Environmental-Industrial Complex: How governments, advocacy groups, ‘progressive’ foundations and industry profit off of climate fears

In 1961, US President Eisenhower gave an alarming farewell address, warning that the military-industrial (Congressional) complex was threatening democracy and leading to a disastrous rise of misplaced power. In the 1950s, a cosy relationship had developed between arms manufacturers, the military, government procurement and the congressional districts benefiting from the increased jobs brought in via the weapons industry. The key to keeping the money and power flowing through these channels was to ensure that the public fear of the imminent threat of Communism was kept at hysterical levels.

With the public fear of the imminent threat of global warming, we have today the formation of an environmental-industrial complex, made up of NGOs, legislators, scientists, foundations and industries involved in developing a green, zero-carbon economy. This advantageous relationship can only continue to thrive so long as the public remains afraid of impending climate catastrophe and is made willing to sacrifice economic resources and personal comforts for this shared quest. Open debate and democratic choices are getting more difficult as money and interests take over, using public fear as a means to generate opportunity.

Fear is a very useful political tool. It provides governments with legitimacy, NGOs with fundraising opportunities and companies with potential new markets. Some would argue that societies need a generalized fear to thrive (part of an ‘Armageddon Complex’ deeply rooted in our DNA?). Climate change fears have been stoked for more than two decades, to the point that it has, echoing Eisenhower, an ‘economic, political and spiritual influence’ on humanity.

Climate concern has crept into everyday conversations, shopping decisions and moral valuations. When it rains â¦ or snows â¦ or if the wind blows, weather is part of the climate narrative, as are debates on
energy, transportation and food. If we fail to act, we are told humanity will face a severe existential threat. Like the threat of Communism in the 1950s, climate today purveys culture, politics and the economy.

Fear can also become irrational; something that can be a very dangerous political tool should the green juggernaut get out of control. Like the unleashing of a Senator McCarthy, the need to tackle climate change has been championed by anti-globalisation activists, vegetarians, forest campaigners, scientists, Hollywood actors... pretty well everyone throwing darts at longstanding Western values and practices.

This “spontaneous global movement” to save the world has been called a war... a war on climate where we are all enlisted as soldiers. Teenagers have been empowered to strike for the climate. As wars entail sacrifice, sustainability is the new cardinal virtue. Those who disagree or feel that resources should be directed elsewhere are branded as traitors.

The green economy

The main solution for us to save the world is to change the way we do things: to decarbonize, which, in a fossil-fuel-based global economy, implies a radical revolution. We need to transition into new food and energy systems, agriculture needs to be transformed, transportation practices need to be rethought, as well as green housing, urban and rural development and public consumption. And the state must take the lead in funding this transformation.

The green public subsidies need to keep flowing, we are told, otherwise the planet will burn and future generations will look down on our present-day leadership. Even if the proposed climate solutions do greater damage to the environment (like electric vehicles or organic farming), policymakers appear helpless to stop these drives to transition. And if leaders are incapable of standing with the activists and protecting the planet, the least that is expected is that they invoke the precautionary principle.

Nobody seems to be standing up to say: “Stop this madness!” Unfortunately, there is no money and no incentive for anyone to take the courage to do so. The only thing they would do is open themselves up to personal attack from the environmental-industrial complex already at the trough of subsidies, incentives and stimulus measures.

The war on climate... No open debate

Truth is the first casualty of war. Scientists who feel that climate models are inaccurate or that the perceived and predicted warming is overstated have been branded “deniers” (today’s equivalent to ostracization), skeptics, contrarians or in the paid pocket of industry. On climate issues, there is no tolerance of those who think contrary to the prevailing consensus.

Consensus-making is a political act, not a scientific one. Science encourages disputes and testing to see
if theories can resist falsification. Limiting or denying free and open scientific debate because of political impetus for consensus does not improve the reputation of science. When motives and reputation come in (climate is the first open scientific dispute of the Internet Age), scientific methodology is compromised â?? science is compromised. So climate celebrities like Michael Mann tout their support within the consensus crowd â?? no need to bother doing any research and if he is challenged, lawyer up.

Facts donâ??t matter when emotions are charged and funds are flowing.

NGOs are rather aggressive when it comes to protecting their environmental campaigns from any open discussion or dialogue questioning their claims. Greenpeace members have been severe on one of their founders, Patrick Moore, for considering nuclear power as a viable energy source. When BjÃ¸rn Lomborg published his book, The Skeptical Environmentalist, suggesting that money could be better spent on other pressing needs than the hopeless task of reversing global warming, NGOs took to the offense and ensured that the Danish academy no longer considered him as a scientist (he was a statistician after all!). Kudos that BjÃ¸rn did not back down and has continued to fight hard for a rational, humane perspective for more than two decades.

Arguments against green positions are often met with rancor and insult rather than facts and rational debate. This is war, after all, and infidels cannot be tolerated.

**Funds and fears**

There are many examples of where the environmental-industrial complex is locking in funding while controlling debate under the fear of a looming climate collapse (and the negative consequences on society):

- **Electric vehicles** (EVs) have been pushed by governments, NGOs and industry on a public that is not ready, interested or rich enough. Deadlines for a full transition to EVs is going against a realistic timeline or available infrastructure. Pity that EVs are not sustainable.
- **Organic food and agricultural production** is claimed as a climate solution by organic farmers, food manufacturers, retailers and NGOs. Farmers though are unable to adopt these arbitrary organic marketing-driven practices and make a living while providing sufficient yields for growing global populations.
  Worse, the UNâ??s Food and Agriculture Organization, in funding politically-charged agroecological ideologies, is imposing poverty and malnutrition on developing countries.
- **The renewable energy transition** is being driven by NGOs, SMEs and governments as restrictions are being imposed on fossil fuels. These are being rushed through in a faux sense of urgency leading to soaring energy costs, increased blackouts, alarming levels of energy poverty and, in certain regions, a migration of energy-intensive industries.
- **Recycling and reuse regulations** are being imposed by governments (with increased restrictions on single-use plastics). NGOs continually lobby for more substances to be â??recycled-outâ?? of markets. Attempts to comply are creating environmental burdens (energy and wastewater) and poor quality recyclate when energy recovery makes more sense.
In the 1950s, Eisenhower could not control the military-industrial complex. Nor could Kennedy. Those outside of the privileged complex suffered greatly from the fear, costs and conflicts. So too today with consumers having to pay more to get less energy and food security, unable to enjoy luxuries or opportunities.

So how do we stop the madness and wanton spending of the environmental-industrial complex? Today Joe Biden and most European leaders are encouraging it. Our only hope is for more people to continue to show courage, stand up and speak out.

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