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Latin America: A Blind Spot in US Energy Security Policy

For more than a decade, America's relationship with Latin America could most accurately be described as unfocused engagement, driven by reactions to events or crises at best and benign neglect at worst. Apart from intermittent efforts to secure free trade agreements (NAFTA and CAFTA), combat drugs (Plan Mérida and Plan Colombia), and weigh in—often too late and too sheepishly—to political events (Honduran Presidential crisis or President Hugo Chavez's saber rattling), the US has failed to engage the nations of resource-wealthy Latin America in any strategic manner.

This lack of attention to our closest neighbors—and some of our strongest allies—is quite alarming given US dependence on Latin America to provide our energy. Currently, more than one-fourth of imported oil comes from Latin America (and almost 50% from the Western Hemisphere). In 2009, the top sources of US imported crude oil (and their percentages) were Canada (21%), Mexico (11%), Venezuela and Saudi Arabia (9% each), Nigeria (7%), Russia (5%), Iraq, Algeria and Angola (4% each), Brazil (3%), Colombia and Ecuador (roughly 2% total). As is widely known, America imports more than 65-70 percent of its energy needs, which means that we are vulnerable to disruptions in the supply chain and to price volatility, which are affected by domestic political and economic conditions in oil-exporting countries upon whom we depend.

TRE, Ala. (Reuters) - The man who acquired a solid gold reputation for fixing sticky situations for the U.S. government is facing one of his toughest challenges yet: running BP Plc's \$20 billion compensation fund.

Who is Bob Dudley?

NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- Talk of the imminent departure of embattled BP chief Tony Hayward has the rumor mill working overtime on the man expected to replace him.

So just who is Bob Dudley?

Tony Hayward, who became the face of BP PLC's flailing efforts to contain the massive Gulf oil spill, will step down as chief executive officer in October and be offered a job with the company's joint venture in Russia, a person familiar with the matter said Monday.

W.House - BP must clean Gulf, no matter who in charge

(Reuters) - BP Plc must meet its obligations to clean up the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, despite any changes among its executives, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said on Monday.

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Tropical Storm Threat Passes, Operations Resume in GOM

Offshore oil and gas operators in the Gulf of Mexico are re-boarding platforms and rigs, and restoring production following Tropical Storm Bonnie. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement's (BOEM) Hurricane Response Team is monitoring the operators' activities. This team will be activated until operations return to normal and the storm is no longer a threat to the Gulf of Mexico oil and gas activities.

View Is Bleaker Than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan

A six-year archive of classified military documents made public on Sunday offers an unvarnished, ground-level picture of the war in Afghanistan that is in many respects more grim than the official portrayal.

The secret documents, released on the Internet by an organization called WikiLeaks, are a daily diary of an American-led force often starved for resources and attention as it struggled against an insurgency that grew larger, better coordinated and more deadly each year.

...The documents — some 92,000 reports spanning parts of two administrations from January 2004 through December 2009 — illustrate in mosaic detail why, after the United States has spent almost \$300 billion on the war in Afghanistan, the Taliban are stronger than at any time since 2001.

WikiLeaks: More US documents coming on Afghan war

LONDON – The release of some 91,000 secret U.S. military documents on the Afghanistan war is just the beginning, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange promised Monday, adding that he still has thousands more Afghan files to post online.

Interview with Art Berman - Part 2

I personally think the current administration is milking this thing for all the political capital they can. Nobody who's handling this for them really knows much about the oil and gas business. You have a theoretical physicist running the Department of Energy and I'm sure he's a very intelligent and high-integrity guy but he didn't really know anything about drilling or petroleum and I don't think Salazar is particularly schooled in it. President Obama doesn't know anything about it. So you have a bunch of amateurs dealing with something that needs a bunch of professionals. Even on the networks and cable news shows, I haven't seen anybody they've brought on who knows anything about it. A lot of interesting people get in front of the cameras and talk: college professors and oceanographers and image analysis specialists and the director of a center for biodiversity-he seems like a real smart guy-but they don't know anything about drilling operations or petroleum. I don't say that hyper-critically; it's just a fact.

Some new rings of power as the Gulf enters a third age

The under-fire BP chief executive Tony Hayward's recent visit to the Middle East may mark a new chapter in the long-running relationship between this region and the supermajor oil companies.

Tullow Discovers 'Major' Oil Field Off Ghana's Coast

(Bloomberg) -- Tullow Oil Plc, the U.K. explorer with the most licenses in Africa,

discovered a "major new oil field" off the coast of Ghana.

China says ocean cleared of oil 10 days after spill

Chinese officials say crude from the July 16 pipeline explosion near the port city of Dalian has successfully been cleaned up. Environmentalists say that, despite the removal of oil, damage is extensive.

Rosneft Second-Quarter Profit Advances 60% on Gains in Production, Prices

OAO Rosneft, Russia's largest oil producer, said second-quarter profit advanced 60 percent on higher oil prices and output.

Five-day week saves millions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The five-day week system adopted by the government has saved millions of rupees in fuel and energy costs, besides enhancing efficiency and improving social life of the people, a survey said. The government initially adopted the five-working day week to cut down by 33 percent or 500 MW of electricity in April this year and the results were soon evident.

Analysis: EIA Analyzes Proposed Climate Change Laws

On March 29, 2010 the U.S. Senate (specifically Senators Kerry, Graham, and Lieberman) sent a letter to the U.S. Energy Information Agency (EIA) requesting analysis to help them in their consideration of climate change legislation. Three goals were mentioned as the top priorities of this proposed legislation called the American Power Act of 2010 (APA): creating jobs, achieving energy independence, and reducing carbon pollution (in that order).

The EIA responded this month with their findings in a paper titled <u>Energy Market and Economic Impacts of the American Power Act of 2010</u> (pdf). The EIA's report focuses on the impact that the policy proposals envisioned in the American Power Act of 2010 would have on the decisions of both consumers and producers and the implications of these decisions on the U.S. economy.

Kurt Cobb: Asymmetrical accolades: Why preventing a crisis almost never makes you a hero

A friend recently related to me that the quality assurance manager at the pharmaceutical firm he used to work for was an absolute stickler for one thing: There had to be a convincing cleanup procedure for anything anyone proposed to bring into a pharmaceutical manufacturing plant. If it got on the floor or in the air or on the walls or

in the production line and it wasn't supposed to be there, there had to be a way to get rid of it completely. Either that or it wasn't coming into the building.

This friend explained that the quality assurance program run by this man was so good that the Food and Drug Administration pointed other firms to it as an example of what they should be doing. So, how did people at the company feel about this man? Well, they didn't really like him. I imagined that to his fellow employees this man must have been like an insect buzzing around their heads—a beneficial insect, to be sure—but a buzzing insect nevertheless.

Turkey: Iran to respond to concerns about nuclear swap deal

Istanbul - Iran will respond to concerns about the nuclear swap deal it signed with Turkey and Brazil in May in a letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Monday, Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Sunday.

'Iran notified us that they will submit a letter to the IAEA tomorrow morning,' Davutoglu said after meeting his Brazilian counterpart Celso Amorim and Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki in Istanbul.

Can sustainable farming really feed us?

After a vivid and thoughtful discussion of the organic farming practices and the positive effects of a strong local economy that has in many ways rejuvenated the town of Hardwick, Vermont, the host, Robin Young, asked a pricelessly dense question: "but can sustainable farming really feed us all?" The thoughtless presumption of the question is that unsustainable farming might possibly be a better approach, that we ultimately have any choice but to follow sustainable practices, at least if we wish to sustain our civilization.

The answer I would have liked to have heard is: "but is unsustainable farming really sustainable?"

Growing Shortages of Water Threaten China's Development

With 20 percent of the world's population but just 7 percent of its available freshwater, China faces serious water shortages as its economy booms and urbanization increases. The government is planning massive water diversion projects, but environmentalists say conservation — especially in the wasteful agricultural sector — is the key.

'Villages' let elderly grow old at home

Phinisee, a widow for 40 years, can get around her home on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., but she needs help opening jars and reaching things. She can't handle even minor repairs around the house or drive places (she gave up her car in 1993).

That's OK because Phinisee lives in Capitol Hill Village, which began operating three years ago and is the oldest of six such villages in the nation's capital. She calls the village office, and they send her folks who clean her garden, install a railing, fix her windows, bring her groceries or drive her to the bank.

Ed and Margaret Missiaen, both retired and in their late 60s, are Capitol Hill Village members who volunteer. Margaret has cleaned Phinisee's garden. Ed has helped fix her windows.

They're counting on the village to help them when the time comes.

Nuclear experts seek to advance fusion project

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) – An explosion in costs has cast a cloud over a multi-billion-dollar nuclear fusion project aiming to make the power that fuels the Sun a practical energy source on Earth.

Delays, rocketing costs and financing problems have hit the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) whose consortium members start a meeting on Tuesday aiming to get the project back on course.

ITER was set up by the European Union, which has a 45-percent share, China, India, South Korea, Japan, Russia and the United States to research a clean and limitless alternative to dwindling fossil fuel reserves by testing nuclear fusion.

Crude Oil Declines a Second Day on Concerns Recovery Stalling

Oil declined for a second day in New York on speculation that the global recovery may stall and crimp fuel consumption.

Crude oil slipped from near its highest level in 11 weeks as European equity indexes pared gains on losses among health- care and food companies. The U.S. economy probably expanded at a slower pace in the second quarter as the trade deficit swelled, economists said before reports this week.

"We are bumping up against resistance again around \$78," said Christopher Bellew, senior broker at Bache Commodities Ltd. in London. "It's going to take better macroeconomic news or perhaps storm activity in the Gulf of Mexico to spring prices from their narrow trading range."

CAMARILLO, Calif. — A survey says the average price of regular gasoline in the United States has gone up in the last two weeks, but by less than a cent.

The Lundberg Survey of fuel prices released Sunday says the price of regular rose slightly to \$2.73.

Gulf Storm Drives Gasoline Bets Higher on Refinery Threat

Gasoline futures trading rose at the fastest pace in more than four months as Tropical Storm Bonnie, the second of the 2010 Atlantic hurricane season, threatened to disrupt refineries in the Gulf of Mexico.

Chavez Warns of Cut in Venezuela Oil Supplies to U.S. if Colombia Attacks

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said his country would suspend oil shipments to the U.S. if a military attack were to be launched from Colombian territory.

The U.S. plans to assassinate him and overthrow his government, Chavez said yesterday on state television, citing a letter from a source he didn't identify. Chavez has used speeches to warn that the U.S. is planning an attack from seven Colombian military bases where it has access, and to denounce alleged assassination plots.

EU to apply pressure on Iran with extra sanctions

BRUSSELS (Reuters) – EU foreign ministers will approve tighter sanctions on Iran over its disputed nuclear activity on Monday, with steps to block oil and gas investment and curtail Tehran's refining and natural gas capability.

The measures go beyond sanctions imposed by the United Nations last month and mirror steps taken by the United States in recent weeks to apply extra pressure on Tehran and get it back to negotiations over its uranium enrichment program.

ANALYSIS - Iran oil sanctions will leak

(Reuters) - Sanctions on Iran tighten their grip on Monday with European measures to make business with the OPEC member even harder, but no-one expects its oil trade to cease as high profits and energy needs inspire ingenuity.

Sanctions on Iran affect Gulf states

The sanctions are expected to disrupt the development of the Gulf region's biggest shared resource, the giant offshore gas and condensate field known as the North Field in Qatar and South Pars in Iran. It ranks as the largest single conventional hydrocarbon deposit in the world, containing an estimated 310 billion barrels of oil equivalent in total reserves and supports Qatar's position as the world's leading LNG exporter.

Tehran Exchange Begins Trading Futures to Attract Investors

(Bloomberg) -- The Tehran Stock Exchange, home of the world's second-best performing equity index, began offering derivatives based on local banks to diversify and attract foreign investors.

Formosa Petrochemical Shuts Down Unit at Mailiao Oil Refinery After Fire

Formosa Petrochemical Corp., Taiwan's only publicly traded oil refiner, said it has halted its 540,000 barrel-a-day refinery at Mailiao after an oil leak triggered a fire at a residual processing unit.

Dalian Port Resumes Operating Two Oil Berths After Explosion Caused Spill

Dalian Port (PDA) Co., operator of China's largest crude-oil terminal, said two oil berths resumed operations after a pipeline explosion caused a spill.

A third berth, capable of receiving 300,000-deadweight-ton crude oil tankers, will restart "in the near future," the company said in a statement to the Hong Kong stock exchange.

China to buy less LNG: study

China could be set to buy less natural gas from countries like Australia in the future.

According to a new study, China is preparing to develop its own huge gas reserves and will import significantly less LNG in the future.

ONGC Said to Plan \$5 Billion Spending to Boost Gas Output 60% in Six Years

Oil & Natural Gas Corp., India's biggest energy explorer, plans to spend a record \$5 billion to develop gas fields to boost output by almost 60 percent in six years, two people with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Russia May Sell Stakes in Rosneft, Sberbank in Bid to Raise \$29 Billion

Russia may raise 883.5 billion rubles (\$29 billion) to help cover its budget deficit by selling minority stakes in 10 companies including OAO Rosneft, the country's largest oil producer, the Finance Ministry said.

U.S. official: BP's Hayward will be replaced

NEW ORLEANS — Gaffe-prone BP Chief Executive Tony Hayward — who incensed many on the Gulf Coast by saying he wanted his life back as they struggled with the fallout from the company's massive oil spill — will be replaced, a senior U.S. government official said Sunday.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because an announcement had not been made, was briefed on the decision by a senior BP official late last week.

BP boss expected to quit but new payoff row looms

LONDON (AFP) – BP chief executive Tony Hayward is expected to quit imminently with a payoff of up to 18.5 million dollars despite being lambasted over the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, British media reported Monday.

The size of the payoff, which must be agreed by a BP board meeting in London on Monday, risks sparking fresh controversy as the British-based firm battles to rebuild its reputation after the worst environmental disaster in US history.

Voyage to the bottom of an oily sea

It's not for the claustrophobic, the seasick or anyone fearful of venturing underwater, but the mini-submarine operated by the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute offers an unparalleled glimpse into the potential impact of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

Our view on gas tax: Price holds key to ending nation's addiction to oil

Two years ago this month, crude oil prices spiked to more than \$145 a barrel, driving the price of regular gasoline to more than \$4 a gallon and painfully reminding the nation once again how vulnerable it is to the whims of the international oil market.

It's reasonable to ask what policymakers have done in the past 24 months to try to reduce that vulnerability. For that matter, it's reasonable to ask what they've done in the *37 years* since the Arab oil embargo, which caused huge lines at gasoline stations, to stop enriching hostile petro-states in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The answer: not nearly enough.

Opposing view on gas tax: Unwise and unaffordable

If you think the USA would be better off with a higher unemployment rate, fewer small businesses and less money in family bank accounts, you should support big increases in federal taxes on gasoline and other motor fuels.

Senate Democrats to introduce energy bill

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid will unveil as early as Monday a slimmed-down energy bill seeking to make offshore drilling safer and convert trucks to run on domestic natural gas.

The full Senate could begin consideration of Reid's bill on Tuesday and Democrats would like to pass it by the early part of the following week.

How Soon Will Saudi Arabia Turn To Nuclear Energy?

While a growing number of countries have announced their civilian nuclear energy ambitions more than the past twelve months, no other nation is probably to have a lot more of your psychological impact on the nuclear energy picture than Saudi Arabia. We believe the Kingdom's organic gas and drinking water issues will lead them to nuclear, sooner somewhat than later, possibly as early as this year.

Russia police kill two power plant attackers

MOSCOW (Reuters) – Russian police killed two men on Sunday accused of bombing a North Caucasus hydroelectric plant, media reported, just days after President Dmitry Medvedev threatened to sack security officials if there were another attack.

Six masked men, suspected Islamist militants, stormed the Baksanskaya power plant in Kabardino-Balkaria Wednesday, shot dead two guards and set off remote-controlled bombs beside the main generator units, bringing the station to a halt.

Brazil Indians block workers at hydroelectric site

SAO PAULO – About 300 Amazon Indians prevented workers from entering or leaving the construction site of a hydroelectric plant that protesters say is on an ancient burial ground, Brazil's official news agency said Sunday.

Indians from eight tribes taking part in the protest are demanding compensation for losses caused by construction of the Dardanelos plant in the southern Amazon city of Aripuana, according to Agencia Brasil.

Brazilian Indians take hostages at Amazon dam site

BRASILIA (Reuters) – Brazilian native Indians on Sunday took 100 workers hostage at the construction site of a hydroelectric plant in the southern Amazon region, local media reported.

As many as 400 Indians from several different tribes occupied a power plant they say was built on an ancient burial site.

A sap and his ZAP (1)

My story begins a few years ago when I taught a series of classes through the Shasta College Community Education Program before they got wise and quit letting me teach there. They were not well attended but I've had worse. I recall having 5 to 15 in each one. This particular class was one night only and the topic was a bit dark. I called it *The End of Oil* and showed a film called *The End of Suburbia*.

I did a PowerPoint presentation on Hubbert's peak and explained that way back in 1956 this geologist named M. King Hubbert predicted that oil production in the United States would peak in 1970, which apparently it did about then.

Exploring Algae as Fuel

Foreign genes are being spliced into algae and native genes are being tweaked.

Different strains of algae are pitted against one another in survival-of-the-fittest contests in an effort to accelerate the evolution of fast-growing, hardy strains.

The goal is nothing less than to create superalgae, highly efficient at converting sunlight and carbon dioxide into lipids and oils that can be sent to a refinery and made into diesel or jet fuel.

Engineers race to design world's biggest offshore wind turbines

British, American and Norwegian engineers are in a race to design and build the holy grail of wind turbines – giant, 10MW offshore machines twice the size and power of anything seen before – that could transform the global energy market because of their

economies of scale.

Smart home meters draw consumer complaints

As smart meters become more common in U.S. homes, they are triggering complaints that they're causing an increase -- not a decrease -- in utility bills.

2011 Ford Explorer makes its debut as an evolved SUV

DEARBORN, Mich. — It never became a symbol of excess, like the Hummer, but the once wildly popular Ford Explorer had become a relic of days when gas was cheap, housing prices were rising and the idea of driving a big, truck-based SUV to the suburban supermarket was rarely questioned.

But Ford unveils its new-generation 2011 Explorer today in a different world, where unemployment is still painfully high and people are questioning the costs of everything: gas, food, college degrees.

For Hybrid Cars, a Hybrid Invention

A company with a different approach to the electric car battery problem got a small boost recently when the Patent Office said it would issue a patent on its concept: using a storage device called a capacitor in conjunction with a traditional battery.

Cities tackle traffic head-on with commuter options

MINNEAPOLIS — The morning rush-hour traffic on Interstate 35W is crawling. The highway, which connects downtown Minneapolis and its northern and southern suburbs, is the busiest road in the state. When traffic snarls here, backups spread across the region.

A year ago, Peggy Birler, 45, would have been right in the thick of it, spending up to an hour driving alone to work. Today, Birler has a much shorter commute: She drives less than a mile to a Park & Ride lot, boards a bus for a 10-minute trip downtown, zipping along in a bus-only lane, then walks 1½ blocks to her office.

Paper Mate has biodegradable pens for back-to-schoolers

It may be less crucial for your kids to have Iron Man or Hannah Montana's images on their back-to-school supplies this fall than it is to have a currently far cooler word stamped on the stuff: biodegradable.

More than a decade after recycled paper started to become a serious factor in the \$55 billion back-to-school market, the new buzzword for 2010 appears to be biodegradable (i.e., an item that will decompose in soil or in your garden compost pile).

Peak Oil and Climate Change: Between Too Soon and Not Soon Enough

We are going to burn all of the oil and coal we have, because their benefits as energy sources are concrete, immediate, and local, while their costs are gradual, delayed, and global.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but when facing similar choices, humankind has never chosen the more long-term view.

Gift Economy (1) - Reconceiving The Market

The show this week looks at the gift economy. We look at a range of reasons to challenge the cynical, capitalist view of the human as 'red in tooth and claw', listening to evidence from speakers including Alfie Kohn, Genevieve Vaughan & Jeremy Rifkin.

The Ecological Crisis is an Economic Crisis is an Energy Crisis

The world crisis is economic, ecological, and energy-based. Liberals want the state to regulate business and have a "new New Deal" to rebuild the economy and ecology. It won't work. Revolutionary anarchists want a new, ecological, economy which is democratically planned, produces for need not for profit, and is a decentralized federalism.

The Right and the Climate

The Seventies were a great decade for apocalyptic enthusiasms, and none was more potent than the fear that human population growth had outstripped the earth's carrying capacity. According to a chorus of credentialed alarmists, the world was entering an age of sweeping famines, crippling energy shortages, and looming civilizational collapse.

It was not lost on conservatives that this analysis led inexorably to left-wing policy prescriptions — a government-run energy sector at home, and population control for the teeming masses overseas.

Social conservatives and libertarians, the two wings of the American right, found common ground resisting these prescriptions. And time was unkind to the alarmists. The catastrophes never materialized, and global living standards soared. By the turn of the millennium, the developed world was worrying about a birth dearth.

This is the lens through which most conservatives view the global warming debate.

Modern cargo ships slow to the speed of the sailing clippers

Container ships are taking longer to cross the oceans than the Cutty Sark did as owners adopt 'super-slow steaming' to cut back on fuel consumption.

Four Ways to Kill a Climate Bill

IF President Obama and Congress had announced that no financial reform legislation would pass unless Goldman Sachs agreed to the bill, we would conclude our leaders had been standing in the Washington sun too long. Yet when it came to addressing climate change, that is precisely the course the president and Congress took. Lacking support from those most responsible for the problem, they have given up on passing a major climate bill this year.

California: Climate law adds jobs to state payroll

The state's landmark global warming law has yet to create the promised bonanza of green jobs, but it has boosted payrolls in another sector of the economy: state government.

At a time of budget cuts and state worker furloughs, the state agency primarily responsible for regulating global warming has bulked up its staff as it prepares to enforce AB 32, the climate change law signed in 2006 by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Arctic may be ice-free by 2050: Russian expert

Media reports say Moscow and Washington are discussing cooperation in Arctic at the highest political level. Russia and Canada would also soon start negotiations on the integration of their national space systems to monitor the Arctic.

Anatoly Shilov, Deputy Chief of the Federal Space Agency, said Russia would spend USD 2 billion for the creation of multipurpose space system Arktika (Arctic) to monitor climatic changes and survey energy resources in the Arctic region.

An icy retreat

The fact that it was sometimes warmer at our measurement site at the West Coast of Greenland than it was in Central Europe at the same time surprised us quite a bit.

However, some recent studies indicate that such a distribution of relatively high temperature in parts of the Arctic and relatively low temperature in Northern and Central Europe and parts of the US might become somewhat more wide-spread in the future. While the Arctic has always shown large internal variability that lead to large-scale shifts in weather patterns, in the future the ongoing retreat of Arctic sea ice might cause those weather patterns to occur more often that allow for Northerly winds to bring cold air from the Arctic to the mid-latitudes. Hence, it is quite possible that because of the retreat of Arctic sea ice, some smaller parts of the Northern Hemisphere will experience pronounced cold spells during winter every now and then. The mean temperature of the Northern Hemisphere will nevertheless increase further, and the export of cold air from the Arctic of course leads to warm anomalies there.

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