

February 2007 TREND EVENTS

Tuna Stocks Close to Exhaustion, Says WWF, by Justin McCurry, January 23, 2007 — *Guardian / UK* —
Guardian Unlimited Guardian News and Media Limited 2007

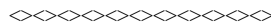
Japan's huge appetite for tuna will take the most sought-after stocks to the brink of commercial extinction unless more rigid quotas are agreed, wildlife campaigners warned yesterday... WWF said that although Japan was the main culprit, burgeoning demand for tuna from other countries, such as China, had increased the threat to stocks.

Fishmongers check the quality of meat on large tuna fish at this year's first trading at Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market. Australia, Japan and the United States have proposed a global system to assess tuna conservation amid criticism that not enough is being done to prevent overfishing. (AFP/Jiji Press/File)... "Tuna are fast disappearing, with important stocks at high risk of commercial extinction due to weak management," the group, formerly known as the World Wildlife Fund, said in a statement. "Atlantic bluefin [tuna], used for high-end sushi and sashimi, is massively overfished, and the spawning stock of southern bluefin in the Indian Ocean is down about 90%."

The warning came at the start of a five-day meeting in Kobe, Japan, of the world's five biggest tuna fisheries management organisations, which cover 77 countries and regions. "We are deeply concerned about the future of global tuna stock. We must strengthen our cooperation to tackle the issue," said Toshiro Shirasu, director general of the Fisheries Agency in Japan... About 2m tonnes of tuna were caught worldwide in 2004 and 530,000 tonnes went to Japanese markets in 2005, according to the Fisheries Agency.

Japan, which consumes more than half of the world's catch of at-risk Atlantic bluefin tuna, admits overfishing, but blames poor communication between its fishermen and denies it has fished illegally. Last October it agreed to halve its catch of southern bluefin to 3,000 tonnes a year over the next five years... A month later, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna agreed to cut this year's bluefin tuna quota in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean from 32,000 to 29,500 tonnes, raising fears in Japan of a steep price rise.

New quotas will not be decided this week, but campaigners hope members of the five regional bodies responsible for managing tuna stocks will agree to share data. "For the first time, there's general agreement by the governments that something significant has to be done," Alistair Graham of WWF told Reuters... Proposals include requiring fishermen to produce certificates of origin for their tuna catches and for fish to be monitored between capture and market.



Gaping Reminders of Aging and Crumbling Pipes, By William Yardley, February 8, 2007
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/08/us/08sink.html>

Portland, OR — After a sinkhole swallowed a sewer repair truck here on the day after Christmas, the truck's crew crawled to safety, muddy and mystified... Last summer in Irving, TX, a 2-year-old boy disappeared near a sinkhole. One theory was that he was kidnapped. Another was that he was lost in the sewer system that had broken open and caused the collapse... In December, firefighters in Brooklyn rescued a grandmother carrying groceries who fell into a hole that opened beneath her on a sidewalk. In Hershey, PA, a damaged storm drain caused a six-foot-deep sinkhole in Chocolate Town Park, nearly sinking the town's New Year's Eve celebration.

Local and state officials across the country say thousands of miles of century-old underground water and sewer lines are springing leaks, eroding, and in extreme cases causing the ground above them to collapse. Though there is no master tally of sinkholes, there is consensus among civil engineers and water experts that things are getting worse.

The Environmental Protection Agency has projected that unless cities invest more to repair and replace their water and sewer systems, nearly half of the water system pipes in the United States will be in poor, very poor, or "life elapsed" status by 2020... "I'm not exaggerating," said Stephen P. Allbee, a project director in the agency's water division who helped make the projections. "It's a really, really big public issue, and it's going to be with us for a long time."

Local geology or underground hazards are blamed for many sinkholes — weak limestone in Florida, old mineshafts in Pennsylvania — but increasingly, the authorities say, as America's cities grow older and basic repairs are put off, when the ground gives way, the problem is bad pipes.

In its 2005 "Report Card for America's Infrastructure," the American Society of Civil Engineers gave water and wastewater infrastructure across the country a D-minus and suggested it would take an investment of \$390 billion to bring wastewater infrastructure alone up to par... Estimates vary on what the costs could be, but nervous water utilities and environmental groups have been campaigning to educate the public and local elected officials to get more money for repairs; but they face an uphill battle, persuading people to pay higher water and sewer rates, and politicians to approve those rates instead of building new schools, parks, libraries, and roads.

"You can't easily go to a ribbon-cutting or have your picture taken in front of a new sewer line," said Dean Marriott, director of the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, which oversees sewer maintenance in the city. "Everyone simply counts on them working. Most people don't know how they work or even where the system is."

Still, Mr. Allbee, the E.P.A. official, said age and neglect could prove as fatal to a system as a catastrophic natural event or a terrorist attack... "You can lose that system all at once because of terrorism," Mr Allbee said, "but you can lose it over time by just not taking care of it."

The American Water Works Association, whose members include more than 4,700 utilities, has begun an advertising campaign "to raise this conversation about buried water infrastructure above ground," said Greg Kail, a spokesman for the association.

One advertisement, placed in spots from bus shelters in Miami to newspapers in Anchorage, features a picture of a faucet with the words, "Do you know how often you turn me on?" Another ad in the works will focus directly on problems with water mains and include the phrase, "Don't let me break down in front of you." "The concept is to personify the infrastructure," Mr. Kail said. "We're not trying to scare people. We're trying to make them aware that this is a real concern that deserves our attention to keep it from being a crisis in the future."

The bulk of the water and sewer lines beneath American streets were installed in three phases: at the end of the 19th century, in the 1920s, and just after World War II, echoing periods of population growth in cities and expansion into suburbs.

A burst of environmentalism in the 1970s, including passage of the Clean Water Act, led to improvements in water and sewage treatment facilities and increased federal scrutiny of the water supply, but the condition of underground water and sewage pipes, many of which were built to last only 50 to 75 years, has not always received the same attention. At the same time, demand has increased... "The pipes age, and the population increases," said James W. Rush, editor of *Underground Infrastructure Management*, a trade magazine for public utility administrators. "Those are the two factors that are always at work."

Portland has had a boom in downtown development, adding demand to its water and sewer systems. The city is in the 16th year of a 20-year, \$1.4 billion, federally mandated project to reduce sewage overflows into the Willamette River from about 100 days a year to 4 days or less. Signs in the city promote two enormous sewer and storm water lines being dug as part of the project, one on the west bank of the Willamette that is 14 feet in diameter and another on the east side that is 22 feet in diameter. "I've walked them," said Mr. Marriott, the Portland official. "You could roll a marble from one length to the next beautiful, beautiful work. What goes in them is stuff that used to go in the river."

While there are many countries in the world where all power and all rights are reserved to the government, and then doled out to the people by constitutional, legislative, or executive decree, the first three words of our Constitution clearly state who in this country holds all the power and all the rights: "We the People." Our Constitution does not grant us rights, because "We" already hold *all* rights. Instead, it defines the boundaries of our government, and identifies what privileges "We the People" will grant to that government.

When Gonzales suggested we have no habeas corpus rights because the Constitution doesn't grant them, his testimony betrayed a breathtaking ignorance of the history and meaning of the United States Constitution; and, because his thinking probably reflects that of his superior, George W. Bush, Gonzales' testimony demonstrates the urgency with which Congress must act to repeal the many laws, signing statements, and executive orders that have been issued by this administration.

But particularly, and first, with regard to habeas corpus.

Abraham Lincoln was the first president (on March 3, 1863) to suspend habeas corpus so he could imprison those he considered a threat until the war was over. Congress invoked this power again during Reconstruction when President Grant requested The Ku Klux Klan Act in 1871 to put down a rebellion in South Carolina. Those are the only two fully legal suspensions of habeas corpus in the history of the United States (and Lincoln's is still being debated).

The United States hasn't suffered a "Rebellion" or an "Invasion" since Lincoln's and Grant's administrations. There are no foreign armies on our soil, seizing our cities. No states or municipalities are seriously talking about secession. Yet, the Attorney General says we have no rights to habeas corpus, and the Military Commissions Act now backs him up.

The modern institution of civil and human rights, and particularly the writ of habeas corpus, began in June of 1215 when King John was forced by the feudal lords to sign the Magna Carta at Runnymede. Although that document mostly protected "freemen" — what were then known as feudal lords or barons, and today known as CEOs and millionaires — rather than the average person, it initiated a series of events that echo to this day.

Two of the most critical parts of the Magna Carta were articles 38 and 39, which established the foundation for what is now known as "habeas corpus" laws, as well as the Fourth through Eighth Amendments of our Constitution and hundreds of other federal and state due process provisions.

Articles 38 and 39 of the Magna Carta said:

"38 In future no official shall place a man on trial upon his own unsupported statement, without producing credible witnesses to the truth of it.

"39 No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land."

This was radical stuff, and over the next four hundred years average people increasingly wanted for themselves these same protections from the abuse of the power of government or great wealth. But from 1215 to 1628, outside of the privileges enjoyed by the feudal lords, the average person could be arrested and imprisoned at the whim of the king with no recourse to the courts.

Then, in 1627, King Charles I overstepped, and the people snapped. Charles I threw into jail five knights in a tax disagreement, and the knights sued the King, asserting their habeas corpus right to be free or on bail unless convicted of a crime. King Charles I, in response, invoked his right to simply imprison anybody he wanted (other than the rich), anytime he wanted, as he said, "*per speciale Mandatum Domini Regis.*"

This is essentially the same argument that George W. Bush makes today for why he has the right to detain both citizens and non-citizens solely on his own say-so: because he's in charge — and it's an argument now

supported by the Military Commissions Act... But just as George's Act is meeting resistance, Charles' decree wasn't well received. The result of his overt assault on the rights of citizens led to a sort of revolt in the British Parliament, producing the 1628 "Petition of Right" law, an early version of our Fourth through Eighth Amendments, which restated Articles 38 and 39 of the Magna Carta and added that "writs of habeas corpus, [are] there to undergo and receive [only] as the court should order." It was later strengthened with the "Habeas Corpus Act of 1640" and a second "Habeas Corpus Act of 1679."

Thus, the right to suspend habeas corpus no longer was held by the King. It was exercised solely by the people's (elected and hereditary) representatives in the Parliament.

The third George to govern the United Kingdom confronted this in 1815 when he came into possession of Napoleon Bonaparte. British laws were so explicit that everybody was entitled to habeas corpus — even people who were not British citizens — that when Napoleon surrendered on the deck of the British flagship Bellerophon after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the British Parliament had to pass a law ("An Act For The More Effectually Detaining In Custody Napoleon Bonaparte") to suspend habeas corpus so King George III could legally continue to hold him prisoner (and then legally exile him to a British fortification on a distant island).

Now, the Military Commissions Act and Alberto Gonzales say that George W. Bush may similarly detain people or exile them to concentration camps on distant islands. Except these people are not Napoleon Bonaparte. "They" could even be you or me.

The Founders must be turning in their graves. As Alexander Hamilton — arguably the most conservative of the Founders — wrote in Federalist 84:

"The establishment of the writ of habeas corpus ... are perhaps greater securities to liberty and republicanism than any it [the Constitution] contains. ...[T]he practice of arbitrary imprisonments have been, in all ages, the favorite and most formidable instruments of tyranny. The observations of the judicious [British 18th century legal scholar] Blackstone, in reference to the latter, are well worthy of recital:

"'To bereave a man of life,' says he, 'or by violence to confiscate his estate, without accusation or trial, would be so gross and notorious an act of despotism, as must at once convey the alarm of tyranny throughout the whole nation; but confinement of the person, by secretly hurrying him to jail, where his sufferings are unknown or forgotten, is a less public, a less striking, and therefore A MORE DANGEROUS ENGINE of arbitrary government.'" [Capitals all Hamilton's from the original.]

The question, ultimately, is whether our nation will continue to stand for the values upon which it was founded.

Early American conservatives suggested that democracy was so ultimately weak it couldn't withstand the assault of newspaper editors and citizens who spoke out against it, or terrorists from the Islamic Barbary Coast, leading John Adams to pass America's first Military Commissions Act-like laws, the *Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798*. President Thomas Jefferson rebuked those who wanted America ruled by an iron-handed presidency that could — as Adams had — throw people in jail for "crimes" such as speaking political opinion or without constitutional due process.

"I know, indeed," Jefferson said in his first inaugural address on March 4, 1801, "that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong; that this government is not strong enough.

But, Jefferson said, our nation was "the world's best hope," and because of our strong commitment to rights like habeas corpus, "the strongest government on earth."

The sum of this, Jefferson said, was found in *"freedom of person under the protection of the habeas corpus; and trial by juries impartially selected. These principles form the bright*

constellation which has gone before us, and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation.

"The wisdom of our sages and the blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment. They should be the creed of our political faith, the text of civil instruction, the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety."

When I was working in Russia some years ago, a friend in Kaliningrad told me a perhaps apocryphal story about Nikita Khrushchev, who, following Stalin's death, gave a speech to the Politburo denouncing Stalin's policies of arbitrarily arresting people and throwing them into prisons or mental institutions without the rights of habeas corpus. A few minutes into Khrushchev's diatribe, somebody shouted out, "Why didn't you challenge him then, the way you are now?"

The room fell silent, as Khrushchev angrily swept the audience with his glare "Who said that?" he asked in a reasoned voice. Silence.

"Who said that?" Khrushchev demanded, leaning forward. Silence.

Pounding his fist on the podium to accent each word, he screamed, "Who - said - that?" Still no answer.

Finally, after a long and strained silence, the elected politicians in the room fearful to even cough, a corner of Khrushchev's mouth lifted into a smile.

"Now you know," he said with a chuckle, "why I did not speak up against Stalin when I sat where you now sit."

The question for our day is who will speak up against Stalinist policies in America? Who will speak against the man who punishes reporters and news organizations by cutting off their access; who punishes politicians by targeting them in their home districts; who punishes truth-tellers in the Executive branch by character assassination that even extends to destroying their spouse's careers? And why is our press doing such a pathetic job that in all probability 95 percent of Americans don't even know that our Attorney General says we have no rights to habeas corpus?

As Alexander Hamilton wrote in Federalist Number 8:

"The violent destruction of life and property incident to war; the continual effort and alarm attendant on a state of continual danger, will compel nations the most attached to liberty, to resort for repose and security to institutions which have a tendency to destroy their civil and political rights. To be more safe, they, at length, become willing to run the risk of being less free."

We must not make the mistake that Jefferson and Hamilton warned us against. We must not remain silent, like Khrushchev's people did. We must speak out.

Contact your U.S. Senators and members of the House of Representatives (the Capitol's phone number is 202 225-3121) and tell them to stop this assault on eight hundred years of legal precedent by repealing the Military Commissions Act and thus restore the most fundamentally American human right of habeas corpus

Thom Hartmann is a three-time Project Censored Award-winning, New York Times best-selling author of nineteen books and, for the past four years, the host of a nationally syndicated noon-3 PM ET daily progressive talk show which will, starting on February 19th, replace the Al Franken show on Air America Radio radio stations from coast-to-coast and on Sirius Satellite Radio. His website is at www.thomhartmann.com His most recent books are "[What Would Jefferson Do? A Return To Democracy](#)" and "[Screwed: The Undeclared War Against the Middle Class and What We Can Do About It](#)."

Posting by Tom Robertson to The EnergyResources List

In the following, we have a discussion of one of the most important topics of our time, and it's loaded with trivia about academic/personal style and fashion. My take on Global Warming is that it is a serious issue but nowhere near as serious or as potentially immediate as what we call "Peak Oil," and as we really get around to addressing Peak Oil, most likely with more urgency and real effect, we will be doing what it actually takes to address the issues in effective ways.

Response to Post by Lawrence B. Crowell

The two topics are coupled together pretty tightly. One involves the drawing down of free energy — free energy as defined by that available by a system from the environment, and the other involves the entropy generated in the process of generating work from the free energy. This entropy we are generating is being released into an environment that is large but not large enough to absorb it properly. As a result, there are these secondary responses. An entropy generated by a chemical potential might not be that large, but if the environment is ultimately finite, our entropy accumulates, and since it is coupled to a larger environment (e. g., the sun, the solar system, etc.), this entropy results in a far larger entropy. Global warming is an example of this, and the increase of heat energy in the global environment is a huge entropy, far larger than anything we generate directly.

So, the two problems amount to running out of resources and the running out of environment. The peak oil issue is important, for it is clear to anyone with some modicum of intelligence that we can't continue with business as usual. So, if we were to tackle this problem and behave rationally, we could rework our socioeconomic structures appropriately to account for this. Global warming clearly gives us added reason to do this. This means the end of an anthropic social construction, whether by rational design on our part or by its collapse. Global warming has more dire implications, for if this leads to its greatest consequences, it means the planet becomes unlivable.

In the context of peak oil, if we have burned about half the petroleum available, it means that we may over the next century burn most of the remaining half. In doing so we will double the contribution of CO₂ from oil. Further, if we switch more to coal, we may add even more. This may increase the global temperature by 3-6 deg C by 2100; however, the melting of permafrost might increase this far more, as there is several times the amount of greenhouse gases that could be released than from all fossil fuels. So, it is not impossible to imagine a 22nd century world an average 15-20 deg C hotter than today. Further, the ice sheets in Greenland are falling apart and calving into the ocean at a much faster rate than previously thought. This could disrupt ocean conveyors and currents in ways that have further consequences.

Peak oil of itself implies a disruption with socioeconomic realities. Global warming, along with deforestation and other problems, are disruptions of biological realities. Again the two are clearly intertwined, and a program of alternative energy, conservation, and efficiency will also address the global warming problem — at least to some degree. Yet, global warming presents a possible future in this millennium where climates are hugely perturbed, and other environmental factors have resulted in a biologically diminished planet. Long-term prognostication suggests that the temperature zones of this planet will end up in a few centuries as very dry and increasingly cold as a new ice age sets in. Much of what is now the United States will likely be covered in glaciers 500 years from now. The tropical rainforests will likely be replaced by savannahs and deserts. Given these prospects, it appears possible that our species will no longer be able to exist — we go extinct. Thermodynamics involves inexact differentials, and so the progression of a thermal system depends upon the path. As a rule, the path a system takes carries the system to equilibrium, or maximum entropy, at the fastest rate. In effect, we humans exist on this planet as entropy adjusters to the planet's biosphere. As such we are accomplishing this as quickly as possible.

This has been the reason why consumerist capitalism works so well — it produces garbage at the maximal rate and thus optimally adjusts the entropy of the planet upward at an extremized or maximal rate. It really comes down to a matter of physics, or if one wants to use biology as an example, our activities are not different than bacteria in a Petri dish of agar. There the bacteria grow at the fastest rate possible to consume their growth medium. Of course, in the end the bacteria colony collapses as it uses up its nutrient supply. In effect, our

