

The Week That Was (Nov 1, 2008) brought to you by SEPP

Quote of the Week:

What historians will definitely wonder about in future centuries is how deeply flawed logic, obscured by shrewd and unrelenting propaganda, actually enabled a coalition of powerful special interests to convince nearly everyone in the world that CO₂ from human industry was a dangerous, planet-destroying toxin. It will be remembered as the greatest mass delusion in the history of the world - that CO₂, the life of plants, was considered for a time to be a deadly poison. – *Richard S. Lindzen*

<http://ecoworld.com/features/2008/10/30/climate-science-is-it-currently-designed-to-answer-questions/>

THIS WEEK *Report from Madrid*

SPAIN'S EX-PRIME MINISTER BLASTS 'NEW RELIGION' OF GLOBAL WARMING

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gAZR7yJ8hMxAwgRYoYk9p9vO1Udg>

MADRID (AFP, 22 Oct) - Former Spanish prime minister Jose Maria Aznar Wednesday dismissed climate change as a "new religion" that is drawing hundreds of billions of euros at a time of economic crisis. Aznar made the remarks at the presentation of a book by Czech President Vaclav Klaus, "Blue Planet in Green Shackles", in which he also questions the widely held theories about climate change.

"In these times of global cooling of the international economy ... the standard bearers of the climatic apocalypse demand hundreds of billions of euros" to combat global warming, said Aznar, who was conservative prime minister from 1996 to 2004. "They want to throw onto the bonfire anyone who, like Vaclav Klaus, questions the new religion. The slightest doubt on the man-made origin of climate change is cause of automatic ex-communication." -- *Courtesy CCNet*

SEPP Science Editorial #10 (11/1/08)

The Fingerprint Controversy Part-1

The crucial question is: **Is warming (predominantly) due to natural or human causes?** How can one tell? The issue is of obvious importance since natural causes cannot be influenced in any way by policies that limit greenhouse (GH) gas emissions, such as CO₂. Resolving the question is a difficult scientific task. Natural causes are plausible; the climate has been warming and cooling for billions of years on many different time scales [See, e.g., Singer and Avery 2007]. On the other hand, GH warming is also plausible, since the concentration of GH gases has been increasing due to human activities.

The method agreed to by everyone is the "fingerprint" method, which compares the pattern of temperature trends calculated from GH models with the pattern observed in the atmosphere. The first application of this method may have been by Santer et al in IPCC-SAR [1996]. However, Santer misapplied the method in order to force the conclusion that warming was due to human causes, namely GH gases.

In one attempt, he compared the geographic pattern of surface temperature trends, derived from GH models, with the observed pattern. He calculated a "pattern correlation coefficient" and claimed that it was increasing with time "as the human signal emerged from the background noise of climate variability" [IPCC-SAR, 1996, chapter 8]. However, when the graph there is compared to the one in his original publication [Santer et al 1995], one discovered that he had removed all of the trend lines, including zero and negative trends, except the one that suggested an increasing correlation in the last 50 years [Singer 1997]. When questioned about this by e-mail, he replied that it was done for "pedagogic reasons"*

Santer's second attempt, also in chapter 8 of IPCC-SAR, was to compare the modeled and observed latitude and altitude patterns of temperature trends. It was soon discovered, however, that his claimed "agreement" was due to a selective use of data; he had chosen a time interval (1963-1987) during which the tropospheric trend was increasing, while the overall trend during the period (1957-1995) was not [Michaels and Knappenberger 1996].

By then it had become quite apparent that there was a disparity between the observed trends in the troposphere and the surface [NRC 2000; Singer 2001]. Douglass, Pearson and Singer carried out a full-scale comparison of available model results and temperature observations from balloons, satellites, and reanalysis [2004]. They concluded that the observations did not confirm the expected increase (from GH models) in temperature trends with altitude in the tropics; but they did not delve into the implication of this disparity. As a result, their result was largely ignored.

Next, a full-scale investigation of this problem was carried out as part of the federally financed Climate Change Science Program. CCSP-SAP-1.1 [2006], the first and most crucial of the 21 reports of the CCSP, titled “Temperature Trends in the Lower Atmosphere: Steps for Understanding and Reconciling Differences,” confirmed the result of Douglass et al [2004].

To be sure, the abstract of CCSP 1.1 claims that the discrepancies between surface warming and tropospheric warming trends have been removed. This statement distorts the sense of the CCSP report and has been widely misunderstood as having confirmed the validity of GH models. CCSP-1.1 admits, however, that in the tropics “the majority of observational data sets show more warming at the surface than in the troposphere....[but] almost all model simulations show more warming at the surface than in the troposphere.” In other words, there exists indeed a discrepancy, which has not been removed. This Executive Summary was authored by Wigley, with the participation of the chapter lead authors, including Santer.

Following the publication of CCSP 1.1, and using best available models and data, Douglass, Christy, Pearson, and Singer [2007] extended their comparison between model results and observations in the tropical zone and concluded again that the observations did not confirm the GH model results. This paper was also ignored until a group of independent scientists, the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC) published its summary report in 2008. Drawing mainly on the data from CCSP-1.1 and Douglass et al [2007], NIPCC [Singer et al 2008] showed conclusively the disparity between GH models and observations.

The NIPCC then drew the obvious logical conclusion: Since GH models cannot explain the observations, the warming of the past 30 years must be due predominantly to causes other than GH gases. In other words, **the human contribution to the warming trend since 1979 is minor and insignificant** – a conclusion contrary to that of IPCC [2007]. Another way of stating the NIPCC result: Climate Sensitivity is considerably less than the values quoted by the IPCC, i.e. 1.5 – 4.5 °C, and more in accord with the much lower values deduced by other methods [Schwartz, Monckton, Lindzen, Spencer].

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Singer SF and Avery DT. 2007. *Unstoppable Global Warming – Every 1500 Years*. Rowman & Littlefield. Lanham, MD

Singer SF. et al 2008. *Nature, Not Human Activity, Rules the Climate: Summary for Policymakers of the Report of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change*, Singer SF (ed.). The Heartland Institute: Chicago, IL.

** Santer also made significant text changes in Chapter 8 of the IPCC-SAR report, after its approval by coauthors. See discussion by SF Singer et al [*Bull. AMS* 78:81-82, 1997], and E. Masood [*Nature* 381:039, 1996]

1. Obama plans to regulate CO2 using EPA and Clean Air Act

2. Bush vs Bush (his irresolution applies also to CO2 and GW)

3. Corruption in climate science and among scientists

4. The next commodity to collapse will be mass-marketed environmentalism

5. Holland inundated by alarmist propaganda

6. Environmental satire trumped by reality of environmental stupidity

NEWS YOU CAN USE

OCTOBER 27, 2008 - Climate Change survey in America: Only 18% believe it's real, caused by humans, and harmful. Americans are sharply divided in their beliefs about whether climate change is real, according to a new study commissioned by The Nature Conservancy and other leading conservation and climate action groups. The study the American Climate Values Survey (ACVS), conducted by the consulting group EcoAmerica also found that only 18 percent of survey respondents strongly believe that climate change is real, human-caused and harmful. It also found that political party affiliation is the single largest indicator as to whether people see climate change as a threat.

COMMENT: This means that 82% get it! <http://tomnelson.blogspot.com/2008/10/18.html>

News about NIPCC: Reply to a reader's question:

1) How many copies of the NIPCC report have been distributed to date? >>>>>about 75,000

2) Did all national legislators receive a copy? >>>>>>>>>All 8700 state legislators and all 525 Members of Congress, plus hundreds of staffers and assorted bureaucrats.

3) Has SEPP targeted a group to receive copies? >>>>>>>SEPP has charged the Heartland Institute with the marketing and promotion of the NIPCC report.

4) Is there a plan for distributing this publication? >>>>>>>>>The NIPCC report is available at all of the scores of presentations, seminars, meetings and conventions that Heartland participates in. In addition, we mail it to teachers, civic groups, colleges, etc. We have nearly exhausted the first 75,000 printing. The report is available at heartland.org in PDF format. In addition, Fred Singer recently completed an update of the NIPCC report, and that update currently is being edited. We expect to publish a new edition in the next

clear, the would-be President intends to blackmail -- or rather, greenmail -- Congress into falling in line with his climate agenda, says the Wall Street Journal.

The complaint has been that the White House blocked Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) bureaucrats from making the so-called "endangerment finding" on carbon. Now it turns out that a President Obama would himself wield such a finding as a political bludgeon. He plans to issue an ultimatum to Congress: Either impose new taxes and limits on carbon that he finds amenable, or the EPA carbon police will be let loose to ravage the countryside.

These costs would far exceed the burden of a straight carbon tax or cap-and-trade system enacted by Congress, because the Clean Air Act was never written to apply to carbon and other greenhouse gases. Moreover, climate-change politics don't break cleanly along partisan lines:

- o The burden of a carbon clampdown will fall disproportionately on some states over others, especially the 25 interior states that get more than 50 percent of their electricity from coal.
- o Rustbelt manufacturing states like Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania will get hit hard too.
- o Once President Bush leaves office, the coastal Democrats pushing hardest for a climate change program might find their colleagues splitting off, especially after they vote for a huge tax increase on incomes.

Supposedly global warming is the transcendent challenge of the age, but Obama evidently doesn't believe he'll be able to convince his own party to do something about it without a bureaucratic ultimatum, says the Journal.

Source: Editorial, "Obama's Carbon Ultimatum," Wall Street Journal, October 20, 2008.
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122445812003548473.html#printMode>

2. BUSH vs BUSH (his irresolution applies also to CO2 and GW)

By Caroline B. Glick, deputy editor, Jerusalem Post

In recent months, conservative commentators have devoted countless commentaries to the American media's open bias in favor of Democratic presidential nominee Senator Barack Obama. Although there is no question that their criticism is accurate, it is wrong to root that bias merely in the media's leftist sympathies. The American media's pro-Obama bias is also the consequence of their misrepresentation of outgoing President George W. Bush's record in office. And that misrepresentation too cannot be ascribed merely to the leftist sympathies of the media. For the media are not the source of that misrepresentation. Bush himself is the source of that misrepresentation.

Bush's record in office is the key issue in the campaign. The outgoing President's abysmal approval ratings in his last two years in power caused both parties to recognize that to win the election, their candidate had to distinguish himself as much as possible from the current occupant of the Oval Office. In selecting Senator John McCain as their party's nominee, the Republicans adopted this approach. Throughout his long career in Congress, McCain has served as the consummate party outsider. Yet, in his own way, and now to his detriment, he has also been loyal. And so until recently he avoided attacking Bush outright preferring instead to ignore him.

But by ignoring the President, McCain gave Obama full freedom to define Bush's presidency in the manner that best advanced his electoral prospects. And Obama's success in defining Bush has enabled the Democratic nominee to set the terms of debate on the central issue of the campaign: how America finds itself in the situation it now finds itself, and what policies should be adopted to improve its situation.

Obama has successfully cast Bush's presidency as a repeat of Ronald Reagan's presidency. Obama has portrayed Bush's foreign policy as a reenactment of Reagan's muscular, pro-American foreign policy, which was based on Reagan's belief in American exceptionalism and his willingness to disregard what America's enemies and its erstwhile allies thought of America's actions. Obama has also portrayed Bush's economic policies as a reenactment of Reagan's policies of free market capitalism characterized by deregulation and tax cuts.

Obama has claimed that European and Muslim estrangement from the US; the increased strength of the insurgency in Afghanistan; the resilience of the insurgency in Iraq; Iran's unimpeded drive towards nuclear weapons, and every other major US foreign policy problem are the consequences of Bush's embrace of Reagan's foreign policy approach. Obama claims that the financial crisis too, is a consequence of Bush's Reaganesque tax cuts and his general embrace of supply-side economics and the conservative preference for limited government. By so defining Bush's record in office, Obama has been able to make a case for his own policies, which are diametrically opposed to those he ascribes to Bush.

There is only one problem with Obama's description of Bush's record in office. It is utterly false.

During his first term in office, Bush's foreign policy was rife with internal contradictions and intellectual confusion. Books have been written about the two competing factions in Bush's inner circle. Vice President Richard Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld championed a Reaganesque model of statecraft. And opposing them, Secretary of State Colin Powell pushed for a UN-centered, European-style foreign policy more similar to the one adopted by Bush's father.

Throughout his first term, Bush refused to side with one or the other of the factions. Instead he tried to simultaneously implement two mutually exclusive foreign policies. His indecisiveness rendered his foreign policy intellectually incoherent and doomed much that he did to failure. Bush's speechwriters were evidently more sympathetic to the Cheney-Rumsfeld view and so many of his speeches during his first term echoed Reagan's soaring rhetoric. But on the ground, Bush's policies adhered much more closely to Powell's program.

This intellectual disarray was perhaps nowhere more evident than in Bush's refusal to define the enemy in the war. The men who attacked the US on September 11, 2001 were more than simply terrorists. They had a plan and a cause: They were Muslim jihadists. And they were not the ideological fringe of the Islamic world. Their beliefs are propagated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and are advanced in the most prestigious academies in the Islamic world.

By claiming that the enemy in the war is generic "terror" rather than a worldview embraced by millions of people throughout the Islamic world, Bush made it impossible for his advisors to develop a coherent strategy for war. He also denied the American people the tools necessary for understanding either the meaning of the struggle or the necessity of fighting it. He deprived the public the basic intellectual framework for understanding, for instance, why he decided to imprison terrorists at Guantanamo Bay.

Bush's two-headed foreign policy made it difficult for the public to recognize that the war being waged against the US and its allies in Iraq is not simply an Iraqi struggle, but a battlefield in a regional war fueled by neighboring regimes. His intellectual confusion blinded him to the fact that his democracy agenda was harmed, not advanced, by holding popular elections in which jihadists - whose views and aspirations are inimical to the notion of human freedom - were permitted to participate.

In Bush's second term in office, and particularly since the Republican defeat in the 2006 Congressional elections, Bush abandoned the intellectual incoherence of his first term in favor of a full embrace of Powell's policy preferences now championed by his successor Condoleezza Rice. Throughout his entire first term in office, and due to his refusal to adjudicate between two contradictory foreign policy visions, Bush failed to adopt any policy towards Iran. After the 2006 Congressional elections, Bush embraced the Powell-Rice policy of European-style appeasement. This has been demonstrated most recently by his stated plan to open a US embassy in Teheran.

Bush's wholesale adoption of the Powell-Rice appeasement policy is also reflected in his policies towards North Korea and the Palestinians. And this week, according to statements by White House officials, he stands ready to apply it towards the Taliban, with whom he is considering opening ties.

In Bush's last two years in office, the only surviving remnant of the Cheney-Rumsfeld Reaganesque foreign policy has been Bush's counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq. And in spite of its military success, the fact that this policy is contradicted by the President's policy everywhere else casts doubt on the durability of America's victories on the ground.

Bush's acceptance of the Powell-Rice foreign policy doctrine has not been widely recognized. In large part this has been due to Bush's own refusal to tell the public that he has in fact embraced appeasement. Moreover, Bush's reluctance to come clean with the public has been exacerbated by the media's denial of the change. Whether due to blindness fed by an underlying hostility towards the President, or to ignorance of the significance of Bush's policies, the media have failed to report that Bush's policies today are a repudiation of the ideals and policies Bush gave voice to in his speeches during his first term. Those effectively repudiated speeches were the embodiment of Reagan's foreign policy doctrine.

The same pattern has been followed in popular characterizations of Bush's economic policies. Aside from his tax cuts in his first term - tax cuts that include a "sunset" provision rendering them temporary measures rather than enduring tax reforms - Bush's economic policies during his two terms have been anything but Reaganesque. Bush has vastly increased the size of the federal government. And he has introduced massive new regulation into the US economy.

Emblematic of Bush's eschewal of Reagan's legacy on both foreign policy and economic levels is his newly created Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The establishment of this new position - and the large bureaucracy supporting it - was how Bush chose to contend with US intelligence agencies' failure to foresee and prevent the Sept. 11 attacks.

But like most failures in governance, the failure to anticipate, uncover and prevent those attacks was not due to an absence bureaucracy. Rather, the failure stemmed from the ideologically-driven unwillingness of the directors of the FBI and the CIA to recognize the threat of al Qaida and focus their efforts on tracking and capturing al Qaida members and sympathizers. The proper response to that failure would have been to fire the heads of those agencies and replace them with people who understood the nature of the threat and were capable of contending with it.

Instead Bush decided to increase the size of the government, add a new layer of bureaucracy to the failed intelligence community, and staff it with people of the same mind as those who had failed to anticipate, expose and prevent the September 11 attacks. Not surprisingly, the newly appointed, ideologically uniform bureaucrats continued to underestimate the threats of jihadists or pay attention to any new significant trends in other areas.

It was this failed bureaucratic groupthink that produced the National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear weapons program last year. That report, with its demonstrably false assertion that Iran ended its nuclear-weapons program in 2003, scuttled all of Bush's efforts to use economic sanctions to dissuade Iran from building nuclear bombs and pulled the rug out from under any plan to take military action against Iran's nuclear installations in the event of the sanctions' failure.

So too, led by officials of limited intellectual curiosity and blinding ideological cowardice now sitting atop a new bureaucracy, US intelligence agencies failed to anticipate or prevent Russia's invasion of Georgia.

Bush's establishment of the behemoth Department of Homeland Security was yet another attempt to solve a personnel problem by creating yet another department. And just as the National Intelligence Directorate has failed to solve the problems it was created to contend with, so the Department of Homeland Security has simply continued the same failed immigration policies and domestic intelligence policies that caused the INS and the FBI to fail to identify and arrest the Sept. 11 hijackers.

In short then, both in foreign and domestic affairs, Bush's record is completely at odds with Reagan's record in office. Indeed, his policies have been far more similar to those that Obama - who runs as the anti-Reagan -- promises to advance than those that Reagan adopted.

And this is the great irony of the campaign season. By failing to accurately represent his policies to the public, Bush invited Obama to misrepresent his record and so wrongly ascribe Bush's failures to policies he never adopted - much less implemented. By failing to correct Obama's misrepresentation of Bush's actual record, McCain has allowed Obama to characterize him as the candidate who would continue the Bush presidency -- when the fact is that the small-government policies and the relatively more robust foreign-policy positions that McCain has adopted render him the candidate most unlike the sitting president.

If Obama wins the elections on Tuesday, his victory will find its roots not in media bias, but in Bush's insistent misrepresentation of his record as president.

SEPP Comment: Bush has shown similar irresolution on the GW issue. While, properly, steadfastly refusing to regulate CO2 emissions, his technology (remember the "hydrogen economy"?) and energy policies have treated CO2 and GW as threats (see, e.g., "Climate fears distort rational energy policy" http://sepp.org/Archive/NewSEPP/Climate_Distorting.pdf)

3. CLIMATE SCIENCE: IS IT CURRENTLY DESIGNED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS?

<http://ecoworld.com/features/2008/10/30/climate-science-is-it-currently-designed-to-answer-questions/>
http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2008/09/corrupted_science_revealed.html

By Richard S Lindzen, MIT

Excerpts:

- The primary spokesman for the American Meteorological Society in Washington is Anthony Socci, who is neither an elected official of the AMS nor a contributor to climate science. Rather, he is a former staffer for Al Gore.
- John Firor was the administrative director for the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and frequently spoke as an NCAR expert on the dangers of global warming. But he didn't mention that he also served as chairman of the board of Environmental Defense,
- The UK Meteorological Offices boards chairman, Robert Napier, was previously the chief executive for World Wildlife Fund - UK.
- Bill Hare, a lawyer and campaign director for Greenpeace, frequently speaks as a scientist representing the Potsdam Institute, one of Germany's leading global warming research centers.
- Michael Oppenheimer is now a professor at Princeton University and is often referred to as a leading climate scientist. Oppenheimer previously occupied the Barbra Streisand Chair at Environmental Defense. His scholarly publication record does not include any significant contributions to climate science.
- The myth of scientific consensus is perpetuated in the webs Wikipedia where climate articles are edited by William Connolley, who regularly runs for office in England as a Green Party candidate. No deviation from the politically correct line is permitted.
- The National Academies of Sciences had a Temporary Nominating Group for the Global Environment which bypassed the usual procedures for vetting candidates and thereby provided a back door for the election of candidates who were prominent environmental activists but otherwise fell short of the qualifications necessary for election. Lindzen details how many of these new Academicians exerted control over the NAS and were elected to high positions.

4. WAL-MART ENVIRONMENTALISM: The next commodity to collapse will be mass-marketed environmentalism

<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fpcomment/archive/2008/10/17/wal-mart-environmentalism.aspx>,

By Lawrence Solomon, October 17, 2008

Stock market indexes have plummeted from their inflated peaks. Oil and other commodities have likewise plummeted. The next commodity to tumble from unsustainable peak levels: environmentalism. In part, I am making this prediction because, in my 30 years as an environmentalist, I have never seen so many governments and so many corporations so profusely espousing so many environmental causes.

Where promoting environmentalism was once seen as daring and counter-cultural, today it has become banal, no longer the exclusive preserve of a Body Shop chain, but of every retailer down to Wal-Mart. For the same reason that clothes go out of fashion after the masses embrace them, mass-marketed environmentalism will come to be disdained.

I am predicting a collapse of today's Wal-Mart environmentalism for another reason, too: Much of it is misguided, based on misunderstanding and vacuity. Global warming is by far the biggest such example. Those who have been following my Denier series in these pages know that large numbers of distinguished scientists dispute the conventional wisdom on climate change, making absurd the claim that the science is settled on climate change. And yet government and corporate propaganda in global warming and elsewhere strip away all subtlety and uncertainty in their public-relations programs, portraying environmental problems and proposing environmental solutions in cartoon-cutout simplicity that, more often than not, accomplish nothing good or make matters worse.

While governments and industry discount major environmental issues that affect crown corporations and crown resources (nuclear power, forestry), they stir up concerns in consumer areas that have high visibility and often pose few true hazards. The results are often perverse: Blue Box recycling programs that promote waste; ethanol blends for automobiles that benefit the farm lobby while depleting the land and fouling the air; bans on incandescent bulbs that ignore consumer preferences but please light-bulb manufacturers seeking lucrative new markets; public-transit systems that run near-empty buses along low-density routes; Right-to-Farm laws that legalize polluting practices; demonization of private water systems, including bans on water bottles, when private systems have a superior safety and environmental record: in short, most of the environmental policies that governments put before the public are wrong-headed.

A third reason for my prediction that environmentalism has peaked is the instinct for self-preservation among the political leadership. Thinking they could raise revenues while appearing green, opportunistic politicians have been promoting environmental taxes without having a credible case to make. The result, increasingly, is political ruin. The federal election [in Canada] results this week are, in good part, a testament to Liberal leader Stphane Dion's failure to sell his Green Shift: the Liberals obtained the lowest share of the vote since Confederation.

In England, where citizens face the world's highest burden of green taxes, the ruling Labour Party received a miserable 3% of the vote in by-elections earlier this year and London's mayor, the greenest in Europe, was thrown out of office. Across Europe, once-green politicians are now backing away from their earlier commitments to push green agendas.

In stock and commodity markets, when values fall from unrealistically high levels, they often fall further than justified. When environmentalism falls from its high values on the realization that many concerns have been oversold, it too will likely fall further than justified. Environmentalism will then need to reestablish public trust before real environmental gains can be made. As history shows, after being burned in the stock market, investors often stay away for years, fearful of being burned again. The lack of trust harms the greater economy. We have no history of what happens when citizens feel taken in by false environmental claims. But we may soon find out.

Lawrence Solomon is executive director of Energy Probe and author of The Deniers.

5. HOLLAND INUNDATED BY ALARMIST PROPAGANDA

<http://climatesci.org/2008/10/28/holland-inundated-by-alarmist-propaganda-a-guest-weblog-by-hendrik-tennekes/>

Guest weblog by Hendrik Tennekes, October 28, 2008

Five months ago, I felt that the tide in Holland was turning. Marcel Stive, a civil engineering professor and member of the Delta Committee, a blue-ribbon panel that was going to publish a report on our coastal defenses, said in an interview with an alumni magazine:

“Fortunately, the time rate of climate change is slow compared to the life span of the defense structures along our coast. There is enough time for adaptation. We should monitor the situation carefully, but up to now, climate change does not cause severe problems for our coastal defense system. IPCC has given lower estimates for the expected sea level rise in four successive reports.” [See here NIPCC report Fig. 19]

But what happened? The Delta Committee published its report in September, and based its recommendations on *well over a meter* of sea-level rise in this century and a *tenfold* increase in coastal security. Its estimate for the additional funding needed is *two billion dollars* annually.

In interviews with journalists, scientists associated with the Delta Committee went further yet. Professor Pavel Kabat of Wageningen University said that sea-level rise could easily exceed the number given in the report, and Professor Pier Vellinga, also of Wageningen University, quoted *six meters*, on the assumption that the rate at which the Greenland ice cap is melting will accelerate dramatically.

Professor Hans von Storch, a German member of the subcommittee in charge of assessing the scientific evidence, promptly protested in the Dutch press, saying that the Delta Committee had piled extreme upon extreme in order to obtain these figures. Holland’s senior science writer, Karel Knip, followed suit, suggesting that the Committee was evidently ignorant of the statistics of rare events. For reasons unknown to me, KNMI, the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute, did not attempt a rebuttal. It could have chosen to state in public that recent assessments by IPCC and by its own scientists predicted *half a meter* of sea-level rise, but it didn’t. I suspect that the Department of Transportation and Public Works, which is responsible for our coastal defense system, instructed KNMI not to derail the political debate with a balanced presentation of the scientific evidence. [*SEPP comment: NIPCC’s best estimate is only 28 cm*]

Much to my dismay, the publication of the Committee report was followed by a massive publicity campaign. Al Gore came over to Holland a month ago, and gave a \$300,000 speech blasting the energy industry. James Hansen, advisor to Gore and well-known forecaster of catastrophic sea-level rise, will address a meeting in Rotterdam next month. Kabat and Vellinga will speak there too. The Urgenda Foundation, not so subtly named for its promotion of an Urgent Agenda for Climate Change, has published a manifesto full of hell and damnation in a leading newspaper. After several years of floating scary stories about possible inundation of Amsterdam Airport, Professor Vellinga now advocates a massive dam in front of our entire coast, wide enough for urban development.

What is the purpose of hyped-up forecasts of sea-level rise? Why don’t the Dutch participants in IPCC speak up? Why doesn’t the IPCC brass? Whose interests are served by ridiculous climate alarms? The problems surrounding climate change are tough enough as is. We desperately need moderation, not propaganda.

6. STRANGER THAN FICTION

By Brendan O’Neill, October 27, 2008

Earlier this year, I wrote an [eco-satirical column](#) under the pseudonym Ethan Greenhart, in which I (or rather, Ethan) called upon Greens everywhere to pray for an economic downturn. The column argued that nothing would benefit our human-ravaged planet more than a big, beautiful, stock-crashing, Wall Street-burning, consumer-baiting, home-evicting, bank-busting recession.

We need something to stop humans raping the planet, I said, tongue pressed ferociously against my cheek, and the recession might just be the chemical castration for the job. A recession could be the antibody Gaia so desperately needs to deal with her human itch, since it would force people to buy less and live more humbly.

The column said recession would be a just punishment for the lunatics of humankind, before the arrival of the final big disease -- that glorious moment when a rampant sickness will reduce the human population to sustainable levels and end industrialism . . . just as the Plague contributed to the demise of feudalism.

I was going too far, right? Yes, there are super-alooft Gaia worshippers who, caring little for the living standards of their fellow men, argue that [a recession would be a good thing](#) and, sure, they deserve a few satirical darts tossed their way. But surely no right-minded Green (assuming such a thing exists) would celebrate the depletion of mankind by a preferably painless but speedily contagious disease?

You'd be amazed.

Not 24 hours after the column was published, Ethan received an e-mail (my alter ego came with his own inbox) from Valerie Stevens, chairperson of the U.K.-based [Optimum Population Trust](#). The OPT is an influential green-leaning outfit that campaigns for strict controls on population growth. Ms. Stevens, believing remarkably that Ethan Greenhart is a real person, wrote: What a marvellous piece of writing. I feel exactly the same as you!

Consider what this means. The head of one of Britain's most vocal Green lobby groups feels exactly that people who work in shops are comparable to concentration camp guards; that humankind is a poisonous bacteria in Gaia's bloodstream; that consumerism makes us mentally ill; that the consumer society has turned us into savages . . . well, not *us*, obviously, but certainly *them*; and that a disease should come and decimate the plague that is mankind. All of these statements were contained in the pretend eco-rant that OPT chair Valerie Stevens described as a marvellous piece of writing with which she agrees exactly.

The OPT has numerous Green bigwigs on its advisory board, including [Jonathon Porritt](#), who was director of Friends of the Earth from 1984 to 1990 and is currently an adviser to [Prince Charles](#), the insufferably eco-minded heir to the British throne. Ms Stevens' enthusiastic agreement with Ethan Greenhart unwittingly revealed the backward, misanthropic thinking that rattles in the attics of Britain's posh Green elite.

It also revealed something else: the environmental movement is now so pompous, hysterical, bloated, and disconnected that it is almost beyond satire. My weekly Ethan Greenhart columns, published in my online magazine, [spiked](#), have now been turned into a book: [Can I Recycle My Granny? And 39 Other Eco-Dilemmas](#). In the course of writing it, I discovered that satirizing Greens is forever an uphill struggle, as one's campaign to mock environmentalism continually threatens to be derailed by the latest ridiculous utterance from the Greens themselves.

Ethan Greenhart has argued that climate-change denial should be recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as a mental disorder and that there should be eco-lobotomies for persistent deniers. Well, this is only a more extreme version of a [leading British Greens](#) demand for international criminal tribunals to try those who preach the gospel of denial. Yet it turns out that many Greens are already discussing the psychological processes that contribute to climate change denial, with [The Ecologist](#), an influential British magazine, arguing that angrily denying the problem [of climate change] outright is a form of psychotic denial. Perhaps eco-lobotomies aren't so far off now.

Ethan Greenhart has claimed to have set up something called Bottlefeeders Anonymous, for those moms who have strayed from The Ethical Path by bottlefeeding rather than breastfeeding their offspring. Bottlefeeding is a form of child abuse, he declares, since it involves stuffing your child's gut with powder produced in a factory by a really big and probably quite evil conglomerate. Lo and behold, it turns out that

eco-minded militant lactivists really do look upon bottlefeeding as abusive. Green columnist [George Monbiot](#) believes that feeding your child formula is tantamount to child abuse.

Ethan has even celebrated suicide as a sensible solution to human overcrowding on Gaia's pretty face. Here he was inspired by cranky Green groups like the [Church of Euthanasia](#). Yet this outlook ain't so cranky anymore. Shortly before [Can I Recycle My Granny?](#) was to hit the shelves in which Ethan maintains that non-existence is the most perfectly ethical way of being, a book by David Benatar (a professor of philosophy at the University of Cape Town, no less) appeared under the title [Better Never to Have Been: The Harm of Coming Into Existence](#).

Horace said the purpose of satire is to laugh men out of their follies. Yet such is the depth of contemporary Green folly that even mockery can be mistaken for another sensible idea or contribution to the Green cause. Of course (and I would say this, wouldn't I?) my book is still full of cutting-edge satire richly comic, hails [The Independent](#). But you had better buy it quick before its maddest, zaniest send-ups of the environmentalist movement become the latest Green orthodoxy.

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