



## Drumbeat: December 3, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 3, 2011 - 10:30am

### [Surviving Progress](#)

...*Surviving Progress* feels like a companion piece to *Collapse*, a 2009 doc by Chris Smith that gave investigative journalist Michael Ruppert an 80-minute platform for his views on peak oil consumption. Ruppert argued that decline in production was a speedy road to global unrest and eventual chaos, as many might agree with, but more importantly that we are at a point of no return. Very soon, believes Ruppert, we won't even be able to make the tires to put on the cars to drive the materials around to build alternative energy resources in the first place. *Collapse* was perhaps a better film but *Surviving Progress* is harder to argue with; by gathering so many respected thinkers Crook and Roy aren't at the mercy of one man's personality, as Smith was. Their film is broader and less focused, but much harder to dismiss.

### [Top Total executives to attend World Petroleum Congress in Doha](#)

A highlight is the keynote speech that will be delivered by Total's President and CEO, Christophe de Margerie on the theme: "Peak oil- ahead of us or behind us?" on December 7.

### [A Conversation With Rob Hopkins, Transition Movement Founder](#)

#### **What's a sustainability trend that you wish would go away?**

People saying "when the economy is back in a growth mode." Not going to happen. We need to be embracing the idea of a post-growth economy, re-imagining how we function in such an economy, and decoupling the ideas of prosperity and growth. It could well turn out to be the making of us.

### [Egyptian Vote Forces Islamists to Confront Their Divide Over Rule by Religion](#)

CAIRO — To Sheik Abdel Moneim el-Shahat, the Muslim Brotherhood's call to apply only the broad principles of Islamic law allows too much freedom.

Sheik Shahat is a leader of the ultraconservative Islamists known as Salafis, whose coalition of parties is running second behind the Brotherhood party in the early returns of Egypt's parliamentary elections. He and his allies are demanding strict prohibitions

against interest-bearing loans, alcohol and “fornication,” with traditional Islamic corporal punishment like stoning for adultery.

### [25 Reported Dead in Syria as Violent Clashes Continue](#)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/04/world/middleeast/25-reported-dead-in-syria-as-violent-clashes-continue.html?ref=global-home>

### [Key political risks to watch in Iraq](#)

BAGHDAD: The US troop withdrawal, recent bombings by militants and an arrest campaign against former members of Saddam Hussein's banned Baath Party have sharpened tensions in Iraq. A decision by Exxon Mobil to venture into semi-autonomous northern Kurdistan set up a confrontation between the world's largest publicly traded oil company and the central government, which threatened to cancel Exxon's southern oilfield deal.

### [Ice halts delivery of winter fuel to Nome, Alaska](#)

SEATTLE -- Lots of Americans are worried about gas prices this holiday season, but the town of Nome, Alaska, is facing a unique problem: With the community's small port locked in ice, the barge hauling the big winter-fuel delivery can't make it into town.

### [TEPCO bias clear in N-crisis examination](#)

Outside experts investigating the crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant operated by Tokyo Electric Power Co. seem to have taken a sympathetic attitude toward TEPCO although they concluded the utility's safety measures were insufficient.

It is believed their probe into TEPCO's reaction to the accident was superficial out of concern for the potentially huge compensation claims that TEPCO faces.

### [High winds kill power to thousands in California](#)

(Reuters) - Heavy "Santa Ana" winds returned to the Los Angeles area early on Saturday as over 100,000 homes and businesses lost power due to fallen trees and other damage from an ongoing windstorm.

### [10 most fuel efficient cars since 1984](#)

Technology has advanced a lot, but some older models still deliver fuel economy up

there with today's hybrids.

### [GM's model response to potential PR hell](#)

What do you do if you are a carmaker, and your vehicles keep self-combusting? If you are General Motors, you write and call your customers personally, offer all of them free loaners, throw your resources into an intense examination of the problem, and hold a press conference to announce all these steps to the public.

### [China Softens Opposition to Adopting Goal on Reducing Pollution](#)

China this week softened its opposition to making a legally binding pledge to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, opening the possibility for a broader international effort to fight climate change.

### [Georgia Ethanol Plant Given Guarantee Under Bush Fails as U.S. Pulls Plug](#)

Range Fuels Inc., a cellulosic ethanol company backed by as much as \$156 million in U.S. aid from President George W. Bush's administration, is being forced by the government to liquidate its only factory after failing to produce the fuel and defaulting on a loan.

The closely held company, which counts Vinod Khosla, a venture capitalist and Sun Microsystems Inc. co-founder, as an initial investor, shuttered the factory in Soperton, Georgia, in January after not delivering on its promise to convert woodchips into ethanol, which was intended to help the U.S. become less dependent on foreign oil.

### [Crude Rises to Two-Week High Amid Concern Iranian Tensions Will Intensify](#)

Oil rose to a two-week high to cap its first gain in three weeks amid concern that tension between Iran and the West will intensify, threatening shipments from OPEC's second-biggest crude producer.

Futures climbed 0.8 percent after the U.S. Senate passed a bill aimed at Iran's central bank yesterday and the European Union tightened sanctions. U.S. unemployment unexpectedly dropped in November to a two-year low, while employers added fewer workers than projected and earnings eased.

### [Iran Faces Oil Curbs as U.S. Targets Central Bank While EU Adds Sanctions](#)

The U.S. Senate took aim at the Iranian central bank in an effort to choke off oil exports, while the European Union stopped short of targeting crude as it tightened sanctions intended to curb Iran's nuclear program.

## [EU Widens Iran Sanctions, Remains Split on Halt to Crude Oil Purchases](#)

European Union governments tightened sanctions on Iran in a clampdown on the country's nuclear program, while divisions festered over a possible halt to purchases of Iranian oil.

## [Will Sanctions Against Iran Raise Gas Prices?](#)

The nightmare scenario would be an additional \$1.25 per gallon. Iran produces just over 5 percent of the world's crude, which doesn't seem like a lot. But oil demand is price-insensitive—people and businesses refuse to change their fuel-buying habits until the costs go way up. That means a reduction in supply will have a disproportionate effect on prices. In the past, price increases have been about 10 times greater than their precipitating drops in production. Based on the same historical data, and given that oil is currently hovering at around \$100 per barrel, a complete shutdown of Iranian exports could force prices as high as \$150. (That's 5 percent, times the tenfold multiplier, times the current price of \$100.) Since a one-dollar change in the cost of a barrel of oil usually translates to a two-and-a-half-cent surge in retail gas prices, cutting Iran off from world oil markets could increase the price of gasoline by a dollar and a quarter.

## [Syria Is Censured by UN Council for 'Widespread, Systematic' Violations](#)

The United Nations Human Rights Council censured Syria, condemning “the continued, widespread, systematic and gross violations of human rights” by President Bashar al-Assad's government.

## [Angolan energy minister sacked](#)

Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos has fired Energy Minister Emanuela Vieira Lopes, blaming the disappointing development of the country's electricity sector, state news agency Angop reported on Friday.

## [First Nations group signs deal with Enbridge](#)

A day after native groups rallied in a show of force against the Northern Gateway project, a hereditary chief announced that the Gitxsan people had signed on as a partner in the \$5.5-billion proposal – allowing Enbridge to make good on its contention that native opposition to the company's plans is far from unanimous.

## [Venezuela to boost Caribbean refining and storage](#)

CARACAS (Reuters) - Venezuela said on Friday it plans to boost its oil storage and refining capacity in the Caribbean while increasing energy cooperation between the 19

countries in the region that receive its crude at preferential prices.

President Hugo Chavez has spread political influence with the oil deals, which include the Petrocaribe accord and a separate agreement with socialist ally Cuba.

### [Transportation office looking beyond gas tax](#)

As cars become more fuel efficient, and drivers buy fewer gallons to go the same number of miles, the state's 12-cent per gallon gasoline tax is not bringing in enough money to pay for all the projects PennDOT would like to tackle, Schoch explained.

### [Powering the Future: A Nobel-Prize Winner Takes a Look Deep into the Future](#)

Have we hit peak oil? How long can we rely on cheap coal for power generation? Is hydro-fracking worth the environmental impact? To each of these pressing and controversial questions, Nobel-prize winner and Stanford physics professor Robert Laughlin would respond that, in the long run, what's the difference?

*Powering the Future: How we will (eventually) solve the energy crisis and fuel the civilization of tomorrow* is Laughlin's audacious attempt to look past the haze and uncertainty of short-term political and technical questions and predict how we'll power our civilization in the centuries to come.

### [The Big Fix](#)

The film presents experts who say that the well hasn't been successfully capped, and that significant amounts of oil are still leaking and creating an ever-enlarging dead zone. They even imply that the death in a hot tub of the doom-saying energy investment banker Matthew R. Simmons may not have been accidental.

But the film's most upsetting scenes are its interviews with residents whose livelihood has been decimated and whose health has been compromised. The documentary maintains that little of the \$20 billion fund set up to compensate those whose lives were affected has reached them. Ms. Harrell Tickell, after spending time on Louisiana beaches, says that she herself began experiencing respiratory and skin ailments.

### [Japan looks to region for new nuclear business](#)

Japan's nuclear industry hopes to recover from the Fukushima meltdown earlier this year as parliament is set to approve bilateral agreements that allow for exports, and for Japanese companies to compete for Jordan's nuclear power project.

### [Predictions for Cleantech in 2012](#)

**Macro-economic turbulence, collapse, or at least, reform:** They're the elephants in the room: The Occupy movement. Arab Spring. Peak Oil. The continued and growing mismatch between overall global energy supply and demand and food supply and demand. Ever-increasing debt and trade deficits. Currency revaluation or political/military developments. Any or all of these could spur another massive global economic "stair-step" downwards of the scale we saw in 2008, or worse. Concern about all of these points and the impact they'd have on the cleantech sector weighs heavy on us here.

### [One Third of World's Energy Could Be Solar by 2060, Predicts Historically Conservative IEA](#)

The International Energy Agency is notoriously conservative on projections for renewable energy. The agency has embraced the need for more clean electricity and fuels to address climate change and peak oil, but its outlook for the future is usually far more conservative than how reality plays out.

So when an official at the IEA says we could get up to one third of our global energy supply from solar photovoltaics, concentrating solar power, and solar hot water by 2060, that's a fairly big piece of news. But even that projection may be conservative.

### [Panel Says Chinese Imports Hurt U.S. Solar Firms](#)

WASHINGTON — American solar panel manufacturers won a round against China on Friday when the United States International Trade Commission reached a preliminary conclusion that they were being harmed by imports.

### [India's Solar-Power Bid Prices Sink to Record, Consultant Says](#)

India drew record-low prices for solar power in an auction today of permits to build about \$700 million of plants as a supply glut in the industry drives down equipment costs.

### [Something to get steamed up over](#)

Geothermal power generation in Kenya has the potential to mirror the huge economic benefits of oil and gas in the Emirates, and the nation has big ambitions to achieve this.

### [New Pollution Rules for Boilers and Incinerators](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday released its much-delayed and oft-revised air quality regulations for industrial boilers and incinerators. The proposal is a modest refashioning of boiler rules introduced earlier this year, which were themselves a major revision of a 2010 plan by the agency that drew heavy political and industry

opposition.

### [Taking the Tiny House Movement Tinier](#)

LOUISVILLE, Colo. — For many Americans who bought more home than they could really afford in the giddy days before the crash, the big-house dream has become a nightmare in the ashes of foreclosure and regret.

So after all that, how does 84 square feet sound?

### [FACTBOX - Carbon trading schemes around the world](#)

(Reuters) - Companies and governments around the world are turning to emissions trading as a weapon to fight climate change and join a global carbon market worth \$142 billion last year.

### [UN Climate Envoys Weigh Aid Measures](#)

Envoys at United Nations climate talks are working on measures including aid to developing nations, funds to help adapt to more extreme weather patterns and forest protection, according to a text released today.

### [Top UN official confident rich nations will renew Kyoto Protocol's CO2 pledges](#)

DURBAN, South Africa — The top U.N. climate official said Saturday she is confident industrial countries will renew their pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions after their current commitments expire next year.



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