



Drumbeat: April 23, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 23, 2010 - 9:12am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Mideast nuclear drive picks up speed](#)

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (UPI) -- Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil producer, says it's setting up a center to develop nuclear technology as part of an \$80 billion drive to boost power generation over the next eight years.

Saudi Minister for Water and Electricity Abdullah al-Hussein said last August that the kingdom was working on plans for its first nuclear power plant, although he gave no timetable.

This is part of an accelerating region-wide shift toward nuclear energy, which is led by the United Arab Emirates, another major oil producer in the Gulf. And it's a trend providing a bonanza for U.S., British, French, Russian, South Korean and Japanese companies that specialize in reactor construction.

e way everyone expected. Instead of peak oil, we're looking at a *peak in demand* for oil. The oil age won't end tomorrow, but the idea that it will go on for ever – with its attendant catastrophes and tragedies – is seriously in question.

[Phil Flynn: Deepwater Horizon - Triumph and Tragedy](#)

In September of last year, Deepwater Horizon made history by drilling the deepest oil well in history. This was an achievement not unlike landing a man on the moon or a successful space shuttle. An achievement that in another era would have inspired the passion and the imagination of the nation in a nation that has become accustomed to great achievements. Think about the implications of drilling for oil in an area of the ocean where no man dared drill before. Think of the impact it could have on a world that is not satisfied with surrendering to the sentence of peak oil but to expand our imagination and our desires to overcome the status quo and do what those who think small said was impossible. Instead of surrendering to the prospect that the world and the economy was doomed because of peak oil, there are those who say we have not even begun to tap the earth's possibilities.

[Obama unchanged on offshore drilling despite spill](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Barack Obama has no plans to reconsider his proposal for new offshore oil drilling in the aftermath of an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the White House said on Friday.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the administration had taken swift action to ensure the safety of workers and the environment after the spill, which on Thursday measured one mile by five miles.

Asked whether Obama had second thoughts on offshore drilling, Gibbs said, "No."

[China's \\$20B Loan to Venezuela to Be Paid with Oil](#)

Oil-rich Venezuela will send resource-hungry China 100,000 barrels a day of crude oil for the next 10 years to pay for a \$20 billion loan agreed to over the weekend, Venezuela Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez said Thursday.

Ramirez, who is also the president of state-run Petroleos de Venezuela, or PDVSA, didn't indicate any specific price for the oil that may have been agreed to by the two nations. The average price for Venezuela's basket of crude oil and refined products began this week at about \$75 a barrel.

[Stuart Staniford: When does surplus = resilience?](#)

In this post, I want to explore the idea that there is at least one important class of threats where we might expect modern civilization to be much more resilient than past civilizations. Specifically, modern civilization operates at far higher levels of economic surplus than past civilizations, and this means that it is in a position to devote far higher levels of economic resources on solving certain kinds of problems.

[Come to the largest climate rally ever on the D.C. mall on April 25](#)

Earth Day Network is organizing a huge event on the Mall in Washington D.C. on April 25. The goal is to demand tough, effective climate legislation and a swift transition away from 19th century energy sources.

"So what?" you may be asking yourself. There have been a lot of climate rallies over the last 25 years and Congress still hasn't managed to pass a law. Why should I come to this one?

Let me count the ways ...

[Zimbabwe: Energy crisis set to worsen](#)

ENERGY problems besetting the country are set to worsen for the rest of this month as it emerged yesterday that only one unit at Hwange Thermal Power Station is operational. According to a recent power generation status report, Hwange Power Station is producing a mere 70 Megawatts against an installed capacity of 750 megawatts owing to breakdowns in other five units.

[South Africa - National integrated resource plan for electricity: a document to shape our future](#)

The document describes the current state of the South African electricity supply industry as characterised by inefficiencies in the current electricity structure, a lack of transparency, inefficient regulation, a lack of competition and conflicts of interest.

The document also argues that independence from ownership and control by market participants is key to the success of an independent system operator, so the operator does not favour one over another and independence is not just a matter of fairness – it has real consequences - and the transmission network must also be independent from the participants.

[Bangladesh: Coal seen as panacea to power crisis](#)

The participants were unanimous on establishing coal-based power projects when other hydrocarbon resources on sharp decline.

Observing coal the only adequate natural resources for generating power to feed the ever growing demands, they recommended formulation of a coal policy to accelerate coal mining for power plants.

[Earth Day energy crisis: Pakistan plans shorter work week, curfews](#)

Amid fears that severe energy shortages could touch off riots, Pakistan will announce drastic measures this week to save electricity, including a shorter workweek and restrictions on nighttime wedding celebrations, government officials said Wednesday.

With power outages lasting up to 20 hours a day in cities and villages, halting industry and even farming in some places, the electricity crisis could further destabilize a vital U.S. ally. Already this year, there have been streets protests, some violent, resulting in at least one death, over the electricity stoppages.

[Pakistan: Public disappointed over govt decision on two holidays](#)

The general public believes the decision would have little impact on the issue of loadshedding, as the shortage of energy production units would further worsen the

situation instead of improving it.

As for the two weekly holidays, the people see the government employees as being the only beneficiary in this regard while the common man would suffer further, as the speed of work at government offices is already agonisingly slow and two weekly holidays would just add fuel to fire.

[Karachi upset: Power share cut stuns city](#)

KARACHI: The government's announcement to cut down city's power quota from 650 megawatts (MW) to 350MW under the national energy policy has left the citizens in a state of shock, despair and uncertainty.

[Energy efficiency is part of the solution to New Jersey's clean energy future](#)

Energy efficient buildings, industrial processes and transportations can reduce the world's energy needs in 2050 by one third, and help control global emissions of greenhouse gases, according to the International Energy Agency. Making homes, vehicles, and businesses more energy efficient is seen as a largely untapped solution to addressing the problems of pollution, global warming, energy security, and fossil fuel depletion. Many of these ideas have been discussed for years, since the 1973 Energy crisis brought energy issues to the forefront. In the late 1970s, physicist Amory Lovins popularized the notion of a "soft energy path ", with a strong focus on energy efficiency. Among other things, Lovins popularized the notion of "negawatts"-the idea of meeting energy needs by increasing efficiency instead of increasing energy production.

[How To Start Cutting Energy Losses in Your Home](#)

"See that trap door?" Archibald asked. "I think you'll see a lot of leakage out of that trap door."

He says this just before Todd Menzies, the proprietor of U.S. Renewable and Efficient Energy near Birmingham, runs some tests to determine just how much energy is seeping out of Archibald's home.

"It adds up," Menzies said. "The leaks around the access attic way are the equivalent of having a seven-inch square hole in the ceiling."

[Scientists: EPA 'Distorting' Biofuels Reality](#)

According to Jeremy Martin, a senior analyst with the Union of Concerned Scientists' Clean Vehicles Program, EPA's decision to focus on anticipated biofuel emissions as of 2022 "distorts the picture of today's biofuels." By 2022, the theory goes, corn crop

yields will have increased and biorefining technology will be more efficient and green than it is today. But for now, according to Joe Fargione, a scientist with the Nature Conservancy, “in the near term, natural-gas-powered, dry-milled corn ethanol production results in an increase of greenhouse gas emissions of 12 to 33 percent compared to gasoline.” Worse yet, EPA’s analysis recognizes this. However, ethanol has been redesignated, despite such indicators that it does not meet the renewable fuels criteria.

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[Sino-Saudi Axis on the Horizon?](#)

Nowhere better illustrates the growing importance of China on the international stage than in the Middle East, and especially in connection to Saudi Arabia. Long gone are the days in which the Saudi royal family perceived communism as the number one enemy and dedicated much efforts and resources to curb its influence inside and outside the kingdom. While China has not exactly shed all its communist feathers, it has given a new meaning to the term “state capitalism.” Today’s China is a vibrant economic player with an attractive long term economic growth backed by growing political influence and military might. Lured by its wealth and power Saudi Arabia sees China as a strategic friend.

The turning point was 1993, when China became a net oil-importer. China’s quest for deep oil wells to meet its voracious appetite met Saudi Arabia’s need for an energy-thirsty market. Their partnership is more than just a question of demand and supply, but a matter of political and economic survival. Without oil rent the Saudi state forsakes about 75 percent of its national income and runs massive political deficit—with the risk of defaulting on its societal pact of no-taxation and wealth distribution. For its part, without steady and sufficient supply of oil, China can hardly maintain the rate of economic growth needed to ensure internal political stability.

[The 2 Biggest Carbon Emitters Find Common Ground in Clean Energy Technology](#)

America's relationship with China may be a swinging pendulum, but energy cooperation between the two greenhouse gas-spewing giants appears to be on a steady track, Energy Department officials and others familiar with the programs say.

[The Peak Oil Side of Volcanoes](#)

Right now the volcano is creating a “peak airspace” condition that is driving down the price of oil...but which almost perversely mimics the effects of Peak Oil. How's that for irony? Sure the price of oil is dropping as a consequence of the eruption. But this same scenario of curtailed world trade is what will result when the price of oil rises and forces world trade to slow down.

[Bolivia, water wars and climate change](#)

Bolivian President Evo Morales calls Cochabamba the heart of Bolivia. It was here, 10 years ago this month, that, as one observer put it, “the first rebellion of the 21st century” took place. Dubbed the Water Wars, people from around Bolivia converged on Cochabamba to overturn the privatization of the public water system. As Jim Shultz, founder of the Cochabamba-based Democracy Center, told me, “People like a good David-and-Goliath story, and the water revolt is David not just beating one Goliath, but three. We call them the three B's: Bechtel, Banzer and the Bank.” The World Bank, Shultz explained, coerced the Bolivian government, under President Hugo Banzer, who had ruled as a dictator in the 1970s, to privatize Cochabamba's water system. The multinational corporation Bechtel, the sole bidder, took control of the public water system.

[Big Coal Booming on Earth Day](#)

Just a quick note to those seeking a rapid decline in emissions of greenhouse gases (and other pollution) from coal combustion: The challenge, in a world with rising populations and energy appetites, is getting harder by the day.

[Petrobras May Have to Review Share Sale Plan, CEO Tells Estado](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA may have to find another way to raise capital if a plan isn't approved by Brazil's congress by June, Chief Executive Officer Jose Sergio Gabrielli told O Estado de S. Paulo in an interview.

The capitalization plan is likely to be voted on and sent to the lower house at the end of May and the process should be completed by June, the newspaper said, citing Gabrielli. The CEO said he won't look at alternatives to the plan until congress makes a decision, Estado said.

[GM unveils SUV version of the Volt](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- General Motors is preparing to unveil a five-seat crossover SUV based on the Chevrolet Volt electric. The vehicle, which GM is calling a "concept," was unveiled at a car show in China.

[A Greener Humvee?](#)

A green trajectory can involve twists and turns. Take TPI Composites, now based in Phoenix, which started out building yacht hulls but branched out into blades for wind turbines and then into bus bodies. The buses were thousands of pounds lighter and therefore more fuel-efficient. An all-composite Humvee, a military spinoff of an environmental technology, wind turbine blades. TPI Composites An all-composite Humvee, a military spinoff of an environmental technology, wind turbine blades.

Now TPI is beating a plowshare into a sword, so to speak, by setting out to supply the Pentagon with a composite Humvee.

[Could you live without electricity?](#)

Earth Day has come and gone, but it's a fact of daily — and especially nightly — life that 1.6 billion people around the globe have no electricity in their homes. Instead, most use wood, coal or even dung to heat and cook their homes — resulting in indoor air pollution that kills 1.6 million people a year.

It's not expected to improve much, and in Africa it's predicted to worsen.

[Long Island's Ticking Energy Clock](#)

America uses 21 million barrels of oil a day. Even if President Obama's plan to open several gigantic off-shore areas to drilling pans out in full, it will only satisfy 10 percent of this country's current oil needs, and not earlier than 2020.

The implications are grave for Long Island, once one of America's major breadbaskets and now an importer by truck of almost everything. Change is coming, whether we want it to or not.

[Is it time to limit growth?](#)

York University economics professor Peter Victor takes up the idea, writing *Managing*

Without Growth: Slower by Design, Not Disaster. He argues that growth isn't achieving expected goals: eliminating or reducing poverty, protecting the environment, and providing full employment.

Instead, poverty remains a continuing scourge, unemployment is a nagging problem, the gap between the wealthy and poor grows ever wider, and the earth's resources are quickly being depleted. The idea of peak oil, for instance, where the extraction of oil is slowing down, was once laughed at. Now it has become accepted government policy. Climate change has become a matter of public debate, the oceans are turning more acidic, there are more chemicals in the air, water and land, and plant and animal species are dying off in record numbers every year. Canadians have seen first hand the limits of growth with the social dislocation caused by the collapse of cod fishing. What happens when all the fish in the seas are gone?

[Inside the "Blue Economy" with Gunter Pauli](#)

ECO: Of the 100 technologies, which do you personally think are the most promising?

GP: The ones where you substitute something with nothing, the ones where you eliminate something from the business. Where you eliminate a battery, rather than replace it with a green battery. That's the good stuff. Another one is using wind energy without having to use wind turbines. They can be built into existing pylons. A lesson of nature is to use what we already have.

[Climate science's chinese whispers: The books that separate global warming fact from fiction](#)

David Goodstein's *On Fact and Fraud* (Princeton, £15.95) comes as a gentle relief after the relentless clause-by-clause disputation between Friel and Lomborg. Yet, paradoxically, it is actual cases of scientific fraud he is talking about. Goodstein is both a hands-on practitioner of science and for many years the officer at the California Institute of Technology charged with maintaining scientific ethics. A genial guide, he shows that sometimes the deciding line between fact, self-delusion and outright fraud is hard to spot. He gives two examples. One is of a science that seemed to flout all the principles of physics and is almost certainly wrong: the widely reported cold fusion, or harnessing the power of the sun or an H-Bomb in a simple test-tube experiment at room temperature. The other is the counterintuitive principle of superconductivity: electric currents that flow for ever in perpetual motion. This definitely works but no one quite knows why.

In all the recent controversies the phrase "peer review" has been on everyone's lips. Of course, peer review is a vital part of the scientific process but it is not the final guarantor of scientific veracity and probity. The best review of a scientific paper is the work that follows, when researchers try to replicate or build on the findings. Some recent cases of scientific fraud were published in the best peer-reviewed journals. As for one of the greatest discoveries of all time, John Maddox, editor of *Nature* for 22 years, said: "the Watson and Crick paper was not peer-reviewed by *Nature*... its correctness is self-

evident. No referee working in the field could have kept his mouth shut once he saw the structure."

[Shouldering Waste on the Trek Down Mount Everest](#)

In 1963 — just 10 years after the first ascent of Mount Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, a Sherpa guide -- a fellow climber, Dr. Barry Bishop, wrote in National Geographic that parts of the mountain had become “the highest junkyard on the face of the Earth.” Expedition teams were trashing Everest by wantonly disposing of empty oxygen canisters, torn tents and other rubbish at base camp and just a few thousand feet below the summit, Dr. Bishop reported.

Decades later, the world’s tallest peak remains under siege. Dozens of expedition teams attack the summit every year, carrying tons of gear and provisions and enlisting thousands of guides, porters and pack animals. Adding to the pressure on the greater Everest region are growing numbers of tourists who trek for weeks over ancient footpaths to the foot of the mountain, where they gaze up in awe at the roof of the world.

[Oil Producers Risk Blowouts, Blazes in Search for Deeper Fields](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Energy companies delving miles beneath the seafloor for oil are risking pressure surges like the one this week that may have sparked the deadliest U.S. rig accident in 23 years.

Explorers began work on 17 new Gulf of Mexico wells last week in waters deeper than 1,000 feet (305 meters), spurred in part by a tripling in crude prices in the past decade. The threat of pressure surges, or blowouts, that can smash steel equipment and create gushing columns of fire increases as drillers probe deeper, Neal Dingmann, an analyst at Wunderlich Securities, said.

...“Offshore drilling has always been high risk, but when you talk about wells going to these kinds of depths, the risks go even higher,” Dingmann said in a telephone interview from Houston. “Once you go anywhere below 10,000 feet, all of a sudden the pressure and temperature become a lot more difficult to contend with.”

[Accidents Don't Slow Gulf of Mexico Drilling](#)

As the Coast Guard was trying to assess the potential environmental effect of the oil rig explosion near Louisiana, industry officials said Thursday that they did not expect drilling in the Gulf of Mexico’s deep waters to be curtailed.

“It’s a tragedy, but at the end of the day we are not going to stop doing things that need to be done,” said Larry Goldstein, a director of the Energy Policy Research Foundation. Eleven workers remained missing Thursday, and several others were injured seriously.

[BP pledges to clean up Gulf spill](#)

LONDON - Oil company BP PLC says it is doing everything it can to contain an oil spill from the drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico that exploded into flames before sinking.

The British firm said Friday it has "activated an extensive oil spill response," including using remotely operated vehicles to assess the sub-sea well and 32 vessels to mop up the spill.

[Blazing oil rig in Gulf of Mexico could be environmental disaster](#)

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana -- A blazing oil rig has sunk into the Gulf of Mexico, sparking fears of an environmental disaster two days after a massive blast that left 11 workers missing.

With no sign of the missing workers, rescuers looked likely to abandon their search for survivors.

U.S. maritime authorities said crude oil was pouring into the sea at the site where the hulking Deepwater Horizon rig once stood, though they were unable to determine at what rate.

[Peak Oil Era: Why the Cost and Risk of Oil Exploration Will Keep Rising](#)

Rigs like Deepwater Horizon will continue to push drilling depths merely because the company has to. The days of easy-to-access oil are gone. Now, companies like BP are faced with oil and gas exploration projects that require operating in politically unstable regions or working in technologically complex areas like the deep waters of the Gulf or offshore Brazil. Protectionist measures from countries like Russia have forced companies to look at friendlier, albeit more difficult and costly, areas including the Canadian oil sands.

[Financial impact of Transocean's rig loss mullied](#)

SAN FRANCISCO -- Analysts believe the financial impact for offshore drilling contractor Transocean Ltd. of its rig lost in the Gulf of Mexico depends on whether it can be replaced, and how much oil is spilled.

[Oil Spill From Rig Blast Is 10 Miles Wide, U.S. Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- An oil spill near the site where Transocean Ltd.'s Deepwater Horizon rig caught fire April 20 and sank yesterday has spread over an area of 100 square miles in the Gulf of Mexico and is drifting northeast toward shore.

The spill measures 10 miles (16 kilometers) by 10 miles, about four times the area of Manhattan, and is comprised of a "light sheen with a few patches of thicker crude," U.S. Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Cheri Ben-Iesau said today. The Coast Guard's search continues for 11 rig workers who are still missing, she said in a telephone interview.

[Deepwater Horizon Accident Foreshadows a Potential Disaster Waiting to Happen in the Gulf](#)

WASHINGTON - Following Tuesday's explosion on the Deepwater Horizon Platform, leased and operated by British Petroleum (BP) in the Gulf of Mexico, the national consumer advocacy group Food & Water Watch is warning of the possibility of a similarly tragic disaster involving the company's Atlantis Project- one of the world's deepest semi-submersible oil and natural gas platforms, located 150 miles south of New Orleans in the Gulf of Mexico.

Last year, a whistleblower and former company contractor alleged that the Atlantis platform has been operating without a large percentage of the engineer-approved documents needed for it to operate safely. An independent engineer later substantiated these concerns, concluding that a BP database showed that over 85 percent of the Atlantis Project's Piping and Instrument drawings lacked final engineer-approval, and that the project should be immediately shut down until those documents could be accounted for and are independently verified.

[Shell shuts oil pipeline near Transocean fire](#)

NEW YORK -- Shell Oil Co said Thursday it temporarily shut down a 75,000 barrel-per-day crude oil pipeline in the Gulf of Mexico as a precautionary measure due to its proximity to the Transocean rig fire. The pipeline known as Nakika supplies the larger Delta pipeline system and Motiva's Norco, Louisiana, refinery.

The pipeline was closed because it is located about a mile away from the now-submerged Transocean Horizon rig, which suffered an explosion on Tuesday.

The incident at the Transocean rig also forced the temporary shut-in of oil production at a Shell-operated Nakika platform nearby, a Shell spokeswoman said.

[Crude Oil Little Changed as Dollar Pares Gains, Equities Rise](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil traded little changed, erasing earlier losses as the dollar gave up gains against the euro, making commodities more appealing to investors, and equities

rose.

Oil rebounded as the euro rose from the lowest in almost a year against the U.S. currency. A weaker dollar encourages investors to buy oil as an inflation hedge.

“The euro-dollar relationship is driving crude prices,” said Hannes Loacker, an analyst at Raiffeisen Zentralbank Oesterreich in Vienna. “Rallying stock markets should also be quite supportive for oil and OPEC should deliver slightly less in May.”

[Russia to Consume More Saudi Oil](#)

PARIS — Ibrahim al-Muhanna, an adviser to Saudi Arabia’s Petroleum Ministry, said India, Russia and Brazil would become “major” oil consumers over this decade and that the share of Saudi crude shipped to Europe will decrease.

“Within 10 years, if the trend of current economic growth continues, there are likely to be three additional major consumption centers: India, Russia and Brazil,” al-Muhanna said. “International oil demand will become more highly diversified.”

[Schlumberger’s Profit Falls on Oil-Spending Cuts](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Schlumberger Ltd., the world’s largest oilfield contractor, said first-quarter profit fell 28 percent after producers cut spending on drilling because of reduced energy demand.

[BG, Eni Venture Said to Face \\$2.5 Billion of Kazakh Claims](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Kazakh government is demanding at least \$2.5 billion from an oil venture led by BG Group Plc and Eni SpA after talks stalled on the state’s entry into the project, said two people with knowledge of the matter.

[Syria inaugurates Canadian built gas processing plant](#)

DAMASCUS (AFP) – Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on Thursday inaugurated a natural gas processing plant in the central Homs region with a production capacity of 2.5 million cubic metres (88 million cubic feet) per day.

The Ebla plant, built by PetroCanada at a cost of more than one billion dollars, has boosted Syria's gas production capacity to around 28 million cubic metres per day, Oil Minister Soufian Allaou was quoted as saying by state news agency SANA.

[Mountaintop Coal Rules May Send More U.S. Miners Underground](#)

(Bloomberg) -- A U.S. crackdown on mountaintop mining in Appalachia may force coal producers to rely increasingly on underground sites such as the Massey Energy Co. mine where 29 workers were killed this month in West Virginia.

[Wind-Farm Boom Backfires in Germany as Consumers Get Cash to Keep the Lights On](#)

(Bloomberg) -- On windy nights in northern Germany, consumers are paid to keep the lights on.

Twice this year the nation's 21,000 wind turbines pumped out so much power that utilities lowered customer bills for using the surplus electricity. Since the first rebate came with little fanfare at 5 a.m. one October day in 2008, payments have risen as high as 500.02 euros (\$665) a megawatt-hour, about as much as a small factory or 1,000 homes uses in 60 minutes.

[U.K. Offshore Wind Power Reaches 1 Gigawatt on E.ON, Dong Farms](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.K. offshore wind power now has 1 gigawatt of generating capacity after projects by E.ON AG and Dong Energy A/S began producing electricity, the industry group RenewableUK said.

The "landmark" figure -- enough to power 653,000 homes -- was reached this week when E.ON's Robin Rigg and Dong's Gunfleet Sands wind parks started operating, the group said today in an e-mailed statement.

[A Big Bet on Solar Technology](#)

In one of the biggest green technology deals of the year, a prominent Silicon Valley venture capital firm is leading a \$129.4 million investment in a long-promising solar technology that is starting to gain traction in the United States.

The venture firm, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, and other investors are making a big bet on Amonix, a company in southern California that has spent 20 years developing concentrating photovoltaic power systems that resemble gigantic solar panels.

[India's Largest Bank Seeks 25 Million Credits From Cow Dung Gas](#)

(Bloomberg) -- State Bank of India, the nation's largest, plans to help farmers buy fuel-saving equipment that could generate as many as 25 million carbon credits, potentially one of the country's biggest offset projects to date.

[F.D.R.'s Brief Dip Into Tidal Energy](#)

Eastport, a city of about 1,600 people that is about as down east in Maine as you can get, has seen better days. At one point in its history it was the sardine capital of the East, but overfishing and resulting catch restrictions led to that industry's long slow death. The old canneries along the shore are shuttered and decaying, and the last one in the region — indeed, in the country — about 50 miles to the southeast in Prospect Harbor, closed just last week.

Now, as I write in Thursday's Business of Green section, a start-up company, Ocean Renewable Power, is hoping to bring some economic renewal to Eastport with a tidal energy project. Their goal is to install underwater turbines that would spin in the tidal currents, generating power. The company is one of a handful in the United States working to develop tidal power as another alternative to fossil-fuel plants.

[In Earth Day setback, Brazil OKs dam that will flood swath of Amazon](#)

São Paulo, Brazil — Environmentalists preparing to celebrate Earth Day received a hefty setback this week when the Brazilian government gave the green light for plans to build the world's third biggest dam that will flood a large swath of the Amazon rainforest.

The decision to grant a construction license for the Belo Monte hydroelectric plant came after a series of tense legal battles fought between environmental and indigenous rights groups and lawyers representing the government of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

[In Venezuela's Savanna, Clash of Science and Fire](#)

The Pemón Indian tradition of burning grassland and forest to hunt and grow food is dividing scientists in Venezuela and beyond.

[On Earth Day's 40th anniversary, a different world](#)

When millions of environmental activists gathered on college campuses and in major cities 40 years ago for the first Earth Day, the rallies, teach-ins and organizing helped galvanize action on a historic scale — including passage of the Clean Air and Clean Water acts and creation of the Environmental Protection Agency.

But even the most optimistic organizers of Thursday's anniversary celebrations in Los Angeles, Chicago and other major cities — and the major rally scheduled in Washington on Sunday — might concede that there's little immediate prospect of matching such watershed achievements.

[Climate scientist sues Canadian newspaper](#)

Climate modeller at the University of Victoria launches libel lawsuit against the National Post for "poisoning" the debate on global warming, reports the Guardian.

Four articles in the paper, published from December to February, claimed that Andrew Weaver chose exactly what data to use for supporting his research. They also claimed he tried to divert attention from reported mistakes in the 2007 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), by blaming the "evil fossil fuel" industry for break-ins at his office in 2008.

[Climate Compromise Assembled, Redrawn in Year of Senate Talks](#)

The measure by Democrat Kerry of Massachusetts, Republican Graham of South Carolina and independent Joe Lieberman of Connecticut will scale back legislation that passed the U.S. House of Representatives last year. Instead of a cap-and-trade program covering almost every part of the U.S. economy, as the House proposed, only power plants would be covered initially. Other industries such as manufacturers would be phased in later.

[Dem leader makes immigration bill bigger priority](#)

WASHINGTON – Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, trailing in polls in heavily Hispanic Nevada, wants to pursue legislation to provide legal status for many unlawful immigrants before the Senate tackles a climate change and energy bill and as Democrats defend their congressional majorities ahead of the November congressional elections.

[Like Sept.11, volcano plane ban may hold climate clue](#)

OSLO (Reuters) – Plane-free skies over Europe during Iceland's volcanic eruption may yield rare clues about how flights stoke climate change, adding to evidence from a closure of U.S. airspace after September 11, 2001, experts say.

The climate effects of jet fuel burned at high altitude are poorly understood, partly because scientists cannot often compare plane-free skies with days when many regions are criss-crossed by white vapor trails.

[Confessions of a Former Oil Industry Consultant](#)

Jeremy Leggett has undergone quite a few large career changes, from oil industry consultant to Greenpeace scientist to solar power entrepreneur. A geologist by training,

he worked with the oil industry until his studies brought him face-to-face with the growing evidence of climate change. In an industry refusing to change, Leggett went to work for Greenpeace and was part of the first Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) talks up to the non-binding, international climate change treaty, the Kyoto Protocol. Seeing the strong resistance to renewable energy, Leggett decided to move in that direction himself, setting up SolarCentury, the UK's largest solar energy company, which helps support the sustainable development organization, SolarAid. In this interview, Leggett discusses his thoughts on the latest IPCC meeting in Copenhagen and impending US greenhouse gas legislation, what he sees as promising developments for renewable energy, and why he regards culture as the key to adequately tackling climate change.



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