



## DrumBeat: January 2, 2007

Posted by [threadbot](#) on January 2, 2007 - 10:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [World's oil outlook frightening, group says](#)

Food shortages, cars abandoned, another depression. It's the stuff of nightmares — and the type of future an eclectic group of engineers, computer experts and others in Seattle believe could await us.

They're not religious zealots predicting Armageddon, nor survivalists digging bomb shelters. They believe the world is about to start running out of gas.

Literally.

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### [Power-Sipping Bulbs Get Backing From Wal-Mart](#)

Which is what makes Wal-Mart's goal so wildly ambitious. If it succeeds in selling 100 million compact fluorescent bulbs a year by 2008, total sales of the bulbs in the United States would increase by 50 percent, saving Americans \$3 billion in electricity costs and avoiding the need to build additional power plants for the equivalent of 450,000 new homes.

That would send shockwaves — some intended, others not — across the lighting industry. Because compact fluorescent bulbs last up to eight years, giant manufacturers, like General Electric and Osram Sylvania, would sell far fewer lights. Because the bulbs are made in Asia, some American manufacturing jobs could be lost. And because the bulbs contain mercury, there is a risk of pollution when millions of consumers throw them away.

### [The Denial Machine](#)

A recent British report estimates that the projected costs of global warming to be as costly as both world wars and the Great Depression added together. Yet, with such consequences, some scientists still insist that climate change, if it is happening at all, could be a good thing.

### [At last, I'm hopeful about climate change](#)

For those of us seeking to tackle the threat of climate change, 2006 was an encouraging year. At the start of the year, the conversation - when it took place at all - was about whether climate change was really happening. That discussion is now over.

### [Global warming: Our worst fears are exceeded by reality](#)

During the past year, scientific findings emerged that made even the most doom-laden predictions about climate change seem a little on the optimistic side. And at the heart of the issue is the idea of climate feedbacks - when the effects of global warming begin to feed into the causes of global warming. Feedbacks can either make things better, or they can make things worse. The trouble is, everywhere scientists looked in 2006, they encountered feedbacks that will make things worse - a lot worse.

### [Global Warming is Here. Now What?](#)

Changing the course of global warming could take a major upheaval to affect public policy -- a Pearl Harbor-type event in the environment.

### [Wind power faces gathering storm: Safety, reliability concerns raised](#)

Energy Probe helped crank up the debate in November when it issued a report that said wind turbines are much less reliable than expected. Data collected from three wind farms near Lake Huron during the summer and fall showed the turbines produced only 22.3 per cent of their potential capacity for electricity generation. Another problem: The wind often died in mid-morning when customer demand was gearing up.

### [Consequences of scarce oil to go far beyond costly gas](#)

The [Sakhalin 2] affair received scant attention in the United States, the world's largest consumer of oil. But it illustrates a future that will challenge not only companies such as Shell, but also America's foreign policy, economy and individual consumers. It illustrates some stark truths that are operative now, not some possibility for the far future thrown out by wonks with bad attitudes. Higher prices at the gas pump may be one of the most benign outcomes.

### [Energy to capture more attention in new year](#)

"Manufacturing is highly dependent on energy, especially natural gas," said NAM President John Engler. "We all have to work together to develop a more sophisticated, comprehensive energy policy that invests more resources toward the aging infrastructure ... and strengthens our research and development into renewable fuels."

## [Ethanol: Not America's complete energy solution](#)

Vic Knutson watches the boom in ethanol plants with guarded skepticism, because ethanol plants also require fairly large amounts of water. "We're in a giant contest," he said. "You know it's ironic, we're on water restrictions looking at even stiffer restrictions, but ethanol plants get all the water they want."

## [Is energy independence finally in sight?](#)

## [Things Could Get MESI in 2007](#)

The gist being, are we going to face a monumental energy crisis in 2007? Reading Denning's article and the news item from Agence France Presse (AFP), which tells us "Belarus signs last-minute deal to avoid Russian gas cutoff", makes us think that something big in energy could be just around the corner.

## [The Energy Crisis of 2007](#)

**"I" is for innovation.** Problems of scarcity and depleting resources are often accompanied by dire predictions of the end of the world as we know it. Which is true. In fact, we read today that Barclay's Wealth in the UK has recently told high net-worth clients that, "Given the likelihood of natural resource depletion and climate change it is feasible the next decade could represent the high watermark for wealth generation."

Wow. So the rising cost of energy inputs into the economy has reached such a level that the world is simply going to cease generating wealth at this level. Hmmn. It's possible. There are the laws of physics to consider, which determine how much energy you can get from carbon, and how efficiently you can turn that energy into work. But thus far, human beings, when confronted with an apparently natural limit on growth do what the species does best: adapt and innovate.

## [Kick back, chill out: It could save the planet](#)

They found that the more hours a country's citizens work, the more energy it uses.

Their point isn't that work consumes more energy than leisure. It's that more work leads to more pay (for some, anyway).

Which leads to shopping.

And the more stuff we buy, the more energy it takes to manufacture, transport and use it. Think TVs, DVDs, SUVs...

### [Coal mine deaths spike upward](#)

Coal mining deaths soared to a 10-year high in 2006, reversing an 80-year trend of steadily falling fatalities and raising safety concerns as coal production reaches record levels.

### [Vladimir Soprano](#)

Some of the world's major energy companies are learning a hard lesson about President Vladimir Putin's Russia. It is the same lesson that Putin's political opponents have absorbed, along with independent journalists, human rights activists, and certain oligarchs who fell afoul of the plutocratic KGB veterans who form Putin's inner circle.

Once behind the WSJ firewall, [Gentlemen, Start Your Plug-Ins](#) can now be read by all.

### [Mini water wheel generates electricity from 8" drop](#)

The water wheel produces one to two kilowatts of power and generates at least 24 kilowatt hours of sustainable green energy in a day, just less than the average household's daily consumption of around 28 kilowatt hours. It should cost around £2000 to install, and will pay for itself inside two years.

### [Astrolab Solar-Electric Hybrid Vehicle](#)



Solar Electric CarAstrolab, the world's first commercial solar car, will be available in January 2008 thanks to automobile designer Sacha Lakic. The car was developed by the French manufacturer, Venturi. The vehicle is powered by energy from the sun - the 16kW electric motor requires very little energy for propulsion. The solar hybrid can travel a minimum distance of 110 kilometres and has a top speed of 120kph.

### [Uganda: How the Current Power Crisis in Uganda Started](#)

The greatest challenge facing Uganda today is the crisis in the power sector. The drop in the installed hydro-power capacity of 380 megawatts (mw) to 135mw as of May 2006 is unacceptable. And yet the downward trends have continued without any permanent solution in sight.

Various reports, including the recent one by the Parliamentary Committee on National Economy, have recorded a big fall in the national economic growth. All accusing fingers point to the power crisis. This could have been foreseen and addressed in time by a caring government. Power shortage grew over many years till it reached the present crisis level.

### [Russia seeks Japan N-help](#)

Should the tie-up be reached, the Japanese firms will probably manufacture and supply steam turbines and generators that make up the core of reactors. Other topics of negotiation might include capital investment in Atomprom--a company modeled on gas giant Gazprom--and the provision of nuclear power technologies, the sources said.

### [Australian PM Says Nuclear Power Inevitable](#)

SYDNEY - Prime Minister John Howard said on Friday nuclear energy was an inevitable option for Australia after the release of a report which found that 25 nuclear reactors could significantly cut greenhouse gases.



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