



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 14, 2011

## Using the Food Crisis

In Sana'a, the capital of Yemen — home to 2 million people — tap water is available only once every 4 days; in [nearby] Taiz, it is [only available] once every 20 days.

Virtually all of the top 20 countries considered to be “failing states” [defined as suffering massive economic decline] are depleting their natural assets — forests, grasslands, soils and aquifers — [just to] sustain their ... populations.

He concludes that rising food prices are merely a symptom of a deeper cause: growing populations demanding a limited, and in some cases shrinking, supply of food. As Brown sees it, rising prices are “not a temporary phenomenon. We can no longer expect that things will soon return to normal, because in a world with a rapidly changing climate system, there is no normal to return to.”



Readers may recognize the name Lester Brown because of his influential position on the environmental scene. A career environmentalist, Brown is the founder of Earth Policy Institute. With the help of a \$500,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, he also founded the WorldWatch Institute, which is “devoted to the analysis of global environmental issues.” Brown has authored more than 50 books on such issues and helped pioneer the concept of sustainable development.

Sustainable development sounds innocent enough, but it represents the idea that there are simply too many people living on the planet based on the amount of food and other finite resources the planet can provide. Freedom of choice must give way to planning so that finite and dwindling resources can be managed internationally. This ultimately involves population control, limiting the size of families, and world government enforcement.

Brown's themes over the years have involved population control, global warming, soil erosion, deforestation, water resources depletion, melting glaciers, energy depletion, and peak oil.

In his 2004 book *Outgrowing the Earth*, Brown states: “Our ability to provide enough food is at stake, and depends not only on efforts within agriculture but also having a[n international] energy policy that stabilizes climate, a worldwide effort to raise water productivity, the evolution of land-efficient transport systems, and population [control] policies.”

He worries that wheat yields are no longer rising in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. He worries that the conversion of cropland to non-farm use is further reducing food supplies: “Suburban sprawl, industrial construction, and the paving of land for roads, highways and parking lots are claiming



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cropland in the Central Valley of California, the Nile River basin in Egypt, and in densely populated countries that are rapidly industrializing, such as China and India.”

He worries that in 2011, new car sales in China are projected to reach 20 million — a record for any country. Brown worries about the rule of thumb that for every five million cars added to a country's fleet, roughly one million acres must be paved to accommodate them. And he worries that cropland is often the loser.

Brown's solutions are predictable: “Unless governments ... shift expenditures from military uses to investing in climate change mitigation, water efficiency, soil conservation, and population stabilization, the world will in all likelihood be facing a future with both more climate instability and food price volatility. If business as usual continues, food prices will only trend upward.”

In *Foreign Policy* magazine's May/June 2011 publication, entitled “The Food Issue,” Brown wailed once again about food price hikes: They “are driven by trends that are both elevating demand and making it more difficult to increase production: among them, a rapidly expanding population, crop-withering temperature increases, and irrigation wells running dry.” Another factor in creating food shortages is the effort by various countries to negotiate long-term contracts with food exporters, effectively taking those supplies off the market to other countries that need them. This, says Brown, increases the chances for armed conflict:

Many of the land deals have been made in secret, and in most cases, the land involved was already in use by villagers when it was sold or leased. Often those already farming the land were neither consulted about nor even informed of the new arrangements. And because there typically are no formal land titles in many developing-country villages, the farmers who lost their land have [no ability] to bring their cases to court.

He calls this “food nationalism,” which must be resolved through the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization. But, he claims, they don't have enough power to intervene effectively at the moment and so, unless “we ... move at wartime speed to stabilize the climate, we may not be able to avoid runaway food prices.... The time to act is now — before the food crisis of 2011 becomes the new normal.”

### **I Am From the UN and Here to Help**

Though Brown's warnings have been seemingly accepted as gospel by the world's movers and shakers, as indicated by his article in one of the establishment's pinnacle periodicals, *Foreign Policy*, there doesn't appear to be real cause for concern — even for the Third World. The claims about recurrent food shortages give off the taint of so much overblown hype, disseminated to redistribute more wealth and power to the already wealthy and powerful.

First, it seems more than just a little coincidental that though the food-scarcity meme has been around since the 1960s when it was the focus of Paul Ehrlich's book *The Population Bomb*, it is just now making headlines everywhere at the same time that global-warming theories are increasingly being discredited (and global-warming was blatantly being used to justify world governance). As political commentator H.L. Mencken once said, “The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety), by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.”

The Kyoto Protocol, supposedly aimed at stabilizing greenhouse-gas emissions in order to prevent a “dangerous anthropogenic [man-caused] interference” in the workings of Mother Nature, was a big step



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toward binding countries to international dictates that would give UN functionaries the ability to tax businesses (thereby enriching UN cronies through controlling carbon credits) and pick winners and losers in international trade through choosing which countries paid carbon taxes and which didn't. The planned replacement for the Kyoto treaty, to be hashed out at the Copenhagen Summit, would have allowed the micromanaging of even what individual citizens in countries were allowed to do. As noted by Lester Brown in his book *Rescuing a Planet Under Stress*,

We concluded that the western economic model — the fossil-fuel-based, automobile-centered, throwaway economy — was not viable for the world. Instead, the new economy will be powered by renewable sources of energy, will have a more diverse transport system — relying more on rail, buses, and bicycles and less on cars — and will recycle materials comprehensively.

Everything about global warming was predicated on disingenuously using fear to manipulate the masses: We were warned about the loss of polar bears and the destruction of ecosystems (though there are more polar bears now than ever before recorded, and their numbers are increasing), the oceans flooding whole cities and countries (despite the fact that during the Medieval Warm Period, when it was much warmer than now, those areas weren't inundated), and, as now, food scarcity because of temperature changes and desertification (despite the fact that increased carbon dioxide in the air functions as plant fertilizer, increasing plants' productivity and making plants more resilient to environmental stresses). The fear that had been generated about global warming was so great that, as of April 2010, 191 countries had ratified the Kyoto Treaty. But then something happened on the way to world government: Climategate.

Just two weeks before the Copenhagen Summit on climate change was to be held in November 2009, thousands of hacked computer files and e-mails were released from the Climatic Research Unit and published worldwide. The e-mails showed that some of the global-warming alarmists involved in studying global temperatures were manipulating the data to make it conform to the pre-conceived conclusion that human activity was having a major negative impact on the environment. One of the scientists, Kevin Trenberth, stated in an e-mail to an associate: "The fact is that we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can't." Then it came out that all of the temperature data relied upon by global-warming advocates had been adjusted for various reasons, and all the original, raw temperature data was nowhere to be found, meaning that few of the conclusions of the global-warming advocates could be subjected to peer review.

A recent Gallup poll reviewed in *The New American* online showed the significant aftereffects of Climategate. According to Gallup, "World residents' declining concern about climate change may reflect increasing skepticism about global warming after Climategate ...," and that such skepticism "demonstrates the obstacles that remain before the world [read: UN and its supporters like Lester Brown] can agree on a climate policy. Gallup's data show that fewer Americans ... feel threatened by global warming today than they did in recent years." Thanks to this increasing skepticism, the Copenhagen Accord was not adopted but merely "taken note of" by members attending the conference. In other words, thanks to Climategate blowing the cover off global warming, Copenhagen was a bust.

### **Strategies to Remedy World Hunger?**

A brief analysis of some of the groups echoing Brown gives credence to the idea that the food scarcity scare is being used as a rationale for authoritarian solutions on the international level.

Following a joint World Bank-International Monetary Fund (IMF) development committee meeting in



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Washington, D.C., on April 16, World Bank President Robert Zoellick said that the world is “one shock away from a full-blown crisis.” He claimed, obvious in his intentions, in the World Bank’s April 1 issue of *News and Broadcast*, that the only solution was more global governance: “*We need global action* to ensure we do a better job of feeding the hungry before we face the future challenges of feeding the expected 9 billion people in the world in 2050.” (Emphasis added.) World Bank vice president Bernard Hoekman was even clearer: “We’d like to see all these markets become *much more interconnected.*” (Emphasis added.)

Unsurprisingly, the World Bank has long aided fraud at the UN. One way it does this is by loaning money to underdeveloped countries with “conditionalities” attached, such as being able to dictate which companies get contracted to build projects in the borrowing countries, mandate trade regulations favoring multinational corporations over local farmers, etc. The amount of fraud is so prevalent in these world aid programs that before world entities began “aiding Africa,” that continent had about a 10-percent poverty level; now it’s above 70 percent.

The late Peter Lord Bauer, perhaps the world’s preeminent development economist, said foreign aid is “a process by which the poor in rich countries subsidize the rich in poor countries.”

In fact, prior to worries about climate-change, “aiding” world poverty was the main tool used to empower UN functionaries. And even as the climate-change meme was built up, the poverty crisis continued to be exploited for UN empowerment. “Poverty” was the excuse behind the attempted implementation of a global tax overseen by the UN. The tax plans were outlined in the *Report of the Technical Group on Innovative Financing Mechanisms*. Taxes were to initially be applied to global financial transactions, arms sales, air travel, ocean activities, and use of the environment, radio frequencies, and outer space.

The weekly news digest of the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) — one of many environmentalist non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work closely with the UN — backed Brown as well with this cry of anxiety:

The magnitude of the food crisis problem is alarming. Since June 2010, 44 million additional people are now living below the poverty line set by the World Bank — US\$1.25 per day. The call for action is due to the concerns that another 10 million people may end up among the ranks of the poverty-stricken if food prices climb by a further 10 percent, and another 34 million would suffer a similar fate if prices of staples were to rise by 30 percent....

At the global level, concerted action and cooperation can mitigate further harmful effects due to price increases.

The name of this organization says it all in regard to its agenda.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was quick to jump into the fray as well with its suggestions and recommendations to help “solve” the crisis: “Increased investment in agriculture, more research and development ... diminished incentives for biofuels [ethanol] in the United States and Europe, and limits on export restrictions, as well as agricultural trade reforms ... will make markets work better.”

The Carnegie Endowment has been one of the principal globalist organizations pushing for world government for much of the past century.

Of course, others outside of the direct control of the UN and its Anglo-American affiliates and interests



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also expressed their concerns, and many were predicting a full-blown food crisis, but such organizations are often either willing dupes or are funded by groups with backgrounds akin to the Carnegie Endowment.

### **Scarcity Scares**

The fact is that almost all the evidence shows that food shortages are not getting worse, nor will they. Most of the causes of the *current* food crisis are temporal in nature. They come and they go. Floods, droughts, diseases, pest infestations, soil erosion, lack of water, and so on, have affected farmers' efforts to grow food for centuries. The *Economist* summed it up nicely:

The main reasons for high prices are temporary: drought in Russia and Argentina; floods in Canada and Pakistan; export bans by countries determined to maintain their own supplies, whatever the cost to others; panic buying by importers spooked into restocking their grain reserves.

Moreover, claims that increasing the population on Earth will inevitably lead to scarcity has proved wrong time and again.

Ecologist Paul Ehrlich's 1968 book *The Population Bomb* opened with this thesis:

The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970's hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now. At this late date nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate.

Ehrlich's solution was, of course, the same as Brown's: population control. "We must have population control at home, hopefully through a system of incentives and penalties, but by compulsion if voluntary methods fail. We must use our political power to push other countries into programs which combine agricultural development and population control," he said.

On the other side of the debate stood University of Maryland economics professor Julian Simon. Simon's view was that *population growth was the solution* to any resource scarcity because free people and free markets innovate. If shortages appear, the free market finds alternatives, or develops better use of existing resources. So confident was Simon in his thesis that in 1980 he challenged Ehrlich to a wager in which Ehrlich would select any five raw materials and "any date more than a year away," and Simon would bet that the prices of those commodities would be lower at the chosen time than at the time of the wager. Ehrlich accepted the wager, selecting chromium, copper, nickel, tin, and tungsten. The "payoff" date was September 29, 1990, 10 years after the wager was made. Between 1980 and 1990, the world's population grew by more than 800 million, yet by 1990, the price of each of Ehrlich's commodities had dropped, forcing Ehrlich to pay \$576.07 to Simon to settle the bet.

The price behavior of each of these commodities perfectly illustrated Simon's point that free markets would find solutions to problems of supply, and put the torch to Ehrlich's claims that they wouldn't. It also showed clearly the false reasoning not only of Ehrlich but of Brown and the other "end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it" alarmists. The price of tin went down because of an increased use of aluminum. Improved mining technologies helped in discovering vast new supplies of nickel. Tungsten fell owing to the increased use of ceramics in cookware. Chromium prices fell owing to improved smelting techniques. And copper prices fell with the invention and increased use of fiber optic cable.

The major theme of population control, aided and abetted by other themes such as global warming and food and water shortages, nevertheless remains an important tool in the arsenal of those who want to install a world government on the planet. The strategy is simple, reflecting H.L. Mencken's observation,





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and has worked well in the past: find an issue (or seize an opportunity if one is presented), create an environment of fear among the people, and then offer solutions that lead inexorably to the real goal: more government.

Yet even as food fears are being re-stoked, the unraveling of the fear-based food crisis “theme” has found a new champion in Veronique de Rugy, a writer for *Reason* magazine and a weekly contributor to Bloomberg TV.

She exploded some myths about the current food crisis. The primary myth: Because of food shortages, the scale of hunger now observed is unprecedented — more people face starvation than ever before. De Rugy responded:

In fact, while unacceptably high, starvation deaths per year have been declining for the past 60 or 70 years. Better publicity, grain market integration, and work by aid agencies have decreased human deaths during each food crisis since the late 1950's.

The only real fears to be concerned about regarding food shortages actually have their genesis in too much government, not too little. For instance, the U.S. Federal Reserve could very well print so much money that the U.S. dollar becomes virtually worthless, destroying food markets. The same holds true with European governments likely defaulting on their debts and the likely crumbling of the euro.

The world today doesn't suffer from too many people; it is, instead, plagued by too much government. It doesn't suffer from a growing scarcity of resources, but from a growing scarcity of freedom. It doesn't suffer from a lack of free-market solutions, but from attempts at manipulation through fear by insiders with their world government agenda.

The ultimate answer to perceived and real food crises is human freedom. As Gary North, writing in *Remnant Review* for May, noted, “Economic liberty ... can and does lead to less hunger, less poverty, and more choices.”

If the dollar is weakening because of deliberate inflating of the currency by the Fed, then abolish the Fed. If the price of oil is increasing due to government restrictions on drilling and development, then remove those restrictions. If ethanol subsidies are distorting grievously the grain markets, then abolish the subsidies. If solutions are offered that revolve around the United Nations, reject them. If the free market in food production can be supported, strengthened, and expanded, then any future food crises will be greatly reduced in impact, starvation will continue its downward trajectory, and human beings can be allowed to grow, thrive, and prosper through their own efforts in a climate of freedom.

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