



Drumbeat: November 23, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on November 23, 2011 - 9:18am

[China agrees to loan Venezuela \\$4 billion](#)

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) -- China has agreed to a new \$4 billion loan to help Venezuela boost its oil output and will also help upgrade power plants and increase production of iron and aluminum, a Venezuelan official said Wednesday.

China has swiftly become Venezuela's biggest foreign lender in recent years, and has previously agreed to more than \$32 billion in loans. President Hugo Chavez's government is repaying the loans with oil shipments.

[Cyprus to Expand Energy Search Despite Turkey](#)

Cyprus announced Wednesday that it is forging ahead with a second round of licensing to exploit oil and gas deposits off its shores despite the strong objections of Turkey.

[Beijing's climbdown in Bali: What is next in the South China Sea?](#)

A key outcome of President Barack Obama's Asia tour is an apparent tactical withdrawal by China on drilling rights in the South China Sea. This does not mean that Vietnam, the Philippines and others in the sea can proceed with abandon, but -- at least for now -- Chinese naval ships may be less likely to interrupt oil and gas exploration. Locally there is some elation, with *The Times of India* calling it a "climbdown" by China.

[Opposing views: in the dark about oil demand](#)

Some say global demand for oil is waning. Others say the exact opposite. Get the right facts and make up your own mind. Everyone else is in the dark.

[India refiners to seek more Middle East crude supplies in 2012](#)

Singapore (Platts) - Indian oil refiners are likely to turn more to term crude supplies from the Middle East in 2012 to meet rising domestic demand for sour grades as more refining capacity comes onstream next year, sources said Tuesday.

[Yemen forced to increase oil imports](#)

Cash-strapped Yemen has again been forced to increase oil product imports, shipping and trade sources said on Tuesday, after its Aden refinery shut down last weekend when its crude oil supplies dried up.

The poorest Arab country has been paralysed by 10 months of popular protests, demanding that President Ali Abdullah Saleh step down, during which there have been numerous attacks on oil and gas pipelines.

[Iran oil embargo wouldn't hurt Europe - EU commissioner](#)

(Reuters) - A ban on Iranian oil imports to press Tehran to abandon its nuclear activity would not be a problem for the European Union as supplies could always be bought elsewhere, the EU's energy commissioner said.

EU countries have been discussing a further extension of sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme and France has been pushing for this to include a ban on imports of Iranian oil.

[Chevron oil spill fallout still being assessed-experts](#)

(Reuters) - Chevron Corp's efforts to contain an oil spill at its prospect offshore Brazil appear to have worked, but it is too early to say whether the accident is a major setback for offshore producers that push technological limits to tap crude, experts said.

"This is not something that's going to encourage people to give kudos to the industry for safety," said Nansen Saleri, CEO of Quantum Reservoir Management in Houston and former head of reservoir management for Saudi Aramco.

"It's definitely not in the positive column. How negative it is depends on how Chevron and Petrobras manage the situation," he said.

[BP gags in-house lawyer on oil spill lawsuit](#)

(Reuters) - Oil giant BP has succeeded in preventing the public airing of comments from a senior in-house lawyer about lawsuits stemming from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, as part of a legal claim of discrimination.

[Regulation Nation: Shell Ready to Move on Alaska Wells -- If Alphabet Soup of Challenges Would End](#)

An estimated 27 billion barrels of oil are sitting just off the northern coast of Alaska in

waters controlled by the United States, but despite spending more than five years and \$4 billion, Shell Oil Company still can't get to it.

[U.K. Energy Laws May Raise Company Bills 20% in 2020, Huhne Says](#)

U.K. energy policies may raise power and gas bills for the heaviest corporate consumers by as much as 20 percent by 2020 as the government promotes measures to curb polluting emissions, Energy Secretary Chris Huhne said.

[Is the Keystone Pipeline Really Dead?](#)

The president postponed the project - but Big Oil is already looking for another way to burn Canada's tar sands.

[Report Details Excessive Force Used Against Bahrain Protests](#)

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The head of an international commission investigating Bahrain's sweeping crackdown on antigovernment protests over the summer said on Wednesday that security forces used excessive force, including torture and forced confessions, against detainees in a campaign that deeply polarized the country, a prominent American ally in the Gulf.

[Military police try to halt Cairo protests](#)

Cairo (CNN) -- Military police poured into Cairo's Tahrir Square on Wednesday in hopes of stopping clashes between protesters and police, as the Egyptian government said a "truce" had been declared through a group of clerics.

CNN saw military police lined up, separating protesters from the police.

But after a period of calm, some protesters began throwing rocks at soldiers. Riot police responded with tear gas.

[U.S. says hopes Iraq, Exxon can resolve dispute](#)

(Reuters) - The U.S. State Department said on Wednesday it hopes Iraq and Exxon-Mobil Corp. will resolve their dispute in a way that will not undercut the future development of Iraq's oil resources.

Exxon is the first major oil company to sign an oil exploration agreement with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in north Iraq, which is locked in a feud with the Arab-dominated central government over territory and oil rights.

[Livestock farmers say ethanol eats too much corn](#)

DES MOINES, Iowa — Livestock farmers are demanding a change in the nation's ethanol policy, claiming current rules could lead to spikes in meat prices and even shortages at supermarkets if corn growers have a bad year.

[PG&E SmartMeters: Regulators offer way to opt out](#)

California energy regulators proposed a way Tuesday for Pacific Gas and Electric Co. customers to opt out of receiving one of the utility's wireless SmartMeters.

But the proposal from the California Public Utilities Commission closely mirrors PG&E's own opt-out plan, imposing fees on people who reject the wireless meters. Critics of the devices, who consider them a health threat, immediately rejected the commission's plan.

[A Solar-Powered Car?](#)

If you like the sun, and you like cars, then I'm guessing you'd love to have a solar-powered car, right? This trick works well for chocolate and peanut butter, but not so well for garlic bread and strawberries. So how compatible are cars with solar energy? Do we relish the combination or spit it out? Let's throw the two together, mix with math, and see what happens.

[EU Carbon Permits Drop to Record Low as European Debt Crisis Trims Demand](#)

The European Union's sovereign-debt crisis is hurting the region's economic production, driving benchmark carbon permits to their lowest since 2009.

[Is progress an idea that has passed?](#)

Two hundred years ago, when 1 billion people walked the earth, the discovery of easily accessed and abundant supplies of coal and oil signaled the start of the Industrial Revolution and fueled the notion of perpetual economic growth. Today there are 7 billion people in the world and fossil fuels must be pulled from the bottom of the ocean or wrung from shale deposits. While we may have tapped only half of the world's supply of fossil fuels (reaching the peak of production) the remaining fuels will be increasingly expensive to extract.

So, our authors claim, an impending inability to supply a constantly increasing demand for affordable energy to power continual economic growth signals the end of the Industrial Revolution.

[Embracing Buy Nothing Day](#)

Don't get me wrong. I love the holidays. And I love the gifting part —both giving and receiving. But with so many ways to share love with family and friends, from homemade foods, garden harvests, handmade cards, photos, knitted or sewn items, or just a gathering, I feel little need to make it our celebrations a year-end over-the-top display.

I don't want to feel that we should shove our food down our gullets just to line up outside of a big box store at midnight salivating to get my hands on a deeply discounted product that is probably making global warming and peak oil situations worse, anyway.

[Seas off Arctic island may hold oil bonanza - Norway](#)

OSLO (Reuters) - The waters off a tiny Norwegian Arctic island may hold vast amounts of oil and gas, the Nordic country's authorities said, as they prepare to open the zone for exploration by oil firms.

Recent geologic studies conducted in the seas off the volcanic Jan Mayen island, a speck of land some 1,000 kilometres (621 miles) west of Norway situated to the east of Greenland and the north-east of Iceland, have been promising, according to the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD).

[Crude Oil Drops After German Bond Sale Signals Deepening of Euro Crisis](#)

Oil dropped from a three-day high in New York as a shortfall of bids in a German bond sale signaled a deepening of Europe's debt crisis and slowing economic growth in the region.

Futures fell as much as 2.3 percent after Germany failed to get sufficient bids at an auction of benchmark 10-year bunds today to reach its maximum sales target. European services and manufacturing output contracted for a third month in November as the worsening debt crisis pushed the region closer to a recession. The American Petroleum Institute said yesterday motor-fuel supplies climbed 5.42 million barrels last week.

[The Peak Oil Crisis: A Report to Remember](#)

In the last few years the IEA's annual report has come to recognize that the next 25 years are unlikely to be anything like the last 25 and the report has become much more nuanced. Gone are the extreme predictions that the world will be consuming 50 percent more oil 25 years from now. In their place are forecasts that global oil production will depend heavily on what alternative policy paths are taken by major governments and how much (\$38 trillion is necessary) will be spent to find and exploit fossil fuel resources in the coming years.

[Peak oil vanishes; peak green arrives](#)

Peak oil theory and the green energy fad both arise from a failure to understand how markets work.

[The U.S. Economy, Market Are Yo-Yoing On Oil](#)

I don't want to discuss "peak oil," because that phrase often leads to irrelevant debate. What I will discuss, and what I believe has been proved by oil prices and economic activity, are three statements that are much more to the point:

[U.S. Shale Oil: 3 Best Growth Companies](#)

Peak oil at one time was dismissed as lunacy. Reality, however, is now setting in. Recession, U.S. over-supply ... none of it has halted a steady march up in oil prices off 2009 lows. This is not surprising. Emerging market demand has skyrocketed and world conventional oil production, according to the International Energy Association, has been in decline since 2007.

[Nigeria: Enugu Residents Decry High Cost of Kerosene](#)

Enugu — As Christmas approaches, kerosene consumers in Enugu State have called on the Federal Government to reduce the price of kerosene which should lessen the burden of common people.

Some of the consumers, who spoke on Monday, regretted that the price hike would worsen the hardship of the common man.

[FACTBOX - Weaker rupee and Indian oil, farm commodities](#)

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - A record slump in the rupee against the dollar is set to impact farm commodities in one of the world's top producing and consuming nations, making exports attractive but possibly worsening inflation as imports become costlier.

...Crude oil accounts for almost a quarter of all Indian imports, making it a significant factor in inflation, while retail prices of diesel and kerosene are subsidised. Every one unit decline in rupee value increases Indian state-refiners' revenue losses on the sale of subsidised fuel by 80 billion rupees as import costs go up.

[UAE shoppers to feel pinch as price of food rises again](#)

The brief let-up in rising global commodity prices has provided little respite to one of the

biggest UAE food companies, Agthia, which is warning of future price increases on the shelves.

[Shoppers cautious as retailers dangle Black Friday deals](#)

In a season of Thanksgiving store openings to lure shoppers out earlier than ever for Black Friday doorbusters, retailers are daring shoppers to load up. But some shoppers aren't buying it.

Rising gasoline prices and stubbornly high unemployment, along with volatile housing and stock markets have kept consumers extra cautious this year.

[Tough economy means another scaled-back Thanksgiving](#)

Thanksgiving airfares are up 20% this year, and the average price of a gallon of gas has risen almost 20%, according to travel tracker AAA. Still, about 42.5 million people are expected to travel, the highest number since the start of the recession.

But even those who choose to stay home and cook for themselves will probably spend more. A 16-pound turkey and all the trimmings will cost an average of \$49.20, a 13% jump from last year, or about \$5.73 more, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation, which says grocers have raised prices to keep pace with higher-priced commodities.

[Extended families are making a comeback](#)

An increasing number of extended families across the USA are under the same roof, living together either permanently or temporarily. Sometimes these arrangements are multigenerational, with adult children, grandchildren or an elderly parent sharing quarters. In other cases, an extended family bunks together, with siblings, cousins, nieces or nephews sharing space.

The reasons are economic, social and demographic. The recession and its aftermath have pushed extended families to share space at a time when the average age at first marriage has climbed to 28.7 for men and 26.5 for women. And life expectancy — now 75.7 for men and 80.6 for women in the USA — continues to rise. The flow of immigrants into this country also has been a factor; immigrants are more likely than other groups to live with members of their extended family.

[The Macro Dilemma, Part 2](#)

Part 1 suggested the macro force of “peak oil” which will constrain global oil supplies, will push the price of oil higher. Yet if peak oil occurs, it implies peak debt and GDP.

Without GDP growth, a stagnant economy implies downward pressure on the price of oil.

In part 2 I look at which factor is more dominant in moving the price of oil, which country looks favourable in such an environment and where I believe the most opportunities lay in terms of oil stocks.

[Strategic energy partnership in the pipeline for China, Turkmenistan](#)

BEIJING (Xinhua) -- Chinese President Hu Jintao pledged on Wednesday to deepen energy cooperation with Turkmenistan and establish a strategic energy partnership following the success of the natural gas pipeline between the two countries opened in 2009.

Hu made the remarks in wide-ranging talks with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, who is on a four-day state visit to China.

[DNB Says Will Support Oil-Tanker Frontline Through Industry Downturn](#)

DNB ASA, a lender to oil-tanker operator Frontline Ltd., said it will back the shipping company through an industry slump that slashed returns from hauling crude at sea.

Frontline, whose main shareholder is a company indirectly controlled by Norway-born shipping billionaire John Fredriksen, said yesterday it will seek talks with creditors and may run out of cash next year. Returns are only covering operating costs and ship prices have plunged as much as 50 percent, the tanker company said.

[China Shunning Biggest Ore Ships Shows \\$2.3 Billion Vale Mistake](#)

Vale's plan, which includes buying 19 vessels for \$2.3 billion, has spurred opposition from Chinese shipowners who say it will worsen overcapacity, slumping cargo rates and industrywide losses. Steelmakers are also likely against it as the ships would give Vale more control over pricing and delivery, said Chang Tao, a China Merchants Securities Co. analyst.

[Turkey says Israeli, Cypriot exploration illegal](#)

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz said on Wednesday Israeli and Cypriot energy exploration in the Mediterranean was illegal, agreement should first be reached with all relevant parties, and resources should be equally shared.

[President of oil-rich, graft-prone Nigeria suddenly fires head of anti-corruption agency](#)

LAGOS, Nigeria — Nigeria's president unexpectedly fired the head of the oil-rich and graft-prone nation's lead anti-corruption agency Wednesday, removing an official who has been criticized and portrayed as being controlled by the country's political elite.

[Cnooc Appoints Executive Director Li as Chief Executive as Growth Slows](#)

Cnooc Ltd. (883), China's biggest offshore oil and natural gas explorer, appointed Executive Director Li Fanrong as chief executive officer to replace Yang Hua after the company called off its latest acquisition.

[Analysis - Exxon Kurdistan foray tests Iraq's centralist resolve](#)

(Reuters) - Exxon Mobil's venture into Iraqi Kurdistan challenges Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's resolve against growing regional separatism and tests the investment strategy of the oil majors in Iraq.

[Nexen pushed out of Yemen oil project](#)

Nexen Inc. has been pushed out of one of its largest oil projects after Yemen rejected its application to continue operating in the volatile country.

[Nexen says it will offset loss of Yemeni production with West Africa offshore oil](#)

CALGARY—Nexen Inc. says Yemen's government won't extend a production sharing agreement for the Masila land block beyond its scheduled expiry Dec. 17 and the company is evaluating its future in the Middle East country.

[Vale Says Galilee Miners Need to Build Joint Rail to Save Costs](#)

Vale SA (VALE3), the world's biggest exporter of iron ore, said miners planning about \$32 billion of coal projects in Australia's Galilee Basin should build a jointly owned railway to save costs and speed development.

[U.S. Targets Iran Oil, Bank in Bid to Halt Nuclear Program](#)

The U.S. expanded measures aimed at thwarting Iran's nuclear program, targeting its central bank and oil industry with actions intended to cut the regime off from international financial transactions.

[Sanctions on Iran to affect Emirates](#)

Tightening sanctions on Iran are set to have widespread effects on UAE traders, oil prices and the petrochemical industry.

[Iran's nuclear showdown with West still short of war](#)

(Reuters) - Iran's nuclear standoff with the West has led to much harsher words and new economic sanctions, but Tehran has yet to cross the red lines that would prompt Israel or the United States to contemplate military action.

[Plea for relations with Iraq](#)

"With the population increasing, we need to start thinking about how to fix the world," Mr Babakhan said.

"Energy is the answer. Iraq is now a democracy and we need to use its resources while also improving our relations.

"Australia has a fantastic relationship with Japan and South Korea, so why can't we have good relations with Iraq?"

[Police, protesters clash for 5th day in Egypt](#)

CAIRO (AP) – Egyptian police clashed with anti-government protesters for a fifth day in central Cairo Wednesday as a rights group raised the overall death toll from the ongoing unrest to 38.

[Libyan tribes protest at new government line-up](#)

TRIPOLI: Some of Libya's clans said on Wednesday they would not recognize the government, after the unveiling of a new cabinet revived regional rivalries which threaten the country's stability.

[Yemen's President Saleh to sign power transfer deal](#)

SANAA, Yemen (AP) – The United Nations envoy to Yemen has confirmed that President Ali Abdullah Saleh will sign a deal to transfer power in exchange for immunity from prosecution in the Saudi capital, Riyadh.

[Green and Lean: Striking the Right Balance For True Prosperity](#)

So the question is: Can we transform our economy radically and quickly enough to curb resource use and avoid climate and environmental catastrophe? And is technology

enough to do it?

Lovins says yes. At the end of his book he lays out an alluring scenario of America in 2050, with homes that produce more energy than they consume, a transportation system integrating electric cars, mass transit and Internet-enabled ride-sharing, and manufacturing taking recycling to new heights to generate inputs from waste. It's a prosperous, post-petroleum world.

And I think it's possible – but only if we also rein in growth.

[Heat on Abu Dhabi's energy efficiency could impact bills](#)

Abu Dhabi is preparing to move towards greater energy efficiency, and will consider a range of measures to reduce consumption that could include a reform of electricity tariffs.

[To save on your electric bill, move to Utah](#)

It's that time of the year: It's darker, colder, and we're fretting about the arrival of the electric bill.

You have a lot more to worry about if you live in Connecticut than if you live Colorado.

[10 most fuel-efficient non-plug-in cars](#)

These are the hybrid and traditional gas powered cars that use the least fuel for the 2012 model year.

[Google pulls plug on renewable energy plan](#)

SAN FRANCISCO — Google Inc. has abandoned an ambitious project to make renewable energy cheaper than coal, the latest target of Chief Executive Larry Page's moves to focus the Internet giant on fewer efforts.

[Masdar trims workforce](#)

Masdar, Abu Dhabi's flagship clean energy company, has cut nine per cent of its workforce as Government-owned companies adjust to the economic downturn.

[Neb. enzyme plant readies to supply biofuel plants](#)

BLAIR, Neb. (AP) — The leading maker of the enzymes used to produce biofuels says the declining political support for ethanol hasn't diminished the long-term prospects for the industry making fuel from plants.

[China's largest coal producer to develop "combustible ice" alternative energy source in NW China](#)

XINING (Xinhua) -- China's largest coal producer, China Shenhua Group, has launched a project to research and develop combustible ice, a kind of natural gas hydrate, in the northwestern Qinghai province.

[A Rare Isotope Helps Track an Ancient Water Source](#)

Pradeep Aggarwal, who runs the isotope hydrology section of the International Atomic Energy Agency's water resources program, said that success in tracking older bodies of water had long been elusive. Carbon 14 dating, so useful in archaeology, reaches back just 50,000 years or so.

It is now clear that the Nubian Aquifer has been a million years in the making.

[A Quiet Push to Grow Crops Under Cover of Trees](#)

The Department of Agriculture has begun encouraging greater use of trees in agriculture.

[Up to 3 million Afghans face hunger as winter looms](#)

Poor rains earlier this year destroyed 80 percent of wheat crops in the country's north, northeast and west, leaving impoverished farming communities with little food to eat, said the nine charities which included Oxfam and Save the Children.

With food prices almost doubling since last year, families are being forced to skip meals, borrow money or migrate.

[Texas town still suffers effects of heat, drought; water supply down to two weeks](#)

(CNN) -- The Texas town of Groesbeck is on the verge of running dry.

"We have about two weeks of water left," Groesbeck Mayor Jackie Levingston said. Her central Texas town, population 4,300, is one of the latest victim's of the state's ongoing drought.

[Depleted Texas Lakes Expose Ghost Towns, Graves](#)

Across the state, receding lakes have revealed a prehistoric skull, ancient tools, fossils and a small cemetery that appears to contain the graves of freed slaves. Some of the discoveries have attracted interest from local historians, and looters also have scavenged for pieces of history. More than two dozen looters have been arrested at one site.

[EPA delays carbon limits on oil refineries](#)

(Reuters) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, struggling with an ambitious agenda on clean air regulations, said it will delay proposing the country's first-ever greenhouse gas limits on oil refineries.

The delay is the latest setback for the agency's new raft of clean air rules on everything from smog to mercury pollution that are heavily opposed by industry.

[U.S. Military Undermined By Environmental Change](#)

Across the US, critical military installations are being put at risk by environmental change. According to the US Department of Defense's (DoD) 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report:

In 2008, the National Intelligence Council [NIC] judged that more than 30 US military installations were already facing elevated levels of risk from rising sea levels. DoD's operational readiness hinges on continued access to land, air, and sea training and test space. Consequently, the Department must complete a comprehensive assessment of all installations to assess the potential impacts of climate change on its missions and adapt as required.

[China Outlines Cuts in Carbon Emissions](#)

BEIJING — With global climate talks set to begin next week, China on Tuesday issued the most comprehensive document yet on its plans and negotiating positions on emissions.

Although much of the information has been released before, it is the first time the data has been presented comprehensively — part of China's strategy to make its accomplishments better known ahead of the talks, which begin on Monday in Durban, South Africa. China, the world's largest contributor to carbon emissions, highlighted its success in reducing emissions per unit of gross domestic product, an indicator that its industries are becoming more energy efficient. The country's overall carbon emissions have been rising, however, with the growth of its industries.

[China urges progress on climate change fund](#)

BEIJING — China is worried the financial crisis is draining contributions to a multibillion-dollar global warming fund but hopes basic financing to help developing countries deal with climate change can be hammered out this month.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).