



DrumBeat: December 31, 2006

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Russia, Belarus sign gas deal; Europe supplies safe](#)

MOSCOW - Russia and Belarus on Monday announced a last-minute deal on gas prices, moments before Moscow was to start cutting off supplies with potential knock-on disruption for customers in Europe.

At a joint news conference, Alexei Miller, CEO of Russian gas monopoly Gazprom, and Belarus Prime Minister Sergei Sidorsky, said Russian gas exports to Europe via Belarus were out of danger after a deal was agreed.

"A mid-term agreement was reached on gas prices to Belarus and on transit shipments to Europe," Miller said.

Under the accord, Belarus agreed to pay Gazprom \$100 per 1,000 cubic meters of natural gas, up from the \$46 ex-Soviet Belarus has been paying until now.

[Dan Lienert On The Automotive Industry](#)

Hybrids, diesels and ethanol-powered cars are not solutions to America's energy crisis and in fact buy very little time. Ethanol has way too many drawbacks. It's expensive to produce, doesn't deliver as many miles per gallon as gasoline and is not available in many places. More important, hybrids, diesels and ethanol depend on fossil fuels. The world is going to run out of cheap crude oil, and as China motors up, the decline only accelerates. We need a replacement for fossil fuels, such as hydrogen- or solar-powered cars, not a massive government program to sell people on ethanol.

[Production Means Investment](#)

The problem isn't that Iran is running out of oil; the nation has the world's second-largest oil reserves behind Saudi Arabia. In fact, the concept of "running out" of oil is bogus for any country. The question isn't how much oil is in the ground but how much a country produces in a given year and how quickly production can ramp up. The term "peak" oil refers to peak production, which occurs long before a country depletes its reserves.

[The top ten green stories of 2006](#)[Exporting segregation: An ugly side of the oil business exposed](#)

From the beginning, ARAMCO's camps in Dhahran were set up according to a strict hierarchy of racial divisions. Ostensibly based on skill levels, this system allocated the best housing and amenities to Americans -- of all ranks -- while European and South Asian workers had to make do with significantly less, and Saudi workers were consigned to "barastis," palm-frond huts without floors or lights. A visiting State Department official called the company's camp "a disgrace to American enterprise," while the American vice consul at Dhahran visited the company hospital and reported that "it is apparent that ARAMCO's medical director takes little interest in the health and care of Arabs."

[World Bank: Dominican energy crisis due to mismanagement](#)

The prolonged energy crisis affecting the Dominican Republic and ineffective measures assumed to remedy the problem generated a vicious cycle of periodic blackouts, high operational costs burdening energy distributors and causing huge losses due in part by theft through illegal connections.

[Building the future: Chicago architects envision what the city will look like 100 years from now](#)

Garofalo's scheme is in some ways the most radical of the contest projects, envisioning the abolition of automobiles not only from Chicago but from the entire state of Illinois. In the team's vision, transportation (as well as shipping, heating and utility systems) would be accomplished by means of an "aeroduct," a network of underground tunnels along a one-mile-square Jeffersonian grid, with a station at every crossing point. The aeroduct would be powered by electricity generated by air drawn upward from below ground inside the walls of double-skinned skyscrapers. Old transportation systems, including the L and highways, would be converted to green space for use as recreational and/or arable land.

['Tomorrow will be a better day'](#)

In a recent night, while I was busy thinking about important social issues, like what to do over the weekend and who to do it with, I overheard my parents talking about my future. My dad was upset -- not the usual stuff that he and Mom and, I guess, a lot of parents worry about, like which college I'm going to, how far away it is from home and how much it's going to cost. Instead, he was upset about the world his generation is turning over to mine -- a world he fears has a dark and difficult future, if it has a future at all.

He sounded like this: "There will be a pandemic that kills millions, a devastating energy crisis, a horrible worldwide depression and a nuclear explosion set off in anger."

[How to claim the energy battleground](#)

...I worry that energy policy will end up being captured by the right, because they still hold on to a major asset: their closeness to the corporate world, and, more to the point, the perception by the business world that they are more friendly to them, and thus that they are more likely to bring about less painful (for the corporations) energy plans.

[Power gridlock](#)

Standing alone, the five leading Internet search engines will consume 5 gigawatts of electricity in 2006. That equates to the amount of electricity needed to run the city of Las Vegas.

Meeting the insatiable energy needs of technology firms and creating adequate power supplies for the new economy is, therefore, an issue of national and state import - both for international competitiveness and Colorado's comparative advantage in the national economy.

[Driven To Conserve: Pulling the Plug on Excess](#)

Schultz read an article on peak oil theory -- the hypothesis that the Earth is at its peak use of oil supplies now and the resource will only get scarcer.

He got interested in the politics and problems of oil, and started attending local meetings with other people worried about a looming crisis. He eventually left the group, but his interest in environmental issues had been piqued.

[Russia, Belarus start last-ditch gas talks](#)

MOSCOW - Belarus's top gas negotiator was in high-level talks in Moscow on Sunday, raising hopes of a last-minute deal in a pricing dispute that threatens to disrupt Russian gas supplies to Europe from New Year's Day.

Russia's gas monopoly Gazprom has said it will cut gas supplies to Belarus from 07:00 GMT on January 1 if no deal is reached, while Minsk said it would retaliate by halting flows of Russian gas crossing the country bound for Western Europe

James Woolsey had an article in yesterday's WSJ called [Gentleman, Start Your Plug-Ins](#). It's subscription-only, but someone at PO.com liberated it [here](#).

[CITIC buys oil company stake for \\$1.91B](#)

BEIJING - China, which is aggressively seeking overseas energy assets to fuel its booming economy, said Sunday that one of its biggest conglomerates has bought the Kazakhstan oil assets of a Canadian company for \$1.91 billion.



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