

# 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	<i>Give Me A Break</i> 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



## 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 CO<sub>2</sub>.” 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.*