

Foreword – A Political Context

European and American statist, including activist NGOs like the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), assert that the moderate climate warming that is occurring today is a man-made catastrophe, and have embraced the dystopian fantasy that coercive policies for the elimination of fossil fuel production and usage can prevent or turn back the current warming cycle. They have, thus, made the “global warming planetary emergency” into the central plank of their ongoing campaigns for more centralized government.

Leftist commentator, Alexander Cockburn, put it this way:

This turn to climate catastrophism is tied into the decline of the left, and the decline of the left's optimistic vision of altering the economic nature of things through a political programme. The left has bought into environmental catastrophism because it thinks that if it can persuade the world that there is indeed a catastrophe, then somehow the emergency response will lead to positive developments in terms of social and environmental justice [liberal fascism].

For decades environmental activists have insisted that capitalism is not a “sustainable” (sufficient to “save the planet”) economic system. We now hear brazen declarations that democracy is no longer a “sustainable” political process. Al Gore lends a popular, philosophical/theological underpinning to collectivist impulses by casting the root of all environmental evils – real and imagined – in the scientific and industrial/technological revolutions. Put differently, for Gore and the EDF, the planetary environment, not human life, appears the supreme standard of value. Therefore, everything, most importantly Science and Economics, must be pried away from the benefit of man and pressed into total service of the State.

Given just a decade or two of such “sustainable” policies, bolstered by Gore’s religion, the world will be well on its way to a new Dark Ages, and the human misery it breeds.

The American people who owe their long, comfortable and healthy lives to the accomplishments of modern industry, technology, medicine and affordable fossil energy ought to be outraged by activists’ claims and policies. They should come to grasp the terrible costs and futility of the left’s policies; they must understand that life lived as the left envision it for them and their children is baneful; life lived in submission to the hard natural forces of climate and disease, increasingly lived without labor-saving technology, without the fruits of sophisticated agricultural techniques, and without modern medicine, sanitation, electrification and transportation systems is, to borrow a phrase from Thomas Hobbes, “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.”

Economic growth requires energy growth, and restricting energy growth through self-interested international agreements such as Kyoto or domestic policies such as carbon taxes or cap-and-trade schemes is a recipe for global poverty and human deaths.

As Christopher Monckton herein points out, the necessity of getting the “big” policy decisions right, applies with the greatest force to those fields of policy where wrong decisions could kill and/or impoverish millions. The international community, spurred on by “green” NGOs, “too often gets the big ones wrong, and kills tens of millions, and does not care much.”

The moral dimension, Monckton ever reminds us, is crucial:

“The policies advocated to mitigate climate change would condemn the Third World to remain abjectly poor, for unless all other countries cut their carbon emissions atmospheric concentrations will continue to rise even if the entire West shuts down and goes back to the Stone Age, but without even the ability to light fires...It is the poor who have been the victims of unscientific but fashionable political decisions in the recent past; it is they who will die in their tens of millions if, yet again, an unscientific but fashionable political decision is taken by us and inflicted upon them. We must get the science right or we shall get the policy wrong. We have failed them before. We must not fail them again.”

The destructive outcomes of policies advocated by the EDF for the non-problem of modest global warming will also be inflicted on Americans, and not only will it fail “them” in the Third World, but will malevolently fail us, too.

Robert Ferguson
President, SPPI

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