



Drumbeat: November 24, 2012

Posted by [Leanan](#) on November 24, 2012 - 10:02am

[Japan Is Eager to Tap U.S. Natural-Gas Supply](#)

TOKYO — Congress could still block efforts to expand exports of America’s newly abundant supplies of natural gas, but there’s no question where Japan stands on the prospect of ships carrying liquefied natural gas from the U.S. arriving at its shores.

“From all the aspects, U.S. LNG is a very, very shining treasure ... for us,” said Hirohide Hirai, director of policy evaluation and public relations at Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

[Gas prices off charts due to 2-tiered Canadian oil market](#)

The difference in gasoline prices across Canada has hit its widest point in a decade because supply problems in the crude oil market have thrown the regular rules out the window, according to a report released today.

The Statistics Canada report released Friday shows how wildly different prices for crude oil that refineries across the country must pay are leading to drastically different pump prices in different parts of the country.

[Musings: If You Believe The IEA, Our Energy Worries Are Over](#)

Earlier this month, as part of its annual energy outlook, the International Energy Agency (IEA) published a study suggesting that by 2015 the United States will become the world’s largest gas producer and by 2017 the largest oil producer if one includes crude oil, natural gas liquids and biofuels. That status, however, will be short-lived as Saudi Arabia is projected by the IEA to regain its number one oil producer position by about the mid 2020s. Given the growth in U.S. and Canadian hydrocarbon production in recent years, coupled with slowing demand growth, energy imports will fall until eventually North America becomes a net oil exporter about 2030 and the U.S. becomes nearly energy self-sufficient by 2035.

[Oil Caps Weekly Gain on German Business Confidence](#)

Oil capped the biggest weekly gain in more than a month as German business confidence

unexpectedly rose in November, a signal Europe's largest economy may expand.

Futures jumped 1 percent and the euro and equities rallied after the Munich-based Ifo institute's business climate index climbed from the lowest level in two and a half years in October. Israeli troops fired on Palestinians near the Gaza Strip border, spurring accusations from both Israel and Hamas that a truce was breached.

[Rig count finds exploratory wells for oil, gas in US up by 8 to 1,817](#)

HOUSTON — The number of rigs actively exploring for oil and natural gas in the U.S. rose this week by eight, to 1,817.

Texas-based oilfield services company Baker Hughes Inc. reported Wednesday that 1,388 rigs were exploring for oil and 428 were searching for gas. One was listed as miscellaneous. A year ago, Baker Hughes counted 2,000 rigs. The tally, normally released on Friday, was advanced this week because of Thanksgiving.

[Potential game changer: Direct cash transfers set to begin](#)

New Delhi (IANS) In preparation for the launch of the UPA government's direct cash transfer (DCT) of subsidies and welfare schemes to millions of people, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will Monday hold the first meeting to roll out the ambitious project which it hopes would be a game changer for the government and the nation.

[Petrobras Losing \\$8 Billion on Cheap Gasoline](#)

Petroleo Brasileiro SA (PETR4) is losing a record \$8 billion at its refining unit this year as Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff's battle with inflation means the state-run company must sell imported gasoline below cost.

Lacking refining capacity to meet demand, Petrobras increased gasoline imports 65 percent to 84,000 barrels a day in the third quarter, according to earnings statements. The imports, which the company sells at about 8 percent less than cost, caused year-to-date losses at its refining division to widen to 17.3 billion reais (\$8.4 billion) from 10 billion reais for the whole of 2011.

[Iran accuses US Navy of 'illegal' acts in Gulf](#)

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iran is accusing the U.S. Navy of carrying out "illegal and provocative acts" in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman.

In identical letters to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Security Council, Iran's U.N. Ambassador Mohammad Khazaee said the Navy repeatedly violated the country's airspace.

[Egypt's top judges condemn Mohamed Morsi power grab](#)

Egypt's most senior judges have condemned President Mohamed Morsi for granting himself sweeping new powers which they say amount to an "unprecedented assault" on the independence of the judiciary.

[Israel eases Gaza border restrictions after Hamas truce deal](#)

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip – Gaza residents said Saturday that Israel has eased some border restrictions as part of its truce with the Palestinian territory's Hamas rulers, allowing farmers to visit land near its security fence and letting fishermen head further out to sea.

The Egyptian-brokered cease-fire ended eight days of cross-border fighting that claimed 166 Palestinian and six Israeli lives, according to health officials.

[John Michael Greer: In the Twilight of Empires](#)

The arrogant certainty that the state could always overcome its enemies and that the Western powers owed it the subsidies that paid for its survival put bitter icing on an already overbaked cake, and all but guaranteed the final disaster.

And that, dear reader, was why the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem fell to the armies of Saladin in 1187, and why the last scraps of the kingdoms of Outremer, as the Crusaders called the land now known as Israel, were mopped up by Muslim armies over the century that followed.

Now I'm quite aware that comparing the current state of Israel to the Crusader states of Outremer is waving a red flag at some already overexcited bulls. Any of my readers who are ready to leap up and insist that Israel either can or can't be compared to the Crusaders on moral grounds are encouraged to stop, and remember that that's not what we're talking about. The relative moral standing of Crusaders and Israelis is irrelevant to the issues this post is trying to discuss; what's relevant is that, in the purely pragmatic realms of politics and war, there are a great many parallels between the two examples.

[Investment Ideas From IEA's World Energy Outlook](#)

While the news on United States oil production garnered most of the attention, the report also made other projections that a long-term investor should pay heed to. While one can speculate on the accuracy of some of the specific numbers, the trends in some areas are undeniable.

[Corbett optimistic about Pa. petrochemical plant](#)

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Gov. Tom Corbett says that he met with leaders of oil and gas giant Royal Dutch Shell and that their preliminary plans to build a multibillion-dollar petrochemical refinery in western Pennsylvania are on track, a newspaper reported Friday.

[Fracking industry keeps eye on Obama](#)

The drilling process that has brought U.S. energy independence within reach faces renewed scrutiny from the Obama administration and an uncertain future in many states.

Oil and gas industry leaders remain enthusiastic yet cautious that hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as “fracking,” will be fully embraced by the newly re-elected President Obama and state leaders.

[Ways to control your gas costs](#)

You can cut your tab for gasoline in two ways: Use less of it and pay less for what you use.

Leave behind what you don't need. An extra 100 pounds reduces fuel economy by up to 2 percent, according to the Energy Department. Don't leave your car idling -- it can use up to a half-gallon of fuel per hour. And slow down. Fuel economy gets worse quickly at speeds over 50 mph.

[Boy doused with gasoline after he tries to stop man from siphoning from cars](#)

TARPON SPRINGS — A man who was trying to siphon fuel from a parked car early Friday morning is facing a child abuse charge after he poured some of the stolen gasoline on a child's head, according to Tarpon Springs police.

[Texas Department of Transportation sees whether it's easy being 'green'](#)

IRVING -- Few government agencies rack up miles like the Texas Department of Transportation -- and now the leadership is trying to go a bit greener.

This month, four Ford F-250 pickups powered by compressed natural gas were rolled out as part of a pilot program to see whether more of the department's fleet of roughly 10,000 vehicles can use something other than gasoline or diesel.

[Great goal – but crazy regulators](#)

Next week, Chrysler Group LLC will unveil a new car that executives expect few customers to buy, and few dealers to order, according to The Wall Street Journal. But this failure has a perverse bright side, because Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne expects to lose up to \$9,000 on each one he sells.

Has this crafty CEO, the savior of Fiat and Chrysler, lost his mind? No, he's just struggling under another load of faith-based regulation from California officials.

[Another Path to Biofuels](#)

The path to profitability, according to the company, is raising the amount of algae produced per unit of area. Algae grows in ponds, but that turns out to require a lot of space: sunlight does not penetrate more than a couple of inches, so the ponds must have big surfaces. The problem is that the carbon dioxide injected to promote algae growth tends to escape from a big surface.

SEE Algae's solution is a silo that is 16 feet tall and has a volume of 177 cubic feet. Sunlight is directed all over the inside of the silo by optical fiber technology. Because the light is coming from multiple directions, the hardware can produce algae at a density up to 20 times greater than can be generated on a pond, according to Joachim Grill, the company's chief executive.

[Solar energy sector lights up in California](#)

The majority of today's small-scale PV installations in California are turnkey operations provided by private renewable energy (RE) companies. At least three-fourths of the solar residential market opted for solar service and third party-owned systems over private control and operation in a survey of the 13 highest-growth solar cities of California. These findings, from a spring 2012 study by PV Solar Report, also observed a decline from the previous year in the average household median-income of these PV-propping zones.

[We're living the dream; we just don't realize it](#)

Over the past two decades, what have the U.S. trends been for the following important measures of social health: high school dropout rates, college enrollment, juvenile crime, drunken driving, traffic deaths, infant mortality, life expectancy, per capita gasoline consumption, workplace injuries, air pollution, divorce, male-female wage equality, charitable giving, voter turnout, per capita GDP and teen pregnancy?

The answer for all of them is the same: The trend is positive. Almost all those varied metrics of social wellness have improved by more than 20% over the past two decades.

...Even though the world's population has doubled over the past 50 years, the percentage living in poverty has declined by 50% over that period. Infant mortality and life expectancy have improved by more than 40% in Latin America since the early 1990s. No country in history has improved its average standard of living faster than China has over the past two decades.

[After Storm, Dry Floors Prove Value of Exceeding City Code](#)

Reviewing projections for local sea-level rise, the company and its architects decided to elevate portions of the site to heights exceeding city requirements by four feet. Using recycled glass and crushed rock discarded from projects like the Second Avenue subway line, they raised the foundation for the plant's four buildings and a dock.

The fill added \$550,000 to the plant's costs of around \$100 million, said Thomas Outerbridge, Sims Metal's general manager.

But it proved more than worth it. When a 12-foot storm surge swept through nearby streets and parking lots on Oct. 29, the plant's dock and partly completed buildings did not flood.

[Coastal Erosion Reaches Alarming Levels in Vietnam](#)

Vietnam has long been subject to typhoons that would typically lash the central coast and the Mekong River Delta. But in the last several years those typhoons have become even more intense and, accompanied by a rising sea level, have put coastal areas and communities in the Mekong Delta at great risk.

Indeed, a December 2010 World Bank report said that Vietnam is experiencing longer typhoon and flood seasons while "storms are tracking into new coastal areas".

[Plan B Updates](#)

In the early decades of the twentieth century, earnest settlers of the semi-arid Plains, along with opportunistic "suitcase farmers" out to make a quick dollar, plowed under millions of acres of native prairie grass. Assured that "rain follows the plow," and lured by government incentives, railroad promises, and hopes of carving out a place for their families, these farmers embraced the newly available tractors, powerful plows, and mechanized harvesters to turn over the sod that had long sustained Native American tribes and millions of bison.

[Will US role at climate talks change after storm?](#)

STOCKHOLM (AP) — During a year with a monster storm and scorching heat waves, Americans have experienced the kind of freakish weather that many scientists say will

occur more often on a warming planet.

And as a re-elected president talks about global warming again, climate activists are cautiously optimistic that the U.S. will be more than a disinterested bystander when the U.N. climate talks resume Monday with a two-week conference in Qatar.



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