



Will America Become an Energy Cripple?

For years now environmentalists have been calling the shots when it comes to energy development in the United States. That's why we don't drill for oil where we know it exists in Alaska. That's why an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has brought oil drilling in the Gulf to a standstill. In fact, President Obama has announced that oil is the fuel of the past without telling us what exactly is the fuel of the future.



The president stated during his presidential campaign that he wants to put the coal industry out of business. Yet coal is used by many power plants to create the electricity we use in our houses, factories, and skyscrapers. As for nuclear energy, which is still the cleanest and most efficient source of energy developed by scientists thus far, the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan, which damaged some of Japan's nuclear facilities, is now being used by environmentalists to once again scare Americans into believing that any nuclear plant in the middle of the United States might be subject to a tsunami of some kind, and therefore no more nuclear plants ought to be built in this country.

Countries like France might use nuclear energy safely to provide clean electric power to many French cities, and even American nuclear plants have not had a problem since Three Mile Island 32 years ago, but when it comes to future energy sources for the U.S., the environmentalists seem to be determined to turn this country into an energy cripple.

We are being told that we shall have to rely on windmills and solar panels for most of our energy in the future, neither of which can fuel cars. But there are even opponents of windmills who say that windmills kill birds and that they spoil the scenery. As for solar panels, they are great in the Southwest which has an abundance of sunlight, but much less efficient in the northeast where clouds often block out the sun.

Note how the ghosts of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl are being flashed before American eyes on the big plasma screens to frighten us into thinking that any new nuclear plant will repeat these calamities. We forget that Chernobyl was caused by shoddy communist engineering, and that nobody died at Three Mile Island. Besides, nuclear technology has been greatly improved since then and has been made virtually fail-safe by continued scientific innovations.

So, as far as the administration's energy policy is concerned, oil is out, coal is out, windmills are iffy



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because they kill birds, but solar power is okay. The president hasn't said much if anything about natural gas, of which we have plenty. But of course as we all know, now and then, a gas leak will cause an explosion and kill people.

By the way, wood burning requires cutting down trees, which tree-hugging environmentalists consider to be a mortal sin. I'm surprised they haven't put the Christmas tree industry out of business by now. And, of course, whale oil requires killing whales

In other words, there are no sources of energy that are totally riskless. I'm sure that even solar panels entail risk in installation and in other ways we have not yet experienced. Indeed, driving a car entails risk, but we are all willing to tolerate such risks in order to enjoy the pleasures and economic benefits of comfortable private mobility. Capitalism has made automobile transportation for the ordinary citizen one of our greatest sources of pleasure without any government assistance. But by now government regulation requiring greater fuel efficiency may make cars lighter and less safe in a crash.

Government in America now regulates everything at additional cost to everyone and with the usual unpredictable consequences. Yes, lighter cars use less fuel, but surviving a crash in one of them has also become less likely. I prefer driving a so-called full-size car, in my case a Grand Marquis, which is like a tank with great protection for the occupants.

Americans are being driven insane by the environmentalists who routinely throw cold water on any scientific innovation that would enhance our use of such reliable energy sources as oil, coal, natural gas, and nuclear power. And the media is full of their doom and gloom scenarios. They want Americans to voluntarily agree to live in an energy crippled society, driving light electric cars, eating more expensive organic fruits and vegetables, and worshipping trees. But what about bushes? Aren't they worthy of adoration?

Environmentalists are cultural pests. You have to keep swatting them like flies. But they keep coming back, especially when there is a calamity like what has happened in Japan. They are America's permanent annoyance that one must put up with and largely ignore. But we ignore them at our peril, for they seem to have an inordinate power over our legislators, many of whom agree with the environmentalists that Americans are not nearly as miserable as they ought to be. That's why many of them advocate a five-dollar tax on gas. That will *really* make Americans miserable.

Like socialists, they want to reduce this country to their acceptable level of misery. They hate individual ingenuity that permits human beings to create a veritable paradise out of the wilderness. The sight of a skyscraper replacing a clump of trees is anathema to them. In fact, they prefer the wilderness to developed civilization.

At this point we must make a very clear distinction between environmentalists and conservationists. Environmentalists are opposed to any further scientific explorations anywhere that could possibly do any harm, real or imagined, to the environment. They generally hate civilization. Even though new trees can be grown from seedlings, they hate cutting down forests for human use. Pictures of deforested areas evoke the same hysteria as pictures of polar bears supposedly stranded on ice floes or melting glaciers in the Arctic. Environmentalists are hysterical nuts who are capable of sending mail-bombs to scientists.

Conservationists, on the other hand, are civilized, sane human beings who understand the need for man to continue to explore for natural resources, but also appreciate the wonderful works of nature. They were principally responsible for the National Park idea, which set aside certain remarkably beautiful



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areas of the wilderness to be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations. Conservationists are usually scientifically oriented individuals who recognize the intrinsic spiritual value of great natural beauty. But they also favor the continued development of our high-tech civilization that has given human beings the great benefits of material comfort, cultural pleasure, and global travel.

That is why it is important not to confuse irrational environmentalists with very rational conservationists. Environmentalists tend to be socialists and liberals. Conservationists tend to be conservative, politically and culturally. And that is why when they advanced the idea of the National Park, they made sure that the lodges all had electricity, hot showers, comfortable beds, and large picture windows.



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