



The Cynical Politics of Global Warming and Its Hobgoblins

Mark W. Hendrickson

Colaboraciones n° 2341

June 30, 2008

“Cynical politics” may be a redundancy, but it is hard to imagine a more cynical political issue than global warming (GW). In his 1992 book *Earth in the Balance*, Al Gore called for a “wrenching transformation of society.” Leftists, with their elitist penchant for social engineering, didn’t need any convincing. The challenge for Gore was the inconvenient truth that, in a democracy, a would-be central planner needs to get the masses on his side, too. To do that, he borrowed a strategy encapsulated in H.L. Mencken’s statement, “The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.” Apocalyptic GW became Al Gore’s hobgoblin of choice.

Gore needed the scientific community to back up his assertions and

the media to spread the word. Enlisting the help of the media was easy (apocalyptic fantasies are sure ratings winners), but getting enough scientists on board was trickier. When Gore started his GW campaign in the early 1990s, a contemporary Gallup poll of scientists showed that only 18 percent thought there was any evidence to support Gore’s theory. Even a survey conducted by Greenpeace found only 13 percent of climatologists willing to declare GW “probable.”

Nevertheless, Gore repeatedly claimed that (literally) 98 percent of scientists agreed with him, and he exhorted reporters to ignore skeptics. Right from the outset, the GW cult (like other illiberal movements, such as communism and fascism) had to resort to the “big lie” technique to make it appear that the science of GW was settled. (See my

prior article, ["Questions About Global Warming,"](#) for some of the holes in the "science" of global warming.)

As senator, and then vice president, Gore used his power to channel money toward those who "played ball" and away from those who doubted GW. The latter found that grant money dried up, promotions were denied, and even jobs were terminated. Gore's colleague, Colorado Senator Timothy Wirth, became Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs in charge of promoting GW theory and international agreements to address the alleged problem. Wirth was quoted as bragging that he could change a lot of minds with a billion dollars per year of State Department money. Indeed, recent estimates are that \$50 billion has been spent promoting the GW theory (mostly governments and international organizations using tax money) and less than \$1 billion to question it. Advantage: GW.

This is richly ironic. GW fanatics routinely accuse skeptics of having been bought off by Big Oil. They expect Americans to disbelieve private-sector scientists while trusting government-funded scientists (i.e., virtually all the scientists on the GW bandwagon) as if, *a priori*, government funding is holy, but private funding corrupt.

The Kyoto Protocol—which called for the developed nations to curb their CO₂ emissions—was the international front of Gore's GW agenda. For the last seven years, Gore's media allies have denounced George

Bush for "killing" Kyoto. Poppycock! The history is this: after the Clinton administration signed Kyoto, the senate voted 95-0 against implementing Kyoto's provisions because they were slanted so unfairly against the United States. Clinton then signed an executive order barring the executive branch from enforcing any part of Kyoto. Bush didn't kill Kyoto; he inherited a corpse. (Factoid: since Kyoto was written, greenhouse emissions in the countries that adopted it increased 21.1 percent on average, while U.S. emissions increased only 6.6 percent; yet, the United States has been singled out as the irresponsible global citizen. That's politics!)

Kyoto's agenda wasn't to save the world, but to shackle economic activity in this country through curbing energy consumption. It's easy to understand why foreign economic competitors would want this, but why would Gore and American liberals want to do this to the American people? The answer is simple: the lust for power and importance. Remember: control energy and you control people.

There are signs that Gore's movement is losing credibility. An English judge ruled that Gore's award-winning film "An Inconvenient Truth" may not be shown in U.K. schools without disclaimers and the inclusion of opposing opinions, on the grounds that it is a work of political propaganda, and not scientifically sound. Various scientists on the political left who formerly endorsed the GW dogma now repudiate it. Remarkably, 31,000 scientists

have signed a statement urging our government not to take any rash, costly actions to curb CO₂ emissions.

Unfortunately, taking rash, costly action may be the eventual outcome. Last week, the Senate considered setting limits on CO₂ emissions through the colossally expensive and grandiloquently named "Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act." Fortunately, this destructive

proposal doesn't have enough support to pass now, but it raises the possibility that Al Gore will get the last laugh after all. What an irony it would be if, even as scientific support for his GW theory crumbles, his years of propagating the "big lie" of the GW hobgoblin were to cause Congress to impose the "wrenching transformation of society" that he has long yearned for.