



Drumbeat: June 25, 2010

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[BP spill an argument against nuclear power](#)

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His fondest wish is for everyone to be as emotionally crippled as he is, and, if they could also be paralyzed fiscally, that would be great too. The argument for the necessity of disaster is merely an excuse for his vindictive fantasies. This is the Doomer's Curse: to wallow in despair, to sneer at the happiness of others, to revel in schadenfreude and to believe that he has humanity's best interests at heart. The Doomer honestly thinks that a universal depression (in the emotional sense) would lay the foundation for a better world, but this belief is rooted in his own selfishness, not in a rational socioeconomic analysis.

[Dark Mountain Project: Defining the mountain](#)

For us, the Dark Mountain Project is an invitation to face the converging crises of our century as a cultural challenge – rather than only a technical or political one. We use the word 'cultural' in several senses. In the sense that anthropologists use it, since this is about changes in our way of being in and making sense of the world. In the sense, too, that the Culture sections of the newspapers use it, because writers, artists and musicians have a particular role in the way we make sense of the world and find meaning in it as it changes. But our list of those who work in the field of culture would be broader, taking in craftspeople and those with practical skills, and embracing, too, the

need to move beyond the 'Two Cultures' of the sciences and the humanities famously identified by CP Snow. (We find it encouraging that responses to the manifesto have come from mathematicians, psychologists, engineers and biologists as well as poets and songwriters.)

[State Giants Lured by Shale Gas Potential](#)

China is playing catch up to Asian rivals in the race to buy into North America's shale gas sector, underlining how the world's second-largest energy consumer is waking up to the potential of a technology that could unlock a massive resource at home.

[EnCana, China National Petroleum May Form Gas Venture](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Encana Corp., Canada's largest natural-gas producer, may form a venture with China National Petroleum Corp. to produce the fuel from shale formations in northeastern British Columbia.

[Iraq cuts officials' privileges amid power crisis](#)

BAGHDAD - Iraqi Oil Minister Hussein al-Shahristani on Friday revoked electricity privileges enjoyed by government officials as he took temporary control of the power portfolio amid public fury over rationing.

Shahristani, a key ally of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, said his measures would redirect much-needed supplies to a national grid that currently provides ordinary citizens with power for only one hour in every five, or less.

[Petrobras Bonds Tumble on Concern Delay of Stock Offering Will Swell Debt](#)

Petroleo Brasileiro SA's benchmark dollar bonds are posting their biggest weekly decline in almost two months on speculation the Brazilian state-run oil producer will be forced to increase debt financing after delaying a planned share sale.

[Russia, China to agree gas price by mid-2011](#)

The price of Russian gas exported to China must be agreed by the middle of 2011, deputy head of Russian gas giant Gazprom Alexander Medvedev said Friday.

Actual supplies of gas to China would start five years after the price was agreed with China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), he said.

[Family: Oil disaster devastated captain who committed suicide](#)

Kruse told his family that he believed the gusher had effectively killed his livelihood as well as the ocean where he made his living.

...Marc and Frank Kruse said their brother would still be alive today if he had believed he was making an impact against the oil that was threatening the waters he loved.

Instead, he told them, cleanup boats were placed close to shore, just so onlookers would think work was being done.

"Madness. It's just a dog and pony show," Marc Kruse said. "Send them out. Ride around. Let everybody see them. Bring them back in."

[Gulf Coast Governors Leaving National Guard Idle](#)

(CBS) All along the Gulf coast, local officials have been demanding more help from the federal government to fight the spill, yet the Gulf states have deployed just a fraction of the National Guard troops the Pentagon has made available, CBS News Chief Investigative Correspondent Armen Keteyian reports.

[Is The Jones Act Lost at Sea?](#)

Who would have thought the Gulf oil spill would make a 90-year-old law newsworthy? The Merchant Marine Act of 1920, also known as the Jones Act, was meant to save the merchant marine industry by requiring ships that plied American waters be built in the United States and manned by American crews. After the oil started gushing, lawmakers started demanding that the government waive the law to speed international assistance for the cleanup. What the White House can't waive, however, is the ongoing damage caused by the Jones Act. The policies it embodies are a remnant of a worldview that contributed to economic collapse and the Great Depression.

[Oil Spill Diplomacy: The Response from the Americas](#)

The BP oil spill also has spurred an unexpected round of talks between the United States and Cuba. U.S. State Department officials have contacted Cuban officials to share information that would help Havana better prepare for the oil slick reaching its coast. Although not acknowledged as official diplomatic relations, cooperation between the United States and Cuba is common on environmental issues such as hurricanes and earthquakes, as outlined by the 1983 UN Cartagena Convention. The inability to predict the spill's size or direction has meant ongoing contact between officials of both countries.

[Gulf Coast oil disaster: 3D](#)

Take a closer look at the cleanup site of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill using the interactive 3-D rendering below.

[Gulf Spill Could Produce Wealth of Scientific Knowledge](#)

WASHINGTON 2010 (IPS) - Eventually, the oil spewing from the ruptured well of BP's Deepwater Horizon offshore rig will stop. And some time after that the bulk of the mess will be cleaned up. By then, though, the amount of damage done to the Gulf of Mexico may be catastrophic - but will we know just how catastrophic?

[Golden parachute unlikely if Hayward leaves BP](#)

NEW YORK (CNMoney.com) -- If embattled BP chief executive Tony Hayward leaves the company, he is not likely to walk with a massive windfall, compensation experts said.

[India 10-Year Bonds Drop Most in a Month on Fuel Price Increase](#)

(Bloomberg) -- India's 10-year bonds fell the most in a month as an increase in petroleum product prices fueled concern that it will stoke inflation and prompt the central bank to raise interest rates.

[How A Regime Change In Iran Would Transform The World: A freer Iraq, a stable Middle East and cheaper oil](#)

Imagine how regime change in Iran would utterly transform the world. So many knotty, insuperable obstacles all overcome in one stroke. Let us consider the benefits. They are so glaring that you can be sure President Obama and his advisors have chewed on them at some length.

[Pakistan: A relationship undefined](#)

Is America our friend, our ally, our partner, our temporary lifeline, what? We have a superpower billeted in our backyard, it's underwriting our economy and keeping the peace between our boys in uniform and the civilians.

[A Weed that Could Bring Cuba Power](#)

I finally identified a specialist on renewable energy, a sector in which this country is a leader. In a single conversation, this individual changed my opinion completely about the marabu, that thorny bush that is devouring Cuban agricultural fields.

He explained to me that in Spain they look at Cuba with envy given the island's abundant marabu "plantations." With these, islanders could generate electric power by building biomass plants and even take advantage of the generating capacities of sugar mills.

[Solving the Water-Energy Crisis](#)

The world is running out of water. By 2030, the UN projects that 60 percent of the global population will face water shortages, increasing social unrest and creating additional risk for companies.

As demand for water increases, so too will demand on the energy system. Technologies like desalination require enormous amounts of fossil energies to process water. But burning more fossil resources exacerbates climate change, thus making water shortages more severe. And more severe water shortages mean that we'll need yet more fossil energies to process water.

[Introducing the "Post Carbon Reader"](#)

In 2009, Post Carbon Institute recruited 29 of the world's leading sustainability thinkers to answer one fundamental question: *How do we manage the transition to a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable world?*

[BP spill an argument against nuclear power](#)

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[New Energy in DC?](#)

Will Obama continue this relatively tough line as he pushes for energy and climate legislation in Congress? He clearly understands the big-picture reasons the United States needs a green energy revolution. Politically, to rely on foreign oil leaves us hostage to events outside our borders, including the desire of some oil-rich states to smite the Great Satan by closing off supply. Geologically, experts say peak oil is either imminent or has already arrived. The easy-to-access petroleum on this planet has been exhausted, which is a big part of the reason BP was drilling so deep—nearly four miles beneath the earth's surface. Economically, clean energy is a key to prosperity and competitiveness in the twenty-first century, as China and Germany clearly recognize.

[Lukoil Allocates \\$5 Billion to Finance Iraq West Qurna-2 Field Development](#)

OA O Lukoil, Russia's largest non- state oil producer, allocated \$5 billion to finance the West Qurna-2 project in Iraq as the company seeks to boost output through foreign projects.

The funds were provided as a loan to its Lukoil Mid-East Ltd. unit exclusively for the Iraq project, spokesman Dmitry Dolgov said today by telephone in Moscow. The loan matures at the end of 2030, the company said in a regulatory filing today.

[Ambani brothers sign revised gas deal](#)

MUMBAI (AFP) – India's billionaire Ambani brothers have agreed a deal sharing the family's natural gas wealth following a vitriolic court battle, a company announcement said Friday.

[Renaissance Capital Forms Unit for Oil and Natural Gas Acquisitions](#)

Renaissance Capital, the Russian investment firm that has arranged the most stock offerings in that country this year, set up an oil and natural gas merger and acquisition company to advise clients from Hong Kong to Morocco.

[Bourbon to Almost Double Oil Fleet by 2015, Sells Bulk Vessels to Genco](#)

Bourbon SA, owner of the second- biggest fleet of supply and crew ships for the oil industry, plans to spend \$2 billion to nearly double its fleet through 2015, partly financed by the sale of bulk carriers to Genco Shipping and Trading Ltd..

[Advances in Oil Spill Cleanup Lag Since Valdez](#)

Two decades after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, cleanup technology has progressed so little that the biggest advancement in the Gulf of Mexico disaster — at least in the public's

mind — is an oil-water separator based on a 17-year-old patent and promoted by the movie star Kevin Costner.

[Order and Chaos in a Bustling Cleanup](#)

On one hand, an impressive rhythm had been established, with each day beginning with an 8 a.m. meeting in the trailer version of a conference room. There, a dozen people each give a synopsis of the situation within their purview, leading off with a weather report. The crisp condensation of information on operations, logistics, medical matters and the day's goals takes about 20 minutes.

On the other, for all of the declarations that the Coast Guard is in charge and that BP and federal officials want to be transparent with the news media, there are signs that the spill response command is not a clear top-down hierarchy. When you add in the other players like the contractors, things work or they don't, reminding one of those old strings of Christmas-tree lights: one recalcitrant bulb can make the whole apparatus go dark.

[Deep Water Oil The Final Frontier](#)

BP's disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, leading to accusation by Obama himself of corporate recklessness, and to huge numbers of lawsuits for damages and loss of earnings, is also capable of leaving very long-term ecological damage. This disaster however underlines the basic problem facing all the major Western oil corporations, and most national oil companies - outside the OPEC states, Russia and a few other oil producer countries with large or relatively low cost, onshore and shallow offshore oil reserves and an export surplus.

[Indians, Envious of U.S. Spill Response, Seethe Over Bhopal](#)

In 1984, a leak of toxic gas at an American company's Indian subsidiary killed thousands, injured tens of thousands more and left a major city with a toxic waste dump at its heart. The company walked away after paying a \$470 million settlement. The company's American chief executive, arrested while in India, skipped bail, never to return. This month eight former senior officials from the company, including one who has since died, were convicted of negligence, but the sentence — two years in jail — seems paltry to many here compared to the impact of their crime.

No matter how halting the Obama administration's response to the gushing oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico might look to Americans, Indians cannot help but marvel — and envy — the alacrity with which the United States government has acted.

[We all live in an oil slick now](#)

Has our crude awakening begun, at last? It's not just the pelicans of Louisiana that are flapping and flailing in an oil slick – it's all of us. We live permanently doused in petrol. Every time we move further than our feet can carry us, or eat food we didn't grow, or go shopping, we burn more barrels. Petrol pours off each of us like an invisible sweat. The 20th century was propelled into the stratosphere on a great gushing geyser of oil, and nobody wanted to ask where it was coming from, or what it would cost us in the end.

But in this decade, the true costs of oil – steadily accumulating since 1901 – have begun to finally distract our gaze from the speed-dial. They now silently dominate almost every long-term question we face.

[Interview with Franny Armstrong](#)

Independent film maker and climate activist Franny Armstrong, whose most recent documentary is called *The Age of Stupid*, about climate change, is also at the head of a campaign she launched called '10:10', to get individuals and companies in the UK to cut their carbon emissions by ten percent this year.

[Study Says Natural Gas Use Likely to Double](#)

WASHINGTON — Natural gas will provide an increasing share of America's energy needs over the next several decades, doubling its share of the energy market to 40 percent, from 20 percent, according to a report to be released Friday by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The increase, the report concluded, will come largely at the expense of coal and will be driven both by abundant supplies of natural gas — made more available by shale drilling — and by measures to restrict the carbon dioxide emissions that are linked to climate change.

In the long term, however, the future may be dimmer for natural gas if stricter regulations are put in place to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 — a goal set by President Obama. Although lower in carbon than coal, natural gas is still too carbon-intensive to be used under such a target absent some method of carbon capture, the authors of the report concluded.

[FACTBOX - Key U.S. shale natural gas and oil deals since 2009](#)

REUTERS — Companies eager to capitalize on the U.S. shale gas revolution are buying up firms which have deeds to land with access to reserves.

Despite rumblings of environmental concerns, cheap and plentiful gas from shale is increasingly becoming a larger part of U.S. domestic energy production.

[Crude Oil Trades Below \\$77 on Renewed Concern Europe Debt Crisis to Spread](#)

Crude oil headed for its first weekly decline in three weeks, as retreating equity markets and growing supplies sowed doubts about the economic recovery.

[Analysts Split on Outlook for Oil Price on Economy, Supplies, Survey Shows](#)

Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News were split over whether crude oil prices will rise or fall next week amid mixed economic reports and ample stockpiles.

Sixteen of 47 analysts, or 34 percent, forecast crude will advance through July 2. Sixteen more respondents predicted that futures will decline. Fifteen said there will be little change. Last week, 52 percent of analysts expected an increase.

[Brent Oil May Reach \\$90 a Barrel on Rising 'Channel': Technical Analysis](#)

Brent crude oil may climb toward \$90 a barrel after it re-entered a rising "channel" that will draw prices higher, according to a technical analysis by Standard Chartered Plc.

['Carbon future: 'peak oil?'](#)

In the past few years, petrol price increases have so angered consumers, such as truckers and fishermen, that they blockaded petroleum refineries — in Britain and France, for instance.

Within days, food distributors and other essential services had run out of fuel. Whole industries were hit, and the economic losses were calculated in the billions.

Our economies rely on cheap oil. When its cost goes up, we lose stability. One of the things that is expected to happen if future oil production falls is that we will pay more to supply ourselves.

[Addicted to oil ... and to economic growth](#)

For the last two centuries, Western economic theory has been based on the untenable proposition and requirement that economies must (and can) grow at substantial rates, indefinitely.

Especially for the last hundred years or so, abundant and inexpensive fossil fuels have allowed an unprecedented rate of economic growth that has brought Americans and much of the rest of the developed world a previously unimaginable, but unfortunately

unsustainable materialistically-based standard of living.

By its very nature, an economic system based on constant and inexorable dynamic growth contains the seeds of its own demise. Indeed, capitalism as it is practiced today in America and Europe has become the proverbial anchor that will send us all to the bottom if we can't find the thoughtfulness and courage to devise a new path forward.

[We Cannot Afford To Live The Lifestyle We Are Used To](#)

Senator Alexander's remarks contain numerous fallacies about our current energy supply and its future.

First, he assumes we can keep on relying on petroleum, when the truth is that we are on the brink of seeing our petroleum supply diminish rapidly. One of the unmentioned truths about deep water oil drilling is that we are only doing it because all the easy oil is gone. We are at the point of peak oil. Supply is remaining constant while demand, especially from India and China, is increasing. Senator Alexander refuses to face the fact that we are running out of oil.

[Wizards and Energy Forecasts](#)

In his talk, Moore looks at the projections of both Cambridge Energy Research Associates, led by Daniel Yergin, author of acclaimed book, 'The Prize,' and the Association for the Study of Peak Oil, ASPO for short. He examines the question of how much oil America produces and why the fields out in the Gulf of Mexico are so important and, in the long view, so futile.

Taking his cue from T.E. Lawrence, he proposes seven pillars of energy cooperation and then examines the feasibility of someday powering most of the cars in America with solar power; ending with this final thought: "We will either fight over the last drop of oil, or we will celebrate it -- the choice is ours to make."

[Investing For A Peak-Oil Future](#)

We can say that a period of relative calm in the world's oil economy is coming to an end and what lies ahead could be a wild ride. In my previous life as an airline pilot, preparing passengers for the disaster we hoped would never happen was routine. Long-term investors would do well to fasten their financial seatbelts now, just in case.

[Oil...Apple...Cloud](#)

Apple sells personal and computer electronics to a fraction of the world while Exxon is a

Global 130 year old oil company. That's mind blowing. Everything Apple, builds, ships and sells is made possible by oil.

What does this say about the potential for Apple, what does this say about the future of oil?

Is Peak oil in process cutting into Exxon's long-term value?

[Caribbean Storms Strengthen, May Head for Oil Spill](#)

The first tropical storm of the Atlantic hurricane season has a 60 percent chance of forming this weekend, with one computer model indicating it could head into the Gulf of Mexico where BP Plc has a flotilla of vessels trying to clean up an oil spill.

[BP market losses hit \\$100 billion on spill cost fears](#)

LONDON/VENICE, Louisiana (Reuters) – BP Plc stock hit a 14-year low on Friday and its credit weakened sharply on talk it needs extra cash to fund the clean-up and compensation bill for the worst oil spill in U.S. history.

Total share losses for the embattled oil major since the ecological disaster began on April 20 stand at around \$100 billion, more than halving its pre-spill market value, and analysts at Nomura said it needed to assure the market of its liquidity.

[BP reattaches cap, but oil closes Florida beaches](#)

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana (AFP) – BP resumed full siphoning operations from the ruptured Gulf of Mexico oil well, but Florida was forced to close down popular tourist beaches at the height of the summer season as more crude washed ashore.

The vast slick has already soiled the coastlines of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, but could spell disaster for Florida, one of the world's top tourist destinations with more than 80 million visitors a year.

[Liability Questions Loom for BP and Ex-Partners](#)

For now, BP appears to be the deep-pocketed party footing many of the bills, including setting up a \$20 billion fund to compensate victims of the spill. But the legal endgame of sorting out the final tab among the companies that owned the well and worked on the Deepwater Horizon rig has also begun.

[Drilling firms set stage for a long liability battle](#)

As BP opens its checkbook to pay damages related to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, it is beginning to do battle over a high-stakes question: Who else bears liability?

Some of the companies involved in the drilling operation are laying the groundwork to argue: not us.

[Halt to Dredging Pits Louisiana Against U.S.](#)

A standoff between Louisiana and two federal agencies, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Army Corps of Engineers, has halted the operation to dredge sand for protective berms to protect the state's coastline from encroaching oil. At issue is where a federal permit allows dredging.

[Oil spill takes toll on tourism on Gulf Coast](#)

Vacationers are starting to steer clear of the Gulf Coast. The worst oil spill in U.S. history, which has endangered wildlife and stymied the fishing and oil trades so vital to the region's economy, now is threatening the multibillion-dollar tourism industry as wary visitors cancel trips or plan vacations to places where they don't have to worry about oil coming ashore.

[Democrats Fail to Reach Agreement in Talks on Energy Bill, Reid Says](#)

Senate Democrats, meeting for the second time in a week for talks on a planned energy bill, still haven't agreed which "clean energy" programs are justified after the BP Plc oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

[Nearly 1 in 5 older women are going childless](#)

More women today are childless: Nearly one in five end their childbearing years without having a baby, compared with one in 10 just 30 years ago. That's true for all racial and ethnic groups and for most education levels, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of Census data for women ages 40 to 44.

But a very small group — the most highly educated — is bucking that trend.

[Monbiot: Sunday Times admits 'Amazongate' story was rubbish. But who's to blame?](#)

Like the hundreds of others who fell head first into this trap, he should have been more

cautious. Richard North is our old friend Christopher Booker's long-term collaborator, and between them they are responsible for more misinformation than any other living journalists. You could write a book about the stories they have concocted, almost all of which fall apart on the briefest examination.

This one was no exception. I decided to check North's claim that the WWF report (pdf) said nothing about 40% of the Amazon's forests reacting badly to a reduction in rainfall. I used a cunning and recondite technique known only to experienced sleuths: typing "40%" in the search bar at the top of the page.

[Forget Peak Oil, Peak Lumber Is Coming](#)

British Columbia is currently experiencing a Mountain Pine Beetle outbreak beyond any bark beetle epidemic recorded in North American history. This eco-system altering epidemic is causing widespread mortality of the lodgepole pine forests, the province's most abundant commercial tree species. At the current rate of spread, 50% of the mature pine will be dead by 2008 and 80% by 2013. The consequences of the epidemic will be felt for decades in British Columbia.

[Northern Wisconsin region suffering long dry spell](#)

Parts of this state's North Woods and the adjacent Upper Peninsula of Michigan are the only areas in the continental USA experiencing "extreme" drought. It's the region's most severe drought since the 1930s and its longest dry period since the 1950s, says Roy Eckberg, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Green Bay, Wis.

It will take 30-50 inches of precipitation to make up the deficit, probably over two or more years, he says. The drought is caused by "natural variability in weather patterns, and I'm sure there is some global (climate) change aspect," Eckberg says. "How much, that's really hard to say."

[Drought adds to Syrian woes of poverty and unemployment](#)

SYRIA IS sweltering in an unseasonable heatwave which Damascenes are blaming on climate change. "We have to fight global warming now, as well as so many other battles," asserted Zuhair, an academic.

Battle was joined in 2007 when the rains failed and 40,000 farm families in the country's northeastern breadbasket began to migrate to Aleppo and Damascus, the country's main cities, to take up low-paying, unskilled jobs.

[Arctic Ice Forecasters Split on Summer Retreat](#)

Despite what has appeared to be a big early dip in the extent of sea ice on the Arctic Ocean this spring, a suite of forecasts issued today by the leading teams studying shifting conditions around the North Pole mostly do not (quite) see a repeat of the extraordinary ice pullback in 2007. The graph below shows the range of the forecasts for early September, the point when the sea ice typically reaches its minimum extent, compared to recent years and the average over the period of precise satellite measurement.

[Climate change debate to get radical overhaul](#)

World leaders will give final approval on a plan to radically overhaul the global climate change debate at summit meetings in Toronto this weekend in the hope of breaking the deadlock in talks for an international emissions-reduction deal, the *Toronto Star* has learned.

[UN talks chief 'appalled' over climate change response](#)

HONG KONG (AFP) – Outgoing UN climate chief Yvo de Boer said Thursday he was "appalled" at the international community's response to climate change, after the failure of last year's Copenhagen summit on global warming.

"The one thing that has appalled me most is to witness the degree to which the international community is cutting off its nose to spite its face," he told a Hong Kong business conference sponsored by The Economist magazine.



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