



Drumbeat: December 4, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 4, 2010 - 11:01am

[CNPC, Sinopec, Cnooc Sign Venezuela O&G Deals](#)

China's three main state-owned oil companies have strengthened their ties to Venezuela's energy sector, signing six agreements and increasing their investments to a planned \$40 billion dollars.

The deals are the latest of a string of multi-billion dollar South American ventures signed by Chinese companies in recent months, aimed at acquiring major chunks of the continent's rich resources and at helping fuel China's economic boom.

[Big freeze: Panic buying on petrol, milk, bread](#)

Britain's families were last night urged by the Government not to panic buy as the big freeze brought fears of shortages in bread, milk and petrol and diesel.

Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman insisted there was no problem with food supply.

But even as she spoke, millions around the country were stockpiling staple foods, with supermarkets rationing some products. And petrol suppliers warned of 'critical shortages' as garages began to run out of fuel.

[Politics, oil prices put choke hold on fuel assistance programs](#)

Allston-Brighton — Those old enough may recall the fuel and energy crisis of the 1970s and odd-even gas rationing — when only drivers with license plates ending with an odd number purchased gas on odd-numbered days, and even-numbered plates fueled up on even-numbered days.

“As the story goes, today’s federally funded fuel assistance programs like LIHEAP (Low Income Energy Assistance Program) were a response to the energy crisis of the ’70s. I can remember sitting in friends’ cars, waiting in long lines,” said Kathy Tobin, director of Energy Services of Action for Boston Community Development).

Since then, LIHEAP has helped poor Americans stay warm in hard and cold times. The lines are gone, but according to ABCD, people are waiting. And there is a crisis.

[Yellowknife gas shortage questions remain](#)

One week after a gas shortage ended in Yellowknife, some residents say they wonder how prepared the city would be in the event of another shortage.

Gas station pumps ran dry in the N.W.T. capital throughout last week, as worried motorists stockpiled gasoline because of a ferry disruption on the Mackenzie River.

[Nigeria: Village raid shows dangers in oil delta](#)

OKWAGBE, Nigeria -- As the heavily armed Nigerian soldiers slipped closer to a suspected militant camp in the country's oil-rich southern delta, they were ready for a fight after suffering casualties only days earlier.

They launched a massive attack including aerial bombings that was aimed at finding a wanted militant. Civilians caught in the middle tried to escape with their lives, human rights activists say.

[Producers' Group: NY Is Turning Back on New Jobs with Moratorium](#)

The Domestic Energy Producers Alliance (DEPA) voiced concern Friday about a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing approved by the New York State Assembly Monday.

"This is a victory for those who use scare tactics and fear to further an anti-fossil fuels agenda for America, thereby eliminating much-needed jobs and decimating our economy," said Mike Cantrell, DEPA President.

[New NY Congressman Plans Pro-Marcellus Caucus](#)

Newly elected Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning, said Wednesday that he plans to pull together like-minded members of Congress to push for fuller development of the natural gas reserves in the Marcellus Shale.

Only a day after the State Legislature approved a six-month ban on the controversial process of hydraulic fracturing to release the shale's gas, Reed -- in his first media conference call as a congressman--told reporters that the shale has great economic potential.

[Towing ship steams to rescue of stricken tanker](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A disabled cargo container ship carrying thousands of gallons of fuel oil and canola seeds near Alaska's remote Aleutian Islands began moving again on limited engine power late Friday, responders said.

The 738-foot Golden Seas had been drifting toward shore in rough seas.

[Report: Peak Oil Happened in 2006](#)

Peak Oil occurred in 2006, the International Energy Agency indicates. Logically, that sentence should have made world press headlines; stock markets should have fallen; and we should have finally responded to the question: "*Knowing that this system is completely bust, when are we going to change it?*" with the answer: "*Now!*"

[Glam Chicago home hides its 48 rooftop solar panels](#)

In its traditional Chicago neighborhood, Michael Yannell's new courtyard home has a distinctive butterfly-shaped roof that hides its 48 rooftop solar panels from street view.

His gorgeously green abode, designed to produce more energy than it uses, has other nifty design features. It's composed of two wings that are connected by a foyer walkway, entered via a courtyard. One wing has a two-story living, dining and kitchen space and the other has a den, two bathrooms and three bedrooms.

[Green Roofs are Starting To Sprout in American Cities](#)

Long a proven technology in Europe, green roofs are becoming increasingly common in U.S. cities, with major initiatives in Chicago, Portland, and Washington, D.C. While initially more expensive than standard coverings, green roofs offer some major environmental — and economic — benefits.

[If the expert is insistent he is right, odds are he is wrong](#)

Life would be so much simpler if only we knew just what we'll have to deal with in the future -- the price of oil or housing, the speed and impact of climate change, where terrorists will strike, the strength of the economy, the real scoop on life after death, all these sorts of things.

So what if I told you that there's an expert out there who has the straight goods on what is certain to happen with all this stuff and more. Because I know that a spot-on prediction has been made for each of these issues. I'm 100 per cent sure of it.

There's a catch, of course. In the vast sea of conflicting expert predictions that engulf most aspects of every issue of importance, I have no idea which one of the self-proclaimed seers is the right one -- only that the Law of Averages says at least one must be.

And, having just read the persuasive *Future Babble: Why Expert Predictions Fail -and Why We Believe Them Anyway* by Dan Gardner, I'm all too aware that if you look at any given prediction, odds are it's wrong. And the more emphatically stated it is, the less likely it is to be right.

[Oil Fluctuates Near 25-Month High on U.S. Jobs Report, Decline in Dollar](#)

Crude oil rose to the highest level in 25 months as the dollar tumbled, boosting the appeal of commodities as an alternative investment.

Oil jumped 1.4 percent as the Dollar Index dropped to the lowest level since Nov. 23 after U.S. employers added fewer jobs than forecast in November. The unemployment rate unexpectedly increased. Futures for delivery from 2013 through 2018 fell below the current month's price.

"The rally is due to a much lower dollar," said Hamza Khan, an analyst with Schork Group Inc., a consulting company in Villanova, Pennsylvania. "This is not based on fundamentals."

[Marathon seeks to cancel a rig deal](#)

WASHINGTON — Marathon Oil Corp. is moving to cancel its contract to lease one of Noble Corp.'s offshore drilling rigs - joining a list of operators wriggling out of rig rental agreements amid fears that it could take months for deep-water exploration to resume in the Gulf of Mexico.

[Petroleum jobs in Gulf may be lost to other industries](#)

While recruiting technical talent is a new worry for national oil companies in the Gulf region, oil producers based in Europe and North America have been grappling with a skills shortage for years.

Universities in those regions have responded, churning out higher numbers of graduates from their petroleum engineering programmes as oil-patch employers offered tempting starting salaries. Not every engineering student was swayed by growing public disdain for companies pumping "dirty" oil and government policies promoting renewable energy.

[Oil world is not men's bastion any more](#)

One of the nuts that all science and technology-based industries must crack, says Michelle Valenzuela, a technical specialist at Dow Chemical, is how to recruit more women to fill large human capital gaps, especially in engineering.

[CNOOC wins 2 awards at Platts Global Energy Awards](#)

NEW YORK -- China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Ltd took top billing at Thursday's 12th annual Platts Global Energy Awards, winning two awards in the industry's most recognized awards program.

It is the first time ever that a Chinese energy company has won the sought-after Energy Company of the Year and Energy Producer of the Year awards, since the program made its debut 12 years ago.

[Iran Accuses UN Agency of Spying](#)

Iran is accusing the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency of sending spies along with its inspectors to monitor the country's nuclear activities.

Iran state television on Saturday quoted Intelligence Minister Heydar Moslehi as saying the U.N. agency was sending spies from foreign intelligence agencies, and that the agency should be held responsible. He did not elaborate which inspectors were spies, and he gave no further details.

[Q&A: Norway has deep oil ties to Texas](#)

Q: Forty years doesn't seem like a lot of time for a country to grow into a top nation for oil-exploration technology. How did Norway do it?

A: We started with a lot of Texans coming to Norway to help us get started. But through this process we've developed our own businesses and our own expertise so that the sea area between Norway and Britain is now the technological hub in the world, leading for so much innovation in offshore drilling. Houston is No. 2.

[Obama's attitude toward oil is deeply ideological](#)

The real problem with the White House's attitude toward oil, and energy generally, is how deeply ideological it is. Few presidents have talked a bigger game about pragmatism while pursuing a dogmatic agenda.

[Louisiana oyster beds remain empty after BP disaster](#)

Louisiana's oyster beds have not recovered from the US's worst environmental catastrophe, the Deepwater Horizon oil-rig disaster, and some fishermen fear they never will.

[Green investment: Spirit of Scottish samurai generates £100m green cash](#)

Japanese technology giant Mitsubishi unveiled a £100 million investment in the Scottish renewables industry yesterday in a move hailed as a "game changing" commitment by First Minister Alex Salmond.

The conglomerate is to establish an engineering centre in Scotland for the research and development of offshore wind technology, as well as acquiring an Edinburgh University spin-off, Artemis Power.

[Buffett Helps Create Nuclear Fuel Bank](#)

Spurred by a pledge of \$50 million from Warren E. Buffett, the billionaire investor and philanthropist, the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency voted Friday to set up a global nuclear fuel bank that aspiring nations can turn to for reactor fuel instead of making it themselves.

The goal is to reduce the risks of weapons proliferation by providing an alternative to the production of nuclear fuel, which countries can use to power either bombs or reactors. The built-in ambiguity explains the world's jitters over plants in Iran and North Korea for purifying uranium.

The new bank is seen as creating a global mechanism to aid the lighting of cities and to hinder the means of destroying them.

[Mexico's Bimbo to build \\$200 million wind farm](#)

(Reuters) - Grupo Bimbo, one of the world's biggest breadmakers, will build a \$200 million wind farm to supply almost all of the electric power needed for its Mexican operations, the company said on Thursday.

[Harkin: Ethanol tax credits could move in omnibus package](#)

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) said Thursday that expiring ethanol tax credits he's battling to extend could hitch a ride on a possible omnibus appropriations package.

"If we have an omnibus, the chances are pretty good we might get that in the omnibus," Harkin told reporters in the Capitol.

[Local gas prices fuel opinions](#)

"Being on a fixed income, it makes me angry," said 74-year old David Grant of Austin. The Army and Marine Corps veteran said, "My Social Security didn't get a boost

because they said there was no inflation."

He recalled the days when gasoline was 25 cents a gallon. He placed the blame for today's price squarely on greed.

"This country is so greedy right now," he said.

[New locally made electric vehicle getting ready to hit the streets](#)

Is there a Triac in your future? Maybe -- if your conscience has evolved to a deep shade of green and you have \$25,000 to spare on a locally manufactured, three-wheeled gasless electric vehicle with a 100-mile range.

[Growth can't continue forever in finite world](#)

Our oil-dependent, industrial food production uses yesterday's photosynthesis stored as coal, gas and oil. Since 1859, we have used up a trillion barrels of oil. An estimated trillion remain, but it is much more difficult to extract than the first trillion. This fossil energy accumulated over 400 million years. To grow enough biomass to replace current oil use of 80 million barrels per day and meet other demands for food and fiber would require 30 to 40 additional planets' worth of farmland.

[Change is Upon Us, Part 3: Food Security](#)

The bad news about the world's population is that we are currently on track to reach 9 billion people by 2050. A rising population requires additional resources to service: more food, more water and more energy. Our resources are already very strained.

The good news is that globally, quality of life has been generally improving these past few decades. More people, especially women, are receiving an education, are better fed, and are participating more fully in the workforce, contributing to the economy. This has led directly to a declining birth rate; in the western world, birth rates are often already lower than population replacement levels, which means that the several decades out, we are likely to experience a decline in western populations. If current trends continue, our population is expected to peak between 2040 and 2070, and begin the process of levelling off.

[Tehran On 'Smog Holiday' As Dirty Air Keeps Hold](#)

For the third workday in two weeks, Tehran was effectively shut down Thursday because of "unhealthy" pollution levels. Government offices, schools, banks, factories and many other sites were ordered closed to try keep the eye-stinging cloud from growing any worse.

[Lake Erie not about to dry up, but warmer water will evaporate faster, study says](#)

See the cycle? Warmer temps leads to more evaporation, which leads to lower lake levels, which leads to warmer temps, which leads to less ice cover, which leads to more evaporation -- and so on.

[UN Aims to Revive Climate Change Talks Amid Rift Between Rich-Poor Nations](#)

United Nations envoys today will attempt to revive progress at stalled climate negotiations, issuing a draft of the meeting's possible conclusion aimed at bridging differences between rich and poor nations

[Southern Africa: Region Collectively Gearing Up for REDD](#)

Cancun, Mexico — The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is moving to support its member countries to tap into benefits from the reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) framework.

[A Low Bar in Cancún? Not for U.S., Envoy Declares](#)

Todd Stern, the chief American climate change negotiator, arrived on Friday in the Mexican resort town of Cancún, where the annual two-week United Nations climate extravaganza has been under way since Monday.

He made clear at an afternoon press briefing that the United States was seeking an agreement that addresses all the major issues that make up the current climate change agenda. He said quite emphatically that he was not interested in some sort of face-saving partial deal that makes progress on some questions but kicks the more difficult problems down the road.

[Mexican chief hopes Republicans change on climate](#)

CANCUN, Mexico - Mexican President Felipe Calderon says he can understand why U.S. voters in an economic crisis turned to the opposition party, but he hopes the Republicans will eventually accept the need to protect the planet's climate for "new generations."

"I hope they can realize sooner or later how important it is for the future," Calderon said Monday.

[World Bank: Cities should step up climate change fight](#)

CANCUN, Mexico — Cities should play a much bigger role in fighting global warming and

can act more easily than governments struggling to agree on a UN climate accord, the World Bank said today.

"The 10 biggest cities in the world emit more greenhouse gases than Japan," Andrew Steer, the World Bank's special envoy for climate change, told Reuters. He urged reforms including changes to carbon markets to help cities become greener.

[As climate talks drag on, more look to tinkering with atmosphere to curb warming](#)

As climate negotiators grew more discouraged in recent months, U.S. and British government bodies urged stepped-up studies of such "geoengineering." The U.N. climate science network decided to assess the options. And a range of new research moved ahead in America and elsewhere.

"The taboo is broken," Paul Crutzen, a Nobel Prize-winning atmospheric scientist, told The Associated Press.

[Carbon Auction Yields \\$16.9 Million for New York](#)

New York made \$16.9 million in the latest auction of carbon dioxide credits, held this week under the cap-and-trade system known as Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. But it remains to be seen whether the money will go to the energy efficiency programs it is intended for.

[WikiLeaks cables reveal how US manipulated climate accord](#)

Hidden behind the save-the-world rhetoric of the global climate change negotiations lies the mucky realpolitik: money and threats buy political support; spying and cyberwarfare are used to seek out leverage.

The US diplomatic cables reveal how the US seeks dirt on nations opposed to its approach to tackling global warming; how financial and other aid is used by countries to gain political backing; how distrust, broken promises and creative accounting dog negotiations; and how the US mounted a secret global diplomatic offensive to overwhelm opposition to the controversial "Copenhagen accord", the unofficial document that emerged from the ruins of the Copenhagen climate change summit in 2009.



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