

The Week That Was: 2011-05-14 (May 5, 2011)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

PLEASE NOTE: The complete TWTW, including the articles, can be downloaded in an easily printable form at the SEPP web site: www.sepp.org.

DON'T FORGET: Heartland Institute is sponsoring the Sixth International Conference on Climate Change (ICCC-6) to take place in Washington, DC from breakfast Thursday, June 30, to noon Friday, July 1, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. This event will be more modest than in the past, yet as informative and, perhaps, even more challenging to the orthodoxy. The principal speakers are S. Fred Singer, Craig Idso, and Bob Carter – all major contributors to the NIPCC reports. Of course, SEPP is a co-sponsor. <http://www.heartland.org/events/iccc2011>

Quote of the Week:

“A lie gets halfway around the world before truth has a chance to get its pants on.” Winston Churchill

Numbers of the Week: 20% by 12/31/13; 25% by 12/31/16; and 33% by 12/31/20

THIS WEEK:

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

In the past two weeks several reports were produced by the orthodoxy insisting that consequences of human-caused global warming are more dire than previously estimated – that is, than projected in the 2007 UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Consistent with the Quote of the Week, these new, non-scientific claims were quickly repeated by many news organizations. Two of these reports are briefly discussed below: the one agriculture production and the one the Arctic. A third report, by the US National Academy of Sciences will be discussed next week.

In “Climate Trends and Global Crop Production Since 1980” the authors claim that global warming is restricting world food production. They analyze four major crops: maize (corn), wheat, rice and soybeans, which they state account for 75% of the world’s human caloric consumption, either directly or indirectly. To estimate reduction in food production, the authors create a model estimating what production would be without global warming (climate change) and compare it with actual production. They conclude that global wheat production is 5.5% and maize production is 3.8% below what it would be without global warming. The main question is: does the model actually measure what the authors claim or are there significant confounding variables that are not identified in the study?

Among the highly questionable assertions and assumptions made by the authors are: one, world temperatures have increased by roughly 0.13 deg C since 1950, or a calculated increase of 0.91 deg C by 2010, which is greater than the generally accepted of 0.7 deg C since about 1880; two, the US has experienced a cooling during the study period, 1980 to 2008 – which must be quite surprising to NASA-GISS that insists the last decade was the hottest in recorded history for the US; and, three, since the US, according to the authors, experienced a cooling, it is exempt from the conclusions of the study even though the US is the world’s major producer of two of the four food commodities studied, maize and soybeans, accounting for some 40% of world production.

Readers of TWTW may recall that in February 19, 2011, TWTW presented the enormous increase in wheat production in India. To quickly test the validity of the conclusions of the new study that global warming is reducing production of human staples, SEPP examined the production of wheat and rice in China and India, the two largest producers and consumers of these staples, accounting for approximately

29% of world wheat production and 48% of world rice production. Historically, these countries were noted for wide-spread famines, often due to changing weather patterns (climate change). The data used are from the US Department of Agriculture covering the period from 1960 to 2010, however to be consistent with the article, the data were truncated to 2008.

From 1960 to 2008, in China, wheat production went up by 437% and milled rice production went up by 221%, or an average annual increase through the period of 9% and 5%, respectively. In India, wheat production went up by 661% and rice production by 186%, or an average annual increase through the period of 14% and 4%, respectively.

These remarkable increases in production occurred during a period of global warming, including the great climate shift of the late 1970s. Those inclined to hasty generalizations, without consideration of confounding variables, may conclude that global warming has been a boon to agriculture production in China and India. However, much of the increase is due to the green revolution, carbon dioxide enhancement, and changes in government policies.

Also during this period both China and India rapidly increased maize production becoming the world's second and fourth largest producers, respectively. Chinese maize production increased more than 10 fold.

The data for the period of the study in question, 1980 to 2008, reveal that the average annual increase was less. In China, it was a 4% per year increase for wheat and a 1% increase for milled rice. In India, it was a 5% increase for wheat and a 3% increase for milled rice.

Are these reductions in the spectacular increases in production due to global warming? No! An analysis of the complete data suggest otherwise, showing that, generally, production increases began to taper off in the 1990s. Basically, China and India became self-sufficient in grain production. Famines are no longer an issue and grain imports in 2008 were less than 0.5% of domestic production. The authors mistakenly attribute to warming the reductions in production increases due to market stabilization from the green revolution, carbon dioxide enhancement, and changes in government policies.

The authors claim that any excess would be available for export. However, export of grains requires an integrated system for such purposes which China and India do not have. Low-cost producers, such as the US and Canada, have such systems, and dominate the world markets. There is no incentive for farmers in China and India to produce more than what they can sell in domestic markets.

Hunger remains a major problem in much of the world, especially in sub-Sahara Africa, parts of which are subject to incessant warfare and political turmoil, resulting in low production of food stuffs. To falsely attribute this hunger to global warming ignores the real causes and is a disservice to science and humanity. Please see referenced articles under "Defenders of the Orthodoxy." The data used above can be found at: <http://www.indexmundi.com/agriculture/?country=cn&commodity=wheat&graph=production>

"Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic," by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) is a stunning example of what we may expect from the upcoming (perhaps 2014) IPCC report on climate change. In the climate alarmist effort to communicate better with the public, the photos are spectacular, the content is weak. Among the conclusions is a projection of a 0.9 to 1.6 meter sea level rise by the year 2100. This conclusion is based on observations between 2003 to 2008 – predictions 90 years hence based on six years of observations!

Probably without recognizing it, the authors refute the claimed "consensus science" as expressed by the IPCC by correctly assert that the warming in the Arctic and the surrounding area is several times stronger

than elsewhere. Please see referenced articles under “Defenders of the Orthodoxy.” Please see the review of a study in Iceland contradicts the findings of the report under “Review of Articles by NIPCC.]

SEPP has long recognized that the characteristics of the recent warming do not fit IPCC claim of carbon dioxide caused warming. Satellite measurements demonstrate that most of the recent warming is in the northern part of the Northern Hemisphere with little or no corresponding warming in the Southern Hemisphere or the tropics. Thus, the primary cause must be something other than carbon dioxide.

As H.H. Lamb expressed in his classic work “*Climate, History and the Modern World*” the Arctic has experienced periods of ice melt and Greenland once had a thriving population based on Nordic agriculture. Empirical studies ignored by the AMAP include the GRIP-2 (see TWTW, Jan 29, 2011) and GRIP (see NIPCC, 08, Fig 2).

For a current article on the inconsistency of Greenland ice melt, and that the Greenland ice melt over a longer period in 1920s to 60s than today, please see the referenced articles under “The Changing Climate.”

The major controversy among climate change researchers is the sensitivity of the climate to changes in carbon dioxide. The classic calculations are that a doubling of carbon dioxide will result in an increase of about 1 to 1.2 deg C. The alarmists claim that the earth is highly sensitive to such a change and carbon dioxide warming will be amplified many times by a warming caused by increases in water vapor over the tropics. The essential claim is that the earth’s systems are fragile and subject to slight disturbances from carbon dioxide.

The skeptics / deniers, etc. demand proof. They assert that the earth’s systems are robust and adjust to disturbances, and dampen them. Among this group is Roy Spencer, who has produced an interesting study based on the failure of oceans to warm as projected by the IPCC. Please see the reference article under “Challenging the Orthodoxy.”

A major debate was held Cambridge, England between those who claim that humans are causing unprecedented and dangerous warming, and those who claim that humans are not. The referenced articles may be of interest, particularly the speech by Vaclav Klaus. Please see referenced articles under “Challenging the Orthodoxy.”

Meteorologist Anthony Watts organized a bold team of investigators to examine US surface stations, which resulted in the publication “Is the U.S. Surface Temperature Record Reliable?” The critics of the investigation stated that the publication was not “peered reviewed.” Now a peer reviewed article on the investigation has come out, probably providing arguments for everyone, and satisfying no one. Please see referenced articles under “Measurement Controversy.”

Numbers of the Week: 20% by 12/31/13; 25% by 12/31/16; and 33% by 12/31/20. These are the percentages of electricity from renewable sources that must be delivered by utilities under the newly signed law by the State of California. This law is greatly rejoiced by the renewable energy industry and will result in expansion of employment in such industries. The headlines will not mention the failure of economic growth in an already stagnant economy that was once one of the bright stars of America. Unfortunately, the politicians and bureaucrats who promoted this law will retire with luxurious pensions and never have to suffer under it.

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see: www.sepp.org.

1. A Dozen Global Warming Slogans

By Bob Carter, Quadrant, May 2011

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2011/5/a-dozen-global-warming-slogans>

Summing up, it is a blight on Australian society that an incumbent government, and the great majority of media reporters and commentators, continue to propagate the twelve scientific and social inanities discussed in this article in an uncritical fashion. The current discourse on global warming is a frightening example of how political spin and postmodern argumentation have now come to dominate public discussion of all matters, even scientific ones.

2. Why Can't We Learn From Other's Failures?

Editorial, IBD, May 3, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/571005/201105031849/Why-Cant-We-Learn-From-Others-Failures-.aspx>

3. After Osama, Energy Sanity?

Donald Trump is right. We didn't invade Iraq to get its oil.

Editorial, WSJ, May 7, 2011 [H/t Deke Forbes]

http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424052748703992704576304940901405296-1MyQjAxMTAxMDAwNjEwNDYyWj.html

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

The UK Government Tricks the SciTech Committee

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, May 9, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/05/09/the-uk-government-tricks-the-scitech-committee/#more-13550>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Weak Warming of the Oceans 1955-2010 Implies Low Climate Sensitivity

By Roy Spencer, drroyspencer.com, May 12, 2011

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/>

The Global Warming Doctrine is Not a Science

By Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, Speech at Cambridge, May 11, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://www.klaus.cz/clanky/2830>

*“To conclude, I agree with many serious climatologists who say that the warming we experience or is on the horizon will be very small. Convincing argumentation can be found in Ian Plimer’s recent book.[11] I agree with Bob Carter and others that it is difficult “to prove that the human effect on the climate can be measured” because “this effect is lost in the variability of natural climate changes”[12]. From the economic point of view, **in case there will be no irrational interventions against it, the economic losses connected with such a modest warming will be very small.** A loss generated as a result of a completely useless fight against global warming would be far greater.”*

Commentary on ‘Sea Level Rise’

By Madhav Khandekar, Guest Post, Climate Science, May 11, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/>

Top Green Admits: “We Are Lost!”

By Walter Russell Mead, American Interest, May 3, 2011 [H/t Real Clear Politics]

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2011/05/03/top-green-admits-we-are-lost/>

[SEPP Comment: Provocative essay on the failure of the global warming movement. The referenced article is realistic assessment from a climate alarmist point of view.]

Adventures in the Climate Trade

By Norman Rogers, American Thinker, May 1, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/05/adventures_in_the_climate_trad.html

Warmist Mantra Wearing Out

By Russell Cook, American Thinker, May 11, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/05/warmist_mantra_wearing_out.html

Carbon and Carbon Dioxide: Clearing Up the Confusion

By Paul Driessen, Townhall, Apr 30, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/pauldriessen/2011/04/30/carbon_and_carbon_dioxide_clearing_up_the_confusion

CSI: Climate Science Investigation

By Anthony Sadar and Albin Sadar, American Thinker, May 8, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/05/csi_climate_science_investigat.html

[SEPP Comment: An amusing approach on the old problem of causation based on a popular TV show.]

Defenders of the Orthodoxy

Climate Trends and Global Crop Production Since 1980

By David Lobell, Wolfram Schlenker, and Justin Costa Roberts, Science, Abstract, May 5, 2011

<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/early/2011/05/04/science.1204531.abstract>

Global Warming Reduces Expected Yields of Harvests in Some Countries, Study Says

By Justin Gillis, NYT, May 5, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/06/science/earth/06warming.html?_r=1&ref=science

Consumers are already paying the price of global warming in higher food bills, scientists warn

By David Derbyshire, Mail Online, May 9, 2011 [H/t Malcolm Ross]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1385035/Global-warming-caused-higher-food-bills.html>

Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic

By AMAP, SWIPA, Executive Summary, 2011

<http://amap.no/swipa/SWIPA2011ExecutiveSummaryV2.pdf>

Effects of climate change in the Arctic more extensive than expected

By Staff Writers, SPX, May 6, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Effects_of_climate_change_in_the_Arctic_more_extensive_than_expected_999.html

Administration Embraces New Report on Arctic Melting, Sea-Level Rise

By Patrick Goodenough, CNS News, May 13, 2011 [H/t Steven Goddard]

<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/administration-embraces-new-report-arctic>

Arctic warming to boost rise of sea levels

By Alister Doyle, Washington Post, May 3, 2011 [H/t Conrad Potemra]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/environment/arctic-warming-to-boost-rise-of-sea-levels/2011/05/03/AFbqCgiF_story.html

Seas could rise up to 1.6 meters by 2100: study

By Alister Doyle, Reuters, May 3, 2011

http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/03/us-climate-arctic-idUSTRE7422YQ20110503?feedType=RSS&feedName=environmentNews&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=greenmeme&utm_content=Twitter

Vatican Science Panel Calls Attention to the Threat of Glacial Melt

Pontifical Academy of Sciences working group of leading scientists to present report to Pope Benedict XVI

Press Release, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, May 5, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://scrippsnews.ucsd.edu/Releases/?releaseID=1158>

[SEPP Comment: This is from the working group, not the approved report.]

The case for climate change

By Amber Jenkins, JPL, May 3, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/The_case_for_climate_change_999.html

[SEPP Comment: An interview with the chief scientist of the Met Office who said they could have predicted the cold UK winter if only they had bigger, faster, super computers. Piers Corbyn of Weather Action, among others, predicted it using an old laptop.]

Renewables key for climate, world energy supply: IPCC

By Staff Writers, AFP, May 9, 2011

http://www.solardaily.com/reports/Renewables_key_for_climate_world_energy_supply_IPCC_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Absurd! "Renewable energy could meet nearly 80 percent of the world's energy needs by mid-century and play a crucial role in fighting global warming, the UN's climate [scientists](#) said Monday in a major report."]

Seeking a Common Ground

Would putting all the climate scientists in a room solve global warming...

Skeptics meet Warmists at Cambridge

By Andrew Orlowski, A Register, May 13, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2011/05/13/downing_cambridge_climate_conference/

[SEPP Comment: (On balance, that is: high clouds have an albedo effect, and nighttime temperatures are raised by low clouds). An error in an otherwise informative report, low clouds have the albedo effect that causes cooling and high clouds have a nighttime warming effect.]

["People underestimate the power of models. Observational evidence is not very useful," adding, "Our approach is not entirely empirical." John Mitchell, principal research scientist at the Met Office.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate?

Climate scientists told to ‘stop speaking in code’

By Staff Writers, AP, May 4 2011

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jV8J1meZ0ID1PNbOkWYWdpChRMXA?docId=1fa900b287114805b741c83d2e751498>

Trust Me, I’m a Scientist

Why so many people choose not to believe what scientists say

By Daniel Willingham, Scientific American, May 5, 2011 [H/t Best of the Web]

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=trust-me-im-a-scientist>

[SEPP Comment: The author equates acceptance of vaccine safety with acceptance of global warming. The former has undergone rigorous testing, the latter fails rigorous testing.]

Measurement Controversy

A Summary Of Our New Paper “Analysis of the Impacts of Station Exposure on the U.S. Historical Climatology Network Temperatures and Temperature Trends” by Fall, et al, 2011
Pielke Climate Science, May 11, 2011
<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/>

Something for Everyone: Fall et al. 2011

By John Nielsen-Gammon, ICECAP, May 12, 2011
<http://www.icecap.us/>

Temperatures and Extreme Weather

Rainfall and flooding update

By Joseph D’Aleo, Weather Bell, May 13, 2011
<http://www.weatherbell.com/jd/?p=1575>

Climate Change and Tornadoes

By Martin Hoerling, NOAA, Earth System Research Laboratory, May 6, 2011 [H/t WUWT]
<http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/csi/events/2011/tornadoes/climatechange.html>
[SEPP Comment: None found.]

The Political Games Continue

Punishing Big Oil Won’t Cut Prices

Editorial, IBD, May 5, 2011
<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/571251/201105051848/Punishing-Big-Oil-Wont-Cut-Prices.aspx>

Obama’s Anti-Energy Policies Are Bankrupting America

By Rob Bluey, Morning Bell, May 5, 2011
http://blog.heritage.org/2011/05/05/morning-bell-obamas-anti-energy-policies-are-bankrupting-america-2/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Morning%2BBell

Obama administration floats draft plan to tax cars by the mile

By Pete Kasperowicz, The Hill, May 5, 2011 [H/t WUWT]
<http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/house/159397-obama-floats-plan-to-tax-cars-by-the-mile>

Litigation Issues

Climate activists target states with lawsuits

By Mathew Brown, AP, May 4, 2011 [H/t Tim Wise]
http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9N11PQG0&show_article=1
[SEPP Comment: When the next ice age arrives, can the citizens sue the states to prevent it?]

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Fears for North Sea oil and gas after UK tax hit

By Nick Clark, Independent, UK, May 2, 2011 [H/t SPPI]
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/fears-for-north-sea-oil-and-gas-after-uk-tax-hit-2277831.html>

[SEPP Comment: The bureaucrats appear surprised that if taxed too heavily, corporations will go elsewhere.]

Get out of Kyoto while it's still possible

Stephen Harper should guide our nation away from the most costly hoax in the history of science

By Tom Harris, Financial Post, May 4, 2011 [H/t Lars Hagen]

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/05/04/get-out-of-kyoto-while-it%E2%80%99s-still-possible/#more-13847>

[SEPP Comment: Will Canada leave Kyoto?]

How to kill agriculture

The proposal that agriculture be subject to a carbon tax must rank as one of the worst aspects of the rush to tax carbon dioxide.

By Tom Quirk, Quadrant, May 8, 2011

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2011/05/how-to-kill-agariculture>

[SEPP Comment: There is no sanity in carbon taxes.]

White House Wants to Track and Tax Your Mileage

By David Patten, News Max, May 5, 2011 [H/t SPPI]

http://www.newsmax.com/Headline/gas-tax-tracking-obama/2011/05/05/id/395346?s=al&promo_code=C372-1

GE's Immelt Returns Focus To Green Cash

By Steve Milloy, IBD, May 6, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/571432/201105061854/GEs-Immelt>Returns-Focus-To-Green-Cash.aspx>

[SEPP Comment: The administration's corporate poster boy is feeling the heat and backs down from cap-and-trade.]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

The CFL Debacle

By Donn, Power America, May 13, 2011

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2011/05/13/the-cfl-debacle/>

[SEPP Comment: Fluorescent lighting is common in offices, but the probability of bulb breakage is much greater in homes – particularly those with children. Ophthalmologists questioned by K.H. consider incandescent lighting superior for the eyes than fluorescent.]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

EPA: House offshore oil permitting plan threatens public health

By Ben Geman, The Hill, May 13, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/161049-epa-house-offshore-oil-permitting-plan-could-prompt-significant-pollution-exposure>

House Republicans Probe EPA Processes on Power Plant Rulemaking

By Staff Writers, Power News, May 11, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3697.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2198256&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e66050d0

The EPA ignores jobs in its rush to regulate

Editorial, Washington Examiner, May 10, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/2011/05/epa-ignores-its-job-its-rush-regulate>

Puddle Power Grab

By Jerry Shenk, American Thinker, May 12, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/05/puddle_power_grab.html

[SEPP Comment: EPA has long used innovative language to expand its control of privately owned property in issues such as wetlands. This is an effort to control use of all private property.]

Creating climate wealth

By Rich Kassel, Bunker World, May 4, 2011 [H/t Jim Kross]

<http://www.bunkerworld.com/forum/blogs/Rich-Kassel/102874/Creating-climate-wealth>

[SEPP Comment: Ocean going vessels are associated with asthma?]

Energy Issues

Nuclear Fears & Responses

Japan starts shutting down Hamaoka nuclear reactor

By Staff Writers, AFP, May 13, 2011

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Japan_starts_shutting_down_Hamaoka_nuclear_reactor_999.html

Panel on Nuclear Waste Disposal to Propose Above Ground Storage

By Matthew Wald, NYT, May 12, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/13/science/earth/13waste.html?_r=2&src=rechp

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

The Great Energy Resource Debate (Part I: Peak Oil was here/is here!)

By Robert Bradley Jr, Master Resource, May 12, 2011

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/05/energy-resource-debate-i/>

[SEPP Comment: A somewhat amusing, but sad, summary of the boom and bust cycle of peak oil.]

Obama's War on Oil

By Peter Ferrara, American Spectator, May 4, 2011 [H/t Bud Bromley]

<http://spectator.org/archives/2011/05/04/obamas-war-on-oil>

Shale gas: good news or bad?

Scientific Alliance, May 5, 2011

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/shale-gas-good-news-or-bad>

What To Expect When Amateurs Set Oil Policies

By Victor Davis Hanson, IBD, Apr 29, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/570634/201104291749/What-To-Expect-When-Amateurs-Set-Oil-Policies.aspx>

Energy Dept. Panel to Revise Standards for Gas Extraction

By John Broder, NYT, May 6, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/07/science/earth/07frack.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha24

[SEPP Comment: Not exactly encouraging.]

Environmentalists Were for Fracking before They Were Against It

By Ronald Bailey, Reason, May 10, 2011
<http://reason.com/archives/2011/05/10/environmentalists-were-for-fr>

Methane levels 17 times higher in water wells near hydrofracking sites

By Staff Writers, SPX, May 10, 2011
http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Methane_levels_17_times_higher_in_water_wells_near_hydrofracking_sites_999.html
[SEPP Comment: A very small sample. Data must be collected before and after drilling.]

Mexico could become oil importer by 2020 without new investment

By Staff Writers, SPX, May 2, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]
http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Mexico_could_become_oil_importer_by_2020_without_new_investment_999.html
[SEPP Comment: Consequences of excessive government control of a once thriving oil industry.]

BP Oil Spill and Administration Control of Drilling

Washington vs. Energy Security

Even former President Clinton calls the Obama administration's deep water drilling policy 'ridiculous.'
By Harold Ford, Jr., WSJ, May 11, 2011
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703730804576313110635853424.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop
[May be behind a pay wall.]

Phony 'Safety' Fears Cripple U.S. Oil

Editorial, IBD, May 9, 2011
<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/571550/201105091855/Frack-Baby-Frack.htm>

Life and Death in the Deep Sea

Does the Gulf oil spill threaten vital seafloor communities?
By Ken Kostel, Oceanus, May 10, 2011
<http://www.whoi.edu/oceanus/viewArticle.do?id=99049§ionid=1000>
[SEPP Comment: The emotion laden writing detracts from the noteworthy scientific effort.]

Stop the Drilling! A Lizard Is Imperiled

By Larry Bell, Forbes, May 10, 2011 [H/t Icecap]
<http://blogs.forbes.com/larrybell/2011/05/10/stop-the-drilling-a-lizard-is-imperiled/>

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Energy

Chinese pay price for world's rare earths addiction

By Staff Writers, AFP, May 1, 2011
http://www.spacemart.com/reports/Chinese_pay_price_for_worlds_rare_earths_addiction_999.html
[SEPP Comment: Rather than the absurd term "addiction to oil," now it is "addiction to rare earths."]

Lots of dirty things have to happen to make clean energy

By Ron Arnold, Washington Examiner, May 5, 2011
<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/05/ron-arnold-lots-dirty-things-have-happen-make-clean-energy>

EU: Euro 20.4 Million From EU Globalization Fund to Help Redundant Workers in Denmark

By Staff Writers, eGovmonitor, May 6, 2011 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/41877>

[SEPP Comment: Europe now must subsidize job training for those who are unemployed from the wind industry. The jobs have gone abroad – mostly to China. A lesson to be learned in California?]

Questioning the European Green

Climate change policy: reality begins to bite

The Scientific Alliance, May 13, 2011

<http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=f1e3eeb023e7d88eff0dda8a2&id=88dcf5a8b5&e=991e1b5d6d>

UK Government Shuts Down Climate Impact Programme

By Chris Koenig, Oxford Mail, May 13, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/9024312.Climate_change_unit_fears_for_jobs/

[SEPP Comment: Budget squeeze, but build more wind!]

California Dreaming

California Signs New Renewable Portfolio Standard into Law

By Dian Grueneich and Theresa Cho, SPX, May 3, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

[http://www.energy-](http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/California_Signs_New_Renewable_Portfolio_Standard_into_Law_999.html)

[daily.com/reports/California_Signs_New_Renewable_Portfolio_Standard_into_Law_999.html](http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/California_Signs_New_Renewable_Portfolio_Standard_into_Law_999.html)

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

The Ability of Coral Reefs to Regenerate after Catastrophic Events

Reference: Anlauf, H., D'Croz, L. and O'Dea, A. 2011. A corrosive concoction: The combined effects of ocean warming and acidification on the early growth of a stony coral are multiplicative. *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* **397**: 13-20.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/may/3may2011a1.html>

"the resilience of planulae to predicted climatic conditions suggests that healthy coral reefs should be able to regenerate naturally after catastrophic events (such as ENSO-induced coral bleaching), if source populations can provide planulae in sufficient quantity and local stressors such as over-fishing, pollution and habitat destruction are controlled."

Will Ocean Acidification – If It Occurs – Affect Marine Microbes?

Reference: Joint, I., Doney, S.C. and Karl, D.M. 2011. Will ocean acidification affect marine microbes? *The ISME Journal* **5**: 1-7.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/may/3may2011a5.html>

"perhaps the most appropriate null hypothesis to test is that marine microbes possess the flexibility to accommodate pH change and there will be no catastrophic changes in marine biogeochemical processes that are driven by phytoplankton, bacteria and archaea."

Hurricane Activity Over the North Atlantic Ocean

Reference: Klotzbach, P.J. 2011. El Niño-Southern Oscillation's impact on Atlantic basin hurricanes and U.S. landfalls. *Journal of Climate* **24**: 1252-1263.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/may/10may2011a1.html>

"Klotzbach (2011) confirmed that "Atlantic basin hurricane activity is significantly reduced in El Niño years compared with La Niña years," and that "the largest impacts of ENSO on large-scale climate fields were shown to be in the Caribbean, with smaller signals observed over the remainder of the tropical Atlantic."

The MWP, LIA and CWP on the North Icelandic Shelf

Reference: Ran, L., Jiang, H., Knudsen, K.L. and Eiriksson, J. 2011. Diatom-based reconstruction of palaeoceanographic changes on the North Icelandic shelf during the last millennium. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* **302**: 109-119.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/may/11may2011a5.html>

And they end by stating that "the data suggest that solar radiation may be one of the important forcing mechanisms behind the palaeoceanographic changes."

"Once again we have a situation where the warmth of the more distant past clearly exceeded that of the recent past, with the peak temperature of the MWP exceeding that of the Current Warm Period by about 0.6°C, as best as can be determined from the graphical representation of Ran et al.'s data, which thus indicates there is nothing unusual, unnatural or unprecedented about the earth's current level of warmth in this particular part of the planet, as in the many other such parts of the planet documented in our Topical Archive under the heading Medieval Warm Period."

The Changing Climate

A 225-year reconstruction of Greenland ice melt

World Climate Report, May 2, 2011

<http://www.worldclimatereport.com/index.php/2011/05/02/a-225-year-reconstruction-of-greenland-ice-melt/>

Attempts to Box Us Out

World Climate Report, May 2, 2011

<http://www.worldclimatereport.com/index.php/2011/05/02/attempts-to-box-us-out/#more-488>

[SEPP Comment: The difficulty of publishing an article contrary to the orthodoxy.]

Breaking News: The Climate Actually Changes!

By Larry Bell, Forbes May 3, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://blogs.forbes.com/larrybell/2011/05/03/breaking-news-the-climate-actually-changes/>

Health and Warming

Climate Change Analysis Predicts Increased Fatalities from Heat Waves

By Staff Writers, SPX, May 4, 2011

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Climate_Change_Analysis_Predicts_Increased_Fatalities_from_Heat_Waves_999.html

["The exact change due to global warming in annual mortality projections, however, is sensitive to the choice of climate model used in analysis." SEPP Comment: How many excess deaths are there from the US southern migration of the older population?]

Other Scientific News

NASA Mission Seeks to Uncover a Rainfall Mystery

By Lori Keeseey, SPX, Apr 29, 2011

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/NASA_Mission_Seeks_to_Uncover_a_Rainfall_Mystery_999.html

Aquarius to Illuminate Links between Salt and Climate

By Staff Writers, JPL, May 12, 2011

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Aquarius_to_Illuminate_Links_Between_Salt_and_Climate_999.html

After a three-decade hiatus, sea-level rise may return to the West Coast

By Staff Writers, SPX, May 5, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/After_a_three_decade_hiatus_sea_level_rise_may_return_to_the_West_Coast_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Backhanded recognition of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation.]

Other News that May Be Of Interest

Expert panel calls for transforming US Agriculture

By Staff Writers, SPX, May 6, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Expert_panel_calls_for_transforming_US_agriculture_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The most productive agriculture system in the world must be changed because it is not “sustainable?”]

The Hijacking of Earth Day

By Gilbert Ross, M.D., American Spectator, May 11, 2011

<http://spectator.org/archives/2011/05/11/the-hijacking-of-earth-day>

Asthma rates increasing in U.S., despite less smoking and decreased air pollution

By Thomas Maugh II, LA Times, May 3, 2011 [H/t ACSH]

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/may/03/news/la-heb-asthma-rates-increasing-05032011>

Better Living Through Chemistry (If Permitted)

The overwhelming body of scientific evidence supports the safety of myriad chemicals in use today

By Gilbert Ross, The American, May 5, 2011

<http://www.american.com/archive/2011/may/better-living-through-chemistry-if-permitted>

Enter Unit 8200: Israel arms for cyberwar

By Staff Writers, UPI, May 11, 2011

http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Enter_Unit_8200_Israel_arms_for_cyberwar_999.html

Quebec unveils \$80 bln plan for undeveloped north

By Staff Writers, APF, May 9, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Quebec_unveils_80_bln_plan_for_undeveloped_north_999.html

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Storms Kill Over 250 Americans in States Represented by Climate Pollution Deniers

By Brad Johnson, Think Progress, Apr 28, 2011 [H/t Best of the Web]

<http://thinkprogress.org/2011/04/28/tornado-global-warming/>

Anthropocene: Have humans created a new geological age?

By Howard Falcon-Lang, BBC, May 10, 2011 [H/t Eric Gottshall]

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13335683>

[Comment: Self aware or self absorbed?]

EU unveils plans to pay fishermen to catch plastic

Trial project aims to provide fleets with an alternative income source income [sic] to reduce pressure on fish stocks

By Fiona Harvey, Guardian, UK, May 4, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/may/04/eu-fishermen-catch-plastic>

Giant fossil ants linked to global warming

By Staff Writer, Physorg.com, May 4, 2011

<http://www.physorg.com/news/2011-05-giant-fossil-ants-linked-global.html>

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ARTICLES:

1. A Dozen Global Warming Slogans

By Bob Carter, Quadrant, May 2011

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2011/5/a-dozen-global-warming-slogans>

Summing up, it is a blight on Australian society that an incumbent government, and the great majority of media reporters and commentators, continue to propagate the twelve scientific and social inanities discussed in this article in an uncritical fashion. The current discourse on global warming is a frightening example of how political spin and postmodern argumentation have now come to dominate public discussion of all matters, even scientific ones.

For many years now, our media outlets have been awash with commentary about dangerous human-caused global warming. The coverage tends to move in spasms relating to events such as meetings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) or, as at present, to government efforts to introduce penal legislation against carbon dioxide emissions in the vain belief that this will “stop global warming”.

Given that carbon dioxide is indeed a greenhouse gas (albeit a mild and diminishingly effective one at currently increasing levels of atmospheric concentration), and that some human-caused emissions accrue in the atmosphere, the question of dangerous warming was a good one to raise back in the late 1980s.

Since then, with the formation of the IPCC, and a parallel huge expansion of research and consultancy money into climate studies, energy studies and climate policy, an intensive effort has been made to identify and measure the human signature in the global temperature record at a cost that probably exceeds \$100 billion. And, as Kevin Rudd might put it, “You know what? No such signature has been able to be isolated and measured.”

That, of course, doesn’t mean that humans have no effect on global temperature, because we know that carbon dioxide is a mild greenhouse gas, and we can also measure the local temperature effects of human activity, which are both warming (from the urban heat island effect) and cooling (due to other land-use change, including irrigation). Sum these effects all over the world and obviously there must be a global signal; that we can’t identify and measure it indicates that the signal is so small that it is lost in the noise of natural climate variation.

Twenty-five years on, therefore, we have answered the question, “Are human carbon dioxide emissions causing dangerous global warming”, and the answer is “No”; but strangely that answer causes environmental activists and their supporters, including apparently many scientists, to develop the disease known as deaf ear.

In such circumstances, how is it possible that hypothetical dangerous warming remains one of the most potent political issues in the world, and certainly so in Australia at the moment?

The answer is, first, that a significant part of that \$100 billion was spent encouraging virtually every lobby and interest group in Western societies to invent ways in which they could benefit from global warming alarmism—and none more so than the numerous climate research groups that cluster around the supercomputer laboratories, spawning endless virtual realities of the climate world as it might, or might not, be in a hundred years time. (One thing is known for certain about these computer models, and it is that they are wrong as tested against the last twenty years of elapsed global temperature.) Second, for the last twenty years environmental policies, such as being seen to “do something” about climate change, have been a critical currency with which to buy swinging, middle-ground votes in marginal electorates; strenuously and persistently egged on by large and unaccountable environmental NGOs, and by business

and climate research group interests, global warming policy measures have thus achieved a remarkable and powerful political resonance.

Through the years, as public discussion of the global warming issue has passed from being dominantly about the relevant science to being instead a happy hunting ground for rent seekers and social engineers, the issue has become an almost exclusively political one. It appears that the only science that now counts is of the postmodern variety—which is to say the “science” of the IPCC, in which consensus opinion (a scientific abhorrence), statistical chicanery and computer fantasising dominate over traditional empirical analysis. Public discussion of global warming in Australia has thereby become dominated by the arts of politics, which is to say spin and repetition towards the end of establishing the propaganda point of the day. This pathology is well exemplified by the remarkably weak and intellectually dishonest government [strategy paper](#) that leaked in late March, just after it had been provided to party members as an aid to their convincing the public of the need for a carbon dioxide tax.

Which brings us to the second part of this article, and the fact that, as a result of the strategy paper, Australian press coverage of global warming policy over the last two months has comprised the endless repetition of numerous facile and utterly unconvincing sound-bites, designed with no other end in mind than propaganda.

Each of the following twelve statements reproduces verbatim, or almost verbatim, statements made recently by Australian government leaders, and repeated by their supporters in the media and elsewhere. The persons making these arguments might be termed (kindly) climate-concerned citizens or (less kindly, but accurately) as global warming alarmists.

Most of the statements, self-evidently, were crafted as slogans, and all conform to the obnoxious and dishonest practice of political spin—in which, of course, the citizens of Australia have been awash for many years. The statements also depend heavily upon corrupt wordsmithing with propaganda intent, a technique that international environmental lobbyists are both brilliant at and relentless in practising.

The following arguments, then, are the main reasons given by the government in justification for their intended new tax on carbon dioxide. As we will see, individually and severally these arguments are without merit.

1. “We must address carbon [sic] pollution [sic] by introducing a carbon [sic] tax.”

The argument is not about carbon nor a carbon tax, but rather about carbon dioxide emissions and a carbon dioxide tax, to be levied on the fuel and energy sources that power the Australian economy.

Under clean air legislation, the aerosols emitted from power stations, such as carbon (soot), nitrous oxides and sulphur dioxide, have been scrubbed at source in industrialised OECD nations for several decades. Similar scrubbing needs to be applied in the rapidly industrialising countries as soon as possible, to help reduce their health-damaging levels of air pollution. Taxing beneficial carbon dioxide emissions will contribute nothing towards reducing these genuine pollutants.

Carbon dioxide is not a pollutant but a natural and vital trace gas in Earth’s atmosphere, an environmental benefit without which our planetary ecosystems could not survive. Increasing carbon dioxide makes many plants grow faster and better, and helps to green the planet.

2. “We need to link much more closely with the climate emergency.”

There is no “climate emergency”; the term is a deliberate lie. Global average temperature at the end of the twentieth century fell well within the bounds of natural climate variation, and was in no way unusually warm, or cold, in geological terms.

Earth’s temperature is currently cooling slightly, ocean heat is declining, global sea-level rise has not accelerated (although the climate models predict that it should) and tropical storm energy is at a thirty-

year low. Furthermore, no evidence exists that Australian climatic phenomena—including droughts, floods, storms, heat waves and snowstorms—differ now in intensity or frequency from their natural historical and geological patterns of strong annual and multi-decadal variability; and the Great Barrier Reef is in fine fettle.

3. “Australia is the largest per capita emitter of carbon dioxide.”

Another untrue statement. Australia emits 18 tonnes per capita of carbon dioxide; according to the UN Human Development Report, countries with higher emissions include the USA (19 tonnes), Luxembourg (24.5 tonnes), Kuwait (31.2 tonnes), the UAE (32.8 tonnes) and Qatar (56.2 tonnes).

That Australia’s emissions are higher than those of some other countries is because we have cheap coal, little hydro-electric potential and have banned nuclear power.

Historically low, but now rapidly escalating, energy costs have allowed Australia, unlike other developed countries, to export products like aluminium (whose production incorporates high carbon dioxide emissions) at a competitive price, thus adding strength to our economy. Taxing the emissions of such companies will cause them to move offshore, or destroy them.

4. “Putting a price on carbon [sic] will punish the big polluters [sic].”

A price on carbon dioxide will impose a deliberate financial penalty on all energy users, but especially energy-intensive industries. These imaginary “big polluters” are part of the bedrock of the Australian economy. Any cost impost on them will be passed straight down to consumers.

It is the consumers of all products who will ultimately pay, not the industrialists or their shareholders.

5. “Putting a price on carbon [sic] is the right thing to do; it’s in our nation’s interest.”

The greatest competitive advantage of the Australian economy is cheap energy generated by coal-fired power stations.

To levy an unnecessary tax on this energy source is economic vandalism that will destroy jobs and reduce living standards for all Australians.

6. “We will protect existing jobs while creating new business investment and clean energy jobs.”

The whole point of a carbon dioxide tax is to force coal-fired power stations out of existence. No amount of subsidy will “protect” the jobs of the workers involved, and business investment will decline because Australia will be perceived as a sovereign risk.

It has been shown that in Spain, 2.2 conventional jobs are destroyed for every new job created in the alternative energy industry, at a unit cost of about US\$774,000 a job. In a comparable UK study the figures were even worse, with the destruction of 3.7 conventional jobs for every new job.

7. “Putting a price on carbon [sic] will result in lower carbon dioxide emissions.”

Economists know well that an increase in price of some essential things causes little reduction in usage. This is true for both energy (power) and petrol, two commodities that will be particularly hit by a tax on carbon dioxide emissions.

Norway has levied a tax on carbon dioxide since the early 1990s which has added to the already high cost of living there, and despite which a 15 per cent *increase* in emissions has occurred.

At its mooted introductory level of \$20 to \$30 per tonne, a carbon dioxide tax is unlikely to effect any reduction in emissions. As the price is ratcheted up, as is intended, to the point at which energy-intensive

industry is forced offshore, Australian emissions will decline, as will Australia's standard of living, but world emissions will remain the same. Such a policy is senseless.

8. "Other countries are taking action, even China and India. We must catch up with the rest of the world, who are already taxing carbon dioxide emissions."

They are not. All hope of a global agreement on emissions reduction has collapsed with the failure of the Copenhagen and Cancun climate meetings. The world's largest emitters (USA and China) have made it crystal clear that they will not introduce carbon dioxide taxes or emissions trading. The Chicago Climate Exchange has collapsed, and chaos and deep corruption currently infest the European exchange. Though a dozen US states have previously committed to anti-carbon-dioxide schemes, some of those (such as New Hampshire and New Mexico) are now withdrawing.

Contrary to assertions, neither China nor India is taking substantive action specifically to mitigate their emissions level, and the carbon tax claimed for India is actually an environmental levy on coal mining of about \$1 per tonne. This is similar to long-standing levies faced by coal mining in Australia, where, in addition, the Mandatory Renewable Energy Tariff (MRET) requires that 20 per cent of electricity is to be generated by renewables by 2020. Because renewable sources such as wind and solar are uncompetitive, by 2020 the MRET will impose a tax equivalent to \$14 per tonne of carbon dioxide emitted.

Playing "follow the leader" is not a good idea when the main leader (the EU) has a sclerotic economy characterised by lack of employment and the flight of manufacturers overseas, and when large industrialising countries intend to take no action.

9. "Australia should show leadership, by setting an example that other countries will follow."

Self-delusion doesn't come any stronger than this.

For Australia to introduce a carbon dioxide tax ahead of the large emitting nations would be to expose our whole economy to competitive and economic disadvantage for no gain whatsoever. It would comprise an act of economic stupidity.

10. "We must act, and the earlier we act on climate change the less painful it will be."

The issue at hand is global warming, not the catch-all, deliberately ambiguous term "climate change".

Trying to prevent hypothetical "dangerous" warming by taxing carbon dioxide emissions will be ineffectual, and is all pain for no gain.

11. "The cost of action on carbon [sic] pollution [sic] is less than the cost of inaction."

This statement is fraudulent. Implementing a carbon dioxide tax will carry large costs for workers and consumers, but bring no measurable cooling in temperature for many hundreds of years, if then.

For Australia, the total cost for a family of four of implementing a carbon dioxide tax is likely to exceed \$2000 a year*—whereas eliminating even all of Australia's emissions might prevent planetary warming of only about 0.01 degree by 2100.

*Assuming a tax rate of \$25 a tonne of carbon dioxide, and Australia's emissions being 550 million tonnes, indicates a total cost of \$13.8 billion. Spread across a population of 22 million persons, that equates to \$627 per person per year.

12. "There is no do-nothing option in tackling climate change."

Indeed.

However, it is also the case that there is no demonstrated problem of “dangerous” global warming. Instead, Australia continues to face many self-evident problems of natural climate change and hazardous natural climate events. A national climate policy is clearly needed to address these issues.

The appropriate, cost-effective policy to deal with Victorian bushfires, Queensland floods, droughts, northern Australian cyclones and long-term cooling or warming trends (whether natural or human-caused) is the same. It is to prepare carefully for, and efficaciously deal with, and adapt to, all such events and trends, *as and when they happen*. Spending billions of dollars on expensive and ineffectual carbon dioxide taxes serves only to reduce our wealth and our capacity to address these genuine problems.

Summing up, it is a blight on Australian society that an incumbent government, and the great majority of media reporters and commentators, continue to propagate the twelve scientific and social inanities discussed in this article in an uncritical fashion. The current discourse on global warming is a frightening example of how political spin and postmodern argumentation have now come to dominate public discussion of all matters, even scientific ones.

2. Why Can't We Learn From Other's Failures?

Editorial, IBD, May 3, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/571005/201105031849/Why-Cant-We-Learn-From-Others-Failures-.aspx>

Alternative Energy: Like a man living out a fantasy, President Obama is still pressing his green energy agenda. But a glance at other experiences tells him it won't work. Why does he think he can do what can't be done?

"Instead of subsidizing yesterday's energy sources, we need to invest in tomorrow's," Obama said in his weekly radio address of April 23. "We need to invest in clean, renewable energy."

It was only one of several opportunities the president has taken lately to play green huckster. He seems dead serious about coercing the country into a renewable energy regime in the same way he rammed through his health care overhaul.

And just as ObamaCare will prove to be ruinous, so too will the green energy scheme.

Consider Germany. It began a renewable energy program that has neither paid off nor lived up to its green promise. This unsurprising conclusion is found in "Economic impacts from the promotion of renewable energies: The German experience" published by RWI, a German research center.

That country's program "is often cited as a model to be replicated elsewhere," RWI notes, but it's a model "without merit."

It adds: "Although Germany's promotion of renewable energies is commonly portrayed in the media as setting a 'shining example in providing a harvest for the world' (The Guardian 2007), we would instead regard the country's experience as a cautionary tale of massively expensive environmental and energy policy that is devoid of economic and environmental benefits."

To ensure that 12% of the country's electricity is generated by renewable sources — a European Union goal — Germany in 1991 adopted a feed-in law requiring utilities to buy power from independent producers and place it on their grids. As is always the case with government do-good programs, this mandate forced costs higher.

Solar power, for instance, cost 62 cents per kilowatt-hour while conventionally produced electricity cost 3 cents to 10 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Wind power costs were 300% higher than conventional power. This jacked up average household electricity prices by 7.5%.

While such an increase is unlikely to drive anyone into poverty, it's enough to affect a family's budget. Imagine, as well, how high the electricity rates would go if the portion of renewables larger than 12% were required by government.

Spain also has had an unpleasant experience with renewable energy. The country tried to establish a green economy — and failed. Gabriel Calzada Alvarez, a professor at Juan Carlos University in Madrid, found that "the Spanish/EU-style 'green jobs' agenda being promoted in the U.S. in fact destroys jobs."

For every green job created by the Spanish government, Alvarez found that 2.2 jobs were destroyed elsewhere in the economy because resources were directed politically and not rationally, as in a market economy.

Researchers from the Italian think tank Istituto Bruno Leoni have published similar findings about their country. There, "each green job cost 6.9 jobs in the industrial sector and 4.8 jobs across the entire economy."

With this information available, why would anyone continue to push green energy schemes? It takes an overbearing arrogance for someone to believe that the laws of economics must bend to his will.

3. After Osama, Energy Sanity?

Donald Trump is right. We didn't invade Iraq to get its oil.

Editorial, WSJ, May 7, 2011 [H/t Deke Forbes]

http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424052748703992704576304940901405296-1MyQjAxMTAxMDAwNjEwNDYyWj.html

With President Obama, the gift of the left, having gone to considerable lengths and invested his political capital to hunt down and kill Osama bin Laden, maybe the time is ripe to clear away certain myths about hidden agendas behind America's antiterror policies.

The U.S. didn't invade Iraq for its oil, though perhaps some remain hopelessly beyond reason on this point. Their view of the world is deduced from the covers of news magazines they haven't opened and from Hollywood movie plots, in which oil is vaguely implied to be infinitely valuable, and oil companies therefore infinitely potent behind the scenes of American policy.

Oil is not infinitely valuable. Invading Iraq was a far more expensive way to get its two million barrels a day than by buying them. True, Iraq is believed to have huge, unmapped reserves—no less a figure than Donald Trump now complains of our refusal to get our hands on these reserves, a failure President Trump presumably would remedy.

Mr. Trump is right about one thing. If we were after Iraq's oil, we've yielded with remarkably little fuss. U.S. companies have had little interest in the profitless terms the Iraqi government is offering. Many of the contracts have gone instead to the likes of the state oil companies of India, China and Angola. The winners will spend billions to develop new fields in return for a meager \$1.40 for every barrel lifted, and then only after meeting a minimum production hurdle.

Mr. Trump is participating in a great American political tradition since the 1970s, saying silly things about energy. Apropos of nothing except \$4 gas and political ructions in the Middle East, back on the media's agenda is the Boone Pickens plan, the Texas billionaire's recurrent campaign for Congressional tax credits to encourage natural-gas vehicles.

There is no end, of course, to people promoting the use of the tax code to support nice-sounding things. That's why we have the tax code we do.

In his recent energy speech, President Obama said the world is running out of oil and higher gasoline prices are foreordained. If so, higher gas prices will provide a bigger incentive for natural-gas cars than any puny tax subsidy. And if Mr. Obama is wrong, the tax benefit will have done nothing but create stranded investments in natural-gas vehicles that will require endless subsidies to remain viable.

Lo, this is no accident but a product of the bounded logic of our political system, as Peter Z. Grossman of Butler University has aptly laid out in various papers:

Voters want cheap gas. They also want things that are antithetical to cheap gas, like "energy independence" and environmental purism. Rather than choosing between conflicting goals, politicians offer happy talk and boondoggles to reconcile these opposites. That's how we got Mr. Obama's electric-car subsidies, Jimmy Carter's "synfuel" disaster, and Bill Clinton's now-forgotten 80 mpg family-car project.

Nor do you have to look further than the New York Times editorial page to find some who think the answer to events in the Middle East is to throw even more money at magical thinking on energy.

Mr. Pickens is no more regrettable than the various big names in national security who've been willing to associate themselves with the ethanol scam. The proclivity of such former high-ranking officials to transition to energy rent-seeking ought to be alarming to Americans.

Here's another example of energy madness: We've lately received the imperfect blessing of the shale gas boom, which some oppose as environmentally hazardous to the towns and farms and watersheds of upstate Pennsylvania and New York. But why did our enterprising wildcatters go hunting hard-to-reach gas in exurban backyards across the Northeast in the first place?

One answer is to be found in a 2004 Argonne National Lab report, which described huge amounts of conventional gas in U.S. wilderness lands placed off-limits in unthinking fashion. To give one instance, a Forest Service bureaucrat in 2001, with the wave of a pen, foreclosed access to 11 trillion cubic feet of gas by decreeing an end to road building on federal lands.

Writ small here is the dynamic that now has greens—rightly—in despair. The price mechanism works to deliver the energy we want even despite our own worst efforts, and it continues to be fossil energy.

Now we are ready to appreciate an irony: With his Iraq invasion, President Bush was accused of setting off a grenade in a china shop—destabilizing a part of the world we depend on for precious oil. Mr. Obama, in contrast, looks like a reversion to form: the hapless wasting of taxpayer dollars on symbolic energy escapism like electric cars; meanwhile, in the face of revolution in the Mideast, a barely concealed priority of stability above all, to keep the oil flowing.

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