



## Drumbeat: October 17, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on October 17, 2009 - 9:08am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Naval Research Lab Looks to Sea, Sun for Energy](#)

WASHINGTON – The services could more effectively power unmanned vehicles, underwater monitoring sensors, ships and aircraft if Naval Research Laboratory scientists achieve their goals of harnessing solar and sea power to fuel the military for years to come, a top NRL scientist said.

“A worldwide peak of fuel production is expected in five to 15 years, and increased demand will likely create large swings in price and availability,” Barry Spargo, head of NRL's chemical dynamics and diagnostics branch, said in an Oct. 14 interview on Pentagon Web Radio's audio webcast “Armed with Science: Research and Applications for the Modern Military.”

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mpany Unocal collapsed under pressure from Congress.

### [#93 - Oil is running out, bring on the new stone age!](#) (podcast)

It seems that the world may hit peak oil production in 2020, which might bring an end to the 'Lalalalala, I can't hear you!' attitude that world governments are currently employing. If only it was in 2120 then no one would care as we'll all be dead by then. Plus we have a cutlery update and some alarming accounting about the war in Afghanistan.

### [Darkness on the Edge of Monotown](#)

VIEWED from the outside, things have been going quite well for Russia recently. The United States has scrapped, at least for now, the plan to base missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic. Germany and Russia seem to have overcome opposition in Europe to their Nord Stream pipeline, despite fears that it will solidify Russia's dominance of the European natural gas supplies. Oil prices have recovered from the disastrously low — for Russia — levels of last winter. And, far from buckling under pressure from the United States over sanctions against Iran, Russian leaders felt confident enough to concede almost nothing to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit to Moscow this week.

Yet on the inside the country remains dangerously close to a serious breakdown of authority. In addition to the Muslim North Caucasus, which is already barely governable, the most vulnerable places are the company towns, which could catalyze a nationwide explosion of political turmoil.

### [Angola eyes Amazon blocks](#)

Angola's Sonangol Group is interested to investing in oil blocks 28 and 29 in Ecuador's Amazon region, the head of state-owned Petroecuador, Luis Jaramillo, said today.

Angola's oil minister and Opec president, Jose Maria Botelho de Vasconcelos, will travel to Ecuador at the end of October to discuss Sonangol's investment in Ecuador, Jaramillo said during a meeting with foreign journalists.

### [Eni, Repsol confirm record Venezuela gas discovery](#)

The Italian oil company Eni and Spain's Repsol on Friday said tests have confirmed that their natural gas discovery offshore Venezuela is the largest ever in the country.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said the discovery could help boost Venezuela to fourth place in the world in proven natural gas reserves within four years.

"Venezuela is growing more established as a global energy power," Chavez said on state television Thursday.

### [Iraq approves oil deal with BP-led consortium](#)

BAGHDAD (AP) -- The Iraqi government has approved a deal with a consortium led by British giant BP PLC to develop a prized oil field in the south in a major step forward for the country's oil industry.

BP, which was booted from the country in 1972 when Saddam Hussein nationalized the oil industry, and its partner CNPC of China were the only winners in Iraq's first international oil auction in over 30 years for development rights for the 17.8 billion barrel Rumaila field.

### [Book on Marc Rich Details His Iran Oil Deals](#)

Marc Rich, the former fugitive oil trader long criticized for his business ties to nations like Iran, South Africa and Cuba, has acknowledged in a new book that his dealings with those nations were more extensive than previously disclosed.

### [Trafigura offers deal to 31,000 Africans over dumped waste](#)

A British oil trader has offered to settle a court case brought by 31,000 Africans who say that they were injured by the dumping of waste — the largest personal injuries class action mounted in an English court.

The company, Trafigura, confirmed yesterday that “a global settlement is being considered by the parties”.

### [PDVSA to Sell \\$3 Billion of Bonds in Local Market](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleos de Venezuela SA, the state oil company, will sell \$3 billion of bonds in the local market next week as the government seeks to shore up the bolivar in unregulated trading.

PDVSA, as the company is known, will sell \$1.3 billion of 4.9 percent bonds due 2014, \$1.3 billion of 5 percent notes due 2015 and \$400 million of 5.125 percent bonds due 2016, according to a statement posted on its Web site. The company said it will sell the securities at 138 percent of face value.

### [Energy secretary tells CEOs new fuels coming](#)

CARY, N.C. - U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has told a North Carolina meeting of corporate CEOs the Obama administration is clearing away red tape to speed progress on alternative energy production.

### [U.S. lobby group defends Alberta's oil sands](#)

The U.S. petroleum industry is touting the development of Canada's oil sands as a boon for the American economy and the source of some 343,000 jobs south of the border, as it battles climate change legislation that could hammer crude imports from Alberta.

### [Utilities split on climate legislation](#)

NEW YORK (MarketWatch) -- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has a rebellion on its hands, led by a handful of utilities that have broken with the powerful lobbying group over its stiff opposition to the war on global warming.

Their defection opens a rift between companies that fear billions of dollars in higher operating costs and those moving now to tackle the challenges posed by stricter laws against carbon emissions.

### [Why climate change denial must be taken seriously](#)

You're living close to the bone, with little security, but you're convinced the American Dream is within your reach.

It's your small, tenuous scrap of the world and you'll fight to keep it – even if that means taking the side of the very industries that pollute the land and keep you at the margin of economic survival while their executives and bankers prosper from your labour.

This is the paradox and potential triumph of *Not Evil Just Wrong*, a new documentary that attacks the environmental "elites" and "extremists" who campaign for measures to curb climate change. The Irish husband and wife co-directors, Phelim McAleer and Ann McElhinney, are among those who argue policies to combat the build-up of greenhouse gases are not only unnecessary but also potentially calamitous.

### [Electric bikes are all green \(colors vary\)](#)

"Ride up steep hills without huffing and puffing!" "Hammer at 20 mph without breaking a sweat!" At the recent Interbike trade show in Las Vegas, an explosion of companies touted the Lance Armstrong-like powers of the electric bike -- a pedal-powered bike with an electric motor for extra speed when you need it. Although E-bikes haven't caught on in the United States as they have in Europe and Japan, makers say high gas prices, the obesity crisis, better lithium-ion rechargeable batteries and a wave of green consciousness make them right for the times.

This review includes two styles of electric bikes: "pedal-assist," in which the rider must keep pedaling to actuate the engine, and "throttle," in which the motor can work independently.

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## [The Next Oil Crisis is Just Ahead](#)

Perhaps the thing that struck me most was how much the outlook on peak oil has changed since the first conference in 2005.

Those who thought conventional oil had probably peaked back then were considered extremely pessimistic, where the consensus view saw the peak another 5-10 years off, and the optimists put it 20 years away or more. Some thought the peak rate of "all liquids" would be around 100 million barrels per day (mbpd), up from 85 mbpd at the time. Most thought non-OPEC production would increase up through 2010. Biofuel boosters were sunny about their future.

Four years later, the view on oil and biofuel has grown considerably worse.

## [4 Forces Driving Oil Prices Higher](#)

Oil prices pushed near the top of their recent range this week, and the usual suspects trotted out on the TV to tell us why this rally couldn't last. And on the face of it, their argument seems to make sense. It boils down to ...

1. Crude has been trapped in the same range since June.
2. U.S. oil demand is lackluster at best.
3. There is plenty of oil in storage.

That sounds pretty solid to me. So why, then, are oil prices trending higher?

## [Oil's Up and Down Ride](#)

The question on many stock market participants' minds these days is how much longer the current rally will last. Most of us are sane enough to realize that the good fortunes bestowed upon us by the markets since March will be taken away again at some point in the not too distant future. The question is only, "when will the good times end?"

Paraphrasing a popular Russian saying: "If I would know that, I would live in Monte Carlo." What I can tell you with much certainty is that for most of us the demise will come just as suddenly and unexpectedly as did the reprieve. And when the markets fall this time, so will the oil prices.

## [Fossil Fuel Production Up Despite Recession](#)

World production of fossil fuels-oil, coal, and natural gas - increased 2.9 percent in 2008 to reach 27.4 million tons of oil equivalent (Mtoe) per day. In the first half of the year, producers strained to meet global demand, but when the recession took hold later in the

year the market was swamped by excess supply. Energy prices reflected this shift: oil peaked at \$144 per barrel in July, then fell to \$34 per barrel in December. Continuing a decade-long trend, most of the growth was in the Asia-Pacific region, where production grew 6.3 percent.

Although the global economic crisis has caused a temporary slump in demand, the longterm trend is clear: fossil fuel consumption in developing countries has surpassed that in industrialized countries. With four times the population and a vast demand for economic development to raise standards of living, developing countries will see energy use rise further.

### [Russia's unsustainable energy model](#)

Russia has taken a significant step in its bid to become a dominant international energy supplier, one that has important implications for its relations with the EU and its prospects of returning quickly to the high growth rates that have underpinned its national recovery in recent years. Monday marks the end of the 60 day notification period after which Russia's provisional application of the energy charter treaty (ECT) will formally come to an end.

### [Bush-era oil-shale decision under review](#)

Reporting from Washington - The Obama Interior Department is reviewing a decision made by the Bush administration in its final days that attempted to lock in lucrative royalty rates and favorable regulations for oil companies holding leases for oil-shale development on public lands.

The decision, which came in the form of amendments to existing leases, drew little public notice at the end of the Bush administration in January. But since then, congressional watchdogs, environmental groups and state officials in Colorado, where most of the leases are located, have denounced the amendments as a massive giveaway to the oil industry.

### [Oil May Breach 200-Week Average, Test \\$85: Technical Analysis](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil is poised to breach technical resistance at its 200-week moving average and rally to \$85 a barrel, according to technical analysis by Citi FX.

### [Transition Rogers Park Seeks a Sustainable Future for the Neighborhood](#)

You just met Dr. Who and he has given you an opportunity to join him in the TARDIS for a journey to the year 2025. What will Rogers Park be like?



Where will the food we eat come from? Will we still be buying it from chain grocery stores? What will be the state of public transportation? Will cars be as numerous? Will they be mostly gasoline powered or hybrids? Will more people be riding bikes?

### [Executive Director of the South Carolina Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Alliance](#)

The biggest challenge to using hydrogen is the infrastructure. Currently we have an infrastructure that serves us fairly well—gasoline. It's hard to compete with it. However, we are not in control of the majority of resources that our present infrastructure is reliant on. The hydrogen infrastructure is challenging but not insurmountable.

### [Maldives government dives for climate change](#)

GIRIFUSHI, Maldives – Members of the Maldives' Cabinet donned scuba gear and used hand signals Saturday at an underwater meeting staged to highlight the threat of global warming to the lowest-lying nation on earth.

### [Biggest economies try again to strike climate deal](#)

The world's 17 biggest and most polluting nations meet in London on Sunday in an attempt to break a deadlock on financing efforts to contain climate change and reducing harmful gases causing global warming.

With a deadline looming, pressure was mounting on the United States to finalize its position before a decisive December conference in Denmark meant to cap two years of negotiations on a global climate change treaty.

### [The Disappearing Deal](#)

In recent months, the prospects that states will actually agree to anything in Copenhagen are starting to look worse and worse. Although the Obama administration initially raised hopes by reengaging in the negotiation process, the U.S. Congress has since emerged as a potential spoiler. While the European Union has resolved to reduce emissions 20 percent (from 1990 levels) by 2020, and Japan's newly elected government has set an even higher target of 25 percent, the Waxman-Markey bill that passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in June fell well short of this goal. And the Kerry-Boxer bill recently introduced in the U.S. Senate seems unlikely to be passed any time soon.

### [NOAA Scientists Study Historic 'Dust Bowl' and Plains Droughts for Triggers](#)

After analyzing historical records and climate model data for two major U.S. droughts in the 1930s and 1950s, NOAA scientists found two very different causes, shedding new light on our understanding of what triggers drought. Studies such as this one that expand our insights into drought are essential for improving forecasts and can aid in the creation of an early warning system to help communities take precautions and prepare.



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