



Drumbeat: May 7, 2010

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[From Oil to Coal to Nukes, US Energy Is Risky Business](#)

NEW ORLEANS -- They're cracking morbid jokes about crossing off the B's on signs that advertise "boiled shrimp," while they wait for the heavy brown sludge from the Deepwater Horizon accident to arrive. They shouted "Amen!" on Saturday when Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder, performing at the New Orleans Jazz Fest, declared that the children of BP executives should come down to help clean up the swamps and beaches.

But while the anger in New Orleans -- and throughout the Gulf Coast -- is palpable, an oil spill from an offshore drilling rig is far from the only disaster America invites in its hunger for the power to run all manner of machinery. Every type of energy is risky business.

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op properties over the past five years. Weak gas prices means those debts cannot be services, so lenders are either forcing sales by existing owners, or taking over properties and selling them off.

[Cubans state radio warns against hoarding rice](#)

HAVANA – Facing a shortage of rice and anxious to reduce the cost of importing it, Cuba is calling on citizens not to hoard the grain – no mean feat in a country that is the seventh largest consumer of rice per capita worldwide.

"We are demanding discipline and order in purchases," state-run Radio Rebelde said during its Friday newscast. "Don't allow, under any circumstances, people to hoard rice so they can later sell it at a higher price."

[From Oil to Coal to Nukes, US Energy Is Risky Business](#)

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[Pemex April Output Posts Smallest Drop Since 2007, CNH Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleos Mexicanos, the state-owned oil company, posted a 1.7 percent decline in crude output in April, according to Mexico's National Hydrocarbons Commission.

Preliminary April output dropped to 2.598 million barrels a day from 2.642 million barrels in the year-earlier period, the commission, known as CNH, said on its website in an oil exploration report dated May 2.

[Petrobras sees record oil production](#)

Brazilian state-run energy giant Petrobras, set a record for oil production in April, company boss Jose Sergio Gabrielli said today.

[U.S. natgas rig count falls 5 to 953 - Baker Hughes](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The number of rigs drilling for natural gas in the United States fell five this week to 953, according to a report on Friday by oil services firm Baker Hughes in Houston.

[Maker of film 'Crude' ordered to turn over footage](#)

NEW YORK — A federal judge in New York City has ordered a documentary filmmaker to turn over about 600 hours of raw footage from a film about a legal fight between Chevron Corp. and Ecuadoreans over oil contamination in their country.

[BP Outlook Revised to Negative by S&P](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Standard & Poor's Ratings Services said it revised the outlook on BP Plc to negative from stable.

[Oil spill could reach US port for foreign oil](#)

VENICE, La. – Oil gushing from a blown-out well at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico could force closure of the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port next week, authorities said Friday.

The port, known as LOOP, is a platform off the Louisiana coast about 80 miles southwest of New Orleans. It is one of the leading facilities for imported oil, handling up to 1.2 million barrels a day and feeding half the nation's refinery capacity.

[As the oil creeps closer](#)

With the Gulf oil slick spreading, these 5 business owners are among the thousands fearing for their livelihood.

[Fed oil rig regulators to examine blowout preventers to assure they're safe](#)

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Federal regulators say they are going to examine whether the last-resort cutoff valves on offshore oil wells are reliable enough in light of the explosion and massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

[Boundaries of fishing ban expand in Gulf of Mexico](#)

(Reuters) - The boundaries of a no-fishing zone in the Gulf of Mexico have been extended due to the massive oil spill off the Louisiana coast, authorities said on Friday.

[In the Chandeleur Islands, Spotting the Spill's 'Leading Edge'](#)

Since the oil spill from the wrecked rig Deepwater Horizon began fouling the waters of the Gulf of Mexico two weeks ago, no single area has been of more concern than the wild and uninhabited Chandeleur Islands.

The southernmost tip of Breton National Wildlife refuge, the islands are home to innumerable birds and other species of wildlife. They are, for example, now believed to be the northernmost birthing grounds for the endangered lemon shark.

[Local fishermen unhappy at BP Gulf spill jobs offers](#)

BURAS, La. (Reuters) - For thousands of fishermen whose livelihoods are threatened by an expanding oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico, the offer of jobs by energy giant BP to help clean up the spill seemed like a lifeline.

But hope has already turned to disappointment for many in Louisiana and Alabama who complain that too few people are being selected. Some also say that out-of-state fishermen are taking advantage of a program designed specifically for locals.

[U.S. seeks more data from Shell on Arctic Ocean drilling plans](#)

WASHINGTON -- Saying there are new safety concerns raised by last month's explosion of an oil drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico, the Interior Department has given Shell Oil until May 18 to provide more information about the company's exploratory drilling plans in the Arctic Ocean and said they will fall under the temporary halt to all pending U.S. offshore drilling proposals.

[The Greatest Misallocation of Resources in the History of the World](#)

Kunstler is often criticized for being too pessimistic, but I find myself going back and forth on that. The case he makes is strong and the evidence is piling up all around us, yet it is still hard for me to get my head around the idea that the big changes he predicts are imminent. For example, Kunstler "categorically" predicts that the airline industry will fall apart within five years, flying will become an elite activity, and the days of visiting granny in Arizona for the holidays will be over. Five years from now?

[Dmitry Orlov on why the U.S. is headed toward Soviet-style collapse](#)

Really, there's no one at the helm now," Dmitry Orlov says nonchalantly. We are talking about the economic crisis and the way that the destructive system of our economy operates without anyone really leading it. It's a perfect statement from a man who has traded in his house and car to live on a sailboat full-time, with an excellent argument for the safety and sustainability of the water-based nomadic existence to back up his decision.

Not much seems to ruffle Orlov, who describes his work as the "comparative theory of superpower collapse." Russian-American and fluent in both cultures, Orlov has made his name on his blog ClubOrlov with beautifully reasoned comparisons of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and the coming collapse of the United States (already underway, depending on how you view the recent economic crisis).

[More Applied Turmoil: Masdar PV Abruptly Changes Management](#)

Masdar PV, the company set up by the government of Abu Dhabi to make silicon solar panels for utility-scale solar parks, has abruptly changed its management.

The company has announced that CEO Rainer Gegenwart and COO Joachim Neil have "been removed from their roles" at the company. There's terminology you don't hear every day. Michael Alexander will head up the organization in the meantime. Gegenwart came to Masdar from First Solar.

[Lithium-Air Batteries Could Rescue Electric Car Drivers From 'Range Anxiety'](#)

ARGONNE, Ill. -- Twenty miles southwest of Chicago, government researchers are pursuing the automotive version of Mr. Right.

He's powerful. He has endurance. He isn't too expensive to have around. And he never, ever explodes.

That's one way to think of the perfect car battery, which will have to balance many different factors to lure the American masses to the electric car.

[Indonesia Eyes Gas Promised to Japan](#)

As Indonesia continues to suffer from a shortage of liquefied natural gas, the government said on Friday that an existing contract to supply LNG from Central Kalimantan to Japanese buyers would likely be revised to enable more fuel to be allocated to the domestic market.

Energy Minister Darwin Zahedy Saleh said the government may alter the contract to provide Japanese buyers LNG from the Bontang project in Central Kalimantan.

"We're able to revise the contract supply since the gas is our resource," Darwin said. He acknowledged the possibility of penalties from buyers if Indonesia failed to meet its agreement, but he asked for understanding from Japanese companies. "We're still considering it."

[Diesel firms buying supplies from rivals](#)

Fuel companies are swapping supplies to prevent stations running out of diesel.

The Dominion Post has been told that diesel is being trucked long distances around the country because of delays importing fuel, which is needed because of a maintenance shutdown at New Zealand's only fuel refinery.

One industry source said BP would be "in a very difficult position if other companies weren't helping out". BP has confirmed that it is buying emergency supplies from rivals

to keep stations in stock.

[Peak oil futures: same crisis, different responses](#)

Peak oil theorists predict an impending terminal decline of world oil production, with no adequate alternate resource and technology available to replace oil as the backbone resource of industrial society. Instead of endlessly debating whether peak oil theorists are right or wrong, let us simply ask what would happen if they were right. Based on historical case studies I suggest that there would be different reactions in different parts of the world, ranging from predatory militarism to authoritarian retrenchment and the mobilization of local resilience.

[UK firm's Falklands oil find sparks mix of hopes and fears](#)

Islanders hope that the discovery will result in an oil bonanza, but environmentalists expressed concern for the region's marine life in the wake of the Gulf of Mexico disaster in similar deepwater conditions.

[Gasoline Futures Sink as Stocks Plunge on Europe Debt Crisis](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Gasoline slid, headed for the biggest weekly drop in eight months, as stocks plunged on concern the European debt crisis threatens global economic recovery and as fuel supplies reached a seven-week high.

[Market Loss from Event Could Be \\$3.5B](#)

In its quarterly earnings report released Thursday, Swiss Re gave its pre-tax, provisional estimate of the loss from the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon rig: \$200 million.

[BP Oil-Containment Box Hovers Above Seafloor in Gulf](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BP Plc lowered nearly to the seafloor a 40-foot-tall structure that may capture as much as 85 percent of the oil leaking from a well into the Gulf of Mexico.

[Gulf incident prompts policy-change efforts](#)

WASHINGTON — If history is any guide, the flow of oil into the Gulf of Mexico could lead to a flow of laws and regulations aimed at protecting the nation's waters, coastal communities and marine-based economies.

[Groundhog Day for Oil](#)

Here now is the sad replay in the Gulf of Mexico, with that life-killing choreography. Then, as today, an oil company deployed booms and dispersants, tried to buy off fishermen with quicky legal settlements, and made resolute promises about restoration and doing the right thing.

In Alaska, we saw how that turned out: after nearly two decades of legal foot-dragging, Exxon got exactly what it wanted: a Supreme Court that consistently backs the powerful and well-connected reduced punitive damages from \$2.5 billion to \$500 million – in a good year, just a single week's profit for the company.

[Accidents and our energy straightjacket](#)

We constantly hear about the global effect of China's growth and concurrent energy demand, but here at home we too have been nothing less than voracious in our consumption of oil and thus forcing our imports to greatly expand. Many point to the national security element and fiscal imbalances caused by this immense demand growth. But perhaps what might be most relevant is that we have now largely transferred on to those we import from all of the myriad elements of the extractive resource industry. We have off-shored a great deal of our responsibility.

[Germany starts financing renewable energy projects in Pakistan](#)

ISLAMABAD (APP) - Germany has started its financial cooperation and assistance to Pakistan in power generation sector through renewable energy to meet the present severe energy crisis here. "Pakistan and Germany have signed two agreements recently for producing power through solar and wind and work will be started before the end of the year on these projects," Dr. Michael Koch told reporters here at the National Press Club Friday.

[Not Initially...But Over Time YES](#)

Today, the World could certainly make the transition to a more renewable source of products and fuels, but the economies which support the World would never recover from a rampant uncontrolled change. The monies invested by Aramco, can be considered "lunch money" in the overall picture but certainly represent a great leading effort and benchmark for other companies to follow suit. What the Saudis' realize and what the rest of the World wants to pretend does not represent reality is simply this; the World will eventually run out of oil, and the people in power have only one fear...loosing their power.

[National Grid Agrees to Buy 50% of Cape Wind Power](#)

(Bloomberg) -- National Grid Plc, an owner of utilities in the U.S. and U.K., will seek regulatory approval to sign a contract to buy half of the power output from the Cape Wind project off the coast of Massachusetts.

[Low snowpack might mean higher utility rates: BPA](#)

The Bonneville Power Administration, which supplies Seattle with about 40 percent of its energy, warned that low snowpack in the Pacific Northwest mountains this season means it might have to raise utility rates.

[Study backing 80 km/h limit ignores our nature](#)

“Another study showing that making life suck is good for the environment? I think we already knew that.”

This was a typical response to recent news that a Dutch research company, CE Delft, has proposed a strictly enforced speed limit of 80 km/h because, it says, the measure could cut greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks by 30 per cent.

[Underground "Fossil Water" Running Out](#)

In the world's driest places, "fossil water" is becoming as valuable as fossil fuel, experts say.

This ancient freshwater was created eons ago and trapped underground in huge reservoirs, or aquifers. And like oil, no one knows how much there is—but experts do know that when it's gone, it's gone.

"You can apply the economics of mining because you are depleting a finite resource," said Mike Edmunds, a hydrogeologist at Oxford University in the Great Britain.

[Obama suspends new Virginia offshore drilling bid](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- The Obama administration took the first concrete steps Thursday to make good on its pledge to halt new offshore drilling projects, suspending the approval process for new wells off of the Virginia coast.

[Deepwater Horizon Rig Disaster Threatens Drilling](#)

The Deepwater Horizon exploded on April 20 at a moment when U.S. energy policy was pivoting in favor of offshore drilling. After two years of partisan debate triggered by the \$4-a-gallon gasoline prices of 2008, President Barack Obama and other Democratic leaders dropped their opposition to expanded offshore drilling.

[Critics turn attention to rig watchdog](#)

Just as the financial crisis revealed that US regulators were often too cosy with institutions that they were meant to supervise, BP's huge oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has shone an unflattering light on the agency charged with regulating US oil resources.

[Previous BP Accidents Blamed On Safety Lapses](#)

The Gulf of Mexico oil rig explosion and fire that killed 11 men and triggered a massive oil leak is not the first time BP has had to contend with a horrible accident or spill.

[How Does The Stock Market Respond To Petrochemical Disasters?](#)

In absence of precise assessments, stock market prices should provide useful information about the financial implications of the oil spill, and indicate whether investors perceive industrial pollution as a serious matter. Back of the envelope estimates show that between April 20 and April 30, BP has lost about \$25 billion in market value, which represents a 12% decline. But, can these estimates be considered as relevant and abnormally big?

[Alaska fishermen still struggling 21 years after Exxon spill](#)

Cordova, Alaska (CNN) -- For third-generation fisherman John Platt, the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill is a financial and psychological nightmare that won't end.

Three years after the 11 million-gallon spill in Prince William Sound blackened 1,500 miles of Alaska coastline, the herring on which he and other Cordova fishermen heavily relied disappeared from the area. Platt and some others stuck around, fishing for salmon and hoping things would improve.

The herring never returned to Cordova. Platt's income plummeted, severely straining his marriage and psyche. He dipped into his sons' college funds to support his family.

[Shell to court: We're ready to drill Arctic Ocean](#)

PORTLAND, Ore. — Shell Oil is ready to drill in the Arctic Ocean this summer and asked a federal appeals court Thursday to rule quickly on a challenge by

environmentalists concerned about the risk of a major spill after the Gulf of Mexico disaster.

Kathleen Sullivan, an attorney for Shell, said the company has spent at least \$3.5 billion on Alaska operations in the past few years as it prepares for exploratory drilling set for July in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas.

[Nigeria: Shell can't meet oil production target](#)

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) -- Royal Dutch Shell PLC announced Friday that it would not be able to fulfill some of its oil production contracts after a fire on one of its major pipelines in Nigeria that the company has blamed on thieves.

Shell issued a statement saying the fire and leaks on its subsidiary's Trans Niger pipeline forced it to declare "force majeure" on production of Bonny Light oil for May and June - meaning it is impossible for the oil major to cover the promised supply from the field.

[Progress ups Levy nuclear plant costs, delays start](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Progress Energy Inc boosted the estimated cost of its proposed Levy nuclear power plant in Florida and delayed its start-up to 2021 due to a delay in licensing the reactors, a spokeswoman for the company said on Thursday.

[Brazil and U.S. Ranked Worst for Environmental Impact](#)

Brazil and the United States rank as the two worst countries in terms of their environmental impact, a new study finds.

The researchers, led by the University of Adelaide's Environment Institute in Australia, used seven indicators of environmental degradation to create two rankings - one in which impact was measured against the total resources available to a country, and another measuring absolute environmental degradation at a global scale.

[ANALYSIS - Reforms needed as China plans unconventional gas push](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's plans to triple natural gas use by 2020 by tapping potential massive supplies locked up in vast coal and shale deposits hinge on policy reforms to allow more foreign investment and a gradual switch to market pricing.

Techniques that have allowed drillers in the U.S. to punch holes horizontally through previously tapped tight hydro-carbon rich geologic formations has spurred a boom in the production of unconventional gas sources in the past decade such as coal seam fields

in Pennsylvania and shale deposits in Canada.

China says it has been closely studying unconventional gas exploration efforts in the U.S. and elsewhere as it seeks more energy supplies to fuel its booming economy and is now ready to try and exploit its own resources.

[Oil Rises, Stemming Weekly Loss as Dollar Weakens Against Euro](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil rose, snapping three days of declines, as the dollar weakened versus the euro and on speculation this week's 10 percent fall may have been excessive.

Futures are still heading for their biggest drop since July on concerns Europe's debt crisis will derail the economic recovery. Prices touched an 11-week low of \$74.58 a barrel in New York yesterday. U.S. inventories of gasoline are 7.6 percent above their seasonal norm as the country's peak driving season approaches, according to the Energy Department.

[Arctic drilling opponents gain momentum from Gulf oil spill](#)

As the federal government and BP struggle to bring the massive Gulf of Mexico oil spill under control, a battle over drilling in arctic water off Alaska's northern shore is heating up fast.

[Canada's oilsands are a blessing](#)

BP's tragic Deepwater Horizon oil well rupture in the Gulf of Mexico points out a cruel irony -- that Canada's so-called "dirty oil" from the Athabasca Sands is now looking pretty good compared to oil from offshore drilling.

[Korea Gas Plans \\$15 Billion Overseas Spending by 2017](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Korea Gas Corp., the world's biggest buyer of liquefied natural gas, plans to spend 17.8 trillion won (\$15.5 billion) by 2017 on overseas expansion to bolster supplies of the cleaner-burning fuel, its chief executive said.

"We are seeking opportunities overseas including gas development, gas pipeline investment, LNG terminal construction and city-gas distribution," Choo Kang Soo said in an interview today. He didn't say where the investment funds will come from.

[Russians free pirates; no legal basis to prosecute](#)

MOSCOW -- Russia has released pirates who hijacked an oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden because there are no legal grounds to prosecute them in Moscow, a Defence Ministry official said on Friday.

The decision reverses a plan to bring 10 alleged pirates to Russia to face prosecution for the seizure on Wednesday of the Russian-owned MV Moscow University, which was headed to China with a crew of 23 and a crude oil cargo worth US\$52-million.

[China's Oil Refining Rates Fall on Global Uncertainty, C1 Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Oil refineries in China, the world's second-biggest energy user, cut operating rates by 4.9 percentage points from two weeks earlier because of uncertainty in the global markets, said commodity researcher C1 Energy.

[China top refineries to run at 2nd highest rate in May](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's leading refineries will process crude oil in May at the second highest rate on record after Beijing raised fuel prices last month amid rising seasonal demand.

Twelve major plants accounting for more than a third of China's capacity, most of them on the eastern and southern seaboards, plans to process nearly 2.96 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil in May, only slightly lower than the record daily rate of 2.98 million bpd in April, a Reuters poll showed.

[Pipe fire shuts-in Shell Nigeria supply](#)

A Nigerian crude oil pipeline shut down by Shell this week because of several fires has a supply capacity of around 150,000 barrels per day, according to reports.

[India billionaire Mukesh Ambani wins gas feud](#)

NEW DELHI (AFP) – India's Supreme Court ruled in favour of the country's richest man Mukesh Ambani on Friday in his long-running feud with his brother Anil over a family deal to share the nation's largest gas find.

In a landmark decision, the court threw out a deal between the estranged siblings involving access to the Krishna Godavari Basin off India's east coast in a move hailed by Mukesh's lawyers and the government.

[BP hopes giant steel dome will stem U.S. Gulf leak](#)

VENICE, Louisiana (Reuters) – BP Plc engineers were expected to lower a massive metal containment chamber onto a ruptured oil well in the Gulf of Mexico on Friday in an effort to stem the widening slick.

If all goes to plan, the four storey-tall structure will redirect the flow of crude from nearly 1 mile below the water and pump it up to the surface. But BP officials warned it will be no easy task.

[Oil-containment effort's success hard to gauge](#)

BRETON SOUND, La. – The Island Ann is usually hauling shrimp this time of year. But this season, the 50-foot trawler and 700 other local fishing boats are one of the last lines of defense against the encroaching massive oil slick creeping toward the Gulf Coast.

The shrimpers have been recruited in the effort to contain the spill, lowering booms of tubing material into the water to corral and absorb oil about 18 miles offshore.

One problem, though: The strategy isn't having much success.

[In Gulf of Mexico, Chemicals Under Scrutiny](#)

As they struggle to plug a leak from a ruptured oil well in the Gulf of Mexico, BP and federal officials are also engaging in one of the largest and most aggressive experiments with chemical dispersants in the history of the country, and perhaps the world.

[U.S. Delays Public Meetings on Offshore Drilling After BP Spill](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The U.S. Interior Department delayed public meetings in Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina to debate plans for offshore drilling as an oil slick started to come ashore in Louisiana from a damaged BP Plc well.

The department said it will postpone meetings on a plan to allow oil and natural-gas drilling off those U.S. states as it reviews “safety issues” that preceded the April 20 explosion of the BP-leased rig. Florida may call a special legislative session to consider banning offshore drilling, Sterling Ivey, a spokesman for Governor Charlie Crist, said yesterday.

[Gulf oil spill: Questions unanswered, residents try legal action](#)

New Orleans – In the wake of the Gulf oil spill, rig operator BP has produced apologies, jobs for local fishermen to aid in the recovery efforts, and a promise to pay for all

cleanup costs.

But what it hasn't yet produced are answers to why the explosion happened and how exactly it plans to compensate local fishermen – unanswered questions that, three weeks after the explosion, are frustrating all those affected by the disaster, including leaders of gulf coast states and fishing operators.

[Clarifying Questions of Liability, Cleanup and Consequences](#)

As the crisis has unfolded, confusion has soared about the oil spill's gravity, the potential effects on coastal residents, the risks to wildlife and who will foot the costs of the cleanup.

Following is an oil spill primer.

[U.S. exempted BP rig from environmental study](#)

The Interior Department exempted BP's calamitous Gulf of Mexico drilling operation from a detailed environmental impact analysis last year, according to government documents, after three reviews of the area concluded that a massive oil spill was unlikely.

[Napolitano: Gulf oil spill a long-term event](#)

BILOXI, Miss. (AP) -- Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano is warning the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a long-term event.

Napolitano said Thursday during a visit to Biloxi that she doesn't think the spill will be over shortly. She says she is hopeful the device being deployed to cap the spewing well is successful, but officials are still planning for the worst.

[Gulf spill will "forever" change drilling-BP exec](#)

BOSTON (Reuters) - The explosion and sinking of a BP Plc oil rig and subsequent massive oil spill will "forever" change the offshore drilling industry, a top executive with the London-based oil giant said on Thursday.

"There is no doubt that this event will change the offshore industry forever, around the globe," said Robert Dudley, executive vice president for the Americas and Asia at BP.

[China's Coal at Discount, Signaling Import Drop](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Coal prices in China are their cheapest in 20 months against the benchmark Australian grades, signaling shipments to the world's second-largest energy user are poised to fall.

[Red China, Green China](#)

WITH the disastrous oil spill in the Gulf, talk has once again turned to clean energy. What few people appreciate is that the demand for everything from solar panels to energy-efficient light bulbs is already booming. Worldwide, \$162 billion was spent in new clean-tech investments in 2009 alone.

The United States, with its expertise, capital and entrepreneurial spirit, is well positioned to dominate what could easily be the biggest market of the 21st century. But as the most recent delay over the Senate energy bill shows, the country is missing a key ingredient in shaping an effective clean-tech policy: the political will to encourage the innovation, manufacturing and investment necessary to bring these new technologies to market. And the longer America drags its feet, the more it cedes this enormous potential source of national wealth to the only other country able to capture it — China.

[Patent Pending: The Fast Track](#)

Inventors of green technology can request that their patents be placed in an accelerated queue at the federal patent office.

[Areva 'Confident' South Africa Will Revive Nuclear Plan in 2010](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Areva SA, the world's biggest builder of nuclear reactors, is "confident" South Africa will revive a plan to build a nuclear plant this year, said Mohammed Madhi, chairman of the company's local operations.

[Hawaii chosen as manufacturing site for electric mini-cars](#)

A South Korea-based company has committed to build a \$200 million assembly plant on O'ahu that would turn out two-seat electric cars and other vehicles and employ as many as 400 people.

[Chevy Volt Faces Its Uphill Battle With "Mountain Mode"](#)

The Mountain Mode option gathers an energy reserve in the lithium-ion battery so that the car has the full power of both the gasoline engine and the electric powertrain behind

it for, say, navigating a series of San Francisco inclines. If a Volt is climbing thousands of feet at high speeds, Mountain Mode can also run the engine at a higher speed to deliver maximum output. The latter feature requires that drivers select Mountain Mode relatively far in advance so that the car has time to gather electric battery reserves.

[Deflation Investing Strategy: 5 Things You Should Know](#)

For example, silver is more volatile than gold, due to it's industrial demand – that works like leverage – great when prices are going up (if you're long) – but very bad when prices go down. I think we'll see single digit silver again before we see silver north of \$25.

Same goes for oil – peak oil or not, if demand hits the road for a year or two, we could see an instant replay of what happened to natural gas. Where all of a sudden there's more supply than anyone knows what do do with, and prices collapse.

Crude oil collapsed into the \$30's last time, and I suspect it could drop even lower this time around.

[Stock Market Investors In the Land of the Blind](#)

“Energy” holds the key. That's where we should be focusing.

Having said this, there can be no quick fixes or silver bullets. Neither can anyone be allowed to “corner the market” in energy. Ultimately, it's precisely because the market in oil was “cornered” flowing from decisions dating back to 1917 (and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire), that we are now witnessing these particular sell signals. The world has passed Peak Oil and we have been caught flat footed because the oil and coal lobbies were happy to maintain the status quo – which is why the US and Australia did not ratify Kyoto. In maintaining the status quo, the door was opened to “management” of the economy by the bankers. They thought they could print their way out of the economic problems. This opened the door to greed, graft and corruption.

[Oil Gusher in Gulf: Energy Gluttony, not Oil Addiction, is Greater Challenge](#)

It's crazy that everyone was blindsided by the unprecedented BP oil rig explosion and oil well disaster, when it or a similar event had to happen eventually. Indeed, we now have a "new" wrinkle for petrocollapse. Petrocollapse has mostly referred to the effects of peak oil, but all is ecological in the final analysis.

[Sickening ourselves on oil](#)

So, here we are again, watching – most of us helplessly – as a huge oil spill wreaks

ecological chaos. This time, it's the Gulf of Mexico and the states there arrayed who will be the direct targets of the latest mishap, although we'll all pay, in some way, soon enough.

[There will be blood—for oil](#)

I could talk about lobbying by big oil companies and the horrid evils of oil monopolies ruling the actions of our government. I could talk about peak oil—estimates of when it will occur and the effects it will have on our way of life—and why this is evidence of the need to shift away from dependence on oil.

I could go on and on. But I'm sure you've heard it all.

And even if I did ramble on with all of this, it probably wouldn't change your opinion anyway.

[E.ON Calls in 110-Meter Crane to Help Cut Acid Rain](#)

(Bloomberg) -- E.ON AG is bringing one of the world's tallest cranes to central England in a 300 million-pound (\$441 million) plan to keep a coal-fired plant running even after Europe clamps down on acid rain.

E.ON U.K.'s Ratcliffe plant in Nottingham will be the first in Britain to install a nitrogen-oxide scrubber. The unit of Germany's largest utility is betting that tall cranes needed to retrofit smokestacks may eventually be hard to come by, even though European Union lawmakers voted this week to move more slowly to restrict gases tied to acid rain and global warming.

[Oil Spill May Spur Support for U.S. Climate Bill, Browner Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The BP Plc oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico may help galvanize support for climate-change legislation to overhaul U.S. energy policy, White House adviser Carol Browner said.

"This accident, this tragedy, is actually heightening people's interest in energy in this country and in wanting a different energy plan," Browner, President Barack Obama's adviser on energy and climate change, said in an interview on Bloomberg Television's "Political Capital With Al Hunt" airing this weekend.

[Tape Exposes Rich-Poor Tussle in Copenhagen](#)

Here's a quick note about a remarkable multimedia report in Der Spiegel (English) built

around recordings made during the tumultuous back-room discussions by an array of world leaders in the final stages of climate talks last December in Copenhagen. Excerpts of “accidental” audio recordings of the discussions obtained by Der Spiegel vividly display the deep rifts between China and India, on the one hand, and European leaders and other industrialized powers on the other.

[Is a Drop in U.S. CO₂ a Blip or Trend?](#)

Dr. Schipper, who has spent many years sifting data on home size, heating bills, appliance purchases, driving habits, freight shipments and other activities that indirectly gauge the use of different fuels, sent me a note about the challenge of gauging trends during turbulent economic times. One big issue, he said, is that the Department of Energy has stopped tracking many lines of data that matter.

[Still Under Attack, Climate Scientists Fight Back](#)

Has any field suffered a faster drop in public confidence than climate science? Two and a half years ago, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was finishing up its widely acclaimed fourth assessment on global warming, which made an unequivocal case for the threat of man-made climate change. For its work, the IPCC was rewarded with the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize — shared with Al Gore for his green advocacy — and polls showed strong concern over global warming, even in the U.S. By the time of President Barack Obama's election in 2008, the stage seemed set for climate science to go from the professional journals to the stuff of legislation.

But that was then. Thanks in part to the events of "Climategate" last November — when someone hacked and released thousands of emails and documents from the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at Britain's East Anglia University — climate scientists now find themselves under fire.

[China's Energy Use Threatens Goals on Warming](#)

HONG KONG — Even as China has set ambitious goals for itself in clean-energy production and reduction of global warming gases, the country's surging demand for power from oil and coal has led to the largest six-month increase in the tonnage of human generated greenhouse gases ever by a single country.

China's leaders are so concerned about rising energy use and declining energy efficiency that the cabinet held a special meeting this week to discuss the problem, according to a statement Thursday from the ministry of industry and information technology. Coal-fired electricity and oil sales each climbed 24 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier, on the heels of similar increases in the fourth quarter



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