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油价的秘密 1 Could the bad old days of economic decline be about to return? Since OPEC agreed to supply-cuts in March, the price of crude oil has jumped to almost \$26 a barrel, up from less than \$10 last December. This near-tripling of oil prices calls up scary memories of the 1973 oil shock, when prices quadrupled, and 1979-1980, when they also almost tripled. Both previous shocks resulted in double-digit inflation and global economic decline. So where are the headlines warning of gloom and doom this time? 翻译：过去经济衰落的日子会不会重来?自从石油输出国组织在3月决定减少原油供应，原油的价格便从去年12月的不到10美元一桶上升到约26美元一桶。这次近3倍的涨价令人想起了1973年和1979~1980年两次可怕的石油恐慌，当时的油价分别涨了4倍和近3倍。前两次的油价暴涨都导致了两位数的通货膨胀和全球性的经济衰退。那么这次警告人们厄运来临的头版新闻都到哪里去了呢? 2 The oil price was given another push up this week when Iraq suspended oil exports. Strengthening economic growth, at the same time as winter grips the northern hemisphere, could push the price higher still in the short term. 翻译：本周伊拉克暂停石油出口，这使油价又一次上扬。强劲的经济增长势头，随着北半球冬季的到来，有可能在短期内使石油价格涨得更高。 3 Yet there are good reasons to expect the economic consequences now to be less severe than in the 1970s. In most countries the cost of crude oil now accounts for a

smaller share of the price of petrol than it did in the 1970s. In Europe, taxes account for up to four-fifths of the retail price, so even quite big changes in the price of crude have a more muted effect on pump prices than in the past. 翻译：然而，我们有充分的理由预期这次油价暴涨给经济带来的影响不会像20世纪70年代那么严重。与70年代相比，现在多数国家的原油价格占汽油价格的份额要小很多。在欧洲，税金在汽油零售价的比例高达4/5，因此，即使原油价格发生很大的波动，汽油价格所受的影响也不会像过去那么显著。 Rich economies are also less dependent on oil than they were, and so less sensitive to swings in the oil price. Energy conservation, a shift to other fuels and a decline in the importance of heavy, energy-intensive industries have reduced oil consumption. Software, consultancy and mobile telephones use far less oil than steel or car production. For each dollar of GDP (in constant prices) rich economies now use nearly 50% less oil than in 1973. The OECD estimates in its latest Economic Outlook that, if oil prices averaged \$22 a barrel for a full year, compared with \$13 in 1998, this would increase the oil import bill in rich economies by only 0.25-0.5% of GDP. That is less than one-quarter of the income loss in 1974 or 1980. On the other hand, oil-importing emerging economies to which heavy industry has shifted have become more energy-intensive, and so could be more seriously squeezed. 翻译：发达国家对石油的依赖性也不如从前，因此对油价的波动也就不会那么敏感。能源储备、燃料替代以及能源密集型重工业的重要性的降低，都减少了石油消耗量。软件、咨询及移动通讯消耗的石油，比钢铁、汽车行业少得多。发达国家国

民生产总值中每一个美元所消耗的石油量比1973年少了近一半。国际经合组织在最近一期的《经济展望》中估计，如果油价持续一年维持在22美元左右，与1998年的13美元一桶相比，这也只会使发达国家的石油进口在支出上增加GDP的0.25%~0.5%。这还不到1974年或1980年收入减少部分的1/4。另一方面，进口石油的新兴国家由于转向了重工业，消耗能量更大，因此可能会受到石油危机的强烈影响。 5 One more reason not to lose sleep over the rise in oil prices is that, unlike the rises in the 1970s, it has not occurred against the background of general commodity-price inflation and global excess demand. A sizable portion of the world is only just emerging from economic decline. The Economists commodity price index is broadly unchanging from a year ago. In 1973 commodity prices jumped by 70%, and in 1979 by almost 30%. 翻译：另外一个不应因油价上升而失眠的原因是，与20世纪70年代不同，这次油价上升不是发生在普遍的物价暴涨及全球需求过旺背景之下。世界上很多地区才刚刚走出经济衰落。《经济学家》的商品价格指数与一年前相比总的来说也没有什么变化。1973年的商品价格跃升了70%，而1979年也上升了近30%。 #ff0000>大纲

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