



Drumbeat: December 15, 2009

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Saudi's switch to sour crude standard ripples out to Gulf](#)

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he nation's oil consumption or carbon emissions before 2030. Savings in oil imports would also be modest, according to the report, which was financed with the help of the Energy Department.

[Renewable timetable is a long shot](#)

One of the most frequently ignored energy issues is the time required to bring forth a major new fuel to the world's energy supply. Until the mid-19th century, burning wood powered the world. Then coal gradually surpassed wood into the first part of the 20th century. Oil was discovered in the 1860s, but it was a century before it surpassed coal as our largest energy fuel.

Trillions of dollars are now invested in the world's infrastructure to mine, process and deliver coal, oil and natural gas. As distinguished professor Vaclav Smil of the University of Manitoba recently put it, "It is delusional to think that the United States can install in a decade wind and solar generating capacity equivalent to that of thermal power plants that took nearly 60 years to construct."

Texas has three times the name plate wind capacity of any other state — 8,000-plus megawatts. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas manages the Texas electric grids. ERCOT reports that its unpredictable wind farms actually supply just a little more than 700 MW during summer power demand, and provide just 1 percent of Texas' power needs of about 72,000 MW.

[Mind Over Matter: Oil / Coal Dependence vs. Alternative Energy](#)

I have warned in my presentation Coal World that unless we start using oil to build Alternative Energy infrastructure, the world will continue on its pathway of energy impoverishment (as the cost of all energy inputs continues to rise) and we will soon enough reach a point where transition to Alternative Energy infrastructure becomes prohibitive. The result would be a world turning back to the cheapest energy it can find –and that is coal. If economies and political bodies seems either reluctant or clueless *now* about using oil to build out new power generation, then 150.00 dollar oil will not function as the inducement that many presume.

[Do Electric Cars Cause Cancer?](#)

Because transportation consumes a major amount of oil, bringing EVs into the picture in a big way is seen as a solution, with the added benefit of eliminating tailpipe emissions and at least stabilizing global warming (although the burning of coal for energy also has to go away). Obviously, however, an EV running off an electric motor with a battery that can weigh 600 lbs. raises the health-hazard issue: Does the electromagnetic field generated by the car pose a threat to drivers and passengers?

[For Bicyclists Needing a Boost, This Wheel May Help](#)

The Senseable City Laboratory at M.I.T. has designed a wheel that captures the kinetic energy released when a rider brakes and saves it for when the rider needs a boost. While technically sound, the wheel's true challenge may be in winning over cyclists. For centuries, bikes have been beloved for their simplicity, not their bells and whistles.

But, said Carlo Ratti, the laboratory's director, "biking can become even more effective than what it was." What the lab is working on, he said, is "Biking 2.0."

The new wheel uses a kinetic energy recovery system, the same technology used by hybrid cars, like the Toyota Prius, to harvest otherwise wasted energy when a cyclist brakes or speeds down a hill. With that energy, it charges up a battery inside the wheel's hub.

[Natural Gas Use May Boom, Expert Says](#)

The confluence of increased availability of natural gas and changes in environmental policy will spur its use in the coming years, a gas association official predicted Monday in Medford.

Electricity generated from wind power is inconsistent and regulatory requirements limit future coal and hydropower, Dan Kirschner, executive director of the Northwest Gas Association told the Chamber of Medford/Jackson County Forum. As a result, he said, there will be greater use of natural gas-generated electricity.

[Canadian Oil Sands Misses Unrealistic Projection – Issues Another](#)

Canadian energy authorities have done it again. They missed their last rosy projection of future oil sands production, so they issued a new one: they merely pushed the big surge in production 5 years into the future.

[Russia, Vietnam sign nuclear, other energy deals](#)

MOSCOW—Russia on Tuesday penned a deal to build Vietnam's first nuclear power plant, and the countries' respective oil and gas giants forged a joint venture, increasing Moscow's outreach into southeast Asia, Russian news agencies reported.

[Russia sees no gas war with Ukraine at New Year](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - The head of Russia's natural gas giant Gazprom (GAZP.MM) said on Tuesday he did not expect a new gas war with Ukraine to erupt over the New Year, echoing an earlier statement from the Russian Energy Ministry.

"We don't expect any conflicts and problems with payments (from Ukraine for Russian gas)," Gazprom Chief Executive Alexei Miller told reporters.

He also said that Gazprom's gas production will decline by about 90 billion cubic metres (bcm) this year to over 460 bcm.

[Rosneft CEO sees oil output rising 4-5 pct in 2010](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Oil production at Rosneft is expected to increase by 4-5 percent next year from expected 112 million tonnes this year, the head of Russia's largest crude producer told reporters on Tuesday.

[In Exxon Deal, Signs of the New Gusher](#)

Over the last decade, a handful of the nation's small energy companies pulled off a coup. Right under the noses of the industry's biggest players, they discovered huge amounts of natural gas in fields stretching from Texas to Pennsylvania.

One of these companies, XTO Energy, grew almost unnoticed into the nation's second-largest gas producer, amassing a substantial portfolio of gas fields, and developing expertise in the complex technology needed to extract the gas from beds of a dark rock called shale.

Now, the biggest energy companies are paying attention.

[Small Energy Firms Yielding to International Giants](#)

Exxon Mobil Corp.'s acquisition of XTO Energy Inc. is the latest sign of a changing of the guard in the U.S. oil patch, as the small companies that led an exploration boom in the past decade start to give way to the international giants.

[For Want of Higher Taxes, Mexico's Debt Is Downgraded](#)

For years, Mexico's policymakers have avoided taking the tough medicine the country needs to boost its tax revenue and reduce its singular dependence on oil revenues. Congress had a chance recently to push through meaningful fiscal reform during a debate over the 2010 budget, but legislators balked at raising taxes in a year when the economy is set to shrink about 7.5%.

Now the country is paying the price: On Dec. 14, Standard & Poors became the second ratings agency in three weeks to downgrade Mexico's foreign-currency debt rating, reducing it from BBB+ to BBB. (Fitch Ratings downgraded Mexico on Nov. 23.) While Mexico maintained its investment-grade status with both agencies, the downgrades reflected concern that the country's failure to fix its tax system will hurt economic growth for years to come.

[The Violent Twilight of Oil](#)

For most people, a trip to the gas pump rarely conjures images of oil spills, poverty-stricken communities and corrupt governments. The routine is so habit-forming that it's rare we stop to think about how the fuel got here to fill our SUVs and Hummers.

But the crude world of oil exists despite our obliviousness, a world that *New York Times Magazine* writer Peter Maass shoves out into the open in his newest book, *Crude World: The Violent Twilight of Oil* (Alfred A. Knopf, \$27).

[2009, year of sorts as Zimbabwe stutters towards recovery](#)

HARARE (Xinhua) -- After enduring economic hardships for close to a decade, many Zimbabweans saw the year 2009 as the spring of hope and boding well for the future as the country's political leaders engaged each other to arrest the economic meltdown and ease political tension.

The year saw many basic commodities that had disappeared from shelves in retail shops become easily available, albeit at a cost, while health delivery services were resuscitated from the intensive care unit to provide a tonic to the country's poor. It was a year full of hope and promise.

[California's troubled waters](#)

New space observations reveal that since October 2003, the aquifers for California's primary agricultural region – the Central Valley – and its major mountain water source – the Sierra Nevada – have lost nearly enough water combined to fill Lake Mead, America's largest reservoir. The findings, based on satellite data, reflect California's extended drought and increased pumping of groundwater for human uses such as irrigation.

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[Kuwait to price U.S. oil cargoes on ASCI:sources](#)

NEW YORK/DUBAI (Reuters) - Kuwait, the world's No. 4 oil exporter, will switch the basis on which it prices oil cargoes bound for the United States to the Argus Sour Crude Index (ASCI), following a similar move by top world exporter Saudi Arabia, sources familiar with the plans told Reuters on Monday.

Kuwait will soon start pricing its U.S. exports against ASCI, a basket of sour crudes produced in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, the sources said. They did not specify whether the switch would take effect immediately, but said state-run oil company Kuwait Petroleum Corporation sent a letter to U.S. buyers, informing them of the switch.

[Economic Contraction will Continue in 2010](#)

The world has passed Peak Oil and the gabfest at Copenhagen has objectives which, if realized, will seriously undermine economic activity. If the world is to reduce CO2 emissions then the world's reliance on fossil fuels will have to reduce. There is no room for discussion on this point. But, if there is insufficient momentum for clean energy technologies to fill the void thus created then world economic activity must contract.

[Home heating efficiencies offer 'hat trick' of savings: UM study](#)

COLLEGE PARK, Md. – Improving the energy efficiency of Maryland homes heated by natural gas would generate a "hat trick" of economic and environmental benefits over the next 10 years, including more than 80,000 new jobs, savings of hundreds of dollars in average heating bills and a nine percent reduction in residential carbon emissions, concludes a new study by the University of Maryland Center for Integrative Environmental Research (CIER).

In the researchers' analysis, homeowners – with assistance from state government – would be encouraged to replace worn-out gas furnaces and water heaters with energy-efficient models, which are generally more expensive. Also, there would be incentives to improve household insulation. While these upgrades would cost thousands of dollars, they would more than pay for themselves in savings. Nearly half of Maryland homes are heated with natural gas.

[Four Sides to Every Story](#)

CLIMATE talks have been going on in Copenhagen for a week now, and it appears to be a two-sided debate between alarmists and skeptics. But there are actually *four* different views of global warming. A taxonomy of the four:

[Trusting Nature as the Climate Referee](#)

To end this political stalemate, Dr. McKittrick proposes calling each side's bluff. He suggests imposing financial penalties on carbon emissions that would be set according to the temperature in the earth's atmosphere. The penalties could start off small enough to be politically palatable to skeptical voters.

If the skeptics are right and the earth isn't warming, then the penalties for burning carbon would stay small or maybe even disappear. But if the climate modelers and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are correct about the atmosphere heating up, then the penalties would quickly, and automatically, rise.

[Portions of Arctic Coastline Eroding, No End in Sight, Says New CU-Boulder Study](#)

The northern coastline of Alaska midway between Point Barrow and Prudhoe Bay is eroding by up to one-third the length of a football field annually because of a "triple whammy" of declining sea ice, warming seawater and increased wave activity, according to new study led by the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The conditions have led to the steady retreat of 30 to 45 feet a year of the 12-foot-high bluffs -- frozen blocks of silt and peat containing 50 to 80 percent ice -- which are toppled into the Beaufort Sea during the summer months by a combination of large waves pounding the shoreline and warm seawater melting the base of the bluffs, said CU-Boulder Associate Professor Robert Anderson, a co-author on the study. Once the

blocks have fallen, the coastal seawater melts them in a matter of days, sweeping the silty material out to sea.

[Another source of greenhouse gas](#)

It turns out that cheese may do as much harm to the environment as some kinds of meat. Based on figures from Sweden, making a 1.5-ounce serving of cheese might be expected to produce about 16 ounces of carbon dioxide equivalent. Depending on which study you consult, a two- to three-ounce serving of cooked, boneless chicken should yield between 4.3 and 31 ounces of CO₂ equivalent. (You'd get about the same number of calories from each.)

[Digital zombies? Virtual world trumps physical](#)

Hayles is among a number of intellectuals who see this dependence as not necessarily bad, but as advancing civilization and, above all, just inevitable. "From Thoreau on, we have had this dream we can withdraw from our technologies and live closer to the natural world, and yet that's not the cultural trajectory that we have followed," says Hayles, a professor of literature at Duke University. "You could say when humans started to walk upright, we lost touch with the natural world. We lost an olfactory sense of the world, but obviously bipedalism paid big dividends."

In the Computer Age, "we are making our environments more responsive to humans' needs and desires than ever before."

[SMT Reports Geoscientists See Coming Increases in Oil Prices](#)

Approximately 50 percent of respondents predicted global peak oil supply to occur either between ten and twenty years from now, or beyond twenty years. The other 50 percent indicated that it had already occurred, or would occur within the next ten years. Chakrabarti commented that this data would serve as a principal "hot topic" for industry debates and forums in 2010.

"The issue of global peak oil has powerful economic and industry implications," he said. "As seismic technology continues to evolve, it will play an increasing role in assessing reservoir conditions and oil supply. Thus, we will continue a lead role in conducting surveys and monitoring market conditions to provide technological assessments as this issue manifests over the next few years."

[Oil hovers below \\$70 in Europe after 9-day drop](#)

Oil prices hovered below \$70 a barrel on Tuesday, held down by high inventories and

weak demand while investors awaited new data about the U.S. economy.

By early afternoon in Europe, benchmark crude for January delivery was up 10 cents at \$69.61 in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. On Monday, the contract fell 36 cents to settle at \$69.51.

Prices have dropped over the previous nine days — the longest slide since 2001 — on investor doubts about a recovery in U.S. crude demand and as the dollar strengthened.

[OPEC Raises Forecast Demand for Its Members' Crude Oil in 2010](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries raised the estimate for the amount of crude its members will have to pump next year as world consumption recovers.

OPEC, which produces about 40 percent of the world's oil, predicts members will need to produce 28.61 million barrels a day to satisfy demand in 2010. That's about 100,000 barrels a day more than last month's projection and represents an increase in 30,000 barrels a day from 2009, the first annual rise in three years.

"Following two years of sharp declines, world oil demand is expected to return to growth in 2010," OPEC's Vienna-based secretariat said in a monthly report e-mailed today. "Fundamentals will continue to be weak in the first half of the year before improving in the second half."

[Producer prices higher than expected](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – U.S. producer prices rose more than expected in November, lifted by a surge in energy costs, and recorded the first year-on-year gain since last November, according to a government report on Tuesday.

The Labor Department said the seasonally adjusted index for prices paid at the farm and factory gate jumped 1.8 percent, the largest gain in three months, following a 0.3 percent rise in October.

[Crude Oil to Resume Decline After Bounce: Technical Analysis](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil prices will probably continue to decline even after a short-term rise, according to technical analysis by Newedge Group.

West Texas Intermediate oil futures for February delivery are in "an underlying downtrend" that wouldn't be affected by a small, short-term rise in prices, Veronique Lashinski, a senior research analyst at Newedge USA LLC, said in a note to clients yesterday.

[Fiscal fears hit Mexico's credit rating](#)

Standard & Poor's, the rating agency, on Monday downgraded Mexico on fiscal concerns stemming from the country's falling oil output and anaemic growth prospects.

S&P's move is the second such blow to the centre-right administration of President Felipe Calderón in three weeks.

[IATA: Costly Fuel Means More Woe for Airlines in 2010](#)

GENEVA--The world's airlines are set to lose \$5.6 billion next year, far more than previously estimated, with a rebound in passenger and air cargo demand only partly compensating for rising fuel costs, industry group IATA said.

In its latest outlook, the International Air Transport Association on Tuesday reaffirmed its projection for an \$11 billion loss in 2009 -- a year its chief Giovanni Bisignani called "an Annus Horribilis" for the highly cyclical sector.

[Don't Expect Lower Oil Prices for Much Longer](#)

But do you honestly feel that oil prices will fall below \$60 per barrel?

I just don't see how that would be possible, especially considering the supply threat that peak oil presents. And it's scary to think there are people out there who believe global oil production will reach over 115 million barrels per day by 2030.

[Larry Reynolds](#)

Larry is the author of *The Trust Effect* and numerous published articles on leadership and organisational change. Here's a sample - *The influencing skills of Barack Obama*. His latest book, *Climate Change and Peak Oil - Threat or Opportunity?* will be published in 2010.

"If this scenario came to pass, what would be the opportunities for business?" Watch a video of Larry Reynolds hosting a debate on the issue.

[Oil Rigs Close Near Australia as Cyclone Intensifies](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Tropical Cyclone Laurence, Australia's first storm of the season, is

intensifying as it moves closer to the northwestern coast, triggering evacuations of offshore oil and gas rigs.

The storm, now off Western Australia's Kimberley region, was upgraded to a category three on a scale of one to five and at 8 a.m. local time today was 85 kilometers (53 miles) north of the town of Kalumburu, moving southwest at 8 kilometers an hour, the Bureau of Meteorology said on its Web site.

[Gazprom Resumes Gas Deliveries Halted After Finding Explosive](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Gazprom "fully" resumed deliveries through the gas network in the southern Russian region of Ingushetia by 7:25 p.m. yesterday, after halting flows when an explosive device was found, the Moscow-based gas export monopoly said today in an e-mailed statement.

[Total Says Strike at Feyzin Oil Refinery Affects Two Units](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Total SA, Europe's largest refiner, said a strike at its Feyzin plant in France is affecting two production units, as talks continue over pay.

The labor disruption is affecting exports of refined products from the site, Michael Crochet-Vourey, a spokesman for the Paris-based company, said today by telephone, without specifying lost output or the units concerned.

[China ends Russia's grip on Turkmen gas](#)

With one flick of a switch, Russia's long-standing dominance and near monopoly over Central Asian natural-gas exports officially came to an end on Monday.

The Turkmenistan-China pipeline, which will carry natural gas from eastern Turkmenistan through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan into China's northwestern Xinjiang region, went on line on December 14 during an inauguration ceremony attended by regional leaders. It marks the first time in more than a decade that a pipeline has been constructed to pump gas out of the region, and is the biggest effort to date to export Central Asian gas without using Russian routes.

[Lyondell Files Plan to Reorganize, Mulls Reliance Bid](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Lyondell Chemical Co. filed a plan to reorganize even as it evaluates an offer from Reliance Industries Ltd., pitting India's biggest company against lenders in a battle for the bankrupt chemical maker.

Lyondell plans to reorganize by repaying its \$8 billion bankruptcy loan in full and giving an equity stake in the new company to lenders, including sponsors of a \$2.8 billion rights offering. The plan, outlined in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan, “won’t preclude Reliance from making a bid if it chooses to do so,” said Lyondell spokesman David Harpole.

[Big Oil Seen Running ‘Race to the Altar’ After Exxon’s XTO Deal](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Exxon Mobil Corp.’s \$30 billion purchase of XTO Energy Inc., the largest U.S. petroleum takeover since 2006, may signal a wave of acquisitions as major producers seek to tap growing gas and oil output from shale formations.

[Exxon Invests Big in Unconventional Natural Gas -- a Climate Bet?](#)

If XTO Energy's shareholders endorse the deal, Exxon's purchase of one of the nation's largest independent natural gas producers will give it access to gas shale fields in the Rocky Mountain, Great Plains, Texas and Appalachia regions. The move by Exxon, which is known for taking a conservative approach to mergers and acquisitions, could further reinforce industry claims that a 100-year supply of natural gas rests under the continental United States.

The purchase also places a significant bet that natural gas demand will increase if Congress and the Obama administration lock in a U.S. climate policy that puts a price on carbon dioxide emissions.

[Indian State Refiners Spend \\$5 Billion on Clean Fuels](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Indian Oil Corp., the nation’s second-biggest refiner, and its state-run rivals are spending 235 billion rupees (\$5 billion) to produce cleaner fuels and meet stricter emissions guidelines.

[Palm Oil Futures May Climb 19% by March, Mistry Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Palm oil futures may advance 19 percent by the end of the first quarter, said Dorab Mistry, director of Godrej International Ltd., one of India’s biggest importers of vegetable oils.

Palm oil may gain to 2,800 ringgit to 3,000 ringgit per metric ton (\$820 to \$879) by the end of March, said Mistry in remarks prepared for delivery at a conference in New Delhi. He was reiterating a Dec. 4 prediction that the commodity would increase to 3,000 ringgit by the end of March.

[Toyota To Sell Plug-In Hybrids To Consumers In 2 Years](#)

TOKYO - Toyota Motor Corp will begin selling "affordable" plug-in hybrid cars in 2011, upping the ante on General Motors and Nissan Motor as they aim to take the lead in the field of rechargeable cars.

Toyota's first plug-in model, the Prius Plug-In Hybrid (PHV), adds an external charging function and more batteries to the popular Prius to enable longer-distance driving on electricity alone.

Because it can also run on gasoline, plug-in hybrids -- such as GM's upcoming Volt due for sale next year -- eliminate the "range anxiety" seen as one of the main shortcomings of battery-powered pure electric cars.

[GE, Google Say Consumers Need More Energy Data to Cut Pollution](#)

(Bloomberg) -- General Electric Co. and Google Inc. said governments need to provide consumers with more information about how they are using power and how much it costs to help them consume and pollute less.

Armed with real time pricing and energy consumption data could result in consumers using 15 percent less power, the two companies said in a joint statement today at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

[Fuel Film Review](#)

Fuel starts with a little Josh Tickell history, how he and his family used to enjoy the unsullied Australian environment only to move to the southern US States, his mother's homeland, and be banned from swimming in the bayous, not being allowed to eat the fish, don't drink the water and often not even breathe the air.

Not one for sitting still, Tickell set off across the US in his bio-diesel eco-van in an attempt to show that there was an alternative to fossil fuel oil. The van, kitted out with its own oil-cleaning system, was topped up along the way with used oil from fast food restaurants.

[In Transition 1.0: Transition Towns Documentary Available Free \(Video\)](#)

When I posted the trailer for In Transition—the documentary about the Transition Towns movement as a response to peak oil and climate change—commenter CB was less than enamored with the film making style. Maybe now CB can judge the entire movie, as the makers have just released the entire thing for viewing free on YouTube. Click below the fold for parts one and two.

The talk of impending peak oil and climate change might give fodder to those who talk about the dark side of transition towns, but the ultimate message is one of hope —namely that it's time to roll up your sleeves and get engaged with the challenges we face.

[Kenya: Power Project Will Condemn Thousands to Lasting Poverty](#)

Nairobi — DESPITE NUMEROUS WARNINGS about the potential impact of the Gibe III Hydroelectric Project on Lake Turkana, our leaders shout "work must go on".

This was quite apparent at a meeting hosted by the African Development Bank on November 18 during which directors, chief executives and other senior staff from the Finance and Energy ministries, KPLC, KenGen, and Ethiopia Electric Power Company met to discuss energy development plans.

[Most back a treaty on global warming](#)

WASHINGTON — A solid majority of Americans support the idea of a global treaty that would require the United States to reduce significantly greenhouse gas emissions, a USA TODAY/Gallup Poll finds, although many also express concern about the potential impact on the economy.

The results provide some encouragement for President Obama, who attends the United Nations conference on climate change in Copenhagen on Friday. By 55%-38%, those surveyed endorse a binding accord to limit the gases tied to global warming.

[British wildlife faces climate change devastation, warns Environment Agency](#)

Rising temperatures and sea levels brought on by climate change could have devastating effects on British wildlife from salmon to wildfowl, the Environment Agency warned.

[Fishermen Say Carbon Dioxide Having 'Really Scary' Ocean Effect](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Jeremy Brown, a fisherman from the Pacific Northwest, is pulling things from the ocean he says are so disturbing that he came to Washington to warn U.S. lawmakers about it.

“This is not overfishing, this is something far larger,” said Brown, one of 10 people who met with lawmakers and legislative aides this week on behalf of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, a San Francisco-based group that advises seafood producers on fishing practices.

[Monsanto Wins Angry Mermaid Award for Hindering Climate Action](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Monsanto Co., the world's largest seed producer and maker of genetically modified crops, won the so-called Angry Mermaid award handed out by The Friends of the Earth for undermining efforts to deal with climate change.

The Amsterdam-based group said Monsanto took 37 percent of the vote, followed by Royal Dutch Shell Plc at 18 percent and the American Petroleum Institute with 14 percent. A total of 9,800 people voted globally, the group said.

[Japan Plans \\$10 Billion in Aid for Global Warming, Dow Reports](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Japan plans to provide \$10 billion in aid for developing countries to help counter global warming, Dow Jones reported, citing the Tokyo Shimbun newspaper.

[UN Climate Envoys Clash Over Funding for Poor Nations](#)

(Bloomberg) -- United Nations negotiators failed to agree on financial aid that industrialized nations such as the U.S. and Japan will give to the developing world for coping with climate change, threatening a global-warming accord.

With China and India seeking about \$200 billion a year for developing states, envoys are bargaining over options for aid beginning after 2012, each without financial commitments, according to a draft agreement released today. The talks among 192 countries end Dec. 18, and developing nations say they'll reject an accord to curb global warming that has no money.

[Black carbon deposits on Himalayan ice threaten Earth's 'Third Pole'](#)

WASHINGTON – Black soot deposited on Tibetan glaciers has contributed significantly to the retreat of the world's largest non-polar ice masses, according to new research by scientists from NASA and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Soot absorbs incoming solar radiation and can speed glacial melting when deposited on snow in sufficient quantities.

Temperatures on the Tibetan Plateau -- sometimes called Earth's "third pole" -- have warmed by 0.3°C (0.5°F) per decade over the past 30 years, about twice the rate of observed global temperature increases. New field research and ongoing quantitative modeling suggests that soot's warming influence on Tibetan glaciers could rival that of greenhouse gases.

"Tibet's glaciers are retreating at an alarming rate," said James Hansen, coauthor of the study and director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York

City. "Black soot is probably responsible for as much as half of the glacial melt, and greenhouse gases are responsible for the rest."



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