



Correction, Please!

Like the Disastrous Virus Lockdown? If So, You'll Love the Green New Delusion



Item: *“Following the pandemic is like watching the climate crisis with your finger jammed on the fast-forward button,”* opines the Economist. The London-based publication, in the cover story of its issue dated May 23-29, maintains: *“Neither the virus nor greenhouse gases care much for borders, making both scourges global. Both put the poor and vulnerable at greater risk than wealthy elites and demand government action on a scale hardly ever seen in peacetime.”*

The pandemic, argues the Economist, *“creates a unique chance to enact government policies that steer the economy away from carbon at a lower financial, social and political cost than might otherwise have been the case.”*

Item: The New York Times has had a plethora of pieces about how the impact of the coronavirus could be useful in pushing green-tinged programs. For instance, on May 19 (in *“Americans See Climate as a Concern, Even Amid Coronavirus Crisis”*), it dismissed any thought that *“Covid-19 might displace climate change as a threat in the American mind.”* *“It hasn’t,”* assured the left-wing “newspaper of record.”

On March 27, in the article *“What the Coronavirus Means for Climate Change,”* we were told that *“our response to this health crisis will shape the climate crisis for decades to come.”* The efforts *“will help determine the shape of our economies and our lives for the foreseeable future, and they will have effects on carbon emissions that reverberate across the planet for thousands of years.”*

And on June 4, the Times put out the alarm (*“Trump, Citing Pandemic, Moves to Weaken Two Key Environmental Protections”*) about a presidential executive order and a new proposed cost-benefit rule by the Environmental Protection Agency that together *“signal that Mr. Trump intends to speed up his efforts to dismantle environmental regulations as the nation battles the coronavirus and a wave of unrest protesting the deaths of black Americans in Georgia, Minnesota and Kentucky.”*

Item: Though hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives to the coronavirus and tens of millions have lost their jobs, MSNBC anchor Katy Tur is among the left-wingers seeing a *“silver lining.”* On May 20, she announced that an *“unexpected yet positive consequence of the pandemic has been a drop in pollution, specifically carbon pollution, which fell 17% worldwide at the peak of the global stay-*



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at-home orders. That's mostly the result of fewer vehicles on the road, but also fewer planes in the sky and factories being closed as well."

Correction: Many in the woke community appear to view the onslaught of the coronavirus as a positive for the environment — because it impairs evil industry and even eliminates polluting humans.

That was essentially the gist of a conversation in mid-May on *CBS This Morning* among correspondent Chris Livesay and co-hosts Anthony Mason and Gayle King. Talking about the lockdown, Livesay commented on the "one silver lining no one can deny: staying at home has been largely good for the environment. And here in Venice, this lagoon city has returned to its pre-industrial tranquility." The network correspondent pointed to the "Rialto Bridge, the Grand Canal, even St. Mark's Square deserted. Streets and canals usually awash with tourists now so still nature is filling the void."

Mason in turn commented on the "beautiful city. And it's lovely to see it empty." Agreeing, King blamed "the human beings mucking everything up."

Who needs so many people? Or their jobs and other uncouth activities?

This is not a rare belief among the intelligentsia. In May, Geoffrey Dickens collected more than a dozen recent illustrations for Media Research Center's "NewsBusters." For example: In Wuhan, China, air quality was now seen to be improving (as noted on NBC's *Today*); from Wales to South Africa, "nature seems to be saying, 'We can get along fine without you'" (*CBS Evening News*); and, how "Mother Earth was starting to clear her throat" and "the planet has essentially hissed, 'I will not be ignored,' how do we confront the climate emergency?" (*CBS's 60 Minutes*)

Here's yet another quotation, this from Christiane Amanpour on her show on (federally subsidized) PBS:

If there is a silver lining in coronavirus news, it is this: The economic shutdown is causing at least temporary relief from air and water pollution.... Could this be a harbinger of a low-carbon future? Or could economic and political pressure turn the clock back again on climate regulation?... We've got many people who are activists and scientists on this who just hope this is going to be a turning point.... Airliners haven't been flying in the way that they normally do.... That's great news for the planet, great news for us, but, again, is it sustainable?

Well, if you want to exist in a primitive economy, that is "sustainable," but that is not the goal sought by most Americans or those in other developed nations.

But that is the objective of much of the political Left in this country, as well as among international elitists (though that is not how *they* intend to live).

(You may also make a case that the Black Plague led to the demise of feudalism, but that's scant solace for the 75 million to 200 million people who died.)

One who is not buying the line promoted by propagandists such as *Time* and the International Energy Agency, among others, is H. Sterling Burnett, Ph.D. A senior fellow at the Heartland Institute and the managing editor of *Environment & Climate News*, Burnett observes that the IEA was created to be "a source of information and statistics about the international oil market and other energy sectors, but it has recently become a shill for green energy interests." (Never mind the coronavirus deaths and economic destruction; in the IEA's view, it offers a "historic opportunity" for a green energy revolution.)

We are not going to get the economy rolling again by depending on wind turbines and solar panels. All



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sources of “renewable” energy (led by hydropower) provided just 11.4 percent of American consumption in 2018, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

The GOP, as Burnett has pointed out, has been “rightly pointing out the economic meltdown brought on by governments shutting down economic activity to prevent the spread of the coronavirus is directly comparable to the economic damage that would result if the country adopted the Green New Deal (GND).” There is considerable evidence, Burnett writes, about “the types of wholesale economic changes that would have to occur to impose” the Green New Deal being proposed by progressives. “Entire industries would have to be fundamentally transformed or written off in the space of just 10 years, squandering trillions of dollars of investment.”

Yet, national and international elites continue to plug the GND. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, as recently recounted by Paul Driessen, senior policy analyst for the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow,

believes “the pandemic could create an opportunity to rebuild the global economy along more sustainable lines.” His environment chief thinks COVID-19 presents “a chance to do capitalism differently.” The UN Green Climate Fund says it “offers an opportunity to direct finances towards bolstering climate action” and “re-launch[ing] economies on low-emission, climate-resilient trajectories,” to control climate and weather and prevent massive extinctions.

Pricey? You bet. And you’re in line to pay for it. One analysis, by the American Action Forum, has estimated that GND would cost between \$52.6 trillion and \$94.4 trillion through 2029, or \$367,000-\$681,000 over the decade for the average U.S. household.

To what end? According to Environmental Protection Agency calculations, even if the United States were (somehow) to eliminate carbon dioxide emissions completely, that would avert less than 0.2 degrees (Celsius) of global temperature rise by the century’s end, too insignificant to be measured accurately.

Nonetheless, fervent progressives and top Democrats are eager to use the coronavirus as an excuse to implement their Green New Delusion.

Meanwhile, conventional energy sources have already shown they can provide economic growth and jobs. Benjamin Zycher, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, explained in the *Financial Times* that “renewables” can’t match that — in part because “unconventional energy is not cost-competitive.” Why else, he asks,

have massive taxes, subsidies and guaranteed market shares been necessary to make it viable? The unreliability of wind and solar power, the unconcentrated energy content of air flows and sunlight, and the theoretical limits on the conversion of wind and sunlight into electric power are the reasons that greater market shares for renewables have led to higher power prices in Europe and the U.S.

Zycher also observes that the International Energy Agency has predicted that the COVID-19 economic recession will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by eight percent in 2020. According to the EPA’s climate model, if this decline were maintained for the rest of the century, the temperature reduction in 2100 would be a bit more than 0.1C. That would be a lot of pain for virtually no gain.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration is trying to unleash the economy — not smother it. Here’s the key part of the executive order so hated by the *New York Times*: “Agencies should address this economic



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emergency by rescinding, modifying, waiving, or providing exemptions from regulations and other requirements that may inhibit economic recovery.”

That is how to cut through at least some of the red tape totaling almost \$2 trillion. Russ Vought, acting director of the Office of Management and Budget, put it this way: “Typically when our country has faced a crisis, Washington responds by grabbing more power. President Trump understands that to get the economy moving, the power needs to be given back to the people and entrepreneurs.”

Alternatively, we could adopt left-wing panaceas. These are being promoted loudly by, say, Bill de Blasio, the mayor of New York City. He also happens to be a big climate-change alarmist who did poorly when the virus hit his city. In March, he demanded federal mobilization and the “nationalization” of seemingly every industry he could think of for New York.

Apparently he had been getting ready for the wrong emergency, as noted in a critical article by Seth Barron shortly thereafter. Wrote Barron:

Why didn’t the city at least stock up on masks and hand sanitizer, which are cheap — or were cheap, before global demand created a shortage? It isn’t as though Mayor de Blasio is unconcerned about emergencies — he talks obsessively about climate change and its “existential” threat to the city. He has initiated major lawsuits against energy companies, attempted to prohibit glass buildings, banned plastic bags, and plans to extend the shoreline of Manhattan into the East River in order to protect New York City against the possibility of rising ocean levels over the next century.

However, as Barron put it in *City Journal*, a publication of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, De Blasio — and New York’s governors — closed hospitals and care centers, turning their sites over to well-connected developers, without replacing capacity or building in redundancy. He signed six bulging budgets that increased spending by tens of billions of dollars, and he lavished money on anything that advanced his political agenda or benefitted his allies. But he clearly didn’t allocate enough money to buy the necessary staples of emergency preparedness. Now that disaster has arrived at the city’s door, the mayor is blaming everyone but himself.

When facing intense criticism of his indecisiveness during the worsening coronavirus crisis, as the *New York Post* observed at the time, de Blasio pointed the finger at the president.

If you choose to believe the Sierra Club or other such outfits, Americans are more worried about climate change than ever before. Sierra Club, in its May/June 2020 publication (with the headline “Last Best Chance”), proclaims: This year’s election “represents a tremendous opportunity to set climate policy for the 2020s, the last decade in which we can avoid catastrophic warming. It’s no exaggeration to say that this election may be the most important one we’ll ever participate in.”

Ecomaniacs make up a dedicated voting bloc, which could make the difference in a close race. And if the country goes in the direction pushed by the progressive Left, the green crowd will then enjoy the spoils. And the nation, trying to recover from the effects of the virus, will be weighed down with even more onerous regulations and counter-productive policies.

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