

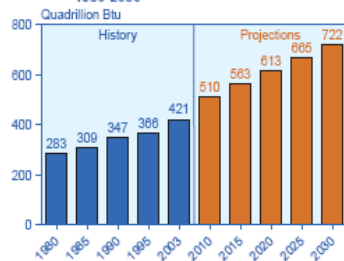
## XX. Morality

**AIT:** “We can’t afford inaction any longer, and frankly, there’s just no excuse for it. We all want the same thing: for our children and the generations after them to inherit a clean and beautiful planet capable of supporting a healthy human civilization. That goal should transcend politics....This isn’t an ideological debate with two sides, pro and con. There is only one Earth, and all of us who live on it share a common future.” (AIT, p. 287) “And that is what is at stake. Our ability to live on Planet Earth—to have a future as a civilization. I believe this is a moral issue.” (AIT, p. 298)

**Comment:** Nothing is more political than the claim to transcend politics, because anyone who actually represents truth (science) and virtue (morality) deserves to rule. We are entitled to be wary of any politician who, professing to be above partisanship and ideology, denies that his opponents have ideas worth debating or motives worth respecting.

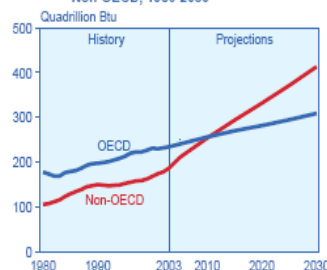
Gore never considers the obvious moral objection to his agenda—its potentially catastrophic impacts on the world’s poor. Stabilizing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels is not even remotely possible unless China, India, and other developing countries restrict their use of carbon-based energy.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Kyoto advocates view the treaty as just a “first step” in a series of carbon-suppression agreements, each more stringent and/or inclusive than its predecessor.<sup>2</sup> But the global economy is moving in exactly the opposite direction. Demand for fossil energy is growing, especially in developing countries. For example, the Energy Information Administration projects that global energy consumption will increase by 71% between 2003 and 2030, with non-OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries accounting for three-quarters of the growth. In 2030, energy demand in non-OECD countries is projected to exceed that in OECD countries by 34%. Fossil fuels account for the lion’s share of the increase in consumption.<sup>3</sup> See the Figures below.

Figure 7. World Marketed Energy Consumption, 1980-2030



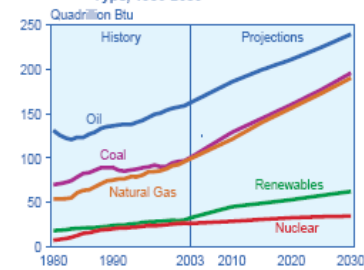
Sources: History: Energy Information Administration (EIA), *International Energy Annual 2003* (May-July 2005), web site [www.eia.doe.gov/iea/](http://www.eia.doe.gov/iea/). Projections: EIA, *System for the Analysis of Global Energy Markets* (2006).

Figure 8. World Marketed Energy Use: OECD and Non-OECD, 1980-2030



Sources: History: Energy Information Administration (EIA), *International Energy Annual 2003* (May-July 2005), web site [www.eia.doe.gov/iea/](http://www.eia.doe.gov/iea/). Projections: EIA, *System for the Analysis of Global Energy Markets* (2006).

Figure 10. World Marketed Energy Use by Fuel Type, 1980-2030



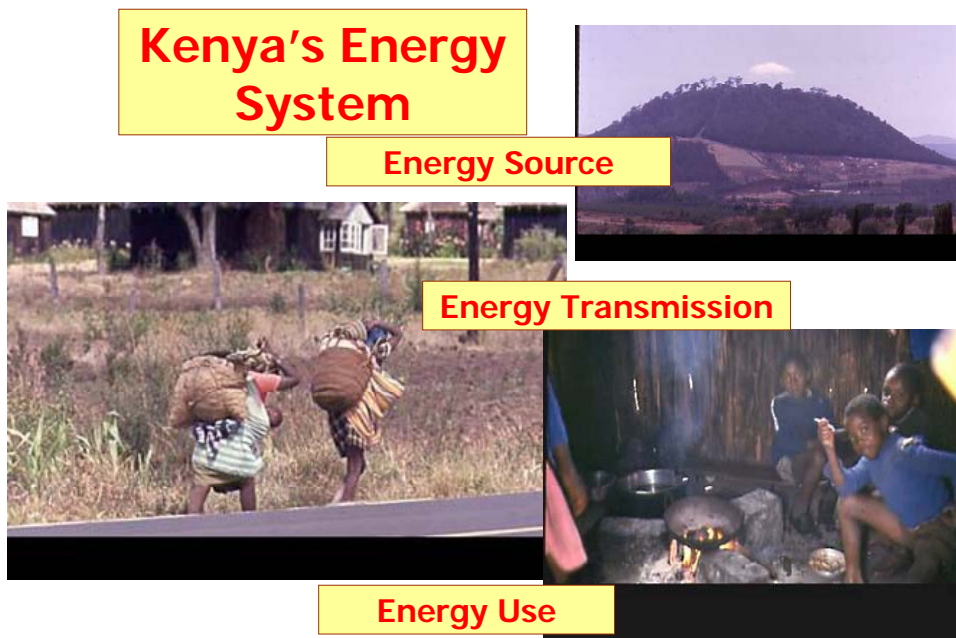
Sources: History: Energy Information Administration (EIA), *International Energy Annual 2003* (May-July 2005), web site [www.eia.doe.gov/iea/](http://www.eia.doe.gov/iea/). Projections: EIA, *System for the Analysis of Global Energy Markets* (2006).

### Projected energy consumption growth from 2003 to 2030

Source: EIA

The inconvenient truth is that nobody knows how to meet current much less future global energy needs with low- and non-emitting technologies.<sup>4</sup>

Energy poverty is a scourge, shortening the lives and impairing the health of untold millions of people around the globe. An estimated 1.6 billion people lack access to electricity, and some 2.4 billion people still rely on traditional biomass—wood, crop waste, and dung—for cooking and heating.<sup>5</sup> Daily indoor air pollution for these people is 3 to 37 times as dirtier than outdoor in the world's most polluted cities, and kills about 2.8 million people a year, most of them women and children.<sup>6</sup> Reliance on traditional biomass also takes a heavy toll on forests and wildlife habitat. The Figure below illustrates the energy poverty that plagues much of the developing world.

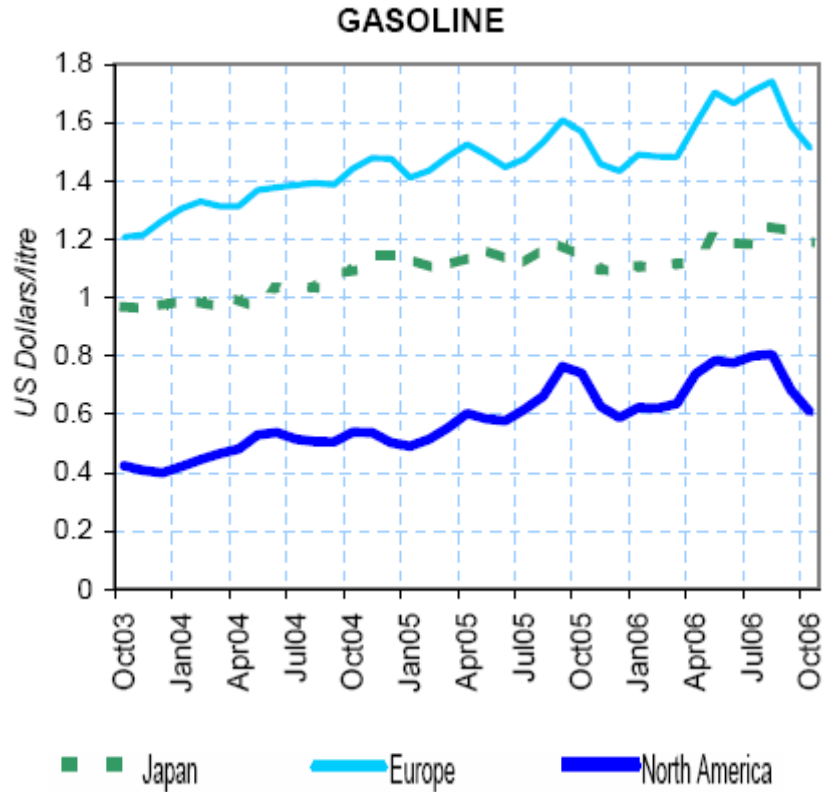


### **Energy poverty**

**Source: John Christy**

Even in a wealthy country like the United States, energy taxes or their regulatory equivalent can inflict hardship on low-income households.<sup>7</sup> Millions of families already feel pinched by the high cost of gasoline, natural gas, and home heating oil. A Kyoto-style system would push energy prices to even higher levels.

Many U.S. politicians professed to be outraged in late 2005 when gasoline prices spiked above \$3.00 a gallon. Consumers pay twice as much for gasoline in some European countries, due to high motor fuel taxes.<sup>8</sup> See Figure below.



**End User Petroleum Product Prices, Oct. 2006**

Source: IEA<sup>9</sup>

Yet from 1990 to 2004, EU transport sector CO<sub>2</sub> emissions increased almost 26% and are projected under current policies to be 35% above 1990 levels in 2010.<sup>10</sup> How much higher than European-level gasoline prices does Gore think Americans should have to pay in order to reduce U.S. emissions?

Gore should at least admit that the pursuit of carbon stabilization has the potential to do more harm than good.

**Conclusion**

*An Inconvenient Truth*, Vice President Al Gore’s book on “The planetary emergency of global warming and what can be done about it,” purports to be a non-ideological exposition of climate science and common sense morality. As this commentary shows, *AIT* is a colorfully illustrated lawyer’s brief that uses science selectively and often dubiously to advance an agenda of alarm and energy rationing.

Gore calls global warming a “moral issue,” but for him it is a *moralizing* issue—a license to castigate political adversaries and blame America first for everything from hurricanes to floods to wildfires to tick-borne disease. Somehow he sees nothing immoral in the attempt to make fossil energy scarcer and more costly in a world where 1.6 billion people

have never flipped a light switch and billions more are too poor to own a car.

Nearly every significant statement that Vice President Gore makes regarding climate science and climate policy is either one sided, misleading, exaggerated, speculative, or wrong. In light of these numerous distortions, *AIT* is ill-suited to serve as a guide to climate science and climate policy for the American people.

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<sup>1</sup> “Without participation of developing countries, the objective of stabilizing atmospheric GHG concentrations at a safe level cannot be achieved.” European Union, *Action on Climate Change Post 2012: A Stakeholder Consultation on the EU’s Contribution to Shaping the Future Global Climate Change Regime*, October 13, 2004, p. 7, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/pdf/background\\_paper.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/pdf/background_paper.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Kyoto is “only the first step in a long journey towards stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions,” Statement by Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director, In Response to News that Russian Government Has Ratified Kyoto, September 29, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Energy Information Administration, *International Energy Outlook 2006*, Chapter 1: World Energy and Economic Outlook 2006, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/pdf/world.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Hoffert, M.I., K. Caldeira, G. Benford., D.R. Criswell, C. Green, H. Herzog, A.K. Jain, H.S. Khesghi, K.S. Lackner, J.S. Leis, H.D. Lightfoot, W. Manheimer, J.C. Mankins, M.E. Mauel, L.J. Perkins, M.E. Schlesinger, T. Volk, T.M.L. Wigley. 2002. Advanced Technology Paths to Global Climate Stability: Energy for a Greenhouse Planet, *Science* 298: 981-987, <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~7Ebielicki/HEJCAAttic/Papers/Hoffert.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> International Energy Agency, “Energy and Poverty,” [http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2002/energy\\_poverty.pdf#search='Energy%20%26%20Poverty%20World%20Energy%20Outlook%202002'](http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2002/energy_poverty.pdf#search='Energy%20%26%20Poverty%20World%20Energy%20Outlook%202002').

<sup>6</sup> Bjorn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the True State of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 182.

<sup>7</sup> Testimony of J. Thomas Mullen, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Health and Human Services, Cleveland Ohio, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, June 12, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> In August 2005, gasoline cost \$6.77 in the Netherlands, \$6.56 per gallon in Norway, \$6.29 per gallon in Denmark, and \$6.02 per gallon in Belgium and the UK. Rachel Elbaum, “What if you had to pay \$6.02 a gallon for gas?” MSNBC, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8994313>.

<sup>9</sup> International Energy Agency, End-User Petroleum Product Prices and Average Crude Oil Import Costs, October 2006, <http://www.iea.org/textbase/stats/surveys/mps.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> European Environment Agency, “EU must take immediate action on Kyoto targets,” <http://www.eea.europa.eu/pressroom/newsreleases/ghgtrends2006-en>.