

The Week That Was 2010-06-5 (June 5, 2010) Brought to you by SEPP (www.SEPP.org)

The FORUM by SEPP and Virginia Scientists and Engineers for Energy and Environment (VA-SEEE) WILL BE HELD at 5:30 pm on SUNDAY JUNE 20 in the Auditorium of the Ernst Community Cultural Center of the Annandale Campus of Northern Virginia Community College at 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Topics will include some of the latest developments in global warming issues. All are welcome. To defray the costs of the auditorium, a donation of \$5.00 per person is suggested. For updates please see: (www.vaseee.org)

Fred Singer will be giving several lectures in the upcoming weeks:

June 9 at 11am, at Nova SouthEastern University Oceanographic Center, Dania Beach, FL,
"Climategate: The important role of ocean data,"

June 12 at 8am, DDP Conference, at Hotel Sheraton-Safari, Lake Buena Vista, FL
"The Collapse of IPCC: NIPCC, Copenhagen, ClimateGate, and the Rest" and

June 17 at 10am, Interface 2010 Conference: 41st Symposium on Computational Statistics, at Westin Hotel, Seattle, WA *"Testing the Hypothesis of Anthropogenic Global Warming: A continuing controversy"*

Quote of the Week

"This[Gulf oil spill] is obviously a difficult situation," said Ms. Carol Browner [WH energy-environment czar], "but it's important for people to understand that from the beginning, the government has been in charge." Meet the Press, May 30, 2010, quoted by Bob Herbert, NYT Editorial, June 1, 2010

THIS WEEK:

By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project

After the Royal Society announced it was reconsidering its extreme pronouncements on global warming, several articles appeared discussing the proper role of science societies. As Philip Stott mentions in his comments, 'Global Warming, The Royal Society, and William Hazlitt,' for around 150 years the Royal Society published that the Society had as a rule to never give their opinion, as a Body, upon any subject.

This appears to be a good rule if the purpose of the science society is to encourage discussion on all topics of interest to intelligent humans with emphasis on their particular fields.

Unfortunately, in recent years, some societies have been taken over by authoritarian personalities who apparently believe the purpose of the Society is to issue opinions which, of course, correspond to those of the leaders. These opinions are often issued without consultation with the broad membership, and those who object are ignored. It is the duty of good troops to follow their leaders.

If the opinions are wrong, this practice will diminish the trust the public may have in the society to the harm of the society. Of course, if this occurs, the authoritarians will blame those who questioned their pronouncements. But they themselves are to blame for believing a science society serves to be a forum for the opinions of its leaders.

When the Royal Society issues its reassessment, let us hope that it recognizes the value of the rich diversity of opinion the study of science encourages; and that dissent is an important mechanism for self correction in the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

The controversy continues, surrounding the demand by Virginia Attorney General Cuccinelli for the work of Michael Mann when he was at the University of Virginia. The chorus that has been insisting the University fight the demand in the name of freedom of scientific inquiry has been strangely silent when it was revealed that in December Greenpeace demanded the work of Patrick Michaels while at the University of Virginia. According to reports, the University sought an extension, but is not fighting this demand which is under the freedom of information act.

This week, a reporter revealed to Fred Singer, that he is included in the Greenpeace demand, which is over five months old. If true, the University has not bothered to inform Singer. Singer questioned the standing of Greenpeace to make such a demand but stated he has no objection with the University complying with the request, of course, in the interest of free inquiry.

The entire affair raises the interesting question of why many academics, and others, believe a legitimate request from an attorney general who has competent jurisdiction is more onerous than a request from a special interest group that openly plans to use the information for purposes of publicity.

NASA-GISS announced that the past 12 months were the hottest ever measured and Britain's Met Office stated that 2010 may be the warmest year on record. Of course, NASA omits mentioning the influence of the El Niño and the unusually strong negative Arctic oscillation, both natural events ignored by the IPCC. Thus, the report is misleading. Both ICECAP and David Whitehouse, referenced below, raise serious questions concerning these claims.

As the BP oil spill continues, it has become clear that neither BP nor the Federal Government had an operational contingency plan to contain such a spill. To its credit, within two weeks of the spill, BP began implementing a long term solution to seal the leak with drilling mud as described in the NYT article referenced below. But this does not excuse BP for its failures.

The erratic behavior of the Federal Government is inexplicable. Phony macho "boot on the neck" attitudes and criminal investigations at this time are contrary to the compelling need – using all available resources to limit the damage. The criminal investigations can come later. Erratic Federal government decisions, such as interfering with Louisiana's plan to protect its shores and EPA's on and off policy on using the best dispersant only amplify the problem.

It is clear many politicians will use the spill to advance their personal agendas, such as cap and tax – even though the current Senate bill has provisions encouraging drilling. But, as discussed in articles referenced below, this problem is long in making. Much of it can be attributed to regulations promulgated by those agencies that supposedly protect the environment. Henry Miller has an excellent discussion how these agencies thwarted promising research in genetically engineered organisms that eat oil, which would greatly reduce the environmental impact of such spills.

Although the environment will recover, as it did after WWII and after similar spills, the political aftermath may include punitive regulations that will be economically destructive for a long time.

SEPP SCIENCE EDITORIAL #18-2010 (June 5, 2010)

By S. Fred Singer, President, Science and Environmental Policy Project

The National Academy Lays a \$6-Million Egg

The report of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences [[Advancing the Science of Climate Change](http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2010/05/three-academy-reports-urge-clima.html?etoc), May 2010] claims that the climate is warming and that the **cause** is human. <http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2010/05/three-academy-reports-urge-clima.html?etoc>

The first claim of this federally funded \$6-million exercise is meaningless and trivial, the second claim is almost surely wrong. Their recommendation is that the United States should put a price on carbon to staunch emissions of CO₂; it is pointless, counterproductive, and very costly.

The climate certainly has warmed considerably since 10,000 years ago (the end of the last Ice Age) -- and much less since 1850, the end of the Little Ice Age. No one disputes these facts. But the climate has not warmed during the past decade -- in spite of the steady rise in human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. According to a BBC interview of Dr Phil Jones, head of the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia (CRU-UEA, of Climategate fame), there has been no warming trend since 1995.

The 2007 report of the UN-sponsored IPCC furnished no credible evidence for anthropogenic global warming (AGW). None at all – see here the Summary of the NIPCC report . “*Nature – Not Human Activity – Rules the Climate*” http://www.sepp.org/publications/NIPCC_final.pdf
The NRC-NAS panel did not add any new relevant information – nor did it have the expertise to do so.

The IPCC panel was made up of many qualified atmospheric scientists, active in research. The NAS panel was politically chosen and listed among its ‘climate science experts’ a sociology professor and a professor of 'sustainable development' – whatever that may mean. That certainly doesn't inspire much confidence in the NAS conclusions.

“This is our most comprehensive report ever on climate change,” said Ralph Cicerone, president of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), at a briefing to discuss the effort, more than 2 years in the making and involving 90 scientists. It “analyzes the reality of climate change and how should the nation respond. ... It emphasizes why the United States should act now.”

Ironically, this report comes at a time when the venerable and respected Royal Society (London) is having second thoughts about their past record of climate alarmism. In the words of outgoing RS president Lord Martin Rees (May 28, 2010): “Science is organized scepticism and the consensus must shift in light of the evidence.”

Looking back, this may well have been a low point for the NAS, which will inevitably discredit all other NAS activities. But it will provide a useful lesson to other scientific organizations that have uncritically jumped on the AGW bandwagon

ARTICLES: [For the numbered articles below please see the attached pdf.]

1. The Royal Society: too little, too late,

By James Delingpole, Telegraph, UK, May 29, 2010

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/jamesdelingpole/100041509/the-royal-society-too-little-too-late/>

2. Obama Slips Up On Oil Spill Panel

By Henry Miller, IBD, June 2, 2010

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/536045/201006021823/Obama-Slips-Up-On-Oil-Spill-Panel.aspx>

3. Environmentalists Also To Blame For Exxon Valdez and Gulf Spills

IBD Editorial, June 1, 2010

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/535996/201006011854/Environmentalists-Also-To-Blame-For-Exxon-Valdez-And-Gulf-Spills.aspx>

4. Uncertain Science

Bickering and defensive climate research have lost the public's trust
By Stefan Theil, Newsweek, May 28, 2010 [H/t Francois Guillaumat]
<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/05/28/uncertain-science.html>

5. The West's Wrong Turn on Natural Resources

By Joseph Sternberg, WSJ, June 1, 2010
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB20001424052748704596504575272790583630252.html#mod=todays_us_opinion

6. EPA puts ideology ahead of common sense

Editorial, Washington Examiner, June 4, 2010
<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/EPA-puts-ideology-ahead-of-common-sense-95563949.html>

NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Science Societies

Global Warming, The Royal Society, and William Hazlitt

By Philip Stott, Clamour Of The Times, May 30, 2010 [H/t Francois Guillaumat]
http://web.me.com/sinfonia1/Clamour_Of_The_Times/Clamour_Of_The_Times/Entries/2010/5/30_Global_Warming%2C_The_Royal_Society%2C_and_William_Hazlitt.html

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Why scientists get it wrong

By David Archibald, Quadrant.AU, June 1, 2010 [H/t Marc Morano]
<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2010/06/scientists-got-it-wrong>
[SEPP Comment: In addition to excellent commentary, the article includes a great photo of "Corals growing above a hydrothermal vent bubbling carbon dioxide." So much for EPA ocean acidification studies.]

The Death Spiral for Climate Alarmism Continues

By Kenneth Green, Master Resource, June 2, 2010
<http://www.masterresource.org/2010/06/the-death-spiral-for-climate-alarmism-continues/>

Study: Coral atolls hold on despite sea-level rise

By Ray Lilley, 3 News. NZ, June 4, 2010 [H/t Bob Kay]
<http://www.3news.co.nz/Study-Coral-atolls-hold-on-despite-sea-level-rise/tabid/1160/articleID/159245/Default.aspx#top>
[SEPP Comment: According to the article, the sea level rise for the past 60 years was 120 mm, or 20 cm per century which is within the Singer estimate given in the NIPCC Summary: "Nature, Not Human Activity, Rules the Climate."]

Oxburgh Refuses to Answer

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, June 4, 2010 [H/t ICECAP]
<http://climateaudit.org/2010/06/04/oxburgh-refuses-to-answer/>
[SEPP Comment: The ClimateGate cover-up continues.]

Hot City Nights

The Daily Bayonet [H/t Francois Guillaumat]

<http://dailybayonet.com/?p=4246>

[SEPP Comment: Six years ago Britain's Met Office dismissed the urban heat island effect, now it is saying it will kill people in the future.]

German FOCUS Magazine: Warm times Will Soon Be Over!

P. Gosselin, NoTricks Zone, May 28, 2010 [H/t Francois Guillaumat]

<http://pgosselin.wordpress.com/2010/05/28/german-focus-magazine-warm-times-will-soon-be-over/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Rudd hints at faster, greener ETS

By Cathy Alexander, Sydney Morning Herald, June 3, 2010 [H/t Joanne Nova]

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/rudd-hints-at-faster-greener-ets-20100603-x294.html>

NASA analysis showing record global warming undermines the skeptics

By Ben Webster, The Times, June 3, 2010

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article7142976.ece>

[SEPP Comment: NASA omits mentioning the influence of the El Niño and the unusually strong negative Arctic oscillation, both natural events ignored by the IPCC. Thus, the report is misleading. For a reality check see ICECAP: <http://www.icecap.us/>]

Is 2010 Heading For A Record?

David Whitehouse, The Observatory, June 3, 2010 [H/t Francois Guillaumat]

<http://www.thegwpf.org/the-observatory/1044-is-2010-heading-for-a-record.html>

[SEPP Comment: Serious questions about the NASA report.]

Britain faces fine for air quality after final warning from EU

Britain faces a £300 million fine for pollution after the second and final warning from Europe to clean up air quality.

By Louise Gray, Telegraph.UK. June 3, 2010 [H/t Malcolm Ross]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthnews/7801436/Britain-faces-fine-for-air-quality-after-final-warning-from-EU.html>

“Previous research shows air pollution already kills 24,000 people a year and could kill up to 36,000 because of lung complaints. [SEPP Comment: Such numbers are similar to those from studies that ignore Sir Bradford Hill's standards for statistical epidemiology.]

BP Spill and Aftermath

White House Tries to Regroup as Criticism Mounts Over Leak

By Clifford Krauss, John Broder, and Jackie Calmes, NYT, May 30, 2010

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/31/us/31spill.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

[SEPP Comment: “We are prepared for the worst,” said Carol Browner, “We have been prepared from the beginning.”]

Plan for Relief Wells Spurs Hope Amid Caution

By Henry Fountain, NYT, June 4, 2010

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/04/science/earth/04relief.html?th&emc=th>

Obama hopes oil spill boosts support for climate bill

By Steven Mufson and Michael Shear, Washington Post, June 3, 2010 [H/t Conrad Potemra]

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/02/AR2010060200380.html?hpid=topnews>

Washington Post Exposes BP ties to Eco-Groups, Other Media Ignore Controversy

By Julia A. Seymour, Business & Media Institute, June 2, 2010

<http://www.businessandmedia.org/articles/2010/20100602161253.aspx>

[SEPP comment: *We need a complete accounting of oil company support of academic and environmental groups.*”]

The Gulf Spill and Alaska

By Sean Parnell, WSJ, June 2, 2010

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB20001424052748704596504575272991022477222.html#mod=todays_us_opinion

Optional link: <http://www.icecap.us/>

Lost in the Gulf: Perspective,

By Ron Ross, American Spectator, May 27, 2010

<http://spectator.org/archives/2010/05/27/lost-in-the-gulf-perspective>

BP disaster darkens U.S., world fuel future

By Patrice Hill, Washington Times, June 4, 2010

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jun/3/bp-disaster-darkens-us-world-fuel-future/>

Oh! Mann!

UVa at center of battles over climate change

By Karin Kapsidelis, Daily Progress, Charlottesville, June 2, 2010

http://www2.dailyprogress.com/cdp/news/state_regional/state_regional_govtpolitics/article/uva_at_center_of_battles_over_climate_change/56842/

UVA’s Defense of Michael Mann: Back Off, He’s a Scientist!

By Christopher Horner, Pajamas Media, June 4, 2010 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/uvas-defense-of-michael-mann-back-off-hes-a-scientist/>

U-Va. Admirably resists Mr. Cuccinelli’s fishing expedition

Washington Post Editorial, May 29 2010 [H/t David Manuta]

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/28/AR2010052804517.html>

[SEPP Comment: *Applying this logic, without having compelling evidence a crime was committed, AG Holder’s investigation into BP could be called a fishing expedition.*]

EPA Marches On

Formaldehyde causes cancer, EPA declares

By Jonathan Tilove, The Times-Picayune, June 3, 2010 [H/t ACSH Dispatch]

<http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/capital/index.ssf?base/news-8/1275546699250110.xml&coll=1>

[SEPP Comment: *Just in time for proposed legislation. The draft document was marked do not “quote” etc. ACSH Comment: “The EPA briefly summarized the draft by correlating a 1 in 1000 risk of developing cancer (within a lifetime) with inhalation of air containing 10-20 parts per billion of formaldehyde, but did not suggest a causal relationship.”]*

Miscellaneous Topics that May Be of Interest

Under the Volcano, Over the Volcano

By Willis Eschenbach, Watts Up With That, June 4, 2010

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2010/06/04/under-the-volcano-over-the-volcano/#more-20202>

[SEPP Comment: A defense of using the atmospheric carbon dioxide measurements from Mauna Loa Observatory.]

Few sunspots, more hurricanes, FSU researchers warn

Florida Today, June 1, 2010 {H/t Larry Millstein]

<http://www.news-press.com/article/20100601/WEATHER01/100601010/Few-sunspots-more-hurricanes-FSU-researchers-warn>

NASA Center for Climate Simulation: Data Supporting Science

NASA, June 2, 2010 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/climate-sim-center.html>

[SEPP Comment: Very impressive numbers, but does it do justice to clouds, which IS a major failing of the models?]

BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

UN urges global move to meat and dairy-free diet.

Lesser consumption of animal products is necessary to save the world from the worst impacts of climate change, UN report says

By Felicity Carus, Guardian, UK, June [H/t Bob Kay]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/jun/02/un-report-meat-free-diet>

[SEPP Comment: Probably the famished headline writers intended to state meat-free and dairy-free diet.]

“Mini skirt meteorology’ used to predict weather

The length of women’s mini skirts can be used to predict changes in the weather ahead of announcements from the Met Office, it has been claimed.

By Nick Collins, Telegraph UK, May 31, 2010 (H/t Malcolm Ross)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/topics/weather/7788326/Mini-skirt-meteorology-used-to-predict-weather.html>

Divorce pains the planet

By Elsa Wenzel, CNet News, Dec 3, 2007 [H/t Best of the Web]

http://news.cnet.com/8301-11128_3-9828389-54.html

[SEPP Comment: Did Al and Tipper realize this before they announced their separation?]

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ARTICLES

1.The Royal Society: too little, too late,

By James Delingpole, Telegraph, UK, May 29, 2010

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/jamesdelingpole/100041509/the-royal-society-too-little-too-late/>

The other night I had the great pleasure of dinner with [Professor Bob Carter](#). He told me that when he goes on speaking tours, there’s only one question he ever gets asked to which he is unable to provide a satisfactory answer. It goes something like this:

“Thank you Professor Carter, that was all very interesting. But please can you tell me why you expect us to take your opinion seriously when it is contradicted by most of the world’s leading scientific organisations, including the National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society?”

Funnily enough, I replied, that’s exactly what I’m planning to write a book about. “How did a scientific theory so feeble and ill-supported by any hard evidence yet become the dominant political idea of our age with so much support from people who really ought to know better?”

One thing’s for certain. When the history of this outbreak of mass hysteria comes to be written, few organisations will emerge with more egg on their face than the standing joke that is the Royal Society.

For years it has acted as cheerleader for the AGW lobby but has [now been forced to backtrack](#) after complaints from 43 of its members that it has been exaggerating the scientific certainty about the existence of ManBearPig. Its current president Lord Rees is trying to salvage what dignity he can be making out that this rethink of its position was always part of the plan:

Lord Rees said the new guide has been planned for some time but was given “added impetus by concerns raised by a small group of fellows”.

“Nothing in recent developments has changed or weakened the underpinning science of climate change. In the current environment we believe this new guide will be very timely. Lots of people are asking questions, indeed even within the Fellowship of the Society there are differing views. Our guide will be based on expert views backed up by sound scientific evidence,” he said.

However he denied accusations that the national academy of sciences has ever stifled debate or that the case for man made global warming is in doubt.

To which the only possible answer is: Yeah, right.

It wasn’t always this way. For the three centuries after its foundation in 1660, the Royal Society was the world’s pre-eminent scientific institution. Its members and presidents included: Sir Christopher Wren, Samuel Pepys, Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Hans Sloane, Thomas Huxley, Joseph Hooker, Joseph Lister, Ernest Rutherford.

Its alumni’s achievements included designing St Paul’s Cathedral, laying groundwork for classical mechanics, discovering law of gravity and three laws of motion, coining word “cell” for basic unit of life, Hooke’s law of elasticity, Boyle’s law, inventing drinking chocolate, creating basis of Natural History Museum’s collection, introducing numerous plant species to the Western World, helping popularise evolutionary theory, devising antiseptic surgery, pioneering nuclear physics.

So what went wrong?

[Nigel Calder](#) blames its politicisation sometime in the 1960s. He quotes this “advertisement” which for two centuries was printed in its house journal Philosophical Transactions:

... it is an established rule of the Society, to which they will always adhere, never to give their opinion, as a Body, upon any subject, either of Nature or Art, that comes before them.

Yet under the presidencies of Lord May and Lord Rees, it has lost all credibility by abandoning objectivity and nailing its colours to the mast of the (now rapidly sinking ship) RMS Climatitanic.

In 2005, as [Gerald Warner reminds us](#), it produced its “A guide to facts and fictions about climate change”, “which denounced 12 “misleading arguments” which today, post Climategate and the subsequent emboldening of sceptical scientists to speak out, look far from misleading.”

Large chunks of this, [Bishop Hill has suggested](#), seem to bear the grubby fingerprints of Sir John Houghton, the fanatical warmist who was formerly head of the Met Office and the Hadley Centre and who was the first chairman of the IPCC scientific working group responsible for giving the AGW scare its official kick-start.

The Royal Society is also the alma-mater (sort of: if ex-press officers count) of rabid pit bull Bob Ward, now spokesman for the warmist Grantham Institute, who can often be heard on the wireless getting very cross with people who don't believe in ManBearPig. (An increasingly tough job, given that this now means almost everyone).

2. Obama Slips Up On Oil Spill Panel

By Henry Miller, IBD, June 2, 2010

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/536045/201006021823/Obama-Slips-Up-On-Oil-Spill-Panel.aspx>

I dislike President Obama's style and substance. A whiner and left-wing ideologue, he is remarkably slow-witted when out of range of speechwriters and teleprompters. I'll say one thing for him, though: He brings a sense of irony to government.

The latest example is the incomprehensible choice of William Reilly, former administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, to co-chair the presidential commission to investigate the catastrophic BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

During Reilly's tenure, the EPA implemented policies that prevented the development of a high-tech method to mitigate the effects of the oil washing onto the magnificent beaches along the Gulf Coast from Texas to Florida.

During the 1980s microorganisms genetically engineered to feed on spilled oil were developed in laboratories, but draconian federal regulations discouraged their testing and commercialization and ensured that the techniques available for responding to these disasters remain low-tech and marginally effective.

They include methods such as deploying booms to contain the oil, spraying chemicals to disperse it, burning it and spreading absorbent mats.

At the time of the catastrophic 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska, there were great expectations for modern biotechnology applied to "bioremediation," the biological cleanup of toxic wastes, including oil. Reilly, who at that time headed the EPA, later recalled:

"When I saw the full scale of the disaster in Prince William Sound in Alaska ... my first thought was: Where are the exotic new technologies, the products of genetic engineering, that can help us clean this up?"

Reilly should have known: Innovation had been stymied by his agency's hostile policies toward the most sophisticated new genetic engineering techniques. The regulations ensured that biotech researchers in several industrial sectors, including bioremediation, would continue to be intimidated and inhibited by regulatory barriers. Those policies remain in place today, and the EPA's anti-technology zealots show no signs of changing them.

The best way to prevent such accidents is, of course, to obtain energy from sources other than fuel oil. Bio-fuels have been widely touted as a possibility, but solutions to technical difficulties, such as breaking down plant materials so that they can be metabolized into ethanol, have thus far eluded scientists.

Ironically, EPA regulation has also inhibited the development of the genetically engineered bacteria and fungi that are needed. Thus, EPA's policies have for decades stymied safe energy production in two ways: (1) by preventing innovation applied to industrial processes that could produce biofuel, and (2) by obstructing the development and commercialization of oil-eating organisms that could be used in a spill.

Characteristically, the EPA didn't let science get in the way of policy. Its regulation focuses on any "new" organism (strangely and unscientifically defined as one which contains combinations of DNA from unrelated sources) that might, for example, literally eat up oil spills.

For the EPA, then and now, "newness" is synonymous with risk, and because genetic engineering techniques can easily be used to create new gene combinations with DNA from disparate sources, these techniques therefore "have the greatest potential to pose risks to people or the environment," according to the agency press release that accompanied the rule.

But science says otherwise. The genetic technique employed to construct new strains is irrelevant to risk, as is the origin of a snippet of DNA that may be moved from one organism to another: What matters is its function. Scientific principles and common sense dictate which questions are central to risk analysis for any new organism:

How hazardous is the organism you started with? Is it a harmless, ubiquitous organism found in garden soil, or one that causes illness in humans or animals? Does the genetic change merely make the organism able to metabolize and degrade oil more efficiently, or does it have other effects, such as making it hardier and more resistant to antibiotics and therefore difficult to control?

The EPA ignored the widely held scientific consensus that holds that modern genetic engineering technology is essentially an extension, or refinement, of earlier, cruder techniques of genetic modification. In fact, the U.S. National Research Council observed in 1989 that the use of the newest genetic engineering techniques actually lowers the already minimal risk associated with field testing.

The reason is that the new technology makes it possible to introduce pieces of DNA that contain one or a few well-characterized genes, in contrast with older genetic techniques that transfer or modify a variable number of genes haphazardly. All of this means that users of the new techniques can be more certain about the traits they introduce into the organisms.

The bottom line is that organisms crafted with the newest, most sophisticated and precise genetic techniques are subject to discriminatory, extraordinary regulation. Research proposals for field trials must be reviewed repeatedly case by case, and companies face uncertainty about final commercial approvals of products down the road even if they prove safe and effective.

Government policymakers seem oblivious to the power of regulatory roadblocks to impair resilience. Experiments using genetically engineered organisms confront massive red tape and politics and require vast expense. The costs and uncertainty of performing this R&D have virtually eliminated them as a tool to clean up oil spills and other pollution.

While he headed the EPA, Reilly was one of those know-nothing policymakers. Obama's tapping him to investigate the Gulf oil spill exemplifies what Newsweek and Washington Post contributing editor Robert Samuelson has called a "parody of leadership."

• Miller is a physician and molecular biologist and a fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. His most recent book is "The Frankenfood Myth."

3. Environmentalists Also To Blame For Exxon Valdez and Gulf Spills

IBD Editorial, June 1, 2010

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/535996/201006011854/Environmentalists-Also-To-Blame-For-Exxon-Valdez-And-Gulf-Spills.aspx>

Energy Policy: To save the environment, a senator from Pennsylvania wants to shut off a major source of natural gas. Weren't the roads to the Exxon Valdez and Deepwater Horizon disasters paved with equally good intentions?

Environmentalism did not cause the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster, but it did help make it possible, just as 1989's Exxon Valdez disaster, which the Gulf Oil spill has now eclipsed, was also ironically made possible by a desire to protect the environment.

The original plan when oil was discovered at Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's North Slope was to build a pipeline directly to the northern border of the 48 contiguous states. Groups like the Sierra Club waged a major battle against both the Prudhoe Bay development and the pipeline.

They lost on the drilling but won a small victory in forcing the pipeline to not traverse the continent via a safer land route but to dead end at the port of Valdez, Alaska. The rest, as they say, is history.

Had the oil companies gotten their way, there would have been no tanker to be run aground by its captain on March 24, 1989, causing 10.8 million gallons of crude oil to be dumped into Alaskan waters.

On Sunday's "Meet The Press," NBC's David Gregory asked if environmental zeal might have also contributed to Deepwater Horizon. "Is the problem that we're drilling in water that's just too deep?" he asked Carol Browner, director of the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change Policy and former EPA administrator in the Clinton administration.

"Should you even rethink your own approach to the environment to say, 'Maybe in the Arctic Wildlife Reserve, we ought to be drilling there. We ought to be going into shallower waters so that this can be done more safely?'"

Browner tap-danced around the question by saying it was one of the things to think about while we shut down the domestic oil industry. Browner et al. should indeed think about the fact that if British Petroleum and others were not barred from drilling in ANWR or in the shallower water of the Outer Continental Shelf, we might not be having this conversation.

Out west we may have what could be called a "Persia on the Plains." A Rand Corp. study says the Green River Formation covering parts of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming has the largest known oil shale deposits in the world, holding from 1.5 trillion to 1.8 trillion barrels of oil. It's all on dry land, but it's all locked up by federal edict.

Environmentalists, aided and abetted by Democratic Sen. Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, now want to stop us from unlocking our vast reserves of natural gas locked up in shale using a technique called hydraulic fracturing or "fracking." The technique involves injecting liquids under pressure, 95% of which is water, into the shale rock to release the trapped gas.

Casey has introduced legislation to remove fracking's long-standing exemption in the Safe Drinking Water Act that allows energy companies to use the process. He claims the process endangers America's drinking water, though fracking is done thousands of feet below the groundwater table and there's never been a case of groundwater contamination caused by fracking.

"This 60-year-old technique has been responsible for 7 billion barrels of oil and 600 trillion cubic feet of natural gas," according to Sen. James Inhofe, ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee. "In hydraulic fracturing's 60-year-history, there has not been a single documented case of contamination."

Casey's Pennsylvania contains a major portion of the Marcellus Shale Formation covering 34 million acres in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia and Kentucky. SUNY-Fredonia geologist Gary Lash and colleague Terry Engelder of Penn State estimate that Marcellus holds 1,300 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Those who would ban fracking also need to consider that if oil companies rather than environmentalists were allowed to decide how to drill for and deliver oil, neither the Exxon Valdez nor the Deepwater Horizon spills need to have happened.

4. Uncertain Science

Bickering and defensive climate research have lost the public's trust

By Stefan Theil, Newsweek, May 28, 2010 [H/t Francois Guillaumat]

<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/05/28/uncertain-science.html>

Blame economic worries, another freezing winter, or the cascade of scandals emerging from the world's leading climate-research body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). But concern over global warming has cooled down dramatically. In über-green Germany, only 42 percent of citizens worry about global warming now, down from 62 percent in 2006. In Britain, just 26 percent believe climate change is man-made, down from 41 percent as recently as November 2009. And Americans rank global warming dead last in a list of 21 problems that concern them, according to a January Pew poll.

The shift has left many once celebrated climate researchers feeling like the used-car salesmen of the science world. In Britain, one leading scientist told an interviewer he is taking anti-anxiety pills and considered suicide following the leak of thousands of IPCC-related e-mails and documents suggesting that researchers cherry-picked data and suppressed rival studies to play up global warming. In the U.S., another researcher is under investigation for allegedly using exaggerated climate data to obtain public funds. In an open letter published in the May issue of *Science* magazine, 255 American climate researchers decry "political assaults" on their work by "deniers" and followers of "dogma" and "special interests."

This is no dispute between objective scientists and crazed flat-earthers. The lines cut through the profession itself. Very few scientists dispute a link between man-made CO₂ and global warming. Where it gets fuzzy is the extent and time frame of the effect. One crucial point of contention is climate "sensitivity"—the mathematical formula that translates changes in CO₂ production to changes in temperature. In addition, scientists are not sure how to explain a slowdown in the rise of global temperatures that began about a decade ago.

The backlash against climate science is also about the way in which leading scientists allied themselves with politicians and activists to promote their cause. Some of the IPCC's most-quoted data and recommendations were taken straight out of unchecked activist brochures, newspaper articles, and corporate reports—including claims of plummeting crop yields in Africa and the rising costs of warming-related natural disasters, both of which have been refuted by academic studies.

Just as damaging, many climate scientists have responded to critiques by questioning the integrity of their critics, rather than by supplying data and reasoned arguments. When other researchers aired doubt about the IPCC's prediction that Himalayan glaciers will melt by 2035, the IPCC's powerful chief, Rajendra Pachauri, trashed their work as "voodoo science." Even today, after dozens of IPCC exaggerations have

surfaced, leading climate officials like U.N. Environment Program chief Achim Steiner and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research head Joachim Schellnhuber continue to tar-brush critics as “anti-Enlightenment” and engaging in “witch hunts.”

None of this means we should burn fossil fuels with abandon. There are excellent reasons to limit emissions and switch to cleaner fuels—including an estimated 750,000 annual pollution deaths in China, the potential to create jobs at home instead of enriching nasty regimes sitting on oil wells, the need to provide cheap sources of power to the world’s poorest regions, and the still-probable threat that global warming is underway. At the moment, however, certainty about how fast—and how much—global warming changes the earth’s climate does not appear to be one of those reasons.

5. The West’s Wrong Turn on Natural Resources

By Joseph Sternberg, WSJ, June 1, 2010

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB20001424052748704596504575272790583630252.html#mod=todays_us_opinion

For all that talk about a new knowledge economy, *things* still matter a great deal in this world. And whether it's the steel beam holding up the floor of your office, the gasoline you put in your car or the circuitry in your new iPad, "things" mean natural resources. So it's worrying that one of the major policy trends emerging in recent days is that the capitalist West is cutting itself out of the resource game.

Witness President Obama's extension of a moratorium on offshore drilling in the wake of the Gulf oil spill. His move blocks 33 exploration projects in the Gulf of Mexico, as well as progress on drilling off the Virginia coast and in the Arctic.

Meanwhile, Australia—a key supplier of minerals such as iron ore and uranium—is debating a confiscatory 40% tax on "excess" mining profits. This already is hampering investment in the country's mining industry. India, Brazil and Chile also are contemplating various forms of windfall profits taxes.

Domestic political concerns explain these policy blunders. Oil drilling of any sort has been contentious with environmentalists and coastal NIMBYs in the U.S. for decades—and those folks tend to vote Democratic. While the tragic and destructive Gulf spill is being cited as the main reason for the latest ban, in truth it is simply providing cover for policies the left has wanted to implement for years, and a convenient excuse for President Obama to backtrack from earlier promises to drill offshore. As for all the windfall-profits taxes, blame governments grasping for new revenue to make up budget shortfalls.

It all adds up to a global problem. One common thread running through these cases is that all the countries involved are democracies. The danger is that if these countries won't supply minerals to the world on market principles, others—like China—will step into the gap with other ideas.

China's alternative is to expand its own nontransparent resource grabs around the world. If capitalism can't provide, Chinese companies will make their own deals in places like Africa, Mongolia and Russia. Expect to see more stories about new Chinese-funded mining or drilling projects in the third world. Expect also to see a lot of hand-wringing about whether this means the authoritarians in Beijing are extending their political influence in smaller, weaker developing countries.

Meanwhile, America's policies to keep its own oil reserves untapped mainly benefit Russia, the Middle East and Venezuela, which are left to fill the unmet demand—and profit handsomely as a result. Especially when combined with weak-dollar policies from the U.S. Federal Reserve, these regimes enjoy enormous windfalls the less Western competition they face.

Sometimes capitalist countries themselves may benefit from this, since state-owned companies can invest in resource extraction with less regard for profitability than Western listed companies. Such has

been the case in Canada, which in 2006 announced that as of next year it will increase taxes on the corporate "income trust" structure that is popular in the resource industry. The corporate profits tax rate on such enterprises will rise to above 30% from zero today. That has crushed valuations in the oil industry, which is capital intensive since Canada's petroleum reserves are mainly in the form of hard-to-extract oil sands.

Smelling a buying opportunity, Chinese state-owned companies, which aren't controlled by private shareholders and can accept a lower return, have been willing to move in, investing at least \$4.6 billion in Canadian oil companies since the tax increase was unveiled. Abu Dhabi has also become a bigger investor.

But this means the West will have to become more receptive to that kind of investment. Canada has, but Australia and the U.S. in particular are still hesitant. Remember the controversy over an attempted Chinese purchase of Unocal in 2005? One point of this story is that Western governments will have to either get out of the way of Western companies that want to extract resources or prepare for the Chinese and others to try.

Without giving too much credence to China alarmists, it is still possible to say the world is better off if resources are in the hands of transparent companies that will trade on market principles free of the risk of excessive government interference. The third and worst alternative is to stay on the current track of crippling Western resource reserves while also blocking capital from the willing investors that remain.

Yes, companies will continue to extract resources in the West even under the taxes (though the outright drilling ban is another story). But those bad policies will make a major difference at the all-important margins of the market, which drive pricing decisions. The choice for Western policy makers now is simple: They can clamp down on their resource industries for domestic political reasons and hand pricing and supply power to nonmarket and nondemocratic governments. Or they can allow their own companies to run a truly global resource market capable of meeting the world's need for things.

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6. EPA puts ideology ahead of common sense

Editorial, Washington Examiner, June 4, 2010

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/EPA-puts-ideology-ahead-of-common-sense-95563949.html>

Do you recall what you were doing on April 22, 2010? Odds are good that lead paint in structures built before 1978 was not in your thoughts that day, but the issue was very much on the minds of the bureaucrats at the Environmental Protection Agency. That was the day their agency's newest rule -- Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting -- officially took effect. While Lead RRP addresses a legitimate public health concern, it is also a massive addition to the hundreds of thousands of pages of existing EPA regulations covering much of the U.S. economy.

Ostensibly, the Lead RRP regulation is meant to protect pregnant women and children from exposure to unhealthy levels of lead paint. Even so, the rule illustrates how EPA is currently driven more by progressive ideology and bureaucratic inefficiency than common sense. The rule requires that any renovation of any building built before 1978 affecting six or more square feet of paint must be overseen by a government-certified renovator and conducted by a government-certified renovation firm. Certification requires completion of an EPA-approved training course and payment of a fee to the agency.

The rule applies to anybody -- including painters, electricians, plumbers, and carpenters, plus general contractors and property owners -- who "disturbs painting" in covered structures. But as of April 22, EPA

had certified exactly 204 trainers to cover the millions of workers who generate approximately 18 percent of the country's annual gross domestic product. No wonder the EPA just got a sharp rebuke on Capitol Hill. The Senate adopted on a 60-37 vote a measure sponsored by Republican Sens. James Inhofe of Oklahoma and Susan Collins of Maine to prevent EPA from imposing a "levy against any person [or] any fine, or to hold any person liable for construction or renovation work" as a result of Lead RRP.

For the time being, the EPA has bigger concerns than fighting Congress over implementation of the Lead RRP regulation. For example, EPA recently ordered BP to use a less toxic oil dispersant without knowing beforehand that none currently exists. And EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson has been vigorously pushing a declaration by the agency that carbon dioxide is a health hazard that contributes to global warming. Jackson has threatened to implement the declaration if Congress fails to adopt the Obama administration's proposed cap-and-trade, anti-global warming program. This is the same EPA that imposed a training requirement on millions of American workers without first making sure it had enough trainers to do the job.

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