



Drumbeat: February 15, 2012

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[Hard times see motorists to leave keys at home with car usage falling as cost cutting commuters seek cheaper alternatives](#)

CAR use in Wales has decreased dramatically since the start of the economic crisis in 2007, latest figures show.

The data suggests that rising fuel costs are driving motorists away from using their car and instead looking to cheaper alternatives – with cars travelling 517 fewer miles each year than before the downturn began.

Car use was increasing year on year up to 2007 but has been falling ever since. In 2007 motorists drove 13.9bn miles on Welsh roads, by 2010 this had fallen to 13.3bn, according to figures from the Department for Transport.

The figures are similar to the pattern across Britain, which has seen car use fall by 3% while cycling is up by 15%.

[Oil Rises to One-Month High as Iran Cuts Exports, China Pledges Debt Help](#)

Oil rose to its highest in a month as Iran said it had cut oil exports to six European countries and after China pledged to help resolve Europe's debt crisis.

Crude futures in New York increased as much as 1.8 percent. Iran summoned the ambassadors of Italy, Spain, France, Greece, Portugal and the Netherlands to protest against the EU sanctions on the country's nuclear program, state-run Fars news agency reported. China will invest in Europe's bailout funds, the nation's Central Bank Governor Zhou Xiaochuan said in Beijing. EU finance ministers will today prod Greece to deliver budget cuts in exchange for a second aid package.

[South Korea's January Liquefied Gas Imports Decline 41% as Prices Increase](#)

South Korean liquefied natural gas imports fell 41 percent from a year earlier in January, while the average price paid climbed 31 percent.

The North Asian nation, the world's second-biggest buyer of LNG, bought 2.89 million metric tons of the power-station fuel last month, compared with 4.93 million tons a year earlier, data on the Korea Customs Service's website showed today. Imports totaled

4.77 million tons in December.

[Flawed Oil Forecasts Hide Continued Upward Pressure On Prices](#)

When it comes to the future of oil, there is much speculation, but little hard analysis. You have the official line from the IEA that has oil prices stopping their abrupt rise and creeping up at a comfortable pace for the next 25 years. You have peak oilers shouting that we've run out of oil and the end is near.

Rather than burden you with one more theory and price target, I intend to look deeper at models and forecasts that already exist. My hope is that you will have a better sense what is logical, what is wild speculation, and what you should expect for oil prices in the coming years.

[Mr. Darcy's earth shattering results](#)

A flashback to history provides the background we need to understand why there is a technological revolution happening in the oil and gas industry and why peak oil theorists may need to go back to math class.

[How much oil is left? Who cares?](#)

There's abundance all right ... an abundance of misunderstanding of what peak oil actually means. And what it means is this: oil isn't going to run out anytime soon — but *production* will eventually be headed toward a downward slope. M. King Hubbert's description of oil's decline doesn't address reserves. What it does say is that, for every natural resource (in this case, oil), production begins slowly and eventually rises steeply, then reaches a peak before sliding down an equally steep slope on the other side.

[Breaking Past the Clichés on Energy Security](#)

Everything you think you know about energy security and energy independence is wrong. All too often you hear that fossil fuels will soon reach their peak, that our consumption of oil causes global insecurity vis-à-vis rogue states and terrorist organizations, and that the United States would benefit tremendously from becoming completely energy independent. Under closer scrutiny, however, the alarmist scenarios, political correctness, and chic notions of sustainability that dominate today's energy discourse simply do not stand up to actual realities.

[The End of an Energy Era](#)

I've uncovered my fair share of profitable stories in the past — from the beginning of the last decade's gold and silver rush to a temporary boom in the uranium market. And now

I'm seeing the puzzle pieces start to fall into place for what should be the next big thing.

In fact, that is what has me convinced that we are on the verge of one of the most important resource revolutions in history.

[100 Years of Natural Gas](#)

The new EIA report did cut shale gas resource estimates, but as that report explains it did so chiefly based on estimates derived from U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) modeling of technically recoverable gas reserves in the Marcellus Shale deposits that stretch through the northeastern Appalachian mountains. Keep in mind that back in 2002, the USGS estimated that the Marcellus Shale would yield only 2 Tcf of natural gas. The new median Marcellus shale gas estimate is now 84 Tcf. However, other knowledgeable experts think that estimate is way too conservative. Given the history of steadily increasing reserve and resource estimates of domestic supplies of natural gas, this is very likely to be the case.

[Four Scenarios For The Future Of Energy](#)

We are reaching an historical inflection point, where our current decisions about energy use and carbon will have major effects on how we live in coming decades. Here are four possible scenarios for what things will be like in 2025.

[YPF Said to Lose Shale Oil Partners as Argentine Government Cracks Down](#)

YPF SA, Argentina's largest energy company, lost eight potential investors in South America's biggest shale deposits after government measures made oil investments less attractive, according to a person familiar with the talks.

[Eni Reports a Second 'Giant' Natural-Gas Discovery Off Coast of Mozambique](#)

Eni SpA, Italy's largest oil company, reported a second "giant" natural-gas discovery off Mozambique, near the Mamba South find that it made last year.

The new discovery adds 212.5 billion cubic meters of gas in place, bringing total resources in the Mamba complex to 850 billion cubic meters (30 trillion cubic feet), Eni said today in a statement. That's more than three times the U.K.'s remaining gas reserves.

[Italy's Eni Sees 2012 Output Rising on Libya](#)

Italian oil and gas group Eni expects its output this year to improve thanks mainly to the gradual recovery of production in Libya which is expected to return to pre-conflict levels

in the second half of the year.

[Gazprom to Invest 300 Mln Euros in European Storage](#)

Russian energy giant Gazprom intends to invest 200-300 million euros to double its underground gas storage facilities in Europe to ensure uninterrupted gas supplies, Gazprom Deputy CEO Alexander Medvedev said on Wednesday.

“We cannot guarantee that the situation (with cold winter) will not be repeated next winter or will not recur in the next five consecutive years, for example. That is why, we have given a green light to the program of doubling our gas reservoir capacities in Europe,” Medvedev said in an in interview with RT television.

[IEA frets over Sudanese oil dispute](#)

VIENNA (UPI) -- The International Energy Agency said revenue disputes between Sudan and South Sudan means overall production estimates are down 25 percent.

South Sudan gained control of most of the oil reserves when Sudan was split into two countries last summer, though landlocked South Sudan depends on Sudan for access to export facilities.

[As violence continues, Syria to hold referendum](#)

BEIRUT (AP) – As the Syrian military besieged rebellious areas Wednesday, President Bashar Assad ordered a referendum for later this month on a new constitution that would open the way to political parties other than his ruling Baath Party.

[Opposition: Syrian war planes blow up oil pipeline in Homs](#)

Homs, Syria (CNN) -- A massive plume of thick, black smoke billowed from the Syrian city of Homs Wednesday, punctuating the chaos that has plagued the opposition stronghold for months.

According to the Local Coordination Committees of Syria, an opposition activist group, government war planes flew over Homs and blew up an oil pipeline.

[First Iranian-made fuel rods loaded in Tehran reactor](#)

Tehran, Iran (CNN) -- Iran vaunted its mastery of the nuclear fuel cycle Wednesday as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, clad in a white lab coat, was on hand to load domestically made fuel rods into the core of a Tehran reactor.

State-run Press TV broadcast live images of the event, hailed by the Iranians as a major scientific advancement for the Islamic republic.

[Report: Iran says has started using new advanced centrifuges at Natanz uranium enrichment site](#)

TEHRAN, Iran — An Iranian news agency says that the country has started using new advanced centrifuges at its main uranium enrichment site.

The semiofficial Fars agency reported Wednesday that a “new generation of Iranian centrifuges” had been installed and operated at the Natanz site in the center of the country.

[Iran 'halts oil exports to six EU states'](#)

Iran has stopped crude oil exports to six European states in retaliation for the sanctions imposed by the European Union last month, state media report.

English-language Press TV said those affected were the Netherlands, Greece, France, Portugal, Spain and Italy.

[Greece's top refiner says has alternatives to Iranian oil](#)

(Reuters) - Top Greek refiner Hellenic Petroleum said on Wednesday it had not been informed of a cut in Iranian oil exports to Greece but that it was confident of finding alternative sources of fuel if needed.

[Iran oil ministry denies state media reports on EU oil stop](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran's Oil Ministry denied state media reports on the Islamic state stopping its crude exports to six European countries on Wednesday.

[U.S. Navy: Iran prepares suicide bomb boats in Gulf](#)

MANAMA (Reuters) - Iran has built up its naval forces in the Gulf and prepared boats that could be used in suicide attacks, but the U.S. Navy can prevent it from blocking the Strait of Hormuz, the commander of U.S. naval forces in the region said on Sunday.

Iran has made a series of threats in recent weeks to disrupt shipping in the Gulf or strike U.S. forces in retaliation if its oil trade is shut down by sanctions, or if its disputed nuclear program comes under attack.

[How the Iran Nuclear Standoff Looks From Russia](#)

When Russians look at Iran, they see a country that has been their neighbor and rival forever. As the Russian empire advanced, it wrestled the North and South Caucasus from the Shah. Peter the Great annexed, briefly, Iran's entire Caspian Sea coastline and put his forces just north of Tehran.

[US, Europe consider crippling worldwide bank penalty against Iran, though costs could be high](#)

WASHINGTON — The United States and Europe are weighing unprecedented punishment against Iran that could cripple the country's financial lifeline but result in higher oil prices for the U.S. and its allies. Underscoring the potential costs, Iran on Wednesday cut oil exports to six European countries.

[Overseas Shipholding Awaits U.S. Loan Decision as Tankers End Iran Visits](#)

The U.S. Maritime Administration has a Feb. 18 deadline to decide on a \$241.8 million loan guarantee application from the New York-based owner of a supertanker that called at Iran's biggest crude-export terminal last month.

[India's crude imports from Iran to dip in 2011/12-source](#)

(Reuters) - India is likely to import less oil from Iran this fiscal year ending in March, compared with 2010/11, a government source said on Wednesday, as pressure mounts on Asian buyers to reduce crude imports from sanction-hit Islamic Republic.

[Bangkok blasts wound Iranian attacker, 4 others](#)

BANGKOK (AP) — An Iranian man carrying grenades blew off his own legs and wounded four civilians Tuesday after an earlier blast shook his house in Bangkok, Thai authorities said. The explosions came a day after an Israeli diplomatic car was bombed in India — an attack Israel blamed on Iran.

[Vancouver Could Take Larger Tankers, More Kinder Morgan Oil, Port CEO Says](#)

Vancouver would be able to handle larger tankers that could receive crude oil from an expanded Kinder Morgan Inc. pipeline, allowing Canada to boost energy shipments to Asia, the head of the city's port authority said.

[Repsol shares in \\$3 bln deal for Algeria gas field](#)

MADRID (Reuters) - Algeria has awarded a \$3 billion concession to develop its gas

fields, Spanish oil and gas company Repsol said on Tuesday, adding it had a 29.25 percent stake in the project.

[Obama wants cheaper pennies and nickels](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- The U.S. Mint is facing a problem -- especially during these penny-pinching times. It turns out it costs more to make pennies and nickels than the coins are worth.

And because of that, the Obama administration this week asked Congress for permission to change the mix of metal that goes to make pennies and nickels, an expensive recipe that has remained unchanged for more than 30 years.

[America's Decline in the Chinese Century - Red Alert Book Review](#)

Every one talks about "peak oil," the author points out, but few discuss "peak coal." China, which wasn't on the radar in solar panel manufacturing or the desalination of seawater a decade ago, will soon become the world leader in both.

At the China Summit, Dr. Leeb said, "China will spend \$5-6 trillion on renewable energy over the next eight years. When a country is growing rapidly it can mask past sins" -- a reference to the pollution caused by the recycling of e-waste. China appears willing to sacrifice towns and people for the long-term strength of the nation.

[Oil industry's rush to drill deep sea blind to dire problems](#)

Oil industry's rush to drill deep sea blind to dire problems

The oil industry in NZ seems oblivious to great dangers and wants the EEZ Bill to be rushed through so they can speedily proceed with ocean drilling projects. Kay Weir, editor of Pacific Ecologist, explains why this is a big mistake.

[Offshore Drilling, Renewable Energy Stressed in Interior Request](#)

The Interior Department would see only a 1 percent increase in overall funding next year under President Obama's 2013 budget proposal, but a significant boost is proposed for oversight and development of offshore oil and gas resources in keeping with the White House's recent push to expand domestic energy production.

[Obama's Wish List for Energy](#)

The proposed \$27.2 billion budget request for the Department of Energy is mostly about

nuclear weapons, including nonproliferation and cleanup efforts.

[Japan official faults nuke design, defends secrecy](#)

TOKYO (AP) — The government official who outlined Japan's worst-case scenario for the unfolding nuclear disaster last March defended how his study, warning that millions of people might have to flee, was kept secret.

Authorities would have had as much as a week or two to expand the evacuation zone if the worst-case scenario had started to unfold, said Shunsuke Kondo, who heads the Japan Atomic Energy Commission that helps set government nuclear policy.

But he also acknowledged Tuesday that the design for the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant had been faulty and he had not expected the "Chernobyl-style disaster" that occurred.

[A year on, only brief home visits for Japan nuclear evacuees](#)

OKUMA, Japan (Reuters) - Back home for just three hours, a tearful Miyoko Takeda sorted through her belongings. She left behind the kimonos she once wore as a traditional dancer, fearful they might be contaminated by radiation.

Nearly a year has passed since a massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake hit Japan, Okuma town, but the site of the reactors at the centre of the Fukushima nuclear crisis remains off limits for residents, save for short trips to hastily abandoned homes.

[Fukushima: the social impact of a nuclear disaster](#)

The earthquake and nuclear meltdown in Japan last year compounded pre-existing issues like falling birth rates, fragmented families and shrinking communities. What does the future hold?

[New study links childhood leukaemia to nuclear power plant radiation](#)

The UK government's scientific advisory group found no link between childhood leukaemia and proximity to nuclear power plants, but German and French research has found an alarming doubling of risk.

[Japan firms plan wind farm near Fukushima: report](#)

A group of Japanese firms led by trading house Marubeni Corp. plans to build a large floating experimental wind farm off the coast of Fukushima prefecture, which was hit by a nuclear disaster last year, a report said Tuesday.

[More new homes conserve energy](#)

In downtown Frederick, Md., blocks from a Starbucks and Barnes & Noble, four new duplexes nearing completion were sold with complimentary iPads to monitor energy use.

For nearly the same price as other new homes, they have solar panels, geothermal wells and ultra-efficient, factory-made exterior walls. They're designed to generate as much power as they use, along with thousands of dollars in renewable energy tax credits.

[More Southern forests at risk from biomass plants, report indicates](#)

A new report says Southern forests are at risk from biomass plants that burn wood to make energy.

The report, released Tuesday by two environmental groups, says the expanding biomass industry will look at cutting trees to fuel the power plants, a departure from the current practice of using waste wood from sawmills and other sources.

[Maersk Leads Shipping Industry in Developing Fuels to Cut Emissions](#)

A.P. Moeller Maersk A/S, the world's biggest container ship owner, is leading its industry in developing biofuels made from organic waste that could cut its carbon emissions and reduce a \$6 billion-a-year fuel bill.

[E-Cat 'Cold Fusion' Machine: Claims of Fraud Heating Up](#)

The E-Cat has gone further into mainstream acceptance than any attempted cold fusion machine before it. Though Rossi doesn't let anyone look under the E-Cat's hood, claiming the technology isn't patent-protected, he invites scientists and investors to staged demonstrations. After a demo last April, for example, a pair of Swedish physicists vouched for Rossi's work, reporting that the E-Cat produced too much excess heat to have been originating from a chemical process, and that "the only alternative explanation is that there is some kind of a nuclear process that gives rise to the measured energy production." According to their report, 400 watts was put into the machine, and this appeared to catalyze a mysterious reaction, and in the process, generate 12,400 watts of energy that slowly poured out of the machine over the next two hours.

And therein lies the alleged scam.

[Electric isn't the only 'green car' solution](#)

With all the attention on EVs, we can forget that plug-in cars probably aren't the only answer for cleaner driving.

[Making the Wrong Case for Renewable Energy](#)

What problems can the U.S. solve with renewable energy?

Four years ago, both presidential candidates acknowledged the threat of climate change and endorsed vigorous policies to move away from fossil fuels. The U.S. seemed on the verge of committing to greenhouse-gas reductions and developing alternative-energy technologies. Since then, most Republican leaders have become skeptical about global warming and now oppose any major policy response.

[David Suzuki: Solutions to Canada's environmental future are rational, not radical](#)

We're not about to quit oil cold turkey. Does that mean we should continue with business as usual?

[What do new findings on ice melt and sea level rise mean?](#)

A new study on how quickly Earth's glaciers and ice caps are melting - a crucial piece of the sea level rise puzzle - has received quite a bit of press attention during the past week, some of it rather misleading. While the paper (technically a letter) published in the journal Nature, concluded that glaciers and ice caps worldwide lost about 4.3 trillion tons of mass between 2003-2010 - enough to cover the entire United States with water 1.5 feet deep, according to NASA - there were some regions where glaciers and ice caps did not lose as much ice as previously thought.

Naturally some media outlets and climate skeptics chose to focus on the exceptions to the rule, losing track of the main conclusions in the process.

[Answering for Taking a Driller's Cash](#)

The recent disclosure of the Sierra Club's secret acceptance of \$26 million in donations from people associated with a natural gas company has revived an uncomfortable debate among environmental groups about corporate donations and transparency.

[A look behind the curtain of the Heartland Institute's climate change spin](#)

The Heartland Institute — a self-described "think tank" that actually serves in part as a way for climate change denialism to get funded — has a potentially embarrassing situation on their hands. Someone going by the handle "Heartland Insider" has

anonymously released quite a few of what are claimed to be internal documents from Heartland, revealing the Institute's strategies, funds, and much more.

[Heartland Institute Exposed: Internal Documents Unmask Heart of Climate Denial Machine](#)

Internal Heartland Institute strategy and funding documents obtained by DeSmogBlog expose the heart of the climate denial machine -- its current plans, many of its funders, and details that confirm what DeSmogBlog and others have reported for years. The heart of the climate denial machine relies on huge corporate and foundation funding from U.S. businesses including Microsoft, Koch Industries, Altria (parent company of Philip Morris), RJR Tobacco and more.



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