



Drumbeat: August 15, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 15, 2011 - 9:28am

[Russia's Arctic 'sea grab'](#)

Moscow - In a multinational race to seize the potential riches of the formerly icebound Arctic, being laid bare by global warming, Russia is the early favorite.

Within the next year, the Kremlin is expected to make its claim to the United Nations in a bold move to annex about 380,000 square miles of the internationally owned Arctic to Russian control. At stake is an estimated one-quarter of all the world's untapped hydrocarbon reserves, abundant fisheries, and a freshly opened route that will cut nearly a third off the shipping time from Asia to Europe.

[Crude Oil Futures Decline Before Data on U.S. Housing, European Economy](#)

Oil fell, reversing earlier gains, before reports this week from the U.S. and Europe forecast to indicate that the global recovery is losing momentum.

Data this week may show U.S. housing starts and building permits fell in July, while consumer prices rose the least in three months as unemployment restrained spending, according to surveys by Bloomberg News. The euro-zone economy probably expanded 0.3 percent in the second quarter, down from first- quarter growth of 0.8 percent. Hedge funds and other money managers cut bullish bets on Brent crude by 49 percent in the week ended Aug. 9, according to ICE Futures Europe.

[Gas prices drop nearly 9 cts at US pumps-Lundberg](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The average price of gasoline in the United States fell by 8.98 cents over the past three weeks due mainly to declines in the crude oil market, according to the nationwide Lundberg Survey.

The national average price for a gallon of regular gasoline declined to \$3.61 on Aug. 12, according to a survey of about 2,500 gas stations in the continental U.S.

[Asia may put GCC on slippery slope](#)

A slowdown in the Asian industrial boom could pull the rug from under oil prices.

Producers and consumers alike have lowered their forecasts for oil demand growth not only in western economies but also in the East. That threatens to send crude prices below the US\$100 mark - the price floor for most of this year - analysts warn.

[Oil price won't delay new projects](#)

Along with other asset values, oil prices have fallen from their spring peak.

The International Energy Agency suggests that an economic slowdown could even create a glut later this year. Should the next worry be that the pendulum will swing too far, as in early 2009, and that promising development projects will be cancelled?

[New Nigeria Finance Minister Vows Tight Budget Amid Slump in Oil Revenue](#)

Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who takes office this week, vowed to tighten fiscal policy amid falling oil prices and turbulent global financial markets.

Prices for oil, which accounts for 80 percent of fiscal revenue, have slumped 14 percent in New York since July 26, reaching as low as \$75.71 a barrel on Aug. 9. At the same time, economic growth in the U.S., which sources a fifth of its crude imports from Nigeria, is slowing.

[Iran says India paid two-thirds of oil debt](#)

Iran has received two-thirds of the oil debts from Indian buyers that had accumulated this year due to a sanctions-related payments problem, Central Bank governor Mahmoud Bahmani told the students' news agency ISNA on Monday.

"Two-thirds of India's debt to Iran has been paid and the balance is being taken care of and there are no problems in this regard," he said.

[Gaddafi defiant as rebels poised to strangle capital](#)

ZAWIYAH, Libya (Reuters) - Muammar Gaddafi urged Libyans Monday to free the country from "traitors," as rebels in the west began to strangle a major lifeline to his capital.

[Factbox - Syria's energy sector](#)

(Reuters) - The United States has called on countries to stop buying Syrian oil and gas

to pressure Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to end a crackdown against protesters.

[56 killed as wave of violence rolls across Iraq](#)

BAGHDAD (AP) — Bomb blasts ripped through more than a dozen Iraqi cities Monday morning, killing 56 people — most of them in the southern city of Kut — in a wave of violence that shattered what had been a relatively peaceful holy month of Ramadan.

[Shell mum on flow from oil pipeline leak](#)

(Reuters) - Royal Dutch Shell said an oil leak from a ruptured pipeline into the North Sea was slowing but refused to say how much oil has already leaked into the sea.

Oil from the Anglo-Dutch oil major's pipeline has been spilling into the sea since last Wednesday but the rate of flow has been reducing since the company shut off the well the same day.

[British government estimates that Shell oil spill off Scottish coast is substantial](#)

LONDON — The British government is estimating that several hundred tons of oil may have leaked into the North Sea from a Royal Dutch Shell rig.

[PDVSA's Petropiar Increases Daily Oil Output to 160,000 Barrels](#)

Petroleos de Venezuela SA, the state oil company, has increased daily production of heavy crude oil at its Petropiar unit to 160,000 barrels, according to a statement today on its website

[Ghana to borrow \\$800 mln from China to develop gas](#)

ACCRA (Reuters) - Ghana will borrow \$800 million from the state-owned China Development Bank to develop its natural gas infrastructure and the first gas could be expected by the end of 2012 or early 2013, the head of the Ghana National Gas Company said.

George Sipa-Adzah Yankey, who did not give any details on the loan, also said on Thursday that Ghana's gas production is expected to stabilise at around 120 million cubic feet per day.

[Q+A-What happened to China's power shortages?](#)

(Reuters) - Earlier this year, China warned that it could be facing its worst electricity shortages in years and that blackouts and power rationing could dent the economy over the summer.

Experts said China's fixed pricing system was eating into margins and discouraging power plants from producing at full capacity, especially as coal prices soared.

[Tanzanian Energy Regulator Increases Gasoline Prices by 5.1% Amid Shortage](#)

Tanzania, which has experienced fuel shortages at gas stations this month, raised the cost of gasoline by 5.5 percent after international oil prices climbed and the shilling weakened against the dollar.

[Business in Dubai hails freeze on utility prices](#)

Businesses across Dubai have welcomed the freezing of the emirate's power and water prices.

The Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, a government body that sets energy policy, said yesterday it would keep utility tariffs fixed over the next few years.

[EPA's Outdated Tests Leave American Cars Guzzling Gas: View](#)

The U.S. automobile industry has come a long way since the 1970s. Today's vehicles are safer, more fuel-efficient and more comfortable. Yet public policy toward cars is marred by standards set in 1978 that are as obsolete as a rusted Chevy Nova.

[Spinning Iran's centrifuges](#)

Consider yourself warned - "[I]n the next few years Iran will be in position to detonate a nuclear device," so writes Ray Takeyh, confidently, in a recent Washington Post OpEd. Why? Because the Iranian government willingly informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it would begin installing additional centrifuges with higher capacity to enrich uranium.

Just like fertilizer can be used to increase crop yields - or make bombs - uranium is a dual use material.

[After peak oil, peak globalisation](#)

The reality of a globalised economy is that poverty is its only sustainable phenomenon.

[A Half-Century at the Local Tire Factory in a Globalizing World](#)

Many of those who are Peak Oil Aware constantly speculate as to what the future collapse is going to look like. I would argue that for a long time it is likely going to look a lot like what has been happening in my hometown for the past 20 years; a long, slow decay in which daily life just continues to get worse for most people as the jackals count their earnings from the dismantling the remainder of our industrial economy.

[Cassandras](#)

What is most impressive in the recent world events is not so much that the authors of "The Limits to Growth" may have predicted with incredible accuracy in 1972 the start of the decline of the world's economic system, evidenced today by the financial crisis. After all, they presented several scenarios with different results. That the "base case" scenario, the one they deemed the most likely on the basis of the available data, may turn out to be right is impressive, yes, but it may have been also a bit of luck.

[Time to refine energy security](#)

Now, price signals are important inputs into public policy. But in the case of oil in particular, there are good reasons to be sceptical about the merits of relying on this mechanism as a basis for policy. World oil prices subside when growth declines, and pick up again when growth gathers pace. And as we saw when the oil producing nations began to exercise their market power in the 1970s, they can spike rapidly. But over the longer run, oil prices do a poor job of reflecting the scarcity of the resource.

[The new breed of young farmer: Ed Hamer, Dartmoor](#)

Inspired by the Levellers (not the band) Ed Hamer's radical vision of farming involves a commitment to making the land work for the people. And it helps to have a big horse.

[At Vacant Homes, Foraging for Fruit](#)

ATLANTA — As she does every evening, Kelly Callahan walked her dogs through her East Atlanta neighborhood. As in many communities in a city with the 16th-highest foreclosure rate in the nation, there were plenty of empty, bank-owned properties for sale.

She noticed something else. Those forlorn yards were peppered with overgrown gardens and big fruit trees, all bulging with the kind of bounty that comes from the high heat and afternoon thunderstorms that have defined Atlanta's summer.

So she began picking. First, there was a load of figs, which she intends to make into jam for a cafe that feeds homeless people. Then, for herself, she got five pounds of tomatoes, two kinds of squash and — the real prize — a Sugar Baby watermelon.

[With Post-Its and Checklists, Schools Cut Their Energy Bills](#)

Simple yellow Post-it notes with the message “When not in use, turn off the juice,” pointedly left on classroom computers, printers and air-conditioners, have helped the Mount Sinai School District on Long Island save \$350,000 annually on utility bills.

Energy consumption in New York City’s 1,245 school buildings is down roughly 11 percent since 2008, as motion detectors have been installed on classroom lights and unused refrigerators and freezers have been unplugged for the summer.

[Six stand trial in carbon fraud case in Germany](#)

The fraud works by buyers importing carbon permits in one EU country without paying VAT and selling them in another, adding tax to the price but pocketing the difference for themselves.



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