



Drumbeat: February 18, 2010

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Jeremy Rifkin: The third industrial revolution](#)

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no country has increased output with the speed the Iraqis envisage. Over the next seven years Iraq intends to go from producing 2.5m barrels per day to 12m b/d, a target that exceeds Saudi Arabia's current output by more than 30%. To this end, Iraq has signed ten deals with most of the world's top oil companies. Some got down to work this month.

[IAEA fears Iran may be working on nuclear warhead](#)

The U.N. nuclear watchdog fears Iran may be working now to develop a nuclear payload for a missile, the agency said in a confidential report on Thursday obtained by Reuters.

The International Atomic Energy Agency report also confirmed Iran had produced its first, small batch of uranium enriched to a higher purity -- 20 percent -- but said the Islamic Republic had failed to give inspectors the required advance notice.

[MMS Adds New Auditors for Onshore Producers](#)

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has finalized its 2010 audit plan to ensure that energy producers on Federal and American Indian lands are properly paying the royalties due to the Federal Government and American Indians. The 2010 audit plan reflects both an increase in staff and the number of audits planned.

"We will be adding 19 new auditors this year and continuing to target companies that have been identified as high risk," said MMS Director Liz Birnbaum.

[Saudi Aramco: Jubail refinery's start-up delayed](#)

(MENAFN) Saudi Aramco said that its joint venture with France's Total, Jubail oil refinery, is slated to start operations in late 2013, later than a previous target of March 2013, Reuters reported.

[Norway says to give go-ahead to Gudrun field](#)

OSLO (Reuters) - Norway's oil ministry will later on Thursday give its go-ahead for Statoil's project to develop the Gudrun field in the North Sea, the ministry said in a press invitation.

[Mexico oil port plan may help Maya quality, output](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico's state oil company Pemex is mulling a \$377 million upgrade of crude oil treatment facilities to fix quality problems in its main export blend, people familiar with the plan said on Thursday.

The project, which has not yet been released for tender, envisions the construction of new equipment at the Dos Bocas oil terminal that would cut the water and salt content in Maya crude oil, said one of the people who had seen a Pemex presentation on the project.

[Chesapeake looks to get oily](#)

Chesapeake's output is currently made up of about 93% natural gas, but the Oklahoma giant is adding more profit-boosting oil to its portfolio, it said today.

"Our liquids production is set to begin expanding rapidly, due to the success we have established in six large new unconventional oil plays," McClendon, who was called "Mr. Gas" in a Fortune magazine article, told investors on the company's earnings conference call.

[Uganda Asks Tullow to Trim Proposed Share of Oil Assets](#)

The Ugandan government has asked U.K.-based Tullow Oil PLC to reduce the size of its proposed share in three of the country's oil blocks in order to diversify ownership of Uganda's oil resources, the ministry of energy and minerals development said Wednesday.

[Concerns Raised Over Gas Flaring in Uganda](#)

Environmental advocates are expressing concern over the potential impact of oil discoveries in western Uganda's Lake Albert region, thought to total as much as 1.7 billion barrels.

Most recently, documents made public by Platform, a British environmental and human rights organization working in Uganda, appeared to reveal an agreement between the British oil exploration company Tullow Oil and the Ugandan government to allow gas flaring.

[A Debate Special: "Will Ecology Dominate The 21st Century?"](#)

In the 2009 New Ecology issue of Alternatives Journal, Thomas Homer Dixon, professor of Environment and Resource Studies at the University of Waterloo, wrote that Ecology would replace Physics as the master science of the 21st Century.

In that same issue Stephen Bocking of Trent University argued that Politics, not Ecology, was the real master science.

To sort things out Alternatives Journal asked them to square off mano-a-mano in a panel discussion format.

[How many is too many? Australia's people problem](#)

Australia is an open and tolerant country with a rich history in migration. But it is an illusion that Australia can absorb many more millions.

Even a basic assessment shows that Australia's more recent high population growth causes or exacerbates many of our major economic, environmental and social problems. Yet successive federal governments push it higher and higher.

[Why Bill Gates is wrong](#)

Gates has burst on to the energy scene with some rather ill-considered thinking. To get a flavor, see his blog post, "Why We Need Innovation, Not Just Insulation." The idea is that "conservation and behavior change" might get the world to its 2020 or 2030 targets, but to get to 80 percent emissions reductions by 2050 we'll need fundamental technological innovation. Ergo: we should pay more attention to, and devote more money to, basic science and R&D.

[NRG Sees Two-Month Wait for Answer on Nuclear Aid](#)

(Bloomberg) -- NRG Energy Inc. said it expects to find out in about two months if it will get a federal loan guarantee needed to build new nuclear reactors in Texas. The company will scrap the project if it doesn't get them.

NRG will try to sell some of its share in the project if it receives loan-guarantee approval from the U.S. Energy Department, company Chief Executive Officer David W. Crane said today in an interview. The company, based in Princeton, New Jersey, is seeking to build two reactors at an existing plant site about 100 miles (161 kilometers) southwest of Houston.

[GCC eyes Philippines renewable sector](#)

Several GCC investors have expressed interest in investing in the Philippines' renewable sector, said an official.

This is because despite being oil-rich most of the countries in the six-country group lack gas to fuel their energy-extensive residential, commercial and industrial projects.

With a shortage of natural gas (except in Qatar), Gulf countries are pushed to find other alternative sources of electricity, which the Philippines has mastered for years.

[E.U. Countries Vie to Meet Renewable Goals](#)

The European Union as a whole will meet its goal of 20 percent renewable energy by 2020, according to an analysis by the European Wind Energy Association — though some individual countries will fall short of their individual production targets, while others now report they will exceed them.

[Virginia Files Challenge to E.P.A. Greenhouse Gas Regulation](#)

Virginia's attorney general, Ken Cuccinelli, filed a petition Tuesday asking the Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider its finding that global warming poses a threat to people.

[Jeremy Rifkin: The third industrial revolution](#)

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Copenhagen, when world leaders tried to deal with our entropy problem and failed.

[John Michael Greer: Why factories aren't efficient](#)

Last week's Archdruid Report post fielded a thoughtful response from peak oil blogger Sharon Astyk, who pointed out that what I was describing as America's descent to Third World status could as well be called a future of "ordinary human poverty." She's quite right, of course. There's nothing all that remarkable about the future ahead of us; it's simply that the unparalleled abundance that our civilization bought by burning through half a billion years of stored sunlight in three short centuries has left most people in the industrial world clueless about the basic realities of human life in more ordinary times.

It's this cluelessness that underlies so many enthusiastic discussions of a green future full of high technology and relative material abundance. Those discussions also rely on one of the dogmas of the modern religion of progress, the article of faith that the accumulation of technical knowledge was what gave the industrial world its three centuries of unparalleled wealth; since technical knowledge is still accumulating, the belief goes, we may expect more of the same in the future. Now in fact the primary factor that drove the rise of industrial civilization, and made possible the lavish lifestyles of the recent past, was the recklessness with which the earth's fossil fuel reserves have been extracted and burnt over the last few centuries. The explosion of technical knowledge was a consequence of that, not a cause.

[Interview with Dr. Colin Campbell](#)

Colin Campbell, founder of the Association for the Study of peak Oil and Gas, is officially retired from his career as oil geologist and Peak Oil pundit but kindly agreed to this interview for the zone5 podcast.

[Oil Declines as Dollar Rises, U.S. Fuel Stockpiles Increase](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil fell for the first time in three days as the dollar strengthened and an industry report showed an increase in U.S. fuel supplies, fanning concern that demand in the world's biggest energy user is slow to recover.

Oil dropped from a four-week high as the U.S. currency extended gains against the euro, damping investor demand for commodities. The American Petroleum Institute said U.S. gasoline inventories rose last week to the highest since March 1999 and distillate fuel stockpiles ended a four-week drawdown. An Energy Department report today is forecast to show crude oil supplies increased, according to a Bloomberg News survey.

[Gasoline, Diesel Surpass Crude in Floating Storage, Poten Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Traders are choosing to store oil products in floating tankers instead of crude oil as freezing temperatures and rising demand boost the need for distillates, Poten & Partners said in a report.

Crude oil stored in tankers fell to about 25 million barrels currently from levels exceeding 80 million barrels last year, Poten said in a report to clients last week. Floating storage for clean products such as gasoline and gasoil reached a peak in December at 80 million barrels in 127 vessels. That's down to 57 million barrels currently, it said.

[Shipyard Order Books Dwindle on Global Recession, SSY Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Orders for vessels to transport commodities such as iron ore and coal have dwindled since the end of 2008 because of the global recession, a surplus of newly commissioned ships and cancellations, according to a report by SSY Consultancy & Research Ltd.

The order book for bulk carriers has declined by 7.5 percent or 21.2 million deadweight tons to its lowest level since mid-2008, according to the report on Feb. 16, based on data from Lloyd's Register-Fairplay.

[Iran aims for an energy break-out](#)

While Western attention was focused on Saudi Arabia's possible provision of energy guarantees to China in return for a "yes" vote on Iran sanctions, Iran was working to leverage its natural gas reserves into economic alliances with China, India and Pakistan.

[Thailand: Tight security at energy plants](#)

Stringent security measures have been put in place at tank farms, oil refineries, natural gas separation and power plants as the Feb 26 judgement day draws near, Energy Minister Wannarat Channukul said on Thursday afternoon.

"I have ordered responsible authorities to ensure the safety of these plants. Natural gas should not be transported during the night hours, to prevent the tanker trucks being seized as happened in the April riots," Mr Wannarat said.

[Norway Growth Will Slow This Year on Oil Spending, Agency Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Norway's economy will expand at a slower pace than previously forecast as lower petroleum investments and a struggling manufacturing sector curb growth, the country's statistics office forecast.

The mainland economy, which excludes oil, gas and shipping, will grow 2.0 percent this year, the Oslo-based agency said in a report on its Web site today. The office in December forecast 2.2 percent expansion in 2010. Gross domestic product will expand 2.7 percent next year, it said.

[Russia to seize Kovytko gas field from BP venture](#)

Russia is poised to seize control of Kovytko, one of the world's largest gas fields, from TNK-BP, a joint venture between BP and four Russian oligarchs.

[Reliance Falls on Speculation of Higher Lyondell Bid](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Reliance Industries Ltd. declined the most in almost two weeks after reports said India's biggest company by market value may have to increase its bid to buy bankrupt chemicals and fuels-maker LyondellBasell Industries AF.

[Poweo Expects 2009 Operating Loss; May Sell Assets on Law Delay](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Poweo SA, a French power company, estimated an operating loss for 2009 and said it may sell assets amid delays for legislation to further open the French market.

The operating loss was about 85 million euros (\$115 million) as sales fell 2.2 percent to 565 million euros, Paris-based Poweo said today in an e-mail. It had forecast it would break even, after an operating loss of 21 million euros in 2008.

[ABB Deepens Savings, Says Outlook Still 'Cautious'](#)

(Bloomberg) -- ABB Ltd., the world's biggest builder of power grids, said it aims to cut costs by \$3 billion by the end of 2010, 50 percent more than previously planned, to meet profit targets as customers remain hesitant to invest.

["The Plan" by Edwin Black](#)

Author Edwin Black's niche is to, assisted by dozens of volunteers, sieve through libraries and archives and write extremely well-researched books. He usually spends a couple of years doing research before he cranks out a new book, but he made an exception for the sleek, no more than 130 pages long "The Plan: How to rescue society when the oil stops - or the day before."

[Why the TTC should get liquored up](#)

We're not suggesting that alcohol should be readily available on subway cars and in stations (but could you imagine?). But see, the LCBO is a government institution with a veritable monopoly on its product, and yet it also provides one of the most enjoyable retail experiences this side of Tiffany's. Ideally, the TTC, as a government institution with a monopoly on public transit, should strive to provide the best goddamn rider experience of any public transit provider in the world.

[The Spotless Garden](#)

Mr. Torcellini's greenhouse wouldn't look out of place on a wayward space station where pioneers have gone to escape the cannibal gangs back on Earth. But then, in a literal sense, Mr. Torcellini, a 41-year-old I.T. director for an industrial manufacturer, has left earth — that is, dirt — behind.

What feeds his winter crop of lettuce is recirculating water from the 150-gallon fish tank and the waste generated by his 20 jumbo goldfish. Wastewater is what fertilizes the 27 strawberry plants from last summer, too. They occupy little cubbies in a seven-foot-tall PVC pipe. When the temperature begins to climb in the spring, he will plant the rest of the gravel containers with beans, peppers, tomatoes and cucumbers — all the things many other gardeners grow outside.

[Why Obama's Nuclear Bet Won't Pay Off](#)

If you want to understand why the United States hasn't built a nuclear reactor in three decades, the Vogtle plant outside Atlanta is an excellent reminder of the insanity of nuclear economics. Its original cost estimate was less than \$1 billion for four reactors. Its eventual price tag in 1989 was nearly \$9 billion for only two reactors. But now there's widespread chatter about a nuclear renaissance, so the Southern Co. is finally trying to build the other two reactors at Vogtle. The estimated cost: \$14 billion. And you can be sure that number is way too low, because nuclear cost estimates are always way too low.

[Cellulosic Fuel Gets Cheaper, Companies Say](#)

Two of the world's leading companies in the enzyme business, Novozymes and Danisco of Denmark, announced this week that they had found a way to produce enzymes that could reliably and affordably convert agricultural waste into so-called cellulosic ethanol.

[Utility Executives Like Nuclear Power. Climate Science. Not So Much.](#)

American utility industry executives see nuclear energy as the most promising carbon-

free power source, are skeptical of climate change science, and are uncertain about the future, according to a report to be issued Thursday by Black & Veatch, the engineering and consulting giant.

[Environmental Advocates Are Cooling on Obama](#)

WASHINGTON — There has been no more reliable cheerleader for President Obama's energy and climate change policies than Daniel J. Weiss of the left-leaning Center for American Progress.

But Mr. Obama's recent enthusiasm for nuclear power, including his budget proposal to triple federal loan guarantees for new nuclear reactors to \$54 billion, was too much for Mr. Weiss.

[Top UN climate official resigning](#)

AMSTERDAM – Top U.N. climate change official Yvo de Boer told The Associated Press Thursday that he was resigning after nearly four years, a period when governments struggled without success to agree on a new global warming deal.

His departure takes effect July 1, five months before 193 nations are due to reconvene in Mexico for another attempt to reach a binding worldwide accord on controlling greenhouse gases.

[Methane: the quick fix for global warming?](#)

Its short lifespan and greater potency means tackling methane emissions now could have a dramatic effect on atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations.

[Overpopulation and Climate Change](#)

PUTNEY, VERMONT — With the continuing failure of governments to reach agreements on combating climate change, the outlook for both humans and nature remains bleak.

And nowhere is the failure more conspicuous than in the avoidance of the subject of population growth. Population is a double-barreled environmental problem — not only is population increasing; so are emissions per capita.



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