



Drumbeat: April 18, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 18, 2010 - 9:24am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[What are you up to Mr. Woolsey - confrontation or cooperation?](#)

"We can move quickly to strike a major blow at oil and OPEC's dominance if we'll adopt a portfolio approach and stop allowing the perfect to be the enemy of the good. We can get a long way using existing vehicles, existing technology and affordable natural gas. As other improvements become practical-like charging your electric car from solar panels on your roof-they can be adopted. In the meantime, we need Theodore Roosevelt's attitude. He decided to improve competition by taking on Standard Oil's cartel and breaking it into 30 parts. President (Barack) Obama, meet your cartel. It's called OPEC."

And this is dangerous thinking. It could result in retaliation. It could impact the fundamentals - rather adversely. It would definitely inhibit investments required - and in abundance - in the sector. This is real catastrophe.

[The coming famine: risks and solutions for global food security](#)

Peak oil has already happened in the United States, in Australia, Britain and in 49 out of 65 of the world's oil producing regions. Yet 51 million new cars continue to hit the world's roads every year.

Just as farmers have little control over who snatches their land, water and other assets, they have little control over who takes their fuel. By 2040 dwindling reserves of fossil oil may well be reserved for the military and everyone else will have to get by as they can, including food producers.

[Oil security fosters action on Iran](#)

MANY observers were puzzled when President Barack Obama announced this month his support for expanded offshore oil drilling. Was he trying to win over Republican swing votes for a climate bill? Head off the inevitable anger over summer petrol prices? Perhaps. But here's another possibility: the move could have been intended to bolster international support for sanctions on Iran. At least that's what events from the nuclear summit last week suggest.

Obama apparently convinced Chinese President Hu Jintao to pursue sanctions as a means of dissuading Iran from developing its nuclear program. He reportedly indicated the US would help China make up any shortfall in oil imports resulting from Iranian retaliation for any Chinese support for sanctions. China is concerned about its growing reliance on crude imports and possible disruptions in the global oil markets. So Obama's offshore-drilling embrace may have been intended to signal that he is doing everything possible to avoid this.

[Najib denies Iran gasoline cut](#)

Malaysian premier Najib Razak has denied reports that the country's national oil company has cut gasoline supplies to Iran.

Petronas has been one of a few non-Chinese oil companies providing gasoline to Iran, the world's fifth-largest crude oil exporter.

[Nonfiction review: 'Eaarth,' by Bill McKibben](#)

McKibben is an eloquent advocate for deep emissions cuts to slow global warming, but making that case is not the purpose of his latest book. Instead, he aims to alert us that on a planet we have altered so profoundly that it deserves a new name ("Eaarth"), we need to shift our lives in light of new realities.

The book surveys the evidence for climate-driven impacts on the planet's major features, challenges the notion that we can grow our way out of this predicament and celebrates locally based, decentralized approaches that McKibben believes can supply food and comfort on our newly volatile home.

[Bill McKibben on Cochabamba, Congress and Eaarth](#)

Look, the planet that we live on now is different, and in fundamental ways, from the one that we were born onto. The atmosphere holds about 5 percent more water vapor than it did 40 years ago. That's an incredible change in one of the basic physical parameters of the planet, and it explains all those deluges and downpours. The ocean is 30 percent more acidic, as it absorbs all that carbon from the atmosphere.

NASA said that we've just come through the warmest January, February, March on record, that 2010 is going to be the warmest year that we've ever seen.

[Samir Doshi -- 'We can realize the impossible'](#)

Advocates of the sustainability movement envision a future where our global society evolves toward a culture of environmental protection, social equity, democratic participation and representation, and an economy that is predicated on the Earth as the source of capital instead of just another resource.

Unfortunately, many do not see a worldwide transition toward a sustainable and desirable future without a catastrophic event that awakens people to transition past the current direction of the status quo. The thought being that unless we are on the brink of a collapse, our society as a whole will not act, as our priorities lie elsewhere.

[Bangladesh to sign nuclear plant deal with Russia](#)

DHAKA — Bangladesh will sign a deal with Russia to build two nuclear power plants at a cost of at least three billion dollars in the electricity-starved Asian nation, Dhaka's atomic energy chief said Sunday.

[PM to focus energy crisis, market access during Pak-EU summit](#)

ISLAMABAD (APP) - In pursuance of Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani's directive a two-day Energy Summit (April 19-20) opens here on Monday to finalize a concrete roadmap to tide over existing energy crisis. The summit would be joined by all provincial Chief Ministers, Provincial Power Ministers, Minister for Petroleum, Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance and other relevant Cabinet members, say a press release.

The summit's proposed framework is built around serious deliberations on need for power generation and capacity additions in thermal, hydro, renewable and solar sectors.

[The Dirty Underside of Lula's Clean Energy Revolution](#)

Brazil's biofuelled paradise is looking more and more like a carbon-spewing wasteland.

[Ecuadorean threat to oil giants](#)

The Ecuadorean government has threatened to take over foreign oil concessions if the companies resist growing state control of the industry.

President Rafael Correa said every day millions of dollars were going to oil companies that should go to the state.

The government has been pressing the companies to give up concessions that give them a share of oil field profits and accept service contracts instead.

[Gas cartel to vote on supply cuts](#)

Leading gas-producing nations meet in Algeria tomorrow to vote on cutting supplies in order to double the price of natural gas.

[No scope for OPEC to curb oil prices](#)

ORAN, Algeria (Reuters) - Algerian Energy Minister Chakib Khelil said on Saturday he believed OPEC could do nothing at this stage to restrain rising oil prices, despite concerns the high cost of energy could hurt the economic recovery.

"I do not see really what OPEC can do to have any impact on the prices at this stage because the increase in prices is not led by the lack of supply, but it is really led by the economic recovery," Khelil told a news conference.

"We have ample supply. The stocks are very high," he said in the Algerian city of Oran, which on Monday is hosting a meeting of some of the world's biggest gas exporters.

[Rising Fuel Prices Could Chill Summer Vacation Plans](#)

That old familiar feeling is back: pain at the pump.

In recent weeks, the price of gasoline has been rising to nearly \$3 a gallon in many parts of the country -- the highest level since the financial crisis hit in the fall of 2008. One year ago, the nationwide price was just over \$2.

This would seem to be an unlikely time for such big price hikes, given that oil supplies have been abundant this year. In fact, with the summer driving season still weeks away and millions of unemployed Americans at home rather than driving to work, this should be a period of low gasoline prices.

But retail gas prices are being driven up by the growing belief that global consumption of oil will rise significantly this year. Today's thirst for oil is "expectations-driven," says Daniel Yergin, author of *The Prize*, a book about the history of the oil industry.

[U.A.E. to Raise Gasoline Prices, Move to Market Rate](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The United Arab Emirates will raise gasoline prices by 11 percent from April 21 as part of efforts to more closely align them with market rates, Emirates News Agency said.

[Venezuela Secures \\$20 Billion Loan From China, Chavez Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Venezuela secured a \$20 billion loan from China and agreed to form a joint venture to pump crude oil from a block in the Orinoco Belt, President Hugo Chavez said as he promised to meet the Asian country's energy needs.

Chavez said the \$20 billion financing from China is separate from a \$12 billion bilateral investment fund, without providing details. Venezuela currently sends China 460,000 barrels a day of crude oil to repay an \$8 billion loan that finances infrastructure projects in the South American country.

[Persian Gulf Tanker Rates Rise on Anticipated Stronger Demand](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The cost of delivering Middle East crude to Asia, the world's busiest route for supertankers, gained for the first time in four days as owners anticipated strengthening demand.

Charter rates for very large crude carriers, or VLCCs, on the industry benchmark Saudi Arabia-to-Japan route climbed 0.2 percent to 96.89 Worldscale points. Returns from the voyage added \$5 to \$56,849 a day.

[Want peace? Solve the energy crisis!](#)

Peak oil, which is inevitable because global oil supplies are finite, will usher in an era of much higher gasoline prices and economic dislocation. Even worse, peak oil could propel us toward "non-solutions" like reckless drilling for oil in fragile, irreplaceable natural environments or tapping Canadian oil sands — which would be catastrophic given the energy requirements and carbon footprint associated with exploiting that resource.

The frightening prospect of peak oil should motivate us to quickly become "energy independent" by developing public transit, bicycle-friendly communities, smart-growth plans to minimize sprawl and highly efficient alternatively fueled vehicles. Lack of action is setting us up to become full participants in an intense international scramble for dwindling oil supplies — a recipe for economic collapse, international conflict and more oil wars.

[Electric vehicle converter has connections to go far](#)

Almost overnight, three partners who co-founded Alte, a fleet vehicle electric conversion company, have gone from a small shop in Plymouth, where they were tinkering with battery cells, to an 185,000-square-foot headquarters and manufacturing site.

While Alte is one of many companies jumping into the electric vehicle industry, it has quickly attracted the support and backing of well-connected automotive industry veterans and politicians.

[In search for efficiency, hydrogen is not lost](#)

Hydrogen energy was defeated by a mountain of obstacles -- the fear of explosion by the highly flammable gas, the difficulty of carrying the fuel in large, heavy tanks in the vehicle, and the lack of a refueling network. Automakers turned to biofuels, electricity or the gas-electric hybrid.

But hydrogen, it turns out, never was completely out of the race. Now Israeli scientists and entrepreneurs claim to have brought hydrogen energy a step closer by putting it in much smaller, lighter containers.

Rather than using metal or composite cylinders of compressed gas that look like bulky scuba gear, hydrogen is packed into glass filaments which, once out of the lab, will be only slightly thicker than a human hair.

[Ferry port move may be end of the line for Stranraer](#)

Transport campaigners have warned that the rail line which links Stranraer to Glasgow could face closure in under three years due to rising costs and the loss of direct ferry connections to Ireland next year.

[Decision on massive B.C. hydro project could be near](#)

The province is about to announce a decision on the decades-old proposal to build a massive hydroelectric-generating dam, known as Site C, in northeastern B.C., says Energy Minister Blair Leckstrom.

Leckstrom won't say exactly when the government plans to announce the decision, but suggests it will be soon because the province has promised to deliver a decision in spring 2010.

[Hawaii's green efforts not cheap, but will pay off, advocates say](#)

A 10-megawatt solar power project that would have boosted the amount of renewable energy on Kaua'i isn't moving ahead at this time.

The reason? The Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative wouldn't agree to pay what the developer wanted for the electricity.

The stalled project provides a glimpse into a not-so-often discussed portion of green energy as the state drives toward adoption of sustainable power projects: Going green could translate into higher electricity prices in the short run for Hawai'i residents.

[Plugging in to a leaner, cleaner energy future](#)

Half a block from the Mexican border, a giant warehouse uses sunlight to keep frozen food, well, frozen.

The \$25 million warehouse, known as ICE II, has solar panels on the roof, super-thick foam walls and LED lighting to keep the temperature at around 0 degrees. It can store nearly three times as much frozen food as ICE I, its 11-year-old sister warehouse a mile and a half away, but it uses half as much electricity.

[New building concept saves 70% Electricity](#)

Living in a detached villa is a desirable lifestyle in the UAE, but it currently comes with a high cost in energy, which is bad news for the environment and the finances of the building occupant. 'With the use of PAC technology, electricity consumption can be decreased by 60-70%' stated Abdul Rahman Al Bluwi, BENA's Managing Director. Precast Aerated Concrete (PAC) is a fully automated technology that has been proven effective and utilised in Europe since 1923. PAC has more than ten times the thermal insulation of conventional concrete of equal thickness. Its superior insulating system significantly decreases the need for electrical consumption which is expected to triple in Abu Dhabi by the year 2030 according to a recent report by Allroya News.

[Earth Day: Four books that can inspire](#)

Once a year, people all over the world gather to celebrate Earth's beauty and provisions and rekindle their commitment to the hard, patient work of building societies that respect, enhance and restore the natural world.

But the weeks leading up to and following Earth Day on Thursday can also be a time of reflection and research into the ecological challenges we face in the 21st century and the steps we can take to remedy them.

Following are four recently published books I recommend for getting those Earth-saving juices flowing:

[After 40 years of Earth Day, what has been accomplished?](#)

Vermont population

1970: 444,732

2010: 621,760, a 40 percent increase

[The Great Unleashing Is Coming To Carrboro](#)

The launch of Transition Carrboro-Chapel Hill, a group comprised of volunteers seeking to build community resilience in the face of challenges such as climate change and peak oil, will be celebrated during a ceremony called the Great Unleashing.

[Is this the end of migration?](#)

Climate change is affecting bird behaviour at a staggering rate. Some 20 billion have already changed their flight plans.

[U.S. seeks climate ideas after Copenhagen fell short](#)

OSLO--The United States is asking for ideas about how to tackle global warming without raising expectations of breakthroughs in 2010 ahead of climate talks among the world's top emitters on Sunday in Washington.

A document obtained by Reuters on Friday listing U.S. questions to delegates from 16 other major economies shows the two-day talks will focus on the fate of U.N. climate talks, the non-binding Copenhagen Accord, and the Kyoto Protocol.

[Why cleaner air could speed global warming](#)

Aerosol pollution, which is now on the downswing, has helped keep the planet cool by blocking sunlight. Tackling another pollutant, soot, might buy Earth some time.



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