then what?

[Ahmadinejad Boosted as Iran Sees 'Return to the Past'](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed defiance against

external “threats” as he defended his disputed re-election. He may have vanquished for now the internal challenges to his authority.

[Nigerian rebels attack oil facility, eyes offshore](#)

ABUJA (Reuters) – Nigeria's main militant group on Monday threatened to extend its attacks to offshore oil facilities after sabotaging a Chevron-operated oil pumping station in the Niger Delta.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) said it attacked the Abiteye flow station early on Monday, the fifth militant attack claimed against the U.S. energy company in Delta state in less than a month.

[China's car sales boom, reshaping a way of life](#)

QUFU, China — This city is a symbol of China's past — the birthplace 2,500 years ago of the revered philosopher Confucius, a town where ancient temples still stand and the gas station sells time-honored Chinese delicacies such as chicken feet and tea eggs.

Even here, though, cars are suddenly everywhere — honking constantly, speeding through the city's medieval gates, crowding past the horse-drawn carts and rickshaw cycles that have had Qufu's roads mostly to themselves.

"We never used to have traffic jams," sighs Song Wenjun, 63, who founded the local brewery. Song says just a year ago, his chauffeur-driven Buick moved easily through the city of 60,000, hindered only by its four stoplights. Now, he says, there are more than 20 lights and the roads are packed.

[On the Streets of China, Electric Bikes Are Swarming](#)

Of all the things that have changed in China over the past 30 years, transportation has undergone one of the most obvious of transformations. Where city streets once swarmed with bicycles, they are now full of automobiles. Cars clog intersection and expressways. Their exhaust clouds the sky and the air is full of the sound of horns. But zipping through the congestion is the vanguard of another transportation revolution: vehicles that use no gas, emit no exhaust and are so quiet they can surprise the unwary pedestrian.

[South Africa: In the driving seat](#)

But Johannesburg and Cape Town decided to move ahead, and there is no doubt that BRT was mapped out with the best intentions. In essence, it is about introducing an improved system not only for existing users, but for the broader public, one that will

alleviate traffic congestion and prepare for the crisis that peak oil will eventually present.

Yet what the project has since done is highlight some major faults in the broader system. Not least is the fact that the taxi industry has been relegated to the second economy, yet it has been servicing the largest number of commuters on a daily basis, most of whom reside in the farthest reaches of the still socially segregated country.

[Honda's Hybrid Insight May Miss U.S. Sales Forecast](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Honda Motor Co.'s Insight hybrid may fall 33 percent short of its U.S. sales goal as cheap fuel, the economic slump and competition from Toyota Motor Corp.'s Prius undermine demand for the model.

[Drilling disaster: Senate push to reduce state's oil-drilling buffer can hurt tourism](#)

Drill, baby, drill may work as a political bumper sticker but it's not the answer to the nation's energy independence. Drilling could prove to be a Florida disaster -- if offshore oil and gas rigs are allowed to move so close to the eastern Gulf of Mexico that beachgoers in the Panhandle could see them.

All it takes is one spill from a tanker to wreck a coastline for years.

[Before Adding, Try Reducing](#)

The U.S. government is committing billions of dollars to support renewable energy such as wind- and solar-power plants. Some say it should use more of that financial clout to encourage less energy consumption in the first place.

Advocates of conservation, including businesses that help homeowners and companies save energy, think there should be more subsidies and tax incentives for basics like insulation and window shading, and for newer, more costly products like light-emitting-diode lamps and building-automation systems. LEDs cost more but use less energy than incandescent bulbs. The new automation systems help buildings waste less energy on cooling, heating and lighting.

[Taiwan passes major green energy bill](#)

TAIPEI (AFP) – Taiwan has passed a bill on renewable energy in a move which is expected to attract 30 billion Taiwan dollar (937 million US) worth of investment, the government and reports said Saturday.

[Gulf's Push for Nuclear Experts May Delay U.K. Plans](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.K. utilities risk falling behind with plans to build nuclear power plants because Middle East nations may use higher salaries to lure skilled workers, reactor builder Westinghouse Electric Co. said.

[Northwest utilities turn to nuclear, 25 years after industry collapsed](#)

WASHINGTON — A consortium of utilities in the Pacific Northwest once known as "Whoops," synonymous with the collapse of the nuclear power industry, wants back in the game.

Though many blame the demise of the industry on the 1979 accident at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island, the financial meltdown of the Washington Public Power Supply System — WPPSS — became the poster child for all that went wrong.

At first the power was going to be too cheap to meter, but cost overruns, schedule delays, nagging licensing problems and safety issues in the late 1970s and 1980s brought construction of commercial nuclear power plants to a halt. Nationwide, nearly 120 nuclear power plants were canceled.

[EPA to rebuild uranium-contaminated Navajo homes](#)

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – The federal government plans to spend up to \$3 million a year to demolish and rebuild uranium-contaminated structures across the Navajo Nation, where Cold War-era mining of the radioactive substance left a legacy of disease and death.

[Obama gives US first national ocean policy](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – President Barack Obama on Friday set up a task force to craft the first US national policy for sustainably managing the country's oceans, drawing praise from environmentalists who said the move was long overdue.

[Amazon deforestation: short-lived boost, big damage](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – Clearing the Amazon rainforest for soy or cattle does not bring long-term social or economic benefit to local communities and threatens the environment, according to a study published Friday.

Huge swaths of the Brazilian rainforest are cut down, burnt or cleared each year, at an average rate of 1.8 million hectares (4.4 million acres) -- about the size of Kuwait --

because the land is worth more when deforested.

[Can We Be Honest About Energy That Will Last?](#)

The decline of American oil production is a reminder that even the world's blood has its limits. But there has always been another assumption – that there is enough supply to last for a long time. Just as conveniently as the supply-demand relationship suggests that demand for energy will never rise above supply, it has always been supposed that there is enough oil to last. How much? Who knows – but it's enough to last through the immediate future, which is all anyone really cares about.

[Economist shows the whole world how to go green](#)

Rich Sandor is a guy who lives in the future. He always has. In fact, he created some of the world's most advanced futures markets, and he's still at it. He says we're now on the verge of an environmental breakthrough.

[Costing the Earth](#)

Helen Harvey talks to some people who say we can't keep leaving the environment out of our economic calculations.

[Reversing globalization](#)

If Jeff Rubin had a sprawling house in the suburbs, he'd sell it and move downtown.

The author of *Why Your World is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller* thinks the day is not far off when soaring oil prices will mean subdivisions in suburbia will be plowed under for farm fields and the average Canadian won't be able to afford to drive a car.

[Building the future politics on our toxic present](#)

In public service, kindness, care and generosity are out of keeping with the dominant market culture. The chronic housing shortage is a national scandal. Unemployment is growing and areas of our country which were devastated in the 1980s are again sinking in the recession. The social welfare contract that once gave some protection in times of adversity is in tatters. The future is full of threats and challenges. A revolution in human longevity is transforming society and leading to an explosion in the burden of care. The value of pension funds has been destroyed by the market. There is food and water insecurity, while oil production will peak at some point within the next 10 years. Looming over all these is the threat posed by global warming. For the great majority of

people, there are no individual market solutions to the problems we face.

This should be the moment of the left, but it, too, is trapped in the same interregnum. It lacks a coherent identity, is organisationally and numerically weak, and unclear about its values. It has no story that defines what it stands for. It is telling that, during the past three decades of resurgent capitalism, social democracy in Britain has failed to produce a significant theoretical work to replace Anthony Crosland's *The Future of Socialism*. Crosland's revisionist answer to Marxism, however flawed, at one time provided an intellectual cornerstone for the centre-left. Crosland was always out there on the horizon, keeping alive the language of class, capitalism and equality. This is no longer the case. The self-inflicted crisis of capitalism is serving only to highlight the weakness of the social democratic and liberal left.

[Emerald Isle plots green revolution](#)

Ireland seems ready to lead the way as Europe gears up for the low-carbon future.

[How the Global Warming Bill Will Affect Your Wallet](#)

In the coming weeks, Congress will likely consider a massive global-warming bill to create a new cap-and-trade program to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. President Obama praised the bill, dubbed "Waxman-Markey" for its co-sponsors, as a vital step to "create millions of new jobs all across America."

But Obama and supporters of the bill are now facing a litany of charges that the bill is not a good deal for American consumers. Critics on both sides of the political aisle complain that the bill does both too little and too much.

[Paul McCartney Calls for Meat-Free Mondays to Curb Animal Gas](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Paul McCartney, the former Beatle and vegetarian pop star, asked fans to go meatless on Mondays to help slow global warming by reducing the amount of gaseous emissions from farm animals.

[Argentine glacier advances despite global warming](#)

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina – Argentina's Perito Moreno glacier is one of only a few ice fields worldwide that have withstood rising global temperatures.

Nourished by Andean snowmelt, the glacier constantly grows even as it spawns icebergs the size of apartment buildings into a frigid lake, maintaining a nearly perfect equilibrium since measurements began more than a century ago.

[Silk Road threatened by melting glaciers](#)

The Chinese gateway to the ancient Silk Road is being flooded – and the culprit, researchers say, is climate change. Melting glaciers sitting above the Hexi corridor in Gansu province, once an important trading and military route into Central Asia, are fuelling dramatic regional floods.

The finding illustrates a major problem for the coming century: around the world, arid regions that sit next to glaciers will suffer a spate of floods, then dry up completely when the glaciers melt away.

[US expects China to cut emissions after a 'peak year'](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – The United States wants China to accept slow increases in its greenhouse gas emissions until it hits a "peak year," beyond which a real decrease must occur, US negotiator Todd Stern said Friday.

[Pachauri: Stern stance on China climate talks 'pragmatic'](#)

(CNN) -- The head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has rejected suggestions that the U.S. has adopted too soft a stance on climate change negotiations with China.

[Climate Change Costs: Stern Review Update](#)

The costs of climate change are going up, warns Alex Bowen, the senior economist on the team that produced the seminal Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change. But a global green recovery could cut those costs.



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