

Are some governments taking 'peak oil' seriously?

September 8 2010, by Miranda Marquit



Image source: Trevor MacInnis via Wikimedia Commons

(PhysOrg.com) -- One of the arguments that some bring up in defense of alternative energy is that of "peak oil." The idea behind peak oil is that, as a fossil fuel in limited supply, eventually we will reach a point where oil production hits its maximum capability -- and then begins to decline. Because there aren't endless supplies of oil, and because it is a finite resource, the idea is that we will reach a tipping point at which it becomes impossible to continue increasing oil production. Some even contend that we're already there.

Those who contend that peak oil is a very real problem that we need to be concerned about push for the development of [alternative energy](#) solutions that are renewable, and not in danger of eventual decline. Opponents of the idea of peak oil insist that we are nowhere near any

point of decline, and that there is nothing to worry about. Some even call those bring attention to peak oil "alarmists."

However, it appears that some governments are starting to seriously consider the merits of peak oil. Publicly, officials in Britain's Department of Energy and [Climate Change](#) downplay worries about Peak Oil. However, an adviser to the department has requested information about peak oil, and the [Guardian reports](#) that there was a peak oil workshop in the not-to-distant past that involved the DECC, Ministry of Defense and the Bank of England. Indications are that some officials in Britain really are considering the possible impacts of peak oil -- and thinking about contingency plans should peak oil turn out to be disruptive on an economic and military scale.

Britain isn't the only government interested, either. In Germany, a military study addresses the possible impacts that peak oil could have. A leaked draft of the report by the Bundeswehr Transformation Center was seen by [SPIEGEL ONLINE](#):

It warns of shifts in the global balance of power, of the formation of new relationships based on interdependency, of a decline in importance of the western industrial nations, of the "total collapse of the markets" and of serious political and economic crises.

While the leaked document was confirmed in its existence, German officials insist that it hadn't been edited, and that it wasn't meant to be published. Even so, the existence of the report indicates that another government is concerned about the implications that peak oil, if we really are approaching such a point, could have on a worldwide scale.

Whether or not you believe that peak oil is a pressing problem, it is interesting to note that some governments are starting to take the issue seriously -- and even look for ways to avoid disaster that could come.

More information: Terry Macalister and Lionel Badal, "Peak oil alarm revealed by secret official talks," *The Observer* (August 22, 2010).

Stefan Schultz, "'Peak Oil' and the German Government," *SPIEGEL ONLINE* (September 1, 2010).

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Citation: Are some governments taking 'peak oil' seriously? (2010, September 8) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-09-peak-oil.html>

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