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Written by **Selwyn Duke** on October 12, 2024

"Green Energy Transition" Is a Costly "Myth," Says Expert, and "Isn't Happening"

"The definition of insanity," the apocryphal saying goes, "is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result." This could come to mind now that yet another warning has been issued about "green" energy.

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A transition to it simply "isn't happening," says researcher Bjørn Lomborg, of the Copenhagen Consensus Center. The problem?

Such a transition is, first, prohibitively expensive. In fact, Lomborg has estimated, lowering Earth's temperature just 1/3 of one degree Fahrenheit by 2100 would cost *$100 trillion*. This makes the endeavor unfeasible.

Second, and counterintuitively, creating "renewable" energy doesn't replace coal, oil, and gas. It mainly just *adds to energy consumption*.

Despite this, the world is proceeding with bull-in-a-china-shop energy ambitions, spending *$2 trillion annually* trying to "transition." The bottom line, says Lomborg, is that we need a "major policy overhaul."

Facts, Not Fantasies

Contrary to what a climate alarmist may suppose, Lomborg is no devout global-warming ~~denialist~~ realist. He does believe man is partially responsible for climate change (I disagree, do note). But he also insists that the threat it poses is exaggerated and that the present solutions are foolhardy.

As Lomborg writes:

> Numerous studies show that adding renewable energy adds to energy consumption instead of replacing coal, gas or oil. Recent research reveals that for every six units of new green energy, less than one unit displaces fossil fuels.
>
> Analysis in the United States shows that renewable energy subsidies often increase total energy consumption. In essence, policies designed to boost green energy lead to more emissions.
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> Human demand for affordable energy is insatiable, as it underpins every facet of modern life. In the last 50 years, energy derived from oil and coal has doubled, hydropower has tripled, and gas has quadrupled. Meanwhile, there has been a significant rise in nuclear, solar and wind energy. Consequently, the availability of energy has reached unprecedented levels globally.

There's a good reason for this: Great energy is required to sustain today's large populations. Apropos here, an estimate held that one square mile is necessary for just one person to live a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Now, note that the average world population density is 98 people per square mile (61 per km^2). Is it any wonder, then, that ex-Greenpeace official and ecologist Patrick Moore has estimated that implementing the "Green New Deal" worldwide would lead to the deaths of most people on Earth? And what would happen before they met their miserable end?

In a vain effort to survive, they'd kill every animal for food and cut down every tree for fuel.

Not a New Phenomenon

Returning to Lomborg, he points out that this increased-energy-consumption phenomenon is history's norm. He explains:

> During the 1800s, as societies moved from wood to coal, overall wood consumption increased as coal began to meet a larger share of energy needs. Similarly, when transitioning from coal to oil, by 1970, the combined energy contributions from oil, coal, gas and wood were more significant than ever before.

The reality: A study found that fully transitioning to a new energy source takes on average about 150 years. Even then, however, the transition only occurs under one condition. As Lomborg put it, "The main driver has always been that the new energy service is either better or cheaper."

Worse and More Expensive

Today's "green" energy, however, fails on both counts. As Lomborg wrote at the *New York Post* in April:

> Wind and solar energy only produce power when the sun is shining or the wind is blowing. The rest of the time, their electricity is infinitely expensive and a backup system is needed.
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> This is why global electricity remains almost two-thirds reliant on fossil fuels….
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> It is often reported that large, emerging industrial powers like China, India, Indonesia and Bangladesh are getting more power from solar and wind. But these countries get *much* more additional power from coal.
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> … If solar and wind really were cheaper, why would these countries miss out? Because reliability matters.
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> … Biden's Energy Information Administration puts solar at 3.6¢ per kilowatt hour, just ahead of natural gas at 3.8¢. But if you reasonably include the cost of reliability, the real costs explode — one peer-reviewed study shows an increase of 11 to 42 times, making solar by far the most expensive source of electricity, followed by wind.

Furthermore, Lomborg points out, "Current estimates of the cost of solar and wind also ignore the cost of recycling spent wind turbine blades and exhausted solar panels."

Much Is Overlooked

There's still more to it, too. As Lomborg further informs, man

> has still not found green energy solutions for most of our transportation needs — think of

> planes and freight — and we haven't even begun a transition to the vast energy needs of heating, manufacturing or agriculture. Solar and wind are entirely deployed in the electricity sector, which makes up just one-fifth of all global energy use. We are dealing with a small part of a vast challenge and ignoring all the "too hard" problems like steel, cement, plastics and fertilizer.

All right, that will have to be tackled, but what's all this talk about expense? Isn't paying more a small price to pay for a cleaner tomorrow? Well, it's not that simple.

It's not just that higher energy costs increase poverty and thus cause more suffering and death among the world's poor. They also lead to environmental destruction, as prosperity is a prerequisite for environmental health. I explained this in-depth in 2020's "Why the Greentopians Would Destroy the Earth."

What Course of Action Is Proper?

> You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete. — *R. Buckminster Fuller*

Lomborg mentions that instead of pie-in-the-sky energy fantasies, we instead should pursue technologies such as hydrogen and nuclear. What he doesn't mention specifically, probably because it's not yet workable, is *fusion*.

Wherever we stand on climate change, we can all agree that, all other things being equal, polluting less is beneficial. And fusion — involving fusing atoms together as opposed to splitting them apart via fission — would provide abundant, cheap, clean energy. As is said, it would be the holy grail of energy production.

Yes, technological hurdles must be overcome. But this is something around which everyone, left, right, and center, should be able to unite. Remember, too, why the doomsday starvation prophecies of Thomas Malthus and Paul Ehrlich didn't come to pass: innovation and invention. The advances that have improved human life have generally come from technologies virtually no one anticipated. And so it will be in the future.

That is, if we stop wasting greenbacks on greentopian fantasy and instead pursue reality. Remember, if your new model doesn't quite naturally make the existing one obsolete, you probably need to go back to the drawing board.