



The CIBUK Clear Water Partnership

News Bulletin

Welcome!



From: Ben Philips Communications
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Clear Water News Bulletin

Wednesday, 27 July 2022

WINTER OF DISCONTENT?

*‘UK, Europe and the
Geo-Politics of Energy’*



INTRODUCTION

Forest fires notwithstanding, the environmental heatwave now engulfing mainland Europe will seem like a distant memory before too long. As temperatures drop and night-time shadows lengthen, the EU faces a potential ‘gastastrophe’ this coming winter unless concerted measures are taken to shore up its impending energy shortfall.

Events are unfolding even as we go to publication. With Putin’s announcement that he will cut gas supplies to Europe to 20% in retaliation for their support for Ukraine, a summit decision among the EU27 has agreed a voluntary 15% reduction in gas use from August through to March of next year. As expected, this is a baseline agreement and like the single currency, is bound to fall prey to competing vested interests further down the line.

And on this side of the Channel, we analyse the various energy options now available to the UK as it attempts to forge its own sovereign strategy free from the constraints of outside legislators.

From fracking and gas to further oil exploration, the resources around us may provide

the UK with the means of navigating the present uncertainty, but this will depend on a consistent and focussed approach from policy makers which has been notably absent in recent years.

As a post-script to this week's edition, I should like to take this opportunity to thank all our readers for their enthusiastic feedback and support since we published our first Clear Water newsletter in May of this year.

With Parliament now in recess, this will be our final Bulletin in the current session and we much look forward to resuming our correspondence with you when we return in September.

In the meantime, from all of us at the CIBUK-Clear Water Partnership, we wish you a very happy holiday.

Ben Philips, Communications Director – CIBUK, Clear Water Partnership

SUMMARY

- We begin with an article on the wider implications of the cat and mouse strategy which Putin is now employing against the EU as he cuts supplies of gas to Europe to 20%.
- Germany's long-favoured policy of Ostpolitik – change through rapprochement with Russia – has collapsed in predictable ignominy and as Daniel Johnson argues in an article for the *Telegraph*, the fall-out for Europe extends way beyond the immediate energy crisis.
- On this side of the Channel one option open to the UK is fracking, according to Catherine McBride, in an in-depth report for *Briefings for Britain*.
- At CIBUK/Clear Water we express no view either way beyond examining the pros and cons behind the operation, and with ample reserves beneath our feet it is a policy that surely deserves to be taken seriously.
- Similar urgency is called for regarding UK gas storage whose reserves are down to suicidally low levels according to Ambrose Evans Pritchard in a special report for the *Telegraph*.
- If the UK is to avoid the nightmare of war-time restrictions currently under consideration by the EU, then urgent action is required.
- The government is being urged to allow the main LNG producers to secure supplies this winter before it is too late and to allow offshore drilling for a minimum of 10 years as a back-up to intermittent renewables.
- But will it all be too little too late?

Germany has condemned Europe to ruin

By Daniel Johnson for the Telegraph

We begin with a wide-ranging article by Daniel Johnson on Europe's response to the sudden shortfall of gas which has been as predictable as its response to the euro crisis. When push comes to shove, it is Germany who decides and Germany who overrules even as the smaller EU states give vent to their anger.

On energy and economics, the divisions are plain to see:

"Putin has already forced the EU Commission to impose a 15 per cent cut in gas consumption across the board. Once this comes into effect, it will sow division by penalising member states that don't depend on Russian gas as much as those that do. Such tensions, already undermining the EU's response to the Ukraine invasion, were compounded yesterday by the European Central Bank's decision to raise interest rates for the first time in eleven years. With inflation spiralling, a recession looming, and no fiscal union, the question of how to distribute the economic pain will be at the forefront of minds on the Continent."

In relation to the current crisis the conflict between Germany's energy needs and the wider security implications for the rest of Europe could not be clearer:

"We've already had a demonstration of the impact the Kremlin's gas manipulation can have on Western leaders. Nord Stream 1 has been running below capacity since June, ostensibly because of a turbine being repaired in Canada but held up by sanctions. After EU pressure was applied on Ottawa, the Canadians returned the turbine, provoking furious protests from Kyiv."

At the heart of this concession was Europe's largest economy, Germany, whose industrial base is a huge gas guzzler. A single plant, the BASF chemical giant's headquarters in Ludwigshafen, consumes half as much gas as the whole of Denmark. If Putin were to turn off the tap, the consequences for Berlin would be "the most severe economic crisis since the end of the Second World War," according to BASF's chief, Martin Brudermüller."

Disagreements over energy policy are symptomatic of far deeper divisions within the EU as it struggles to reconcile competing federal and national priorities under a single banner.

"The current Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, hasn't been much better. He continues to prevaricate as Europe prepares to freeze. He was happy to burn vast quantities of coal to deal with the

recent heatwave, but refuses to restart decommissioned nuclear plants to placate his Green coalition partners.

Around him, the dream of a strong and united European Union is crumbling. Italy has seen its ruling coalition fall apart. Prime Minister Draghi, in [confirming his resignation](#), despaired that some in the Italian establishment were eager to appease Russian demands.

With elections coming, populists such as the Brothers of Italy will exploit the energy crisis to steer the country on a pro-Russian course. And in France, Emmanuel Macron is as good as a lame duck, having lost his parliamentary majority last month.”

One thing is clear: from gas to grain, Europe’s lazy reliance on rogue regimes is unravelling at alarming speed. How it responds will ultimately determine its future.

The full article can be read **here** with a link to the original below:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/07/21/germany-has-condemned-europe-ruin/>

Why we really need to give a frack

By [Catherine McBride](#) for *Briefings for Britain*

Prejudice and suspicion continue to dominate attitudes towards fracking. Lauded and demonised in equal measure, it has been hard to make an objective case for the industry.

In a thoroughly researched article for *Briefings for Britain*, Catherine McBride makes the economic, environmental and geo-political case for fracking in the UK under seven headings. We take no side, merely inviting our readers to come to their own conclusions.

Natural Advantages

“Britain is lucky to have hydrocarbons: coal, oil and gas. Not all countries do. Japan for instance is a G7 country with little to no hydrocarbon reserves and imports around \$65 billion worth of crude oil, \$42 billion worth of gas and \$22.5 billion of coal every year.

Gas also forms the basis for so much else:

“[It] powers our electricity – especially when the wind drops; gas heats our boilers, hot water and homes; gas powers our factories burning efficiently to release about 90% of its energy and to a high heat to transform substances; and along with other hydrocarbons is

an ingredient in many common manufactured products, including pharmaceuticals, waxes, plastics, tars, carbon fibre, clothing, trainers, and industrial chemicals. Even the renewable industry relies on hydrocarbons: solar panels require plastics; wind turbines require steel, fibreglass, resins, hydraulic oils and concrete bases – all are made using hydrocarbons; even Blue Hydrogen is made from methane – natural gas.”

Great future potential:

“This is an area where the UK has both the natural resources, the technology and the investment funds to develop a very successful industry but instead the UK Government is giving subsidies to industries where the UK doesn’t have a natural advantage – for example solar farms.”

Levelling Up

“Reopening UK fracking sites could be a serious levelling up opportunity. Gas doesn’t just provide power for reliable electricity generation and domestic heating but is also a source of inputs for chemical production which could encourage reshoring of chemical industries and a high heat source for other industrial processes.

This means jobs. Manufacturing jobs as well as in the fracking industry.”

The environmental objections to this don’t really stack up:

“Bizarrely, Michael Gove, until recently the UK’s Secretary of State for Levelling Up, [blocked a plan for a fracking site](#) in South Yorkshire on the rather middle-class grounds that a 3 metre high fence might spoil the view.

This seems like an even stranger decision when you consider that many views in the UK’s formally ‘green and pleasant land’ have already been spoilt by solar farms and wind turbines.

Renewables are also extremely unreliable:

“Solar farms are particularly egregious if you review the very small amount solar contributes to [UK electricity production](#) each day or even each year. Today, 5th July, Gas is supplying 53.5% of UK electricity, nuclear is supplying 16.5%, wind 8.9%, biomass 6.9%, while solar isn’t listed. And I reiterate it is early July – the peak of the English summer.

Wind power would be useable for industry, if – when the wind stopped blowing in the Thames Estuary, it started to blow on the west coast of Scotland, but the UK electricity production websites show that this is generally not the case. Wind is all or nothing. In the past 24hours it has dropped from 9.5k to 2.5k megawatts.”

Strategic Importance

“Right now, Western Europe is at the mercy of Putin’s Russia because the engine of the EU – Germany, decided to rely on Russian coal, oil and gas imports. Without, it would appear, ever asking the all-important question of ‘What could possibly go wrong?’

And with access to plentiful supplies of shale gas beneath its feet, would it not be better for the UK to supply the Germans with their much-needed gas instead of enriching Putin?

Side Effects

Earthquakes are often cited as reasons not to proceed. However

“The two earthquakes thought to have been caused by the Cuadrilla fracking site measured only 2.3 and 1.5. This magnitude of quake may cause something to fall off a shelf but that is about it. Apparently, the UK gets about 15 earthquakes of 2.3 magnitude every year and few people notice.”

Competitors and hostile states also have a vested interest in denigrating shale:

“The Centre for European Studies found that the Russian government has invested €82 million in NGOs campaigning against shale gas. The former Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said the Russians, as part of a sophisticated disinformation operation, ‘engaged actively with so-called non-governmental organisations — environmental organisations working against shale gas — to maintain Europe’s dependence on imported Russian gas.’ “

Keeping the UK’s green promises

“Fracking should not be viewed as anti-green. Natural gas is a much cleaner fuel than coal. The UK’s massive reduction in CO2 emissions since 1990 have mainly come from gas fuelled electricity production replacing coal-fired electricity production; by better landfill management reducing methane emissions; and by outsourcing UK manufacturing to Germany and China.

And with China and India

“Both bound by their Paris Commitment to continue to increase CO2 emissions until 2030, the UK, already responsible for only 1% of global emissions, will find its proportion of global emissions falls by 2030 even if it changes nothing, simply because the rest of the world’s total emissions are increasing.”

With the security of the free world now hanging in the balance and its energy requirements at the mercy of hostile suppliers, now surely is the time to seriously assess the arguments for and against fracking.

Government indecision over energy policy goes back decades and has brought us to this present crisis. If the UK does not seriously examine the options and act urgently now, it may never do so. By which time it may be too late...

The full article can be found **here** with a link to the original below:

<https://www.briefingsforbritain.co.uk/why-we-really-need-to-give-a-frack/>

Europe is moving to a war economy footing – so should Britain

by Ambrose Evans Pritchard

And finally, a word of warning.

While the EU's disastrous energy policy may be entirely self-inflicted, the UK hardly emerges with much credit in relation to its own domestic record, according to Ambrose Evans Pritchard in an article for *Economic Intelligence* in the *Telegraph*. And while the EU has acted promptly (only today announcing an agreement to cut its use of Russian gas by 15%), the UK has remained remarkably complacent about the implications of the crisis on its own ability to get through the forthcoming winter.

"The UK is fully integrated into the European energy nexus, and furthermore it subcontracted winter storage to the Netherlands and Germany after closing its main gas storage facility at Rough in a fit of globalist madness in 2018. The UK has just five days' reserve.

The logic of renewable expansion is greater gas storage, not less, since dispatchable gas (peaker) plants are the complement to intermittent wind and solar. Centrica has [secured a licence to reopen Rough](#) – tripling the UK's total storage – but there is no agreement yet with the Government over who pays the bill. Is the Treasury blocking it?

In winter, the interconnectors go the other way. The UK relies heavily on gas and electricity imports from Europe during cold snaps from November to February, which tend to coincide with low-wind Dunkelflaute episodes in the North Sea. We must assume that these flows will not be forthcoming this winter. Britain will have to bid exorbitant sums to obtain global LNG when needed in a viciously tight market."

For those in the know, time is of the essence:

“The energy price cap could go above £4,000, if you can get gas at all. I don’t think the Government yet realises this,” said a member of an industrial group that has presented an emergency plan to ministers.

They are demanding an immediate conclave of key LNG traders such as BP, Shell, and Vitol, to secure supplies this winter and beyond, because there is a structural shortage of global gas and the winter of 2023-2024 could be even worse. They want long-term LNG contracts instead of spot sales before China locks up the trade.

They want to fast-track the UK’s offshore fields of Cambo, Leverett, Rosebank, and Glengorm. They want a clear statement that drilling will be encouraged beyond 10 years, without which projects are uninvestable, and an end to destructive, soak-the-producer windfall taxes. They want coordinated gas purchases through the International Energy Agency to avoid a global bidding war.

On the current insouciant course, the UK risks a three-day working week and an institutional debacle of the first order this winter, discrediting the Conservative Party for a generation.”

And so far, not a mention of any of this from either of the Tory leadership contenders...

The full article can be found [here](#) with a link to the original below:

[Europe is moving to a war economy footing – so should Britain \(telegraph.co.uk\)](#)

About CIBUK: The Campaign for an Independent Britain ([CIBUK](#)) is a non-party political campaigning organisation of people from all walks of life. It is the UK’s longest-running membership organisation for freedom, democracy and independence.

Founded in 1969, for over 50 years the CIBUK has made a significant contribution in campaigning on issues important to the majority of our population and in securing our exit from the European Union. Now it’s time for the next chapter.