



Drumbeat: December 7, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 7, 2009 - 9:35am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[EPA: Greenhouse gases are harmful to humans](#)

WASHINGTON - The Environmental Protection Agency took a major step Monday toward regulating greenhouse gases, concluding that climate changing pollution threatens the public health and the environment.

The announcement came as the Obama administration looked to boost its arguments at an international climate conference that the United States is aggressively taking actions to combat global warming, even though Congress has yet to act on climate legislation. The conference opened Monday in Copenhagen.

The EPA said that the scientific evidence surrounding climate change clearly shows that greenhouse gases "threaten the public health and welfare of the American people" and that the pollutants — mainly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels — should be regulated under the Clean Air Act.

ct on oil prices and financial markets.

[Iraq oil claims may be too high](#)

Some international oil companies have overstated how high they can take Iraq's crude oil production, a senior government adviser said today, ahead of a second round of oilfield development tenders this week.

Thamir Ghadhban, adviser to Iraq's prime minister and a former oil minister, told an industry conference that he believed 6 million barrels per day (bpd) was a realistic target for Iraq's oil output within the next six to seven years.

This is well below the estimates of 10 or even 12 million bpd that have been mentioned as a result of plateau production targets proposed by some foreign oil companies as they bid for Iraqi oilfield contracts.

[The Peak Oil Report Buried in the Financial Crisis](#)

It's easy to forget things.

In this particular case, the "thing" is an oil report overshadowed by the economic crisis. Had everything not hit the fan last year, I believe more people would have taken notice.

After all, it took \$150/bbl oil prices and \$4-5/gallon gasoline to get people's attention. Unfortunately, their memories were wiped as soon as pump prices came back down and oil prices crashed to \$30 per barrel.

However, a November report released last year by the International Energy Agency was grossly overlooked. The report painted a sobering picture for us... and it wasn't just a generalized warning that we need to get our act together.

[Peak oil and peak gold: No comparison](#)

It's difficult to see the logic. In fact, the implied parallel between peak oil and peak gold seems deliberately misleading. We use up oil. We don't use up gold.

...If we are truly nearing peak gold, we don't have to fear a world without gold. We just have to prepare for a world that will have exactly as much gold as it does now.

Sure, having no new supply of gold may eventually make the metal more valuable. But given that the overwhelming most common use for the metal is for jewelry, I suspect the world would find substitutes if gold became too expensive.

[U.S. government oks Shell's Chukchi Sea drilling plan](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Interior Department on Monday approved, with conditions, Shell Oil's plan to drill three exploratory wells in Alaska's Chukchi Sea.

Shell, the U.S. unit of Royal Dutch Shell Plc, paid \$2.1 billion in 2008 for leases in the Chukchi Sea when the Bush administration opened up 30 million acres (12 million hectares) in the unexplored area for drilling, in a bid to reduce U.S. dependence on oil imports.

But the oil major had been held up by environmentalists and North Slope residents.

[Valero's Texas City boiler had history of problems](#)

HOUSTON (Reuters) - A giant industrial boiler that exploded late Friday, killing a worker at Valero Energy Corp's (VLO.N) Texas City, Texas, refinery had a history of problems since it was installed in 2006, said an attorney for a worker injured in the blast.

"It just blew up," said Houston attorney Tony Buzbee, who represents injured Valero

employee Michael Gibb, in an interview with Reuters on Monday. "They've been having fits and starts with this thing for many months."

[Electricity networks frustrated at Ofgem proposals](#)

Companies in charge of transferring electricity from the national grid to homes and businesses have warned they will reassess their commitment to the industry following new proposals from Ofgem.

[James Hansen: Cap and Fade](#)

Because cap and trade is enforced through the selling and trading of permits, it actually perpetuates the pollution it is supposed to eliminate. If every polluter's emissions fell below the incrementally lowered cap, then the price of pollution credits would collapse and the economic rationale to keep reducing pollution would disappear.

[Energy Department tightens reins on Ill. stimulus money](#)

WASHINGTON — The Energy Department has agreed to increase oversight of a \$5 billion weatherization program after department investigators found that Illinois failed to properly monitor the \$242 million in economic stimulus money it received to pay for energy efficiency upgrades to low-income homes.

In one case, an inspector for a local agency in Illinois overlooked a potentially catastrophic gas leak in a new furnace installed with stimulus weatherization money, according to a "management alert" issued Monday by the department's Office of Inspector General.

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[Baker Hughes: US Land Rig Count Up 63 to 1,107 for Nov.](#)

Baker Hughes reported that the international rig count for November 2009 was 1,025, up 42 from the 983 counted in October 2009, and down 71 from the 1,096 counted in November 2008. The international offshore rig count for November 2009 was 284, up 17 from the 267 counted in October 2009 and down 13 from the 297 counted in November 2008.

[‘Global race for oil & gas assets is intense’](#)

Iran is strategically important for us, as in a world worried over the progressive depletion of hydrocarbon reserves it is the second largest oil-reserve-holding country after Russia with estimated reserves of 800 trillion cubic feet (tcf). In fact, the projects at Rostam and Raksh oil fields in Iran were among our early initiatives immediately after the company was formed out of the erstwhile Hydrocarbon India Pvt. Ltd in 1989. We already have an exploration block in Persian Gulf—the Farsi offshore block—which we had won in December 2002 through auction.

We had faced some problems in carrying out the drilling there due to the US sanctions on Iran. But we managed to move our own rigs from here in India and have since successfully completed drilling in four wells. The estimated gas reserves of the block, as approved by the Iranian authorities, are of the order of 12.5 tcf. To put that in perspective, our domestic KG basin gas reserves are currently estimated at around 10 tcf.

[Rebel attacks swell Nigeria-to-Ghana pipeline cost](#)

ACCRA (Reuters) - Rebel attacks in Nigeria's restive Niger Delta have boosted the cost of a natural gas pipeline to Ghana in which U.S. oil major Chevron (CVX.N) is a large stakeholder, a project official said Monday.

"We have suffered delays due to many factors including damage to the pipeline as a result of the unrest in Niger Delta region," Jack Derickson, managing director of the West African Gas Pipeline Company told reporters.

[Mexico cuts Pemex's budget for Chicontepec work](#)

The Mexican government has slashed the allocation to state-owned Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex) for Chicontepec oil development in 2010 by more than 60% from this year's level, according to local media.

[Crude Oil Consolidating Before the Next Big Move Higher](#)

When it comes down to it, I'd rather not wrestle a vampire squid at all. I'd rather be the guy sitting on the dock drinking a beer, cheering on some other poor sap who is splashing around and wrestling the squid: "Dude, you've totally got him! Keep at it! You're doing great!" But sometimes you get to sit on the dock, and sometimes it's your fate to wrestle the squid.

[GM plugs \\$336 million into Volt production](#)

DETROIT (Reuters) -- General Motors Co. will invest \$336 million in a Detroit-area plant to produce its heavily anticipated Chevrolet Volt electric car beginning next year, the No. 1 U.S. automaker said Monday.

Assembly of Volt prototype vehicles will begin in the spring at GM's Detroit-Hamtramck assembly plant, with the regular production scheduled for late 2010, GM said.

[New Buses Bring Silence to the Streets](#)

Silence, that rare commodity on the city streets, is achieved by throwing out the most basic element of automobile design: internal combustion. Instead of a noisy, piston-based engine, the DesignLine operates on a spinning turbine that recharges a lithium-ion battery, a green energy source more commonly found inside laptop computers. That means fewer moving parts, and fewer ways to create a racket.

[Building Resilience](#)

The current economic downturn is the worst in decades. Millions are suffering devastating losses – vanishing jobs, foreclosed homes, and soaring food and health costs. Meanwhile, climate instability, species extinction, resource scarcity, and toxic pollution are threatening the basic life-support systems of the planet. And let's be honest: All of these are traceable to the grow-at-all-costs economy. We're finally running up against – if not far surpassing – the limits of our planet.

And yet, the primary ecological challenges of our time remain largely off people's radar, due partly to corporate dominance over our media, culture, and government. But we environmentalists also share in the blame. All too often, we've focused on endangered species and ecosystems, and failed to connect their protection to the well-being of people or communities. In a world with fewer resources to go around, the future of environmentalism may hinge on making it synonymous with building sustainable communities that can meet everyone's basic needs.

[America The Immaculate](#)

Obama is continuing a policy that the Pentagon has given name to: Full Spectrum Dominance. That's everything! Land, sea, air, space, biological, cyber. That's the way we maintain the disparity between what "we" have, and what "they" have.

From the middle of the last century, when we began coveting Middle East oil, control of energy resources became a vital part of our economic and political strategy. And this was when supply seemed inexhaustible, long before the bleak "peak oil" scenario appeared!

Controlling the world's energy resources is key to maintaining this position of dominance, that and a strong military. It's no coincidence that our military is globally positioned along the sights of proven oil and gas reserves.

[Petraeus: Afghanistan war surge won't have quick results](#)

Gen. David Petraeus, who commands U.S. forces in the Middle East, said he does not expect progress in Afghanistan to mirror the quick and dramatic results achieved under the troop surge in Iraq in 2007.

[Religious groups active in climate debate](#)

COPENHAGEN — Sunday started like any other day for Sister Joan Brown — with a period of prayer and meditation just before dawn at her home in Albuquerque.

Then, instead of going to Mass, the Franciscan sister boarded a plane to Copenhagen. When she arrives Monday, she'll join 20,000 other attendees at a United Nations summit on climate change, where she hopes to persuade leaders including President Obama to reach a worldwide agreement to cut pollution levels.

[What It Looks Like When a Local Authority REALLY Gets Transition... the Montevoglio story](#)

So what might it look like when a local authority *really* gets Transition? Earlier this week I received a very excitable email from Cristiano Bottone, one of the movers behind Transition Italia, and the Transition of his own town, Montevoglio, near Bologna. "Montevoglio's local authority signs a strategic partnership with "Montevoglio Città di Transizione"....This is a revolution for this country, believe me. Thank you for all your help. I love you ;-)". So what did the Montevoglio authorities actually sign up to, why is Cristiano so excited about it, and what does it mean?

[Why We Find it so Hard to Act Against Climate Change](#)

It should be easy to deal with climate change. There is a strong scientific consensus supported by very sound data; consensus across much of the religious and political spectrum and among businesses including the largest corporations in the world. The vast majority of people claim to be concerned. The targets are challenging, but they are achievable with existing technologies, and there would be plentiful profits and employment available for those who took up the challenge.

So why has so little happened? Why do people who claim to be very concerned about climate change continue their high-carbon lifestyles? And why, as the warnings become ever louder, do increasing numbers of people reject the arguments of scientists and the evidence of their own eyes?

[Copenhagen: time to re-think? Or just keep thinking!](#)

Hansen and Lomborg have completely different positions and standings in the climate debate. Hansen is a heavyweight who insisted on energetically disseminating the conclusions of scientific research at a time when the world did not want to hear it and the weight of established scientific opinion was against him. Thirty or forty years ago, the settled view was that climates do not change quickly. That he succeeded in getting a proper hearing was the result of his dedication and determination to carry through on a major act of public service.

By contrast, Lomborg is a gadfly with a talent for getting publicity, who courts controversy, some of it around his ideas but much of it around his use of evidence, and who is often worth listening to because what he says is not all stupid.

[Krugman: Unhelpful Hansen](#)

James Hansen is a great climate scientist. He was the first to warn about the climate crisis; I take what he says about coal, in particular, very seriously.

Unfortunately, while I defer to him on all matters climate, today's op-ed article suggests that he really hasn't made any effort to understand the economics of emissions control. And that's not a small matter, because he's now engaged in a misguided crusade against cap and trade, which is — let's face it — the only form of action against greenhouse gas emissions we have any chance of taking before catastrophe becomes inevitable.

[Business Fumes Over Carbon Dioxide Rule](#)

Officials gather in Copenhagen this week for an international climate summit, but business leaders are focusing even more on Washington, where the Obama administration is expected as early as Monday to formally declare carbon dioxide a dangerous pollutant.

An "endangerment" finding by the Environmental Protection Agency could pave the way for the government to require businesses that emit carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases to make costly changes in machinery to reduce emissions -- even if Congress doesn't pass pending climate-change legislation. EPA action to regulate emissions could affect the U.S. economy more directly, and more quickly, than any global deal inked in the Danish capital, where no binding agreement is expected.

[Kunstler: Climate, Oil, War, and Money](#)

Against a greater welter and flow of incoherence jerking the nation this way and that way en route to collapse comes "ClimateGate," the latest excuse for screaming knuckleheads to defend what has already been lost. It is also yet another distraction from the emergency agenda that the United States faces - namely the urgent re-scaling, re-localizing, and de-globalizing of our daily activities.

What seems to be at stake for the knuckleheads is their identity, their idea of what it means to be an American, which boils down to being an organism so specially blessed and entitled that it is excused from paying attention to reality. There were no doubt plenty of counterparts among the Mayans when the weather changed and their crops failed, and certainly the Romans had their share of identity psychotics who doubted reality even when Alaric the Visigoth was hoisting off their household treasure.

[Center line stripes may be thing of the past on some county roads](#)

"The gas tax is only decreasing a little, but the license fee income will be the lowest since 1996," he said. Bachman has been in office since 1989.

Through Oct. 31, the fees generated \$2,256,551. Through that date in 1996, it was \$2,200,041. The peak was in 2003 at \$2,568,656.

The gas tax revenue is almost 2 cents per gallon sold, while the license plate fee for a typical passenger car generates \$14 to \$15 for the department.

Bachman pointed out that for the last couple of years, the department has purchased used pickup trucks, and this year bought a used truck for the first time for salting roads and plowing snow.

The number of bridges being replaced annually has been reduced from eight to six.

"We can't afford to buy the steel and concrete to build the bridges with," he said.

[Natural gas locked in the Marcellus Shale has companies rushing to cash in on possibilities](#)

"It was an amazing thing," Ms. Haines said, and a small indicator of surging interest in

the Marcellus Shale, a geological formation that sprawls from midstate New York across more than half of Pennsylvania and into Ohio and West Virginia. Little regarded five years ago, the Marcellus Shale is now viewed as one of the world's leading reservoirs of recoverable natural gas.

It was only in 2008 that interest in the Marcellus Shale exploded, a development triggered by the release of two reports.

[Solar industry 'in limbo' as grants dry up](#)

Renewable energy manufacturers have warned of their "frustration" after the government's flagship grant scheme for solar power ran out of money less than halfway through the financial year.

The UK PV Association, which represents companies making and installing solar panels, warned that they were "in limbo" after the Low Carbon Building Programme Phase 2 was closed to solar applications this week.

[Drive for Geothermal Power Heats up on US Campuses](#)

While solar and wind power get most of the headlines, geothermal power is quietly gaining traction on college campuses where energy costs can siphon millions each year from the budget.

[UK small wind blows strong despite recession](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's small wind sector is booming despite the recession as many rural homes, farms or small businesses are putting up turbines in the yard to counter higher energy prices and blackouts.

Orders for turbines with less than 50 kilowatts capacity have soared before the introduction in April of feed-in-tariffs for small renewables, a system similar to those that have propelled wind farm growth in Germany or Spain.

[Sunshine, sewage to power cities of the future](#)

LILLE, France (Reuters) - "These are the three giant stomachs of Lille."

Amid the hum of machinery and warm odor of putrefying autumn leaves, official Pierre Hirtzberger is explaining how three giant fermenters can convert household food waste, trimmings from parks and gardens and the slops from school and hospital canteens into enough methane gas to power about a third of the buses in the French city.

[Underpriced Rare Earth Metals From China Have Created A Supply Crisis](#)

China has a policy of predatory pricing, which has allowed it to gain monopoly control over some strategic natural resources such as the rare earth metals. The policy has now backfired as the low revenues to Chinese producers have deprived them of the investment funds they need to not only expand production but also to maintain the production they have.

The result is a massive Chinese environmental problem, which threatens all by itself to cut non Chinese end users off from their only supply.

[Coal throbs at the heart of India growth engine](#)

Although government has announced a new climate plan which identifies renewable energy such as solar power as key elements, coal remains the backbone of energy supply in a country where almost half the 1.1 billion population still has no electricity.

"Coal-fired power will stay for the next 20-25 years at least," said R.D. Sonkar, chief engineer at one of Korba's many thermal power stations.

"Look at the high cost of solar and wind energy. Can we afford? Power from renewable energy will have to wait, I think."

[Chesapeake Energy Corporation Named Energy Producer of the Year and Receives Industry Leadership Award](#)

The Platts Global Energy Awards recognize excellence and innovation by companies and executives throughout the global energy industry. A total of approximately 150 individuals and companies were finalists for the Global Energy Awards with hundreds more nominated. According to Platts, "The *Energy Producer of the Year Award* recognizes excellence in the upstream energy sector for companies that have set world class standards in exploring for and finding new resources, maximizing technical excellence and innovation in resource extraction, and bringing complex or difficult projects to completion on schedule and on budget. The panel of independent international judges noted Chesapeake's expertise in shale gas plays and its very high success rate in exploration activities."

[The internet's dirty carbon secret](#)

A demand for data from the likes of Google and Facebook about their emissions and energy consumption is long overdue

[100 Best Blogs for Socially-Minded MBAs](#)

Some of the recent news stories have given those in the business world a bad rap, insinuating that ethics and business don't necessarily go hand-in-hand. You, as a socially-minded MBA student, know those allegations are not true. So do these bloggers and their readership. The following blogs provide insight and thought-provoking posts on environmental and social justice topics that are relevant to all future business people.

[Approaching peak oil](#) (video)



As oil approaches its maximum rate of production globally, Western Australians are considering ways to prepare for the inevitable rise in prices.

[Saudi Aramco Plans to Drill 45-50 Exploration Wells in 2010](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Aramco, the world's biggest oil company, plans to drill 45 to 50 oil exploration wells next year, the company's vice president for exploration said.

"Aramco now is exploring in every corner of the kingdom," Abdulla al-Naim said in an interview in Doha, Qatar, today. "Our exploration is spread evenly in the Rub al Khali, in northwestern Saudi Arabia, in the Gulf area, and in existing operational areas too."

[Kurt Cobb: Reserves are bunk](#)

Henry Ford is famous for having once said, "History is more or less bunk." He was, in fact, attacking tradition in an age of rapid technological and social change. Almost a century later we have a less ambitious observation which may not achieve the broad visceral appeal of Ford's statement, but one which may turn out to have a good deal of

importance, to wit: Oil and natural gas reserve numbers are more or less bunk.

[Oil prices fall below \\$75 as dollar strengthens](#)

Oil prices fell below \$75 a barrel Monday as the dollar strengthened and several OPEC ministers said they don't expect their group to change production levels at a meeting later this month.

[Price of gas drops, but not by very much](#)

CAMARILLO, Calif. - The average price of regular gasoline in the United States has dropped 1.24 cents over a two-week period to \$2.64.

That's according to the national Lundberg Survey of fuel prices released Sunday.

[Adnoc Raises November Oil Prices to 14-Month Highs](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Abu Dhabi National Oil Co., which exports most of its crude oil output to Asia, raised November official selling prices to their highest in 14 months, reflecting increases in the global benchmark.

[Iran to launch oil, gas exploration in Caspian Sea](#)

TEHRAN (Xinhua) -- Iran is to start exploration drillings in the Caspian Sea for oil and gas by the end of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2010), the local satellite Press TV reported on Monday.

With the inauguration and operation of Iran-Alborz semi-floating rig, the country can reach a high level of technical knowledge and oil industry technology in deep waters, Press TV quoted an Iranian official at Khazar Exploration and Production Co. (KEPCO) as saying.

[Police clash with protesters at Tehran University](#)

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Security forces and pro-government militiamen clashed with protesters shouting "death to the dictator" outside Tehran University on Monday, beating men and women with batons and firing tear gas, on a day of nationwide student demonstrations, witnesses said.

Thousands of protesters demonstrated in the streets outside the campus in support of students inside. As they chanted "death to the dictator," riot police and Basij militiamen

charged the crowds, the witnesses said.

[Job fears, hopes temper Iraq welcome for oil majors](#)

BASRA, Iraq (Reuters) - Like a camel laden with gold but fed with thorns, as locals say, the impoverished Iraqi city of Basra has seen little benefit from its oil wealth, but new deals with foreign oil majors have stirred cautious optimism.

[FACTBOX - A history of foreign oil firms in Iraq](#)

(Reuters) - Iraq on Dec. 11-12 will hold its second auction since the 2003 U.S. invasion of oilfield service contracts, ramping up its efforts to lure foreign oil companies back into the country after a long absence.

Here is a history of oil operations in Iraq:

[Brazil girds for massive offshore oil extraction](#)

Everything about the shipyard here is colossal -- the 4,000-man workforce, the billions sunk into it in capital costs, the half-finished 10-story-high production platforms.

But then, so is the challenge facing Brazil's state-controlled energy company, Petrobras: developing a group of newly discovered deep-sea oil fields that energy analysts say will catapult this country into the ranks of the world's petro-powers. The oil pools are 200 miles out in the Atlantic and more than four miles down, under freezing seas, rock and a heavy cap of salt.

[PDVSA in \\$600m bond buy back](#)

Venezuela's state-owned oil company PDVSA bought between \$300 million and \$600 million of its dollar-denominated bonds during the second half of this year, taking advantage of their fall in market price, a company source said.

[China Gas May Increase LPG Sales Sixfold on Expansion](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China Gas Holdings Ltd., the Hong Kong-listed supplier of the fuel to homes and businesses on the mainland, expects liquefied petroleum gas sales to surge sixfold as the company expands its distribution network to 300 cities.

Sales of bottled LPG may rise to 3 million tons by March 2012 as the company extends

sales beyond the 113 cities it currently sells the fuel in, Chief Financial Officer Eric Leung said in an interview. The shares reached a two-year high today.

[Recession Makes '03 Blackout Unlikely as Grid Investment Grows](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Six years after the biggest blackout in U.S. history, the reliability of the electricity supply is being shored up by investors betting that transmission projects are a smart wager in a weak economy.

“The current recession definitely bought some time for utilities,” said Angie Storzynski, an analyst at Macquarie Capital USA Inc. in New York. “Economic contraction reduced traffic on transmission lines, easing the pressure to add new transmission capacity.”

[Energy suppliers may be forced to cut bills](#)

Ofgem, Britain's energy regulator, today warned energy supply companies that they may be forced to pass on the benefits of falling wholesale gas prices to customers in the new year.

Alistair Buchanan, the chief executive of Ofgem, said: “Ofgem’s role is to ensure that companies can invest, but do not use investment as a shameful excuse to overcharge consumers.”

[ADB Pitches for \\$2 Billion Clean Energy Funding](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Asian Development Bank, a lender to developing countries in Asia, plans to help raise more than \$2 billion in private equity and venture capital to boost clean-energy spending in the region, an official said.

The bank is evaluating a program to invest as much as \$100 million in venture capital funds to raise \$1 billion and is investing \$100 million in five private equity funds, which plan to finish raising \$1 billion by next year, said M. Shin Kim, an investment specialist with ADB.

[When Dreams Came True](#)

Is this an alarming development? Is it a bourgeois-capitalist-masturbatory-decadent trend that bodes ill for our capacity to confront future economic devastation, environmental catastrophe, peak oil, and terrorism? Maybe. In any case, it underscores the range of ways in which filmmakers have begun to dramatize—directly, indirectly, and by accident, via osmosis—the breakdown of connections between people and one

another, the planet, and even their own minds. The most compelling films of the last decade, bad and good, suggested that globalization and instant communication have not brought us closer but driven us deeper into our dream worlds.

[Battle over mountaintop mining slowly gains ground](#)

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. -- Environmental activists gained more momentum this year than in the past decade against the destructive, uniquely Appalachian form of strip mining known as mountaintop removal, though they have yet to mobilize the millions of supporters they want.

[Rio favours coal carbon project over gas](#)

RIO Tinto has dumped its gas-related carbon capture and storage (CCS) project in the United Arab Emirates and will instead focus on sequestering emissions from coal.

[Plug-in hybrids have miles to go for widespread use](#)

"EVs are at a point of no return," I was assured last week by Jason Wolf, an executive at Better Place, a Palo Alto firm aiming to provide charging services for plug-in drivers. "Over 70% of major manufacturers have some kind of mass plug-in coming in the next two years. That's a milestone."

Yet plug-ins or fully electric cars can't run on hope and expectations any more than today's Buicks and Hondas can run on cooking oil. A lot has to change in policy, practice and public attitude for plug-ins to reach critical mass in the U.S. private fleet.

[VW Planning Diesel Beetle And Electric Up! Minicar For U.S.](#)

Volkswagen's New Beetle (pictured), which has been on sale since 1998, is set to be replaced by a brand new car in 2012 and according to the automaker's U.S. chief, Stefan Jacoby, a clean diesel engine is planned for the iconic car.

Jacoby also revealed that a production version of Volkswagen's 2007 Up! minicar concept is also headed to the U.S. in 2014. However, while other markets will receive gasoline and diesel versions, the models sold in the U.S. will only be available with electric powertrains.

[Obama's Climate Push Plays Catch-Up With Executives](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Now that U.S. President Barack Obama has given fresh impetus to

climate-change negotiations in Copenhagen, corporate leaders supporting an agreement to control greenhouse-gas emissions are pressing anew for action.

[Analysis: Obama, Dem Efforts on Climate Cooled Off](#)

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Barack Obama strode into office backed by a Democratic majority in Congress and pledged to do something his predecessor had not: set mandatory limits on global warming gases and show that the U.S. was ready to tackle a problem it played a lead role in creating.

Nearly a year into his presidency, Obama and Democratic leaders in Congress have fallen short of their own expectations on climate change as they prepare to attend international negotiations that begin this week.

[Climate change conspiracies: Stolen emails used to ridicule global warming](#)

Russian computer hackers are suspected of being behind the stolen emails used by climate sceptics to discredit the science of global warming in advance of tomorrow's Copenhagen climate negotiations, the United Nations' deputy climate chief said yesterday.

"This was not a job for amateurs," said Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, vice-chairman of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), referring to the theft of the emails from the Climatic Research Unit of the University of East Anglia (UEA).

[Pachauri Defends UN Climate Science After Leaked E-Mail Flap](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Rajendra Pachauri, the top United Nations climate-change scientist, said the panel he heads is "transparent and objective," dismissing allegations by global-warming skeptics that UN data were manipulated.

[The distorted global-warming debate](#)

(CNN) -- I asked a knowledgeable environmentalist earlier this week: "How big a story is the CRU scandal in your community?"

"The what?"

"The e-mails hacked at the Climate Research Unit at [the British] East Anglia University?"

"Ah." He smiled. "It says something that I didn't immediately recognize what you were

talking about. I suppose on my side we'd take the same view that the Pentagon took of Abu Ghraib: a few bad apples on the night shift."

Meanwhile, on the right, the story is the biggest scandal since the leak of the Pentagon Papers.

[Paul Krugman: An Affordable Truth](#)

Of course, if things go well in Copenhagen, the usual suspects will go wild. We'll hear cries that the whole notion of global warming is a hoax perpetrated by a vast scientific conspiracy, as demonstrated by stolen e-mail messages that show — well, actually all they show is that scientists are human, but never mind. We'll also, however, hear cries that climate-change policies will destroy jobs and growth.

The truth, however, is that cutting greenhouse gas emissions is affordable as well as essential. Serious studies say that we can achieve sharp reductions in emissions with only a small impact on the economy's growth. And the depressed economy is no reason to wait — on the contrary, an agreement in Copenhagen would probably help the economy recover.

[Bill McKibben: Why Copenhagen May Be a Disaster](#)

Let me be blunt about what amazes me when it comes to global warming. In the U.S., it's lblocargely an issue for Democrats, "progressives," liberals, the left, and I simply don't get that. Never have. If the word "conservative" means anything, the key to it must be that word at its heart, "conserve"; that is, the keeping or not squandering of what already is, especially what's most valuable.

[Neither Canada nor the world can afford growth of dirty oil](#)

Today in Copenhagen, the Harper government will walk into the UN climate summit not with the intention of transitioning Canada into a clean energy economy, but instead with the agenda of prolonging the oil industry frenzy in the tar sands in northern Alberta.

[The best last chance: UN climate conference opens](#)

COPENHAGEN — The largest and most important U.N. climate change conference in history opened Monday, with organizers warning diplomats from 192 nations that this could be the best last chance for a deal to protect the world from calamitous global warming.

[U.N.: Climate summit may get happy ending](#)

"For those who claim a deal in Copenhagen is impossible, they are simply wrong," said U.N. Environment Program Director Achim Steiner, releasing the report compiled by British economist Lord Nicholas Stern and the Grantham Research Institute.

[In Face of Skeptics, Experts Affirm Climate Peril](#)

COPENHAGEN — A much-anticipated global meeting of nearly 200 nations — all seeking what has so far been elusive common ground on the issue of climate change — got under way here on Monday with an impassioned airing of what leaders here called the political and moral imperatives at hand.

"The clock has ticked down to zero," said the United Nations' climate chief, Yvo de Boer. "After two years of negotiation, the time has come to deliver."

[Developed countries should pay for climate change](#)

COPENHAGEN (Xinhua) -- "How much money is enough to fight climate change?" "Who should provide the money?" These were questions thrown at the UN climate change chief by journalists at a pre-summit press conference in Copenhagen.

[Scientists: Decade Of 2000s Was Warmest Ever](#)

It dawned with the warmest winter on record in the United States. And when the sun sets this New Year's Eve, the decade of the 2000s will end as the warmest ever on global temperature charts.

Warmer still, scientists say, lies ahead.

[Australia: Breathing space on climate change](#)

WITH Australia's ETS voted down and continuing impasse at the international level, three hard lessons are obvious in relation to climate change policy.

[FACTBOX - Predicted impacts from rising global temperatures](#)

REUTERS - The head of the U.N. climate panel painted a stark picture of the future unless nations agree tough emissions curbs to control global warming.

Following are some of the key points from Rajendra Pachauri's speech on Monday to

delegates from nearly 200 countries gathered in Copenhagen for Dec 7-18 talks aimed at sealing the outlines of a climate pact.

[Earth More Sensitive to Carbon Dioxide Than Previously Thought](#)

ScienceDaily — In the long term, the Earth's temperature may be 30-50% more sensitive to atmospheric carbon dioxide than has previously been estimated, reports a new study published in *Nature Geoscience*.

The results show that components of the Earth's climate system that vary over long timescales -- such as land-ice and vegetation -- have an important effect on this temperature sensitivity, but these factors are often neglected in current climate models.

[Kjell Aleklett: "The UN's future scenarios for climate are pure fantasy"](#)

Kjell Aleklett



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