



## Drumbeat: August 28, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 28, 2009 - 10:22am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Recession Speeds Coal's Long-Term Decline](#)

HOUSTON - Declining industrial electricity demand and an abundance of cheap natural gas will threaten coal's status as the dominant U.S. fuel to generate electric power, even after the economic recession ends.

Power companies are reducing use of coal plants because of declining demand from heavy industry, the economic sector hardest hit by the recession. The loss of industrial "baseload" looks long term, analysts and executives say.

Natural gas-fired plants, easier to stop and start, have remained busy serving commercial and household power demand, which varies hour by hour and has been less affected by the recession.

### [U.S. natgas rig count climbs for a sixth week](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The number of rigs drilling for natural gas in the United States rose four this week to 699, the sixth straight weekly gain after sinking in mid-July to the lowest level in more than seven years, according to a report on Friday by Baker Hughes in Houston.

U.S. natural gas drilling rigs are still down sharply since peaking above 1,600 in September, and now stand at 907 rigs, or 56 percent, below the same week last year.

### [Food, Water, Energy Shortages Threaten India Security](#)

(Bloomberg) -- India's future is threatened by shortages of food, water and energy and these should be addressed on a priority basis, the Prime Minister's security adviser said.

"These are part of a broad national security plan, and defense is only one aspect of it," Shekhar Dutt, India's deputy national security adviser, said in an interview in New Delhi yesterday. "We think water is going to be a very severe determinant of prosperity and well-being."

Inadequate rainfall has led to a drought in as many as 278 of India's 626 districts, according to the farm ministry. This has sparked concern over food shortages and rising prices, prompting authorities to raid wholesalers hoarding commodities. Raw sugar futures have soared 90 percent this year.

"Unless we drive in the fear of god among hoarders, the man on the street will suffer from rising prices," Ashok Das, principal secretary of food, civil supplies and consumer protection in the central Madhya Pradesh state, said in a phone interview from Bhopal today. Authorities seized 480 metric tons of sugar in the past week, he said.

### [Myanmar Takes Rebel-Held Town Near China Oil Projects](#)

Bloomberg) -- Myanmar's army seized control of a rebel-held town on its border with China, raising concern a 20- year cease-fire could collapse, threatening planned oil and gas projects in the region.

Ethnic Kokang rebels attacked Myanmar police patrolling a border gate in northeastern Shan state, killing at least one, the Washington-based U.S. Campaign for Burma said in a statement late yesterday. The United Nations Refugee Agency said today that as many as 30,000 people may have fled to neighboring Yunnan Province in China since Aug. 8 to escape the fighting. The provincial government has described the situation as a domestic war, state-controlled Xinhua News Agency, said.

### [Oil, Ecuador and its people](#)

In a small, spare courtroom in the Amazon region of Ecuador, Chevron Corp., California's largest company and one of the world's largest oil producers, will soon face a day of reckoning. After 16 years of litigation, a case the company inherited in a merger, Aguinda vs. Texaco Inc., is nearing an end. The legal battle that began in the United States in 1993 and resumed in Ecuador in 2003 has pitted the multinational against an unlikely adversary, a coalition of indigenous tribes and communities. A verdict is expected early next year. The plaintiffs are poised to prevail, and Chevron acknowledges that it is likely to lose.

The case is historic by several measures. Never before have indigenous peoples brought a multinational oil corporation to trial in their own country. Moreover, a victory would mark a turning point in the relations between native populations around the world and the foreign corporations that do business in their homelands. And the potential damages are staggering: A court-appointed expert has determined that they could run to \$27 billion, almost 10 times that initially awarded to plaintiffs after the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

### [Confusion Reigns Over China's Polysilicon Import Policy](#)

NEW YORK -(Dow Jones)- The solar industry has been left in confusion over whether

China has started restricting imports of the solar-module material polysilicon, with some manufacturers reporting that shipments have been held up by customs officials and that buyers are delaying orders.

Those companies say that China has added waste silicon to a list of restricted imports, either as part of a deliberate move to protect its domestic polysilicon industry or for environmental reasons. However, other sources, including one major polysilicon distributor, said they weren't aware of any change in Chinese policy.

### [US seeks independence with natural gas](#)

Natural gas may be cleaner than oil - it produces around half the greenhouse gasses for the same amount of energy - but Ms Schaefer does not believe it is the answer the US needs.

"We have to stop looking at the short term. Sure we can find enough fuel for the next two years, five years, 10 years, but what happens at that point when we haven't built up our renewable or alternative energy technologies?" she asks.

And Ms Schaefer fears the focus on new natural gas discoveries could diminish funding for those seeking new alternative energy sources.

### [Brazil to unveil overhaul of oil laws](#)

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters) - Brazil's government will propose on Monday a new law that will determine how it taps and manages huge crude reserves miles below the ocean's surface that it sees driving the nation's rise to developed status.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is scheduled to present Congress with legislation that will increase the role of the government and state-run Petrobras (PETR4.SA)(PBR.N) in the oil fields that could turn Brazil into a major energy exporter.

### [Escalating tensions over hunt for oil and gas in the Arctic](#)

The Arctic has captured the attention of all the major world powers, and Russia is no exception. Growing interest in the Arctic has been driven by the recent spike in energy prices, which makes developing energy resources in hard-to-reach areas increasingly lucrative. Onshore mineral resources are being depleted, and the Arctic will soon become the world's only untapped reserve. Consequently, no contender for the North Pole's resources is likely to give up without a struggle.

The potential is enormous: the Arctic is said to contain up to 500bn barrels of oil, huge gas reserves and significant deposits of diamonds, nickel, tin and gold. Researchers are hurrying to update estimates of the Arctic's ice-locked riches. Science magazine recently

published a detailed map of the region's oil and gas deposits, which is the result of a comprehensive five-year study conducted by Donald Gautier of the US Geological Survey. According to the study, the Arctic holds 30pc of the world's undiscovered gas and about 13pc of oil. Most of the oil reserves lie within the state of Alaska, in the United States, while the gas is concentrated in Russian territory.

### [Exxon calls for level playing field: renewable energy](#)

NEWLY installed ExxonMobil Australia chairman John Dashwood says he is sceptical about the nation's ability to meet the Rudd government's renewable energy target.

Speaking at a lunch in Melbourne yesterday, Mr Dashwood also called for a federal tax system that favoured gas over coal.

Success in switching from coal-fired to gas-powered power plants was probably the biggest factor in Australia succeeding in cutting greenhouse gasses, he said.

### [Economic Hit Men and the Next Drowning of New Orleans](#)

Dr. van Heerden has lots of friends, mostly the people of New Orleans, those who survived and cheered his fight to save their city. But he also has enemies, many of them, and they are powerful.

First, there is Big Oil. More than a decade ago, van Heerden pointed the finger at oil drilling as a culprit in threatening New Orleans and the Gulf Coast with flooding.

### [Makin' Bacon: Foodies Are Going Hog Wild Over Pig](#)

Maybe it's a recession-driven money saver, or maybe we just feel the need to get back in touch with what we eat, but Americans everywhere are discovering the pleasures of home-cured bacon. Culinary blogs are replete with homemade-bacon recipes, including how to make pancetta. Mario Batali's recipe for guanciale, cured pig cheek, has gone viral. Leading the piggy parade is food writer Michael Ruhlman, who has challenged his blog readers to make a BLT from scratch — including homegrown lettuce and tomatoes and homemade bread — shoot a picture, submit it and win a prize: his latest book *Ratio*.

### [More Sun for Less: Solar Panels Drop in Price](#)

For solar shoppers these days, the price is right. Panel prices have fallen about 40 percent since the middle of last year, driven down partly by an increase in the supply of a crucial ingredient for panels, according to analysts at the investment bank Piper Jaffray.

The price drops — coupled with recently expanded federal incentives — could shrink the time it takes solar panels to pay for themselves to 16 years, from 22 years, in places with high electricity costs, according to Glenn Harris, chief executive of SunCentric, a solar consulting group. That calculation does not include state rebates, which can sometimes improve the economics considerably.

### [Suburbanization: The impact on energy use, CO2 emissions](#)

A new congressionally mandated report from the National Research Council, **DRIVING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: THE EFFECTS OF COMPACT DEVELOPMENT ON MOTORIZED TRAVEL, ENERGY USE, AND CO2 EMISSIONS**, examines how suburbanization -- made possible largely due to the prevalence of automobiles and the extensive U.S. highway system -- impacts the number of miles we drive, our reliance on petroleum fuel, and the percent of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. The report looks at studies on compact, mixed-use development where people live in denser environments with jobs and shopping close by, to determine whether a shift to this type of land use could lessen vehicle use, energy consumption, and CO2 emissions.

### [Copenhagen's 'best city for cyclists' goal](#)

Rush hour in Denmark's capital seems anything but rushed.

City workers glide through the streets - trousers tucked into their socks and briefcases slung on to the side of their bicycles.

Some even have children following on behind, wrapped in waterproofs and perching on special trailers known as cargo bikes.

The air feels fresh and there is not a traffic jam in sight.

With less than four months to go until Copenhagen hosts the United Nations climate change summit, the city has announced its vision to become the world's best city for cyclists.

In Copenhagen, a third of people already cycle to work, school or university.

### [Australia sweats through long, hot winter](#)

SYDNEY (AFP) — Drought-hit Australia has endured an exceptionally hot winter, with abnormal temperatures shattering records that had in some places stood since World War II, official figures show.

In a special climate statement released late Wednesday, the weather bureau said maximum temperatures in August were broadly three degrees Celsius (37 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than the long-term average.

### [Climate change poses threat of war, USF forum will hear](#)

TAMPA - Military analysts say climate change threatens a cascade of natural disasters – crop failures, famine and disease – that will strengthen terrorists by sparking conflict in unstable countries.

### [Weak dollar is pushing energy prices higher](#)

The effect of the weak dollar is again pushing oil prices higher in the face of little demand for energy and huge surpluses of crude.

On Friday, the dollar again fell against major currencies.

Since March, the dollar index, which weighs the U.S. currency against a basket of foreign currencies like the euro, the Japanese yen, the pound and the Swiss franc, has fallen nearly 12 percent. In that same period, crude has jumped 81 percent.

The widening gap between the value of a dollar and that of a barrel of oil shows just how much oil-based index funds have come to affect the prices that consumers pay for energy.

### [Are Peak Oil Fears Really Bogus?](#)

In other words, even Lynch himself admits "that geological scarcity will at some point make it impossible for global petroleum production to avoid falling"—he just thinks that point is further away than peak-oil theorists claim. If you believe that technology gains will allow us to one day discover and tap a total of 3.5 trillion barrels of oil instead of two trillion, then we haven't passed the halfway point yet (to date, humanity has only produced about 1.1 trillion barrels of oil).

### [OPEC suggests meeting with Russian oil companies](#)

MOSCOW (Itar-Tass) - OPEC has proposed a meeting in Moscow with the Russian Energy Ministry and Russian oil companies, LUKOIL vice-president Leonid Fedun stated.

### [Study: Role for Strategic Reserves To Limit Speculators](#)

Governments should consider their strategic petroleum reserves a part of their arsenal to limit speculation in the oil market, according to a report issued Thursday by Rice University's James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy.



The Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which regulates the oil market, is expected to issue a draft rule this fall limiting the size of positions held by those making speculative bets in energy, and is already gathering more information about the activities of large traders. U.S. regulators are also working to convince their foreign counterparts to adopt stricter limits.

### [Detroit: The Next Agrarian Paradise?](#)

Many people have all but written off the once booming “Motor City”. With a poverty rate of 32 percent and a population that has shrunk from 2 million to under 900,000, the auto capital of the world has become our nation’s most depressed metropolis. Today, as more and more people flee the city, it becomes harder to imagine what the future holds. Now having reached a bottom, Detroit has the opportunity to experience the same kind of revitalization that is slowly taking hold in New Orleans, which aims to be a clean, green model for the nation. Both cities experienced life-altering disasters. Hurricane Katrina, which killed thousands, decimated New Orleans in 2005 and the death of the auto industry, ruined the lives of many and left Detroit unrecognizable. The unlikely sister cities became ghost towns as long time residents fled homes and businesses in search of higher ground and greener pastures.

But before we entirely write off Detroit as an environmental wasteland, let’s look again, and try to imagine the possibilities.

### [The Ethics of Sustainable Healthcare Reform](#)

Simply stated, the present healthcare system is unsustainable for two sets of (interconnected) reasons, fiscal and ecological. The fiscal side receives attention in the current debate, but most discussion underestimates the problems and proposes solutions that provide little more than temporary band-aids. It is in the main unappreciated that the nation is in socioeconomic decline—primarily in the form of massive debt and defaults on that debt, deflation of asset values, and unemployment—which threatens the present healthcare system. Our collective understanding of the ecological dimension is abysmal, especially its connection to the economy, and if grasped would lead to the abandonment of politics and business as usual in medicine and throughout society.

### [Toyota to pull out of California plant](#)

DETROIT/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Toyota Motor Corp has decided to end production at a California plant it has shared with General Motors for 25 years, labor officials and legislators said Thursday.

The move to close the plant by March 31 puts at risk 4,200 jobs at the facility in Fremont and highlights significant overcapacity global carmakers are facing as they try

to shake a recession-fueled sales downturn.

### [Dealers Reportedly "Price Gouging" on 2010 Toyota Prius](#)

The month-long car buying binge triggered by the federal Cash for Clunkers trade-in program has led to a shortage of some fuel-efficient cars. Now, the shortage is having an ugly consequence.

Daily Tech reports, "Rogue Toyota dealers" have begun "price gouging on [the] scarce 2010 Toyota Prius." Daily Tech reports, "With the typical sticker price of the Prius coming it at around \$26,000, many dealers across the country have been charging \$3,000 to \$10,000 markups, more than offsetting the "Cash for Clunkers" rebate of \$3,000 to \$4,500 in some cases."

### ['Green Pipeline' Puts La. On Leading Edge of Advanced Recovery](#)

When completed, a "green pipeline" that will carry carbon dioxide more than 300 miles from Donaldsonville to southeast Texas will have employed nearly 800 construction workers and cost about \$750 million.

### [A 'Dow Jones' For Climate: The Case for a Warming Index](#)

If a cap-and-trade bill passes Congress this year, it may include weak emissions targets and will likely need to be strengthened in the years to come. One way to guide future policy: create a Global Climate Change Index that could be used to track global warming's impacts. by daniel r. abbasi

### [Drawing a line in the sand](#)



A County Press reader sent this photograph of what looks like a graph with a set of dates on it, plus a 'you are here' message. The graph attracted lots of attention from



early-morning joggers and dog walkers, before it was obliterated by the tide.

### [OPEC Raised Crude-Oil Supplies in July, PetroLogistics Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The 11 OPEC nations bound by quotas increased crude-oil supplies last month, straying further from their official limits, according to estimates from tanker-tracker PetroLogistics Ltd.

Those 11 members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries provided consumers with an average of 26 million barrels a day in July, up from 25.96 million a day in June, the Geneva-based consultant said. Supplies from all 12 members, including Iraq, rose to 28.6 million barrels a day from 28.3 million a day.

### [Pakistan State Oil Raises Funds to Help Avoid Default](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Pakistan State Oil Ltd., the nation's biggest fuel retailer, raised 15 billion rupees (\$180 million) to help avert defaulting on payment for importing fuels.

The company got 10 billion rupees in loans from banks and 5 billion rupees in cash from the government, giving it funds to buy fuels for a week more, Managing Director Irfan K. Qureshi said in an interview today in the capital, Islamabad.

### [Peak oiler responds to Lynch op-ed in NYT](#)

Actually, I didn't start this post intending to critique Hagens's arguments, but I hope as *The Oil Drum's* staff works over a response to Lynch that they can do much better than this beginning. Interest in peak oil seems to be growing even within the oil industry – not all proponents are as ignorant “of how the oil industry goes about finding fields and extracting petroleum” as Lynch suggests – so it is worthwhile to examine the best arguments for *and* against peak oil and the best arguments against those arguments.

### [Why putting climate change on trial is a terrible idea](#)

The US Chamber of Commerce is upset that the EPA has chosen to regulate CO2 emissions as a pollutant, and are calling for a public trial on both the policy decision and the science behind it. It's hard to imagine a worse way to help clarify the status of climate science.

### [Solar Panels Built Into Roads Could Be the Future of Energy](#)

The Department of Energy just gave \$100,000 to upstart company Solar Roadways, to

develop 12-by-12-foot solar panels, dubbed "Solar Roads," that can be embedded into roads, pumping power into the grid. The panels may also feature LED road warnings and built-in heating elements that could prevent roads from freezing.

Each Solar Road panel can develop around 7.6 kwh of power each day, and each costs around \$7,000. If widely adopted, they could realistically wean the US off fossil fuels: a mile-long stretch of four-lane highway could take 500 homes off the grid. If the entire US Interstate system made use of the panels, energy would no longer be a concern for the country.

### [POLL: Energy Policy has Support But Jobs and Cost are Crucial](#)

Support for fossil fuel plants is down, support for nuclear power is up (though with a strong not-in-my-back-yard component) and hopes are reasonably high that a new U.S. energy policy will create jobs and help address global warming – albeit at some cost.

A substantial 41 percent of Americans in this ABC News/Washington Post poll think proposed changes being developed by Congress and the Obama administration will raise their energy costs. Yet enough of them back those changes nonetheless to give the effort 57 percent support among all Americans – well higher than support for health care reform, 45 percent.

### [Washington Capitulates: Peak Oil Is Real](#)

Projected production, as you can see, is suddenly shriveling up. From 107.5 million b/d of oil projected for 2030 in 2007, to 102.9 million b/d in 2008, to this year's meager expectation for 93.1 million. That's a drop of 13.4% in only two years, and posits production growth of only 11.6 million b/d (14.2%) from 2006 levels.

If that isn't an admission that the era of Peak Oil is upon us, what is?

### [Speaking at Jackson Hole](#)

What Jim Rogers calls the Commodity Super Cycle, now with an Asian resource demand turbo effect, in fact stretches back to well before Keynes invented his theories, including his debt based remedies for fighting recession. Long-term read outs from high and low commodity price surges and crashes, and global growth, is that higher prices for energy and resources have certainly levered up the economy, in some periods, and not in others. Bernanke may be right to fear higher oil prices, but he can only claim to be right about 33 percent of the time. With present stakes so high, is that enough?

The simple answer to the question is that higher oil prices can and very likely will boost and bolster growth, but not for long, if we look at 2004-2007 performance. The Petro Keynesian growth driving paradigm and process is easy to set out. Wealth is transferred

from global consumers to energy and resource producers, most of them lower income, who then spend more. Classic debt based Keynesian programs in high income economies tend only to shift more spending power to the already rich, who spend a lower percent of their revenue gains, received through government tax cutting largesse and printing press activity. OPEC's ability to spend more when revenues rise is easy to forecast: not too many OPEC states are in the Qatar or Saudi camp, where more personal consumption, at least for national citizens and not economic migrants, presents challenges for the imagination. A lot of more are in the Nigeria, Algeria, Iran or Venezuela camp.

### [A perfect economic storm](#)

This perfect economic storm already has a number of winds gathering speed. Firstly of course is the heavy government action to protect and boost the global auto industry with tax breaks, direct investment and loans. Secondly, electric cars, long sidelined as a marginal technology strategy are emerging as a serious global contender, driven by the success of petrol electric hybrids and responses like GM's Volt. Thirdly is the acceptance of high oil prices being the norm, with peak oil a matter of when not whether. Fourthly and most significantly is the reluctant acceptance by the global auto industry of climate change as a game changer. The new assumption is that zero CO2 personal transport is inevitable, just a matter of when and with what technology.

### [Energy in Russia: No consensus on oil production shortages](#)

The world will face a "catastrophic energy crunch" within five years, warns Dr Fatih Birol, chief economist of the International Energy Agency (IEA). Russian analysts are less certain, but say that, in the future, Russia will launch 60pc of the new oil fields.

The IEA report is based on the assessment of more than 800 oil fields, accounting for 75pc of global reserves. Forecasters reason that the largest fields are running short of oil, and independent oil producers have already peaked. The IEA experts say that oil production declined at the rate of 6.7pc in 2008 compared to 3.7pc in 2007.

### [Deficits, Dollars, and the Price of Energy](#)

The latest revision to the forecasted federal deficit has implications beyond the sustainability of current government spending. Reading a pair of high-profile, skeptical assessments of Peak Oil in the context of a \$9 trillion deficit projection for the next decade, it occurred to me that the most serious risk of higher oil prices in the near future might not be flagging production or surging demand but the further depreciation of the US dollar. The quickest route back to \$4 gasoline could run through Washington, DC, rather than Riyadh or Beijing, and that might not be as helpful for renewable energy as its advocates might guess.

## [Peak Oil: A Reality or a Lie?](#)

After the epic crash last year, the price of oil is stabilizing and it could rise exponentially over the following years. Over the past year, global consumption has stayed weak and may stay that way for awhile.

However once the economy recovers, crude oil should resume its secular bull-market trend and many pundits think it might shock some folks as to how high prices may go.

## [Head in the Tar Sands? The New York Times Runs Anti-Peak Oil Op-Ed](#)

Pinpointing the exact moment that world oil production begins to decline is really just a parlor game. No one disputes that oil supplies are finite, which is reason enough to diversify our energy sources. And even if supplies were unlimited, few experts dispute that oil dependence threatens humans and the environment because of its role in climate change. Why is the United States paper of record running a column from someone with a vested interest in saying there's nothing to worry about?

## [PetroChina Second-Quarter Profit Beats Estimates on Refining](#)

(Bloomberg) -- PetroChina Co., the world's most valuable company, posted profit that beat analysts' estimates on record earnings from oil refining after the government raised fuel prices and China's economic recovery spurred demand.

Net income rose 26 percent to 31.5 billion yuan (\$4.6 billion), according to Bloomberg calculations based on first-half figures announced today. The median estimate in a Bloomberg survey of seven analysts was for a 30.9 billion-yuan profit.

## [Norway's Oil Fund Names New Executive Management Team](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Norges Bank Investment Management, which oversees Europe's largest sovereign wealth fund, named a new team of executives after record losses last year wiped out gains from 12 years of investing Norway's oil and gas revenue.

## [Saudi prince vows to fight terrorism after attack](#)

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia – Hours after being lightly wounded by a suicide bomber, a senior Saudi prince largely credited with the kingdom's aggressive anti-terrorism efforts said Friday he was more determined than ever to fight militants in the country.

The bombing was the first assassination attempt against a member of the royal family in decades and was also the first significant attack by militants in the kingdom since 2006.

Saudi Arabia has waged a fierce crackdown on al-Qaida militants in the country that succeeded in killing or capturing most of its leaders after a string of attacks that started in 2003.

### [The Next Dark Age?](#)

In the post Peak Oil and a Brick Wall I discussed briefly how peak oil is upon us. So what does this mean. Peak oil itself is not important, we will feel it when demand exceeds supply. That won't happen gradually – it will be like running full speed into a brick wall. That may, and some say likely, will result in a breakdown of society – a new Dark Ages. Before we continue lets take a look at the original Dark Ages for a little background.

### [Salazar: Let's take renewable energy lead](#)

The United States can fall behind the rest of the world in addressing renewable energy and climate change, or it can take the lead, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar told a large group of students and area residents at Fossil Ridge High School on Thursday.

At the two-hour regional forum on President Barack Obama's "Clean Energy Economy" agenda, Salazar, Gov. Bill Ritter, Democratic Rep. Betsy Markey and representatives of the White House and the states of Washington and California stumped for future congressional climate legislation focusing on renewable energy and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

### [Leaking pipe removed at oldest US nuclear plant](#)

LACEY TOWNSHIP, N.J. – Workers have safely removed a leaking pipe at the nation's oldest nuclear power plant, the Oyster Creek Generating Station in New Jersey.

Oyster Creek reduced its power capacity by about 50 percent while repairs were being done and continued to operate at that level Thursday.

### [Energy Secretary Chu Wimps Out Again](#)

Most of my followers are very familiar with my opinion of Energy Secretary Stephen Chu: he should resign his office. Why? Because Chu doesn't understand that America's biggest energy and economic problem is our addiction to foreign oil imports and the resulting daily drain of U.S. wealth away from our shores. Any U.S. Energy Secretary who is "agnostic" about the only domestic fuel (natural gas) that can be scaled up to solve these problems should be fired. Top that off with Chu's agreement that "clean coal" is actually possible and, you have an Energy Secretary who has certainly risen to the level of incompetence.

## [Obama Faces Uphill Climate-Change Battle](#)

Senate passage of a cap-and-trade emissions reduction regime this autumn is less than a 50-50 proposition; it is much more likely that Congress will approve an energy bill that promotes a renewable energy standard for electricity production. If cap-and-trade fails this year, Obama may attempt to revisit a simpler carbon tax scheme in 2010 as economic recovery gathers pace.

## [Indonesia eyes 40% cut in emissions](#)

Indonesia has held out the promise of a 40 per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions if it receives international support.

South-east Asia's largest economy is one of the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters after the US and China, and four-fifths of its emissions come from the degradation of peatland and the logging of its forest cover in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua.

A cut of 40 per cent by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, would be a far more ambitious target than other developing countries have considered and corresponds with some of the most stringent targets rich nations are considering for themselves.

## [Laughing Gas: The Latest Threat to the Ozone Layer](#)

"Pretty soon human-caused N<sub>2</sub>O emissions will be greater than all other ozone-depleting substances combined," says John Daniel, an atmospheric scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and a co-author of the *Science* study. "It will be the dominant gas in the future."

## [Millions in Nepal facing hunger as climate changes](#)

KATMANDU, Nepal – Millions of people in Nepal face severe food shortages because global climate change has disrupted weather patterns and slashed crop yields in the Himalayan nation, an international aid agency warned Friday.

Changing weather patterns have dramatically affected crop production in Nepal, leaving farmers unable to properly feed themselves and pushing them into debt, Oxfam International said in a report released in Katmandu.

The British aid agency described the situation as "deeply worrying."

## [Hijacked by climate change?](#)



As the UN climate summit in Copenhagen approaches, exhortations that "we must get a deal" and warnings that climate change is "the greatest challenge we face as a species" are to be heard in virtually every political forum.

But if you look back to the latest definitive check on the planet's environmental health - the Global Environment Outlook (Geo-4), published by the UN two years ago - what emerges is a picture of decline that goes way, way beyond climate change.

Species are going extinct at perhaps 1,000 times the normal rate, as key habitats such as forests, wetlands and coral reefs are plundered for human infrastructure.

Aquifers are being drained and fisheries exploited at unsustainable speed. Soils are becoming saline, air quality is a huge cause of illness and premature death; the human population is bigger than our one Earth can currently sustain.



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