



## Drumbeat: March 31, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 31, 2010 - 9:10am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Obama Announces Expanded Offshore Oil Exploration](#)

(Bloomberg) -- President Barack Obama said today he will allow oil and natural-gas drilling off the U.S. East Coast and cancel development in Bristol Bay, Alaska.

The president proposed permitting exploration in the Atlantic Ocean from Delaware south and, if a congressional moratorium is lifted, in the Gulf of Mexico 125 miles (201 kilometers) off the west coast of Florida.

“Given our energy needs, in order to sustain economic growth and produce jobs, and keep our businesses competitive, we are going to need to harness traditional sources of fuel even as we ramp up production of new sources,” Obama said at an event at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

(Also: [Obama's Remarks on Offshore Drilling](#))

steam injection. The oil industry had largely pulled out of the Great Plains when independent prospectors earlier this decade found promising new deposits in the Bakken Formation, below North Dakota and Montana. It is now thought to contain up to 4 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil, the largest continuous oil formation in the lower 48 states. And BP announced last autumn that its Tiber oilfield in the Gulf of Mexico could hold 4 billion-6 billion barrels.

### [ConocoPhillips to expand Alaska offshore drilling](#)

HOUSTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Barack Obama's announcement on Wednesday of plans to expand offshore oil and gas drilling allows ConocoPhillips to move ahead on exploring its leases in offshore Alaska.

### [Four bids for Jordan nuclear plant](#)

Amman - Jordan has received four offers to build a nuclear power plant in the country, the chairman of the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC), Khalid Touqan, said Wednesday.

Touqan said the offers came from Russia, Canada, South Korea and a consortium comprising France's Areva and Mitsubishi of Japan.

## [Reclaiming Ireland's Culinary Heritage, One Roast Lamb or Sponge Cake at a Time](#)

The book is an outgrowth of the school's "Forgotten Skills" workshops, popular one-day classes that teach the basics of making butter, curing bacon and skinning animals.

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"Given our energy needs, in order to sustain economic growth and produce jobs, and keep our businesses competitive, we are going to need to harness traditional sources of fuel even as we ramp up production of new sources," Obama said at an event at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

(Also: [Obama's Remarks on Offshore Drilling](#))

## [Fracking not a cleaner alternative - Cornell prof.](#)

PHILADELPHIA (Reuters) - Natural gas obtained by the controversial technique of hydraulic fracturing may contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and so should not be considered as a cleaner alternative to coal or oil, according to a Cornell University researcher.

Although natural gas, when burned, produces only about half of the carbon dioxide emissions of coal, that calculation omits greenhouse gas emissions from the well-drilling, water-trucking, pipeline-laying, and forest-felling that are part of the production of hydraulically fractured natural gas, Ecology Professor Robert Howarth argues in a new paper.

## [Crude Oil Rises to 11-Week High as Dollar Slips Against Euro](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil surged to an 11-week high in New York as the dollar declined against the euro, bolstering investor demand for commodities.

Oil rose as much as 1.7 percent after the greenback fell against the common currency for the third time in four days. Prices slipped from the day's highs after an Energy Department report today showed that supplies of crude oil rose by a greater-than-

forecast 2.93 million barrels last week and that gasoline inventories unexpectedly increased.

“The market is focused on the U.S. dollar today,” said Sean Brodrick, a natural resource analyst with Weiss Research in Jupiter, Florida. “If we were trading on the fundamentals, the crude oil and gasoline numbers would be sending prices lower.”

### [Europe finds electric vehicle religion](#)

Until recently, European makers seemed oblivious of the push for electric propulsion. Seeing hybrids and other battery cars as a Japanese technology, makers like Mercedes-Benz and BMW were determined to fight back with their own high-mileage alternative, the diesel.

Suddenly, there’s a shift in strategy, and while European makers aren’t walking away from diesel, they’re determined to prove that they can dominate the battery car field too.

### [Pemex Chief Executive Suarez Sees First Output Gains in 6 Years](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleos Mexicanos, Latin America’s largest oil producer, is targeting its first production gains in six years as the company brings online new projects and arrests slumping output at the Cantarell field.

The company, whose production fell to 2.61 million barrels a day last year from 3.4 million barrels in 2004, expects Cantarell to be “stable” for at least the next two years and production from its onshore Chicantepec field to gain, Chief Executive Officer Juan Jose Suarez Coppel said in an interview.

### [Aramco Confirms Ras Tanura Location Review](#)

A Saudi Aramco official has confirmed a Reuters report earlier this week that a change of location for the giant Ras Tanura petrochemicals project is under consideration. The project would be a joint venture between Aramco and Dow Chemical.

Al-Jubail is one alternative location being evaluated, which, like Ras Tanura, is a port city on the Saudi east coast (see map above). Other media reports suggest that Ras al-Zour is also being looked into, which is 80km north of Al-Jubai.

### [IHS CERA Sees Big, But Potentially Limited, Iraqi Production Growth](#)

Iraq's current "highly ambitious plans" to expand oil production are unlikely to be fully realized given political, security, operational and infrastructure challenges, according to a new report, *Fields of Dreams: The Great Iraqi Oil Rush -- Its Potential, Challenges, and Limits* by IHS Cambridge Energy Research Associates (IHS CERA).

Iraq currently plans to expand production to as much as 12 million barrels per day (bpd) in the next six to seven years. Achieving levels around half that in the next decade would be more likely and would still constitute "a significant expansion," the report emphasizes. IHS CERA's current outlook for Iraq is 4.3 mbd in 2015 and 6.5 mbd in 2020 -- still big growth numbers.

### [Libya aims to privatise half of economy in decade](#)

TRIPOL - Half of Libya's economy will shift into private hands within 10 years, a privatisation official said, creating opportunities for foreign investors to snap up assets in the oil-exporting country.

### [Troops take over 38 gas stations in the state of Táchira](#)

From Tuesday, Venezuelan National Guard and Army troops took over 38 gas pumps in the state of Táchira (on the border with Colombia) to prevent "destabilizing actions" related to the supply of fuel.

### [Kazakhstan Extend Tax Probe of BG, Eni-Led Venture](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Kazakhstan extended a tax probe into payments by the BG Group Plc and Eni SpA-led Karachaganak venture after preparing claims for 2004.

The Kazakh Finance Ministry's tax committee is checking the "completeness and timeliness" of Karachaganak Petroleum Operating BV's payments in the years 2005 to 2008, as well as those of shareholder affiliates, the Astana-based ministry said today in an e-mailed response to questions.

### [Lukoil to Increase Uzbek Gas Investment This Year](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Lukoil, the Russian oil producer with the most overseas assets, will increase investment in Uzbek natural-gas projects to profit from higher international prices.

Lukoil plans to spend \$480 million developing gas deposits in Uzbekistan this year to boost output more than fivefold after 2015, an official from the Moscow-based company's overseas arm said today.

### [Iraq oil law a priority, PM hopeful Allawi says](#)

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said on Wednesday he would honour deals signed with global oil majors in recent months and would move quickly to pass a new hydrocarbons law if his bloc forms the government.

But Allawi, whose cross-sectarian Iraqiya bloc won the greatest number of seats in Iraq's March 7 parliamentary election, said the deals might need some minor adjustments and he wanted to see more competition in Iraq's energy sector.

"We are going to honour all contracts. We are going to honour all agreements because we believe this is very important," Allawi told Reuters in an interview.

### [Saudi's Al-Naimi 'Hopes' Oil Stays in \\$70-\\$80 Per Barrel Range](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali al- Naimi said he "hopes" prices remain in the \$70-a-barrel to \$80-a-barrel range, signaling the world's largest producer may be willing to boost output if crude accelerates further.

### [Natural gas ETF flaming out versus oil](#)

In all the furor about potential inflation and the pricing pressure on energy, one amazing anomaly stands out — natural gas. In my view, it is an almost perfect fuel and energy source, yet it is getting cheaper and cheaper compared to oil. What's up?

### [Offshore Drilling Plan Covers Expansion, Conservation - Salazar](#)

U.S. Interior Secretary Kenneth Salazar Wednesday said the Obama administration's new proposal allowing for an expansion in offshore oil and natural gas exploration provides both needed development of those resources and conservation protections -- notably in Alaska.

In an interview on CNBC, Salazar said the plan would result in additional production, but didn't elaborate or provide a time-frame.

### [Environmentalists attack Obama plan to allow oil drilling off Florida's coasts](#)

WASHINGTON -- Florida environmentalists are blasting the Obama administration's plans to expand offshore oil drilling, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Coast.

## [Delays to major projects give Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority breathing space](#)

Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (ADWEA) has gained more breathing space to meet rocketing power demand in the short term because of delays to major residential and industrial projects, an official forecast showed yesterday. But the utility will still need to double generating capacity before the emirate's first nuclear reactor comes online in seven years.

## [High court: PPL must pay millions in rent for dams](#)

HELENA, Mont.—The Montana Supreme Court told utility PPL Montana on Tuesday that it owes the state \$40 million in current and back rent -- along with more in future rents -- for use of the riverbeds where hydroelectric dams sit.

The order came as Gov. Brian Schweitzer was considering budget cuts to fend off a looming cash crunch, and it stands to provide the state with another multimillion dollar windfall following the recent deal to sell the Otter Creek coal tracks.

## [Remapping the Nuclear Grid](#)

The “atomic renaissance” has become a household expression to describe the nuclear boom that is taking place in different parts of the world. It is certainly true for China, India and Russia, which have already launched a number of nuclear power units and are considering more in the coming decade. The nuclear boom has echoed through Europe, although this part of the world is better known for its unconditional support for the development of renewable energy sources—more of a shift in attitude than an atomic renaissance.

## [Vermont Yankee Tests Show Tritium Plume Spreading](#)

Vermont Yankee officials announced last week that they had definitively identified and stopped two tritium leaks from underground pipes surrounding the reactor. Elevated levels of tritium in groundwater were first reported Jan. 7.

A series of nearly two dozen test wells drilled at various depths in locations around the reactor are informing state officials about the scope and movement of the tritium plume, which appears to be inching closer to the Connecticut River.

## [China Said to Curb Soybean Oil Imports From Argentina](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China, the world's biggest soybean oil importer, will seek to curb shipments of the commodity from Argentina on growing trade tensions between the



countries and to help domestic oil producers, four executives said.

Beginning April 1, some soybean oil shipments from Argentina will likely be rejected for failing to meet a national standard on impurity and companies are discouraged from applying for further import permits for Argentine soybean oil, said the executives. They attended a briefing given by the China Chamber of Commerce of Import and Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce & Animal By-Products, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce.

### [China begins solar-powered refrigerator development](#)

Can a refrigerator operate without electricity? A project jointly launched by Henan Xinfei Electric Company and the China Household Electric Appliance Research Institute on March 31 displayed this possibility. The two sides began joint research and development of solar-powered refrigerators in an attempt to realize the actual deployment of environmentally-friendly refrigerators that will operate against the traditional cooling mode by the end of this year. These refrigerators emit little carbon dioxide, consume almost no electricity and do not make any noise.

### [Mistake? My green house won't have a garage](#)

Am I making a mistake? My green house won't have a garage, an almost American institution and a feature considered desirable for resale. Occasionally, I question this very deliberate decision to go without.

### [Between the grimms and the grins](#)

In this cheerful future, we can have very comfortable lives trimmed of gluttony but guided by intelligence. Amory Lovins is perhaps the most prominent proponent of this viewpoint. He's been at it more than 30 years, and if not quite a household name, he has nonetheless been greatly influential among energy policymakers, helping guide the United States to more efficient uses of energy.

But his argument has a soft underbelly. If all we do is milk more productivity out of energy, doesn't this encourage us to spend our savings in other ways? For example, if we can save energy building and powering our homes, aren't we liable to use that savings on outdoor Jacuzzis and swimming pools?

The counterpoint to Lovins at the Aspen Environment Forum and other sessions in the West has been James Howard Kunstler. He became famous for his stern criticism of post-World War II urban designs and suburban living patterns. He's funny in a snide and often profane way. Shown a '60s-style condominium building during a tour several years ago, he barked out: "Whoever designed that should be summarily shot." Because of global climate change, Kunstler sees darkness ahead, at least by standard definitions of prosperity, including virtual abandonment of that totem of 20th century ingenuity,

the high-rise building.

### [Can Humans Manage the Atmosphere?](#)

To my mind, some of the intensity in the discourse over this broad suite of possible climate interventions — on top of the unintended one under way now — derives from the uncomfortable situation the human species finds itself facing at this moment in its history.

Humanity stands poised between its fossil-fueled adolescence and whatever comes next.

### [Breaking Ground for the Digital Homestead](#)

If you want to go back to nature, you might think twice before leaving your computer and Internet access behind. There's a burgeoning e-commerce sector dedicated to meeting the needs of urban and rural homesteaders -- providing products, information and social networking opportunities.

### [Jeff Rubin: Expect a new peak for oil next year](#)

What does \$80-per-barrel oil say to you?

Three years ago, it would have told you that global oil markets were at record tightness. Back then, the U.S. president was making a personal pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia to vainly plead for more production. And economists were worrying about the implications for global economic growth.

Today, it seems the goalposts have suddenly moved. After filling up on \$4-per-gallon gasoline only two Memorial Day weekends ago, today's \$2.20-per-gallon average gasoline price doesn't seem so expensive to American motorists anymore.

### [Oil up near \\$83 on dollar, mixed US supply report](#)

Oil prices edged up to near \$83 a barrel Wednesday as the dollar weakened and the market awaited a key government report about the strength of U.S. crude demand.

By early afternoon in Europe, benchmark crude for May delivery was up 48 cents to \$82.85 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 20 cents to settle at \$82.37 on Tuesday.

Crude inventories rose last week by 421,000 barrels, the American Petroleum Institute said late Tuesday. Analysts had expected an increase of 2.7 million barrels, according to



a survey by Platts, the energy information arm of McGraw-Hill Cos.

Inventories of gasoline and distillates fell less than expected, the API said.

### [Shell, Total Chase 'Impossible' Sales in Race to Curb Refining](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Oil companies may struggle to unload their excess refining capacity in Europe this year as profits from turning crude into fuel stay depressed.

Total SA, Royal Dutch Shell Plc and Chevron Corp. are seeking to sell refineries in Europe after the recession reduced demand. Eni SpA Chief Executive Officer Paolo Scaroni said this month it's "impossible" to find buyers after refining profit margins slumped to a 15-year low in December.

### [OPEC Output Slipped From a 14-Month High on Iraq, Survey Shows](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' crude-oil production slipped from a 14-month high in March, led by an Iraqi cut, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

Output fell 30,000 barrels a day, or 0.1 percent, to an average 29.205 million barrels a day, according to the survey of oil companies, producers and analysts. Members with production quotas, all except Iraq, raised output by 55,000 barrels to 26.84 million barrels a day, the highest level since December 2008 and 1.995 million above their target.

OPEC cut its quotas by 4.2 million barrels to 24.845 million barrels a day beginning in January 2009 as fuel demand tumbled during the worst recession since World War II. The group left the targets unchanged at a meeting March 17 in Vienna.

"With oil near \$82 it's going to be hard to get them to cut back by much," said Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy & Economic Research in Winchester, Massachusetts.

### [Is an oil price band credible?](#)

There seems to be a concerted effort to stabilize market expectations around a price band of \$70-\$80, or more realistically \$60-\$90, in the hope this would encourage self-stabilizing speculation in the market and steady prices around this level.

But how realistic is the stabilization effort?

### [Ministers to urge better dialogue on oil price volatility](#)

CANCUN, Mexico (AFP) – Energy producers and consumers were set Wednesday to urge improved dialogue on tackling oil price volatility in a joint ministerial declaration to be issued at the end of a key forum.

The biennial International Energy Forum (IEF) concludes two days of talks in the beach resort of Cancun that have also centered on the future for fossil fuels amid increasing use of renewable energy sources.

### [Oil and gas have 'vital' future role: US minister](#)

CANCUN, Mexico – Oil and gas still have a vital role to play despite the United States' need to use renewable fuels, US Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman said here on Tuesday.

Speaking on the sidelines of the International Energy Forum -- the world's biggest gathering of energy producing nations and consumers -- Poneman also backed calls for more transparency in energy supply data to help avoid excessive volatility in oil prices.

### [Interior Dept. to decide Alaska offshore drilling](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Interior Department is ready to announce its analysis and review of defects in a program covering lease sales off much of Alaska's coastline, including Arctic waters, according to a legal filing Tuesday.

### [Obama to allow oil drilling off Virginia coast](#)

WASHINGTON (AP) – In a reversal of a long-standing ban on most offshore drilling, President Obama is allowing oil drilling 50 miles off Virginia's shorelines. At the same time, he is rejecting some new drilling sites that had been planned in Alaska.

Obama's plan offers few concessions to environmentalists, who have been strident in their opposition to more oil platforms off the nation's shores. Hinted at for months, the plan modifies a ban that for more than 20 years has limited drilling along coastal areas other than the Gulf of Mexico.

### [Gas Drillers' New York Hopes Fade on Paterson Woes](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Chesapeake Energy Corp.'s bid to tap new sources of natural gas in New York state may be quashed by Governor David Paterson's political troubles.

Paterson is the most prominent state proponent of drilling in the Marcellus Shale, a formation extending from West Virginia to New York that has helped spur a boom in U.S. shale-gas production. Chesapeake, the second-biggest producer of natural gas in the U.S., is one of three companies that have filed a combined 58 applications for drilling permits in the state.

### [Cnooc Profit Misses Estimates After Oil Price Slump](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Cnooc Ltd., China's biggest offshore energy explorer, reported full-year profit that missed analysts' estimates as oil prices slumped from a record.

Net income fell 34 percent to 29.5 billion yuan (\$4.3 billion), or 0.66 yuan a share, from a record 44.4 billion yuan, or 0.99 yuan a share, a year earlier, Beijing-based Cnooc said in a statement to the Hong Kong stock exchange today. That's worse than a median estimate of 30.55 billion yuan in a survey of 15 analysts compiled by Bloomberg News. Sales fell 17 percent.

### [The New Face of Oil And Gas](#)

But it was always considered one business - oil 'n gas. So much so that there evolved a pricing guide among investors to gauge the over or under valuation of the oil or gas price. This guide was simply that under stable conditions, oil should be about 6 times gas. For many decades that has been a pretty good guide, but it no longer applies - since about 2006. So what happened in 2006? Two mega developments - peak oil and hydro-fracing in gas bearing shale.

### [Athabasca Raises \\$1.32 Billion in Biggest Canada IPO Since 1999](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Athabasca Oil Sands Corp. raised C\$1.35 billion (\$1.32 billion), the most for a Canadian initial public offering since Manulife Financial Corp. in 1999, to fund energy exploration in Alberta.

The Calgary-based company priced 75 million shares at C\$18 each, selling a 19 percent stake, according to a prospectus yesterday. The offering is scheduled to close April 8, and the shares will begin trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange before June 18 under the symbol ATH, Athabasca said in a statement.

### [Peabody's Offer Fails to Value Expansion, Macarthur Coal Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Macarthur Coal Ltd. said a A\$3.3 billion (\$3 billion) cash offer from Peabody Energy Corp., the biggest U.S. coal company, fails to value its expansion plans and isn't in the best interests of shareholders.

The proposal “does not fully value Macarthur Coal and its significant growth prospects,” Chairman Keith De Lacy said today in a statement. The A\$13-a-share bid sent Brisbane-based Macarthur surging to A\$14.05, as investors bet Peabody will have to increase its offer to win over ArcelorMittal and Posco, who paid as much as A\$20 a share for their stakes.

### [Power Lines Replace Pines as Tree Cuts Wreck Westchester Views](#)

Bloomberg) -- Westchester County homeowners are learning the price of keeping the lights on.

Some residents have new views of the steel-lattice towers that carry power lines through Westchester, which is the closest northern suburb to New York and has the highest median home price in the state. Oaks, maples and beeches that veiled a highway for decades are being chopped down.

“I know what time it is by the sound of the traffic,” said Amy Kupferberg, who estimates that 350 fresh tree stumps behind her family’s century-old farmhouse in Greenburgh hacked as much as \$1 million off its value. “This whole neighborhood has been redefined by this.”

### [Solar, Wind Power Groups Becoming Prominent Washington Lobbying Forces After Years of Relative Obscurity](#)

In 1998, the entire alternative energy industry barely even registered as a political player in Washington, spending a mere \$2.4 million on lobbying the federal government. Meanwhile, in the same year, the oil and gas, electric utilities and mining industries spent a combined \$142 million advancing their own legislative interests.

That landscape, however, has changed considerably.

### [Where did all that power debt come from?](#)

I have been a vocal critic of NB Power and the politics of energy for 30 years. Nothing in the current state of affairs at NB Power surprises me - high debt, a nuclear albatross, a fossil fuel-dependent grid in the age of peak oil and climate change.

What surprises me or, more to the point, discourages me, is the fog that still shrouds electricity politics.

### [Chevrolet factory turns out its 1st Volt; Nissan prices Leaf](#)

The first factory-built Chevrolet Volt battery car is scheduled to roll off the production line today, a significant dry run for the General Motors' Hamtramck, Mich., factory that will begin regular Volt production in November.

### [Tesla files update with SEC, confirms Roadster production for 2012, draws from DOE loans](#)

Registering for an initial public offering, like Tesla Motors has done, requires that certain documents are filed regarding company actions. Since first filing for its IPO back in January, Tesla has had a few new developments surface which requires the company to amend its S-1 filing.

### [Clean Car Gain Means Polypore Battery Parts Beat Wind](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Polypore International Inc., which makes one of the key components of electric-car batteries, is climbing faster than most alternative energy stocks this year as investors bet on a global shift to low-polluting automobiles.

### [Should the U.S. compete or work with China on clean energy?](#)

On Monday, Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced \$37.5 million in U.S. funding over the next five years for the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center, to be located at existing facilities in both countries. The Center will focus on energy efficiency, clean vehicles and carbon capture from coal plants.

### [California solar projects rush to beat deadline for subsidies](#)

The deadline — and the push for green energy by President Obama and California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger— has inspired unprecedented coordination among regulators and environmentalists who want green energy but not rampant destruction of wilderness. If they succeed in siting so many large solar projects quickly, California may set a precedent for how other states resolve concerns over land use vs. the benefits of green energy.

"It's a scene that's being played out all over the country," says Benjamin Kelahan, senior vice president for energy of the Saint Consulting Group. But California, he says, is "a hotbed of activity."

### [Alternate Current -- A time of opportunity - will we seize the day?](#)

The next great economic boom will be in the arena of replacing oil. Whether we drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or deep offshore, oil is a finite resource. Many believe

we have already reached "peak oil" in that from now on usage of oil will always outstrip new supplies and that within 50 years or so, oil will be scarce, if still available at all. We use oil not only for fuel, but for fertilizers to satisfy the ever increasing need for food, for plastics to build all the things we now "need" such as the computer I'm using right now and for so much more it's hard to list it all.

### [Food a Growing Problem](#)

There is one more intriguing factor in the game which is presumed to be food production chasing numbers; it is that this is not the actual game at all, but the reverse, ie, numbers chasing food production. First came agriculture, then surpluses, then increasing numbers, then more agriculture etc. This point has been variously made. The UN supports the statement that "... the agricultural transformation improved food security and thereby set in motion a progressive increase of human population density. So productive was the enterprise of agriculture that over time an ever-decreasing number of farm workers were able to feed ever larger numbers of people".

### [Dr. Guy McPherson Talk](#)

Dr. McPherson recently left academia for other pursuits. As he put it in his popular blog, Nature Bats Last: "I departed university life for many reasons, among them to dedicate more time informing the world's citizens about the consequences of the way we live. My message centers on the twin sides of the fossil-fuel coin: global climate change and energy decline (commonly known as "peak oil"). ...These unprecedented phenomena impact every aspect of life on Earth, notably including our ability to protect the living planet on which we depend for our own survival."

### [West Kootenay Boundary economic picture bleak according to report](#)

"In terms of peak oil, it is hard to see an upside for this region," he said, "as dependent on external regions as we are and being as isolated as we are."

It's a bit of gloom, Penfold admitted, but the doom may be averted and a healthy economy emerge if people endeavour to become more self-reliant and resilient. People can begin to create more regional food, energy, goods and services to replace the ones currently imported.

### [U.K. Panel Calls Climate Data Valid](#)

LONDON (AP) — A parliamentary panel investigating allegations that scientists at one of the world's leading climate research centers misrepresented data related to global warming announced Wednesday that it had found no evidence to support that charge.

But the panel, the Science and Technology Committee of the British House of Commons,



did fault scientists at the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit and its director, Prof. Phil Jones, for the way they handled freedom of information requests from skeptics challenging the evidence of climate change.

### [Some good news for a change](#)

As with all climate change issues, there are plenty of reasons to respond with a "yeah, but..." Regardless of the climategate tempest in a thimble the scientific warnings remain pretty terrifying and globally the pace of emission cuts needs to accelerate rapidly. The UN negotiations to agree a successor to Kyoto are stuck in a dangerous limbo, as evidenced by the failure last week of the International Maritime Organisation to make any real progress towards cutting emissions from shipping, while plans for a US climate bill continue to face vehement opposition. Peak oil, meanwhile, remains the economically apocalyptic, riot-inducing elephant in the room.

### [U.N. official expects no climate deal until 2011](#)

AMSTERDAM (AP) — A new legal agreement committing nations around the world to curb greenhouse gas emissions is unlikely to be completed until the end of 2011, two years later than originally envisioned, the top U.N. climate official said Wednesday.

Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the U.N. climate change secretariat, said countries need to restore confidence in U.N. negotiations following the dismal results of the Copenhagen summit in December, which ended in a vague agreement of principles and a pledge of finances for poor countries most threatened by climate change.

### [Geoengineers get the fear](#)

"Be very careful." The warning, from Robert Socolow, a climate researcher at Princeton University in New Jersey, came at the end of a meeting last week that aimed to thrash out guidelines for the nascent field of geoengineering. The discipline aims to use global-scale efforts to control the climate and mitigate the worst effects of anthropogenic warming — but the techniques used could also have far-reaching, unintended consequences.



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