



Drumbeat: May 6, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on May 6, 2011 - 10:15am

[Another way to beat al Qaeda: Energy independence?](#)

Behind the wheel of his Volt on a Maryland country road, Woolsey notes bin Laden once stated he'd like to see the price of oil reach nearly \$150 dollars a barrel.

"He thinks it can break the economy. He thinks it could hurt us big time and he has a point," Woolsey told CNN three days before bin Laden's death.

For Woolsey, the only solution is to break OPEC's dominance on global energy supplies.

"In the interest of everybody, we need to undermine oil's strategic role. We need to be able to drive on things other than oil," Woolsey said. "Even if they have a monopoly of oil, they don't have a monopoly on transportation. We need to break that link," he said.

[US natgas rig count climbs by 8 to 890-Baker Hughes](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The number of rigs drilling for natural gas in the United States rose by eight this week to 890, its second straight weekly gain, data from oil services firm Baker Hughes showed on Friday.

[Stuart Staniford: Energy Prices and US Recessions](#)

So I would argue that this data is at least consistent with the narrative that, in the post 1973 era, energy is consistently in somewhat problematic supply, and you can think of many of the recessions as showing a pattern in which energy prices are rising as the world overshoots what can currently be supplied, or what can currently be supplied drops as a result of geopolitical events, and energy prices rise until some pre-existing weakness in the global economic fabric tears in the course of a recession, and prices fall back again. In some cases, perhaps, like 2001, the thing was about to tear on its own anyway, and energy prices fall almost immediately at the onset the recession. In other cases, like 1990 or 2007, it perhaps wasn't quite ready to tear, and energy prices had to rise substantially more before finally breaking.

[Obama presidency depends on the pump price at your local gas station](#)

The fate of the Obama presidency hangs not on a birth certificate or the red ink on the

federal budget but by the hose nozzle of your local gas station.

Electoral discontent is measured by the price of a gallon of gasoline. Heading past \$4 toward \$5, that is a lethal trajectory for President Barack Obama.

[Death toll in Syrian protests jumps, activists say](#)

Syrian security forces killed at least 21 people during widespread protests Friday, a human rights group said.

Thousands of protesters held rallies in major areas across the country, including the capital, Damascus, and its suburbs.

[Sneak Peak: Oil Markets in the Next Issue of Foreign Affairs](#)

Bob McNally and I have an essay on oil markets in the July/August issue of *Foreign Affairs*. We argue that big oil price swings are here to stay for awhile, outline the consequences for economics and geopolitics, and describe some ways that the United States can cope with the situation. The issue won't hit the newsstands until June, but I sat down with FA editor Gideon Rose to talk a bit about what's in the article.

[Peak oil: Weaning Europe off its oil addiction](#)

A Greens/EFA conference. Part II: The EU and peak oil - analyses and policy measures

[With bin Laden Gone, the Oil Threat Remains](#)

The U.S. Navy has been using nuclear power in its ships and submarines safely for decades. There are scientists who say we could easily install these same small reactors in cities all over America, rather than construct the large-scale nuclear power plants that elicit so much anger from environmentalists.

In many countries, cars operate on both gasoline and natural gas, or methane. The mechanism to have such a switch in cars is inexpensive, but it is not available in U.S. cars. With natural gas so plentiful in the United States, why not?

[Kenya: Govt blames fuel shortage on power outage](#)

Energy Minister Kiraitu Murungi now says that the current fuel shortage was caused by power outage at the oil refinery company in Mombasa forcing a shutdown on April 27.

[Motorists take to streets as fuel shortage hits city](#)

Karachi - People took to the streets in several areas of the city on Wednesday, as petrol pumps remained shut due to the non-availability of petrol in the wake of a strike by the oil tankers associations.

“I had to push my car to home, as I found petrol nowhere in the city,” said Javed Ikram, a carpenter. “I went to as far as Khayaban-e-Ittehad in search of petrol. But all the pumps were shut.”

[Pakistan: Spinning industry compelled to close down 43% capacity](#)

The SNGPL and PEPCO, in spite of instructions from the President Asif Ali Zardari, are both curtailing industry supply to the textile industry. It has brought industry to a situation to take prudent decision not to run on alternate fuel during the disconnection of gas supply period for three days a week i.e. 12 days a month until May 2011.

This will bring production capacity down from 225,000 tons per month to 110,000 tons per month.

[Canadian Natural blasts UK North Sea oil tax hike](#)

CALGARY, Alberta (Reuters) - Canadian Natural Resources Ltd, the country's largest independent oil explorer, said on Friday that the British government's increase in North Sea taxes has prompted it to scale back activity.

[BP Gets Right to Rosneft Swap for Ceding Arctic to TNK-BP](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BP Plc gained the right to carry out a \$7.8 billion share swap with state-owned Russian oil producer OAO Rosneft in return for ceding the right to an Arctic oil exploration deal to its TNK-BP venture.

[Pemex's \\$3 Billion Bond Sale Program Gets Boost From Rally: Mexico Credit](#)

Petroleos Mexicanos, Latin America's largest oil producer, plans to sell as much as \$3 billion of bonds as soon as this month as speculation the company will reverse a six-year decline in output drives yields to a four- month low.

[Shell loses Nigeria Bonny Terminal land dispute](#)

The oil giant Shell has lost its appeal against a ruling that it is not the rightful owner of land where it runs Nigeria's biggest oil export terminal.

Three years ago, a lower court said the oil firm should pay rent to the local community for Bonny Terminal, but Shell says it bought the land outright.

[Rep. Roscoe Bartlett Joins Bipartisan House Members to Introduce Open Fuel Standard Bill](#)

Washington, May 3 - Congressman Roscoe Bartlett today joined a bipartisan group of House members led by Congressmen John Shimkus (R, Illinois-19) and including Eliot Engel (D, New York-17), and Steve Israel (D, New York-2) to introduce the Open Fuel Standard (OFS) Act (HR 1687), which is intended to bring fuel competition to the pump.

The OFS would require that 50 percent of new automobiles in 2014, 80 percent in 2016, and 95 percent in 2017, would be warranted to operate on nonpetroleum fuels in addition to or instead of petroleum based fuels. Compliance possibilities include the full array of existing technologies – including flex fuel, natural gas, hydrogen, biodiesel, plug-in electric drive, and fuel cell – and a catch-all for new technologies. This requirement will then provide certainty to investors to produce alternative fuels and fueling stations to have a variety of pumps supplying those alternative fuels.

[Wind industry and Decc urged to come clean on output of wind farms](#)

With a new analysis showing UK wind farms operating at just 20 per cent of their capacity in 2010, the potential of wind power has been called into question. Eifion Rees examines the arguments from both sides

The efficacy of wind power has been called into question by a new report suggesting wind turbines are not living up to their billing by government and industry. Opponents are now urging both to make public data they hold on wind power.

[AES Building World's Largest Lithium-Ion Battery Grid Projects](#)

Power company AES has been experimenting with using lithium-ion batteries (large forms of those found in your laptop and mobile phone) as energy storage for the power grid, and currently has several pilot projects underway. But now AES tells me it's in the process of scaling up its lithium-ion grid battery projects to a commercial size, and by the third quarter of this year, plans to start operating a 32 MW lithium-ion battery project in conjunction with grid operator PJM in West Virginia.

[Can the world feed 10 Billion people?](#)

Collier's contempt for peasants seems, however, to rest on something other than the facts. Although international agribusiness has generated great profits ever since the East India Company, it hasn't brought riches to farmers and farmworkers, who are invariably society's poorest people. Indeed, big agriculture earns its moniker – it tends to work most lucratively with large-scale plantations and operations to which small

farmers are little more than an impediment.

It turns out that if you're keen to make the world's poorest people better off, it's smarter to invest in their farms and workplaces than to send them packing to the cities. In its 2008 World Development Report, the World Bank found that, indeed, investment in peasants was among the most efficient and effective ways of raising people out of poverty and hunger. It was an awkward admission, as the Bank had long been trumpeting Collier's brand of agricultural development. Farmers organizations from Malawi to India to Brazil had been pointing out that access to land, water, sustainable technology, education, markets, state investment in processing, and — above all, access to level playing field on domestic and international markets — would help them. But it took three decades of lousy policy for the development establishment to realize this, and they're not quite there yet.

[On Small Farms, Hoof Power Returns](#)

Now, as diesel prices skyrocket, some farmers who have rejected many of the past century's advances in agriculture have found a renewed logic in draft power. Partisans argue that animals can be cheaper to board and feed than any tractor. They also run on the ultimate renewable resource: grass.

“Ox don't need spare parts, and they don't run on fossil fuels,” Mr. Ciotola said.

[ASPO 9 Conference Presentations](#)

The era of cheap energy is ending due to the depletion of low cost high quality fossil fuel deposits. First effects are being felt in Europe in the growing reliance on Middle-East, Caspian and Russian Oil & Gas, significantly higher fuel and chemical prices, and an international struggle over remaining fossil fuel extraction contracts.

These effects will become more apparent with the peak and decline in oil production approaching for reasons of geologic, economic and political nature. The challenge of this predicament is to reduce our dependency on oil while maintaining economic stability, within Europe and beyond.

The ninth international ASPO conference aims to provide insights in the challenges that we face in maintaining economic stability as fossil fuels get more expensive to recover and produce. The attendees will have the opportunity to obtain updates on the latest research on fossil fuel availability, on long and short term economic consequences of expensive energy, and on solution pathways from alternative energy to infrastructure, all within the context of European Energy Policy.

[Aramco finds little interest for its new oil blend](#)

Saudi Aramco is finding little interest among buyers for the new, light-crude blend that it developed to replace Libyan supplies curtailed by an armed rebellion, five people with

knowledge of the matter said.

European refiners that have been offered the crude declined to take additional cargoes because of its quality, said the people, who asked not to be identified. One of the people said bids from buyers didn't meet the price expectations of Aramco, the world's largest crude exporter.

[Saudi Aramco joins the switch to natural gas as oil wanes](#)

Saudi Aramco will attain a production rate of 15.5 billion standard cubic feet of raw natural gas by 2015. Focus has shifted from crude oil to natural gas following the addition of 2 million bbl/day of capacity in the 2004-2009 period. While the focus of exploration and development will be directed toward conventional resources, the company is studying the potential of unconventional resources. Saudi Arabia's gas consumption has risen by 7%/year. Most goes to electric power and petrochemical.

[Obama forms panel to improve fracking safety](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - After a series of high-profile natural gas drilling spills, the U.S. Energy Department named a panel to recommend ways to improve the safety of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a technique that has expanded the country's potential to extract the fuel.

President Barack Obama asked the DOE to form the panel of academic and environmental experts to identify any immediate steps that can be taken to improve the safety and environmental performance of fracking, the DOE said on Thursday.

[Putin urges Russian government to solve gasoline shortage](#)

MOSCOW (Xinhua) -- Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on Thursday instructed the agriculture and energy ministries to solve the problem of gasoline shortages in the country to ensure the start of spring cultivation, local media reported.

[Putin accuses oil groups of price-fixing](#)

Vladimir Putin has lashed out at Russia's oil groups and accused them of price-fixing amid fuel shortages across the oil-rich country.

Speaking at a government presidium, the prime minister cut off his deputy Igor Sechin who mentioned the fuel shortage, which had forced drivers in certain regions to queue up for petrol.

[Ukraine's long natural gas row rolls onto U.S. shores](#)

This latest episode in the saga centers on Rosukrenergo, a Swiss-based middleman company that earns billions of dollars by arranging for the shipment of natural gas from Turkmenistan and Russia through Ukraine and on to Europe. Granted, it's no simple matter to move raw materials of any type across former Soviet borders, as any trader will tell you. But this company has been the source of much mystery because of its scale of fees. Some people have wondered why Gazprom, for example, the mighty, muscular Russian natural gas giant, has been willing to share fees with this comparatively no-name company with no visible sign of geopolitical leverage.

[Statoil is 'worst incident offender'](#)

A total of 166 incidents were recorded on the Norwegian shelf in the first quarter, with Statoil responsible for more than 78% of the most serious occurrences, according to a new report.

[A booze blowout for China's oil giant](#)

HONG KONG — Oil companies usually focus on barrels, but Chinese petroleum giant Sinopec is struggling to get a grip on bottles — or, to be more precise, 1,176 bottles of Chateau Lafite Rothschild and expensive Chinese liquor.

The alcohol, purchased with \$245,000 in company cash, has created a public relations debacle for Sinopec, China's biggest company by revenue. The scandal is also a headache for the ruling Communist Party, which controls the oil behemoth and appoints its top management, and has reinforced a widespread belief that big state-owned corporations serve the interests — and lavish lifestyles — of a tiny group of insiders.

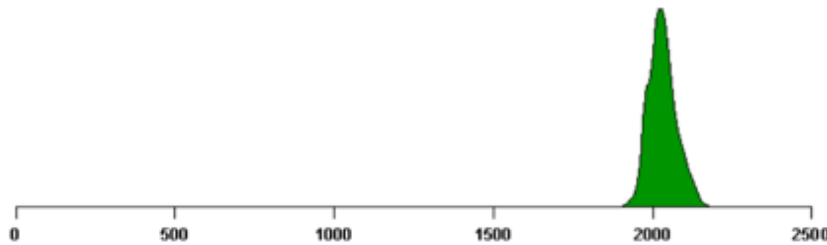
[ExxonMobil CEO's speech draws criticism, 'counter-speaker' at Worcester Tech](#)

Worcester Polytechnic Institute has invited a “counter-speaker” to Graduation Day after some students vowed to walk out on a commencement speech by the chief executive of ExxonMobil Corp., a college spokeswoman said.

Richard Heinberg, a senior fellow of the Post Carbon Institute, will speak after the May 14 graduation ceremony, during which seniors will hear a speech from Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson and then receive their diplomas, WPI spokeswoman Eileen Mell said.

[Peak Oil In Perspective](#)

Oil production in the time frame between birth of Christ and the year 2500



Have we really even begun to take this in yet?

[You and Your Slaves](#)

In 2009 a British family living in a four-bedroom house became the subject of a subversive energy experiment about modern slavery.

While the foursome flicked on gadgets one Sunday with the abandon of Roman patricians, an army of volunteers (The Human Power Station) furiously pedalled 100 bicycles next door to generate the needed energy.

The unsuspecting family, of course, had no idea they had been unplugged from a power grid fueled largely by fossil fuels.

At the end of the day the slave masters literally dropped their jaws when a BBC television crew introduced them to the exhausted slaves that boiled their tea. (Get this: it took 24 peddlers to heat the oven and 11 cyclists to make two slices of toast.)

At the end of the experiment many of the cyclists collapsed. Several couldn't walk for days. The peddlers actually consumed more energy in food than they generated by peddling.

[The Peak Oil Crisis: Peak Oil Elasticity](#)

One would think that with an increase in gasoline prices of over a dollar a gallon in the last year sales of gasoline would be slipping – and indeed they have, but not very much. With U.S. gasoline consumption running around 9 million b/d in last couple of years, consumption has only fallen by about 150,000 barrels a day, or 1.6 percent, compared with last year. Three years ago during a similar price spike, U.S. gasoline consumption fell by closer to 400,000 b/d. So far this year's drop in consumption has not been enough to stem the rise in prices which in recent weeks have become more closely tied to the global supply/demand balance and the falling U.S. dollar.

[The World has Passed Peak Oil, says Top Economist](#)

Despite high prices, crude oil production has stayed basically flat for roughly five years. It seems this is the all-time high-water mark, according to Fatih Birol, chief economist for the International Energy Agency. “We think that crude oil production for the world has already peaked in 2006,” he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. “I think it would have been better if the governments have started to work on it at least 10 years ago.”

At a European Parliament conference on peak oil, the European Commission’s director-general for transport and mobility policy warned if actions are delayed to reduce oil dependency, “we may be forced to drastically reduce all our mobility.”

Already, rising energy costs are taking their toll around the world, with U.S. economic growth stumbling and raising the spectre of stagflation, as well as, helping to drive up food prices in Latin America, and driving inflation in Europe.

[Jeff Rubin: Where will China find the oil to power its economy?](#)

With OPEC tapped out, where will China find the oil to power future economic growth?

The obvious answer is it will take a big chunk out of the 19 million barrels the U.S. economy burns every day. And China doesn’t have to build a blue water navy or engage in an arms race to take a big slice of the U.S.’s energy pie . All it has to do is stop showing up at the U.S. Treasury auction, and Washington’s massive budget deficit will do the rest.

[Five facts that will turn your world upside down](#)

Fact #2: China has 21% of the world's population but only 1.8% of the world's oil

[A Common Thread Between Horse Manure and Peak Oil](#)

Anyone recall the massive economic plight wrought by the Great Horse Manure Crisis of 1894? It’s ok if you don’t because it turned out to be...well...a pile of manure. And no, this isn’t made up. In the late 19th century, growing global urbanization led many to extrapolate then-present trends into the future ad infinitum and ad ridiculum. At the time, most local transport was horse powered—cabs, buggies, and wagons conveyed the bulk of goods intra-city. Seeing this, many who failed to fathom the power of human ingenuity believed London and New York would, in a handful of years, be buried in nine feet of dung. It’s easy to look back now and realize the flaw. But underpinning those beliefs was a Malthusian, doomsday-ish belief in a finite world to which we humans, as a group, are susceptible even today. Here’s one example: Peak Oil.

[Oil has biggest 1-day drop in more than 2 years](#)

NEW YORK — Oil plunged nearly 9 percent to settle below \$100 per barrel. Investors who had ridden a months-long rally fled the market Thursday because of concerns about weakening demand for fuel in the U.S.

..."More and more people were saying that oil was just too high," said Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy & Economic Research. "That got a lot of investors ready to run for the door. That's what they're doing now."

[Oil falls \\$5 as rout continues](#)

LONDON (Reuters) – Oil prices fell 5 percent on Friday, after a 10 percent crash on Thursday, as fears about global economic recovery pushed investors to further unwind commodities positions.

"The big drop yesterday has scared the bulls, so now only bears are left," said Thorbjørn Bak Jensen, an analyst at Global Risk Management.

"The instinct is to liquidate. Even if you are a bull, you need to have deep pockets to ride this out," said one Singapore-based trader.

[Nomura Says Crude Oil Prices May Peak This Summer on Libyan Curbs, Demand](#)

Oil prices are likely to peak this summer as the loss of Libyan crude production has an increased impact on the market amid rising demand in Europe and Japan, Nomura International Plc said.

Oil has "a potential to spike higher" as European refineries resume after maintenance in coming months while demand may be boosted further by a surge in Japan's electricity needs in the summer, Nomura analysts including Michael Lo said in an e-mailed report today. Prices may moderate later in the year amid "reduced global liquidity," according to the report.

[OPEC delegate sees oil drop to \\$90-\\$100 ideal](#)

(Reuters) - The steep slide in oil prices this week is welcome because crude above \$120 a barrel may hurt the world economy, while crude at \$90 to \$100 is ideal, an OPEC delegate said on Friday.

[Where will oil prices go from here?](#)

"It is important to emphasize that even as oil prices are pulling back from their recent highs, we expect them to return to or surpass the recent highs by next year," Goldman Sachs' analysts said in a research note. "We continue to believe that the oil supply-

demand fundamentals will tighten further over the course of this year, and likely reach critically tight levels by early next year should Libyan oil supplies remain off the market,” it said.

[Gas prices could slow job growth this year](#)

WASHINGTON — A brightened outlook for employment growth may dim this spring as rising gas prices weigh on companies and prompt some to rethink their hiring plans.

[James D. Hamilton: Will gas prices trigger another recession?](#)

Before the latest gasoline price increase, sales of SUVs in the U.S. were significantly below the levels to which the industry had become accustomed in 2006. The U.S. auto sector should not be quite as vulnerable today as it was when gas prices approached \$4 a gallon for the first time in 2007-2008.

Another critical factor is that although higher gasoline prices are squeezing household budgets, the gains we've been seeing in employment and income as the economy continues to recover from the last downturn have been an even bigger contributor on the plus side.

[Crude oil prices slump; are gas pump prices next?](#)

Has the soaring price of gas finally peaked ?

Possibly. Crude oil prices sank Thursday, pushing the benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude down 9% to \$99.80 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, the first time it has closed below \$100 since mid-March.

[Natural Gas Tumbles on Bigger-Than-Forecast Supply Gain, Economy Concern](#)

Natural gas futures fell the most in 19 months, following declines in commodity markets, on a bigger- than-forecast U.S. inventories gain and concern that economic growth will ease.

[Dissecting This Week's Oil Price Tumble](#)

There's a saying in the oil business: The best cure for high oil prices is high oil prices. In other words, when prices are high, consumers are supposed to buy less at the pump and oil companies are supposed to produce more because it is more profitable to do so.

So, is that the explanation for today's plummeting oil price? In late Thursday morning trading, the principal oil benchmark price in United States trading was down more than

6 percent, and the price has been tumbling for the last three days. Gasoline prices, which normally are a week or two behind oil prices, have peaked and are poised to start falling.

[Your monthly gasoline bill: \\$368](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- Round-trip airfare from New York to Los Angeles. More than a dozen dinners for two at Applebee's. Two 16 GB iPod nanos.

These are just a few of the things you could have bought if you weren't spending \$368.09 a month on gasoline.

[Russia's Lukoil to quadruple overseas oil production](#)

Moscow - The Russian energy giant Lukoil plans to quadruple its overseas oil production with major projects in Iraq and the Aral Sea region, Interfax reported Friday.

The planned increase will take place over six years.

[Shale gas: a welcome energy shock](#)

And what is becoming clear is that there is a *lot* of gas down there. Estimates of just how much gas there is have been zooming upwards in recent years. For example, in the Marcellus shale which lies partly under the US state of Pennsylvania, estimates in 2007 suggested there could be 50 trillion cubic feet (tcf). Given that the US uses just over 20 tcf per year, that seemed like a handy new resource. But by 2011, some estimates put the amount of gas recoverable from the Marcellus shale at 516 tcf – equivalent to about 25 years worth of total US gas consumption from just one (admittedly enormous) gas field. In 2010, Ridley notes, total US estimated shale gas resources stood at 2,000 tcf (discovered) and 3,000 tcf ('expected') according to one report. That's 150 years' supply at current levels.

[German Refiners Cut Greener Gasoline Production on Slower Demand](#)

German refineries are reducing output of cleaner, high-ethanol gasoline known as E10 after motorists shunned the fuel.

[Midwest Senators Aim to Extend Ethanol Tax Credit](#)

Several U.S. senators from Midwest states, as part of a bipartisan coalition, have introduced the "Domestic Energy Promotion Act of 2011," a bill that would slowly reduce the tax credit incentives for ethanol -- but still extend them for another five

years, reports Reuters.

[US House votes to boost oil, gas drilling](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – Amid a political war over painfully high gasoline prices, US President Barack Obama's Republican foes on Thursday pushed a bill to boost offshore oil drilling through the House of Representatives.

[White House slams Republican offshore drilling bill](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – The White House sharply criticized a bill passed by the House of Representatives on Thursday that would expand offshore drilling as part of a broader Republican effort to stimulate domestic production in the face of rising gasoline costs.

The bill, which easily cleared the Republican-dominated House, would require lease sales to proceed that were canceled or delayed by the Obama administration offshore Virginia and in the Gulf of Mexico following the BP oil spill.

[PG&E appoints new exec. to realign gas operations](#)

SAN FRANCISCO – Pacific Gas & Electric Co. has appointed a new vice president to realign the company's natural gas operations in the wake of a pipeline explosion in a San Francisco suburb that killed eight people and destroyed 38 homes.

[North Sea oil and gas firms flare up over tax](#)

Some of the biggest names in the British oil and gas industry are plotting a fresh attack on George Osborne with an open letter urging him to reconsider his windfall tax on North Sea firms.

[Sunoco blames high oil prices for wider 1Q loss](#)

Petroleum refiner and seller Sunoco Inc. reported a much wider first-quarter loss than expected on Thursday, and said it was hurt by unplanned maintenance work at two of its refineries.

On the retail side, the company said it wasn't able to fully pass higher crude oil prices on to consumers in the form of higher gasoline prices.

[Iraq pays Kurd oil contractors](#)

BAGHDAD (AFP) – Iraq has paid oil contractors in its autonomous Kurdistan region for the first time, the region's premier said in a statement released on Thursday, a significant step in an ongoing energy dispute.

[Libya rebel leader says oil sites damaged](#)

(Reuters) - A number of oil installations in areas controlled by Libyan rebels have been damaged in recent fighting, the head of the interim rebel government, Mahmoud Jibril, said on Thursday.

[Libya faces fuel crisis as oil supplies dwindle](#)

Police officers in riot gear and armed with wooden staves have been manning fuel pumps at a petrol station in Tripoli as long queues of cars caused traffic chaos in western Libya, amid fears that the Gaddafi regime is running out of its most precious commodity.

Queues of vehicles, sometimes five or six deep, stretched up to half a kilometre from some petrol stations last week, most of which are shut behind makeshift barriers. Two men in a queue near the city of Zuwara said they had been waiting for five days in the hope of a fresh delivery.

[Qaddafi's Cash Hoard Will Be Made Available to Libyan Rebels, Clinton Says](#)

The Obama administration said it will permit Libyan rebels to draw on the \$33 billion in Libyan assets frozen by U.S., as allied nations opposing Muammar Qaddafi looked for further measures to force him from power.

[Still gas left in China's slowing auto market](#)

In recent years, the sky has been the limit when it comes to car sales in China, with growth at levels not seen anywhere else in the world.

But now reality is kicking in and that growth is slowing, forcing foreign auto makers to adapt with the times. Estimates are for 10 to 12 per cent growth in sales this year, slowed by inflation, rising fuel prices, an end to government subsidies on new car purchases and regulations designed to limit the number of new cars on the road in congested Beijing – still a healthy number by world standards, but a long way down from the 32 per cent enjoyed by the industry in 2010, and 45 per cent in 2009.

[Japan orders 3 reactors shut](#)

Japan's government has told the Chubu Electric Power Co. to halt three nuclear reactors

over safety concerns.

The reactors, located at Hamaoka on the south coast of central Japan, could be affected by earthquakes.

Prime Minister Naoto Kan told a news conference Friday that experts have forecast a 90 per cent probability of a major quake striking the region within 30 years.

[Tepco starts flooding No. 1 reactor vessel](#)

Tepco on Friday started increasing the amount of water it is injecting into the No. 1 reactor at the Fukushima No. 1 power plant in hopes of providing stable cooling for the damaged nuclear fuel inside.

Tokyo Electric Power Co. plans to fill the reactor's primary containment vessel with enough water to submerge the fuel over the next 20 days or so, and start operating by June an air-cooling device it hopes will reduce the temperature of the water circulating around the reactor, company officials said.

[Calif. OKs PG&E rate hike to pay for old meters](#)

California regulators have approved a plan allowing Pacific Gas & Electric Co. to charge its customers more for electricity to make up for profits lost when SmartMeters were installed.

[This \\$1.4bn deal may be a sign that Big Oil is taking the renewables industry seriously](#)

Total, which also has a small French wind-power business, has just unveiled plans to buy EDF's stake in Tenesol, while continuing to partner GDF Suez in solar cell manufacturer Photovoltech.

The move for SunPower is a substantial leap forward. As Philippe Boisseau, the oil company's gas and power divisional boss, puts it: "Total is executing on its strategy to become a major integrated player in solar energy."

[China doubles solar power target by 2020: report](#)

SHANGHAI (AFP) – China has more than doubled its target for solar power capacity to 50 gigawatts by 2020, state media said, as the world's largest polluter steps up efforts to boost clean energy sources.

The increased target follows a massive earthquake and tsunami in Japan that triggered a nuclear crisis in the country's northeast and fuelled worldwide debate about the safety of atomic power.

[Sunshine on tap in Sweden's dark winter](#)

ANNEBERG, SWEDEN // It is a country better known for cold winters than for hot summers, but solar technology being developed to keep homes in Sweden warm could help to keep Gulf homes cool.

Stig Ram, a former Ericsson employee, is conducting a unique experiment in solar heat storage for the municipality of Danderyd, 10km north of Stockholm.

[Motor-dependency is an addiction we can help cure](#)

OK, I'm a starry-eyed optimist and would love to think we could all ditch cars and ride bikes instead (heck, this doesn't even happen in the Netherlands, car use is still rampant there despite the bike paths) but, of course, we're not going to easily prise motorists out of their cocoons and on to people-powered transport. It's like motorists are super-glued to their cars, no amount of carrot-flavoured cajoling seems to work. And the present Government doesn't seem too keen on wielding any sticks, as these sticks would lose them votes.

However, Peak Oil and the Tragedy of the Commons will eventually force the Government to act.

[After 50 years of decline, household size is growing](#)

A half-century slide in the number of people living under one roof has ended and has even reversed in some places, according to 2010 Census data released today.

...Just as growing affluence let many Americans live with fewer people, the recession, high unemployment and the housing bust now are forcing some people to double up.

[Weak economy causes some to cut back on kids](#)

The U.S. fertility rate fell 4 percent from 2007 to 2009 — the biggest drop in more than 30 years, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control. Those years coincided with the worst recession in at least 30 years. The CDC cautions that there is not enough data to prove cause and effect, but independent researchers do see a trend.

[Japanese language traced to Korean Peninsula: study](#)

At the same time that China was undergoing one of the most remarkable explosions of culture and philosophy in human history during its Spring and Autumn Period, Japan

was just emerging -- perhaps by choice -- from the stone age.

"What puzzles me is that the hunter-gather population who live in Japan seemed to have chosen a 'harmonious' lifestyle over an 'exploitative' agricultural lifestyle," he said.

"They had knowledge of cultivation but never developed it into full-scale farming."

[In the persuasion game, beware the backfire effect](#)

For a generation, activists have built their protest movement on the scientific facts of climate change. But the facts of another kind of science -- neuroscience -- indicate this only reinforces the point of view of the unconvinced.

[How Clean is Clean?](#)

"Clean" is a broader category than "renewable," but just what is it?

Mr. Obama wants nuclear energy, natural gas and "clean coal" — or plants that burn coal more cleanly or use their technology to capture and store carbon dioxide emissions — counted in the total.

[Energy projects should help poor areas thrive](#)

California once again is at the forefront of national efforts to address the crisis of global warming and achieve a thoughtful transition from fossil fuel to clean and renewable energy sources. By signing a law that requires 33 percent of the energy produced by all of the state's major retail electricity suppliers to come from renewable sources by 2020, Gov. Jerry Brown has positioned the Golden State to lead the nation in reducing greenhouse gases that threaten the future of Mother Earth.

What has been somewhat overlooked is Brown's commitment to build 12,000 megawatts of distributed energy infrastructure. "Distributed generation" refers to smaller, local renewable energy projects built close to where electricity is consumed, a contrast to the distant large solar and wind farms that receive a significant amount of media coverage.

[Wyoming project will help CO2 storage research](#)

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - The drilling of a single 14,000-foot deep well in southwest Wyoming will go a long way toward proving whether the area and others like it across the U.S. can permanently store vast amounts of greenhouse gases underground.

[UN Climate change panel concludes renewable energy will be key tackling global warming](#)

DOHA, Qatar — The world's top scientific body concluded that renewable energy in the coming decades will be widespread and could one day represent the dominant source for powering factories and lighting homes, according to a draft report obtained by The Associated Press Thursday.

But the report also warned that such expansion will be costly and policy changes will have to be enacted to ensure that renewable energy can achieve its potential in helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

[Methane Will Wreak Havoc in Changing Climate](#)

A two-part study investigating the impact of methane - one of the most potent of greenhouse gases - has found that millions of tonnes of methane currently frozen in sediment beneath the Arctic Ocean will wreak havoc if released into the oceans.

[Feeling Climate Change Down on the Farm](#)

A new worldwide analysis of agricultural trends blames our warming global climate for a 3-5 percent decline in corn and wheat production during the last 30 years -- a period that saw a 6 percent rise in food prices.

The research, just published online by the journal *Science*, links yield declines in these two important food sources to temperature changes in major agricultural regions around the world -- with the singular exception of North America.



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