



Drumbeat: April 6, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 6, 2010 - 9:08am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Clay Shirky: The Collapse of Complex Business Models](#)

Tainter's thesis is that when society's elite members add one layer of bureaucracy or demand one tribute too many, they end up extracting all the value from their environment it is possible to extract and then some.

The 'and then some' is what causes the trouble. Complex societies collapse because, when some stress comes, those societies have become too inflexible to respond. In retrospect, this can seem mystifying. Why didn't these societies just re-tool in less complex ways? The answer Tainter gives is the simplest one: When societies fail to respond to reduced circumstances through orderly downsizing, it isn't because they don't want to, it's because they can't.

See also: [Mayans, Romans and Peak Oil](#)

e changed my point of view about future prices," said Campbell, who used to think the peak in conventional oil production, which he believes happened in 2005, would lead to a relentless price surge.

[Oil rises to fresh 18-month high above \\$87](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Oil rose to a fresh 18-month high on Tuesday, rallying for a sixth consecutive session as investors awaited oil inventory data out of the United States.

U.S. crude for May delivery was up 12 cents to \$86.74 a barrel by 1358 GMT, down from an intraday peak of \$87.09, the highest since October 2008.

[U.S. Raises 2010 Oil Price Outlook on Economic Growth](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The U.S. government increased its crude oil price forecast for 2010 on projections that the global economy will rebound through the end of the year.

West Texas Intermediate oil, the U.S. benchmark, will average \$80.74 a barrel this year, up from last month's forecast of \$80.06, according to the Energy Department's monthly Short- Term Energy Outlook, released today. That's 31 percent higher than

the 2009 average price of \$61.66 a barrel.

[U.S. Forecasts LNG Imports to Increase 42% in 2010](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.S. imports of liquefied natural gas may rise 42 percent in 2010 to approximately 1.76 billion cubic feet per day, the Energy Department forecast today in its monthly Short-Term Energy Outlook.

The latest estimate for 2010 imports was 2.2 percent lower than the previous forecast. The department's Energy Information Administration last month predicted imports of 1.8 billion cubic feet per day.

[U.S. Carbon Emissions to Rise 2.1% in 2010, EIA Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.S. carbon dioxide emissions from energy use will climb 2.1 percent this year as the economy emerges from the recession, the Energy Information Administration forecast today.

[Saudi Arabia's crucial role in the crude price outlook](#)

It's a well-known Opec phenomenon that while most members break any production quotas to increase their own oil revenues, Saudi Arabia not only adheres to the targets but at times produces even less than its own quota to offset the poor compliance of other Opec states. This is one reason it has become known as the 'central bank of oil'. The other (related) reason is that Saudi Arabia has more spare capacity than any other oil producing nation, although exactly how much is not completely clear and hotly debated.

[Iraq to Take Control of Oil Revenue by End of 2010, UN Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Iraq's government will install a metering system to properly track crude oil production and take full control of the disbursement of revenue from oil exports by the end of 2010, Iraqi and United Nations officials said.

[Desire abandons Liz in Falklands](#)

British oil explorer Desire Petroleum said it had plugged and abandoned the first well to be drilled as part of a controversial oil exploration programme by UK companies in the Falkland Islands.

[Qatar says oil spike is speculation](#)

Qatar said crude oil prices are being pushed up by speculators rather than by any shortage of supply.

[Brazil sees China interest in offshore oil fields](#)

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters) - Chinese energy companies will likely participate in bidding for Brazil's offshore subsalt oil reserves when auctions begin and are already seeking to buy stakes in existing oil projects, a top energy official told Reuters.

Chinese President Hu Jintao is slated to visit Brazil next week to deepen ties with the South American nation as it taps tens of billions of barrels in the offshore subsalt province that has become a new frontier for petroleum exploration.

[Argentina Soy Growers 'Optimistic' on End to China Oil Blockade](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Argentina is "optimistic" negotiations will end a blockade by China on soybean oil imports that may cost the South American country as much as \$2 billion, an Argentine soy industry official said.

[Eaarth by Bill McKibben](#)

Pioneering environmentalist Bill McKibben hopes to take his readers by the collars and shake them in his new climate change wake-up call, Eaarth.

[Clay Shirky: The Collapse of Complex Business Models](#)

Tainter's thesis is that when society's elite members add one layer of bureaucracy or demand one tribute too many, they end up extracting all the value from their environment it is possible to extract and then some.

The 'and then some' is what causes the trouble. Complex societies collapse because, when some stress comes, those societies have become too inflexible to respond. In retrospect, this can seem mystifying. Why didn't these societies just re-tool in less complex ways? The answer Tainter gives is the simplest one: When societies fail to respond to reduced circumstances through orderly downsizing, it isn't because they don't want to, it's because they can't.

See also: [Mayans, Romans and Peak Oil](#)

[Richard Heinberg: Economic History in 10 Minutes](#)

Here is all of economic history compressed into one sentence: As societies have grown more complex, larger, more far-flung and diverse, the tribe-based gift economy has shrunk in importance, while the trade economy has grown to dominate nearly every aspect of people's lives, and has expanded in scope to encompass the entire planet.

With more and more of our daily human interactions based on exchange rather than gifting, we have developed polite ways of being around each other on a daily basis while maintaining an exchange-mediated social distance. This is particularly the case in large cities, where anonymity is fostered also by the sheer numbers of people one sees from day to day. In the best instances, we still take care of one another—through government programs and private charities. We still enjoy some of the benefits of the old gift economy in our families and churches. But increasingly, the market rules our lives. Our apparent destination in this relentless trajectory toward expansion of trade is a world in which everything is for sale, and all human activities are measured by and for their monetary value.

[Stuart Staniford: Implications of Unmeasurable Capital](#)

This seems to me to bear on one of the hardest issues at the heart of any "Risks to Civilization" discussion: how resilient is modern civilization really? In the past, in discussions with collaborators trying to figure out how vulnerable civilization is to large scale cyber-attacks, I've run into the fact that different folks have radically different intuitions about this, and it's very difficult to come up with a methodology that makes the situation more objective.

[James Hansen: Obama's Second Chance on the Predominant Moral Issue of This Century](#)

The predominant moral issue of the 21st century, almost surely, will be climate change, comparable to Nazism faced by Churchill in the 20th century and slavery faced by Lincoln in the 19th century. Our fossil fuel addiction, if unabated, threatens our children and grandchildren, and most species on the planet.

Yet the president, addressing climate in the State of the Union, was at his good-guy worst, leading with "I know that there are those who disagree..." with the scientific evidence. This weak entrée, almost legitimizing denialists, was predictably greeted by cheers and hoots from well-oiled coal-fired Congressmen. The president was embarrassed and his supporters cringed.

[Uganda's oil: A bonanza beckons](#)

A DETERMINED push by Western wildcatters and big oil companies from fast-growing Asian economies such as those of China and Malaysia may change the fortunes of several countries in remoter and trickier bits of Africa once largely ignored by foreign investors. One of the most spectacular recent finds has been in Uganda. The reserves of the

Albertine rift, which takes in the Ugandan and Congolese shores of Lake Albert (see map), are said to need \$10 billion for development. All being well, Uganda will soon become a mid-sized producer, alongside countries such as Mexico. Foreign investment in Uganda may nearly double this year to \$3 billion. The country expects to earn \$2 billion a year from oil by 2015.

[Ukraine Says Russia to Consider Reduction in Price for Gas](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Ukraine said Russia agreed to consider proposals to cut the price of natural gas exports, President Viktor Yanukovich said in a statement.

The accord was reached during a visit by Yanukovich to Moscow yesterday, according to the statement issued in Kiev today. Yanukovich asked Prime Minister Mykola Azarov to prepare a set of proposals for the Russian side.

[Total Maintains Iran Oil, Gas Deals Worth Billions of Euros](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Total SA, Europe's third-largest oil company, continues to receive crude oil as payment for developing four Iranian natural gas fields while buying billions of euros worth of fuel from that country last year.

[The Secret of Libyas Liquid Gold](#)

An infinite wealth of treasure lies in The Elephant Field, 800km south of Tripoli, which was discovered by the Italian company Eni in 2006. The Elephant Field drew a renewed focus upon MENA oil and gas, and showed that there are new possibilities waiting to be found in the face of a global oil crisis.

Booming investment within China and India has created a vast amount of pressure on MENA oil reserves, but Libya could hold the solution. There are doubts over Libyan official records regarding their oil and gas reserves; oil and gas experts insist Libya has much higher amount than they are currently prepared to say. Although Libya hopes to reach a target of three million bpd by 2013, this is impossible without foreign investment. Therefore Libya might be a key port of call for the struggling oil and gas industry, which is set to be one of the items up for discussion at the illustrious NGO&G MENA Summit (run by GDS International) being held this week in Doha.

[El Paso Gets Go-Ahead for Ruby Pipeline](#)

El Paso Corp. has received Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approval for its Ruby Pipeline project. Ruby is a 675-mile, 42-inch interstate natural gas pipeline that will access significant Rockies supplies and make them available to consuming markets in California, Nevada and the Pacific Northwest.

[Divided Aborigines in vital vote over \\$30bn gas plant plan](#)

A BITTER split among Kimberley Aborigines over Woodside Petroleum's plan to build a \$30 billion gas plant will come to a head today when native title claimants decide whether to oust opponents of the project from their claim group.

[Pakistan: Domestic generators face action](#)

AMID the energy crisis in the country, the Sui gas authorities are all set to launch a campaign against the use of gas generators by domestic consumers that will certainly add to the miseries of people who are already fed up with loadshedding.

The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd (SNGPL) has initially scrutinised a list of about 6,000 domestic consumers who are 'illegally' using gas for standby power generation. The authorities will start checking of illegal gas-powered generators during house-to-house search and will cut connection on the spot. The SNGPL has warned that users of gas generators should register with gas authorities if they want to avoid action.

[Britain may block World Bank loan for coal plant in South Africa](#)

The Government is considering blocking an aid project to provide reliable coal-fired electricity for millions of South Africans after coming under intense pressure from green groups in the run-up to the election.

On Thursday, Britain will cast the deciding vote on whether the World Bank should grant a \$3.7 billion (£2.4 billion) loan to allow South Africa to build the Medupi coal plant.

[French Propose Methane Project for Ukraine](#)

French investors are offering an environmental project to recover and utilize methane at five mines in Donetsk Region, Ukraine, Ostrov.org reports. "Such a project does exist within the framework of co-operation between France and Ukraine. Our companies are proposing to utilize methane in order to turn its normally negative effects into something positive", French Ambassador to Ukraine Jaques Faure said.

[Surge of Enthusiasm Greet US Offshore Power Study](#)

A new wind is blowing in, stirring up the scientific, media and business communities with its powerful implications for the U.S. energy supply: limitless, renewable, clean

electricity that's capable of powering the entire Eastern Seaboard.

But where, exactly, would it all come from?

Right off the East Coast, according to scientists. That's where some 11 weather-monitoring stations are stretched out across 1,550 miles from Maine to Florida. At present, they're just collecting meteorological data, but imagine if each one had an electricity-generating wind turbine and all were connected to a single power grid by a giant undersea cable.

[Site C Would Drown a Vital BC Breadbasket](#)

If anyone needs a reminder of what kind of damage a dam can do, they told me, they need only visit the W.A.C Bennett Dam, the massive two kilometre-long earth-fill dam that was completed in 1967. Nearly 50 years on, the Williston Reservoir, a 70,000 square kilometre watershed that was flooded by the dam, remains a striking testament to the near-apocalyptic damage a dam can do to its surrounding environment. That massive reservoir, the largest body of water in British Columbia, was supposed to provide local residents with a valuable recreational resource and nearby First Nations communities with a bounty of fish and fowl. Instead, though, it is a dead zone, a toxic stew of dead trees and mercury-filled fish surrounded by the still-eroding banks, and recreational activity in the reservoir is limited to those with a taste for the extreme.

[A revelation for the gas market](#)

The mystery over how US natural gas production has increased while rig counts have decreased might be solved, in part because it might not actually have been rising that much. At least, not as much as EIA data had suggested.

Industry rig counts, although increasing for the natural gas industry in the past few months, crashed last year from their mid-2008 highs and remain more than 600 rigs short of the 1,600-rig high. Yet production levels as estimated by the EIA in its 914 report have only fallen slightly since then. And prices, of course, are low.

Natural gas futures have risen on news that the production data are being revised, and reports that it may be revised downwards. But how big will the impact be?

[Oil rises over \\$86 a barrel — an 18 month high](#)

NEW YORK - Oil and gasoline prices climbed to 18-month highs Monday as a batch of new economic reports provided more signs that the U.S. economy is back on steady footing and demand for crude will follow.

The worry now among some analysts is whether gasoline pump prices are starting to approach a level that could choke off the recovery.

[Tanker Rates Seen Sinking 35% Amid Refinery Cutbacks](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The most profitable supertanker market in more than a year is heading for a 35 percent slump as oil refineries from Japan to the U.K. shut for maintenance and leave a surplus of vessels.

Shipping costs will fall to an average of \$28,758 a day this quarter from \$44,576 on April 1, according to the median estimate in a Bloomberg survey of 13 analysts, traders and shipbrokers. Rates to hire the ships, each bigger than the Chrysler Building, averaged \$49,908 a day in the first quarter, the most since the last three months of 2008.

[Oil Refiners to See Profit Boon in Dubai's Drop Versus Brent](#)

(Bloomberg) -- SK Energy Co. and rivals including Reliance Industries Ltd. may raise their output as price declines for more dense crudes such as Dubai and Arab Medium boost processing profits, company officials and analysts said.

“The more sophisticated refiners benefit from a widening light-heavy spread,” said Victor Shum, a senior principal at consultants Purvin & Gertz Inc. in Singapore. “It would be a positive for most refiners and certainly help the export refiners like SK. You may see some increased operating rates.”

[Natural gas boom brings riches to a rural town](#)

(Reuters) - At a windswept rail yard at Wellsboro in northern Pennsylvania, dozens of railcars wait to load thousands of tons of sand onto trucks that will take the cargo to natural gas rigs across the state.

The freight railroad, which runs 35 miles north to Corning, New York, had its busiest year in more than two decades in 2009, fueled by demand from a booming natural gas industry, which uses sand in hydraulic fracturing operations.

[SKorean warship catches up with hijacked tanker](#)

SEOUL, South Korea – A South Korean navy destroyer caught up with a hijacked supertanker carrying about \$160 million of crude oil and was maneuvering nearby in the Indian Ocean, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday.

The supertanker, on its way from Iraq to the United States, is believed to have been hijacked by Somali pirates, the latest high-value bargaining chip for the sea bandits. Similar seizures of oil supertankers in the waters off the coast of lawless Somalia have

yielded ransoms as high as \$5.5 million.

[Iran says oil sanctions threat "a joke"](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) – The idea of international sanctions on Iranian oil exports is a joke, a senior Iranian official said on Tuesday, adding Iran would not abandon its disputed nuclear work despite mounting international pressure.

U.S. President Barack Obama is pushing for new U.N. sanctions in the coming weeks to pressure Iran to stop its sensitive nuclear activities, which Washington and its European allies believe is a cover to develop bombs.

[Saudi Argas Sees Aramco Red Sea Award 'Shortly'](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Arabian Geophysical & Surveying Co., part-owned by the world's largest seismic surveyor CGGVeritas, expects Saudi Aramco to award a contract for exploration work in the Red Sea "shortly."

"We have already answered the bid," Saad al-Akeel, chief executive officer of the company known as Argas, said in a phone interview from Al Khobar, in eastern Saudi Arabia, on April 4. "We expect to hear the news very shortly."

[Sinopec Corp setting up fuel oil, bunker arm -sources](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - Asia's top refiner Sinopec Corp is forming a fuel oil and bunker sales and marketing arm that aims to expand its market presence in China's rapidly growing marine fuel market, two industry officials said on Tuesday.

[Vietnam to Be Handed Refinery by Builders in April](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Vietnam expects international builders to hand over the country's first oil refinery of Dung Quat this month, Vietnam Oil & Gas Group said in a statement on the government's Web site.

The state oil company, the plant's investor, expects its contractors to provide a 24-month warranty period after handing over the facility, Tran Thi Binh, deputy chief executive officer of the company known as PetroVietnam, said in the statement. "Contractors will still take responsibility if any technical problems happen."

[Kazakhstan May Expel Foreign Workers From BG, Eni-Led Venture](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Kazakhstan is seeking to expel workers from the BG Group Plc and Eni SpA-led Karachaganak venture, the central Asian nation's second-largest producing oil field, for violating immigration laws.

"We have questions on about 270 of the venture's employees and have started by suing seven for receiving their labor permits and visas improperly," Alexander Ogay, a senior official at the Prosecutor General's Office in Astana, said in a phone interview. "The punishment for the violation is a fine and deportation, if the court upholds the prosecutor's claim."

[Rudd Seeks Reasons for 'Outrageous' Ship Stranding](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said he wants to bring to account those responsible for the stranding of a Chinese coal carrier on a sandbank in the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef.

"It is frankly outrageous that a vessel this size could find itself 12 kilometers (7 miles) in the middle of the Great Barrier Reef, and it's time we got to the bottom of how this could have occurred and to hold those who are responsible for this accountable," Rudd said in the Queensland city of Cairns. He earlier flew over the Shen Neng 1, which ran aground on April 3, about 100 kilometers off the northeast coast.

[Total Faces Investigation on Iraq Oil-for-Food Bribery Charges](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Total SA, Europe's third-largest oil company, was placed under formal investigation in February on bribery charges related to oil deliveries from Iraq.

French Judge Serge Tournaire is examining charges of corrupting a foreign public official and influence-peddling, Isabelle Montagne, a spokeswoman for the Paris prosecutors' office, said today, confirming information in Total's annual review and reported earlier by Les Echos.

[Tesoro Refinery Probe Homes in on Precise Site of Explosion](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Investigators with the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board say they have conflicting information about the precise site of a fire at Tesoro Corp.'s Anacortes, Washington refinery that killed five people last week.

The safety board is trying to determine the cause of a breakdown that released a "fireball" that engulfed seven Tesoro workers April 2. Two workers remain hospitalized, one in serious condition and one who is critical, according to a spokeswoman for Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, where both are being treated.

[Chevron: Ecuador plaintiffs' lawyers lied](#)

Oil giant Chevron Corp. said this week that lawyers for groups of people suing it in Ecuador turned in bogus reports to a court there in 2005.

This is just one salvo fired in a long war between Chevron and various groups trying to hold it responsible for pollution in the Amazon rainforest. Chevron inherited these suits when it bought Texaco in 2001. Texaco worked in Ecuador and spent some \$40 million cleaning up sites there afterwards.

[Selling off our public assets makes no sense for Toronto: Many of them generate stable flows of revenue that the city will lose in these one-shot deals](#)

The list of Toronto mayoralty candidates running from the conservative side of the spectrum is getting pretty long. Even longer is the list of public assets they are promising to sell off should one of them win the election.

Toronto Hydro, the downtown heating and cooling system, parking meters, parking lots, garbage collection, transit routes, even ski hills and campgrounds have all been offered up by business-friendly candidates, all promising to downsize the city out of its fiscal problems.

[An Uncomfortable Fact About Oil](#)

What is the uncomfortable realization facing the president? It is the fact that going forward it is going to become dramatically more difficult for America to obtain and secure the energy it needs—and sooner than most people realize. It is a truth that policy makers and politicians are afraid to publicly admit because the implications of an oil-constrained world affect everything from stock markets and food production to the dollar's status as the world's reserve currency.

In short, over the next several years, global oil dynamics may change the planet forever. And America will not be immune.

[Fossil Energy Use in Conventional and Low-External-Input Cropping Systems](#)

Conventional agriculture production systems in developed countries rely heavily on fossil energy, but emerging uncertainties in energy supply indicate a need to better understand energy efficiency in conventional and alternative systems. These researchers used 6 yr of data from a cropping systems experiment conducted in Iowa to compare energy use of a conventionally managed corn–soybean system (a 2-yr rotation) with two low-external input (LEI) cropping systems that used more diverse

rotations and manure, but substantially lower quantities of synthetic N fertilizer and herbicides.

Depending on how fossil energy costs were assigned to manure, the two low-external input systems (a 3-yr rotation of corn-soybean-small grain/red clover, and a 4-yr rotation of corn-soybean-small grain/alfalfa-alfalfa, used between 23 and 56% less fossil energy than did the conventional system.

[Industries brace for peak water as peak oil hits](#)

As though businesses didn't have enough on their plates dealing with peak oil in their strategic planning, production practices, and business models, now researchers from GlobeScan, after conducting a survey of 1,200 sustainability experts, have concluded that peak water is upon us and will worsen over the coming decade making every production process employed in creating the amenities of modern life more expensive.

[Toyota faces record \\$16.4M fine in gas pedal recall](#)

The government said Tuesday it has proof that Toyota knew about a safety problem involving sticking gas pedals for four months before it recalled vehicles and said it will penalize the automaker the maximum \$16.4 million for the delay.

[Newcastle Coal Exports Rise 24%; Ship Queue Shortens](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Coal shipments from Australia's Newcastle port, the world's biggest export harbor for the fuel used in power stations, rose 24 percent last week while the number of vessels waiting to load declined.

[W.Va. mine blast disaster kills at least 25](#)

NAOMA, W.Va. — An explosion killed 25 miners Monday in a West Virginia coal mine and four others are missing, a federal Mine Safety and Health Administration official said today. It is the worst U.S. mine disaster since 1984.

The blast occurred about 3 p.m. at Massey Energy's Upper Big Branch site, which was hit with \$900,000 in federal fines in 2009 for about 500 alleged safety violations, Labor Department records show.

[U.S. Lawmakers Raise Concern About World Bank Loan to Eskom](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Three U.S. lawmakers whose committees oversee World Bank policy

and funding asked the institution for more environmental and social commitments from Eskom Holdings Ltd. before lending the South African utility \$3.75 billion to build one of the world's largest coal-fired power plants.

[South African Coal Plant Proposal Strains 'Culture' of World Bank](#)

On Wednesday, the World Bank board is expected to vote on a \$3.75 billion loan to help South Africa build a 4,800-megawatt coal-fired power plant. The plant will release an estimated 25 million metric tons of global warming pollution into the atmosphere. Its loan application has sparked some of the fiercest public outcry the World Bank has seen in years.

Opponents are leaning hard on the United States to cast one of its rare but potent "no" votes, shining a spotlight on the secretive World Bank decisionmaking process, in which critical choices are made behind closed doors and, analysts say, diplomatic sensitivities mingle with an institutional drive to approve loans. Actual "yea and nay" votes, in fact, are almost unheard of at the World Bank, where the money flow is virtually always given the green light by a well-orchestrated consensus.

[Tax credits for energy-saving windows, cars going strong](#)

If your air conditioner sputtered and died last August, forcing you to buy a new one, you probably didn't clap your sweaty hands and shout, "Hooray! We'll qualify for an energy-efficient tax credit!"

But if your new air conditioner uses less energy than the one it replaced, there's a good chance you'll be able to recoup some of your costs when you file your tax return.

[Q.&A.: Transportation Secretary on Biking, Walking and 'What Americans Want'](#)

The United States transportation secretary, Ray LaHood, recently caused a stir when he proclaimed that bicycling and walking should be given the same consideration as motorized transport in state and local transit projects.

Supporters, who continue to post notes of adulation and thanks on Mr. LaHood's Facebook page, say the acknowledgment of biking and walking as legitimate modes of transportation is long overdue.

Critics, conversely, believe the secretary is taking the country in the wrong direction.

[Digital Download: Join the Armchair Revolutionaries](#)

Online social games such as *FarmVille* and *Happy Island* let players tend make-believe homesteads and islands. A new online site wants to take such social gaming tasks into the real world.

Armchair Revolutionary (armrev.org), which launches Tuesday, adapts the features of Facebook games such as *FarmVille* and social networking applications such as Foursquare to involve people in social and environmental causes.

[Transition Town, for when the oil is gone](#)

Imagine for a moment Powderhorn neighborhood in the not so distant future; five, ten, maybe 15 years from now. Powderhorn Park is the vibrant center of the community. Part of the park has been transformed into an enormous community garden. Fruit and nut trees abound. Several folks are fishing in the clear, clean lake. The park building hosts community meetings as well as community theater and art shows. There is a community kitchen where people preserve food together. Cooking classes are held throughout the year. The park building has a tool library where anyone in Powderhorn can check out a rototiller, a saw, a snowblower or other items that people need (but don't use often enough to justify everyone having one).

[The Bright Green City: Alex Steffen's Optimistic Environmentalism](#)

Cooper: So how do we start to build a sustainable society?

Steffen: I think we're still figuring that out. Big chunks of our infrastructure, our existing cities, our manufacturing base, and so on are radically unsustainable, but we have enormous amounts of money, energy, and materials invested in them. I think the most graceful solutions are ones that take what already exists and remodel it in a way that's new, sustainable, and even charming. Retrofitting historic buildings to make them green, for example, not only conserves the resources that went into the building in the first place, but preserves the cultural identity of the building.

[Of Biofuels, Land Grabs and Food Prices](#)

Scientists still are trying to work out whether biofuels represent a significant savings in greenhouse gas emissions compared with fossil fuels, and whether the kinds of targets mandated by Europe will lead to a serious increase in global food prices.

There are also conflicting views among experts about the benefits for countries where many of the crops are grown.

[A Town Says 'Yes, in Our Backyard' to Nuclear Site](#)

In most countries, of course, people would sooner allow a factory hog farm or garbage incinerator in their backyards than a nuclear waste dump. But in Sweden, SKB found 18 of 20 possible towns near proposed sites intrigued by their proposition. Then it had to whittle the list down to two, Osthhammar and Oskarshamn, both already the site of nuclear plants.

...Claes Thegerstrom, a nuclear physicist who is the chief executive of SKB, attributed the new attitude of Swedes toward nuclear energy to fears of global warming. "In the 1980s nobody was mentioning CO₂," or carbon dioxide, considered the major cause of global warming, he said. "Now, it's on the top of the list of environmental issues." Since they burn no fossil fuels, nuclear power plants do not produce carbon dioxide.

[U.S. Sued Over Nuclear Waste Fees](#)

WASHINGTON — Sixteen utilities and a trade association sued the Energy Department on Monday to halt the government's collection of nuclear waste disposal fees, arguing that the country no longer had a disposal plan after ruling out Yucca Mountain, Nev., as a repository.

[The Smoking Guns and Blue Dress Moments of Climategate](#)

The repetitive use of these phrases and cliches by deniers would probably make GOP wordsmith Frank Luntz proud. By sticking to a small set of familiar, eye-catching and dramatic-sounding memes, the denialosphere succeeded in getting many of the mainstream outlets covering the stolen emails scandal to follow suit by using the same language again and again.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).