



HIGH NOON FOR NATURAL GAS

The New Energy Crisis

JULIAN DARLEY

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The United States will find the world of LNG [liquefied natural gas] potentially much more troubling than that of oil. To the extent that the so-called War on Terror is a cover for increasingly desperate moves to control the world's dwindling oil supply, expansion into LNG (with its main production sources in anti-U.S. states) threatens an even greater likelihood of endless war, covert disruption, and forced regime change.

"A few years ago no one thought much about natural gas; this year or next, we will all probably realize that its rapid depletion is the straw that is breaking the American economy. Meanwhile, a race will be on to create a vastly expanded global market for liquefied natural gas, mirroring the existing global oil market. These developments, taken together, are probably even more significant than the energy events of the 1970s, in whose wake we are still reeling. Julian Darley has done far more than just research the facts; he understands the big picture and helps readers see how our lives and our world are being imperiled because of our increasing dependence on this powerful but invisible substance."

—Richard Heinberg, author of
*The Party's Over: Oil, War, and the Fate of
Industrial Societies*

Blackouts, rising gas prices, changes to the Clean Air Act, proposals to open wilderness and protected offshore areas to gas drilling, and increasing dependence on natural gas for electricity generation. What do all these developments have in common, and why should we care?

In this timely exposé, author Julian Darley takes a hard-hitting look at natural gas as an energy source that rapidly went from nuisance to crutch. Darley outlines the implications of our increased dependence on this energy source and why it has the potential to cause serious environmental, political, and economic consequences. In *High Noon for Natural Gas* readers can expect to find a critical analysis of government policy on energy, as well as a meticulously researched warning about our next potentially catastrophic energy crisis.

Did you know that:

- Natural Gas (NG) is the second most important energy source after oil;
- In the U.S. alone, NG is used to supply 20% of all electricity and 60% of all home heating;
- NG is absolutely critical to the manufacture of agricultural fertilizers;
- In the U.S. the NG supply is at critically low levels, and early in 2003 we came within days of blackouts and heating shutdowns;
- Matt Simmons, the world's foremost private energy banker, is now warning that economic growth in the U.S. is under threat due to the looming NG crisis?



Photo © Darren Bernhardt

JULIAN DARLEY is a British environmental researcher who writes about non-market and non-technology-based responses to global environmental degradation. He directs the Post Carbon Institute, runs an Internet broadcasting station (GlobalPublicMedia.com), has developed OpenSource web database sites for nonprofits and civil society organizations, and is currently working with communities and policy makers to achieve “global relocalization” of the economy, society, and culture. Julian lives in Vancouver, Canada.

“While much is known about the growing pressures on petroleum supplies, far less is known about natural gas. Julian Darley convincingly demonstrates in this important book, the long-range future for gas is equally bleak as that for oil. This invaluable book arrives at a critical juncture.”

—Michael Klare, author of *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*

“This small book provides a powerful, clear, and concise introduction to this looming crisis which is far too little talked about. Julian Darley brings sanity and solid thinking to a topic normally fraught with denial. This is an important book.”

—Derrick Jensen, author of *A Language Older Than Worlds* and *Walking on Water*

“Julian Darley has written an important book during an important time and uncovered new and critical information about the social, economic, environmental and human rights implications of natural gas which the companies won’t tell, cover up, and try to avoid by going offshore. Darley gives this issue the attention it deserves.”

—Katie Redford, Esq. Director, EarthRights International Counsel for Plaintiffs in *Doe v. Unocal*

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from Chapter 1: Introduction

The U.S. energy story is complex and not very edifying in places, but it is full of wild and unexpected twists. The strangest is that the worst immediate problem confronting the United States (and Canada) is not oil, but natural gas. It is a natural gas shortage that could seriously interrupt the U.S. economy, though there are several other impressive candidates, including a dollar crash and global oil peak. (“Peak” refers to a peak in extraction, followed by inexorable decline. Peak production can apply to the extraction of any naturally occurring fluid or gas deposit).

The information to support the case being made here is largely in the public domain, but few have noticed. In September 2003, the National Petroleum Council, a group of oil and gas industry advisers, released their eighteen-month-long study of the state of North American gas supply and demand. It should have been at the top of the best-seller list. As it was, just a handful of energy analysts reviewed it, and they are calling out loud and clear that the Titanic is about to hit the iceberg, but, if you will pardon the mixture of metaphors, mission control is not listening.

The coming shortage of natural gas in the United States and Canada, compounded by global oil peak and decline, will try the energy and economic systems of both countries to their limits. It will plunge first the United States, then Canada, into a carbon chasm, a hydrocarbon hole, from which they will be hard put to emerge unscathed.

For more information

To learn more about Julian Darley and his work on oil and gas peak, please visit www.globalpublicmedia.com and www.postcarbon.org. For excerpts from the book please visit www.chelseagreen.com/2004/items/highnoon.