

Re: OT: NOT EVIL JUST WRONG

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- *From:* Kris Krieger <me@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 13 Aug 2008 16:05:11 -0500
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James Arthur <bogusabdsqy@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote in
[mGnok.850\\$7N1.175@trnddc06](mailto:mGnok.850$7N1.175@trnddc06):>news:[mGnok.850\\$7N1.175@trnddc06](mailto:mGnok.850$7N1.175@trnddc06):

Kris Krieger wrote:

James Arthur <bogusabdsqy@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote in
[Zs8ok.649\\$EL2.246@trnddc01](mailto:Zs8ok.649$EL2.246@trnddc01):>news:[Zs8ok.649\\$EL2.246@trnddc01](mailto:Zs8ok.649$EL2.246@trnddc01):

Kris Krieger wrote:

James Arthur wrote:

Kris Krieger wrote:

But in any
event, that's
a red
herring.
The point
is that, as
with
insurance,
you can pay
something
now, or risk
losing
everything
later on.

The numbers MATTER.
Insurance against the wrong
problem is
useless.

No, you said a number above, which referred
in a very specific but

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unconstructive and inapplicable way, to my analogy with insurance.

If you disagree with teh analogy, then say so

I disagree with your analogy.

OK. I'd be interested in a better one (mine aren't perfect). But mainly, I was just trying to

– but red–herring numbers pulled out of the air seem only to imply a nonexistent authority. I made an analogy to insurance; you pulled out some number out of your hat. If you have real numbers that honestly and rationally compare long–term cost comparisons between (1) research, development, and pahsed implementation of pollutionn controls and alternative energy, with (2) continuing on with things as they are, including things like eventual health–care cost increases due to [pollution–related halth effects, then offer the numbers. If you have none, don't pull numbers out of the air that are not intended to inform, but rather merely intended to denigrate an analogy/idea.

You're the one suggesting we should take <unnamed measures> as a way of buying "insurance", against an unquantified, unknown problem, that it's a good idea.

I mentioned measures elsewhere, so I thought I should skip a list for the sake of brevity :o

But OK, In a nutshell:

1) continuing oil exploration and extraction, becasue current infrastructure and suburbanization and so on cannot be changed quickly; 2) realizing that "more drilling" is not a solution, and not really a "quick fix" to either gas prices or teh increasing

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difficulty of finding and recovering oil (i.e. the problems associated with any non-renewable resource) – it's something that only offers some "breathing room" while additional/alternative technologies are researched, developed, made more efficient, have infrastructure developed, and so on; 3) nix NIMBYism – people want to have their energy-cake and eat it too, but that simply isn't realistic; eventually, the time comes to pay the proverbial piper, and people have to realize that they can't get "cheap" energy by saying that "someone" should "fix" it, but do so in a way that keeps things nasty, ugly, un-stylish power-generating thingamadohickeyjigs at least three states over from their Suburban back-yards; 4) nix "single-solution-ism" – there is not such thing as "The" solution to energy needs; no, conservation will not "solve it all", and no, wind will not "solve it all", etc and so on and so forth – OTOH, oil doesn't "solve it all" either, and never has – that's why there is "hydroelectric power" and "nuclear power". Arguing that a technology must be rejected because "it can't meet all our needs" is nonsensical – nothing ever has, and nothing ever will.

That's all very sensible stuff. We're doing it too, right?
We're still drilling, the debate to open up more is ongoing, etc.

Maybe it's a little slow for your tastes, but democracy's a big ship (or a Hummer ;-); it don't spin on no dime.

As part of all that:
Educate people. And I don't mean shout scary stuff at them. I mean, present facts as facts, present probabilities as probabilities, and present possibilities as possibilities.

Call me silly, but I thought we already did that, that everyone knew this stuff.

You've analogized that it's cheap and easy, like buying house insurance. You've made the proposal, so I'd expect you to have answers about the costs vs. benefits.

Nope, I didn't say it would be cheap and easy. (My insurance, at least, ain't cheap! But it certainly isn't the \$40K/year you suggested as an analogous projection.) I just think that your number was unnecessarily exaggerated.

It was an analogy, not a quote. Followed by lower number. Jeez.

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You asked what could possibly be wrong with taking out insurance, so I pointed out, by analogy, that until you can a) estimate the cost of those <unnamed> measures, and show b) they actually help protect against a c) credible problem, you haven't made your case.

I said we're already adapting; you deny. Fine. If you want to be gloomy, be gloomy. Priced SUVs recently? Or their makers' stock prices?

Individuals are coming up with ideas – what's needed is for the gov. to get the bleep out of their way.

I disagree 1,000% that government is in any way hindering conservation or alternative energy's progress. There was plenty of fuel-cell activity in the 1999–2001 bubble.

The problem is that none of those make economic sense; if they did people would flock to them.

In the past few years, there has been an inordinate emphasis upon petroleum, at the expense of other technologies. Do I think that people developing alternative technologies should receive tax breaks? You bet. It's "insurance".

((Then too, IMO, the current attempt by Russia to repeat history and again flex its Imperialistic muscles is also an object lesson illustrating the dangers of being dependent upon a foreign power for one's energy supplies – Russia has Europe by the cojones because, according to the various news reports, it supplies most of Europe's petroleum and natural gas, so, if they vetch too much about Russia's invasion of Georgia, all Russia has to do is turn off the tap. As for making economic threats against Russia – look at history; Russia will survive, even if many Russians lose their lives in the process. They're stubborn and resilient in that way.))

Let's put it this way. I'm pretty sure that some of Louisiana's state tax money, and certainly some of New Orleans' city taxes if such exist, was put towards the levees in New Orleans. Federal money also goes to that, so people in Alaska are in part paying for New Orleans as well. They were supposed to be the city's "insurance".

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Because of government (state and fed) screwing around and interference and fund-diversion and who knows what else, the people did not get what they paid for, and the levees failed. Does that mean that nobody should ever contribute to paying for the levees and the city should be abandoned? There is debate about that, but the overall view seems to be that no, the city should not just be abandoned, but the levees need to be gotten right.

You're wrong on the New Orleans facts. I lived there.

??

Er, kind of beside the point; someone doesn't have to live in a place to read reports/info, but anyhow:

Gobs of money were spent on the levees, which were under *continuous* improvement since 1964. They are among the largest works of man ever, up there with the pyramids and The Great Wall.

Excessive expenditures have never correlated well with robust/quality design and engineering. The question isn't "how much money" as much as it is "how effectively and efficiently was funding used".

Yes, some levee money was wasted, yes, dumb things were done, yes it was hugely expensive.

IOW, what I said.

But all to no avail in the case of a direct hit, for which there simply is no protection.

In essence, the gamble was taken that storms would not surpass a certain level, so there was under-engineering. That gamble didn't work out too well – not because there was no history of huge storms and flooding, but because it's simply human nature to bet on the low probability of something catastrophic happening, to figure that the statistics are in their favor, and choose to save the resources (time, materiel, money) and direct them elsewhere.

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That's what I was cautioning w.r.t. global warming: reckless banning, regulating, rationing, or taxing aren't guaranteed to do much except raise a bunch of tax money. Tax money which, in New Orleans, just encouraged corruption, not good works.

But money corrupts the corruptable regardless of whether it's tax money or money from some other source. The answer isn't to simply cut all funding, though – the answer, when something that important needs to be done, is to (1) have rigorous oversight, (2) actually *punish* those who embezzle and otherwise divert or steal funds, and (3) place a higher value on elected officials who try to take care of the people they represent/lead, as opposed to merely pandering to them, reward long-term thinking rather than myopia. Part of the reason to have elected officials is supposed to be that, whereas average folks spend their days working and raising families and so on, the elected officials are *supposed* to be Professional in matters of state. If I was elected to something, I would bring my Professional mindset to it and work very hard at learning what I needed to learn, seeking advice, thinking, and so on – the question is not only what an elected official would do, tho', the question is also, Would the electorate *want* that, or do they just want someone who will pander to short-term (day to day) wishes and desires? There is a difference between what is desired, and what is needed, and often, the electorate demands officials to deal with desires. OTOH, if the electorate set aside quibbles, and decided as a Body Politic to demand accountability, ethical action, hard work, and Professionalism in general, politicians wouldn't be able to get away with questionable shenanigans. So part of the matrix, in terms of solving problems, is just human nature itself, and sociocultural values. Currently, for example, those values favor the *appearance* of wealth, which is at the root of a great many problems related to over-borrowing/over-spending, and under-investing/under-saving.

So, yes, kaboodles of dollars went into the NO levees; similarly, kaboodles of dollars have into the Sacramento levees, but the latter are well-known to be under-engineered, with disaster unforecastable yet nevertheless inevitable. None of that really negates my original analogy. A risk is perceived, and people choose how to respond. Most of the time, people choose to bet that the statistical rarity of some catastrophe will continue to hold and operate in their favor. My analogies are only intended to show examples where that sort of thinking can, and does, fail. I extrapolated that to global warming, saying that, even if GW/AGW have not been proven to everyone's satisfaction, the fact also remains that nobody has adequately *disproven* GW/AGW, and in light of that, there is a *risk* of certain things occurring.

Anti-GW people seem to be willing to bet on that risk not manifesting itself. While that might work in most situations, and while risk might be something they are comfortable living with, I still pose the

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question: Do they have the right to impost their personal acceptance of risk upon everyone else, given the magnitude of teh consequenes of that gamble turns out to be wrong? I also maintain that it is valid to ask, in conjunction with that, what would be the worst consequences of actually lowering CO2 emissions (which would be done in large part by lowering gaseous wastes in general).

In *either* event, yes, of course the danger of political corruption, and other forms of idiocy, exsits, especially if We The People don't even care enough about our own nation, or our own progeny, to start placing more value on insight and intelligent consideration of *national* issues, and reject mere flash and mere partisan bickering.

But the possibility (or in the current situation, probability) of political assininity is a side issue to the above question of risk. The penultimate, teh foundational, question is whether or not to gamble, take the risk, that there "is no such thing" as any sort of global warming, given the potential consequenes.

All else, including questions of politics, flows from how that question is answered. If we choose to not take that gamble, then we have to change not only technological matters such as energy sources, but we also have to change teh nature of the political dialogue, and how we view what it means to be a citizen of this nation, and a citizen of the world.

No amount of hair-splitting will alter the fact that we, as a people, will either deal with these matters, or sit back and passivly watch whatever unfolds; and no number of red herrings will alter the fact that people, both as individuals and as nations, either
(1) choose to take charge of those things which are within their power to control and try to create a better situtaion, a better world, or
(2) they just sit back and let things happen to them, and complain if the result is unfavorable.

That is the big picture.

As for teh part of that picture tat includes regulations, taxes, and the other things you'd mentioned:

In any endeavor, there are smart ways to do things and there are stupid ways to do things. Regulations can be good things, or bad things, depending upon whether or not they're formed smartly, *and enforced*. Regulations exist, as least ideally, for the same reason that there are laws against reckless driving. Businesses can and do have a particular focus. I was reading about Shell and some of it's operations in the early 200's, and its focus was upon saving itself money by scrupulously avoiding environmental damage, because it is liabel, since it's a US company, fro such damages. Other companies, which are not held accountable (the examples were a couple non-US companies, tho' I can't recall which they were), took the fast porfit and didn't care whether

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they crapped up the environment and destroyed the livelihoods of a few "primitive" people who depended upon that environment. IN that case, regulation encouraged conservation, non-regulation destroyed natural areas.

SO, yes, of course bans, regulations, and so on can be done stupidly/recklessly, but errors in implementation do not negate the entire concept of oversight and controls; for those concepts to function properly, however, there has to be oversight, which itself only functions if people have at least some minimal level of ethics. THE biggest problem with gov/t isn't gov.t, but lack of ethics and lack of transparency, both of which work to make oversight a pathetic joke.

You objected to having "everybody" pay for the development of non-petroleum energy.

No I didn't.

But maybe I should. If it makes economic sense, government doesn't need to fund it. If government funds it, they turn science and economic issues into political issues.

Only in the absence of ethics. And, in the absence of ethics, science, as well as all other human endeavors, will degenerate with or without gov.t funding.