New American

Written by **William P. Hoar** on February 19, 2021
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Correction, Please!

Middle-class Jobs Menaced by Biden's Energy Assaults

Item: Bloomberg Businessweek *(February 1) quoted a statement made by Joe Biden on January 27 amid a "flurry of executive orders," with the president remarking: "Today is climate day at the White House, which means that today is jobs day at the White House."*

Facts and figures not his strong suit: Biden says that going to wind and solar will create lots of jobs, apparently not realizing that most of the jobs will be in China or don't pay as much as oil-related jobs. He also seems oblivious to the fact that each U.S. oil job creates additional U.S. jobs. (*Photo credit: AP Images*)

Item: *President Biden, reported Reuters on January 25, "vowed to replace the U.S. government's fleet of roughly 650,000 vehicles with electric models as the new administration shifts its focus toward clean energy."*

Item: *Biden, according to CNBC for January 27, signed "a series of executive orders that prioritize climate change across all levels of government and put the U.S. on track to curb planet-warming carbon emissions." This included orders "to halt new oil and natural gas leases on public lands and waters."*

The actions, said CNBC, kicked off "the president's agenda to reduce the country's emissions and establish stricter targets under the Paris climate accord, the landmark agreement by nearly 200 nations aimed to mitigate climate change."

Item: *Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, while speaking at a press briefing at the White House on January 27, among other comments, said the coal miners would be better off if they built solar panels — pointing to the possible "consequences of black lung for a miner." Remarked Kerry: "The same people [coal miners and solar technicians] can do those jobs, but the choice of doing the solar power one now is a better choice."*

Item: *A White House briefing on January 27 said that Biden would employ "executive action to tackle the climate crisis at home and abroad while creating good-paying union jobs and [an] equitable clean energy future, building modern and sustainable infrastructure, restoring scientific integrity and evidence-based policymaking across the federal government."*

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Correction: America is getting jobbed — but not in a good way. The Biden team is, among other strokes of inanity, pulling the plug on the Keystone XL pipeline, rejoining the deleterious Paris climate accord, instituting a freeze on federal oil and gas permitting, and mandating that the government's fleet consist of zero-emission vehicles — someday.

Such actions would eventually cost the jobs of millions of Americans and billions of tax dollars, and knock trillions from the U.S. gross national product. All this, and more, is supposedly necessary to mend the planet's climate — though it won't — and eco-activists admit that they won't be satisfied anytime soon.

While the Paris agreement requires virtually nothing but lip service from China — the world's worst carbon dioxide emitter — you know Biden's "experts" are champing at the bit to handicap U.S. industry. The Paris accord, according to a March 2017 analysis by National Economic Research Associates (NERA) Economic Consulting, could cost the American economy more than $1 trillion and 1.1 million industrial-sector jobs by 2025, and $3 trillion and 6.5 million industrial-sector jobs by 2040. NERA projected that job losses could reach 2.7 million in 2025. That was what we escaped — temporarily — when Donald Trump pulled out of Paris.

When we exited the Paris accord, the world did not end. Indeed, as Tim Benson of the Heartland Institute has noted, the United Nations "released its Emissions Gap Report 2020 in December and it showed that the United States greenhouse gas emissions have declined since 2008 and continue to do so while those of China, India, and Russia continue to rise."

Quarantining America's energy supply, he went on,

> to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions while other countries continue trending upwards unfettered, despite making unenforceable pledges to the Paris Climate Accord, is a recipe for disaster. We'll be trading our own energy security for climate virtue signaling while the rest of the world laughs and sells us oil at inflated prices.

And the joke is on us when even alleged climate whiz John Kerry can admit (as he did in the White House on January 27) that "almost 90% of all of the planet's emissions … come from outside of U.S. borders." We could, acknowledged Kerry, "go to zero tomorrow and the problem isn't solved." (Kerry's job, lest he forget, is coordinating with foreign nations on climate change — not making domestic policy.)

There was, by the way, some pushback for Kerry's advice (see above) for coal miners to become solar techs. (That arrogant counsel sounded much like Joe Biden's earlier guidance for them: Learn to code.) Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) slipped in a shiv via Twitter:

> John Kerry — who flies in private jets, owned a 76-foot yacht and several mansions — has the carbon footprint of a small nation. Yet he tells energy workers to "make solar panels" when the Biden administration kills their jobs.

Indeed, with so-called progressives wanting to step up subsidies for wind and solar power as well as for vehicles powered by batteries, if the destination is energy independence, we are going backward. Mark Mills, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, points out that the

> pursuit of a hydrocarbon-free future would lead to a complete reversal of U.S. import dependencies and the creation of new geopolitical challenges. The U.S. is essentially self-sufficient in petroleum and a net exporter of natural gas as a direct consequence of the shale-fracking revolution. But virtually all the demand for critical green "energy materials" will come from imports.

It's a relevant question: Are we going "green" or communist red?

Back to emissions and their climatic connections. Our responses to date have been largely symbolic, though that doesn't bother green activists. They are big on empty, albeit expensive, symbols.

Even the *New York Times* was recently forced to admit (January 31) that Biden "overhyped" the effects when he claimed that replacing all the cars and trucks owned by the feds with electric vehicles would somehow create "a million autoworkers jobs in clean energy." Keep in mind that this "fact check" was all hidden within a long article that boasted that Biden's claims are "largely accurate," while finding a tiny room to be a tad critical in the 23rd paragraph of page 19.

Accidentally pointing to a hole in the plan: John Kerry, Biden's new climate czar, admitted that even if the United States emitted zero CO_2 it wouldn't solve global warming, because other countries release 90 percent of CO_2. And those countries are not likely to change in the near future. *(Photo credit: AP Images)*

Here are some facts: As of 2019, the federal government, according to the General Services Administration, owned 645,000 vehicles. Noted *Wired*, "That's a tiny fraction of the 280 million vehicles that traveled on US roads that year. Of the 17.1 million vehicles sold in the US in 2019, just 1.4 percent were fully electric," said the publication. *Wired* also noted (February 1) that the U.S. government "turns over its fleet slowly; today, the average government-owned vehicle is almost 15 years old. Aging gas-powered vehicles out of that fleet will take some time."

But facts are not necessarily vital to those making government decisions.

Certain "environmentalists," as Richard Rahn has observed, argued for the cancellation based on "saving the environment" and "social justice." However, said Rahn (chairman of the Institute for Global Economic Growth), the

> Canadians will continue to produce the oil as long as it is profitable — so they will ship it to the U.S. by rail and truck if the pipeline is not available, or ship it to a foreign buyer — most likely the Chinese.
>
> Shipping oil by rail and truck is more damaging, dangerous and expensive to the environment than sending it through an underground pipeline — so how "just" is it to ban the pipeline? What is the "justice" behind firing all of the workers and suppliers who were building the pipeline? Most of the pipe and other supplies for the pipeline have already been produced. Are the social justice warriors going to pick up the costs?

You know the answer to that.

Moreover, after people spend their working lives improving, say, their pipeline skills, that doesn't make them better (and lower-paid) solar techs.

As pointed out by Terry O'Sullivan, the general president of the Laborers' International Union of North America: "There are no renewable energy jobs that come even close to replacing the wages and benefits the Keystone XL project would have provided. Killing good union jobs on day one with nothing to replace them, is not building back better."

Posing, Joe Biden likes to talk about being for the "middle class." His actions prove otherwise. Representative Kelly Armstrong (R-N.D.), for one, isn't buying, saying that the Keystone pipeline

> is expected to provide approximately 11,000 jobs and up to 60,000 indirect and supporting jobs, generate tax revenue, decrease our reliance on foreign energy, and strengthen American national security and energy independence. President Biden's decision to revoke the Keystone XL Pipeline permit is an attack on the way of life for thousands of people who rely on energy production to feed their families. The Keystone XL Pipeline would transport safe and reliable energy across our nation, providing thousands of American jobs in the process and increasing our national security.

For those worried about global warming, consider this: Were the pipeline built, the effect on the planet's temperature would have been negligible. Benjamin Zycher, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, calculates that the Keystone pipeline "would transport 830,000 barrels per day of Canadian crude oil, the total greenhouse gas emissions from which would be about 150 million metric tons per year, or about 0.3 percent of the world total."

If, says Zycher, we apply

> the EPA climate model using the least favorable set of assumptions, those emissions would have a global temperature effect of about *four ten-thousandths of a degree Celsius* by 2100. The impacts upon sea levels and other climate phenomena would be similarly undetectable; so much for the ubiquitous empty rhetoric about the "climate disaster" supposedly to be engendered by Keystone XL. [Emphasis added.]

Concerned about spills? The AEI expert explains that "transport of oil by pipeline is substantially safer than transport by rail or truck, the real-world alternatives to Keystone XL."

Just needs installing: For the most part, components for Keystone XL pipeline are done; they just need installing. Yet though Canada will still pump this oil — finding other buyers — Joe Biden halted the pipeline's construction. *(Photo credit: AP Images)*

The net effect of stopping Keystone, as Zycher says, "will be an inefficient allocation of crude oil geographically. In short: Without the pipeline, railroad capacity will grow, overall safety will decline, and economic costs will be higher."

Thanks, Joe. Or whoever handed down your marching orders.

Other existing facilities, including the Dakota Access Pipeline, are also under fire by environmentalists.

The assault on energy has been escalated with the president's moratorium against oil and gas drilling, bearing particularly upon states that depend on the revenue for education, police, firefighting, and other services. A recent study from the University of Wyoming calculates that such a halt could cost the affected states an average of $1.6 billion annually.

The ban affects huge parts of many states and the revenues and jobs lost are significant. Here's a recent summary from the *Wall Street Journal*; federal land, say the editors,

> accounts for 51.9% of New Mexico's oil production and 66.8% of its natural gas, as well as a sizable share of gas extraction in Colorado (41.6%), Utah (63.2%) and Wyoming (92.1%). A federal leasing ban would cost some 18,000 jobs in Colorado, 33,000 in Wyoming and 62,000 in New Mexico by 2022, according to the American Petroleum Institute.
>
> States would also lose hundreds of millions of dollars of mineral royalties that are shared by the feds. Oil and gas revenue accounts for 20% of New Mexico's budget. Downstream suppliers like fracking sand mines in Wisconsin and steel manufacturers in Pennsylvania would also be hit.

The various attacks, centering on animus for the fossil-fuel business, are not just directed at distant wildcatters. It is a wider assault. Indeed, a study released a while back by the American Petroleum Institute showed that the natural gas and oil industry supported 10.3 million U.S. jobs and added $1.3 trillion to the nation's economy in 2015. And current figures from the U.S. Energy Information Administration show that about 80 percent of the nation's energy comes from oil, gas, and coal. That can’t be replaced with intermittent sunbeams.

Or perhaps windmills do represent the true progressive panacea. After all, Washington, D.C., has an overabundance of hot air.

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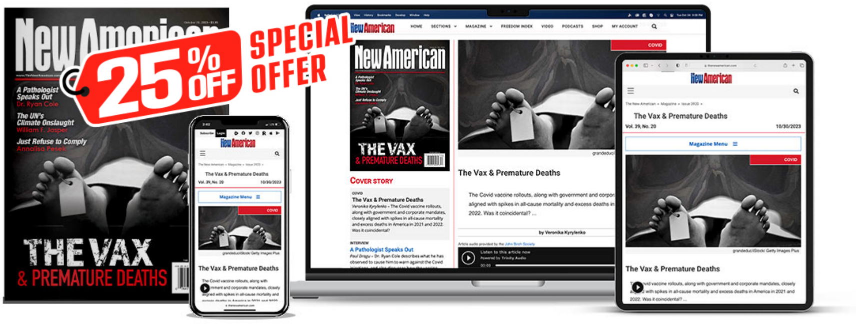

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