



Drumbeat: March 30, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 30, 2011 - 10:07am

[Obama Lays Out Plan to Cut Reliance on Fuel Imports](#)

WASHINGTON — President Obama called on Wednesday for a one-third reduction in oil imports over the next decade, and said the effort had to begin immediately. In a speech at Georgetown University, the president said that the United States cannot go on consuming one-quarter of the world's oil production while possessing only two percent of global reserves. He said that the country had to begin a long-term plan to reduce its reliance on imported oil, and that the decades-long political bickering that has stalled progress toward that goal had to end.

[Obama rolls out plan to cut oil imports](#)

Washington (CNN) -- President Barack Obama outlined a plan Wednesday to cut America's imports of foreign oil by a third by 2025 -- a response to growing global energy demands and instability overseas.

The president's proposal relies primarily on increased domestic production, conservation and a shift to biofuels and natural gas.

[Amid rising gas prices, Obama outlines plans to make US less dependent on foreign oil](#)

WASHINGTON — Seeking to show the public he understands the burden of rising gas prices, President Barack Obama set an ambitious goal of reducing U.S. oil imports by one-third by 2025, and vowed to break through the political gridlock that has stymied similar initiatives for decades.

[Pemex's Proved Oil Reserves Decline for 12th Year in a Row](#)

Petroleos Mexicanos, Latin America's largest oil producer, said crude proved reserves dropped for a 12th consecutive year after the company faced delays bringing online new projects.

Proved reserves fell 1.4 percent to the equivalent of 13.8 billion barrels of oil in 2010, the Mexico City-based company said today in a presentation on its website.

[US Jan oil demand up 3.2 pct from year ago-EIA](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. oil demand in January was 92,000 barrels per day more than previously estimated and up 593,000 bpd from a year earlier, the Energy Information Administration said on Wednesday.

[Companies concerned about energy security as prices soar](#)

Business leaders are warning that world oil prices could shoot up to as much as US\$250 a barrel if the deadly violence in North Africa and the Middle East cannot be curtailed.

Moreover, experts say that if the uprising spreads to major oil producing countries, Thailand's energy security could be put at great risk.

They urged the government yesterday to stop subsidising energy prices and establish bigger oil reserves to cope with any price spikes.

[Funds plea to speed up oil drilling permits](#)

Regulators have called for extra funds to speed up the issuance of deepwater drilling permits in the Gulf of Mexico, warning that their ability to grant permission will be "sharply limited" without more resources and that any delays could hold back US oil production.

[BP faces investor unrest following executive payouts](#)

BP is facing a potential row with investors at next month's annual meeting after awarding bonuses to two senior directors for the year in which the company presided over the worst oil spill in US history.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI), which represents big City investors, has issued an "amber-top" alert to its members – a signal to consider issues that should be weighed before voting on the remuneration report at the 14 April meeting.

[And the Winner Is... The Haynesville](#)

In recent weeks there has been some discussion and debate regarding which basin in the U.S. is producing the largest amount of natural gas. Prior to the meteoric rise of drilling in the Haynesville Shale, the clear leader in natural gas production was unquestionably the Barnett Shale. The Barnett, situated in North Texas, took the leading spot in 2008 when its production surpassed the San Juan Basin.

[Delta diesel scarcity hits rice harvest, fishing](#)

VietNamNet Bridge - An acute diesel shortage has hit the Mekong Delta in the last few days because of smuggling to Cambodia where the fuel costs more.

[Saudi Arabia Plugs Gap in Europe's Supply of Libyan Oil](#)

LONDON—Saudi Arabia has begun supplying European oil companies with high-quality crude oil in an effort to replace Libyan exports, people familiar with the matter said.

[Saudi "special brew" oil gives traders headache](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia's new oil blend sold to Europe this month to compensate for lost Libyan barrels is meeting muted response from traders and refiners who are still in the dark over future volumes and unsure of its quality.

[What price Saudi Arabia's new special 'blend'?](#)

It turns out it's simply not that straightforward substituting Libyan crude.

[Saudi Aramco Awards Contracts for Red Sea Oil and Gas](#)

Saudi Aramco, the world's largest state-run oil company, awarded two contracts to Saudi Arabia's Shoaibi Group to search for oil and gas in the Red Sea.

Shoaibi Group and its international partners started in February to survey parts of the Red Sea, the Khobar, Saudi Arabia-based firm said today in an e-mailed reply to Bloomberg.

[Japan's Taiyo gets steady supplies of Saudi Super Light crude-source](#)

TOKYO (Reuters) - Taiyo Oil Co Ltd., one of Japan's smallest refiners, is getting steady supplies of Saudi Arabian Super Light crude, a signal that an increase in shipments to Europe by the world's top oil exporter has not been at the expense of Asian customers.

Taiyo's intake of Saudi crude will also be unchanged for the new fiscal year starting in April, a company source said on Wednesday, adding that the kingdom has boosted production to replace some of the disrupted flows from Libya to Europe without reducing exports to Asia.

[IAEA says Japan should consider further evacuations](#)

Vienna - Japan should consider evacuating a village outside the exclusion zone around the Fukushima 1 nuclear power plant because of high radioactivity levels, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Wednesday in Vienna.

The community concerned is Iitate, some 40 kilometres from the stricken power plant. It is beyond the 20-kilometre evacuation zone and the 30-kilometre zone in which people have been advised to stay indoors.

[Tokyo Electric may seek bailout](#)

TOKYO - Tokyo Electric Power warned on Wednesday that a US\$24-billion bank loan was not enough to keep it afloat and pay for Japan's worst nuclear disaster, adding to expectations the government will step in to bail out the stricken company.

[Most Energy Insiders Say Japan Crisis Won't Affect U.S. Nuclear Policy](#)

In a survey of *National Journal* Energy and Environment Insiders, a solid majority of respondents said they think the nuclear crisis unfolding in Japan will not have much of an effect on a nuclear renaissance in this Congress. But many say that's because chances were already slim from the start.

[Google's Wind-Power Project Draws Opposition on Return Guarantee](#)

A Google Inc.-backed effort to build a \$5 billion undersea power line supporting wind energy from New Jersey to Virginia faces opposition from state officials and utilities.

[Richard Heinberg: Energy efficiency to the rescue](#)

The historic correlation between economic growth and increased energy consumption is controversial, and I promised in Chapter 3 to return to the question of whether and to what degree it is possible to de-link or decouple the two.

While it is undisputed that, during the past two centuries, both energy use and GDP have grown dramatically, some analysts argue that the causative correlation between energy consumption and growth is not tight, and that energy consumption and economic growth can be decoupled by increasing the efficiency with which energy is used. That is, economic growth can be achieved while using *less* energy.

[Oil Dependence Reading List: How Did We Get Here?](#)

I read a lot of books about oil. There have been masterful overviews of the industry such as Yergin's *The Prize* and Maugeri's *The Age of Oil*. There are also smart, user-

friendly volumes such as Tertzakian's *1000 Barrels a Second* and Margonelli's *Oil on the Brain*. And Hollywood has of course also produced its share of takes on the industry with films such as *Syriana* and *There Will Be Blood*.

Lately I've been digging into the history of the industry, and for those interested I recommend taking a look at a few relatively new additions to the field.

[Less than 50 Years of Oil Left, HSBC Warns](#)

The world may have no more than half a century of oil left at current rates of consumption, while surging demand from the developing world threatens to create "very significant price rises" before substitutes like biofuels can serve as viable alternatives, the British bank HSBC warns in a new report.

"We're confident that there are around 50 years of oil left," Karen Ward, the bank's senior global economist, said in an interview on CNBC.

[Joel Salatin: Breaking Free From Factory Farms](#)

In this twelfth video in the series "Peak Oil and a Changing Climate" from *The Nation* and On The Earth Productions, American farmer, lecturer and author Joel Salatin outlines the key issues America faces as its citizens increasingly rely on factory farms, concentrated animal feeding operations that require cheap energy in order to operate profitably. He condemns regulations that appear to be on the books to benefit animal factories and prevent individuals from farming sustainably.

Salatin calls this the "food inquisition." The regulatory climate created by government, he says, makes it possible to "capriciously and arbitrarily exclude small local food producers, processors, canneries, cheesemakers, etc. from accessing the market." Salatin advocates for the decentralization of food production and notes the US has thirty-five million acres of lawn, which should be much better utilized in order to prevent Americans from going hungry when peak oil begins to have a real impact.

[Ex-premier slams province over 'peak oil'](#)

Former Manitoba NDP Premier Ed Schreyer is stepping back into the spotlight and warning about the threat of peak oil, and also to criticize Manitoba's government on the belief it's not doing enough to prepare for a coming energy crisis.

"When we do wake up and acknowledge the fact [about the existence of so-called peak oil], it may well be too late. That's the real fear," Schreyer, who is also a former Governor General of Canada, told CBC News.

[The Peak Oil Crisis: Edging Towards Recession](#)

As oil prices edge ever higher, more people are expressing concern about what this phenomenon is doing or could do to economic recovery. The conventional wisdom used to be that, in the U.S., whenever total national spending on oil products exceeded four percent of GDP the country went into recession. Elaborate charts have been produced showing how this happened in four of the recessions over the last 40 years. In 1974, 1981, 1991, and 2008 oil prices rose to levels anywhere from 4.5 to 9 percent of GDP just prior to the U.S. economy going into recession.

[An Energy Crisis of Tsunami Proportions Rushes Toward America](#)

America is already experiencing energy problems, but they are nothing compared to the energy crisis that will descend upon this nation in the not too distant future. The question is not if this crisis will actually occur, because it is inevitable; the only question is when. Such a crisis has long been predicted, but now is drawing ever closer to becoming a reality. And when it hits, America will find itself totally unprepared to withstand its fury.

No, the world is not going to run out of oil; that won't happen for a long time. But what will definitely happen is that, in the not too distant future, say within 5 to 10 years, the world's demand for oil will overwhelm the production capabilities of the oil producing nations. That point in time is generally referred to in scientific terms as "Peak Oil." That's when the world will enter an era of rapidly declining supply and skyrocketing prices -- the end of cheap oil.

[An Unnatural Love Affair](#)

The environmentalist will riposte not all resources are alike. Oil is different: once consumed it is gone forever. Environmentalists and economists have been warning about peak oil since the wells in western Pennsylvania began running dry, which wasn't long after Col. Edwin Drake drilled the first commercial oil well in Titusville, in 1859.

Before Pennsylvania's oil fields became economically barren, though, drillers moved further west and struck oil in Ohio, then Texas, then Wyoming, then California, then Alaska. Prices rose, then dropped as drillers mastered the ability to extract less convenient reserves. The process has been replicated numerous times since, and will be replicated numerous times in the future. Peak oil in one market spurs production in other markets.

[Shale, Tar, and Natural Gas to the Rescue](#)

In the forecast it says, "despite rising prices, use of liquid fuels increases by an average of 1.3 percent per year, or 45 percent overall from 2007 to 2035."

If that's true, we'll need 110.6 million barrels per day.

Today, the world produces 89 million barrels per day.

Where's the difference going to come from?

[Oil, leaks and peaks](#)

It's worth a look for those future gazers in the procurement fraternity. It predicts we're in for a troubled time with oil, as demand massively outstrips supply. That is until things settle down by 2050, when somehow we'll be accustomed to the new reality.

["All of the Above" Is No Energy Policy](#)

Several times recently, we've heard this argument: When it comes to securing America's energy future, we need "all of the above" -- coal, oil, gas, nuclear, solar, wind, and so on.

That is a not an energy policy; it's a cop-out. It's how elected officials dodge hard choices about our energy security. It's how they avoid political backlash from energy interests, especially those with money and clout such as coal, oil and nuclear.

[Down an unsustainable energy path](#)

The Department of Energy's "Integrated Electricity Resource Plan 2010" (IRP2010) aims to guarantee security of energy supply, diversify the country's energy mix and reduce carbon dioxide emissions over the next 20 years. After a round of public consultation, the DoE presented a revised plan to cabinet, which approved it on March 17.

The latest publicly available version, a "revised balanced scenario" (RBS), is based on a string of deeply flawed assumptions and means the country is being steered further down an unsustainable path towards economic contraction, social dislocation and environmental degradation.

[Garden As If Your Life Depended On It, Because It Does](#)

There are at least five reasons why more of us should take up the spade, make some compost, and start gardening with a vengeance.

[When Velocity Feels Like Acceleration](#)

The implication for central bankers is that even if energy prices (and even more importantly, food prices) flatten out so that they are not going up any more – and thus, food and energy inflation will revert to zero after a year – consumers may still encode a high level of inflation *expectations* because of the *level of prices*.

And that would really suck, to use a technical term. Because the Fed has very little control over the level of gasoline prices, especially if the world is retreating from nuclear power and there is anything to the "Peak Oil" hypothesis. Inflation expectations could come unmoored even as inflation itself was contained.

[Syrian president fails to lift emergency laws](#)

DAMASCUS — President Bashar al-Assad defied expectations on Wednesday that he would lift Syria's decades-old emergency law after nearly two weeks of protests that have presented the gravest challenge to his 11-year rule.

Speaking in public for the first time since the start of the unprecedented wave of protests, inspired by uprisings across the Arab world, Assad said he supported reform but offered no new commitment to change Syria's rigid, one-party political system.

[Outgunned Libyan rebels scatter, world mulls sending arms](#)

NEAR BREGA, Libya - Loyalist forces overran the Libyan oil town of Ras Lanuf on Wednesday, scattering outgunned rebels as world powers debated arming the rag-tag band of fighters seeking to oust Moammar Gadhafi.

AFP reporters quoting rebel fighters said Gadhafi's troops swept through Ras Lanuf, strategic for its oil refinery, blazing away with tanks and heavy artillery fire soon after dawn.

[Libya warning on oil deals](#)

Libya's government warned today it would sue any international company that concluded energy deals with the rebels who control some of the country's oil infrastructure, the state news agency reported.

[Accounting for the environment while counting biofuel feedstocks](#)

Diverting food for use as fuel is another issue. Fortunately, technology is developing at a rate which has seen the biofuels sector reduce its dependence on food crops, such as corn and sugarcane, in favour of biomass from residues and waste. Using crop residues such as wheat stubble and sugarcane bagasse to produce biofuels has removed the food versus fuel argument. However, in terms of sustainability credentials, that is only part of the story.

[Obama wants to curb U.S. oil imports by a third](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – President Barack Obama will set an ambitious goal on Wednesday to cut oil imports by a third over 10 years, focusing on energy security amid high gasoline prices that could stall the U.S. economic recovery.

Obama will outline his strategy in a speech after spending days explaining U.S.-led military action in Libya, where fighting, accompanied by popular unrest elsewhere in the Arab world, has helped push gasoline prices toward \$4 a gallon.

[WHITE HOUSE FACT SHEET: America's Energy Security](#)

Rising prices at the pump affect everybody – workers and farmers; truck drivers and restaurant owners. Businesses see it impact their bottom line. Families feel the pinch when they fill up their tank. For Americans already struggling to get by, it makes life that much harder. That's why we need to make ourselves more secure and control our energy future by harnessing all of the resources that we have available and embracing a diverse energy portfolio. With an ultimate goal of reducing our dependence on oil, in the near term we must responsibly develop and produce oil and gas at home, while at the same time leveraging cleaner, alternative fuels and increasing efficiency. And beyond our efforts to reduce our dependence on oil, we must focus on expanding cleaner sources of electricity – keeping America on the cutting edge of clean energy technology so that we can build a 21st century clean energy economy and win the future.

[FACTBOX-Energy issues facing the White House](#)

Here are some of the top energy issues the Obama administration faces:

[Oil Slides on Signs U.S. Supply Rising; Deutsche Bank Raises Price Outlook](#)

Oil declined in New York for the fourth time in five days before a U.S. government report that may show stockpiles of the fuel increased to their highest level in more than three months.

Futures slid as much as 0.6 percent before an Energy Department report today that may show inventories rose by 1.5 million barrels, according to a Bloomberg survey. The industry-funded American Petroleum Institute said yesterday stockpiles climbed 5.7 million barrels, advancing for the fourth week. A separate report showed confidence among U.S. consumers fell more than forecast in March as fuel costs surged.

[Record gas prices blamed on peak oil](#)

A prominent energy scientist blames record-high gas prices on the approach of peak oil – a point when the world's oil fields will pump out their maximum amount of oil, then gradually decline.

"There's no question that's what's causing it," says David Hughes, a recently retired

geoscientist, who worked with the Geological Survey of Canada for 32 years.

His view defies conventional wisdom that turmoil in Libya is to blame.

[Petrobras Sees Oil Price Advancing for Years Amid Middle East Instability](#)

Petroleo Brasileiro SA expects oil to keep rising in coming years after conflicts in Libya and across the Middle East sent the price to above \$100 a barrel, Chief Financial Officer Almir Barbassa said.

[Deffeyes: Macondo — Fukushima](#)

So how does our energy supply look in a post-Macondo, post-Fukushima world? Not so good. Permits are being issued again for drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, but we have lost almost a year because of the BP Macondo blowout. In the February 14 Current Events, a graph was posted from my book, *When Oil Peaked*, showing a danger level for crude oil purchases above five percent of Gross Domestic Product. Crude oil prices continue to climb. Gasoline and food cost more as a result. How are we supposed to climb out of this recession when we have BP's boot on our neck?

[You Saw the Movie; Now Here's the Book](#)

Sooner than we had imagined, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill has produced an excellent book. Joel Achenbach's "A Hole at the Bottom of the Sea: The Race to Kill the BP Oil Gusher," to be published next week by Simon & Schuster, is a gripping reconstruction of the events of last summer, when the nation was transfixed by that seemingly endless disaster.

[Manslaughter charges possible for BP execs](#)

Manslaughter and perjury are among possible charges that Justice Department investigators are exploring in the early stages of their probe into the Gulf oil spill, people familiar with the inquiry said Tuesday.

These people said the Justice Department is not ruling out the possibility of bringing manslaughter charges against companies or managers responsible for the explosion aboard the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig that killed 11 workers.

[Two-thirds of oil and gas leases in Gulf inactive](#)

An Interior Department report to be released Tuesday says more than two-thirds of offshore oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico are sitting idle.

According to the report, obtained by The Associated Press, those inactive swaths of the Gulf could potentially hold more than 11 billion barrels of oil and 50 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The report also shows that 45 percent of all onshore oil and gas leases are inactive.

[U.S. Oil Production: Don't Abandon Ship Just Yet](#)

Peak Oil has become a grim reality in the United States... And for Alaska, it's downright scary.

2010 was a heart-wrenching year for Alaska.

Oil production averaged less than 600,000 barrels per day. It hasn't been that low since 1977 — *more than thirty years ago!*

[On Food Riots, Peak Oil and Military Force](#)

Here's a fabulous look into the political economy of oil by Andy Lees. His view is that the era of cheap oil is over. But, more than that, natural resources as a whole are increasingly dear. And a world of dwindling natural resources has geopolitical implications when supply and demand are finely balanced.

[Does Libya's Oil Industry Reflect its Fate?](#)

Even if the Libyan war ended tomorrow, energy analysts estimate that the country's production has now dwindled to between 200,000 and 300,000 barrels a day, compared with the 1.6 million pumped before the revolt. The more important statistic, however, is a big zero: That is the amount of oil and gas Libya currently exports, and by extension, the amount of hard currency Gaddafi is currently earning. "It would be very difficult, no, impossible, to export oil from Libya now," says Cliff Kupchan, director of the Eurasia Group in Washington. "And it's hard to see, in any near-term period, them exporting much oil."

[Jeff Rubin: Regime change not bullish for oil production in Middle East](#)

If the Western military intervention in Libya is really being driven by oil, maybe it's time to think again. History says regime change is never bullish for oil production in the Middle East and even less so for oil exports.

[Rebels retreat from Libya oil port under attack](#)

BREGA, Libya (AP) — Rebels retreated Wednesday from the key Libyan oil port of Ras Lanouf along the coastal road leading to the capital Tripoli after they came under heavy

shelling from ground forces loyal to leader Moammar Gadhafi.

[Air power won't seal win for Libyan rebels](#)

Libyan rebel forces backed by U.S.-led airstrikes were fighting their way toward Tripoli on Tuesday but air power alone will not topple the stronghold of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, military experts said.

Experts said the untrained and poorly equipped rebels will need arms, training and air attacks to oust Gadhafi militarily.

[Can Qaddafi cling to power if oil runs out?](#)

The lineups at Western Libya's gas stations are an ominous warning. Once oil reserves drop to critically low levels, Qaddafi's government will have to turn off power stations and even the oil-fired pumps that keep water flowing.

The loyalty of his supporters is being tested in a small way as they line up for gas. Wait until they can no longer fill a glass of water at the kitchen tap.

[Zenga zenga, Mr Obama](#)

Obama's selective intervention in Libya is tarnishing the American image even more in the Arab world.

[Assad Faces a Critical Moment as Syrians Seek Freedoms, Multiparty System](#)

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad may offer to lift the nation's emergency law today in response to deadly protests that pose the most serious challenge to his rule since he inherited power from his father in 2000.

[Syrian president blames protests on 'conspirators'](#)

DAMASCUS, Syria – Syrian President Bashar Assad has blamed a wave of protests on "conspirators" who are trying to destroy the country.

Assad is giving his first address to the nation since the protests erupted in this tightly controlled Arab country.

[Will Yemen protests boost Al Qaeda?](#)

Yemen protesters say Saleh has overstated the threat posed by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to get US aid. But the group stands to benefit from major upheaval.

[Bahrain's protest movement fades beneath government suppression](#)

Bahrain has turned into a fearful abode of sectarian division, fueled by a Sunni-led government.

[Karzai blasts US troops for gruesome Afghan deaths](#)

KABUL, Afghanistan – Afghanistan's president on Wednesday condemned the actions of a group of U.S. soldiers charged with murder in the deaths of three unarmed Afghans and said they killed for entertainment, after taking drugs.

It was Hamid Karzai's first public mention of the actions of five soldiers from the 5th Stryker Brigade who have been charged with murder and conspiracy in the deaths of the three men in southern Afghanistan. His condemnation came a few days after Rolling Stone magazine published a series of graphic photos showing the soldiers posing next to the dead bodies. The German news magazine Der Spiegel had previously published three of them.

[Tullow Oil says Total, CNOOC buy Uganda assets](#)

LONDON (AFP) – Anglo-Irish energy firm Tullow Oil said Wednesday that it has agreed to sell part of its Uganda assets to France's Total and China's CNOOC for a total of \$1.8 billion pounds (\$2.9 billion).

The announcement should clear the way for a \$10-billion refinery in the oil-rich Lake Albert region of the east African country.

[Next Nigeria leader must progress fragile oil recovery](#)

(Reuters) - Nigeria's next president will need to ensure an amnesty programme is sustained in the restive Niger Delta and energy reforms are passed if he is to avoid watching an oil sector relapse from its fragile recovery.

[Statoil Postpones U.K. Oil Investment After Tax Hike](#)

STOCKHOLM -(Dow Jones)- Norwegian oil and gas firm Statoil ASA has postponed more than \$10 billion of investments in the U.K. following a recent tax hike on oil production.

[Japan struggles to contain radiation](#)

Engineers using sandbags and water pumps continued their fight Tuesday to keep radiation-contaminated water from Japan's imperiled nuclear plant from flowing into the sea.

[Setbacks mount in Japan at leaking nuclear plant](#)

TOKYO – Setbacks mounted Wednesday in the crisis over Japan's tsunami-damaged nuclear facility, with nearby seawater testing at its highest radiation levels yet and the president of the plant operator checking into a hospital with hypertension.

Nearly three weeks after a March 11 tsunami engulfed the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant, knocking out power to the cooling system that keeps nuclear fuel rods from overheating, Tokyo Electric Power Co. is still struggling to bring the facility in northeastern Japan under control.

[Tepco's Damaged Reactors May Take 30 Years, \\$12 Billion to Scrap](#)

Damaged reactors at the crippled Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear plant may take three decades to decommission and cost operator Tokyo Electric Power Co. more than 1 trillion yen (\$12 billion), engineers and analysts said.

[Fukushima Governor Sato Slams Japan's Handling of Nuclear Reactor Disaster](#)

Fukushima Prefecture, epicenter of the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986, accused Japan's central government of sowing confusion and hampering recovery efforts through poor communication.

[Tokyo Electric Says Reactor Crisis Response Was 'Best Possible'](#)

Tokyo Electric Power Co. for the first time defended its response to the crisis at the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear power plant, with Chairman Tsunehisa Katsumata rejecting claims the utility was slow to react.

[4 of 6 Daiichi reactors can't be fixed; Tokyo Electric president hospitalized](#)

TOKYO--Four out of six reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant were damaged beyond repair in Japan's devastating earthquake and tsunami, the chairman of the Tokyo Electric Power company said Wednesday.

[Marine Life Faces Threat From Runoff](#)

The announcement by Japan's Agency for Natural Resources and Energy that high levels of radioactive cesium have been detected in seawater near the crippled nuclear reactors raises the prospect that radiation could enter the food chain.

[No threat from Japanese radiation spread across US](#)

WASHINGTON – Traces of radioactive material from the endangered Japanese nuclear plant are being detected from coast to coast in the United States and in Iceland, but amounts continue to be far below levels that would cause health problems.

The development of super-sensitive equipment to detect radiation is both a blessing and a curse, allowing scientists to monitor materials released in nuclear accidents, but also causing unnecessary worry, said Kathryn Higley, director of the nuclear engineering and radiation health physics at Oregon State University.

[Japan orders immediate safety upgrade at nuclear plants](#)

(Reuters) - Japan ordered an immediate safety upgrade at its 55 nuclear power plants on Wednesday in its first acknowledgement that standards were inadequate when an earthquake and tsunami wrecked a facility nearly three weeks ago, sparking the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl in 1986.

[Toyota rationing parts to dealers to avert hoarding](#)

The parts supply problem for Japanese cars has extended from new cars to the one you may be driving: Toyota is rationing repair parts for its dealers in the U.S.

[Japanese Oil Ports Still Open to World's Five Largest Crude-Tanker Lines](#)

The world's five biggest oil-tanker companies will still travel to the ports of Tokyo Bay, joining other shipping lines in judging them safe for crew and vessels.

Mitsui O.S.K. Lines Ltd., Frontline Ltd., Teekay Corp., Nippon Yusen Kaisha and NITC Co., whose ships can hold enough oil to supply Japan for 100 days, all said there is no disruption to their services. All vessels are avoiding a 30-mile exclusion zone around the crippled Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear plant, about 220 miles to the north of Tokyo.

[Japan PM urges clean energy push](#)

OSAKA, Japan (AFP) – Japan's Premier Naoto Kan said Tuesday the country must push alternative energy sources as it recovers from its quake and tsunami disaster and struggles to contain a nuclear emergency.

"Taking this as a lesson, we have to lead the world in clean energy, such as solar and biomass, and make it a major pillar of a new Japan," the centre-left leader told a parliamentary committee.

[Gulf presses ahead with nuclear energy](#)

Despite the disaster in Japan, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia are to continue with their investigations into adopting nuclear energy.

[Nuclear Curbs Will Hurt Climate, Energy Security Goal, IEA Economist Says](#)

Slowing the expansion of nuclear power will harm efforts to fight climate change, push up energy prices and set back goals to secure power supplies, said Fatih Birol, chief economist at the International Energy Agency.

[UB to host 8 free lectures on hydraulic fracturing](#)

The controversial hydraulic fracturing natural gas drilling technique and its potential impact on the state's environment and economy will be the subject of an eight-week series of free lectures arranged by the University at Buffalo.

[Saudis consider power export](#)

Saudi Arabia is considering exporting surplus electricity to Europe in the winter months, when some power capacity lies idle.

The kingdom is conducting a feasibility study on a high-voltage line to connect to the European grid in the next decade, the deputy electricity minister said at a conference in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

[Abu Dhabi's electricity demands to grow at faster pace this decade](#)

Abu Dhabi's demand for electricity will rise an average of almost 13 per cent a year this decade, a rate that is one-third faster than the increase in power use in the last five years, a government official said.

[US Energy Dept. program to cut costs for start-ups](#)

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu is making it easier for start-up companies to license groundbreaking technologies developed by the National Laboratories.

Chu announced Tuesday the department will reduce the total upfront cost of licensing patents in a specific technology to a \$1,000 fee for portfolios of up to three patents.

[2 Mass. utilities make very different power deals](#)

BOSTON – State lawmakers gave every Massachusetts utility the same order in 2008: go buy more power from renewable energy sources.

But the state's two largest utilities came back with vastly different deals — especially in price.

[Russian upper house ratifies Norway border deal](#)

Russia's upper house of parliament on Wednesday approved a maritime border delimitation agreement with Norway.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg brought a long-standing dispute over dividing the Barents Sea and part of the Arctic Ocean to an end last year by signing an agreement that paved the way for oil and gas exploration in the lucrative region.

[Alaska Clash Over Resources and Rights Heats Up](#)

Resisting Washington is “part of the cultural fiber of Alaska, but it has definitely been taken to a new level by this administration,” said Tom Waldo, a staff lawyer here for the environmental law firm Earthjustice. “You see this particular eagerness to respond even to imagined provocations.”

He pointed to a lawsuit that the state filed last year seeking to block a federal moratorium on offshore oil drilling in Alaska that did not actually exist. The state filed the case after the United States secretary of the interior, Ken Salazar, suggested during a news conference that a moratorium would be put in place, but it was never carried out.

[Rich hunters, poor town clash over power plant](#)

FULTON, Ark. — The barbed-wire fence surrounding the Hempstead County Hunting Club divides more than property lines. It separates rich from poor.

On one side: wealthy duck hunters who have preserved a private forested paradise largely untouched by chain saws. On the other: the people of this struggling Arkansas town where jobs are scarce and families live in run-down trailers.

The hunters are now waging a bitter legal battle over construction of a coal-fired power

plant, and the dispute has laid bare the class tensions that have long beset this rural area.

[Cozy pocket neighborhoods have sprawl on the move](#)

Big houses get families to put all their needs under one roof, often isolating them from neighbors, he says. Now that gas prices are soaring, large homes that need lots of energy to heat and cool are losing their appeal.

Homes in pocket neighborhoods may be small but are designed to feel big and airy. Many feature high ceilings and skylights. Parking spaces and garages are usually out of sight to encourage residents to walk home through the shared gardens.

[Democrats may compromise on EPA](#)

WASHINGTON — Democrats indicated Tuesday they may be willing to accept Republican-backed curbs on the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal regulators as part of an overall deal on spending cuts, a rare hint of compromise in private negotiations marked by public rancor.

[Dolphin toll from BP oil spill far higher: study](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The discovery of more than 100 dead dolphins on Gulf of Mexico shores likely reflects only a small fraction of the total killed by the BP oil spill last year, a study suggested on Wednesday.

The actual toll among cetaceans, a group of mammals that includes whales, narwhals and dolphins, may be as much as 50 times higher, said the Canadian and American research team in the journal Conservation Letters.

[U.S. drops to 3rd in clean-energy investment: Pew](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The United States fell one spot to third place in clean-energy investment last year as the lack of a national energy policy hurt purchases in wind and solar power and other technologies, a report said on Tuesday.

China came in first and Germany second, according to the report "Who's Winning the Clean Energy Race" by the Pew Charitable Trusts, an independent, nonprofit group.

[S.Africa takes heat for burning coal](#)

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) – The global fight over fossil fuels has hit home in South Africa as the coal-dependent country debates its energy future before hosting UN climate talks later this year.

[On Global Warming, No Clear Skies For Most 2012 GOP Contenders](#)

When news broke of Jon Huntsman's serious consideration of a run for president last month, several conservative pundits, including the Washington Post's Jennifer Rubin, dismissed the former Utah governor's chances by pointing to his moderate record on global warming, which they predicted would play poorly among the GOP's conservative base.

[Study: Emissions trading doesn't cause pollution 'hot spots'](#)

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- Programs that allow facilities to buy and sell emission allowances have been popular and effective since they were introduced in the U.S. two decades ago. But critics worry the approach can create heavily polluted "hot spots" in low-income and minority communities.

A new study by Evan Ringquist, professor in the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs, finds the problem hasn't materialized -- that the efficiency gains of allowance trading have not come at the expense of equitable treatment of minorities and the poor.

[NASA detect extensive drought impact on Amazon forests](#)

A new NASA-funded study has revealed widespread reductions in the greenness of the forests in the vast Amazon basin in South America caused by the record-breaking drought of 2010.

"The greenness levels of Amazonian vegetation- a measure of its health decreased dramatically over an area more than three and one-half times the size of Texas and did not recover to normal levels, even after the drought ended in late October 2010," said Liang Xu, the study's lead author from Boston University.



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