



Drumbeat: January 1, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on January 1, 2010 - 9:35am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Federal agencies may have to consider climate before they act](#): *The Obama administration may issue an order that would expand the National Environmental Policy Act's scope to prevent global warming. The move could open up new avenues to challenge projects.*

Reporting from Washington - The White House is poised to order all federal agencies to evaluate any major actions they take, such as building highways or logging national forests, to determine how they would contribute to and be affected by climate change, a step long sought by environmentalists.

Environmentalists say the move would provide new incentives for the government to minimize the heat-trapping gas emissions scientists blame for global warming. Republicans have opposed it as potentially inhibiting economic growth.

se reservoir pressure than the amount of oil that is actually being pumped out. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, 2 to 2.5 gallons of water are used to produce each gallon of gasoline from conventional crude and more than 6 gallons of water are required to produce one gallon of gasoline from oil shale. Alternative fuels are also water intensive. The voice of the U.S. ethanol industry, the Renewable Fuels Association, estimates that 3.45 gallons of water are used per gallon of corn ethanol produced. Electric generation is no less water intensive. Ninety percent of all power plants in the U.S. are thermoelectric, requiring billions of gallons to cool the steam used to drive their turbines.

[Energy crisis may cripple country by 15th](#)

ISLAMABAD: The country may plunge into the worst imaginable energy crisis as virtually all refineries are teetering on the verge of financial default and may close down operations by Jan 15.

All the oil refineries of the country, currently working on a negative gross revenue margin, and with their borrowing limits already exhausted, are likely to shut down within the next two weeks following their expected default to retire the existing L/Cs to import crude oil. The shutdown would mean no oil supplies for thermal power generation plants and the picture turns outright dark.

This harrowing scenario of the looming crisis was given to The News by a senior functionary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources, speaking on condition of anonymity.

[Pakistan - CNG sector on the verge of collapse: speakers](#)

LAHORE - The CNG sector, once launched as environment-friendly fuel with billions of rupees, is now on the verge of collapse due to the wrong and short-term planning of the policymakers.

[Plan to operate 800,000 tube wells on solar energy](#)

LAHORE - In order to overcome the power crisis, the Punjab government has decided to operate tube-wells through solar energy with the cooperation of a German company.

[How to solve Nigeria's energy crisis - Experts](#)

As the Federal Government fails yet again in its promise to provide Nigerians with 6000 megawatts of electricity, experts have declared that gas remains the best way to resolve Nigeria's power problem.

[Vietnam Opens Up Oil Sector To More Firms](#)

The Vietnamese Government has thrown open the petroleum sector to more categories of businesses, relaxing restrictions that prevented all but a few firms from operating in the sector.

[All's well that ends in oil wells. The Saudis are bullish on the future of oil.](#)

Cap and trade talk, green energy expansion, new, unconventional oil and gas reserve exploration, and economic recession notwithstanding, Saudi Aramco is confident that the future will entail a growing demand for the Kingdom's massive oil reserves.

President and CEO Khalid Al-Falih made it clear in a recent statement that the rapidly growing economies of Asia (led by China and India) formed the basis for the International Energy Agency's forecast that world energy demand will increase by 40% by 2030, or about 1.5% per year. And the Kingdom's crude oil reserves will remain the largest single fuel in that energy mix.

[Oil To Lift Gulf States In 2010, Debt Remains Concern](#)

Arab Gulf states may get a boost from higher oil prices in 2010 but the region's real-

estate and banking sectors still face head winds.

"We are going to see an improvement in macro-economic conditions, mainly due to higher oil prices, which will trickle down to corporate activity," said Faisal Hassan, head of research at Global Investment House.

[The Oh Decade: California's electricity crisis stung – but made us stronger](#)

When I was on then-Gov. Gray Davis' staff, I remember being informed that California might experience "rolling blackouts" because our available electricity supply could be outstripped by the demands of a hot summer. This was so foreign a concept that we couldn't see the threat as real. Undeveloped countries had rolling blackouts, not major U.S. cities, and certainly not California. Electricity was universally available, reliable and cheap. It was just there when we flipped a switch.

The full force of the crisis hit like an uppercut to the jaw because at the time no one knew about Enron's market games or why major power plants were suddenly in need of "unplanned maintenance" right when summer demand began to skyrocket. Literally overnight, California became a Third World country rationing electricity and struggling to keep the lights on.

[The Path Not Taken](#)

Historian Kevin Mattson just wrote a book about the famous speech by President Jimmy Carter given on July 15, 1979, "the speech that should have changed the country." It was a time of yet another gasoline crisis, a time of high interest rates and of raging inflation, in an atmosphere of uncertainty about where the country was going, or needed to be going. Many of things Carter said at the time ring true today, and other things remind us of opportunities missed, and yet to be taken up.

[Why Ecological Revolution?](#)

It is now universally recognized within science that humanity is confronting the prospect — if we do not soon change course — of a planetary ecological collapse. Not only is the global ecological crisis becoming more and more severe, with the time in which to address it fast running out, but the dominant environmental strategies are also forms of denial, demonstrably doomed to fail, judging by their own limited objectives. This tragic failure, I will argue, can be attributed to the refusal of the powers that be to address the roots of the ecological problem in capitalist production and the resulting necessity of ecological and social revolution.

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[No Need to Worry](#)

Peak Oil Refuses to Rise to the Occasion

You don't have to be a global-warming alarmist to wonder just when the world's oil reserves are finally going to dry up and drive the price of oil through the roof, thereby ushering in a glorious age of energy created by hamsters on exercise wheels or some other renewable source. Conservatives who are into energy independence (such as former Gov. Sarah Palin) are also rooting for "peak oil," the moment at which oil reserves go into irreversible decline, as it means that increasing domestic production will become politically possible.

The funny thing is, peak oil has been predicted with regularity for decades now and something always gets in the way: new reserves are discovered, prices collapse due to economic slowdowns, new technologies extract more fuel from less supply. Look for a new peak-oil panic the moment the world economy unambiguously recovers and demand rises. And after gas prices climb up to \$4 a gallon before dropping again to \$2.50.

[Movers and shakers look toward the future](#)

I think the high price of oil that we saw in 2007 and 2008 may return by the end of 10 years. We will continue to see a significant shift toward hybrid or electric powered vehicles, and renewable energy -- wind and solar -- not just because of global warming, but because we're past peak oil in the U.S., and generally not discovering reserves as fast as we're consuming it. We will be in the middle of that transformation 10 years from now.

[PetroChina steps up global trading drive](#)

NEW YORK: Saudi Arabia will quit a long-held lease for 5 million barrels of Caribbean oil storage near the key US market and PetroChina is poised to move in, industry sources said, a potential major shift in global oil trade dynamics.

Coming just weeks after Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi revealed the world's top oil exporter accepted an offer for free storage in Japan, the news underscored the growing importance of China and Asia versus the United States, where the government says oil demand has already peaked and supply competition from nearby Brazil and Canada is expanding.

It also highlights the increasingly global reach of the Chinese oil company, which could use the facilities as a staging point for a growing slate of South American oil deals or as trading leverage in the US market, which still effectively sets the global price of oil.

[Russia imposes customs tariff on oil supplied to Belarus](#)

RUSSIA will impose customs tariffs on oil supplied to Belarus, Russia's government said early today as Minsk denounced "unprecedented pressure" on its delegation due to hold talks in Moscow, the Interfax news agency reported.

[Gazprom, Turkey Agree on Pricing, Volumes for 2010 Gas Supplies](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Gazprom and Boru Hatlari ile Petrol Tasima AS, the Turkish natural-gas distributor known as Botas, agreed on pricing and volumes for Turkey's gas imports from Russia next year, Gazprom said.

"In particular, the sides agreed on the 'take-or-pay' terms of the contract and on pricing, which is based on a basket of oil-product prices," Moscow-based Gazprom said today in an e-mailed statement, without specifying volumes or tariffs.

[Venezuela in oil production deal with Italy's ENI](#)

CARACAS—Venezuela's state oil company has announced a deal with the Italian company Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi for producing and refining crude from an exploration project in the eastern strip of the Orincoco basin.

[Toyota's hybrid Prius faces US probe over brakes](#)

DETROIT, Michigan — Toyota is facing a potential safety issue with its highest profile vehicle, the Prius, the latest in a plague of quality problems that forced it to recall four million vehicles in 2009.

A growing number of owners allege that the brakes on the third-generation, 2010 Toyota Prius can malfunction unexpectedly, with at least 20 complaints filed so far with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

[Five economic reasons why 2010 will be greener](#): *Economics, rather than politics, will be the main driver of the fight against global warming in 2010.*

In 2009, the global recession had a greater impact than all the diplomatic efforts that ended in the Copenhagen flop: energy production hadn't declined on such a scale since 1981, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). Here are five economic reasons for the world to become slightly greener in the coming year (just a few of them could be wishful thinking...)

First, high oil prices. Pricier crude encourages investments in alternative energy sources. Crude oil has been trading in a fairly narrow - and reassuringly expensive - range of \$64 to \$80 a barrel since June. It is not likely to fall below that level.

[Hawaii's future depends on developing sustainable industries, not relying on tourism and military](#)

Q: Why do you think Hawaii's economy could get that bad?

A: Our major economic bases at this time are tourism and U.S. military spending and both of those are very fragile and not very good, if you are interested in local sustainability. Over the years I have been using the phrase "the unholy trinity plus one" to describe in a metaphorical sense the concerns I have about Hawaii. These factors need to be studied as one, thought of as being integrated, rather than as separate issues. They must be dealt with together.

Q: What are they?

A: One is peak oil, or the end of oil, or the energy transformation that must come. It's suggesting, in effect, an end to oil before a comparable energy source comes online. And that certainly will affect tourism and everything else in Hawaii. Our food is shipped in. We use oil to generate our electricity. No other state is as dependent on oil as we are.

[Pioneers aim for cleaner, greener lives in suburbia](#)

SYDNEY residents concerned about peak oil and government inaction on climate change are taking matters into their own hands, forming groups to turn their suburbs into low-carbon "transition towns".

The movement, which began in the town of Totnes, in Devon, is called Transition Towns and aims to reduce reliance on global sources of energy and food.

The Sydney umbrella organisation is now adapting the strategy - which evolved in British rural areas - to the needs of a large Australian city.

[Retro: Y2K and Peak Oil](#)

Initially Y2K was the obsession of a handful of terrified (and sometimes terrifying) technologists, who seemed baffled by talk of "end of the century" parties, angry at the lack of concern demonstrated by those who should know better, and convinced that the problem was far worse than was generally acknowledged. By the last couple of years of the decade, however, the question of what would happen come January 1, 2000 seemed to be a debate between "we're hosed" and "we're so hosed that the living will envy the dead." I expect a similar arc for peak oil -- as the idea moves out of the niche blogs and discussion boards and into the cultural mainstream, driven by relatively popular writers such as James Howard Kunstler, the level of anxiety around what will happen when oil production peaks (or, as some would have it, when the powers that be admit that oil production has already peaked) will skyrocket.

[Eco Family Produces Nearly Zero Waste](#)

The Strauss family, who come from Longhope, Gloucestershire managed to get through all of 2009 filling only one garbage can. The family found a variety of ways to reduce the amount of rubbish they were throwing away to literally only a handful or so a week. They grow much of their own food, do their own composting, and only buy food from local vendors, which makes extra packaging unnecessary. Studies have shown that a large percentage of the trash that gets put in landfills comes from some type of packaging. The Strauss' managed to cut theirs down by doing things like bringing their own reusable packaging to the butcher.

['Carousel' frauds plague European carbon trading markets](#)

It is not the only oddity to emerge from the Danish Carbon Registry. All the expected big players are on the list – utilities, oil and heavy industry – the only sectors obliged by law to own permits to cover emissions.

Quite a few investment banks are also signed up, on behalf of industry or trading to make a profit.

But outnumbering these familiar names, hundreds of UK companies selling anything from hair loss treatments to electronics have mysteriously registered to buy and sell carbon permits in the Scandinavian nation – mostly in the last 18 months.

[Power bidders left in dark over carbon-cost risk](#)

UNCERTAINTY over Australia's emissions trading scheme is threatening to drive down the sale price of the NSW power assets, as bidders struggle to assess the risks of investing in the electricity industry.

[Carbon pricing is 'starting point'](#)

PUTTING a price on carbon is the "essential starting point" in dealing with climate change, according to Australia's top economists. Asked as part of The Age Economic Survey what is the best way of tackling climate change, almost all respondents agreed that carbon must be priced so that there is an incentive for people to stop emitting greenhouse gases.

[Is that CO 2 coming from my laptop?](#)

Environmentalists argue the Web's infrastructure burns energy that produces greenhouse gases, but others say the impact is small.

[Exelon's Carbon Advantage](#)

Exelon's John Rowe has been planning for expensive carbon for a decade. Now it's time to push for the payoff.

[Vietnam - Climate change support needed to ensure food security: PM](#)

Vietnam, the world second largest rice exporter, needs greater international help to deal with climate change to ensure global food security, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has told the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit.

When sea levels rise a further 0.75 to 1 meter, Vietnam's river basins and coastal forests will be 19-38 percent under water, which will have direct and severe impacts on livelihood and food security for Vietnam as well as the world, Dung said on Wednesday.



Happy New Year!



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