



Drumbeat: May 14, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on May 14, 2010 - 9:13am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Q. and A.: The Population Guru](#)

Paul Ehrlich, the biologist and professor of population studies at Stanford University, is best known for his 1968 book "The Population Bomb."

The book gained him as many fans as critics with its stern warnings about the impact of population growth, and Dr. Ehrlich continues to explore this subject in his teaching and writing, often collaborating with his wife, Anne Ehrlich.

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e in financial reports from Jiuquan's emerging wind-power network prove that, without state assistance or more preferential policies, limitless winds do not translate into limitless profits.

[Lisa Margonelli: 7 Ideas for Armchair Oil Spill Regulators](#)

Drill here often? Then register your ship here, too--and pay some taxes.

I noted yesterday that though Transocean was in fact a company largely formed in Houston, it registered itself in the Cayman Islands so it didn't pay U.S. taxes. In 2008, company brass moved to Switzerland, avoiding U.S. income taxes as well. Even more problematic, their drilling ships are registered in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, which is officially responsible for inspections but actually leaves the work up to a classification society. Under the Jones Act, only U.S.-owned ships can do coastal shipping. Do we want to allow "non-U.S. rigs" from "non-U.S. companies" to drill off our coasts?

[Barack Obama: No more cosyng up to oil industry](#)

US President Barack Obama has vowed to end the "cosy relationship" between oil companies and US regulators in the light of the Gulf of Mexico disaster.

Promising "relentless" efforts to stop the oil leak, he rebuked oil industry executives for seeking to pass on blame for the disaster in Congress.

[Proposed spill penalty: A year of profits](#)

NEW YORK (CNMoney.com) -- Companies responsible for oil spills could be forced to give up a year's worth of profits under a bill introduced in the Senate on Thursday.

The Oil Spill Response and Assistance Act was proposed in response to BP's Gulf of Mexico oil spill. The bill would double the current \$75 million cap on economic damages to \$150 million or expose a company to damages equal to the last four quarters of its profits, whichever is greater.

[Environmental analysis: Oil spill disaster 'could lead to oil crisis'](#)

The oil industry is likely to suffer as awareness of the risks of drilling grows among environmentalists, an oil and energy group has said.

BP's recent oil spill off the Gulf of Mexico may cost the company more in the long-term as major organisations could join the lobby against the oil industry for its harmful effect on the environment, according to the UK Industry Task-Force on Peak Oil and Energy Security.

Spokesman John Miles said: "There is likely to be a massive outcry against the environmental risk of drilling in extreme locations and operations may get suspended."

[Disastrous oil spill further greases the energy crisis](#)

Americans act as if gasoline comes from a pump and electricity from a switch. But a recent string of environmental and human disasters reminds us that there are consequences to our cravings for cheap energy.

[2 oyster areas reopen in Gulf ahead of oil slick](#)

NEW ORLEANS, La. — Louisiana health officials reopened two prime oyster areas Friday to give harvesters a chance to gather as many oysters as they can ahead of a Gulf of Mexico oil slick that has been spreading west from the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

"It'll keep the wolf away from the door for a number of people," Al Sunseri, co-owner of P&J Oyster Co. in the French Quarter, said of the move by the Department of Health and Hospitals. He said he had been close to running out of oysters to shuck for restaurants in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast.

[US Coast Guard treating oil spill as "catastrophic"](#)

DAUPHIN ISLAND, Ala. (Reuters) - The spreading oil slick in the Gulf of Mexico has the potential to be "catastrophic", and the U.S. response is already treating it as such, Coast Guard Commandant Thad Allen said on Friday.

[US Coast Guard sees less threat of huge oil landfall](#)

DAUPHIN ISLAND, Ala. (Reuters) - The oil slick from the huge uncontrolled spill in the Gulf of Mexico has broken into smaller parts, and while potentially catastrophic, may pose less threat of a massive landfall, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thad Allen said on Friday.

"The character of the slick has changed somewhat, it is disaggregated into smaller patches of oil," said Allen, who is leading the response to contain what could be the worst oil spill in U.S. history.

"It's not a monolithic spill, we're dealing with oil where it's at," Allen added.

[Indonesian energy - a black future?](#)

Indonesia is mixed up about the energy mix, and the underlying problem is the shortage of energy. Latest long range projections from the Ministry of Mines and Energy show growing dependence on coal, rising from 36.5 percent now, to 52 percent in 2025 and 86 percent by 2050.

Although government and people seek a green future, the future will be black, or coal will have to be greened. What has happened to all this renewable energy we are supposed to develop? To paraphrase Humphrey Bogart in the famous movie Casablanca "It doesn't seem to amount to a can of beans".

[Airlines come out for regulation -- of the derivatives market](#)

(Fortune) -- Airlines and banks tend to be on the same page when it comes to regulation of business -- they don't want it.

Now, the airline industry has decided some regulation isn't so bad. Carriers have become big champions of limitations in the financial sector, especially around reforms related to derivatives trading.

So, why the change of heart? It comes down to oil. Airlines are blaming the unchecked derivatives trading market for severe price swings that have made it impossible for

them to control their fuel costs. In a note to employees on April 23, Delta Air Lines (DAL, Fortune 500) CEO Richard Anderson summed up the issue for his company: "Prices are artificially inflated and volatility is created as a consequence of excessive speculation and trading by parties with no tangible need for the commodities."

In other words, hedge funds and other investors with no intention of taking delivery are betting on oil futures, and it's making fuel hedging harder and more expensive for the parties that actually burn the jet fuel-the airline carriers.

[Nigeria's oil region ex-governor freed on bail](#)

ABUJA, Nigeria (Map, News) - A spokesman for the former governor of Nigeria's oil-rich Delta state says he was freed on bail after being arrested in Dubai for corruption charges.

[BP May Bid for Colombian Reserves as Production Slips](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BP Plc, Europe's second-largest oil and gas company, said it may bid for new reserves in Colombia as it seeks to stem a decline in production in the country.

[Is there a quick fix for KSA's refining sector?](#)

Saudi Arabian refining has suffered a lot since the beginning of this year. Three major development projects face an unclear future that may lead the government to review its generous subsidies for the sector.

[Brazil May Top Second Biggest Pre-Salt Find at Well](#)

(Bloomberg) -- A second oil well Brazil's drilling as part of a plan to swap reserves for stock in state-run Petroleo Brasileiro SA may hold more than the 4.5 billion-barrel estimate of the recent Franco discovery, an official said.

The new prospect, named Libra, may be larger than Franco based on seismic data obtained from the well, Magda Chambriard, a director of oil regulator ANP, told reporters today in Rio de Janeiro. Franco is Brazil's largest discovery since the 8- billion barrel Tupi find in the offshore Santos basin in 2007.

[Economic Woes Threaten Chavez's Socialist Vision](#)

Venezuela's economy is in trouble despite the country's huge oil reserves. Blackouts plague major cities. Its inflation rate is among the world's highest. Private enterprise has

been so hammered, the World Bank says, that Venezuela is forced to import almost everything it needs.

The situation is creating a serious challenge to President Hugo Chavez's efforts to transform his country into a socialist state.

[Semisub Had Taken on Water Before - Reports](#)

The Aban Pearl semisubmersible rig that sank off the Venezuelan coast early Thursday had a history of listing problems, according to August 2009 reports from two Trinidad and Tobago newspapers.

[Venezuela rig disaster further dents PDVSA image](#)

(Reuters) - The reputation of Venezuela's state oil company PDVSA has taken another hit with the sinking of an offshore gas exploration platform it was leasing in the Caribbean Sea, raising doubts about its ability to develop potentially huge undersea reserves.

[China coal imports may hit 170 mln T in 2010](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Net coal imports to China, the world's biggest coal producer, could soar by 70-100 pct to 170 million tonnes or more in 2010, boosting coal prices globally, if China's power use boom continues, according to exporters and analysts including the International Energy Agency.

Despite domestic coal output of over 3 billion tonnes a year, China's 2009 net imports soared to 100 million tonnes, having been forecast at 50 million at the start of the year.

[Iran's Nuclear Determination May Doom Fuel Swap, IAEA Head Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The prospects of a nuclear-fuel swap with Iran are fading because the Iranian government refuses to heed calls to curb its uranium-enrichment program, International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Yukiya Amano said.

More than six months after the United Nations-brokered offer to exchange nuclear fuel for low-enriched uranium, the deal has stalled and chances of reviving it look bleak, Amano said. In the meantime, some nations are losing interest in pursuing the agreement, he said, without naming the countries.

[UN warns rare metal shortage could derail clean tech boom](#)

The UN yesterday issued a stark warning that the adoption of low carbon technologies such as solar panels, electric cars and energy efficient lights could stall unless the recycling rates for "speciality metals" used by the electronics industry drastically increases.

Metals such as lithium, neodymium and gallium all play crucial roles in the development of many clean technologies. But according to a new preliminary report from the UN's International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management, recycling rates for these metals currently stand at around one per cent.

[Regulators OK Ameren's 'Methane to Megawatts' project](#)

Missouri regulators said Thursday they approved AmerenUE's plans to build electricity-generating turbines that burn methane gas captured from Fred Weber's landfill in Maryland Heights.

[Nature loss 'to damage economies'](#)

The Earth's ongoing nature losses may soon begin to hit national economies, a major UN report has warned.

The third Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3) says that some ecosystems may soon reach "tipping points" where they rapidly become less useful to humanity.

Such tipping points could include rapid dieback of forest, algal takeover of watercourses and mass coral reef death.

[Wild Fishing Industries Catch On to Locavore Craze](#)

Ask any fisherman: It's not an easy way to make a living.

Still, from Alaskan wild king salmon to lobsters plucked from the chilly waters off Maine, the industries have for the most part survived, many benefiting from the newfound appreciation for local, sustainable food sources.

[Iceland's volcano revealed the deep ignorance of jet-setters](#)

Why, asks Molly Scott Cato, did it take a volcanic eruption to demonstrate to us the hugely fragile links that hold our modern lives and economy together?

[Degrowth - Voices from 1st North American Conference](#)

Pretty well everyone senses a collapse is inevitable, as natural reality, and the laws of physics, interrupt our endless expansion of population and consumption. The only question is: will we drain Earth until it dies, or will we at least try to plan something else?

There is an alternative. It is called "Degrowth". A planned and willing movement to end the mad economic system of endless growth, based on endless consumption and pollution. An admission that really, to survive, humanity needs to shrink out demands upon the planet. To plan out a smaller economy, and lower personal ecological footprints.

[Sustainable business: sea change or meaningless buzzword?](#)

It may seem a misnomer as big businesses by their nature are money-making machines first and foremost, but there are ways they can reduce their impact on the environment, either through technology and more government intervention.

[Bill McKibben's Nonfiction Picks](#)

MJ: Which science-fiction book do you think is most interesting in the way it grapples with the future of our planet?

BM: *The Mars Trilogy* by Kim Stanley Robinson, which is really a very long book about how to make communities work (or not).

MJ: Which book (past or present) has given you the most hope?

BM: *The Monkey Wrench Gang* by Edward Abbey.

[Response to "Who's to Blame for the Population Crisis?" in Mother Jones](#)

The author states, incorrectly, that "Two hundred million women have no access whatsoever to contraception..." This is false and represents a common misunderstanding of the primary driver of the population problem. Many people think that the term "unmet need," which is used to describe the estimated 215 million women who don't want to be pregnant and are not using contraception is actually the phenomenon of unmet demand for contraception. It is not.

In fact, most of these women don't want or intend to use family planning because: 1. they have heard it is dangerous, 2. their male partners are opposed, 3. their religion is opposed, or 4. they don't think it will work because they think God determines how many children they will have. Many people in the population/family planning field do not know this information, let alone journalists.

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Recently, they have become involved in the Millennium Assessment of Human Behavior, or MAHB (aptly pronounced "mob"), an international effort to engage academics and the general public on the ethical and behavioral challenges involved in creating a more environmentally aware society.

[Nigeria and China sign \\$23bn deal for three refineries](#)

Nigeria's state-run oil firm NNPC and China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) have signed a \$23bn (£16bn; 18bn euros) deal.

The two will jointly seek financing and credits from Chinese authorities and banks to build three refineries and a fuel complex in Nigeria.

The project would add 750,000 barrels per day of extra refining capacity.

NNPC hopes the construction of new refineries will stem the flood of imported refined products into Nigeria.

[Ukraine president resists Russian gas takeover](#)

Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich has told the BBC he will not let Russia's state gas monopoly Gazprom take control of his country's gas pipeline network.

He was reacting to an offer by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to merge Gazprom with Ukraine's main energy firm Naftogaz. Ukraine's network carries almost all of Russia's gas exports to Europe.

Moscow's surprise offer was another indication of how close relations between Russia and Ukraine have become since Mr Yanukovich was elected president in February.

[Shell faces final hurdles for 2010 Arctic drilling](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) -- Shell Oil won a court victory in its quest to drill exploratory wells in Arctic waters this summer but still faces several regulatory hurdles,

a company spokesman said.

Curtis Smith said Thursday the company awaits appeals of required federal air permits before it can send its drilling ship north to the Chukchi and Beaufort seas off Alaska's northwest and north coast. The company also needs a final Interior Department blessing and authorizations on several wildlife issues.

[Talisman, Repsol Win Drilling Rights in Indonesia](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Talisman Energy Inc., PTT Exploration & Production Pcl and a unit of Repsol YPF SA were among companies awarded rights to drill in Indonesia as Southeast Asia's biggest crude producer seeks to replace aging fields.

The government awarded rights in 14 oil and natural gas areas with planned total exploration investments of \$146 million, said Edy Hermantoro, upstream director at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

[Crude Oil to Remain Depressed](#)

Yesterday, crude oil futures settled below \$75 per barrel, hitting a three month low. Although the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) recently raised its forecasts on oil prices, supply and demand forces suggest otherwise and point to the likelihood that these price levels will remain intact, if not witness a further decline.

[Oil Leak Stop At Least a Week Away, BP Exec Says](#)

(CBS/ AP) A top executive for British Petroleum said Friday that the best-case estimate for putting an end to a devastating oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was still a week away.

"We'll keep trying until we bring this thing to a close," Doug Suttles, BP's Chief Operating Officer, told CBS' "The Early Show", adding that the current techniques the company is using now "won't stop" the leak caused by an oil rig that exploded April 20.

[Congressman to launch inquiry on how much oil is gushing into Gulf](#)

(CNN) -- A U.S. congressman said he will launch a formal inquiry Friday into how much oil is gushing into the Gulf of Mexico after learning of independent estimates that are significantly higher than the amount BP officials have provided.

Rep. Edward Markey, a Democrat from Massachusetts, said he will send a letter to BP and ask for more details from federal agencies about the methods they are using to analyze the oil leak. Markey, who chairs a congressional subcommittee on energy and

the environment, said miscalculating the spill's volume may be hampering efforts to stop it.

[Sunbathing, and Keeping an Eye Out for Tar Balls](#)

DAUPHIN ISLAND, Ala. — When David and Darla Lindsey arrived for a day at the beach with their paperbacks and crab nets and towels, they found a mysterious line of hay bales stretching along the water, taking a heavy beating from the waves.

A couple of hours later, they watched in bemusement as a small army of workers in Tyvek pants, work boots and life vests came along and moved the entire line a few feet back from the surf.

Life on the prized white sands of Dauphin Island, a barrier island guarding the mouth of Mobile Bay, is proceeding on two tracks right now. While National Guard troops and scores of laborers in hazmat gear and gloves fortify the island for the coming war on oil (the hay, it turns out, is meant to absorb encroaching sheen), vacationers kite-surf and loll about barefoot, peering at the heavy helicopter traffic through their bird-watching binoculars.

[Nuke the Gulf Oil Gusher, Russians Suggest](#)

Using a nuclear explosion to try to plug the gushing oil well in the Gulf of Mexico might sound like overkill, but a Russian newspaper has suggested just that based on past Soviet successes. Even so, there are crucial differences between the lessons of the past and the current disaster unfolding.

[For U.S. government and BP, no choice but to work together](#)

Within hours of the massive April 20 explosion on Deepwater Horizon, the U.S. government launched an urgent and carefully managed response to demonstrate its control of the emerging disaster, sending Coast Guard ships to the site, keeping the president informed and posting projections of how an oil spill might affect travel.

What the Obama administration did not realize was how the arcane world of offshore drilling would collide with official Washington as politicians began kibitzing about rig mechanisms on Sunday talk shows and oil executives gave daily briefings about their disaster-management skills. The administration probably had no idea that it would find itself in many ways dependent on a foreign oil company -- both foe and needed friend in the response.

[Africa's Biggest Fund Manager Invests to Help Eskom](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Public Investment Corp., Africa's biggest money manager, plans to invest as much as \$1.2 billion in the expansion of South Africa's power utility that is needed to keep pace with economic growth.

[Peak Oil Investments I'm Putting My Money On: Part X, Improving Vehicle Efficiency](#)

Dr. Daniel Sperling knows about as much as anyone about what policymakers can do to reduce the use of oil. He is the Director of the Institute of Transport studies at the University of California Davis, and a long time member of the California Air Resources Board [CARB], so he understands transportation from both the academic and policy perspectives. He also recently co-authored a book *Two Billion Cars: Driving Towards Sustainability*, so he understands the magnitude of the problem as well.

[Huhne outlines coalition deal over nuclear power plants](#)

A new generation of nuclear power plants will still be built - provided no public money is spent on them, Energy Secretary Chris Huhne has said.

[Huhne attacks 'scandalous' UK wind power waste](#)

Huhne told the BBC that he thought "the most scandalous legacy" of the past 13 years of government by the centre-left Labour Party was "the fact that here we are sitting on the part of Europe that has the most potential for wind power. For tidal power, for wave power.

"We literally have an abundance of potential renewable energy and yet we have one of the worst records of any country in the European Union for generating electricity from renewables".

[IEA to present roadmap for CSP at industry summit this June](#)

This June at a meeting of over 650 Concentrated Solar Power professionals the International Energy Agency (IEA) will present their roadmap for CSP. The Roadmap which was announced last week in Valencia during the Mediterranean Solar Plan Conference hosted by the Spanish presidency of the EU, emphasises that solar energy could represent 20-25 per cent of global electricity production and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050. The roadmaps detail the technology milestones that would make this possible.

[U.S. Clears a Test of Bioengineered Trees](#)

Federal regulators gave clearance Wednesday for a large and controversial field test of genetically engineered trees planned for seven states stretching from Florida to Texas.

The test is meant to see if the trees, eucalyptuses with a foreign gene meant to help them withstand cold weather, can become a new source of wood for pulp and paper, and for biofuels, in the Southern timber belt. Eucalyptus trees generally cannot now be grown north of Florida because of occasional freezing spells.

[EU biofuel policy has 'negative' climate impact](#)

The new study conducted by Mareike Lange and Dominique Bruhn of the institute says that current EU regulations have seen biofuel production displace food production on cultivated land. In turn this has, in some cases, resulted in new land being cleared for the purpose of producing food and in extreme cases, the new land cleared is in tropical forests. This situation leads to a rise of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the indirect affects of biofuel production. Equally if biofuels use of previously uncultivated land, e.g. forests, savannas, and grasslands (i.e., a direct change in land use), it emits considerable amounts of GHGs and results in a loss of biodiversity and habitats as well. In this situation, the contribution that biofuels have in reducing emissions is virtually nil.

[Leading Evangelical Group Expresses Grave Concern Regarding New Restrictive Energy Policies](#)

WASHINGTON /Christian Newswire/ -- Dr. E. Calvin Beisner, national spokesman for the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, made the following statement today:

"Despite the fact that the scientific case for dangerous, manmade global warming is crumbling in the wake of Climategate and other revelations of scientific malpractice by leading alarmists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, supporters of policies to fight global warming are still pushing for restrictive energy policies.

"But those policies will hurt working families and the poor by driving up energy prices. And since energy goes into everything we consume, these rising energy prices will make everything more expensive--especially the most basic things like food and clothing and shelter.

"American evangelicals strongly support greater energy freedom, not restriction."

['Climate dice' now dangerously loaded, leading scientist insists](#)

Evidence for global warming has mounted but public awareness of the threat has shrunk, due to a cold northern winter and finger-pointing at the UN's climate experts, a top scientist warned.

James Hansen, a leading Nasa scientist whose testimony to the US Congress in 1988 was

a landmark in the history of climate change, said he was worried by "the large gap" in knowledge between specialists and the public, including politicians.

"That gap has increased substantially in the last year," Dr Hansen said.

[Study: Climate change puts world's lizards at risk](#)

Hundreds of species of lizards in nearly all parts of the world are at risk of extinction because of climate change, according to research reported in the journal *Science*.

In fact, because of rising global temperatures from carbon dioxide emissions, about 1,000 of the world's 5,000 lizard species could be extinct by 2080, the researchers say.

[Ambani Says Refiners Must Prepare for \\$100 Oil as New Norm](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Refiners must be ready for oil prices to rebound to more than \$100 a barrel on growing consumption in Asia, said Mukesh Ambani, Asia's richest man.

"We have to again be actively prepared to see a three-digit oil price" amid sluggish refining growth and higher marginal cost of production at new fields, Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd., said in a speech at a conference in Mumbai today.

[Oil falls near \\$73 amid signs demand may slacken](#)

SINGAPORE – Oil prices fell to near \$73 a barrel Friday in Asia amid expectations a slower economic recovery in debt-saddled Europe will weigh on crude demand.

[WTI at 15-Month Low to Mars on Cushing Supply: Energy Markets](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.S. benchmark West Texas Intermediate oil is trading at the widest discount in 15 months to traditionally less expensive grades as supplies in Cushing, Oklahoma, the delivery point for New York-traded futures, swelled to a record.

[Salazar names 2 to oversee agency restructuring](#)

WASHINGTON – Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said Thursday he has named two high-level officials to oversee a restructuring of an agency that oversees offshore drilling.

Salazar previously said he wants to split the Minerals Management Service in two. One agency would be charged with inspecting oil rigs, investigating oil companies and enforcing safety regulations, while the other would oversee leases for drilling and

collection of billions of dollars in royalties.

[Saras Says Refining Margins Will Recover on Stronger Economy](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saras SpA, owner of the largest oil refinery in the Mediterranean, swung to a loss in the first quarter and said refining margins are likely to improve as the economy picks up.

[India Acquires Russian Oil Company](#)

NEW DELHI - India has acquired a Russian oil company and bought equity stake in an oil field project in Venezuela through consortium route, the Rajya Sabha was informed on May 4.

Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Jitin Prasada said, "we have recently acquired a Russian oil company named Imperial Energy through ONGC Videsh. Apart from this we have acquired 18 per cent equity share in a Venezuelan field project through consortium mode."

[Aban Offshore Falls Most in 18 Years After Rig Sinks](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Aban Offshore Ltd., India's largest oil rig company, fell the most in almost 18 years as Venezuela started investigating the sinking of a natural-gas platform leased by a unit to state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela SA.

Aban shares fell 18 percent to 832.25 rupees at the close in Mumbai, the biggest decline since July 17, 1992. The stock has dropped 35 percent this year compared with a 3 percent fall in the benchmark Sensitive Index.

[Obama eyes 'next steps' in oil spill](#)

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana (AFP) – US President Barack Obama meets with top advisers Friday to determine the "next steps" in trying to stem a sea of oil lapping the fragile Gulf Coast as BP readies its latest containment bid.

Obama, who the White House said was "deeply frustrated" that the leak has not been plugged three weeks since a spectacular explosion rocked an offshore drilling platform, has increased pressure on rig-operator BP as experts raised questions over exactly how much oil is spilling into the Gulf of Mexico.

Experts said the spill may actually be at least 10 times worse than the US Coast Guard's official estimate that 5,000 barrels (210,000 gallons) of crude were gushing from a

ruptured well each day.

[Pressure mounts on BP as Obama eyes 'next steps'](#)

PORT FOURCHON, La. (Reuters) – Political pressure mounted on Friday for BP to show progress plugging a massive oil leak while residents of coastal Florida, Mississippi and Alabama learned the growing pool of oil from the leak would not strike their beaches before late on Saturday.

The drifting sea of oil could still spell disaster for coastlines all around the Gulf of Mexico while crippling attempts in Washington to overhaul U.S. energy policy.

[Obama Sends Bomb Inventor, Mars Expert to Fix BP Oil Spill](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu signaled his lack of confidence in the industry experts trying to control BP Plc's leaking oil well by hand-picking a team of scientists with reputations for creative problem solving.

[BP hopes tube will siphon Gulf oil to tanker](#)

Undersea robots tried to thread a small tube into the jagged pipe that is pouring oil into the Gulf of Mexico early Friday in BP's latest attempt to cut down on the spill from a blown-out well that has pumped out more than 4 million gallons of crude.

The company was trying to move the 6-inch tube into the leaking 21-inch pipe, known as the riser. The smaller tube will be surrounded by a stopper to keep oil from leaking into the sea, which could be in place later Friday, BP said. The plan is for the tube to siphon the oil to a tanker at the surface.

[Spill's 'Slow-Moving Hurricane' Leaves Coast Waiting](#)

(Bloomberg) -- For Tammy Wolfer of Louisiana, the worst part about the oil slick looming off the Gulf of Mexico coast isn't that it cut her income from working at a marina and ruined plans to buy a house this year. The worst part is waiting to see where and when the oil will arrive on shore.

"The not knowing is what is driving everyone crazy," Wolfer, 42, who lives in Empire on Louisiana's eastern coast, said this week. "At least if the oil started coming ashore, we could start cleaning it up and know where we are."

[Gulf Oil Leaks Could Gush for Years](#)

If efforts fail to cap the leaking Deepwater Horizon wellhead in the Gulf of Mexico (map), oil could gush for years—poisoning coastal habitats for decades, experts say.

[Where's the oil? Much has evaporated, underwater](#)

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - For a spill now nearly half the size of Exxon Valdez, it's hard to pin down where the oil from the Deepwater Horizon disaster has gone.

Although the government has been slow to say what's happened to it, a picture can be drawn from a publicly available model called the Automated Data Inquiry for Oil Spills.

[BP chief executive Tony Hayward admits his job is under threat over oil spill](#)

Tony Hayward, chief executive of BP, has signalled for the first time that his job could be under threat if the company is unable to swiftly resolve the oil slick crisis in the Gulf of Mexico.

Mr Hayward admitted that, while he felt under no immediate pressure to step down, his career was likely to hinge on the company's ability to end the crisis.

[BP's suggestion box is spilling over](#)

Some 5,000 suggestions have been submitted through an online suggestion box set up by the oil giant and the Coast Guard, and thousands more are circulating through Youtube videos, in Internet chat rooms and in e-mails sent to media organizations.

"It is just unbelievable," said BP spokesman Mark Proegler. "People are not only offering products, we are getting a lot of calls — even here in the media center — from people with ideas on how to fix it. Anything ranging from crazy ideas to ones that actually sound sensible."

[The Risky Hunt For The Last Oil Reserves - Does Deep Sea Drilling Have A Future?](#)

The oil catastrophe afflicting the Gulf of Mexico underscores just how dangerous offshore oil exploration can be. Oil companies are seeking to extract the planet's last remaining barrels by drilling from ever-deeper sites on the ocean floor that wouldn't even have been considered not too many years ago.

The oil now coating the Gulf of Mexico in reddish brown streaks has a long journey behind it. Tracing that journey would require diving 1,500 meters (5,000 feet) into the

ocean, passing through a massive layer of mud and finally pounding through hard salt.

[Don't drill: Recent destruction digs a deeper hole of despair](#)

As we enter the third week of the Gulf Coast oil spill, various strategies have tried and failed to stop the flow of 210,000 gallons of oil per day. These include, but are not limited to, roping off the area, a failed cap system, untested chemical dispersants and even stuffing the hole with shredded tires.

Those 210,000 gallons have translated into roughly \$350 million in costs — at this point. While the news is abuzz with stopping the flow, we should be more concerned with stopping the flow of oil, for good.

It's now time that we stop paying for gasoline, along with its "mistakes," in the form of catastrophic oil spills and begin paying for environmentally-friendly alternatives.

[Doug Casey on The Return of the Crisis Creature](#)

Oil. As currencies go down, oil will have to go up. But there's a lot to be said for Hubbert's Peak Oil theory. And the increasing possibility of a serious war could send it to the moon. In any event, demand from developing economies will continue growing. The need for it isn't going away anytime soon. At least not until we're well into the Nanotech Era.

[Peak Oil: The End](#)

Matthew Simmons sees peak oil as the end of energy supplies as we know them.

The following is a transcript of the conversation I had with Matthew Simmons on the April 27 episode of Turning Hard Times into Good Times and with Paul Michael Wihbey on the May 4 episode of my radio show. Simmons presented his continuing thesis that the lights on western civilization are about to go out. Contrasting that notion is Paul Michael Wihbey, who provides a much more optimistic view of prospects for keeping the lights on, not from foreign imported oil, but from abundant sources right here in North America.

(Transcript of audio interview previously posted.)

[Updating the Oil "Head-Fake" Scenario](#)

The terrible irony of the head-fake, of course, is that the exporters' mad efforts to pump

more oil merely exacerbates the oversupply, further depressing prices, which are set on the margin. As exporters receive fewer dollars for their production, they attempt to compensate by pumping even more oil. Perniciously, this suppresses prices even more, setting up a positive feedback loop which pushed prices into full-blown collapse.

At the same time, the majority of exporting nations will continue under-investing in their oil production and exploration infrastructures, essentially dooming them to future depletion and potentially even collapse of production.

[Manifesto omissions](#)

For energy, the manifesto talks about revising the fiscal terms to stimulate activity in the sector, the priority use of gas resources and renewable energy agenda. What is interesting is that the Government's focus will be on small, mature fields, tail-end production and encouraging new investment (where?) while allowing production levels to be sustained.

Its priorities for gas development refer to allocating gas to downstream plants. There is not a word in the manifesto on the precarious situation which we have been brought to by successive governments - past Peak Oil in which the production of oil is steadily decreasing and our risked reserves of gas is at 18.67 tcf which, with current use (not including the new plants), will last for 12 years. But moreso, wherein we have become a gas economy in which LNG is the major consumer of our gas production, the international gas supply situation is in glut and the medium term prospect is that its prices will remain low, restricting the Government's ability to get the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund to TT\$30 billion.

[Vermont: Independent Congress candidate finally gets his say](#)

"I don't see any alternative (to secession)," he said. "The system is broken and unfixable, but Vermont is small."

Secession, Steele said, would free this progressive enclave from the moral stain of illegal wars and financial calamity of Wall Street bailouts. Vermont could harness an agrarian ethic, according to Steele, that would save the Vermont from peak oil and looming environmental disasters.

"For my children to be able to have a future in this state and live here and work here, I believe an agrarian agriculture-based society is the only way that can happen," Steele said.

[EVs Will Fail in the Marketplace, Says a Battery Insider](#)

He's particularly negative about the viability of EV batteries, expressing doubt that

costs will come down below \$400 a kilowatt hour anytime soon. In an interview Monday, Anderman compared the fuel savings of the forthcoming Nissan Leaf with an off-the-shelf Toyota Prius and found the plug-in car wanting.

The Leaf's battery, he said, will cost \$16,000 to \$20,000. Even if the Leaf is produced in volumes of 200,000 or more, Anderman concludes, the battery will still cost \$9,000. All this, he said, to produce a car that, when the different power sources are compared, only saves \$400 in fuel costs annually over the Prius. "In five years, you save \$1,500, which isn't even enough to pay for the charger, let alone the \$20,000 battery," he said.

[GE, Vestas Fall Behind in China's 'Tough' Wind Market](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Western wind turbine manufacturers are losing ground in China, the world's fastest-growing green energy market.

The combined market share for companies such as General Electric Co. and its European rivals Vestas Wind Systems A/S and Siemens AG fell to 14 percent last year from 71 percent in 2005, according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance. Sales are being eroded by local companies including Sinovel Wind Co. Ltd. and Xinjiang Goldwind Science & Technology Co. Ltd.

[UN science chief defends work, welcomes review](#)

AMSTERDAM – The head of the U.N. scientific body on climate change defended Friday the work of the thousands of scientists who contribute to its reports, even as he welcomed a review of procedures that produced errors undermining the panel's public credibility.

[The E.P.A. Announces a New Rule on Polluters](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency unveiled a final rule on Thursday for regulating major emitters of greenhouse gases, like coal-fired power plants, under the Clean Air Act.

Starting in July 2011, new sources of at least 100,000 tons of greenhouse gases a year and any existing plants that increase emissions by 75,000 tons will have to seek permits, the agency said.



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