

## Imminent Peril, Part 2

by

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*Note: The Washington Post and The New York Times have both published stories asserting that Global Climate Change is now accepted by the majority of the world's scientists, and that global warming is proceeding at a greater rate than anyone had anticipated. The question now is: will global warming reach a tipping point where positive feedback mechanisms will take over, resulting in irreversible and catastrophic climate change? And how long do we have to reverse the trend before the process passes the point of no return. Of course, the Bush Administration does not want the US public to know about this.*

*You can read about the articles at the following website: [http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1001920362](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1001920362).*

### Introduction

In the first half of this article, we reviewed the unprecedented warnings issued during the past decade by the world scientific community. And we summarized the results of the first global assessment studies, which were issued in just the last couple years. We learned that virtually all of the planet's major ecosystems have been stressed to the brink of collapse. And we were warned that we have only one generation, or at most two, in which to deal with these impending crises.

Why are these issues not foremost in the minds of every human being living right now? Why are we not engaged in a global dialogue to seek a solution to these problems? Next, we will turn our attention to the answer to these questions.

### Mindset

The prevalent economic system is predicated on never ending growth, where prosperity requires continuous growth in production and consumption. However, this growth must take place on a planet with limited resources and carrying capacity. Economists are completely blind to these limits. They illogically argue that as known reserves of vital resources grow short, the increasing value of the resource in question will spur the discovery of additional reserves and render previously uneconomical reserves economical. When cornered, economists point towards scientific and technological innovations which they are sure will come to our rescue. They ignore the scientists and engineers who warn that we cannot expect such breakthroughs alone to solve our problems. They argue that we need basic changes in our lifestyle. We need to wean ourselves from over-consumption, emphasizing sustainability instead.

Continuing over-consumption also plays upon the intransigent nature of human behavior. Human beings are predisposed toward developing habits and comfortable patterns of behavior. That which is new is alien and suspect. Change is resisted until it becomes absolutely necessary, or until the benefits of change become obvious. Even when change is clearly beneficial or necessary, many will resist, becoming obstinately and blindly reactionary instead.

The situation is further obfuscated by the media, which has tended to either ignore the scientific warnings or downplay the warnings and quickly divert the public awareness to more innocuous matters. There is a documented bias in the media towards positions favored by their owners and sponsors.<sup>1</sup> Whether this media bias is deliberate or systemic, the effect is a public which is uninformed or—worse—misinformed.

The problem of disinformation is largely intentional. There is a powerful disinformation industry, the purpose of which is to produce conflicting studies attacking the veracity of scientific work which may prove harmful to moneyed interests. Many scientists are employed for no other purpose than to contradict the work of legitimate scientists. This tactic was first pioneered by the tobacco industry<sup>2</sup>, but has since developed into a major industry of its own devoted to retaining the status quo in favor of major corporations. Yearly, corporations funnel millions of dollars into junk science, either directly or through conservative think-tanks and foundations.<sup>3</sup>

4

Practitioners of junk science are closely linked to the PR and advertising industries. Modern advertising

developed out of research into brainwashing and psychological manipulation. Edward L. Bernays, the father of the PR industry, applied the work of Freud and other psychoanalysts to the task of swaying public opinion<sup>5</sup>. In the last few decades, military researchers have developed computer programs which utilize artificial intelligence to mimic basic personality types. These programs can then be used to determine how to manipulate people into doing and thinking as desired.<sup>6</sup> These techniques are all employed by the PR industries, as well as the major political parties and the military establishment.<sup>7</sup>

The moneyed elite have a vested interest in maintaining things the way they are. This is not because they are intrinsically evil people, but because they actually believe they are acting for the good of all. Many believe that the less affluent classes are inferior. They believe that the masses are incapable of making their own informed decisions and must be told what to do. But most simply cannot face their own culpability. They are removed from the chain of causality between their actions and their inevitable effects. They are no more inclined to accept the responsibility for their actions than are meat eaters inclined to accept responsibility for the slaughter of the animals whose meat they purchase in the supermarket.

Returning to the reactionaries, perhaps the worst of this breed are the Christian Zionists. They are Christian fundamentalists who are actively seeking to bring about their own vision of Armageddon. According to these fanatics, once Israel reclaims all of its former territory, a massive religious war will be provoked with Jews and Christians on one side and Muslims and other unbelievers on the other side. At this point, the true believers will ascend into heaven while the antichrist and the four horsemen of the apocalypse ravage the earth. Finally, Christ will return to vanquish the antichrist and proclaim a new kingdom of God, all people will be converted to fundamentalist Christianity, and the true believers will return to govern over the kingdom of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Christian Zionists are not a fringe group. They are numerous, well organized, and influential. During the Reagan years, Christian Zionists were invited to present their interpretation of the Book of Revelation at the Pentagon. Among the most notable Christian Zionists are Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and George W. Bush. In spring of 2002, after Bush demanded that the Israelis pull back their tanks from West Bank refugee camps, Jerry Falwell led born again Christians to flood the White House with phone calls, emails, and letters telling Bush to back off. Bush retracted his demand and the tanks rolled on.<sup>9</sup>

Christian reactionaries are a powerful group, and they stand opposed to the resolution of the environmental threats listed in this book.

### **Coup and Empire**

In the year 2000, the moneyed interests backing the George W. Bush presidential bid pulled out every stop in order to install their candidate in the White House. They over-spent every other candidate from both parties. In Florida, George's brother Jeb rigged the voter lists in an effort to disenfranchise minorities and others who vote predominately democratic. As the election came down to only a few thousand votes and Al Gore appeared likely to win in a recount, the U.S. Supreme Court—dominated by Reagan and Bush Sr. appointees—ordered that the recount cease, handing the presidency to George W. Bush. In their decision, the Supreme Court—which is supposed to set precedent in matters of constitutional law—stated that this was a one time decision which could not be used as a precedent.<sup>10</sup>

In the months following his inauguration, Bush made very clear that he had no interest in resolving environmental and social problems. His administration was packed with oil, pharmaceutical and defense industry executives. Practically the first action of his administration was to back out of the Kyoto Treaty on Global Warming. In the months ahead, he also backed out of a biological weapons treaty and sought to weaken or overturn a variety of environmental laws and legislation on everything from water and air quality to opening the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration. He refused to do anything about the California energy crisis, even when it became apparent that the situation had been largely contrived by corporations such as Enron. Instead of launching an investigation, he and Vice-president Dick Cheney had Enron President Ken Lay and other industry insiders submit a wish list which then served as the basis for the presidential Energy Plan.

I do not wish to imply that the situation would have been much better had Al Gore been sworn into office. Though Al Gore has gone to great lengths to present himself as an environmentalist, his record as Vice-

president is full of compromise and watered down legislative efforts. Witness his performance at the first Kyoto conference, where he lobbied to weaken the resulting treaty on global warming. In context of the scientific warnings issued over the past decade, Al Gore would appear to be the spokesman for big business with a conscience, seeking a compromise which will not penalize the ability of corporations to generate profit by exploiting the earth's resources, nor hamper economic growth or the right of the affluent to over-consume. Cast in this light, George W. Bush would appear to be the candidate of big business without a conscience.

By fall of 2001, the Bush administration had earned the animosity of most of the international community, and his popularity at home had plunged to record lows. The Democrat controlled Congress was successfully fighting many of his proposals. His administration was dead in the water; it appeared unlikely that any of his goals would come to fruition. Had things gone on this way, in all likelihood George W. Bush would soon be facing impeachment.

Whether or not the Bush administration had foreknowledge of the 9-11 terrorist attacks (and there is a mountain of evidence suggesting that they did), the Bush administration, and business interests tied to the Bush administration, was the big winner in this catastrophe and the subsequent Anthrax letters. Bush himself was heard to quip in the days following the attacks, "I hit the trifecta!"<sup>11</sup> As a result of the terrorist attacks, Bush's popularity surged to unheard of heights. He announced a never ending war and ramrodded legislation through Congress which would negate civil liberties guaranteed by the constitution. Whatever their connection to the attacks and the attackers may be, the Bush administration has capitalized on the attacks to push ahead a fascistic and imperialist agenda both at home and abroad.

Within a month after the attacks, Bush launched a war against one of the poorest countries in the world, though a country in a commanding position with regard to the potentially energy-rich Central Asian region. This gave him command of a vital strategic position at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Military units poured into the surrounding countries, as did exploration teams from the various oil majors. Yet, as the oil prospects were toned down, so was the military presence.<sup>12</sup> The US had already turned its attention to the Middle East.

The US has not turned its attention to Saudi Arabia, which was the country of origin for Osama bin Laden and most of the attackers, and the country from which Al Qaeda receives much of its financial backing. Nor has the US turned its attention to Pakistan, which has very strong ties to both Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Instead, the US has turned its attention to the one Middle Eastern country without ties to Al Qaeda; a country which is, in fact, reviled by Al Qaeda for its secular government. Yet a country which holds 11% of the world's proven oil reserves: Iraq.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, the United States is not fighting a war on terrorism. It is fighting a war of imperial conquest aimed at dominating the world through control of its energy resources. Witness the Bush administration's lack of interest in capturing Osama bin Laden. Witness the Bush administration's insistence on a war with Iraq on the flimsiest of claims that he *might* be seeking weapons of mass destruction. Witness that Bush has done nothing about North Korea, even though they admit that they are actively seeking weapons of mass destruction and will use them preemptively. Witness the Bush administration's efforts to destabilize Venezuela and support a coup in that country, though the only offense of democratically elected President Chavez is to use a portion of oil profits to help alleviate poverty within his country. Witness the Bush administration's inclination to label as international terrorists one faction of a long-standing civil war in Colombia, while sending military aid and military advisors to that country in an effort to beef up the policing of oil pipelines which the rebels have damaged.

### **What's to Come**

The Bush administration is not interested in a war on terrorism. The elite interests behind the Bush administration seek to ensure their continued dominance in a world of shrinking energy resources and looming environmental catastrophes. Comparing US policy over the past decade to the four strategies analyzed in **GEO-3**<sup>14</sup>, it would appear that the US has been pursuing a Markets First strategy, while giving a nod to the Policy First strategy. However, since George W. Bush moved into the White House—and certainly since 9-11—the US has given up any pretense of a Policy First strategy and is currently moving away from a Markets First strategy

to a Security First strategy. The Sustainability First strategy has never received any serious consideration.

If the US continues to pursue its current strategy, then this country will become a police state in every sense of the word. The privileged classes will complete their flight to guarded and gated communities, while the rest of the population will be left to contend with a collapsed economy, energy impoverishment and starvation. Civil liberties will be dismissed and the constitution retired. Anger and dissent will be met with overwhelming repression. A massive military organization will take command of the world's resources while forcing the world population to accept a harsh military justice.

As burgeoning personal debt comes crashing down on the citizens of the US, it is likely that new laws will force them into debt servitude. Indeed, as energy production diminishes some form of slavery will have to be instituted in order for the elite to retain their accustomed lifestyles. As rates of imprisonment skyrocket, prisons will be transformed to work camps where the remaining industries will have access to abundant free labor. As for the masses, both within the US and throughout the world, they will be faced with unparalleled levels of starvation and suffering.

Or, if some alliance is formed in opposition, the Christian Zionists might just get their conflagration. It is doubtful, however, that it will be the apocalypse they are seeking.

### Other Options

It doesn't have to be this way. We still have the time and resources to build a better world for all of us. Compromise is not the answer, nor is a cosmetic change in the prevailing economic system. It is doubtful that regulation of market-based capitalism is viable over the long-term. Experience has shown that eventually capitalism will find some way of nullifying any imposed restrictions, and then the maximization of profit will regain preeminence over environmental and social considerations.

A sustainable society must be focused on the small-scale, based on strong local communities, most likely functioning on principles of direct democracy. Local communities require localized and self-contained economies. Such economies would not be measured by growth and profit, but by sustainability and quality of life. Local transportation would return to the basics: foot, bicycles and horses. Intercommunity transport would likely consist of high-speed monorails. Intercontinental transportation would return to the high seas. Housing would be restructured for energy efficiency, possibly in conjunction with the recycling of industrial waste heat. Communities would be supported by a local agricultural base, utilizing organic and permaculture techniques. There are already working models for sustainable communities, and the movement toward sustainability is growing.

In conclusion, we cannot depend on our political leaders or our business leaders to walk us safely through this minefield. We need to educate ourselves and we need to organize. We must take back the reins into our own hands, and we need to move fast.

### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> **Manufacturing Consent**, Herman, Edward & Chomsky, Noam. Pantheon Books, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> **Tobacco Industry Efforts subverting International Agency for Research on Cancer's Second Hand Smoke Study**, Ong, Lisa & Glantz, Stanton. *Lancet*, 2000; 355: 125359. <http://www.electric-words.com/junk/glantz/glantz.html>

<sup>3</sup> **Who Determines what is Junk Science? The Corporate Corruption of Science**, Fist, Stewart, editor. <http://www.electric-words.com/junk/junkindex.html>

<sup>4</sup> **Trust Us, We're Experts: How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles on Your Future**, Rampton, Sheldon & Stauber, John. Tarcher/Penguin.

<sup>5</sup> **The Father of Spin; Edward L. Bernays and the Birth of Public Relations**, Tye, Larry. Owl Books, 2002. See a detailed review of this book: <http://www.prwatch.org/prwissues/1999Q2/bernays.html>

<sup>6</sup> **Profiling and Personality Simulation**, Livergood, Norman D. <http://www.hermes-press.com/program1.htm> & **Brainwashing America**, Livergood, Norman D. <http://www.hermes-press.com/brainwash1.htm>

<sup>7</sup> **Toxic Sludge is Good for You!: Lies, Damn Lies, and the Public Relations Industry**, Stauber, John C & Rampton, Shelton. Common Courage Press, 1995.

<sup>8</sup> **Armageddon Lobby**. <http://www.againstbombing.com/ArmageddonUpdates.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> **The Best Democracy Money Can Buy**, Palast, Greg. Plume, 2002, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> **Remarks by the President in Texans for Rick Perry Reception**. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/>

2002/06/20020614-8.html

<sup>12</sup> **Much Ado about Nothing—Wither the Caspian Riches**, Pfeiffer, Dale Allen. *The End of the Oil Age*, Lulu Press, March 2004. a href=<http://www.lulu.com/allenadale>

<sup>13</sup> **US Intentions**, Pfeiffer, Dale Allen. *The End of the Oil Age*, Lulu Press, March 2004. a href=<http://www.lulu.com/allenadale>

<sup>14</sup> **Global Environmental Outlook-3**. United Nations Environment Programme, May 22 2002. <http://www.grida.no/geo/geo3/>