



Drumbeat: July 23, 2010

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[A Big Oil Field in Central Asia Isn't Earning What Chevron Planned On](#)

ATYRAU, KAZAKHSTAN — A single oil field here in Central Asia stands ready to produce nearly as many barrels each day as the entire Gulf of Mexico does, with less danger to the environment.

But 30 years after its discovery, this field, known as the Tengiz, is still running at only about half speed. Blame geopolitics, not geology.

The problem with the Tengiz field, whose lead operator is the U.S. company Chevron, is not a matter of extracting the oil. More than 100 working wells have already been successfully drilled into the scrub desert of western Kazakhstan, near the Caspian Sea.

The challenge is getting the oil to the market.

petite_make_it_a_great_power">Steve LeVine: Does China's energy appetite make it a great power?

In *The Prize*, energy guru Daniel Yergin correlates energy consumption with a nation's greatness. So in theory, by the Yergin Rule, the referee would blow the whistle and end the game now: China has crossed the bar, and is all but certain to become the greatest geopolitical power on the planet. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, IEA chief economist Fateh Birol declared "a new age in the history of energy."

Really? To be sure, many signs point to a Chinese century -- but the IEA report isn't one of them.

[China floods put pressure on Three Gorges Dam](#)

BEIJING — Record-high water levels at China's massive Three Gorges Dam have called into question Beijing's claims that the world's largest hydroelectric project could withstand a 10,000-year flood.

On Friday, the water level reached 158.86 meters (522 feet), only 16 meters (52 feet)

away from the reservoir's maximum capacity of 175 meters (574 feet), the official Xinhua News Agency said, citing reservoir engineers. Given the continued flooding, the levels could easily rise higher.

[Iran reports Turkey gas deal, Ankara stands back](#)

TEHRAN - Iran's Oil Ministry said the country had signed a 1 billion euro (\$1.3 billion) pipeline deal to take gas to Turkey, while Ankara denied the Turkish state was involved and a firm called Som Petrol said it was the partner.

"The one billion euro deal to build 660 km gas pipeline was signed on Thursday during the Iranian Oil Minister's trip to Turkey," the Iranian oil ministry said in a statement.

[What Happened at the 'Enron of Kansas'?](#)

Hard as it is to fathom, some three years into the worst financial crisis of our lifetimes, not a single Wall Street or corporate executive has been held accountable for it.

[BP could face legal claims beyond \\$20 bln - Feinberg](#)

(Reuters) - The \$20 billion fund set up to help compensate victims of BP Plc's devastating Gulf of Mexico spill does not prevent future lawsuits against the company that exceed that amount, the fund's administrator said on Friday.

[Travel industry group wants BP to pay \\$500 million](#)

The travel industry's main trade group demanded Thursday that BP pay \$500 million to mitigate up to \$23 billion of losses in tourism spending it anticipates along the Gulf Coast in the next three years.

[Hands-off approach to oiled marshes — strategic or chaotic?](#)

Three months after the Deepwater Horizon accident unleashed a flood of oil, the image of sweaty workers fanning out along the Gulf of Mexico to pick up tar balls and scoop up blackened sand has become a familiar one.

But very little of that cleaning is occurring in the Gulf's delicate coastal marshes, which make up more than twice as much damaged shoreline as the oiled sand beaches.

There could be good scientific basis for the inactivity. Among the approaches advocated by experts for cleaning the fragile marshes is doing nothing and letting nature take care

of the oil.

[Shoppers on a 'Diet' Tame the Urge to Buy](#)

The premise was to go an entire month wearing only six items already found in your closet (not counting shoes, underwear or accessories). Nearly 100 people around the country, and in faraway places like Dubai and Bangalore, India, were also taking part in the regimen, with motives including a way to trim back on spending, an outright rejection of fashion, and a concern that the mass production and global transportation of increasingly cheap clothing was damaging the environment.

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[Oil Drops From 11-Week High on Speculation Prices Rose Too Fast](#)

Crude oil dropped after approaching an 11-week high, on speculation that rising U.S. inventories will signal that prices have risen too fast.

Oil has gained 3.7 percent this week as global stock markets rallied on growing optimism about the world's economy. Prices may fall next week on speculation that U.S. inventories will climb as imports increase, a Bloomberg News survey showed. Tropical Storm Bonnie is forecast to move into the Gulf of Mexico, according the National Hurricane Center.

[Canadian annual inflation eases in June on energy](#)

Consumers paid 2.9 percent less for gasoline in June, the first such drop in prices at the pump since October 2009, after gas advanced 6.9 percent in May. Natural gas prices increased 3 percent in June after rising 4.7 percent in May. Overall, energy prices rose

1.3 percent compared with a 6.2 percent jump in the previous month.

[Oil Futures Exodus Biggest Since Lehman on Recovery Unease](#)

Investors are exiting the oil- futures market at the fastest pace since the collapse of Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. amid evidence the global economic recovery is slowing.

[North Sea Oil's New Boom](#)

I've been hearing dark mutterings about the imminent 'end of North Sea oil' all my life, with the dramatic impact that would have for the UK economy. North Sea oil was a diminishing resource that would be "gone by the end of the century" experts constantly assured back in the 1970s. But the rigs just kept right on drilling and producing into the new century – and the experts just kept right on being confounded. And it looks like they are to be confounded yet again as a new North Sea boom is set to boost oil reserves – and the UK's economy.

[Can OPEC Beat The Black Swans?](#)

Taking oil and by late this year 2010, nothing prevents the present 'Peak Oil plateau' of around 88 Mbd maximum capacity (including about 1.4 Mbd "well-to-wheel" losses in production, transport, storage) from breaking. We would then find that producing any more than around 88 + 1.4 Mbd is already the limit: the only way out of this is another crash dive into global economic recession, courtesy of the Black Swan.

[Huge Turnout for E.P.A. Fracking Hearing](#)

With gas prospectors now eyeing a potentially mammoth new gas play stretching from West Virginia and Pennsylvania to the southern tier of New York — and a public newly sensitized by the gulf oil disaster to the potential ravages of under-regulated oil and gas exploration — scrutiny of the industry is at an all-time high.

A ballroom set up for some 800 stakeholders at the Hilton Garden Inn in Canonsburg, Penn., about 30 miles south of Pittsburgh, quickly overflowed, and a blooming garden of colorful signs and homemade placards — from “No Fracking” on one end of the spectrum, to “Fracking is our Future” on the other — were already hinting at the fault lines in this debate even before the 6 p.m. meeting got under way.

[Energy companies brace for possible Gulf of Mexico storm](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) – Energy companies in the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday were closely monitoring a tropical depression that could become a storm as it crosses the

region, with some pulling workers from offshore platforms.

Tropical Depression 3, which is not expected to reach hurricane strength, formed on Thursday near the Bahamas and is likely to strengthen into a tropical storm by Thursday night, the U.S. National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

[Tropical Storm Bonnie Accelerates Toward Florida Keys](#)

Tropical Storm Bonnie accelerated on a course toward Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, where it's already delaying efforts by BP Plc to plug its wrecked Macondo well permanently.

Bonnie, packing sustained winds of 40 miles (65 kilometers) an hour, was about 80 miles south-southeast of Miami and moving west-northwest at 19 miles an hour, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said in an advisory on its website shortly before 8 a.m. local time.

[Gulf storm Bonnie puts BP spill efforts on hold](#)

HOUSTON/LONDON (Reuters) – Tropical Storm Bonnie threatened efforts on Friday to plug BP's Gulf of Mexico oil leak for good, with vessels and rigs involved in the operation set to move out of the system's path.

"While these actions might delay the effort to kill the well for several days, the safety of the individuals at the well site is our highest concern," the top U.S. oil spill official, retired Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen, said late on Thursday.

[BP's Partners in Well Try to Distance Themselves](#)

BP's partners in the blown-out Macondo well in the Gulf of Mexico distanced themselves from the oil giant in a Senate subcommittee hearing on Thursday, though their arguments encountered a skeptical audience.

"Our view is that this accident was preventable," said James T. Hackett, chief executive of the Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, a part owner in the well.

[Louisiana: oil moratorium halting much drilling](#)

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana (AFP) – The US government's freeze on new deepwater oil drilling is halting nearly all exploration in the Gulf of Mexico, including shallow water projects, local officials said.

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources said this week that approved shallow water drilling permits in the Gulf have "dropped significantly since the federal moratorium on deepwater drilling earlier this year."

[BP accused of trying to silence science on spill](#)

LONDON (AFP) – The head of the American Association of Professors accused BP Friday of trying to buy the silence of scientists and academics to protect itself after the Gulf oil spill, in a BBC interview.

"This is really one huge corporation trying to buy faculty silence in a comprehensive way," said Cary Nelson.

[Stop the Sand Berms, Scientists Plead](#)

In an open letter to Thad W. Allen, the retired Coast Guard admiral overseeing the Gulf of Mexico oil spill response, almost two dozen coastal scientists from Louisiana and around the country have urged the federal government to halt the construction of sand berms in the gulf, calling the project ineffective in the fight against the oil and a waste of resources that could have heavy environmental consequences.

"As BP appears close to shutting off the flow of oil, we believe that it is also time to shut off the flow of funding and permitting for the large-scale re-engineering of the Gulf Coast," the letter states. "If this is not done, environmental damage resulting from ill-conceived, poorly reviewed coastal engineering may become an additional and unnecessary byproduct of the spill."

[Reported number of bird deaths grow on Gulf Coast](#)

NEW ORLEANS – The number of dead birds collected on the Gulf Coast has more than doubled in the past month as oil from BP's broken deepwater well continues to wash up on islands and beaches rich in bird colonies.

Officials say 2,599 dead birds had been collected on the Gulf Coast as of Thursday. A month ago, 1,046 dead birds had been collected, according to official death counts.

[Along the Gulf Coast: Uneasy feelings, uncertain future](#)

GULF COAST – The sea defines the people who live along the Gulf of Mexico, provides their livelihoods and sets the rhythm of their days. Now it is something many of them fear.

Over six days, USA TODAY traveled 1,000 miles between Galveston, Texas, and Tampa, Fla., and talked to dozens of coastal residents in the five states affected by the oil spill, which began April 20. Many say the disaster feels like a betrayal — one that has altered their lives forever.

[BP Sues Six Former Singapore Staff for Misusing Confidential Information](#)

BP Plc is suing six former members of its energy team in Singapore claiming they misused confidential information to help rival Shenzhen Brightoil Group gain a “strategic advantage.”

[Mitsubishi i-MiEV electric car is spunky, fun and promising](#)

Using the "economy" setting on the Mitsubishi i-MiEV minicar, we sacrificed full power in favor of slower battery drain, knowing we could switch into one of two other modes that allowed max scoot if the highway speeds required it for safe going.

No air conditioning or headlights were needed this day — or the outcome would have been different.

[Kinks in the Ethanol Message-Machine?](#)

The ethanol industry is feverishly lobbying lawmakers in an effort to hang onto billions of dollars in subsidies that are set to expire — although there appears to be some discord on the message front.

[Forget contraceptives, go natural, church teaches](#)

As the pill marks its 50th anniversary this year, the Catholic Church is making renewed efforts to persuade the faithful to practice natural family planning, arguing that artificial birth control not only violates church doctrine, it harms women's bodies and the environment.

But the church has an uphill battle, Catholic leaders say.

Polls show that Catholics overwhelmingly reject the Vatican's views on birth control. And about half of American Catholics who leave their faith cite their unhappiness with the church's teachings on birth control as a reason they left, according to a survey last year by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

[Energy strategy too focused on fossil fuels](#)

The Government's draft energy strategy prioritises unsustainable fossil fuels over renewable energy sources, a climate change campaigner says.

Energy Minister Gerry Brownlee released the draft New Zealand Energy Strategy (NZES) and a draft New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (NZECS) yesterday.

[Australia shirks setting a price on carbon](#)

Sydney - Australia will not bring in carbon trading until other major polluters do and even then only if there is popular support within the country for putting a price on carbon.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard, in remarks Friday, reiterated the policy of Kevin Rudd, the party leader she deposed last month.

[Japan seeks consumer burden to push renewable energy](#)

(Reuters) - Japanese consumers will have to pay higher electricity bills under a government plan to help triple the generating capacity of renewable energy in the next decade and cut CO2 emissions.

[Korea negotiates Masdar entry](#)

South Korean clean-energy companies are expected to play a major role in filling Masdar City, the carbon-neutral development at the edge of the capital, but they need better incentives to get on board, the new Korean ambassador said yesterday.

Plans call for a Korean "clean-tech cluster" to occupy 7 per cent of the Masdar City site, said Kwon Tae-kyun, South Korea's ambassador to the UAE. That would be a significant proportion of the six-square-km city, which is weeks away from completion of a first stage comprising several buildings and a transport network.

[Beijing fund warns on Kyoto CO2 offset rule changes](#)

(Reuters) - A Chinese government fund has told a U.N. panel it supports project developers which earn carbon offsets under a lucrative Kyoto Protocol scheme, and which rejects the idea that they are over-compensated.

[Not Enough Hours in the Day for Endangered Apes: Warming Climate May Change Ape](#)

[Behaviour, Resulting in Loss of Habitat](#)

The researchers, from Roehampton University, Bournemouth University and the University of Oxford used data from 20 natural populations to model the effects of climate change on ape behaviour and distribution. The results suggest that rising temperatures and shifts in rainfall patterns alone may cause chimpanzees to lose up to 50% and gorillas up to 75% of their remaining habitats.

[EPA Employees Blow the Whistle on Flawed Climate Bills](#)

The major bills before Congress to regulate greenhouse gases to combat global climate change suffer from "multiple unfixable flaws" that undermine their effectiveness, according to a detailed congressional disclosure by two U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employees, posted today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). These agency experts' unofficial protest is also testing new agency guidelines on employee free speech rights following EPA's order last fall that the two employees remove a YouTube video they had produced on the frailties of cap-and-trade.

[Democrats Call Off Climate Bill Effort](#)

Bowing to political reality, Senator Harry Reid, the Nevada Democrat and majority leader, said the Senate would not take up legislation intended to reduce carbon emissions blamed as a cause of climate change, but would instead pursue a more limited measure focused on responding to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and tightening energy efficiency standards.

[Q&A: How Far Can Existing Regulations & Authority Reduce GHGs?](#)

A new WRI report looks at what greenhouse gas emissions reductions could be achieved through federal and state regulations that are already in place.

[China's Carbon Emissions May Reach Peak by 2030, State Researcher Says](#)

China, the world's biggest polluter, may see its carbon-dioxide emissions peak around 2030 as the country taps cleaner sources of energy, a researcher at a think tank run by the National Development and Reform Commission said.

Emissions may reach almost 9 billion metric tons in 2030, from about 7 billion tons currently, Jiang Kejun, director of energy and market analysis at the NDRC's Energy Research Institute, said in an interview in Beijing today.

[Experts: Climate change challenges global food security 2010-07-23 13:02](#)

Climate change, such as global warming and changes in rainfall, has become a challenge to food security across the world, scientists said at a workshop in Lanzhou, capital of northwest China's Gansu Province.

The workshop, scheduled from Tuesday to Sunday, was held at Lanzhou University, where agricultural scientists and organizations from the U.S., Australia, Canada and Japan met to discuss the productivity and sustainable development of agricultural ecosystems.

As rainfall is diminishing and basic resources are degrading, food security is seriously threatened, said Kadambot Siddique, director at the Agriculture School of the University of Western Australia.



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