

Climate Change: An Unprecedented Challenge and Opportunity

Introduction

As the first decade of the 21st Century closes, we face the unprecedented challenge of preventing catastrophic climate change (“C3”). If we fail to act soon in implementing an effective prevention program, we will condemn our children and grandchildren to a much more miserable and dangerous world than the one we are living in now. **We submit that the Imperial Agenda of the Military Industrial Complex (“MIC”) is the main obstacle to preventing C3 as well as achieving global equity and a world at peace.** Therefore there can be no climate security for all of humanity without peace and no peace without climate security. Meeting this challenge will create a much more just world for all. Join us and help create this future for our youth and future generations. **For example, millions now employed directly and indirectly within MIC can be retrained and fully employed in the new peace economy.**



Fossil Fuels – Now and in Transition

Fossil fuels are the energy source for the unsustainable modes of production and consumption now dominating the capitalist global economy, especially in the global North. These energy sources are the main contributors to global warming and rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. The other aspects of ecological and environmental crisis related to fossil fuel use include species loss, the growing shortage of fresh water for human consumption, and huge negative health impacts from air and water pollution.

Fossil Fuels in the Solar Transition

Given the impact of the BP ecocatastrophe in the Gulf, the role of fossil fuel use in a solar transition should be clarified. A global transition to high efficiency solar power must utilize the existing energy sources to completely replace them, but minimize carbon emissions in this process. Therefore the highest EROEI (energy return over energy invested) technologies such as wind turbines should be the first choice. While the fossil fuel of preference for a solar transition is petroleum (including natural gas), mainly because it yields significantly lower carbon emissions/energy generated than coal (and of course tar sands), the phase-out of all fossil fuels must be as rapid and safe as possible.

- By bringing on peak oil as soon as possible (if it hasn't already occurred) through radical energy conservation and solar power generation rapidly replacing fossil fuel.
- By ending all mining of coal, petroleum in the continental shelf, as well as deposits below rain forests and other very vulnerable ecosystems!
- By retraining workers in these industries for union jobs to create the new solar power infrastructure.



While the global North must reduce its prodigious energy consumption, the global South requires an increase in energy consumption per capita to achieve the global state-of-the-science quality-of-life as measured by the human development index (hdi). To bring about the solar transition, a global cooperative regime including oil producing countries must be established as fast as possible. It is hard to imagine this happening without the effective dissolution of the military industrial complex (See MIC Page 1 of 10

below) and termination of the imperial agenda of the U.S. and its allies. All this has bearing on the debate on the potential for ecosocialist development in Venezuela, Bolivia etc. At the same time solar power creation should be encouraged in these petroleum producing countries.

21st Century – Ecosocialism

Unrestrained capital expansion is threatening the future of humanity and nature. Hence, the Socialism of the 21st Century must be an ecological socialism, “Ecosocialism”, or it will remain the vision of marginal sects who pretend to be socialist or communist but fail miserably in confronting the global challenges that stand in the way of a much more just and peaceful future.

“Revolutionaries who recognize the deep-seated inequality and injustice of the world economic order, growing out of centuries of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism by the coal- and oil-burning capitalist powers, have a responsibility to support the call for a truly just [climate] treaty. Only such a treaty can begin to restore the necessary trust internationally that would then make possible rapid leaps forward to renewable energy- based, sustainable and fair economic development throughout the world.”

Any ‘revolutionary’ or alleged revolutionary movement which doesn't do all that it can to prevent this worldwide catastrophe is a complete and total contradiction in terms.” (If You Want a Revolution, Start With a Clean Energy One, July 11, 2009 By Ted Glick)”

The climate is the dictator: replacing Capitalism with Ecosocialism cannot be a prerequisite to begin taking effective preventative action to avoid C3, but rather, overcoming the obstacles to an effective prevention program will open up an unprecedented path for an ecosocialist transition out of capitalism. Further, ecosocialist theory and practice are essential to make C3 prevention possible, starting now.

The Challenge

Our global climate is nearing tipping points.



“Changes are beginning to appear, and there is a potential for explosive changes with effects that would be irreversible – if we do not **rapidly** slow fossil fuel emissions over the next few decades. Tipping points are fed by amplifying feedbacks. *As Arctic sea ice melts, the darker ocean absorbs more sunlight and speeds melting. As tundra melts, methane a strong greenhouse gas, is released, causing more warming. As species are pressured and exterminated by shifting climate zones, ecosystems can collapse, destroying more species.*” (Jim Hansen, Feb. 15, 2009: The Sword of Damocles, op-ed submitted to The Observer)

Phenomenon	Target CO2 (ppm)
1. Arctic Sea Ice	300-325
2. Ice Sheets/Sea Level	300-350
3. Shifting Climatic Zones	300-350
4. Alpine Water Supplies	300-350
5. Avoid Ocean Acidification	300-350

How much time do we have left? Maybe 10 years at most!

“Catastrophic climate change prevention will require rapid " reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide from burning coal and carbon sequestration from the atmosphere starting now to reduce the level of atmospheric carbon dioxide from its present value of 385 ppm [390 ppm in 2010] to 350 ppm or lower.” (James Hansen (NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies)



(Note that carbon sequestration, removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere," could be increasingly powered by a rapidly expanding solar energy infrastructure.)

What is the main obstacle to C3 prevention?

The MIC!

Critical to effective prevention is a rapid demilitarization of the global economy. Ultimately this means replacing capitalism with an ecosocialism.



"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children... This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron." Dwight Eisenhower (1953)

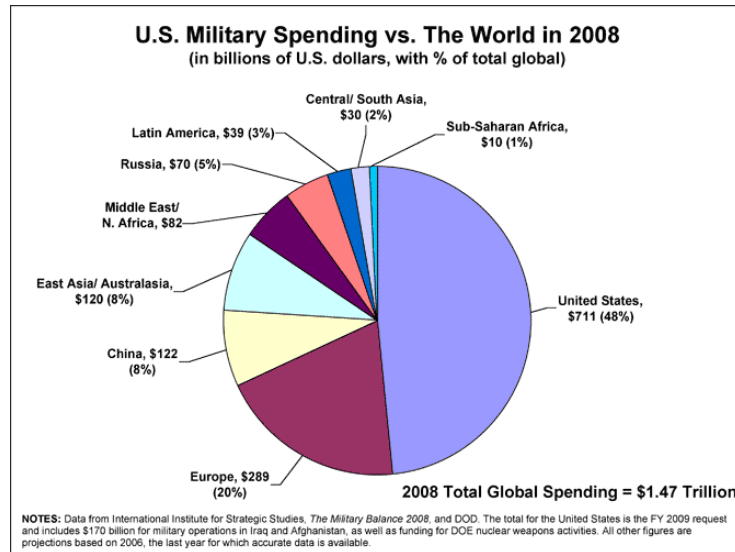
The MIC has grown much larger since Eisenhower's warning. Military force will not provide security; on the contrary it threatens the very existence of human civilization. Real security will only come with a world at peace. Global disarmament is a realistic goal once the Imperial Project is terminated and global equity becomes the commitment of the global North, particularly the United States.

The avoidance of catastrophic climate change (C3) requires the end of coal and fossil fuel addiction, giving up the nuclear option and a rapid conversion to a high efficiency solar power infrastructure which would provide a sustainable source of energy.

The Military Industrial *Fossil Fuel Nuclear Terror* Complex (aka MIC) is likely the biggest single obstacle to preventing C3 because:

1. MIC is the present core of global capital reproduction with its colossal waste of energy and material resources.
2. The fossil fuel/nuclear industry is an integral component of MIC.
3. MIC has a dominant role in setting the domestic/foreign policy agenda of the United States, with no evidence of weakening in the present administration.
4. Pentagon as the "global oil-protection service" for the U.S. imperial agenda (Michael Klare), or even for the transnational capital class itself (e.g., see the work of William Robinson, *A Theory of Global Capitalism*, 2004).
5. The Imperial Agenda blocks the global cooperation and equity required to prevent C3, as shown once again in Copenhagen in the climate treaty negotiations last December.

"The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist," "McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the U.S. Air Force F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies to flourish is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps." (Tom Friedman, 1999, 'The Lexus and the Olive Tree')



The huge role of MIC in the U.S. and global economy is shown by military expenditure of over \$1.2 trillion in 2006, with the U.S. responsible for 46% of the total. The U.S. 2009 Fiscal Year military budget is actually \$1.449 trillion (the U.S. GNP in 2006 was \$11.5 trillion) (War Resisters League). The projected \$3 trillion for the Iraq War and Occupation is approximately equal to the estimated renewable energy investment of \$2.89 trillion needed by 2030 to insure a 50% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 (July 2007, www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/future-investment).

“Climate Stabilization Requires a Cultural and Political Revolution”

“The only viable roadmap for survival-an 80-90% reduction in fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050-means we must force a drastic reduction in military spending (current wars and military spending are costing us almost one trillion dollars a year).”

(http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_20200.cfm)!

$$\del{MIC} + ES = SE$$

Without the MIC, add Ecosocialism, equals a Sustainable Ecosystem

Real climate security will only come with the radical reduction of MIC and its servant the Pentagon. Without this challenge to MIC and its Imperial Agenda, brought about by a massive popular demand that refuses to be ignored, we can anticipate at best pathetic curbs on carbon emission (note the outcome of Copenhagen), woefully insufficient to avoid C3, combined with the expanded military agent of MIC.

Thankfully there are some helpful, reality and socially based, dialectics:

- Growth of solar power capacity and energy efficiency undermines the rationale and popular support for MIC,
- The struggle against the Imperial Agenda and for global demilitarization promotes a more peaceful and cooperative world,
- Thereby freeing up both resources and labor for the creation of a global solar energy infrastructure.

There is still time to implement a program to prevent C3 with a reasonable chance of success. To pretend that our only option now is adaptation to inevitable climate catastrophe is a betrayal of the interests of humanity who will be condemned to a world of imaginable misery if indeed they survive.

"I feel the obligation - as we all should - to make a special effort to avert a fatal catastrophe for humanity." Fidel Castro, October 30, 2006

The Opportunity and Our Strategy

The urgent demands of this challenge require we focus on both the scientific and political imperatives and opportunities required to prevent C3.



Even a Solar Ark would be too small!

The most recent climate projections reinforce the urgency of radically cutting carbon emissions by:

1. Rapidly implementing energy conservation in all areas and phasing out coal use, the most dangerous source of carbon emissions driving global warming.
2. Replacing industrial agriculture (agribusiness) with organic farming, especially in and near urban centers.
3. And pumping big investments in creating a high efficiency solar power infrastructure now, both to replace the present unsustainable energy base and to create the base capable of carbon sequestration, the process of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.” (see <http://www.350.org> and the papers of Jim Hansen)

Opportunities in the Transition

All of these measures have a huge potential to create millions of jobs and sharply reduce poverty in the U.S., simultaneously creating a mass social base for ecosocialist transition. Solar power is by far the easiest energy source to multiply fast, the biggest job generator, and has the biggest potential for community-based control and management (urban, labor, indigenous people, etc.).

And these measures must start from organizing at a neighborhood and community level, from the ground up. The Oakland Climate Action Coalition is a living model illustrating this approach (see <http://urbanhabitat.org/cj/weinrub>).



Mass Awareness + Organized Demands = A Mass Movement

There is no such thing as pure class struggle, except in the minds of the ultra left. Class struggle is multi-dimensional confronting issues facing the exploited and oppressed. It must include tactical and strategic alliances, with full recognition of how success at one stage can open up possibilities to reach another. The climate can't wait for socialism to arrive to solve humanity's problems. The slogan "Change the System, Not the Climate" is a complete cop-out. Therefore, creation of a solar power capacity must include making alliances with the fraction of capital being invested into solar (including big worker-owned cooperatives like Mondragon and of course nation states that are rapidly solarizing).

Of course, we need clarity about such alliances, those with capitalist countries that happen to solarize rapidly. A few potential examples come to mind, such as the broad climate security movement supporting big government subsidies to solar technology development and implementation and likewise carbon taxes with robust protection for low income folk and workers. This approach could promote tacit alliances with solar capitalists who would gain, while the fossil fuel/nuclear lobby would lose. Similarly, supporting international treaties which give leverage to solar power expansion and of course carbon emission cuts, with support from nation states that are rapidly solarizing. At the same time, struggles for

social governance of production and consumption must continue simultaneously with rapid solarization, including unionization of workers and technicians in solar industries, pollution prevention in the same, community control of solar and organic agriculture, all the way up scale to municipal ownership of utilities, nationalization of big energy production, and global treaties with real power to ensure rapid decarbonation of the world's energy supplies. *The main political goal is to pull the military teeth out of real existing capitalism, making it truly vegetarian, i.e., demolishing MIC, bring ecosocialist transition closer.*

A Science-Based Approach Able to Prevent C3

Even existing solar technologies can now be the basis of a high efficiency infrastructure capable of replacing the present unsustainable fossil fuels/nuclear power/big hydropower energy system, especially combined with greater energy efficiencies.

These solar technologies include:

- 1) *Wind power*
- 2) *Solar thermal power (CSP)*
- 3) *Photovoltaics, including near future thin film high efficiency plastic technology*

Expansion of nuclear energy, specifically a reincarnation of fission-powered reactors with new technology, will not significantly mitigate global warming, nor will it plausibly avoid the well-known negative environmental and health impacts of this energy source.

Likewise other false solutions being championed by transnational capital include so-called "clean" coal and most biofuels.

Ecosocialism

Can there be sustainable growth? And what would an eco-socialist world look like?

Those who call for a steady-state economy now fail to deconstruct economic growth, thinking through the qualitative versus quantitative aspects. We should support the growth of culture, information, dematerialization of technology in our national and global economy. Likewise, there must be green sustainable growth in transition to a steady-state global solar economy, replacing the unsustainable energy infrastructure, repairing the immense damage left by MIC, and converting urban centers into green cities. The energy base of an economy is critical. Only global solar power will pay its "entropic debt" [Entropy is a measure of the disorder created by any natural or man-made process.] to space as non-incremental waste heat, in contrast to all other energy sources. **(For more on the relevancy of entropy to the quality of energy see papers in redandgreen.org link provided below.)**

So, is ecosocialism achievable or just another infantile disorder?

Sustainability:

The WWF's *Living Planet Report 2006* assesses sustainable development using the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) and the ecological footprint. The index is calculated using life expectancy, literacy and education, and per capita GDP. " The UNDP considers an HDI value of more than 0.8 to be high human development. According to the ecological footprint, a measure of human demand on the biosphere, 1.8 global hectares per person or less denotes sustainability. " *The only country in the world that met both of the above criteria is Cuba.* (Viva La Revolución Energética, Laurie Guevara-Stone, *Solar Energy International*)

An Example: If Cuba, a living example of ecosocialist transition, could accomplish so much, under such difficult circumstances imposed by U.S. Imperialism, Just think of what is really possible for our future!

But there are three critical components of this Eco-socialist revolutionary process:

◆ demilitarization ◆ extensive solarization and ◆ agroecology (organic agriculture).



What is necessary to achieve these goals?

The Belem Ecosocialist Declaration of 2009 outlines the immediate necessary tasks:

“To theorize and to work toward realizing the goal of green socialism does not mean that we should not also fight for concrete and urgent reforms right now. Without any illusions about “clean capitalism,” we must work to impose on the powers that be – governments, corporations, international institutions – some elementary but essential immediate changes:

- drastic and enforceable reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases,
- development of clean energy sources,
- provision of an extensive free public transportation system,
- progressive replacement of trucks by trains,
- creation of pollution clean-up programs,
- elimination of nuclear energy, and war spending. “

(<http://www.ecosocialistnetwork.org/Docs/Mfsto2/BelemDeclaration.htm>)

We also stand in solidarity with the following Political Statement of The Rising Tide Coalition for Climate Justice: (Barcelona in February 2002)

“Equity

We believe that social and economic equity between and within countries lies at the heart of all solutions to climate change. These must include:

- A Just Transition to renewable energy sources, ie. a transition which doesn't fall hardest on low income communities, communities of colour or low income employees of industries reliant on fossil fuels.
- Repayment of the ecological debt of the north to the south. Ecological debt is caused by the extraction, use and destruction of southern resources such as fossil fuels, minerals, forests, marine & genetic resources. These resources are usually exported to the north under unequal terms of trade, typically to pay back third world debt. Northern industrialized countries have an obligation to help repair and reverse the damage caused to the biosphere.
- Equal access to, and responsibility for, common global resources amongst all peoples.”

“Diversity

We believe that successful solutions will be defined by those most severely affected by climate change and who have been systematically excluded from negotiations, for example developing countries, island states, indigenous peoples, women, children and refugees of all kinds. We need to recognize the plight and the rights of refugees fleeing from the effects of climate change, economic collapse or wars, which always have inequality and exploitation at their core. Energy to meet basic needs is an essential element of climate justice. Subsistence emissions of marginalised groups must not be targeted by any plans to reduce global emissions. Challenging sexism and racism are at the core of Rising Tide's principles and actions. We must take responsibility to protect all living species which face destruction in the wake of climate change.”

(<http://risingtide.org.uk/about/political>)

World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth

"Today, our Mother Earth is wounded and the future of humanity is in danger."

The U.S. sabotage of the world's people's climate needs at Copenhagen proved that we dare not rely on the imperial nations and has fueled the shift of the environmental movement to a people's based mass movement.

"Building the People's World Movement for Mother Earth"

A painful lesson was learned in December 2009, when the US led sabotage of the Copenhagen climate conference proved that the imperial nations will protect their financial interests, even if it means sacrificing the needs of the poor and vulnerable nations and putting the world's future at greater risk! In response, Bolivia hosted the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, April 20-22, 2010. Over 10,000 people representing 135 countries of the developing world came together in to build the people's movement necessary to overcome the imperial resistance to the energy and social changes necessary to prevent C3. The thousands of activists, government ministers and indigenous peoples worked to set a foundation for a mass based movement powerful enough to demand the system changes necessary. To make these goals clear and possible, they adopted a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and the People's Agreement plan designed to achieve these rights and build the power needed to save mother earth.

Never has the call "Power to the People" been more inspiring or important.

We urge all to read the documents of Cochabamba and follow and join this developing movement. The Second World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth will be in Cancun, Mexico in December, 2010.

Documents and analysis of Cochabamba. <http://pwccc.wordpress.com>

Summing Up..."

Prevent Catastrophic Climate Change

A Green Future for All will require mass support for a worldwide plan.

If left to their usual games, governments and corporations will not do it in time.

Failure to put together a winning coalition for a progressive green energy program will mean the probable destruction of human civilization and biodiversity as we know it.

We Need to See

- ***National and international planning to protect the environment....***



- *A shift of power and resources from the military industrial complex to public needs.*
- *More “high-road” green enterprises and more worker owned and controlled cooperatives creating new technology.*
- *More government owned public transit and high-speed rail.*
- *A nationalized energy infrastructure.*
- *A peaceful and just world instead of the environmentally disastrous military adventures around the world..*

The world environmental movement is increasingly recognizing the imperatives and demands required to prevent catastrophic climate change. Hopefully, we will act on the principle that “at the precipice, we change” and realize that there will be:

- **No Climate Security without Peace, No Peace without Climate Security**
- **No Peace without the dissolution of MIC and its Imperial Agenda, asap!**
- **No Climate Security without the transfer of the colossal resources now wasted by MIC**
- **And only a Movement from below, A Transnational Movement will make this happen..**
- **Think Globally, act Locally, Think Locally act Globally**

• **For more information and details:**

- CCDS: www.CC-DS
- Cochabamba: pwccc.wordpress.com
- 350.org: www.350.org
- Green Jobs: www.greenjobsconference.org
- Ecosocialism: www.cnsjournal.org
- www.redandgreen.org/Climate_Change
- **This document available for download: <http://www.redandgreen.org/C3>**

Further reading:

Badgley, C. et al. (2007) "Organic Agriculture and the Global Food Supply," *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 22: 86-108.

Brown, L. R. (2009) *Plan B 4.0* Earth Policy Institute. W.W. Norton New York.

Hansen et al. (2008) “Target Atmospheric CO2: Where Should Humanity Aim?,” *The Open Atmospheric Science Journal*, Vol. 2, pp. 217-131; go to: <http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1> for this and many other valuable articles.

Jacobson, M.Z. & M.A. Delucchi. (2009) "A Path to Sustainable Energy by 2030." *Scientific American*, November, 58-65.

Rennie, J. (2009) Seven Answers to Climate Contrarian Nonsense

Evidence for human interference with Earth's climate continues to accumulate.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=seven-answers-to-climate-contrarian-nonsense>

Schwartzman, D. (2009a) Response to Naess and Hoyer, *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 20, No.4, 93-97 (December) PDF available upon request from dschwartzman@gmail.com.

Schwartzman, D. (2009b) Ecosocialism or Ecocatastrophe? *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 20, No.1, 6-33 (March). PDF available upon request from dschwartzman@gmail.com.

Websites with much more information on this subject:

http://www.redandgreen.org/Climate_Change/index.htm

http://www.redandgreen.org/Documents/Marxism&Ecology_page.htm

<http://www.ecosocialistnetwork.org>

<http://climateandcapitalism.com>.

Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism <http://www.cc-ds.org>

Members of the CCDS are working in many arenas to take up these and other challenges. If you would like to join us, or just get in touch, visit our website at www.cc-ds.org or fill out the form below:

Name _____	Address _____
City, St, Zip _____	Phones _____ Email _____
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_____ Regular dues \$36/yr , _____ Low income dues \$18/yr, _____ Household dues (2 people) \$48/yr	
Enclosed is a contribution of \$ _____	
And send it to us at: CCDS, PO Box 437, New York, NY 10018-0008	

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www.RedandGreen.org/C3