

The Oil Drum: Campfire

Discussions about Energy and Our Future

Tipping Point: Near-Term Systemic Implications of a Peak in Global Oil Production--Conclusion and Adaptations

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Recently, a 55 page paper called [Tipping Point: Near-Term Implications of a Peak in Global Oil Production](#) (PDF warning) was published as the joint effort of two organizations: [Feasta](#) and [The Risk/Resilience Network](#), with lead author [David Korowicz](#). We have recently published several excerpts from that paper, which can be found at [this link](#). This final excerpt gives the author's view about the future.

8. Conclusion

This report has laid out why we may be entering a near-term period of profound and abrupt change. The temptation might be to ignore it, or to carry it awhile until some august personage assures and persuades us that such concerns are quite without foundation and that the experts are indeed in control. Or we might wonder why we should stand out from our social group, initiate some actions, and risk the ridicule of those whose opinion we value. There is an abundance of psychological literature exploring the diverse ways in which we as individuals and groups maintain cohesion and keep the frightening and uncomfortable at bay [67]. Yet in acknowledging our fears and anxieties we are being true to ourselves. Fear evolved to warn us that action must be taken, and for many, action is the means by which we surmount our fears.

There is much we can do. Not to prevent or defer a collapse--rather to prepare to some degree ourselves and communities for some of its impacts. For example, despite the limitations of lock-in, planning for food insecurity is something in which everyone, from children to governments, has a role to play. Other jobs, from monetary system collapse and reserve communication systems planning are more specialised, but in which we all have an interest in understanding. And the reality is that this is the most important, meaningful, and potentially liberating work that we have ever had to do, and it must be done right now. Our current employment status is immaterial, employed or unemployed, we can begin from where we are.

Part of the preparation is in the acknowledgement of our predicament, that we recognise it when we see it. That as systems fail, we spend our efforts on positive change and adaption, rather than finding scapegoats or letting anger and loss drive the cannibalisation of our social fabric. Putting a wise step forward increases the chance that the next step will be wise; putting the foolish foot forward increases the chance that the next step will be foolish, or even initiates an evolving spiral of social breakdown. By acknowledging the potential stresses and the demons in our nature, we can begin to protect ourselves from our own worst enemy.

What does seem clear is that those who, through fear or avarice, try and insulate themselves from

the impacts by disproportionate hoarding or land grabs for example, will imperil not only their community's security and wellbeing, but their own. This will be a time when we really will need the cooperation and support of others, and where the idea of autonomous security through wealth and the market system will be revealed as a transient illusion.

What is important is wisdom and speed. Our current political and social processes have not evolved to take quick and decisive action, in developed democracies. Instead, they have evolved to manage competing interests for the spoils of growth, and the maintenance of general stability. Constructive action must be taken at the limits of the possible, and this will require individual courage and the support of those who recognise the precarious *status quo*.

Finally, this is a personal story. It will no doubt be a difficult time, and horrific for some. We are likely to see a major increase in mortality. But it will also be a time when many people will find a liberation in new social and personal roles; in the new friends and connections they make; in the skills and pastimes acquired; in their ability to contribute to other's welfare; in their freedom from the subtle corrosion of positional consumption; and in the pleasures gained from contributing to the most crucial of shared endeavours.

Reference

[67] Cleary, S. Malleret, T. (2007) *Global Risk: Business Success in Turbulent Times*. Palgrave Macmillan. Introductory chapters review cognitive biases.



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