



## Drumbeat: July 4, 2012

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 4, 2012 - 10:54am

### [Can the U.S. Economy Be Sustained for Another 236 Years?](#)

The original Declaration of Independence, badly faded from poor 19th-century preservation techniques, is on permanent display in the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom, at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Each passing Fourth of July provides evidence that this document is better preserved than the land whose inhabitants it grants freedom and rights.

As the United States turns 236, relatively few people dwell on the possibility that within another 236 years, North America may cease to be a place capable of sustaining 300 million people in comfort, stability and peace.

That's because the land and water of the United States, and other nations, are increasingly subject to conditions absent in 1776. In fact, they've been largely absent from the 12,000-year epoch in which humans blossomed across the globe.

### [Energy probe casts shadow on JPMorgan](#)

[WASHINGTON] JPMorgan Chase & Co's refusal to turn over e-mails in a federal probe of potential energy market manipulation is the latest challenge for chief executive officer Jamie Dimon as the bank faces multiple investigations.

The US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) sued JPMorgan on July 2 to release 25 e-mails in an investigation of possible manipulation of power markets in California and the Midwest by J P Morgan Ventures Energy Corp, according to court filings by the Washington-based agency. FERC opened the probe in August after complaints from California and Midwest grid operators that JPMorgan's bidding practices were abusive, the documents show.

### [Norway oil talks fail, strike could last weeks: union](#)

(Reuters) - An 11-day strike in Norway's oil sector, which has slowed shipments from the world's eighth-largest exporter, could drag on for weeks, a labour union said on Wednesday after a second round of talks with employers failed to produce a deal over pensions.

Oil prices have risen this week back above \$100 per barrel, as the strike has cut

Norway's oil production by around 13 percent and as traders said on Monday that exports of at least one tanker had been delayed.

### [Troubled political situation in Kuwait](#)

KUWAIT: Sources revealed that government is very much angry from the troubled political situation in the state under an explosive regional situation at any time. Sources said that inspite of the dangerous developments between Iran and the west, which reached to the point where the Iranian Parliament announced a suggestion to close Hormuz straights, through which all oil exports for Kuwait and Gulf State pass through. In addition to the military exercise of the Iranian forces which resembled the attack of foreign bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Emirates and Oman. In spite of all those dangerous developments, the creation of crisis by the MPs is still their main concern, and example the last escalation by the majority MPs.

### [Oil now a weapon against Iran](#)

Over the past decades, oil producing countries were the ones that determined the rules of the game in oil markets, as exporting countries have been using oil as a tool to apply pressure on consumers, especially during the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 during which time Arabs had halted oil exports leading to prices jumping five times.

Four decades after the 1973 war, the situation has changed and oil consuming countries are now pressurising oil exporting countries after they recently reducing their dependence on oil, especially from the Gulf countries by the developing alternative sources of energy. The countries to do so include the Americas, Brazil and Venezuela and the US.

### [Russia to Take \\$60 a Barrel Oil as One Budget Assumption](#)

MOSCOW--The Russian government will consider a sharp fall in the price of oil, to just \$60 per barrel, as one of its budget scenarios for 2013, officials said Wednesday, stressing however that this would be only a risk assessment.

"This is...a forecast of a behavioral model in the case of a sharp drop in oil prices, which could be unlikely," Deputy Finance Minister Tatyana Nesterenko said.

### [Unconventional Oil is NOT a Game Changer](#)

The drilling costs are high, as are the decline rates ("While some have been able to yield as much as 1,000 barrels a day, the rate then falls off to 65 percent the first year, 35 percent the second, and 15 percent the third"), and the EROEI is very low in comparison with conventional oil. As with unconventional gas, which suffers from the same obstacles, the industry is set on an accelerating drilling treadmill in an attempt to

grow equity by expanding the reserve base with the cash flow generated.

Continued expansion is necessary to maintain the perception of company value. In other words, the industry is based on ponzi dynamics. So long as prices hold up, we can expect it to continue, but if we look at the broader economic context in conjunction with the lessons derived from unconventional gas, there is every reason to expect that the production boom is temporary, precisely because these circumstances will generate a price collapse.

### [The Godmother Ran Out Of Luck: Saudi And Global Oil](#)

The new way of looking at risk is at the heart of the transformation. International oil companies traditionally faced a simple choice: They could either invest in oil that was easy to produce but located in politically volatile countries, or operate in harsh, difficult and high cost environments in stable countries where the oil was hard to extract and can only be expensive. To be sure, this was great for Saudi Arabia, Russia and other OPEC and NOPEC states sitting on large amounts of "conventional" oil, imagining they could "fine tune" prices and keep the(ir) party going.

The Big Picture background to this global energy transformation away from oil is easy to explain: comparing 1973 and 2009 using IEA data, the OECD countries depended on oil for 52.6% of their total energy consumption in 1973. By 2009, this was down to 36%. The future trend of the energy mix is 100% sure and certain: oil's share of total energy will go on shrinking - possibly fast. Conversely, gas energy will grow - probably fast.

### [Poland Looks for German Prices for Gas](#)

Polish Treasury Minister Mikolaj Budzanowski has said that Poland should be paying Gazprom the same prices for gas as other countries in the EU, such as Germany.

### [Mongolia Pushes Russia, China to Re-Route Planned Gas Line](#)

Mongolia is calling upon China and Russia to re-direct a planned natural-gas pipeline across its territory as the world's fastest growing economy seeks to tap the cleaner-burning fuel.

### [Dangers of fracking are clear to see](#)

What do these deaths have to do with plans for "fracking" for natural gas in Ireland? Everything.

It was my job to investigate these three explosions, the Deepwater Horizon and California explosions as a reporter for Channel 4's Dispatches, the earliest as a US government investigator.

In all three cases the deaths were preceded by the same reassurances about the safety of drilling and piping that I read now in the debate about fracking in Ireland.

### [With Keystone in limbo, VFW helps vets get work on Canada's section](#)

U.S. veterans looking for jobs have a new employment opportunity -- in Canada, working on that country's section of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Though the push to start building the Canada-to-Texas oil route has been delayed in the United States amid political and environmental disputes, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is part of a deal that would send veterans and transitional active-duty soldiers across the border to fill as many as 114,000 skilled-labor jobs. The jobs include work on the crude-oil pipeline as well as work on infrastructure and even skyscrapers.

### [Fukushima inmates given compensation](#)

FUKUSHIMA (Jiji Press)--More than 80 inmates in Fukushima Prefecture have received 80,000 yen each in resident compensation from Tokyo Electric Power Co. for the crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, it was learned Wednesday.

Eligible for the compensation are people who lived in 23 municipalities in the prefecture, including Fukushima city, when the massive earthquake and tsunami devastated the plant on March 11, 2011.

### [TEPCO workers' salaries may be reduced further](#)

The government is considering cutting the salaries of Tokyo Electric Power Co. employees by an additional 10 percentage points, to offset an expected reduction in the utility's planned rate hike, it has been learned.

TEPCO has applied to the Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry to increase electricity charges for general households by an average 10.28 percent.

### [Hydro-Québec powerline plan not worth 'marginal' savings - Stornoway Diamonds](#)

HALIFAX, NS (MINEWEB) - Though it could save some money in the long run, Stornoway Diamonds said it would not go with a hydro power option that, according to a Hydro-Québec feasibility study, would cost Stornoway's Renard diamond project in Québec \$174 million to build. Stornoway cited the burden of greater capital costs that only lead to "marginal" savings.

Stornoway released results of a feasibility study on the overall Renard project late last year in which it outlined a diesel powered operation that would initially cost \$802 million

to build.

### [Brazil Solar Energy at \\$299 a Megawatt-Hour Competes With Grid](#)

Producing power from rooftop solar panels in Brazil costs less than electricity sold by 10 of the country's 63 power distributors, according to the national energy agency Empresa de Pesquisa Energetica.

### [Monbiot says he was wrong on peak oil but the crisis is undeniable](#)

In the run-up to credit crunch of 2007, whistleblowers were warning that an incumbency, the financial-services sector, had its asset assessment fundamentally wrong. The incumbency poured scorn on this, many of them professing that they had invented a new asset class – mortgage-backed securities and related complex derivatives – that represented an entirely new method of generating wealth.

Today, rather more whistleblowers are saying that another incumbency, the oil and gas sector, has its asset assessment fundamentally wrong. The incumbency pours scorn on this, insisting that they have opened up another new asset class – unconventional oil and gas – and that it represents another unforeseen road to riches. Some go so far as to say that North America is en route to being self-sufficient in hydrocarbons.

The first incumbency illusion proved to be a deadly bubble, the legacy of which still threatens to torpedo the global economy five years on. We will find out about the second within a few years. The UK industry taskforce on peak oil and energy security, which I convened, is among many groups forecasting a global descent in oil production by 2015 at the latest, notwithstanding all the incumbency rhetoric.

### [Monbiot: wrong again – 'Peak Oil' this time](#)

Some people might find themselves feeling sorry for George as his belief system continues to collapse about his ears. But they really shouldn't. I've no doubt that George is agonisingly sincere and principled in everything he does, but his Weltanschauung is the philosophy of the devil. George is the embodiment of the phenomenon I describe in Watermelons – one of those bitter, misanthropic, control-freak kill-joys, green on the outside but red on the inside, the true purpose of whose "environmentalism" is not so much to save the planet as to end Western industrial civilisation.

### [Oil's Long Goodbye and a Species' Quest for Self Control](#)

It's become fashionable among younger and more radical activists I've met to link climate to capitalism and to express disdain for the western system. There's some overlap between the Occupy movement and the more radical climate campaigners. And who can blame them for rejecting the West, given the current polarization in the United States and European political scene and the lingering recession?

But I've read my George Orwell. And I spent the first half of the Thatcher decade in the British military and the second half in the American environmental counterculture. A rare and heady mix, to be sure, but what I eventually emerged with was this reluctant sense that despite all its horrible faults – My Lai and Guantanamo, water-boarding and drone strikes, not to mention the current American political polarization between Occupy and the Tea Party – empirically speaking, the West has the only viable governmental systems on the planet that comes even close to the practical democracy that will be needed to solve the problem.

### [Evolution, not ecology](#)

One of my major gripes with my friends in ecology is that **there is a tendency to look at every problem through the lens of ecological models.** Garrett Hardin, who popularized the term “tragedy of the commons” is an exemplar of this. People in ecology often get irritated by the public confusion between it, a positive scientific discipline, and environmentalism, a normative set of beliefs (it doesn't help when some environmentalist groups have names like “ecology movement”). **But the fact is there are deep commonalities in terms of prior assumptions by both ecologists and environmentalists.** Despite evolutionary ecology, the reality is that ecologists seem to be characterized by a mindset which posits limits to growth and a finite set of responses to the challenges of scarce resources. That is, the Malthusian paradigm.

### [Is Peak Oil Really a Thing of the Past?](#)

Say what you like about George Monbiot, but he is not afraid to speak his mind—even when that means breaking ranks with the environmentalist “party line”. (Sadly, I'm not sure we greenies have ever been organized to actually have a party line.)

### [Richard Heinberg: Peak Denial](#)

No doubt peakists will continue to produce thoughtful, well-reasoned, and fact-filled articles elucidating the precariousness of global energy supplies. Nevertheless, the sheer number and media prominence of “No Peak Oil” pieces (in the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, and even on NPR) is having an effect. Depletionist sites are seeing declining web traffic. And while far more people now have heard of Peak Oil than was the case just a few years ago, many mistakenly believe that its core assertion has somehow been “debunked.”

### [Oil retreats, focus on grim economy](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Crude oil prices fell on Wednesday, after a sharp gain the previous day, as investors returned their focus to the grim global economic backdrop, though expectations of fresh stimulus measures limited losses.

### [Gasoline's Drop Toward \\$3 Provides Obama a Lift](#)

U.S. gasoline prices at the pump, headed to \$4 a gallon in April, are dropping toward \$3 as the July Fourth holiday approaches, giving consumers relief and a boost to President Barack Obama's re-election campaign.

### [Iran says can destroy U.S. bases "minutes after attack"](#)

(Reuters) - Iran has threatened to destroy U.S. military bases across the Middle East and target Israel within minutes of being attacked, Iranian media reported on Wednesday, as Revolutionary Guards extended test-firing of ballistic missiles into a third day.

Israel has hinted it may attack Iran if diplomacy fails to secure a halt to its disputed nuclear energy program. The United States also has mooted military action as a last-resort option but has frequently nudged the Israelis to give time for intensified economic sanctions to work against Iran.

### [Iran Convenes Discussions Amid Maneuvers in Persian Gulf](#)

Iran, in the middle of a three-day military exercise in the Persian Gulf, convened a meeting with world powers in Istanbul in search of a diplomatic solution to the nation's nuclear work.

Chinese, French, German, Russian, U.K. and U.S. diplomats, known as the P5+1 group, will meet their Iranian counterparts today to review unresolved issues from their previous discussions. The sides downgraded the talks to a "technical level" after high-level negotiations on June 20 in Moscow failed to yield a compromise.

### [Iran wants strait-up Hormuz closures to block oil passage](#)

Iran's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has drafted a bill calling for Iran to try to stop oil tankers from shipping crude through the Strait of Hormuz to countries that support sanctions against it, a committee member said yesterday.

### [Japan to load first of two Iran oil cargoes as early as July 22: sources](#)

Japanese shipping companies are likely to load Iranian oil on two VLCCs in late July, with the first cargo to be loaded as early as July 22 after the expected signing of new insurance contracts with the government next week, sources close to the matter told Platts Wednesday.

### [Britain urges Kenya not to import more Iranian oil](#)

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Britain urged Kenya on Wednesday not to increase its imports of Iranian oil at a time the international community is increasing pressure on Iran to take steps to demonstrate its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes, the foreign office said.

### [Kenya cancels Iran oil deal due to sanctions](#)

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Kenya is cancelling an agreement to import 4 million tonnes of Iranian crude oil per year because of international sanctions against Iran, the top official in the energy ministry said on Wednesday.

### [Turkey eyes further 10 pct cut in Iran oil buys](#)

ISTANBUL (Reuters) - Turkey is prepared to cut its Iranian oil imports by no more than an additional 10 percent from next year to persuade the United States to extend sanction exemptions when they expire in December, a high-level Turkish source told Reuters.

Last month Washington granted exemptions to Turkey and six other countries from its financial sanctions on Iran's oil trade in return for significant cuts in their purchases of Iranian oil.

### [The Oil Sanctions Against Iran](#)

And there is another matter as well. Iran is already storing oil offshore in tankers, but that is clearly only a short-term solution to the problem of what to do with the unsold surplus. It is also cutting back on how much oil it pumps: the latest figures from the Organisation of Petroleum-Exporting Countries say that Iranian production is already down by 720,000 barrels per day.

But after a certain point Tehran can no longer deal with the problem by just cutting production at all its wells; it has to start shutting some of them down completely. Re-starting production later can be tricky, and some wells will be permanently damaged by the shutdown. The longer the sanctions last, the more difficult it will become for the Iranian regime.

Yet there is almost no chance that Iran will back down. You do not have to assume that the regime really wants to build nuclear weapons to explain its defiance. This is a country that has faced a century of exploitation and humiliation at the hands of the West, and even those Iranians who loathe the regime will close ranks in defence of their nation's right to enrich its own nuclear fuel.

### [Iran Oil Tankers' Position Signals Spur Export Speculation](#)



The number of Iranian oil tankers signaling their locations and destinations rose from June, prompting speculation the country facing U.S. and European Union sanctions is selling cargoes that were stored at sea.

### [Iran Tanker Flagging Threatens Tanzania-U.S. Ties, Lawmaker Says](#)

Tanzania must reverse the decision allowing Iranian oil tankers to register in the country or face a breakdown in its ties with the U.S., a member of Congress wrote in a letter to the East African nation's president.

NITC, an oil-tanker company owned by Iranian pension funds, renamed at least 10 of its vessels and switched them to a Tanzanian flag, according to the Equasis shipping database maintained by the European Commission. The move will assist Iran in evading U.S. and European sanctions, Representative Howard Berman wrote in a June 29 letter to President Jakaya Kikwete, a copy of which was posted on the congressman's website.

### [Nigeria signs \\$4.5bn oil refining deal](#)

Nigeria has signed a preliminary \$4.5bn (£2.9bn) deal with US-based Vulcan Petroleum to build six oil refineries. The deal could boost refining capacity in the country by 180,000 barrels a day, with two of the refineries due for completion this year. Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil producer but its refineries are only able to refine a fraction of this into fuel.

### [Blast at Bangkok oil refinery triggers huge blaze](#)

BANGKOK - An explosion at an oil refinery in an industrial area of Bangkok sparked a massive fire early Wednesday, sending a thick column of smoke into the air that could be seen across the Thai capital. There were no reported injuries in the blast and subsequent fire, which prompted the government to close the 120,000 barrels-a-day refinery for at least 30 days.

### [Oman expects oil prices to erase 2012 budget gap](#)

(Reuters) - Oman expects to erase its 1.2 billion rial (\$3.1 billion) budget deficit projected for 2012 as oil prices have been higher than forecast, a finance ministry official said on Wednesday.

"Up to May, we have sold our oil 50 percent above the price we estimated for the 2012 budget, and that has pushed up revenues beyond our expectations," a finance ministry official in the budgeting department told Reuters.

### [Indonesia Considering Moratorium on Gas Exports](#)

The Indonesian government acknowledged on Wednesday that it was considering a moratorium on the signing of new contracts for natural gas exports, saying the country needed the gas more to support national development.

Evita Legowo, the director general for oil and gas with the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry, said gas exports did generate income for the state, but using it directly for domestic purposes would have “multiplier effects” that boosted local industries and the national economy.

### [Ambassador Hamai: Algeria set to increase gas supply to Turkey](#)

The top Algerian diplomat in Ankara has said negotiations for additional gas supplies to Turkey are currently taking place commensurate with the growing economic and political relations between the two countries.

Turkey, which is heavily dependent on Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan to meet the energy demands of its fast-developing economy, has been trying to diversify its suppliers, and Algeria may play a larger role in Turkey’s plans.

### [Tajikistan increases production of oil products](#)

According to the country's statistics data, the oil products production growth amounted to 11.1 percent during the first five months of the year.

### [Drilling trucks have caused an estimated \\$2 billion in damage to Texas roads](#)

CLEBURNE -- The new wave of oil and gas production, which has created thousands of jobs and plowed big money into the Texas economy in recent years, has also taken a huge toll on the state's roads.

The Texas Department of Transportation told industry representatives and elected officials Monday that repairing roads damaged by drilling activity to bring them up to standard would "conservatively" cost \$1 billion for farm-to-market roads and another \$1 billion for local roads. And that doesn't include the costs of maintaining interstate and state highways.

### [Enbridge has a best friend in Ottawa](#)

Patrick Daniel started in the oil and gas pipeline business more than 30 years ago. At the time, pumping oil through thousands of kilometres of buried metal pipes was viewed as a relatively innocuous activity, to the extent it was even thought about at all. “It was generally considered to be dull, boring and well below the radar screen,” says Daniel, the chief executive of Calgary’s Enbridge Inc., now the country’s largest transporter of crude oil. “It provided an essential service to society and was something that most

everyone took for granted.”

Not anymore. Enbridge now occupies ground zero in the raging debate over Alberta’s vast oil sands.

### [No easy fix for eastern US storm power outages as heat wave persists](#)

In the aftermath of violent storms that knocked out power to millions from the Midwest to the Mid-Atlantic, sweltering residents and elected officials are demanding to know why it's taking so long to restring power lines and why they're not more resilient in the first place.

The answer, it turns out, is complicated: Above-ground lines are vulnerable to lashing winds and falling trees, but relocating them underground involves huge costs — as much as \$15 million per mile of buried line — and that gets passed onto consumers.

### [Duke and Progress Energy Become Largest U.S. Utility](#)

Duke Energy said on Tuesday that it had completed its \$32 billion merger with Progress Energy, a few hours after South Carolina gave final approval. The move creates the largest electric utility in the United States, with 7.1 million customers in six states in the Southeast and Midwest.

### [Al-Jazeera: Tests suggest Arafat died of polonium poisoning](#)

Recent tests conducted on Yasser Arafat's personal belongings at the time of his unexpected death in 2004 suggest his body contained abnormal levels of radioactive polonium, the same poisonous substance that killed Russian spy-turned-dissident Alexander Litvinenko, Al-Jazeera TV reports.

### [Michigan: Record Fine Sought for Spill](#)

The federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration said Monday that it would seek a \$3.7 million fine, a record civil penalty, from the pipeline operator Enbridge over a 2010 oil spill in the Kalamazoo River.

### [Chinese fishermen sue ConocoPhillips over spills](#)

HOUSTON – A group of 30 Chinese fishermen sued ConocoPhillips in U.S. federal court on Monday, claiming their livelihoods have been greatly impacted by two oil spills last year from the company's offshore drilling operations in northeastern China.

## [Is Fracking Cemeteries Immoral? Plot Owners Have No Say](#)

To frack or not to frack in cemeteries, that's the new question natural gas companies are asking loved ones of the dead. Deep underground, ancient shale formations hold lucrative quantities of natural gas in places like Ohio, Colorado and Mississippi in veterans' final resting places to parks, playgrounds, churches and residential back yards.

The shale boom, though good for the economy, has not only raised environmental concerns, but is now starting to dabble in questions of morality. Many fear that drilling activity would pollute peaceful places of mourning with noisy, smelly and unsightly industrial activity. But defenders argue the drilling would take place so deep that it wouldn't disturb cemeteries, and would actually generate revenue to enhance the roads and grounds that surround them.

## [Japan utility repairing reactors near Fukushima](#)

TOKYO (AP) — The operator of Japan's tsunami-ravaged nuclear plant says it is repairing four reactors at a less-damaged nearby plant despite demands from local residents that it be scrapped.

## [Belgian cabinet agrees slower phase-out of nuclear power](#)

Belgium's cabinet voted Wednesday to close the 433 MW Doel 1 and 2 nuclear reactors from 2015 but prolong the lifespan of the 962 MW Tihange 1 unit to 2025, a spokeswoman for the energy ministry said.

## [UK popular support for nuclear power rises - poll](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - The percentage of Britons who support nuclear power as part of the country's energy mix has risen, a YouGov poll showed on Monday, 16 months after Japan's Fukushima disaster fuelled opposition to the atomic fuel.

## [The Nuclear Industry and Venting, Round 2](#)

The debate over making post-Fukushima Daichi improvements to American reactors is getting down into the details, and one focus is pressure relief vents.

## [Solar: Life, Liberty And The Pursuit of Energy Independence](#)

No energy source is more American than solar. Technologies to convert sunshine to electricity were pioneered in the U.S. half a century ago at Bell Labs, and quickly became a source of inspiration and imagination. In the last several years, solar energy has awoken from yesterday's dream to today's reality.

### [Odd Alliance Is Forged Over Access to Herring](#)

PORTLAND, Me. — There is no great love between Glenn Robbins, a bright-eyed third-generation fisherman, and the environmental lobby. Mr. Robbins grew up trapping Atlantic herring in cotton nets strung up in craggy coves off the Gulf of Maine. These days, he casts a net off a 104-foot boat, but catch restrictions limit those trips to twice a week, he says.

If he can't go out for herring, he fishes for lobster, and he serves as a deacon in a Baptist church. Mr. Robbins is a staunch skeptic of global warming.

So it was supremely odd, he said, to find himself working with advocacy organizations like the Pew Environment Group as the New England Fishery Management Council recently imposed new regulations on the herring fishery.

### [World Bank Sees Warning Sign in Gas Flaring Increase](#)

New data showing a two-billion cubic meter increase in flared gas in 2011 over the previous year is a warning that efforts to reduce flaring need to be sustained and even scaled up, said officials with the World Bank-led Global Gas Flaring Reduction partnership (GGFR).

### [Protect whales from new oil industry threat, warns WWF](#)

Conservationists on Tuesday appealed to countries to urgently address new threats to whales, dolphins and other cetaceans as climate change opens up previously inaccessible areas of the Arctic and industries move in to new areas.

### [EU's Arctic Policy: Questions and Answers](#)

The Arctic is rapidly warming up. The period 2005-2010 stands out as the warmest period ever recorded in the region<sup>1</sup> and this is projected to continue into the future. The Arctic's rapid change provides a strong rationale for the EU to step up its commitment to environmental protection and combating climate change in the area.

As warming continues, ice-free summers in the Arctic may be evident in the next 30 to 40 years. Already, thawing sea ice and rapid advances in offshore technology have increased human activity in the region, such as shipping, mining and hydrocarbon extraction.

### [A Climate Scientist Battles Time and Mortality](#)

Dr. Thompson, 64, is one of the most prominent of the generation of scientists who, in

the latter decades of the 20th century, essentially discovered the problem of global warming. Now those scientists are beginning to age out of the field. Many of them say they grapple with the question of how hard to keep pushing themselves. Could one more finding or one more expedition help turn the tide of public awareness?

Some have continued working into their 70s and 80s. One of the most vocal about the need for action, Stephen H. Schneider of Stanford University, fought off a rare form of cancer several years ago, only to die of a blood clot in 2010 after speaking in Europe about climate change. He was 65.

### [Bavarian Glaciers Could Disappear in 30 Years](#)

The Bavarian Alps are known for their stunning vistas and winter sports opportunities. But the view from some summits could change drastically in the coming years. Nearly all of the glaciers in the Bavarian Alps will likely disappear in the next 20 to 30 years due to climate change, the southern German state warned on Monday.

### [North Carolina lawmakers reject sea level rise predictions](#)

RALEIGH, North Carolina (Reuters) - Lawmakers in North Carolina, which has a long Atlantic Ocean coastline and vast areas of low-lying land, voted on Tuesday to ignore studies predicting a rapid rise in sea level due to climate change and postpone planning for the consequences.

### [Gosford Council repeals controversial sea level policy](#)

A Council on the New South Wales Central Coast has voted to repeal its controversial sea level rise policy, just months after hundreds of waterfront property owners rallied against it.

Two months ago, crowds of residents from the Coast and Lake Macquarie took to the streets, angry at state legislation and their councils' actions in response to the projected sea level threat over the next 90 years.

### [Drought Caused Big Drop in Texas Portion of Ogallala](#)

The historic Texas drought caused the Ogallala Aquifer to experience its largest decline in 25 years across a large swath of the Texas Panhandle, new numbers from a water district show.

The 16-county High Plains Underground Water Conservation District reported this week that its monitoring wells showed an average decline last year of 2.56 feet — the third-largest in the district's 61-year history, and three times the average rate over the past decade. Farmers pumped more water during the drought to compensate for the lack of rainfall, which was about two-thirds less than normal last year in Lubbock and

Amarillo.

### [Blazes are a window into the future](#)

The fires that are burning throughout the country offer a window into what we can expect in the future as the climate heats up. That grim assessment comes from Steve Running, a wildfire expert, ecologist and forestry professor at the University of Montana. Running was among the scores of scientists who, along with Al Gore, won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for their work on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.



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