

CEI's Monthly Planet

Fighting For Freedom

APRIL/MAY 2004 COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE VOLUME 17, NUMBER 3

The Day After Never

by Iain Murray

In the new movie *The Day After Tomorrow*, German director Roland Emmerich lets the glaciers roll over Manhattan following an abrupt change in climate that suddenly sets off a new ice age. This is the third time that Emmerich's production company, Centropolis, has destroyed New York in recent years. They leveled it in *Independence Day*. They had a monster eat it in a remake of *Godzilla*. Now they're freezing it. What do these guys have against New York City?

Plenty, if my theory is correct. New York, you see, is a symbol of the triumph of capitalism. So, if you want to make the point that capitalism has done terrible things and needs to be eradicated, the Big Apple would be your number one target.

This new movie is a case in point. The ice sheets that roll over Wall Street—and the tornadoes that rip through Los Angeles—are caused by man-made global warming. You read that right. In some environmental alarmists' computer models, global warming threatens to shut down the Gulf Stream and bring on a new ice age to Europe and North America. Al Gore is so impressed by this argument that he told *Variety*: "*The Day After Tomorrow* presents us with a great opportunity to talk about the scientific realities of climate change. Millions of people will be coming out of theaters on Memorial Day weekend asking the question, 'Could this really happen?' I think we need to answer that question."

The answer to the former Vice President's question is well known: This scenario is about as likely as a 30-story-tall monster emerging from the depths. MIT's Carl Wunsch, a leading expert in ocean circulation systems, said recently in a letter to the journal *Nature*:



Cartoon by Timothy Kelly

"The only way to produce an ocean circulation without a Gulf Stream is either to turn off the wind system, or to stop the Earth's rotation, or both...The occurrence of a climate state without the Gulf Stream any time soon—within tens of millions of years—has a probability of little more than zero."

In short, as long as the Earth turns and the wind blows, the Gulf Stream is safe.

Continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

Bright Lights, Dim Wits.....	2	Give Me A Break Book Review.....	8
The Day After Never (cont.).....	3	The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.....	10
Sympathy for the Mosquito?.....	4	Media Mentions.....	11
Q & A with Roger Bate and Richard Tren.....	6	End Notes.....	12



FROM THE GENERAL COUNSEL



Bright Lights, Dim Wits

by Sam Kazman

I recently bought my first energy-saving compact fluorescent bulb. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, if every household in America were to use one of these to replace an incandescent bulb, we'd reduce pollution by the equivalent of one million fewer cars. According to Amory Lovins, the soft-energy guru of the Rocky Mountain Institute, such bulbs, "widely deployed," could help Bombay avoid power outages, raise the profits of North Carolina chicken farmers, and increase the disposable income of Haitian families. And

if that's not enough, they're "also the key to affordable solar power that lets girls learn to read, advancing the role of women and reducing population pressure."

That's a pretty strong pitch, but that's not why I bought the bulb. I got it because my teenage daughter had purchased a new ceiling fixture for her bedroom. The fixture was groovy (yes, a Sixties term, but it had a Sixties look), but it could only accommodate a single 60-watt bulb. I figured it was better to light one 26-watt fluorescent—advertised as equivalent to a 100-watt regular bulb—than to curse the 60-watt dimness.

The bulb, however, wasn't quite what I expected. When I first turned it on, it was pretty dim. I figured I'd bought a dud, until I realized that it needed a few minutes to warm up.

Incandescent bulbs don't need to warm up. Over the years I've seen lots of claims about how much money compact fluorescents will save you, but I've never seen any mention of some warm-up time: not in the federal government's Energy Star Program ("change a light, change the world"), and certainly not in Amory Lovins's over-the-top paeans. Only after I actually bought one did I learn about the phenomenon (though, in all fairness, it was mentioned in the fine print on the back of the bulb's package).

This was a trifling irritation, but it does suggest how energy efficiency tends to get a free pass in most consumer news stories. Problems that would merit coverage in any other context are glossed over when they involve "high efficiency" products.

Worse yet, government programs that tout or mandate these products get even less scrutiny. Several years ago, *Consumer Reports*—which often bucks the above trend—found that high-efficiency dishwashers, which had special dirt sensors to supposedly reduce hot water use, were actually *less* efficient than lower-priced conventional models. Meanwhile, the government's Energy Star program touted the high-priced models, and the Department of Energy relied on the same dirt-sensing technology to mandate high-efficiency clothes washers.

By the way, the higher operating costs of sensor-equipped dishwashers didn't show up in their federally required energy cost labels. While *Consumer Reports* used dirty dishes in its tests, the testing prescribed by the feds, until very recently, utilized clean dishes. That's another great story that you didn't read in your newspaper.

(Of course, yet another story you didn't read with your morning coffee is the lethal effect of CAFE—the federal new-car fuel economy program—on traffic safety. But since we've written about that so many times, we'll skip it for now.)

None of this is to deny that compact fluorescents are incredibly useful in many situations. But the notion that they will significantly reduce our overall energy consumption is questionable. Back in 1987, the municipal utility of Traer, Iowa, launched the Great Light Bulb Exchange, distributing 18,000 high efficiency bulbs to the small town's residents. Despite the fact that over half of the town's households participated, electricity consumption actually *rose* by 8 percent.

This result isn't all that inexplicable. Advances in efficiency make energy less expensive per unit of output. Compact fluorescents give us cheaper lumens, so it shouldn't surprise us if we end up burning more lights than we did before.

Nor is it bad. Politicians may see cheap energy as a problem, but to any normal person it's a blessing—which is why I may get a second compact fluorescent for my kitchen, warm-up period and all.

MONTHLY
PLANET

Publisher:
Fred L. Smith, Jr.

Editor:
Ivan G. Osorio

Assistant
Editor:
Elizabeth Jones

Contributing
Editor:
Richard Morrison

CEI's Monthly Planet is produced 10 times a year by the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a pro-market public interest group dedicated to free enterprise and limited government.

CEI is a non-partisan, non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia and is classified by the IRS as a 501 (c)(3) charity. CEI relies upon contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals for its support. Articles may be reprinted provided they are attributed to CEI.

Phone:
(202)331-1010

Fax:
(202)331-0640

E-mail:
info@cei.org

ISSN# 1086-3036



To Panic or Not to Panic?

Continued from page 1

Even more succinctly, Canadian experts Andrew Weaver and Claude Hillaire-Marcel said in the April 16 issue of *Science*, referring directly to the movie, that, “it is safe to say that global warming will not lead to the onset of a new ice age.”

This has actually been known for some time. In recent years a scientific consensus has emerged that the Gulf Stream is not at risk from man-made global warming. Researchers R. Bleck and S. Sun, for instance, writing in the journal *Global and Planetary Change*, tell how they revisited their model of the meridional overturning circulation (MOC), the scientific term for the Gulf Stream. “In view of evidence presented in IPCC (2001) [report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change],” the researchers “had expected the Atlantic MOC to weaken in response to a doubling of atmospheric CO₂.” They found that, “the Atlantic overturning stream function appears to be stable,” concluding that, “It is

message to the world, given a billboard for one final day, what would you put or say on it?” Hidden among the thousands of profiles are the filmmakers’ responses. (Special thanks to junkscience.com’s Steve Milloy, who pored through them). Writer Jeffrey Nachmanoff said: “Out of 20 million species, why is there always one who has to go out and ruin it for the others?” Emmerich was particularly blunt; his response: “No more Bush.”

Emmerich’s 1998 *Godzilla* remake exhibits the same hostility to America and man’s success. Though in that movie it was a French nuclear test that created everyone’s favorite building-chewing lizard, the environment had to have its revenge on America—so *sayonara*, Chrysler Building. The filmmakers tried to cover this up with a silly story about Manhattan being the only island where the monster could possibly hide, somehow forgetting that Hong Kong was a tad more convenient for Godzilla’s point of origin.

Note also that the French were the heroes in that movie—they recognize their mistakes and send a crack team of sophisticates to fix the problem, unlike the U.S. military,

Climate alarmists like Al Gore push the fantasy—however implausible—of a collapsing Gulf Stream to blame greed and consumerism for the energy use and greenhouse gases that they claim threaten the planet.

insensitive to global warming resulting from gradual CO₂ doubling.”

Climate alarmists have gotten no comfort their favorite model, that from the UK’s Hadley Centre. (That model, by the way, proved no more capable of predicting past climate than a table of random numbers when used for the flawed National Assessment on Climate Change). A team of scientists (Wu et al.), using the Hadley model, reported in *Geophysical Research Letters* that their examination of thermohaline [the interaction of heat and salinity in the oceans] circulation (THC) was expected to show a weakening of the stream. “However,” as they wrote, they “do not find a decreasing trend of the North Atlantic THC.” Instead, “Accompanying the freshening trend, the THC unexpectedly shows an upward trend, rather than a downward trend.” In other words, according to the Hadley Centre model, global warming may actually *strengthen* the Gulf Stream.

But climate alarmists like Al Gore push the fantasy—however implausible—of a collapsing Gulf Stream to blame greed and consumerism for the energy use and greenhouse gases that they claim threaten the planet. So New York, the icon of American capitalism, is the ideal target to underscore the threat.

The film’s website, reputedly the most expensive ever for a motion picture, contains some evidence of the filmmakers’ motivation. Fairly touchy-feely for an action-adventure flick (suggesting some confusion about the target demographic that may come back to haunt the distributors), it asks visitors to submit profiles, answering such questions as “Your

whose efforts keep failing because of arrogant commanders and political interference. (Hmmm, have we seen this story elsewhere before?).

Even the relatively patriotic *Independence Day* carries the message, however subtly. We all cheered as American forces kicked some alien behind, but that was after all the cities had been destroyed. Really, it’s an environmentalist’s dream: The engines of capitalism are gone, so now we can rebuild the Earth in a “sustainable” fashion.

It is a terrible thing to ponder, but could filmmakers like Emmerich be motivated to destroy New York City with such regularity for the same reason the radical Islamists attacked it? Is it because they can’t stand the fact that New York lives, eats, and breathes capitalism? Machiavelli once said that to win a war you should destroy the icons of your enemy’s people. Terrorists understand this well.

Environmentalists and anti-capitalists aren’t evil like terrorists, of course, but they are just as misguided. Capitalism has conquered diseases, generated wealth, and brought a quality of life we could never achieve in the world that Greenpeace and Al Gore want. Socialism, fascism, religious fundamentalism, and radical environmentalism have all tried to destroy capitalism, and failed—so it’s no surprise that those who want to see capitalism fail might dream about aliens, monsters, or Nature herself bringing it about.

Jain Murray (imurray@cei.org) is a Senior Fellow at CEI, where he specializes in the debate over climate change and the use and abuse of science in the political process.



Sympathy for the Mosquito?

Anti-Spraying Hysteria Reaches the Absurd

by Angela Logomasini

“Save Our Mosquitoes” isn’t a plea one expects to hear these days, with the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus killing hundreds and making thousands of people sick. But just two summers ago, someone posted that very appeal on a sign in Chargin Falls, Ohio. These “poor bugs” were indeed at risk as the town debated whether to spray pesticides that year. Residents, feeling unduly merciful, gave the mosquitoes a stay of execution: No spraying in 2002.

Discovered by an official from the local health department, the sign shows how bizarre the debate about mosquito spraying has become. While it makes good sense for every community to consider all the facts about spraying, few of these debates have focused on any rational discussion—instead falling prey to misinformation campaigns and hysteria.

Radical environmental groups bear much of the blame for feeding the hysteria by making a host of unsupported claims about the risks associated with pesticides. In contrast to its sympathy for the mosquito’s “plight,” the anti-pesticide crowd has shown little concern for humans suffering from the often debilitating—and sometimes deadly—virus transmitted by the bugs. In the past, these groups have downplayed the risks of West Nile by claiming that the illness only kills the elderly, the sick, and children—as if that offered any comfort! (Yet that claim isn’t even true. In 2003, the median age of those who died from the virus was 47 years, within an age range of one month to 99 years.)

The radical environmentalist anti-spraying stance may have played better before 2002, when the death toll remained relatively low. Starting in 2002, West Nile took a disturbing turn. The Centers for Disease Control and



CDC/James Gathany

Prevention (CDC) reported that more than 4,000 people became ill and 300 died—compared to about 150 cases and 18 deaths over the previous three years. In 2003, the CDC’s tally is nearly 10,000 cases and more than 250 deaths. Almost 3,000 of these cases were reported to be West Nile meningitis or encephalitis, which is a particularly painful and potentially debilitating form of the disease.

Clearly, West Nile is a very serious and growing problem, so spraying must be pretty dangerous to arouse so much concern, right? Wrong. Consider the CDC data on documented cases of health problems related to pesticide exposures from spraying during the period 1999-2002. If spraying-related health problems were as rampant as environmental activists suggest, we should expect some significant documentation of cases. But the CDC data indicate that the number of cases has been very small and the impact only temporary.

According to the CDC report, there were two cases of definite health impacts, 25 probable cases, and 106 possible cases. No deaths were reported. That’s a total of 133 potential cases of temporary illness over four years—none of them fatal—among a population that CDC estimates was 118 million in 2000. CDC concluded: “The findings in this report indicate that serious adverse outcomes potentially related to public health insecticide application were uncommon. When administered properly, in a mosquito-control program, insecticides pose a low risk for acute, temporary health effects.”

In four years of spraying, there has been only one case that could be considered severe, and that case was related to asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). CDC explained the circumstances thus: “When her neighborhood was sprayed, a woman aged 54 years was exposed to sumithrin, which passed through operating window fans



and a window air conditioner. She had exacerbation of her asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease." Window fans suck in air from the outdoors, which is something that a COPD patient should avoid. Individuals with COPD generally have to be very careful because even minute amounts of substances can initiate respiratory complications. Dust, pollen, and even air fresheners can trigger such episodes.

Fortunately, this individual recovered. Her case highlights special precautions that COPD patients must take to reduce exposure to a host of substances, both natural and man-made, but it does not justify inadequate protection of the public from vector-related risks. In fact, COPD patients would be particularly vulnerable should they be struck with

able public health benefits. The authors, Mark S. Fradin of the University of North Carolina and John F. Day of the University of Florida, note: "DEET-based products provided complete protection for the longest duration. Higher concentrations of DEET provided longer-lasting protection." DEET lasted for 301.5 minutes, while the next best alternative lasted not even one third as long (94.6 minutes). For these reasons, the *Journal* study dubbed DEET the "gold standard" for protection against insect-borne illnesses.

Activists have also spread misinformation about the impact that spraying has on wildlife. The Audubon Society has repeatedly claimed that data collected by the State of New York prove definitively that pesticides, primarily lawn products,

includes two entries on pesticides. One concludes that animal deaths related to organophosphate pesticides "are usually sporadic and infrequent in occurrence." The other notes: "Mortality in wildlife due to chlorinated hydrocarbon poisoning is seldom observed in Michigan anymore." In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—which studies these products extensively—maintains that spraying has negligible impact on birds.

While claims about rampant pesticide deaths are not supported, the impact of the West Nile virus is well recognized and documented as a serious threat to wildlife. Emi Saito of the USGS calls West Nile Virus "a huge concern." She told *USA Today*: "If it's attacking our endangered species, is it going to lead

In contrast to its sympathy for the mosquito's "plight," the anti-pesticide crowd has shown little concern for humans suffering from the often debilitating—and sometimes deadly—virus transmitted by the bugs.

West Nile, which could easily kill someone with a compromised respiratory system.

Environmental activists have also claimed that application of chemical insect repellants—particularly those containing DEET—can increase risks of seizures among children. But in a recent review of the literature on this topic published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, researchers from the Universities of Toronto, Western Ontario, and Montreal report that none of these studies were conclusive that DEET was in fact the cause of seizures. Given that 3 to 5 percent of children suffer from such seizures for a variety of reasons and that 23 to 29 percent of children are exposed to DEET, it is possible that the cases were incorrectly attributed to DEET.

Similarly, a *New England Journal of Medicine*-published study of the relative effectiveness of various repellants found DEET to pose minimal public health risks, while providing consider-

are killing the majority of birds, far more than those killed by West Nile or other diseases. Yet New York State has not publicly released any data on this topic in any report, nor has such data been peer reviewed. Further, the researcher who conducted these tests has not publicly made the pesticide claim either, and has even told the press that spraying isn't a significant risk to birds.

Reports by other governmental bodies do not support Audubon's claims, either. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), a division of the Department of Interior, has been collecting data and studying wildlife diseases for decades. USGS researchers study pesticide-related deaths among wildlife, focusing on pesticides only when an illegal use or over-application is reported. It shows that many mass die-offs of species occur from natural causes. Far fewer incidents are related to illegal and/or excessive use of pesticides. The State of Michigan also has collected data on wildlife-related illnesses. Its *Wildlife Disease Manual*

to their extinction?" Because of such concerns, the USGS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and CDC have stepped up efforts to study West Nile's impact on birds. USGS reports that West Nile has killed birds from at least 160 bird species, including some endangered species.

This year, West Nile is expected to spread throughout the West Coast, and debates and misinformation about spraying will likely spread along with it—exacerbating the virus' spread. But it doesn't have to be. Hopefully sympathy for the humans will prevail over the "plight" of the mosquito.

Angela Logomasini (alogomasini@cei.org) is Director of Risk and Environmental Policy at CEI. This article is drawn in part from a recently released CEI monograph, Pesticides and the West Nile Virus: An examination of Environmentalist Claims, available online at <http://www.cei.org/gencon/025,03893.cfm>.



Q & A with Roger Bate and Richard Tren:

Two Public Health Experts on the Persistent Problem of Malaria in the Developing World and Developed Nations' Response



Roger Bate

CEI recently interviewed Dr. Roger Bate and Richard Tren, co-founders of African Fighting Malaria (AFM), a not-for-profit health advocacy group based in South Africa and in the United States. Founded in 2000, AFM conducts research on the political economy of diseases and disease control in developing countries. They are also co-authors of the CEI monograph *When Politics Kills: Malaria and the DDT Story*. Dr. Bate is currently a visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. He holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University. Richard Tren is AFM's Director. He has written extensively on malaria and health development policy. They answered some questions jointly.

CEI: Although malaria affects millions in the developing world, few people in industrialized countries are aware of its devastating impact. How did you become aware of this scourge? And what prompted you to start Africa Fighting Malaria?

Roger Bate: I was conducting research on water in South Africa in the late 1990s when an explosion of malaria occurred. It became apparent that ceasing the use of DDT in 1996 was the cause. Since there was a strong movement to

ban DDT worldwide, and given South Africa's experience, I thought it was essential that some group stood up for DDT, and hence Africa Fighting Malaria (AFM) was born.

Richard Tren: Even though I grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa, which is free of malaria, any trip to the bush meant having to take malaria pills. And I had always heard about the disease from my parents and grandparents. In 1997, when I moved back to South Africa after having lived in the UK for around 10 years, the country was in the grip of a major malaria epidemic, and for me it stopped being a disease that my grandparents may have suffered from. It was a disease that was killing hundreds of young, vital people only a few hours' drive from my home.

I had been writing about environmental policy and was becoming increasingly frustrated with the Western environmentalist agenda and its effects on Africa. When I heard about the attempts of Western countries and green groups to ban DDT while thousands were suffering from malaria I became almost speechless with anger. Roger and I started this NGO and I think have been very successful in fighting back attempts to stop the use of the chemical.

It is revolting that the people wanting to ban DDT pretend that they somehow have people's best interest at heart and are acting for the greater good. Green groups, governments, and donor agencies have assumed the moral high ground and yet their actions kill. They kill people who are too young to read or write. They kill people who just want to go to school, get a good job, and perhaps build a bright future, but cannot build that future because powerful, well-funded groups based in safe, healthy countries with plenty of food and electricity won't let them. The people behind these groups should be utterly ashamed of themselves; they romanticize the poverty, filth, and ill health in Africa, while stopping public



Richard Tren

health officials from using DDT to give children a safer, healthier future.

CEI: Besides killing or incapacitating millions of people annually, what other effects does malaria have on developing nations?

AFM: Malaria has played a significant role in thwarting development in the poorest countries. Both the short- and long-term development effects of malaria are significant, because so many people are severely affected by the disease. In some areas, malaria sufferers occupy almost one third of all the hospital beds, and one malarial bout can put a person down for almost two weeks. The recovery time, coupled with malaria's frequent occurrence during the harvest season in Africa, has a devastating effect on economic growth. For example, one study showed that families sickened by malaria are only able to clear 40 percent of the amount of land that healthy families clear for crops. Moreover, Jeffrey Sachs, the Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, estimates that over a 15-year period malaria alone reduces a country's gross national product by 20 percent.

CEI: Researchers regard DDT as an



effective weapon against malaria, but many international aid agencies refuse to fund its use. Why are these aid agencies so reluctant to use this chemical?

AFM: The vast majority of 60 years of evidence agrees with the opinion of the National Academy of Sciences: “[T]here is still no clinical or epidemiological evidence of damage to man from approved uses of DDT.”

Donor agencies, under pressure to conform to Western environmental standards, are reluctant to fund any indoor residual spraying—which kills insects long after the insecticide’s application—and are particularly unwilling to fund the use of DDT in malaria control. The Swedish International Donor Agency (SIDA) claims that it cannot fund the use of DDT in poor countries because it is banned in Sweden, but SIDA fails to take into account the different risks that Africans face. If malaria killed between one and two million Europeans every year and DDT was one of the few effective weapons against the disease, one could be sure that most European governments would sanction its use—as indeed they did when malaria was a problem in Europe. The argument that Africans shouldn’t use technology because the West finds that technology unacceptable simply dresses up a callous disregard for human life in politically correct egalitarian camouflage.

CEI: Recently, a group of researchers, writing in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, accused the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) of medical malpractice for providing developing nations with ineffective medicines. Are these authors correct in their assertions?

AFM: In some countries the drugs are ineffective in over 80 percent of cases, and on average maybe over 25 percent, which is a significant failure of both GFATM and WHO. Their defense is that it takes time to change front-line treatments since training, educational materials, and supplies have to be made. The WHO claims it may take five years to change from the ineffective drugs to

the newer, more effective Artemisinin Combination Therapies, but it should be possible to do it faster than that. Indeed, I have seen it done in a matter of days in some locations. The reality is that both WHO and GFATM dropped the ball, paying more attention to AIDS and funding matters.

CEI: Could you explain the intent of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Convention? How has it compounded the effects of malaria?

If malaria killed between one and two million Europeans every year and DDT was one of the few effective weapons against the disease, one could be sure that most European governments would sanction its use.

AFM: Persistent Organic Pollutants are designated by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) to be “chemical substances that persist in the environment, bioaccumulate through the food web, and pose a risk of causing adverse effects to human health and the environment.” The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants centers on the elimination of 12 POPs, one of which is DDT.

DDT is considered a persistent organic pollutant, although, as it is used to prevent malaria, it poses little environmental risk in that use. The Convention initially intended to phase out the use of DDT by 2007, but due to the timely intervention of some public health organizations and some countries, the Convention now permits the use of DDT for controlling disease-bearing vectors.

The Convention stipulates that DDT may only be used in accordance with WHO recommendations and guidelines and only when “safe, effective, and affordable alternatives are not available to the Party in question.” However, the desirability of this statement becomes obvious when one considers the nature of mosquito control.

Insecticides such as the carbamates, synthetic pyrethroids, and DDT are effective in indoor residual spraying. However, mosquitoes are becoming

resistant to synthetic pyrethroids, and carbamates are expensive, twice as much as synthetic pyrethroids and four times as much as DDT.

If the price of carbamates were to drop dramatically, malaria control programs in poor countries would have a safe and affordable alternative to DDT, but they would also have only one reliable insecticide for malaria control. This would be highly risky. Good pest management practice requires the rotation of insecticides. Until the

invention of more effective techniques or pesticides, malaria control programs would probably still need to use DDT in order to manage insecticide resistance.

Under the terms of the treaty, parties to the Convention (The Conference of Parties or COP) will gather every three years to determine whether to keep or to withdraw this exemption. Given the success that environmentalist lobby groups have had in swaying opinion at COP negotiations and the poor representation that most malarial countries have, it is conceivable that the COP could rescind the exemption even though public health programs would still need DDT. At the final negotiations of the text of the Stockholm Convention in Johannesburg 2000, there were approximately twice as many environmentalist delegates as there were representatives from all sub-Saharan African countries. It was environmental groups like the World Wildlife Fund that pushed for the outright ban, even though they now try to deny it.

In all, while the Stockholm Convention recognizes the ongoing need for DDT in public health programs, it will most likely severely undermine public health efforts, removing decision making from health experts and scientists in developing countries and burdening poor countries’ governments with excessive reporting and bureaucratic requirements.



Give Me A Break

How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media

by John Stossel

(Harper Collins, 2004: \$24.95)

Reviewed by Neil Hrab

Acrobats, NASCAR drivers, rodeo clowns—three of the world’s most dangerous professions. Today, given doomsayers’ reaction when someone questions their pronouncements, we could add the occupation of “skeptic” to this list. Witness the public pillory of Bjørn Lomborg, author of *The Skeptical Environmentalist* (and winner of CEI’s Julian Simon Award for 2003). As the Cato Institute’s Steve Hanke notes, the campaign against Lomborg proves “what any fighter pilot knows: that when you start receiving flak, you know you are over the target.”

By this standard, ABC News correspondent John Stossel is one heck

I have ever encountered”—apparently incensed by Stossel’s exposés of how government regulations hurt the very consumers they were designed to protect. Stossel’s willingness to question conventional wisdom led TV columnist Gail Pennington to dub him “America’s best-known skeptic.”

In his first book, *Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media*, Stossel details his intellectual odyssey as a reporter. Early in his career, he shared the fashionable skepticism against private corporations that permeates many newsrooms. As a consumer reporter, he covered

Many journalists, by positioning themselves as “experts,” unintentionally come across as dour know-it-alls. Stossel avoids this pitfall by asking questions rather than reciting conclusions, and by keeping his tongue firmly in cheek.

of a fighter pilot. Environmentalists loudly denounce him for questioning their claims that the world is careening towards ruin. Organic farming advocates attack Stossel for arguing that organic food is no safer or more nutritious than normal fare. And drug war supporters assail him for questioning the wisdom of imprisoning non-violent drug offenders. Stossel has even drawn the ire of Ralph Nader, who called Stossel “the most dishonest mass-media journalist

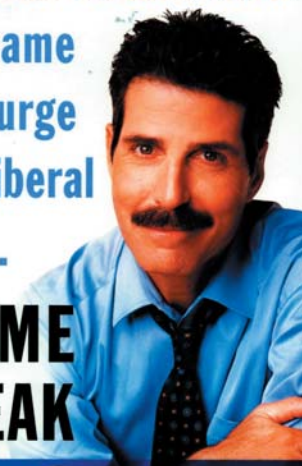
things like deceptive practices in the cosmetics industry and price-fixing by grocery stores and milk wholesalers. “For years, I bought the stereotypes that serve as conventional wisdom in the news business: Corporations are evil; all risk is intolerable; consumers need more government to protect us,” he writes. “I went on to do a thousand stories on high-pressure car salesmen, rip-offs by various businesses, medical breakthroughs, and other assorted

How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media...

GIVE ME A BREAK

JOHN STOSSEL

CO-ANCHOR OF ABC'S 20/20



scams.”

However, after some reflection and study, Stossel began to doubt the conventional wisdom, and to question the supposed beneficial effects of government regulation and intervention.

It's embarrassing how long it took me to see the damage regulators do. The taxes that pay their salaries and build their offices are the least of it. The bigger harm is the indirect cost, all the money businesses spend trying to wade through the red tape (lobbying, filling out forms, hiring lawyers), plus the damage the regulation does to the American spirit. So much creativity now goes not into inventing things, but into gaming the system, manipulating the regulatory leviathan.

Stossel took to his new mission with gusto. TV critic James Endrst once observed: “A lot of John Stossel’s stories are hard to believe. That’s what makes them so good. And so maddening.” *Give Me A Break* does not disappoint: It’s packed with dozens of hard-to-believe stories and groan-inducing quotes.

For example, on a show on the effects



of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Stossel asked Clinton-era Equal Employment Opportunity Commission head Gilbert Casellas to what degree regulations forbid employers from asking disability-related questions when hiring. Casellas boasted that the rules are crystal-clear; “none of this stuff is rocket science,” he said. Stossel decided to test this. He asked Casellas, “If you come to me applying for a job, and your arm is in a sling, can I ask you why your arm is in a sling?” At that point, Casellas asked for Stossel to stop taping so he could consult an assistant. After five minutes of conferring, the camera came back on. Stossel repeated his question. Casellas responded, “You can ask me whether I can do the job.” Stossel pointed out that Casellas had to ask an assistant “what the rule is.” Casellas said he had to confer “because you asked me a specific question, about a specific situation.” So much for Casellas’ claims that “none of this stuff is rocket science.”

Stossel’s ability to dig up bizarre, yet humorous examples to make his point is only part of the reason for his popularity. The straightforward, almost folksy way in which he tells stories endears him to viewers, whom he addresses directly. He once told an interviewer: “I behave as I do when I’m talking to friends and family. I try to sort out the more pompous language that comes to me in the form of research...and convert that to plain talk.” Stossel writes in this same folksy style. His book not only entertains with its revelations about the author’s life, career, motivations, and philosophy, but also provides a good example of how to communicate effectively and concisely.

Another reason for Stossel’s popularity—which also comes through in the book—is his insistence on always asking questions. Many journalists, by positioning themselves as “experts,” unintentionally come across as dour know-it-alls. Stossel avoids this pitfall by asking questions rather than reciting conclusions, and by keeping his tongue firmly in cheek. (In one self-effacing moment, he even acknowledges that some people he meets confuse him with his former “20/20” colleague Geraldo Rivera.) “I don’t claim to have all the answers,” he writes. As the book and Stossel’s ABCNews specials show, having

all the answers is often less important than knowing the right questions to ask. Thus, his broadcasts, rather than dryly reciting facts, work as engaging dialogues in which he and the viewers discover certain things together. This same rhetorical style comes through in *Give Me A Break*, making it a very enjoyable read.

It will sound strange to his fans, but there was a time when Stossel was not sure how long he could continue his skeptical odyssey. He once said that pointing out the unintended consequences of government does not always “make for good television, and I’m finding [such stories] very difficult

to do.” But that was in 1994. Fortunately for the state of public debate in America, he kept going.

Today, even some of Stossel’s most outspoken critics admit the man has a certain charm, his almost heretical views notwithstanding. For instance, *Chicago Tribune* TV critic Steve Johnson blithely dismisses Stossel’s ideas as “nuts,” but he credits Stossel for being a “provocative and engaging” journalist. No fan of Stossel will want to miss this provocative book.

Neil Hrab (nhrab@cei.org) is CEI's 2003-2004 Warren T. Brookes Journalism Fellow.

CEI Board Member Leonard Liggio Receives International Award of Liberty from Italy’s *Società Libera*

Italy’s *Società Libera*, an organization dedicated to promoting classical liberal ideas, has awarded its **International Award of Liberty** to **Professor Leonard P. Liggio**, Executive Vice President of the **Atlas Economic Research Foundation** and Board Member of the **Competitive Enterprise Institute**, for his contributions in promoting liberal culture.



A prestigious jury composed of leading figures of Italian civil society—including two judges from the board of RAI (Italy’s state run TV channel); professors from the universities of Milan, Rome, and Bologna, and Bocconi University; and the *Corriere della Sera* (Italy’s leading newspaper)—made the award selection.

The award will be given **June 21, 2004** at a ceremony to be televised by RAI on prime time.

According to the director of *Società Libera*, **Vincenzo Olita**, the practice of liberalism, understood as a system of freedom and responsibility, faces big barriers to become accepted in local communities. For this reason, *Società Libera* tries to reward those in the areas of scientific research, economics, and culture who have given testimony to the values of responsibility and liberty. In the area of culture, *Società Libera* regards the contributions of **Karl Popper, F.A. Hayek, Bruno Leoni, Carl Menger, and Dario Antiseri** as the guide for the award. We congratulate Leonard for this merited award and the judges for their wisdom.



The Good, the Bad, AND THE UGLY

The Good: Four More Years of No Internet Taxes

On April 29, the U.S. Senate, breaking a stalemate, passed the Internet Tax Non-Discrimination Act (S. 150), extending the ban on Internet taxes for four years, by a 93-3 vote. In January 2003, Sen. George Allen (R-Va.) introduced a bill, co-sponsored by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), to extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act of 1998, which expired in November 2003, but the legislation stalled. A few Senators—most notably Sens. Lamar Alexander (R.-Tenn.) and Tom Carper (D-Del.)—refused to consider a permanent tax ban, saying it could impinge upon existing states' rights to tax traditional telephone service. The legislation languished until October, when Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) introduced an amendment to extend the tax ban until 2007. Unfortunately, S. 150 allows states and localities to tax voice communication over the Internet; but the compromise convinced many senators, including Alexander and Carper, to support the bill.



PR Newswire Photo Service

Although a partial victory—S. 150 was originally intended to make the tax ban permanent—it is a step in the right direction. It keeps the taxman at bay for another four years and prevents states from stifling broadband development by eliminating existing taxes on DSL. Further, as former CEI Analyst

Solveig Singleton points out, preventing states from collecting Internet taxes—which could be easily hidden—could force them to become more fiscally responsible. “States have options; they just don’t want to use them. For example, they might enforce ‘use taxes’—use taxes are the often-not-collected taxes that states impose on products that their citizens have bought out of state. They might try to raise income taxes or general business taxes. States resist this because voters are likely hold them accountable for these direct taxes and force them to discipline spending, the real solution to state budgetary woes.”

The Bad: EPA Enacts Costly and Unnecessary Air Quality Rules

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently adopted stricter standards for ground-level ozone—despite the lack of scientific evidence that the old regulations were insufficient. On April 15, EPA announced that 474 of the nation’s 3,141 counties fail to meet the new standards. The new regulations create a classification system and timeline for counties to come into compliance—policies that could prove onerous for both industries and local governments.

According to EPA’s own estimates, counties will have to shell out approximately \$50 billion over the next 15 years to meet new air quality standards. Counties with relatively minor smog problems have until 2007 to come into compliance, while those with severe air pollution have until 2021 to do so. Failure to meet these standards could result in sanctions, including the loss of federal highway funds. To help states avoid these penalties, EPA will offer a suite of inter-related actions known as the Clean Air Rules of 2004, which include tools to help states meet the national standard for ground-level ozone. However, adopting these new measures will cost states and industry dearly—all while doing little to clean the environment.

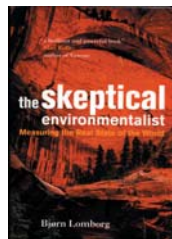


PR Newswire Photo Service

So why is EPA doing this? A possible explanation may be to gain political points for the administration on a high-profile environmental issue. “EPA’s Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee concluded this tougher standard would not be ‘significantly more protective of public health,’ and called the change a ‘policy judgment,’” notes CEI Air Quality Policy Director Ben Lieberman. Even more alarming, EPA seems to have ignored its own economic findings. “The agency’s own cost benefit analysis found the modest marginal benefits of the new standard outweighed by its costs.”

THE UGLY: IPCC HEAD COMPARES BJØRN LOMBORG TO HITLER!

Godwin’s Law—coined in the early 1990s by Electronic Frontier Foundation Counsel Mike Godwin—states that if someone improperly compares an opponent to Adolf Hitler, then his argument is flawed and he therefore loses. By this criterion, United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change head and Kyoto Protocol advocate Rajendra Pauchauri has disqualified himself from the global warming debate by comparing Danish statistician and *Skeptical Environmentalist* author Bjørn Lomborg to the Nazi tyrant.



Pauchauri compared Lomborg to Hitler after Lomborg said that Inuits should move away from the melting ice caps rather than stay in their native lands because that would be cheaper for the world than would be complying with the Kyoto Protocol. Pauchauri then attacked Lomborg in a leading Danish newspaper. “If you were to accept Lomborg’s way of thinking, then maybe what Hitler did was the right thing,” he railed. However, Pauchauri offers little evidence as to how Kyoto could actually benefit the Inuits.

It may be that Pauchauri’s outrage is actually directed at the popularity of Lomborg’s best-selling book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, which, as CEI Director of Global Warming and International Environmental Policy Myron Ebell explains, “has revealed the unseemly disconnect between environmental fact and what the public is led to believe by environmental doomsayers in the scientific community.”



Director of Food Safety Policy Gregory Conko and Adjunct Fellow Dr. Henry I. Miller illustrate corporate rent-seeking in the biotechnology industry:

Long before the first gene-spliced plants were ready for commercialization, a few agrochemical and biotechnology companies, led by Monsanto and Calgene, approached policy makers in the administration of President Reagan and requested that the EPA, USDA, and FDA create a regulatory framework specific to gene-spliced products.

The policies recommended by the industry, that were predicated on the myth that there's something fundamentally novel and worrisome about gene-splicing techniques, were far more restrictive than could be justified on scientific grounds.

Often they were even more burdensome than those proposed by regulators.

Ostensibly, the goal of these policies was to placate anti-biotech activists and provide reassurance to consumers that government regulators had evaluated and cleared gene-spliced products, but the real motives were less benign. The companies wanted excessive regulatory requirements to make biotech R&D too expensive for possible competitors such as startups and seed companies; in other words, regulatory expenses and delays would serve as a market-entry barrier.

- *Investor's Business Daily*, May 28

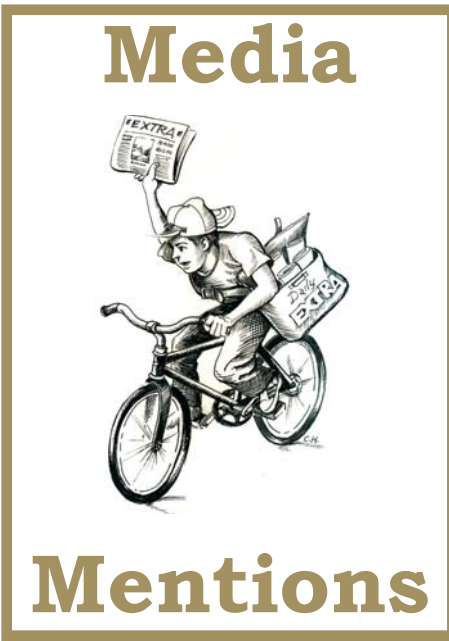
Warren Brookes Fellow Neil Hrab chronicles the sad story of appeasement in corporate America:

Exactly 50 years ago, the idea of the "domino theory" first found its way into popular discourse in the context of Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. While it sounds a bit like a Cold War relic today, the phrase remains useful to explain certain events. Consider the activist Rainforest Action Network's (RAN) recently concluded four-year campaign against Citigroup.

In 2000, RAN accused Citigroup of loaning money to economic development projects that were purportedly destroying the world's "remaining old growth forests" and "accelerat[ing] climate change."...Over the next four years, RAN staged dozens of anti-Citigroup stunts, including student rallies and boycotts, anti-Citigroup TV ads, and street protests. RAN activists also hung banners in front of Citigroup's New York headquarters and demanded that Citigroup not make loans to economic development projects in undeveloped regions of the world, to ensure that they remain pristine.

Last January, Citigroup gave in—it sued for peace. In exchange for an end to RAN's campaign, Citigroup promised to "promote higher environmental standards through its business practices," particularly in the areas of "endangered ecosystems, illegal logging, ecologically sustainable development, and climate change."

- *American Enterprise Online*, May 26



Director of Air Quality Policy Ben Lieberman takes the long view on achieving affordable gas prices:

The price of oil is set by global supply and demand, and right now, demand is stronger than supply. Yet, while foreign production levels are not within our control, America could do more to use its domestic sources—including tapping the estimated 5.7 billion to 16 billion barrels of recoverable oil in a small portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), which is currently off limits.

Granted, it would take at least seven years before ANWR oil becomes available, so it is not going to help us now (had President Bill Clinton not vetoed an ANWR drilling proposal in 1995, we would have that oil today). But once available, it would knock at least a little

off the price per gallon for decades thereafter.

- *The Detroit News*, May 23

Senior Fellow Iain Murray explains the persistently limited appeal of that darling of environmentalists, the hybrid-electric car:

Hybrid-electric cars are the flavor of the moment for environmental campaigners...Yet there are a few problems with this dream of a hybrid tomorrow. Surveys show that people are highly resistant to them; their owners are starting to realize that they aren't quite as fuel-efficient as advertised; and when it comes to their expense, a new study suggests that lack of access to affordable cars hurts minority employment.

- *Tech Central Station*, May 18

Vice President for Regulatory Policy Clyde Wayne Crews weighs the convenience and privacy trade-offs of free email services:

Other search engines, like Yahoo, have long offered free email. Latecomer Google plans to offer a full gigabyte of e-mail storage, many times that available today from the popular Yahoo and Hotmail free services; their few megabytes are consumed by a song file or a few attached documents.

But nothing is free: The Gmail tradeoff is that e-mails a user receives will be scanned by machine and advertisements, based on trigger words, will appear within one's browser. The method is rather like the tailored ads that appear whenever one searches the Web, except that it responds to key words or phrases typed in the body of a message...[A]s the Progressive Policy Institute has pointed out, any e-mail provider that wants to scan e-mails can already do so; mail scanning is already common in spam filters. So Gmail is not exactly an invasion of privacy.

- *The Washington Times*, May 11



Hill Hotheads Lose Their Cool over Global Warming Flick

The global warming disaster movie *The Day After Tomorrow*—whose disregard for science is profiled in this issue’s cover story—is generating considerable hot air outside movie theaters. On May 18, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz) said he hopes the film generates momentum for his greenhouse gas-limit bill, co-sponsored by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), which McCain has been trying to reintroduce after it was defeated last year. “We’ll use any publicity we can get,” he told *Greenwire*. Meanwhile, Sen. Arlen Specter (R.-Pa.) said, “I’d have to see to movie to see how factual it is.”

Fidel Castro 1, Ho Chi Minh 0

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), in late April, informed the Miami Spanish-language station WXDJ that it intends to fine the station \$4,000 for an on-air prank call to Cuban dictator Fidel Castro last year—for failing to tell Castro that he was going to be on the air, as FCC rules mandate. WXDJ argued that the rule shouldn’t apply to Castro, who heads a government the United States doesn’t recognize, but the FCC rejected that argument. In stark contrast to the commie-coddling FCC, the city of Garden Grove, California—known as “Little Saigon” for its large Vietnamese population—in May declared itself a “no Communist” zone. The city council of Garden Grove, about 30 miles south of Los Angeles, passed a resolution saying it “does not welcome, or sanction, high-profile visits, drive-bys, or stopovers by members or officials of the Vietnamese Communist government.”

...END NOTES



Oxford Profs Decry Green Scare Tactics

A group of Oxford University scholars recently accused environmental organizations of exaggerating dangers to attract more donations. In a recent paper titled “Crying Wolf on Climate Change and Extinction,” four researchers from Oxford’s Biodiversity Research Group looked at news stories that claimed that over a million species threatened to go extinct by 2050 due to climate change, according to Leeds University researchers. That claim, found the Oxford team, was hogwash fueled by PR hype. “The origins of most of the crude generalizations

and extrapolations can be traced back to the original press releases and agency wires,” they note. They especially criticize the World Wildlife Fund UK for touting this dubious claim in a direct mail campaign. Dr. Paul Jepson, one of the paper’s authors, said that environmental groups had “overstated the evidence to meet fundraising targets.”

Unions Run Away from Union Rules

A section of the AFL-CIO recently chose not to hold its convention in Detroit—because of high labor costs due to union rules, reports *The Detroit News*. The Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau recently polled groups that had considered Detroit’s Cobo Center as a convention venue but decided against it. According to the Bureau’s report, the AFL-CIO Union Label & Service Trades Department cited high labor costs as its reason for rejecting Detroit as a convention site.



1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Suite 1250
Washington, DC 20036

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit 2259
Washington, DC