



Drumbeat: February 11, 2012

Posted by [Leanan](#) on February 11, 2012 - 9:25am

[The Future of American Colleges May Lie, Literally, in Students' Hands](#)

Some critics say colleges should use technology to scale up; others go so far as to bemoan the physical campus as an unnecessary, expensive burden in an online world. In that cultural and economic climate, liberal-arts colleges have been at pains to articulate their usefulness. They have emphasized that they teach students how to think, how to be engaged, world citizens—not merely how to do a job.

I agree that a liberal-arts education provides those intangibles. But maybe it's time that instruction—at least at some colleges—included more hands-on, traditional skills. Both the professional sphere and civic life are going to need people who have a sophisticated understanding of the world and its challenges, but also the practical, even old-fashioned know-how to come up with sustainable solutions.

[Environmental Sustainability Issues Among Key Topics at CERAWeek 2012](#)

ENGLEWOOD, Colo.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Persistent economic concerns, unease over energy security and the question of how to meet energy objectives while addressing environmental concerns have made sustainability one of the key topics for this year's 31st Annual CERAWeek conference, being held March 5-9 in Houston.

[Richard Heinberg schools Vancouver on the new economic reality](#)

How much do regular folks really know about the economy? Richard Heinberg wants you to understand one crucial thing about it. It's finished.

[The Politics of Keystone, Take 2](#)

Somewhat to my surprise, the most reasoned Keystone opponent I spoke to this week was Bill McKibben, who led the protests against it. Although the tar sands ranks as “the second biggest pool of carbon in the world,” he told me, “Keystone, by itself, won't make or break the environment.”

Rather, he said, he and other environmentalists had decided to draw this particular line in the sand because stopping Keystone would help accelerate what he described as the difficult transition from a fossil fuel economy to a new, brighter world based on

renewable sources of energy. "The most sensible way to go about dealing with global warming is one pipeline at a time," he said. "These kinds of fights are extremely important because they are the way the message gets out that we need to change."

[The Hidden U.S. Export Boom](#)

Today's topic: a hidden U.S. export boom. There's starting to be more and more coverage in the mainstream media, but I still wonder whether it's sunk in to most Americans just how historic the changes going on right now in oil production in the United States really are. Last year, for the first time since the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) began comprehensive data (in 1993), annual U.S. crude exports of petroleum products exceeded imports in 2011 (see Figure 1).

[Two Mexican Gulf oil ports close due to weather](#)

(Reuters) - Two of Mexico's three main oil export hubs in the Gulf of Mexico, Cayo Arcas and Dos Bocas, were closed on Saturday due to poor weather, port authorities said.

[Total Preps to Move into Iraqi Kurdistan](#)

France's Total is preparing the ground to become the next oil major to move into Iraqi Kurdistan, negotiating over two blocks following Exxon Mobil's deal with the semi-autonomous region last year, Kurdish and industry sources said.

[Billions at stake as Russia backs Syria](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- Russia's controversial stance in the Syrian crisis has left many wondering what Moscow stands to gain by backing the brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad.

Analysts say political and strategic concerns are Russia's primary motivation: Moscow is pushing back against what it sees as excessive Western interventionism in sovereign states, and fears losing an old ally that is its last foothold in the Middle East.

But economic ties -- valuable military contracts and energy investments that could be lost if the Assad regime fails -- play a key role as well.

[Saudis Said to Ship All Committed March Oil to Japan, China](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Arabian Oil Co. will supply all its contracted volumes of crude to Japanese and Chinese customers in March, said three refinery officials who received notification from the world's biggest exporter.

Saudi Aramco, as the company is known, will supply 100 percent of shipments committed under long-term contracts for a 28th month, according to the refiners in Japan and China. They declined to be identified because of confidentiality agreements with the Dhahran-based company.

[Asia seeks more Saudi crude](#)

Asian refiners are seeking additional crude from top exporter Saudi Arabia in a scramble to secure supplies to feed rising energy demand, as depending on Iran becomes increasingly difficult due to tighter sanctions.

Additional sales add to the growing list of evidence that the kingdom and other exporters are increasing shipments to top Asian consumers and taking away market share from Iran, Opec's second-largest producer.

[Saudis Export One Million Barrels of Crude to Korea, Riyadh Says](#)

Saudi Arabia is exporting more than one million barrels a day of crude oil to South Korea, Riyadh newspaper reported, citing S-Oil Corp. (010950)'s Chief Executive Officer Ahmed A. Subaey.

[Indian refiners seek 2.6m bbl extra Saudi oil](#)

Indian refiners have sought at least 2.6 million barrels extra supplies from Saudi Aramco for March, according to sources familiar with the plan.

India's Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited has sought an extra 600,000 barrel cargo, two sources said.

[India, Praising U.S. Ties, Defends Buying Iran's Oil](#)

NEW DELHI — Ranjan Mathai, the Indian foreign secretary, made the rounds in Washington last week, describing India's relationship with the United States as one of growing comfort, depth and candor, if not perfect harmony. On that last point he could have been talking about the recent frictions between the two countries over Iran.

India's determination to continue buying Iranian oil, despite sanctions and growing political pressure from the United States and Europe, has frustrated officials in Washington at a time when the forward momentum in the United States-India relationship has slowed, with differences over issues including civil nuclear cooperation, trade protectionism and military sales.

[Pipeline would make Canada a global oil player](#)

Kitamaat Village, British Columbia - The latest chapter in Canada's quest to become a full-blown oil superpower unfolded last month in a village gym on the British Columbia coast.

Here, several hundred people gathered for hearings on whether a pipeline should be laid from the Alberta oil sands to the Pacific in order to deliver oil to Asia, chiefly energy-hungry China. The stakes are particularly high for the village of Kitamaat and its neighbors, because the pipeline would terminate here and a port would be built to handle 220 tankers a year and 525,000 barrels of oil a day.

[China oil deal aided by 'panda diplomacy'](#)

CANADA'S prime minister Stephen Harper wrapped up a visit to China aimed at boosting oil sales by announcing yesterday that Beijing will lend two of the country's prized giant pandas to Canadian zoos.

[Pemex reforms 'require \\$25bn a year'](#)

Pemex will need to invest more than \$25.2 billion a year over the next few years as it strives to become "highly competitive, safe and sustainable", its chief executive has said.

[Gas is cut while Europe freezes](#)

Thankfully, the cuts did not create a new energy crisis for the EU. Moreover, the gas contracts that the EU has with Russia allow for a certain amount of flexibility in the event Russia needs extra gas, which was the case this time. However, it was a timely reminder of the need to quicken the pace of the work on the diversification of supply routes and sources projects.

[India: Industrial workers raise a hue and cry about outages](#)

COIMBATORE: All trade and industrial establishments in Coimbatore district downed their shutters on Friday to protest the erratic power cuts and failure of the state government to resolve the issue. Black flags were hoisted on top of 40,000 industrial units and employees who stayed away from work undertook a protest march in Coimbatore and Mettupalayam. Over 15,000 industrial workers and their supervisors observed a fast in Gandhipuram till the afternoon, pressing for an immediate solution to the power crisis.

[Fuel crisis hits consumers hard](#)

KATHMANDU: The fuel crisis has been hitting consumers hard for the last two months. People have been facing an acute shortage of petroleum products— diesel, petrol, kerosene and cooking gas— but government agencies have remained silent observers and have not done anything worthwhile to solve the crisis, blamed consumer rights activist Jyoti Baniya.

[Norfolk Island running on fumes as residents grapple with fuel shortage](#)

Barry Soley, who runs a petrol station on the island, said some motorists had filled up during panic-buying earlier this week. Others had "missed the boat" and did not even have enough fuel for their lawnmowers.

Mr Nobbs said tourists hiring rental cars would be allowed to fill up with A\$50 (£34) of petrol. They were being given priority, because "the tourism industry is what supports the island", he said. Locals, he suggested, should take in the beautiful scenery while travelling around under their own steam.

[Group Taken Aback by Marcellus Legislation Impact Fees](#)

Members of the Associated Petroleum Industries of PA are still examining how the local impact fee will affect their operations and creation of associated jobs, said Stephanie Catarino Wissman, the organization's executive director.

[Japan considers green future after nuclear disaster](#)

In the long process of rebuilding after the triple disasters, the country should focus on renewable energy.

[U.S. Oil Fields Stage "Great Revival," But No Easing Gas Prices](#)

The United States has long been seen as a nation in its twilight as an oil producer, facing a relentless decline that began when President Richard Nixon was in the White House. He and every president since pledged to halt the U.S. slide into greater dependence on foreign oil, but the trend seemed irreversible—until now. Forty-one years later, U.S. oil production is on the rise.

..."A 'great revival' in U.S. oil production is taking shape," said Jim Burkhard, managing director of the energy consultancy IHS Cambridge Energy Research Associates in testimony last month before a U.S. Senate committee. The resurgence provides the United States a welcome measure of energy security at a time of global economic uncertainty and geopolitical risk, he said.

Yet the U.S. government's own energy analysts and many experts see a limit to this new gusher. The technological advances that have driven the revival—high-volume hydraulic fracturing combined with horizontal drilling—can only squeeze so much more crude out of the U.S. landscape, they say. Projections are that U.S. oil production will never again

reach the lofty heights of the 1960s, even without environmental concerns slowing development or hampering industry with new costs.

[Oil Declines From Highest Level in Three Weeks as Greek Bailout Held Back](#)

Oil dropped from a three-week high as euro-area finance ministers refused to approve a rescue package for Greece, boosting concern that the European debt crisis will reduce fuel demand.

Futures fell 1.2 percent after Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, chairman of the group of euro-area finance chiefs, said yesterday that Greece won't get financial aid until it implements an austerity plan. The International Energy Agency also cut its 2012 global oil demand forecast for a sixth month, citing a "darkening" economic outlook.

[US natgas rigs at 28-month low, prices squeeze profits](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The number of rigs drilling for natural gas in the United States fell last week to the lowest level in 28 months as producers continued a rapid cut in activity in the face of ultra-low prices.

The gas rig count fell for the fifth straight week, by 25 to 720, completing the biggest two-week drop in three months, according to data from Houston-based oil services firm Baker Hughes on Friday.

[Low Natural-Gas Prices Hold Back Power Plant Development-AEP CEO](#)

NEW YORK – Low U.S. natural-gas prices have made it tough for developers to build new power plants in competitive electricity markets, which could affect the electric grid, the chief executive of American Electric Power Co. said Friday.

[‘Masked men’ battle Saudi troops, 1 dies](#)

RIYADH: One person was killed and three wounded when security forces exchanged gunfire with "masked men" in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich east, the official SPA news agency reported yesterday. Activists and witnesses said the casualties came when security forces opened fire on a Shiite demonstration in the Qatif district of the kingdom's Eastern Province.

[Gazprom's Empire at the End of the Earth](#)

The Russian energy giant has a lot riding on the success of a massive new gas field 250

miles above the Arctic Circle. So does Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin.

[Russia resumes Novorossiisk oil loadings-Transneft](#)

(Reuters) - Russia resumed crude oil exports URL-E on Friday night from the Black Sea port of Novorossiisk, crippled by the worst weather for the past 10 years, a spokesman for Transneft said on Saturday.

[Nigeria Probes Possible Fraud Over \\$12.6 Billion Subsidies](#)

Nigeria's parliament is probing whether fraudulent practices by government agencies fueled a fivefold rise in spending on gasoline subsidies in the past three years, said the head of the investigating committee.

[Nigerian president's state votes amid tight security](#)

YENAGOA, Nigeria (Reuters) - Nigerians voted amid tight security in a governorship election on Saturday in President Goodluck Jonathan's restive and oil-rich home state of Bayelsa, where last week militants attacked a major oil pipeline.

[Gunmen assassinate Syrian army general in Damascus](#)

BEIRUT (AP) – Gunmen assassinated an army general in Damascus on Saturday in the first killing of a high ranking military officer in the Syrian capital since the uprising against President Bashar Assad's regime began in March, the state-run news agency said.

[OSG Says Oil-Tanker Pool Will Halt Trading in Iran After Europe Sanctions](#)

Overseas Shipholding Group Inc., the largest U.S. crude-tanker owner, said the pool in which its ships operate will no longer go to Iran after the European Union agreed to an embargo on oil from the Persian Gulf nation.

[Analysis: Sanctions on Iran underscore delicate situation](#)

INTERNATIONAL sanctions targeting Iran's oil exports are inflicting economic pain but may well fail to force Tehran to compromise on its nuclear ambitions and may make it more intransigent.

The measures could also boomerang by driving up oil prices, hitting the jittery global economy, analysts say.

[U.S. Attack on Iran ‘Suicide,’ Would Spark Reprisal, Russian Envoy Says](#)

A U.S. attack on Iran would be “suicide” that would prompt retaliation, said Mahmoud-Reza Sajjadi, the Persian Gulf country’s ambassador to Russia,

“Iran has very good access to the whole world to carry out strikes against America,” he told reporters in Moscow today, adding that no pre-emptive strike is planned.

[Petrobras struggles to hit investment, output goals](#)

(Reuters) - Petrobras cut investment in 2011 for the first time in eight years as Brazil's state-run energy company struggled to buy the equipment, technology and services needed to carry out a \$225 billion (142 billion pound) expansion plan and exploit one of the world's most promising offshore oil frontiers.

[China Welcome to Boost Investment in Canadian Oil Industry, Oliver Says](#)

Canadian Natural Resource Minister Joe Oliver said he’s assuring Chinese officials that the nation is welcome to expand investments in Canada’s oil industry.

Canada doesn’t have sufficient capital to fully develop its oil reserves, Oliver said in an interview, adding the key factor in government approval will be whether investments are being made for “commercial” purposes.

[The Next American Oil Boom?](#)

Decline rates.

Seriously.

There are not very many people outside the “Peak Oil” crowd who care — heck, even know — what “decline rates” are.

[Indonesia plans unprocessed metal export ban in 2014](#)

JAKARTA: Indonesia will ban exports of some unprocessed metals from 2014 and could revoke the export licences of firms that violate the ban, the energy ministry said in a regulation that was posted on its website on Friday but later disappeared. Minerals covered by the ban, which has been widely discussed, include copper, gold, silver, nickel, tin, bauxite and zinc. Coal will be regulated separately.

[US Ambassador: No One Wants to Harm Beautiful Bulgaria](#)

The Ambassador was critical to Chevron, saying they arrived in Bulgaria somewhat unprepared and failed to offer enough information on shale gas to Bulgarians.

"No one wants to harm the environment and Bulgaria is an extremely beautiful country. In any way, the company does not have intentions to begin exploring shale gas before 2015 – we are talking about a future period," the diplomat told the host.

[Keystone backers try to hitch ride on Senate highway bill](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Republican senators who back the Keystone XL pipeline plan to file an amendment that would attach the project to highway funding legislation on Monday, another step in their quest to overturn President Barack Obama's decision to put the project on hold.

[Ohio petroleum producers decry call for penalties](#)

COLUMBUS -- Ohio petroleum producers are pushing back against a call by the state attorney general to increase environmental penalties and chemical reporting requirements on the drilling industry.

Republican Attorney General Mike DeWine has recommended three changes that he says will bring Ohio in line with other drilling states and allow effective enforcement against violators.

[US urges for openness at Gulf oil spill trial](#)

NEW ORLEANS -- The federal government's lead lawyer in an upcoming trial over fault in the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill urged judges on Friday to make public sensitive business documents and testimony.

[Don't let BP fines paid for spill disappear into federal black hole](#)

Well, BP's bill is coming due and almost nine of 10 Floridians think the oil company's fines should go to the states that suffered the greatest harm from the spill. Sen. Bill Nelson thinks that's just common sense. Sen. Marco Rubio agrees.

But a huge chunk of BP's penalties are dangerously close to disappearing into the black hole of the federal treasury instead of coming back to Florida.

[A Confused Nuclear Cleanup](#)

IITATE, Japan — As 500 workers in hazmat suits and respirator masks fanned out to decontaminate this village 20 miles from the ravaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactors, their confusion was apparent.

“Dig five centimeters or 10 centimeters deep here?” a site supervisor asked his colleagues, pointing to a patch of radioactive topsoil to be removed. He then gestured across the village square toward the community center. “Isn’t that going to be demolished? Shall we decontaminate it or not?”

A day laborer wiping down windows at an abandoned school nearby shrugged at the work crew’s haphazard approach. “We are all amateurs,” he said. “Nobody really knows how to clean up radiation.”

[Thousands march against nuclear power in Japan](#)

TOKYO (AP) – Thousands of Japanese people marched against nuclear power Saturday, amid growing worries about the restarting of reactors idled after the March 11 meltdown disaster in northeastern Japan.

[Tokyo Electric Asks Lenders for Loans of 1 Trillion Yen, Nikkei Reports](#)

Tokyo Electric Power Co. and the Japanese government’s nuclear disaster rescue fund asked lenders for about 1 trillion yen (\$12.9 billion) in loans, the Nikkei newspaper reported.

The Nuclear Damage Liability Facilitation Fund is asking for the loans to be advanced with no collateral or repayment guarantees from the government, the Nikkei said, without providing the source of the information.

[Nuclear Power vs. Natural Gas](#)

When critics say nuclear power is risky, they often mean the risk of an accident. But people in the nuclear industry say that the bigger threat is natural gas.

[Energy Loan Oversight Is Needed, Audit Finds](#)

WASHINGTON — The Department of Energy’s loan guarantee program for alternative energy projects, which produced the ill-fated loan to the solar panel maker Solyndra, needs more rigorous financial oversight and stricter performance standards for recipients to reduce the chance of future defaults, according to an audit conducted by the White House and released Friday.

[Energy Loans a Safer Bet for U.S. Than Congress Anticipated, Review Shows](#)

Potential losses from U.S. energy loan programs are likely to be less than projected by the White House and Congress, according to an independent analysis that Democrats said validated support for clean-energy innovation.

[The Military Is Hoping To Save A Bunch Of Money And Lives With This New Hardware](#)

It's estimated that one U.S. Marine is killed for every 50 convoys of gasoline the U.S. brings into a war zone.

[Construction permit delay may reverse sale of large solar project to Exelon](#)

NEW YORK — First Solar is warning that a construction delay threatens to undo its sale of a large solar project planned for Los Angeles County to power producer Exelon Corp.

The company said in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission on Thursday that it has been unable to resolve a construction permit issue. That is blocking the distribution of funds from a federal loan guarantee to help pay for the construction of the project.

[Wind Tower Makers in U.S. Hurt by Chinese Imports, Panel Finds](#)

U.S. makers of wind towers such as Broadwind Energy Inc. (BWEN) are being harmed by cheaper imports from China and Vietnam, a trade panel ruled in the first step toward imposing tariffs on the shipments.

[A123 Advances on Deal to Supply Battery-Storage Systems in U.K.](#)

A123 Systems Inc., a Waltham, Massachusetts-based maker of batteries for electric cars and utilities, rose after announcing a contract to supply power-storage systems to a U.K. grid operator.

[Three Gorges Dam to work at full capacity in May](#)

YICHANG (Xinhua) -- The Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydropower project, will work at full capacity by the end of May, when the last two power units will become operational, Chen Fei, general manager of the China Three Gorges Corporation, said Saturday.

[My Decade of Being "Peak Oil Aware"](#)

It's been a long haul since then. I'm no longer married, for instance. Some of what I

thought would happen came to pass. Most of it did not... or has not yet anyways. You don't change civilization on a dime, even though that's what I wanted to have happen when I dove into the sustainability movement and became heavily involved with renewable energy, edible landscaping, and all things local. I figured out a while back that the problem isn't peak oil, or global climate disruption, or peak anything else. And it isn't us. Humanity isn't inherently evil.

[There are plenty more fish in the sea](#)

These are among 50 stories cited by the Prince of Wales's latest campaign. Launched almost unnoticed (except by The Daily Telegraph) last week, it aims – like so many before it – to save the world's rapidly diminishing fisheries. But, unlike others, it focuses on the positive, showing what fishermen are already doing to turn things round, and demonstrating that – in his words – managing fisheries sustainably is “actually more profitable than perennially succumbing to the temptation of maximising short term income”.

[E.P.A. Is Sued Over Delays in Soot Standards](#)

Eleven states sued the Environmental Protection Agency on Friday over its delays in tightening air quality standards involving soot.

[The world's losing its workers. How will we compete?](#)

The world is on the threshold of what might be called “peak people.” The world's supply of working-age people will soon be shrinking, causing a shift from surplus to scarcity. As with “peak oil” theories – which hold that declining petroleum supplies will trigger global economic instability – the claims of the doomsayers are too hyperbolic and hysterical. These are not existential threats but rather policy challenges. That said, they're very big policy challenges.

[2°C warming goal now 'optimistic', say French scientists](#)

PARIS — French scientists unveiling new estimates for global warming said on Thursday the 2°C goal enshrined by the United Nations was “the most optimistic” scenario left for greenhouse-gas emissions.



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