



Drumbeat: April 13, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 13, 2011 - 10:19am

[Flacking for Qaddafi: The Price of Silence at Harvard](#)

Porter, a distinguished Harvard Business School professor, had held out high hopes for Libya under Khadaffy in a report prepared (with Daniel Yergin's Cambridge Energy Research Associates) for the Libyan government in 2006. ("Libya's popular democracy system supports the bottom-up approach critical to building competitiveness. ... Libya has the only functioning example of direct democracy on a national level.")

"To put it simply," said Lewis, "a tyrant was willing to pay for a Crimson-tinged report that he was running a democracy, and a Harvard expert obliged in spite of all evidence to the contrary."

[Carrier officers say Gadhafi's troops hard to spot](#)

ABOARD THE CHARLES DE GAULLE – As French navy Rafale and Super Etendard fighter-bombers carrying laser-guided bombs catapult off the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, officers describe the difficulties they face: Despite the technology, troops loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi are hard to identify from the air.

[Shock treatment: Jeff Rubin Q&A](#)

You believe we will actually take vehicles off the road?

Rubin: I do. The days of the U.S being a 17-million vehicle market, like it was three or four years before last recession, is over, and never coming back. I say there will be fewer vehicles on the road in the future, not more. Yes, vehicle sales recovered to 12-12.5 million, but the only problem is, as the U.S. economy recovers, look at where gasoline prices are? They're not far off from four dollars (per gallon).

[Oil and trouble](#)

The most disconcerting part of the IMF analysis is its estimate of the potential impact of declining oil output on world GDP under different output scenarios. In the benchmark case, growth in oil output drops by one percentage point a year and real world GDP two decades from now is about 3 percentage points below where it otherwise would have

been. In America, the drop is closer to 4 percentage points. Given greater substitution away from oil, the gap over two decades is closer to 1 percentage point for both the world and the American economy.

But the IMF also considers a more pessimistic scenario in which the annual hit to growth in oil output is 3.8 percentage points. In that case, real world GDP could wind up 10 percentage points below its but-for level. In America, the projected gap is more like 13 percentage points.

[High gas prices hurt many, hope coming?](#)

High gas prices are putting a big hit into lawncare businesses.

"I spent \$89 dollars this morning for 16 gallons in the truck and to fill up the gas cans," Larry Collier, owner of Cut & Trim, Inc, said.

That cost comes every week, sometimes more than once. His truck, mower, weed trimmer, all require gas. Collier said he can't afford to not pass that on to his customers.

[Saudi supplies India heavier crude for May: Trade](#)

DUBAI: State oil giant Saudi Aramco has changed the mix of crude it supplies to India for May, substituting some heavier crude for light oil, a Gulf-based trade source said.

The overall volume under India's term contract with Saudi Aramco is unchanged.

"They need less lighter grades mainly due to the end of seasonal demand," said the source, who declined to be identified.

[Gas at \\$4? Time to invest in oil](#)

(Money Magazine) -- With tensions in the Middle East and North Africa pushing oil above \$100 a barrel for the first time in two years, you may be clamoring for ways to offset rising gasoline and home heating bills.

So why not claim a stake in rising prices by investing in black gold?

[As gas goes up, Ford and GM go down](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- It's hard to believe that it was only five months ago that General Motors made a triumphant return to the public markets.

[‘Spillionaires’ are the new rich after BP oil spill payouts](#)

So many people cashed in that they earned nicknames: “spillionaires” or “BP rich.” Others hurt by the spill wound up getting comparatively little. In the end, BP’s attempt to make things right — spending more than \$16 billion so far, mostly on damage claims and cleanup — created new divisions and even new wrongs.

Some of the inequities arose from the chaos that followed the April 20 spill. But in at least one corner of Louisiana, the dramatic differences can be traced in part to local powerbrokers.

[Pakistani team leaves for Tehran for gas line talks](#)

A team of Pakistani officials Tuesday left for Tehran to hold talks with Iranian counterparts on the multi-billion Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, which Islamabad says will be completed by 2015, officials said.

[Spending resources on coal alone a folly: study](#)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is spending resources on exploitation of its coal reserves at a time when the countries around the globe are phasing it out as the primary source of energy, says a study launched by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

[Whither oil prices? 150 in sight. So follow Bill Gates in to digital barrels.](#)

The first two great eras of oil & gas technology are now mature. The first began a century ago with the rudimentary mechanical (by today’s standards, almost Tinker Toy like) drilling technologies yielded by the industrial revolution. The second emerged post World War II, using advanced materials and electro-mechanical tools and the sheer scale made possible by the 20th century’s engineering might epitomized by commonly safe massive off-shore oil platforms the likes of BP’s fateful Deepwater Horizon. The Third Oil Era now emerging piggy-backs the late 20th century information revolution which is now accelerating (again). In the oil field, information is now king.

[Natural gas won't save us](#)

If you do the math, you find that it doesn't take much escaping methane to cancel out the benefits of burning natural gas compared with coal or oil. Burning natural gas produces half the CO₂ as burning coal, but methane has 20-25 times the warming potential as CO₂.

[The limits to solar thermal energy](#)

It is very commonly assumed that we can move from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources without significant change in the lifestyles and systems of rich countries. People might think that some things would have to be quite different, such as the kinds of cars they drive, but it seems to be taken for granted that the transition could be made without any threat to the growth economy, the free enterprise market system, or affluent living standards.

I do not think this is so and for some years have been trying to clarify the situation.

[Fuel tax decline has cost 350,000 jobs](#)

On the day the European Commission is set to propose an increase in the minimum level of road diesel taxation in Europe, a new study shows that average road fuel taxes in Europe have declined by 10 cents per litre in real terms since 1999. If taxes had been inflation-corrected and the revenues used to lower labour taxes, 350,000 jobs would have been saved, oil imports would have been cut by €11 billion, and road transport CO2 emissions would have been 6% lower, according to the report.

['Indigenous thinking can solve climate crises,' says Bolivia's foreign minister](#)

Development, by the west, creates considerable imbalances and a million problems. Indigenous people can solve these, says David Choquehuanca, Bolivia's foreign minister.

[Southern Chairman Fanning talks energy policy at U.S. Chamber](#)

Southern Co. Chairman, President and CEO Thomas A. Fanning told an audience at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce "CEO Leadership Series" Luncheon in Washington, D.C. the nation needs full portfolio of energy resources combined with a big R&D effort to create new energy technologies.

[BP, Khodorkovsky and how Russia is ruled](#)

The upside of BP's latest brawl in Russia is how much we are learning about how much the place works.

[Rosneft: Will Likely Replace BP With New Arctic Partner - Sources](#)

MOSCOW -(Dow Jones)- Russian state-controlled oil company OAO Rosneft told investors in London that BP PLC (BP) will almost certainly have to be replaced with another partner in an alliance to develop Arctic oil fields, according to people familiar with the meeting.

The comments from a Rosneft representative to investors Tuesday marked the first indication that the Russian oil company may be giving up on salvaging the landmark \$16

billion deal with BP.

[Radioactivity in the Ocean: Diluted, But Far from Harmless](#)

With contaminated water from Japan's crippled Fukushima nuclear complex continuing to pour into the Pacific, scientists are concerned about how that radioactivity might affect marine life. Although the ocean's capacity to dilute radiation is huge, signs are that nuclear isotopes are already moving up the local food chain.

[Energy Dept.: Extent of vehicle research cuts unclear](#)

Energy Department officials said they don't know yet how much the government's vehicle research budget will be cut for the remainder of 2011.

[How many Democrats on the Tucson council will vote to burden the poor even more tonight?](#)

The City of Tucson should be promoting public transportation as much as possible, especially if they know anything about peak oil. Increasing bus fares on the poor is the exact opposite of the way they should be headed.

[Bolivia enshrines natural world's rights with equal status for Mother Earth](#)

Bolivia is set to pass the world's first laws granting all nature equal rights to humans. The Law of Mother Earth, now agreed by politicians and grassroots social groups, redefines the country's rich mineral deposits as "blessings" and is expected to lead to radical new conservation and social measures to reduce pollution and control industry.

[El Alto, city of rural migrants whose crops failed when the climate changed](#)

Rural Bolivians migrate to El Alto when their crops fail because of droughts, erratic rainfall, heatwaves, frosts and floods. Climate change – and Pachamama – are driving them into the city.

[Britain's taste for cheap food that's killing Brazil's 'other wilderness'](#)

An "upside-down forest" of small trees with deep roots, Brazil's wildlife-rich outback is home to a 20th of the world's species, including the spectacular blue and yellow macaw and giant armadillos.

Yet this vast wilderness – as big the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain put together – is being rapidly lost to feed the heavily carnivorous appetites of Britons and others.

[Chronic illnesses lead to a childhood of limitations](#)

Families became smaller, while homes grew bigger — large enough that parents no longer felt compelled to toss children outside to get a moment's peace. Inside, kids in the 1980s suddenly had access to air conditioning, cable TV, video games and home computers, Louv says.

As children spent less time outside, and schools cut back on recess to prepare kids for standardized tests, more kids began being diagnosed with asthma and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), says Edward Hallowell, a child psychiatrist for more than 30 years.

"I have no doubt that the trend for kids to go inside, with electronic gadgets, has resulted in more obesity and less attentive time," says Hallowell, author of *Driven to Distraction*. "There are kids that we think have ADHD, but they are really just electronically overstimulated and interpersonally understimulated."

[New energy crisis; new investment choices](#)

(Reuters) - "Green" investing was once dismissed as a hobby of the granola and sandals set.

But it's gone pinstripes in recent years as the rise of a sustainable goods consumer sector has broadened the sector. Japan's nuclear debacle and Middle East uprisings have added more urgency for investors looking to "clean up" their portfolios.

Big oil and nuclear were back in favor in the post-financial crisis. But new money flowed into the alternative energy sector in the first quarter of the year for the first time since 2009. Some of it was 'crisis investing' -- though some was triggered by President Barack Obama's plan to cut oil imports by a third over 10 years.

[Pickens: We'll Cut OPEC in Half in 5-7 Years](#)

BP Capital Founder T. Boone Pickens discusses the need for America to increase its use of natural gas.

[Jupiter floatel sinking off Mexico](#)

The Jupiter accommodation platform in the Gulf of Mexico has partially sunk after listing heavily on Tuesday, operator Pemex said.

"After several attempts to rescue the platform failed, it partially sank at 14:30 (local time)," said Pemex in a statement.

[Argentine oil workers strike causes fuel shortage across country](#)

A strike by Argentine oil workers in the country's southern Patagonia region is causing fuel shortages across the country, especially in the capital.

The protests for better salaries and working conditions have mainly affected companies working in San Jorge Gulf, which is home to 90 percent of Argentina's oil production, according to local press.

[Va. Dem Bucks Administration on Offshore Leasing](#)

"As gas prices rise, in part due to America's dependence on foreign oil, we must pursue robust energy policies that include the expansion of our domestic energy resources in a safe and secure manner, as well as conservation and clean energy measures," Webb said in a statement issued by his office last week.

He also asked Obama to expand the 2.9-million acre tract -- slightly larger than Delaware -- located 50 miles off Virginia's shore that was previously considered for drilling.

[Bay of Oil?](#)

On the heels of the President's recent visit to Brazil where he announced that he's all in favor of helping their country develop its oil and gas drilling, we now read news about Cuba seeking their own energy independence. And it makes one wonder, has the United States traded economic systems with Cuba?

[Offshore Regulation Could Grow](#)

The Obama administration is exploring whether to expand federal oversight of offshore drilling beyond oil and gas companies to rig suppliers, oil field services providers and other contractors now outside regulators' reach.

Michael Bromwich, the director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, told reporters Tuesday that the existing system imposes artificial limits on what his agency can do to make offshore drilling safer. Its enforcement power now ends with oil and gas companies that hold leases to drill in U.S. waters.

[Horror at gas drilling plans](#)

Bridgend-based Coastal Oil and Gas Ltd has applied for planning permission to drill a test bore hole at Llandow industrial estate.

But campaigners fear that if the tests successfully find gas the company could use the controversial process known as fracking to access it with what they say are potentially devastating consequences for the local environment.

[Nepalese minister stabbed, police detain 150](#)

KATHMANDU — Police in Nepal rounded up 150 suspects on Tuesday as part of a hunt for two assailants who stabbed the country's new energy minister just hours after he was appointed.

...The attack occurred during one of the rolling 14-hour power outages that have blighted daily life in Kathmandu and elsewhere, due to a national energy crisis that would be Bista's top priority as minister.

[Tokyo Data Centers Face Possible Uptime Problems](#)

(The Hosting News) – Despite the energy crisis caused by last month's earthquake, Tokyo-based data centers have not faced many problems due to power shortages. However, this could change over the summer if the Japanese government implements rolling blackouts. Such blackouts may be performed by Japanese utility companies in order to preserve enough power for the entire nation.

[8 red hot small cars](#)

Gas prices are up and so are small car sales. Here are some tiny rides that should absolutely be on your shopping list.

[Rob Hopkins: How Climate Change Puts Globalization in Reverse](#)

Painting climate change as sheer disaster without offering an alternative vision blows people's world to pieces and offers them nothing. This is what Rob Hopkins, an environmental grassroots campaign award-winner, sees as a significant challenge to roping people into cutting their carbon emissions. Hopkins speaks about his global forecast in this thirteenth, and final, video in the series "Peak Oil and a Changing Climate" from *The Nation* and On The Earth Productions. The future world will be much more localized, which is not such a gloomy picture, he says.

Hopkins argues that high energy prices should be seen as a positive push towards a new economic model, noting that high oil prices encouraged the US to start producing its own steel again. He likens state-sponsored oil subsidies to giving liquor store discount coupons to an alcoholic relative.

This necessary transition will be like reverse globalization, and will undoubtedly be an enormous shock to the population, he says. "But then, so was the process we've seen over the last 50 years. It drove farmers to suicide, it bankrupted lots of people and it

drove many millions of people off of the land. As we go back the other way it will be a process that throws open many opportunities for people who are entrepreneurial, imaginative and creative.”

[OPEC marginally raises global oil demand forecast for 2011](#)

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has raised its forecast for worldwide oil demand in 2011 to 87.9 million barrels per day from the previous month's forecast of 87.8 million bpd, OPEC said on Wednesday.

"The most important incident is the Japanese earthquake, which is expected to affect oil demand only marginally," OPEC said in its report.

[No plans to review gas prices for Ukraine - Putin](#)

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on Wednesday dismissed reports that Russia and Ukraine agreed to discuss and possibly review the gas pricing formula.

[IAEA defends late Japan nuclear severity upgrade](#)

Japan's decision to wait until now to raise the ranking of its nuclear disaster to the most severe level on the global scale does not mean that Tokyo authorities have been downplaying the disaster, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Tuesday.

[Greece's PPC, China's Sinovent sign wind power deal](#)

(Reuters) - Dominant Greek power producer PPC said on Wednesday it signed an agreement to develop renewable energy projects with Sinovent Wind, China's top wind turbine maker.

The deal adds clout to PPC's ambitious plan to shed part of its polluting coal-fired power plants to become a clean energy powerhouse.

[If Flying Isn't Green, Can the Airport Wait Be?](#)

The art-filled terminal, known as T2, features Danish modern furniture, organic chow, 350 power outlets, free Wi-Fi and other creature comforts and innovations designed to cut the building's energy footprint while making air travel, dare we say it, more fun.

[U.S. on track to meet 1 mln plug-in autos goal-DOE](#)

(Reuters) - President Barack Obama's goal of having 1 million plug-in vehicles on U.S. roads by 2015 is on its way to being met, a Department of Energy official said on Wednesday.

"It's looking good," said Assistant Energy Secretary David Sandalow when asked by reporters on the chances of meeting the goal set by Obama.

[Thinking globally and acting locally](#)

UAE and three other nations have agreed to set up a network of eco-friendly cities.

[UW Assistant Professor Awarded \\$5 Million Grant for Sustainable Community Food Project](#)

A University of Wyoming professor is leading a \$5-million, multi-state project to build community food systems that nourish populations in both current and future generations.

[Book review: The New North: The World in 2050](#)

Smith focuses on the eight countries which control territories bordering the Arctic Ocean - the United States, Canada, Iceland, Greenland (Denmark), Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. He calls them the Northern Rim countries or NORCs. He then sets out to imagine - with the help of demographic statistics, climate change models and projections for resource demand and globalisation - what these countries might be like by the year 2050. His aim, he says, is to construct a probable future, even if it comes at the expense of a good story.

[Jeff Rubin: Where is Saudi's excess capacity when you need it?](#)

Exactly how high do oil prices have to rise before Saudi Arabia will start using its supposed three million barrels of spare capacity?

Does Saudi Aramco intend to stay on the sidelines watching Brent crude prices - already \$120 per barrel - climb as high as \$200 (U.S.) per barrel, while blaming speculators for distorting market fundamentals?

[Crude oil drops more than 3% on Goldman warning](#)

NEW YORK — Crude oil tumbled more than 3% Tuesday after Goldman Sachs warned investors that crude is due for a “substantial pullback.”

Goldman analyst David Greely said global supplies remain “adequate” even though the rebellion in Libya shut down production there. Before fighting broke out in February,

Libya exported about 1.5 million barrels per day, 2% of global demand — mostly to Europe.

[Crude Oil Rises For the First Time in Three Days Before U.S. Supply Report](#)

Oil rose for the first time in three days before an Energy Department report forecast to show that gasoline supplies declined for an eighth week in the U.S., the world's largest crude consumer.

Gasoline stockpiles probably declined 1 million barrels from 216.7 million barrels in the longest stretch of declines since the summer of 2008, according to a Bloomberg survey of analysts before today's data. Oil dropped as much as 0.6 percent in London earlier as Libyan rebels said they would accept a Turkey peace proposal if it includes an agreement for leader Muammar Qaddafi to relinquish power.

[Drivers start to cut back on gas as prices rise](#)

"More people are going to work," said John Gamel, director of gasoline research for MasterCard. "That means more people are driving and they should be buying more gas."

Instead, about 70 percent of the nation's major gas-station chains say sales have fallen, according to a March survey by the Oil Price Information Service. More than half reported a drop of 3 percent or more — the sharpest since the summer of 2008, when gas soared past \$4 a gallon. Now it's creeping toward \$4 again.

[Global oil demand takes hit from unrest](#)

Global oil demand has fallen in response to sharply higher oil prices, and the stage may be set for a structural drop in crude demand and more price volatility.

[Dust storm halts Kuwait oil exports](#)

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — OPEC member Kuwait on Wednesday halted oil exports as a "precautionary measure" after a blinding dust storm hit the desert Gulf state, a Kuwait Petroleum Corp spokesman said.

Oil exports from terminals, facilities to receive vessels and some maintenance works at oil refineries were "halted as a precautionary measure", Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah said in a KPC statement.

[Ukraine's ex-PM accused over Russia gas deals](#)

KIEV (AFP) – Ukraine on Monday accused former premier and Orange Revolution leader Yulia Tymoshenko of costing her government almost \$200 million by signing excessively expensive natural gas deals with Russia.

[Dubai aims for energy shift from oil to gas](#)

Dubai, which currently burns oil for a large part of its electricity supply, plans to generate 70 per cent of its power with natural gas.

The rest would come from coal, nuclear energy and renewable sources, said Saeed al Tayer, the chief executive of the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (Dewa).

[The Gas Revolution](#)

Amazingly, an era of energy abundance is upon us, unless politicians and environmentalists get their way.

[Gas drilling's promise, perils rile townfolk](#)

Ron Hilliard came back from church one Sunday to find hundreds of plastic \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$100 bills hanging on his fence in Flower Mound, Texas, another message from townfolk angry at him for signing a lucrative natural gas drilling lease for his suburban Dallas property.

In Damascus, Pa., about 1,500 miles away, drilling advocate Marian Schweighofer awoke one morning to the word "LORAX" — from the Dr. Seuss book about environmental destruction — spray-painted on the road near her family's 712-acre farm.

Hilliard and Schweighofer have never met, yet both are living with the nastiness and rancor erupting in communities nationwide over the volatile issue of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

[Fracking shale for gas brings wealth, concerns](#)

Hydraulic fracturing is a drilling process that blasts large amounts of water deep into the earth to fracture dense shale and allow natural gas to escape.

The water — from a few hundred thousand to several million gallons — is mixed with sand and chemicals — some of them toxic or potentially carcinogenic. Some of that fracking liquid then gushes back to the surface, often with natural underground brine, in a brew that is intensely salty and often contains barium, strontium and sometimes radium from the earth.

In Texas and other states, the liquids are disposed of in deep injection wells; Pennsylvania is the only major gas-producing state that routinely allows fracking wastewater to be partially treated and dumped into rivers and streams from which communities get their drinking water.

[Shale gas as dirty as 'oil, coal': study](#)

PARIS (AFP) – Shale gas, an energy source enjoying a boom in North America and Europe, carries a greater carbon footprint than oil, coal and conventional gas over at least a 20-year period, according to a study released on Tuesday.

[Checking in with Iraqi Stability](#)

The future of global oil supply, and the timing and height of peak oil, depend critically on whether and when Iraq can markedly increase its oil production. A precondition for increased oil production is adequate political stability in the country. So it's good to check-in every so often on how the statistics in the Brookings Iraq Index are tracking.

[Iran LNG Says It Will Overcome Sanctions to Start Exporting Fuel in 2012](#)

Iran Liquefied Natural Gas Co., the country's maiden LNG project, says it's poised to begin exporting by the end of next year after tapping domestic funds to beat international sanctions.

[Upheavals in Africa threaten oil exports](#)

Violence is on the rise again in parts of Africa, clouding the outlook for oil exports from more than one nation.

While the armed conflict in Libya has grabbed the most attention from oil traders, the deadly election-related violence in Nigeria could threaten oil output from a second African Opec producer. Even the post-election military clash in Ivory Coast, which is not an oil exporter, could affect future supplies of prized light, sweet African crude.

[Clinton's 'Failed State' Warning Hangs Over Libya as NATO Can't Stem Chaos](#)

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's early warning that Libya may become a failed state risks turning into reality as three weeks of Western military intervention have failed to stem the chaos that's split the country in half.

[Libya rebels aim to boost oil exports, receive aid](#)

DOHA, April 13 (Reuters) - Rebels trying to overthrow Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi want to increase their exports of crude oil to secure food and other humanitarian aid, a spokesman for the Libyan National Council said on Wednesday.

The rebels control fields that currently pump 100,000 barrels per day of crude, Mahmud Awad Shammam told reporters, but are only exporting what he termed a "minimal" amount of oil.

[Qatar confirms helping Libyan rebel sell oil](#)

Qatar is confirming it sold oil from Libya's rebel-held areas earlier this month and says it has also shipped fuel into the rebel stronghold of Benghazi.

The Gulf nation says it has delivered four shipments of fuel to Benghazi, the main opposition-held city in eastern Libya, including diesel, propane and gasoline. It also says it marketed a million barrels of oil loaded in the eastern Libyan city of Tobruk last week.

[Fitch Downgrades, Withdraws Libya's Credit Rating](#)

LONDON -- Fitch Ratings on Wednesday announced that it had downgraded Libya's long-term credit rating to B from BB, removing the ratings from Ratings Watch Negative and assigning them a stable outlook. Fitch said it had simultaneously "withdrawn" all ratings because it doesn't have enough information to maintain coverage of the strife-torn issuer.

[Delegates Meet in Support of Libya Rebels](#)

DOHA, Qatar — — NATO, Arab and African ministers met with Libya's rebels here on Wednesday in a show of support for insurgents who are seeking to overthrow Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi against a backdrop of division over the pace of coalition air attacks on pro-Qaddafi forces.

[Libyan rebels urge stronger US military role](#)

DOHA, Qatar – A spokesman for Libyan rebels urged the U.S. military Wednesday to reassert a stronger role in the NATO-led air campaign or risk more civilian casualties in the stalemate fighting between Moammar Gadhafi and forces seeking to end his four-decade rule.

The appeal by the spokesman, Mahmoud Shammam, appeared to set the urgent tone for the rebels' meetings with the U.N.'s secretary-general and other top Western and Arab envoys as they gathered in Qatar's capital to discuss ways to end the Libyan crisis.

[Syria Presses Crackdown in Two Cities on Coast](#)

CAIRO — The security crackdown on Syria's coastal region tightened on Tuesday, with checkpoints blocking off access to the city of Baniyas and its outlying areas and a violent raid by government security forces on the nearby village of Bayda, local human rights advocates said.

[In new protest, Syrian women block main highway](#)

BEIRUT — Thousands of Syrian women and children holding white flags and olive branches blocked a main coastal highway Wednesday to protest a crackdown by Syrian authorities on opponents of President Bashar Assad's authoritarian regime, eyewitnesses said.

The crowd was demanding the release of hundreds of men who have been rounded up by authorities in the northeastern villages of Bayda and Beit Jnad in the area in recent days. Some 200 people have been killed during more than three weeks of unrest, said Syria's leading pro-democracy group, the Damascus Declaration.

[Rival Military Factions Clash in Yemen](#)

SANA, Yemen — Fighting broke out late Tuesday between rival military factions near the capital, leaving at least one soldier from the forces commanded by Maj. Gen. Ali Mohsin al-Ahmar dead. It was the first clash between the two sides here since General Ahmar announced his support for the country's antigovernment forces three weeks ago.

[Egypt's Mubarak detained for investigation](#)

CAIRO — Egypt's prosecutor general announced Wednesday the 15-day detention of former President Hosni Mubarak pending inquiries into accusations of corruption, abuse of authority and the killings of protesters during the uprising that ousted him from power.

A separate announcement said Mubarak's two sons were detained for questioning in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, where the family has lived since the president's ouster on Feb. 11 in a popular uprising. The sons, Gamal and his businessman brother Alaa, were transferred Wednesday to a Cairo prison.

[Analysis: Russian Internet attacks stifle political dissent](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russian hacker attacks on the country's biggest blog site and a spy agency's warning to Gmail and Skype have raised fears that authorities are tightening their grip on dissent in a China-like assault on free speech.

With an eye on Arab unrest that has toppled two North African leaders and spurred Western military intervention in Libya, Moscow is keen to defuse potential turmoil ahead of a December parliamentary election and a 2012 presidential vote.

[Transocean claims record sea depth for oil drilling](#)

ZURICH (AFP) – Offshore oil drilling group Transocean claimed Tuesday that it had set a world record for deep water drilling at an ocean depth of 3,107 metres (10,194 feet) off the coast of India.

The depth was achieved by the ultra-deepwater drillship Dhirubhai Deepwater KG2, surpassing the previous record of 10,011 feet, also set by Transocean in 2003 in the Gulf of Mexico, the group said in a statement.

[Government weighs more drilling contractor oversight](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – The U.S. offshore drilling regulator is weighing options for expanding oversight of rig contractors after last year's massive BP Plc oil spill exposed a possible regulatory gap, Interior official Michael Bromwich said on Tuesday.

[BP faces wave of protests at AGM](#)

Oil giant BP is facing a wave of protests as it holds its annual general meeting in London days before the first anniversary of the Gulf of Mexico disaster.

[BP Spill Fund Administrator Tells U.S. Judge to Stay Out of Claims Process](#)

The U.S. judge in charge of hundreds of BP Plc (BP/) oil spill-related damages lawsuits shouldn't -- and legally can't -- take charge of the claims-payment process, said the head of BP Plc's \$20 billion spill fund.

[Damage from BP oil spill lingers a year later](#)

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana (AFP) – The worst maritime oil spill in history began nearly a year ago with a drop in pressure in a poorly drilled well deep in the Gulf of Mexico. It hasn't really ended even though BP's runaway well was eventually capped 87 days later.

As crews in Japan struggle to contain a nuclear meltdown at a poorly maintained plant in Fukushima, the April 20 anniversary of the BP spill is a stark reminder of the high costs of our energy needs and the far-reaching consequences of cutting corners on safety.

[BP, government win 1st Amendment Muzzle awards](#)

RICHMOND, Va. – Oil giant BP and the Obama administration were among the winners of the Jefferson Muzzle awards, given Wednesday by a free-speech group to those it considered the worst First Amendment violators in 2010.

BP and the government appeared on the list, compiled by the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression, for their roles in restricting news media access to the massive Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

[Japan Hit by Aftershocks as Jaczko Says Nuclear Crisis Is Yet to Stabilize](#)

Japan's crippled nuclear station is yet to stabilize and the reactors must be kept cool to prevent the crisis from deteriorating, the U.S. atomic regulator said, as more aftershocks rocked the country.

"Currently the situation is static," Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Gregory Jaczko said at a hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee yesterday, after Japan raised the severity rating of the accident to the same level as Chernobyl. "It is not yet, however, what we believe to be stable" and "significant additional problems" could still occur at the Fukushima Dai-Ichi plant, he said in Washington.

[Evacuees slam Japan nuclear plant operator](#)

TOKYO – Angry residents forced from their homes near Japan's tsunami-stricken nuclear power plant protested at the Tokyo headquarters of the plant's operator Wednesday, demanding compensation as the company's president pledged to do more to help.

"I can't work and that means I have no money," said Shigeaki Konno, 73, an auto repair mechanic, who lived seven miles (11 kilometers) from the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant before the area was evacuated due to leaking radiation. "The talk about compensation is not concrete. We need it quickly."

[Tokyo Electric Chief Defends Response to Nuclear Crisis; Pledges Pay Cuts](#)

Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s chief defended the utility's response to the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl and pledged executive pay cuts as workers struggle to stop radiation leaks from a crippled atomic station.

[Japanese Officials on Defensive as Nuclear Alert Level Rises](#)

TOKYO — Japanese officials struggled through the day on Tuesday to explain why it

had taken them a month to disclose large-scale releases of radioactive material in mid-March at a crippled nuclear power plant, as the government and an electric utility disagreed on the extent of continuing problems there.

[Hitachi, GE Submit Proposal to Dismantle Crippled Fukushima Nuclear Plant](#)

Hitachi Ltd. (6501) and General Electric Co. (GE) submitted a plan to dismantle the crippled Fukushima Dai- Ichi plant they helped build as Japanese engineers battle to contain the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl.

[Keeping Score on Nuclear Accidents](#)

Now that Japan has raised its assessment of the Fukushima accident to a 7 on the International Atomic Energy Agency's scale, equal to the 1986 accident at Chernobyl, it may be time to review past accidents. Thomas B. Cochran, a physicist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, just did that in preparing to testify on Tuesday afternoon before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

[Quake-Prone Taiwan Halts Nuclear Expansion as Japan Struggles at Fukushima](#)

Taiwan Power Co., which operates the island's three atomic-power plants and is building a fourth, halted plans for additional reactors after an earthquake and tsunami crippled a nuclear plant in Japan.

[Shift to dry storage sought for U.S. nuclear fuel](#)

ATHENS, Ala. — Tons of radioactive waste is piling up at U.S. nuclear power plants in water-filled pools, and some experts say dry-cask storage is safer.

[When fear wins, we all lose](#)

As the frantic struggle to control damaged nuclear reactors in Japan shifts into a longer term battle to minimize the damage, some lessons begin to appear. One is that the fear itself could do more damage than what we're afraid of in the first place.

[Atop new poll, Trump slams China, OPEC and Obama](#)

Under a President Trump, China would be forced to end currency manipulation or face a 25 percent tariff on all exports to the United States. OPEC oil-producing nations would have to drop the price of a barrel of oil to \$40-50 or face America's wrath. And Arab nations and South Korea would pay for benefiting from America's military might.

[Mines prof says Obama, Salazar stalling on oil shale the way Bush did on climate change](#)

Dr. Jeremy Boak, a leading expert on oil shale technology at the Colorado School of Mines, says the Obama administration is dragging its feet on oil shale production in the United States much the way the Bush administration stalled on climate change policy.

[What's the Alternative to Oil Sands?](#)

I can recall when technologies like oil sands and coal gasification were commonly referred to as alternative energy, with the same high-tech aura now attached to solar power and advanced biofuels. Much has changed since then, not least our perspective on climate change and the greenhouse gases that contribute to it. It's no longer possible to consider Canada's oil sands production and the means of transporting it without a serious examination of the environmental consequences, both at the source and along its journey to market. However, while I understand that perspective, the reaction to the proposed Keystone XL pipeline seems disconnected from the reality that crucial supplies of Middle Eastern oil suddenly look much riskier than they did. We should certainly weigh the costs and benefits of oil sands carefully, but the missing element from this conversation is the question of what the alternative would be if we ruled out more oil sands imports.

[UK faces a gruelling race against time to meet its electric car targets](#)

If you are driving through North London in an electric car, head to Sainsbury's in Islington for a guaranteed free parking place and charging point.

For more than a year now, two freshly painted spaces have been waiting for electric car customers. I have never seen them used.

But this year is supposed to be the one when driving an electric car becomes a reality across the UK.

[Greenest cars? Gas prices drive interest in fuel economy](#)

As gas prices rise, consumers are more interested in buying cars with better fuel economy and -- good news! -- there's more eco-friendly cars on the market this year, Kelley Blue Book reports Tuesday.

[The greenest car you've \(likely\) never heard of](#)

GREENSBURG, Indiana (AFP) – The greenest car you've likely never heard of will soon be hitting Honda showrooms across the United States as the Japanese automaker expands sales of its compressed natural gas powered Civic.

[Believers in 'peak oil' preparing for when a fill-up costs \\$100](#)

Standing in the state Capitol basement is a new symbol that times have changed: an electric vehicle charging station.

Hawaii may have only a few electric cars so far, but state law requires large public parking structures to have at least one charging station. As many as 320 of the 2-foot-tall systems are expected to be installed across the state.

It is part of the answer to the looming crisis of peak oil, which is defined as the time when global oil extraction reaches its maximum rate and the rate of extraction declines.

[Calif. sets nation's highest renewable power goals](#)

MILPITAS, Calif. – Gov. Jerry Brown on Tuesday signed legislation requiring California utilities to get one-third of their power from renewable sources, giving the state the most aggressive alternative energy mandate in the U.S.

California utilities and other electricity providers have until the end of 2020 to draw 33 percent of their power from solar panels, windmills and other renewable sources.

[A Nobel Prize for Renewable Energy](#)

What better way to raise awareness of the issues surrounding depleting oil and global warming, and the role our oil- and coal-driven economy plays in both than to create the buzz of a Nobel Prize?

[US Energy Department backs Calif. solar projects](#)

Federal energy officials are putting financial support behind two huge solar energy projects in California that could create hundreds of jobs and power 145,000 homes.

Energy Secretary Steven Chu on Tuesday announced a conditional offer of \$1.2 billion in loan guarantees for the California Valley Solar Ranch project on the state's Central Coast. The project would use new technology to follow the sun, increasing efficiency.

[Oregon cowboy town promotes solar energy](#)

Rural Pendleton is blazing an unlikely renewable energy trail, offering no-interest loans to spark interest in solar power and a group-buy philosophy to get better prices. More than 50 residents installed systems last year, and the program was expanded to more residents and to include businesses this year.

[The need for biofuels](#)

EXPERTS predict the majority of the world's oil fields will reach maximum petroleum extraction capacity in 2020, a state otherwise known as "peak oil". After this point, a reduction in pressure causes the rate of production to enter a state of terminal decline.

Some quarters even claim the official predictions are misleadingly optimistic and that the world has in fact, already surpassed peak oil.

[Current biofuels policies are unethical, says UK report](#)

Current UK and European policies on biofuels encourage unethical practices, says a report by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics today following an 18-month inquiry. Policies such as the European Renewable Energy Directive are particularly weak when it comes to protecting the environment, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and avoiding human rights violations in developing countries. They also include few incentives for the development of new biofuel technologies that could help avoid these problems.

[As population increases, so does demand for food](#)

Food -- its availability and its price -- is becoming a major concern around the world, and this time it includes the United States where citizens have seldom had to worry about their food supply. We are more concerned over the second highest obesity rate in the world. The current situation is due to a confluence of nature-induced problems from droughts and floods to insect infestations. It is also rapidly increasing demand from third-world countries who all want the same lifestyle that we have always enjoyed.

[High Prices Sow Seeds of Erosion](#)

When prices for corn and soybeans surged last fall, Bill Hammitt, a farmer in the fertile hill country of western Iowa, began to see the bulldozers come out, clearing steep hillsides of trees and pastureland to make way for more acres of the state's staple crops. Now, as spring planting begins, with the chance of drenching rains, Mr. Hammitt worries that such steep ground is at high risk for soil erosion — a farmland scourge that feels as distant to most Americans as tales of the Dust Bowl and Woody Guthrie ballads.

Long in decline, erosion is once again rearing as a threat because of an aggressive push to plant on more land, changing weather patterns and inadequate enforcement of protections, scientists and environmentalists say.

[Congress, in a First, Removes an Animal From the Endangered Species List](#)

Congress for the first time is directly intervening in the Endangered Species List and

removing an animal from it, establishing a precedent for political influence over the list that has outraged environmental groups.

A rider to the Congressional budget measure agreed to last weekend dictates that wolves in Montana and Idaho be taken off the endangered species list and managed instead by state wildlife agencies, which is in direct opposition to a federal judge's recent decision forbidding the Interior Department to take such an action.

[Marijuana Growing Gobbles Electricity, Study Finds](#)

A new study estimates that indoor pot-growing operations in the United States burn about \$5 billion worth of electricity annually, or roughly 1 percent of national power consumption. That's enough electricity to power two million average homes.

[As the Mountaintops Fall, a Coal Town Vanishes](#)

A couple of years ago, a subsidiary of Massey Energy, which owns a sprawling mine operation behind and above the Richmond home, bought up Lindytown. Many of its residents signed Massey-proffered documents in which they also agreed not to sue, testify against, seek inspection of or "make adverse comment" about coal-mining operations in the vicinity.

You might say that both parties were motivated. Massey preferred not to have people living so close to its mountaintop mining operations. And the residents, some with area roots deep into the 19th century, preferred not to live amid a dusty industrial operation that was altering the natural world about them. So the Greens sold, as did the Cooks, and the Workmans, and the Webbs ...

[Indians Join Fight for an Oklahoma Lake's Flow](#)

TUSKAHOMA, Okla. — Sardis Lake, a reservoir in southeastern Oklahoma young enough to have drowned saplings still poking through its surface and old enough to have become a renowned bass fishery, is not wanting for suitors.

Oklahoma City and fast-growing suburbs like Edmond want to see the water flowing through their shower heads someday. So do the water masters of Tarrant County, Tex., 200 miles to the south, who are looking to supply new subdivisions around Fort Worth and are suing for access.

Now another rival has arrived: the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes, who were exiled to southeastern Oklahoma 175 years ago and given land in the area.

[China's green progress leaves US red-faced](#)

When it comes to responding to climate change, the contrast between China and the United States is stark.

It has been clear for some time that the Asian powerhouse is moving more rapidly on renewable technologies. A recent report by Pew Charitable Trusts shows China led the world last year with a \$54.4bn investment in clean technology, about 40% higher than third-placed America.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/us/).