



Drumbeat: April 20, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 20, 2010 - 9:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[George Monbiot: What links the banking crisis and the volcano?](#) - *We rely globally on over-complex, over-strained systems. Act now, or wait for the much more brutal corrective of nature*

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hat already use the method in their long-term contracts.

The Gas Exporting Countries Forum, which accounts for two-thirds of global gas exports, will work independently to reach price parity between gas and oil in their sales contracts, said Chakib Khelil, Algeria's energy minister.

[Yemen eyes GECF membership](#)

Yemen is in discussions to become a member of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, Oil Minister Amir al-Aidarous said in Oran, Algeria where the group is meeting this week.

[China's resource grab](#)

Since becoming a net oil importer in 1993, China has rapidly overtaken everyone but the US in its thirst for the world's crude. If one could quantify a country's eagerness to control this vital resource, though, China would surely be number one. Aggressive investments in Africa's resource sector have led some to dub its policies there the "Great Chinese Takeout". Its latest move, a \$20bn loans-for-oil deal with Venezuela, coming on top of an existing \$8bn commitment, is its largest. This follows last year's \$25bn loans-for-oil deal with Russia and separate agreements for \$10bn each with Brazil and Kazakhstan.

[A 'Hamburger Helper' for Diesel Fuel](#)

A Nevada company has found a way to use natural gas as a cheap extender for diesel fuel.

[Putin to visit Vienna for gas deal - and judo](#)

Vienna - Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is scheduled to visit Austria this weekend not only to conclude a gas energy deal, but also to support Russia's team at the European judo championship, Austria's government confirmed Tuesday.

A deal between Russia and Austria to build a section of the planned South Stream gas pipeline on Austrian territory is to be signed on Saturday, Chancellor Werner Faymann said in Vienna.

[Kuwait says oil price good, warns against speculation](#)

"We hope the increase in the oil price will remain within a reasonable range and that there won't be spikes like before," he said.

"Hopefully, speculation will no longer play (a role) in the price of oil," he said when asked about the impact of fraud charges against Goldman Sachs.

[Saudis eye \\$24.3bn surplus in 2010](#)

Saudi Arabia will book a 91 billion riyal (\$24.3 billion) surplus this year based on an average oil price of \$75 per barrel, and will avoid a deficit if prices stay above \$60, a state-owned bank said today.

[BPMigas Forecasts Lower Oil Production for Indonesia](#)

Upstream oil and gas regulator BPMigas has lowered its estimate for national oil

production to 917,000 barrels per day this year, down 5 percent from initial projections, citing the prospect of shutdowns and regulatory hurdles. The estimates will be submitted for inclusion in the revised state budget.

In a meeting with House of Representatives Commission VII overseeing energy issues on Monday, BPMigas head Raden Priyono said: "In accordance with our technical review, 917,000 bpd is the optimistic figure to be met. Therefore, we are proposing an oil production target of 917,000 bpd instead of 965,000 bpd for the sake of the security of state revenue."

[Science never stops for oilsands](#)

Every year, the Canadian Heavy Oil Association and the Society for Petroleum Engineers hold a one-day symposium on the technical advancements and research being conducted in the oilsands.

[Coal India Said to Plan \\$2.9 Billion IPO, Nation's Biggest](#)

(Bloomberg) -- India plans to raise as much as 130 billion rupees (\$2.9 billion) selling shares in Coal India Ltd. in July, in the nation's biggest initial public offering, said two government officials with direct knowledge of the sale.

[REC May Run Singapore Plant at Full Capacity in 2010](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Renewable Energy Corp. ASA, the Norwegian maker of solar-energy components, plans to run its Singapore plant at close to full capacity in the fourth quarter to meet demand in Asia, its chief operating officer said.

The facility plans to ship to markets in India, South Korea, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand, John Andersen said by videoconference from Oslo in an interview today.

[Chevron has go-ahead to fix Louisiana oil line leak](#)

HOUSTON (Reuters) - Government agencies have approved the start of repair work on a damaged Louisiana oil line that leaked oil into a wildlife refuge, a spokesman for operator Chevron Corp said Tuesday.

The U.S. Coast Guard told Reuters on Monday that needed agency approvals were near for work to begin at the site of the April 6 leak, but Chevron was unable to comment until all shippers were notified, the spokesman said.

[The US War Machine—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow](#)

With depleting oil reserves and peak oil production already past, and an anticipated shortage of water, food, and biological resources especially with on-going global warming and climate change, competition for resources will only intensify. In that scenario, the more powerful will snatch and grab resources by economic or military force. The USA is militarily well poised for such a situation, but whether it (and indeed the international community, which lends money to the USA, the world's biggest debtor nation) can sustain such an expensive military in view of its declining economic status, and if so for how long, is debatable.

[Addressing Corporate Fraud: Norway's 40% Solution](#)

Another major impetus for the law were theoretical and empirical studies showing that diversity promotes innovation and resilience by broadening the range of debate. A number of European leaders (in government and business) recognized as far back as the late nineties that Peak Oil and pressure to reduce carbon emissions posed very serious challenges for the corporate world. They were also far-sighted enough to see that diversity-based resilience and innovation would be essential in finding the drastic solutions that were required.

Many saw the example of the US as one they didn't want to follow. Initiatives to develop alternative energy sources and auto mileage and emissions standards – by “appropriate technology” enthusiasts and engineers, as well as state and local governments – date back to the 1973 oil crisis. The response by the small circle of middle aged white gentlemen who ran the US oil and car companies was to buy up all the solar and wind patents and sequester them, to kill the electric car and to systematically obstruct any federal or state fuel or emissions standards.

[Germans Desperate Over EU, Greece](#)

Many elite promotions are unraveling or at least becoming less convincing. Peak oil, global warming, even regulatory democracy itself - all are being questioned and all are being found wanting. In the US, libertarian congressman Ron Paul (R-Tex) is running neck-and-neck with the US president, Barack Obama in terms of approval ratings. And according to Pew Research, only 22 percent of Americans trust the government "always or most of the time."

We would argue that the EU is heading toward the same fate.

[Fossil Free By '33: Happy 40th Earth Day, A Conversation With Sigrid Wright](#)

Today, the CEC is leading a campaign to move Santa Barbara County away from fossil fuels in one generation - Fossil Free by '33. This bold, regionally-driven blueprint seeks

to head off a nearly perfect storm of energy-related concerns, including rapidly diminishing oil supplies ("peak oil"), growing concern over our national security because of our dependence on foreign oil, volatile fuel prices, and climate change.

[Earth Day celebration: Transition Towns free fun-filled 50 min family film](#)

Film title: 'In Transition 1.0 - from oil dependence to local resilience'

(Australia) Whether you're into growing your own fruit and veges, starting a local business, riding your bicycle, or making your own clothes, this fun-filled inspiring film is for you!

[Beyond Earth Day: Sustainability groups begin transition to life after oil dependency](#)

Picture yourself in the year 2030. Imagine a community where organic food is grown and harvested locally. Imagine being able to meet the majority of your needs in the nearby town center, where you can walk or bike to purchase locally produced goods and services.

With Earth Day 2010 just two days away, envision a community that is energetically self-reliant — harnessing renewable energy sources such as solar and wind to meet its needs and decreasing energy consumption to a level that is sustainable for the long-term well being of the planet.

[Films, music to mark Woodstock observance](#)

WOODSTOCK — Woodstock Town Hall Theater will host a celebration for the 40th Earth Day at 7:30 p.m. Thursday. This celebration will include local music talent, two films and various entertainment.

One film, included in the event, will be the seven-minute documentary "Jungle Park." This film illustrates Sustainable Woodstock's plan to rejuvenate the town and take a piece of land, known to locals as 'the jungle,' and transform it into a riverside park.

The other film is "In Transition," a documentary about the Transition Movement, a community-led response to climate changes and peak oil.

[For Earth Day, 7 New Rules to Live By](#)

On the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, is the middle-aged green movement ready to be revived by some iconoclastic young Turqs?

No, that's not a misspelling. The word is derived from Turquoise, which is Stewart Brand's term for a new breed of environmentalist combining traditional green with a shade of blue, as in blue-sky open-minded thinking. A Turq, he hopes, will be an environmentalist guided by science, not nostalgia or technophobia.

[Solar-powered plane reaches new heights](#)

(CNN) -- On April 9, 2010, the sun-powered Solar Impulse HB-SIA aircraft took off from a runway in Payerne, Switzerland, on its maiden flight.

Over the next 87 minutes it climbed to 1,200 meters, and undertook a series of tests and maneuvers to assess its reliability and performance, before returning test pilot Markus Scherdel safely to earth.

[Startups offer consumers rewards for going green](#)

The 40th Earth Day is Thursday, a reminder that going green isn't always easy. Most people are slow to change their behavior, and even the most eco-conscious consumers can forget to bring their own bag to the grocery store or coffee mug to the office.

Now several startup companies are building business models around information technology and the idea that consumers need an extra push — from free cupcakes to gift cards for iTunes or Starbucks — to go green. They've tapped into the fact that Americans love to earn coupons, prizes and rewards, and are far more apt to participate in recycling, carpooling or energy-saving programs if there's a tangible payoff.

[On Ash and the Global Aviation Boom](#)

The continued disruption of air travel and airborne commerce over much of Europe from volcanic ash clouds is a reminder of how flying has become a deeply embedded part of human life in just a couple of generations.

There are those who foresee a return to localism in the long run, with the price of flying rising as demand outstrips supplies of liquid fuels in a world of rising populations and energy appetites (with or without restrictions on greenhouse gases). My guess is that the intensifying work toward an aviation biofuel will supply that niche in years to come, while proving utterly inadequate for transport on the ground. In the meantime, the human appetite for globe-spanning mobility shows no signs of ebbing.

[Wal-Mart's Chairman Pulls a Long Supply Chain Toward Sustainability](#)

LAGUNA NIGUEL, Calif. -- If a single executive at Wal-Mart Stores Inc. deserves the lion's share of credit for the company's recent drift into corporate sustainability, most agree it is Lee Scott, CEO of the largest retailer on the planet from 2000 to 2009.

Scott, now the chairman of Wal-Mart, has been praised by many for sparking a cultural overhaul at the big-box chain that resulted most recently in a voluntary commitment to slash 20 million metric tons of carbon emissions from its global supply chain by the end of 2015. Other notches on Scott's résumé are the company's pledge to attain 100 percent of its power from renewable sources of energy and a promise to create zero waste.

[Facing unfit recruits, military leaders target food in schools](#)

The obesity epidemic is threatening national security, so schools — which are on the front lines in battling the problem — need to boot out junk food and serve healthier snacks and meals, a group of retired military leaders is announcing today.

About three-quarters of today's young adults, ages 17 to 24, would be unable to join the military if they wanted to because they are either too heavy, didn't graduate from high school, have criminal records or have other health problems, says Mission: Readiness, Military Leaders for Kids, a non-profit group of 130 retired generals, admirals and other senior military leaders. They are advocating for policies that would help young Americans get ready to serve.

[Do food stamps feed obesity?](#)

Food stamps have done a good job fighting hunger since their 1964 roll-out, but as the program has grown, so has the percentage of Americans who are obese — from 13% in the early 1960s to about 35%. Now there's some evidence the two are related. Jay Zagorsky, a scientist at Ohio State University, has calculated that, controlling for socioeconomic status, women who received food stamps were more likely to be overweight than non-recipients. They gained weight faster while receiving assistance than when not.

[New castles bring back medieval memories](#)

The Ozark Medieval Fortress, a 20-year-long work in progress, will serve as an outdoor classroom where students experience living history and learn about architecture, geometry, economics and geology.

...The wood, stone, earth, sand and clay used to build the 45-foot-high towers and 6-foot-wide walls of the castle are found at the site and hauled by horses.

"We use only native materials, just like they would have in the Middle Ages," says general manager Julie Sonveau.

As the castle continues to take shape, so will its surrounding community, Sonveau, 46, says. Shops on the periphery already are in place for spinners, weavers, basket, and rope and candle makers. Herbs, grains, vegetables and plants used for dyes grow in raised beds.

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[A contrarian makes another call – this time, natural gas](#)

Mr. Groppe – the octogenarian patriarch of Texas petroleum industry analysts Groppe Long & Littell – doesn't buy the prevailing wisdom that New York Mercantile Exchange natural gas prices are dead in the water, stuck around \$4 to \$5 (U.S.) per million British thermal units even as demand recovers, awash in supplies and with much more on the way.

No, his analysis (and more than 50 years of experience) tells him that gas inventories are about to get a lot tighter, that new supplies are overstated, and that prices are headed north of \$8 by the end of summer.

Why is he so sure he's got it right and most everyone else has it wrong?

Because, he contends, shale gas – the previously unattainable source of vast gas supplies that has been unlocked by new high-tech horizontal drilling advancements – is not the holy grail it's been cracked up to be. Not even close.

[Oil Rises From Three-Week Low on Forecast for U.S. Supply Drop](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Oil rose from a three-week low on speculation a report tomorrow will show crude stockpiles declined for a second week in the U.S., the world's biggest energy consumer.

Crude gained with European and Asian equities as concerns eased about further regulatory scrutiny of banks. Oil futures fell yesterday after the Securities and Exchange Commission's decision to sue Goldman Sachs Group Inc. deterred investors from riskier assets. U.S. inventories of crude oil probably fell 600,000 barrels in the U.S. last week as imports slowed, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

[European Jet Fuel Demand 'Evaporates,' Prices Drop on Volcano](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Jet fuel consumption in Europe has fallen by about two-thirds as flights in the region were halted after last week's volcanic eruption, pushing down prices and disrupting deliveries.

U.K. fuel depots are filling up, possibly forcing refiners such as Exxon Mobil Corp. to reduce shipments, according to Astor Consulting Ltd. Frankfurt airport has canceled deliveries from a pipeline connecting it with refineries including BP Plc's 400,000-barrel-a-day Rotterdam plant, according to the pipeline operator.

"This disruption is having a measurable impact on oil demand," Adam Sieminski, Deutsche Bank AG's chief energy economist, said by phone from Washington. "Europe is a sizeable market for jet fuel."

[Iran Adds Four Supertankers to Oil Storage, Taking Total to 11](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Iran, OPEC's second-biggest oil producer, added four supertankers to its fleet of vessels storing crude, taking the total to 11 after two others set sail, ship tracking data show.

At least 11 such vessels are idling in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, according to data from the ships collected by AISLive Ltd. Combined, the tankers can store about 22 million barrels of oil, more than Europe consumes in a day.

[Ahmadinejad to visit Uganda for nuclear talks](#)

KAMPALA (AFP) – Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will visit UN Security Council member Uganda this week for talks over its nuclear programme and Kampala's oil industry, the foreign ministry here said Tuesday.

[Saudis Tighten China Energy Ties to Reduce U.S. Dependence](#)

China, the world's second-largest oil consumer, and Saudi Arabia, holder of about a fifth of global crude reserves, are forging ever closer ties as the Persian Gulf kingdom responds to a Chinese drive to feed its rising energy needs. China in November overtook the U.S. as the main buyer of Saudi oil, and Saudi Arabian Oil Co. and Saudi Basic Industries Corp. are investing in refinery and petrochemicals projects in China.

The partnership between Saudi Arabia and China is part of a broader strategy by the world's largest oil exporter to tap Asian markets and extend global influence. It also helps Saudi Arabia reduce reliance on the U.S., which since World War II has protected Saudi security in return for stable oil supplies, said Ben Simpfendorfer, Hong Kong-based chief China economist at the Royal Bank of Scotland Plc.

"China's rise has provided Saudi Arabia with an excuse to knock on Washington's door and to say, you are not our only partner," he said.

[Russia, Qatar plan joint gas projects in Russian Arctic](#)

Russia and Qatar are planning joint projects to develop gas deposits on the Yamal Peninsula in the Russian Arctic, the energy ministers of both countries said in a joint statement on Monday.

The statement was signed by Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko and his Qatari counterpart Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah.

[Russia's ESPO Crude Oil Exports Scheduled to Drop Next Month](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russia, the world's second-largest oil exporter, plans to lower shipments of ESPO crude from the Pacific port of Kozmino by about 5.2 percent in May.

[Feds clear way for Utah-Nevada petroleum pipeline](#)

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — An environmental study has set the stage for construction of a 399-mile pipeline to move gasoline from Utah refineries to the Las Vegas area.

The Bureau of Land Management says the pipeline from Woods Cross, Utah, to Apex, Nev., is needed to meet market demand for fuel in southern Utah and Las Vegas, which get most of their fuel trucked in at higher prices.

[Most important U.S. oil discovery in 40 years](#)

He told me he has found what he expects will be the largest oil discovery of his entire career. It lies in the middle of a huge new oil and gas discovery called Eagle Ford. It is a field so large, Cactus says he believes it will become the largest oilfield in the history of the United States.

[BG says keen to pull out of ONGC's KG block](#)

NEW DELHI (Reuters) – British gas producer BG Group on Monday said it was keen to exit an exploration block off India's east coast operated by Oil and Natural Gas Corp, becoming the second foreign firm to make such a move.

Last week, ONGC's head of finance D.K. Sarraf said Brazil's Petrobras had informed the Indian firm about its plans to exit an east coast block, different from the one referred to by BG.

[Flowers, Fruit Start to Run Short as Volcano Disruption Spreads](#)

Bloomberg) -- Swiss Migros supermarkets ran out of roses today. Exotic fruit and asparagus from the U.S. may be the next items European shoppers won't be able to find.

Retailers in Europe are reporting shortages after authorities started grounding airplanes April 15 because of a cloud of ash from Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano. In the U.K., Waitrose has encountered difficulty stocking shelves with papaya and prepared mango, according to spokeswoman Gill Smith.

[Electromobility: Fast-tracking innovation](#)

A lot's going to change with the transition to electric cars: The automotive industry will no longer manufacture certain parts for vehicles, yet new ones will take their place instead. Utility companies will need modified business models and fee structures for supplying electricity to vehicles.

[Will we switch to gas made from human waste?](#)

As the UK faces the prospect of North Sea gas running out, could supply problems be eased by using gas made from human waste?

[Scientists Try Algae 'Alchemy' to Grow Oil in Paddies](#)

(Bloomberg) -- As Japan's rice fields turn fallow and its farming communities decline, a new army of workers is preparing to make the countryside fertile again. This time the

crop is motor fuel and the laborers are microscopic algae.

At least 75 developers globally are studying algae, which has the potential to generate more energy per hectare than any other crop used for making fuel, according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance. The technology has attracted the U.S. Department of Energy and big oil including Exxon Mobil Corp., which plans to spend as much as \$600 million on research over five years.

[A Private Plan for a Hydrogen Highway](#)

Many alternative-fuel companies are cash-poor, which means they spend a lot of their time chasing government loans and private capital. SunHydro, a start-up founded by Tom Sullivan to establish a solar-powered fuel-cell car refueling network on the East Coast, doesn't have that immediate challenge. In 1993, Mr. Sullivan founded Lumber Liquidators, a hardwood flooring retailer that now boasts more than 200 stores and, according to Reuters, had \$544 million in net sales last year.

Hydrogen and hardwood floors? What's the connection? In an interview, Mr. Sullivan said his \$15 million to \$20 million backing of a network of hydrogen stations from Maine to Florida began in 2008, when he started to research the next generation of car fuels. "It seemed ridiculous we were spending \$1 billion a day on imported oil when we could make our own zero-emission hydrogen," Mr. Sullivan said. "If we can make hydrogen from wind or solar, that's as good as it gets."

[New Solar Thermal Plant in Egypt Could Yield Clue to Success of Massive Desertec Project](#)

The Desertec concept is based on a factoid featured prominently on the organization's website: "Within six hours deserts receive more energy from the sun than humankind receives within a year." Though its broadly stated mission is sustainability, the Desertec concept also addresses the geopolitical vulnerability of fossil fuel supplies to Europe, particularly regarding its dependence on natural gas from Russia. As for petroleum, the U.S. military is predicting a "peak oil" supply squeeze in the near future that certainly won't help matters much. Speaking of the U.S. we have a couple of deserts, too, so maybe it's time we stopped pushing that same tired old fossil fuel line and start focusing on showing the Old World a thing or two about networking solar power on a mass scale.

[Hoover Dam turbines set for upgrade to cope with drought](#)



Andritz Hydro will provide systems to allow the generators to provide power more smoothly and efficiently when water in Lake Mead is at lower levels because of the current drought in the region.

[For them, Earth Day was late in coming](#)

Numerous studies have shown that low-income and minority communities tend to suffer disproportionately from exposure to toxic substances and resulting health problems.

[Easy being green for students with list of eco-friendly colleges](#)

For the past 19 years, The Princeton Review has been helping students shop for colleges by creating guidebooks that look at a dizzying array of factors, from academics to campus life. So why would it add yet another factor to the checklist of items for college applicants to consider?

Put simply, because students are going green and care about a college's commitment to sustainability.

[US unveils climate report in runup to Senate bill](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States released a new draft report on climate change on Monday, one week before the expected unveiling of a compromise U.S. Senate bill that aims to curb heat-trapping greenhouse emissions.

The report, a draft of the Fifth U.S. Climate Action Report that will be sent to the United Nations, says bluntly: "Global warming is unequivocal and primarily human-induced ... Global temperature has increased over the past 50 years. This observed increase is due primarily to human-induced emissions of heat-trapping gases."

(Report is [here](#).)

[Will Collaborative Climate Coverage Work?](#)

With the Senate poised for an “uphill push” to pass climate and energy legislative, and numerous surveys saying that Americans’ concern about global warming has declined, seven news outlets have banded together to improve upon what they see as chronically poor coverage of climate change.

[Hansen Clarifies Realities Of Global Climate Change](#)

Dr. James E. Hansen, head of NASA’s Goddard Institute of Space Science, arrived at Cornell Monday to discuss the imminent reality of climate change. Hansen, who has spent the last 30 years studying the reality of humans’ impact on climate change, spoke during the twelfth annual Jill and Ken Iscol Distinguished Environmental annual lecture series.

[UK water use 'worsening global crisis'](#)

The amount of water used to produce food and goods imported by developed countries is worsening water shortages in the developing world, a report says.

The report, focusing on the UK, says two-thirds of the water used to make UK imports is used outside its borders.

The Engineering the Future alliance of professional engineering bodies says this is unsustainable, given population growth and climate change.

[Food supply chains at risk in changing south-east Asian climate](#)

A report co-written by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and HSBC Climate Change Centre of Excellence claims that food supply chains in India and south-east Asia are under serious threat from changing climatic conditions.

[Scientists suggest climate link for volcanoes and earthquakes](#)

Exceptional levels of climate change could trigger volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and other geological catastrophes, say scientists.

[Geologists Drill into Antarctica and Find Troubling Signs for Ice Sheets' Future](#)

Modeler and geologist Robert DeConto of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, says the policy implications are grim. "Our models may be dramatically underestimating

how much worse it's going to get," he says, noting that many population centers worldwide are within a few meters of sea level. Looking at signs of meltwater in the early Miocene, DeConto says, "we're seeing ice retreat faster and more dramatically than any model predicts."

Antarctica's ice sheets contain roughly two-thirds of the world's fresh water. A meltdown of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet alone would boost sea levels by an estimated 20 feet, but if the East sheet were to also succumb, along with the Greenland ice sheet, sea levels could rise by more than 200 feet. This would be catastrophic for major population centers near sea level, such as New York City, much of Florida and nearly all of Bangladesh. No one expects the ice sheets to disappear overnight—even the worst timelines span centuries—and uncertainty about their fate remains, but radar altimetry from NASA satellites indicates that melting is under way in some parts of the East sheet, as well as in much of the West sheet. Researchers say the effects of melting ice sheets could be apparent within a lifetime as undersea currents are disrupted and weather patterns shift.



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