

## Gore's Policies Keep Africa in the Dark

*Paul Driessen is the author of Eco-Imperialism: Green Power, Black Death (Bellevue, Wash.: Merril Press, 2003), a senior policy advisor to the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and a senior fellow with the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow. He writes and speaks frequently on energy and environmental policy, and he appeared in the recent British television documentary, "The Great Global Warming Swindle."*

*Driessen was interviewed on March 26 by Wesley Irwin of the LaRouche Youth Movement.*

**EIR:** In the introduction to your book, it says that among other things you've done—being a senior policy advisor to certain areas of the Congress; being part of a number of different public policy institutes that focus on energy, environment, economic development; and also being the author of this book *Eco-Imperialism: Green Power, Black Death*—you're also a former member of the Sierra Club and Zero Population Growth.

**Driessen:** That's right. I'm also an Eagle Scout and helped organize the very first Earth Day on my college campus.

**EIR:** Clearly your views on things have changed greatly. Why is that?

**Driessen:** In a nutshell, because I gradually realized that these groups often misrepresented the facts and paid little or no attention to the impacts their policies had on people. Their agenda was uppermost. Take DDT, for example. Environmental Defense, Sierra Club, and other groups knew that scientific studies did not back up their claims about the allegedly toxic effects of DDT on bird eggshells, eagles, and people. They knew the ban on DDT was causing the deaths of millions from malaria. And yet, to this day, they have bogus and far-fetched claims about this life-saving chemical on their websites.

(Some studies say DDT may be "associated with" low birth weights in babies and early lactation failure in nursing mothers, for instance—as though those speculative risks are worse than the very real risks that mothers and babies will die from malaria, which DDT can prevent.)

Over and over, I caught the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and

other groups saying things that just were not honest or accurate. They used photographs that were taken in one place and claimed they were taken someplace else; or published a close-up shot of a drilling rig site, with trees cut and the ground graded and leveled—when a wider angle would show one acre of disturbance in a thousand acres. Or a photo they claimed was a devastating clear-cut, was actually a forest area that had burned down because careless campers had let their fire get out of control.

Greenpeace flat-out lied about Shell Oil's plans to sink an oil platform as an artificial reef. And a lot of leaders and members sounded delighted when hundreds of loggers were put out of work and entire rural communities were destroyed.

Even after they were told their facts were wrong, they didn't change. Their lies would simply move faster than the truth. In Latin America, Amnesty International and several environmental activist groups were attacking various oil company operations. One group would say a particular picture was a Unocal operation. Another would say it showed how irresponsible Occidental Petroleum was. In reality, the picture showed some sloppy operations by state-owned PetroEcuador. They've always got some oil, timber, or mining company in their cross-hairs, to sucker people into sending them money, and to advance their anti-industry, anti-foreign investment agendas—and the facts, or people's dreams of a better life, just aren't going to get in the way.

The director of the Sierra Club's wilderness program in Colorado actually told me that the real purpose of the wilderness designations was to eliminate opportunities to develop energy and minerals. He said Americans use too much, consume too much, and aren't going to change voluntarily. So we have to force them to change, by taking the minerals away—and the best way to do that is put them in wilderness, so that they're off limits to exploration and development.

They show incredible disregard for the rights, aspirations, and even lives of the world's poorest people. They constantly hammer on the supposed risks of using chemicals, fossil fuels, and biotechnology—and never mention the far greater risks that those technologies would reduce, or the lives they can save. And they have tax-exempt status, and get literally billions of dollars a year from foundations, and even government agencies, to promote their agendas and lies, despite their lethal consequences.

Their disregard for the poor, especially dark-skinned people in developing countries, is frightening. They've never apologized once for the deaths their anti-DDT policies have caused, never even admitted they were wrong, never offered any form of aid or compensation to victims or their families, and certainly they've never been held accountable. During the World Trade Organization conference in Cancun a few years ago, the head of a major Mexican environmental group told a friend of mine: "We don't care at all about the poor. We don't want them to become rich or middle class, because then they will become consumers and that means you have to



David Brooks

take more resources out of the ground to meet their demands, and that's bad for the Earth. It's better to keep them poor."

My Zero Population Growth days involved a lot of concern about the supposed population bomb, and then I started reading things from Julian Simon and other people, who raised questions that Paul Ehrlich [author of *The Population Bomb* and other environmentalists just couldn't answer. It became apparent that there was an environmental agenda that I was very uncomfortable with: keeping poor people poor, being so concerned about population that they were promoting anti-DDT, anti-biotechnology, anti-fossil fuel development, anti-economic development policies, that ultimately meant the poor were going to be kept poor, diseased, and dying prematurely.

Jacques Cousteau said we have to find a way to "eliminate" 350,000 people a day to stabilize global populations. And Prince Philip said he wanted to come back as a particularly deadly virus, and take out large segments of the Earth's population. Club of Rome co-founder Alexander King wrote, "My chief quarrel with DDT in hindsight is that it greatly added to the population problem." And former Sierra Club president Mike McCloskey said, "by using DDT, we reduce mortality rates in underdeveloped countries without considering how to support the increase in populations."

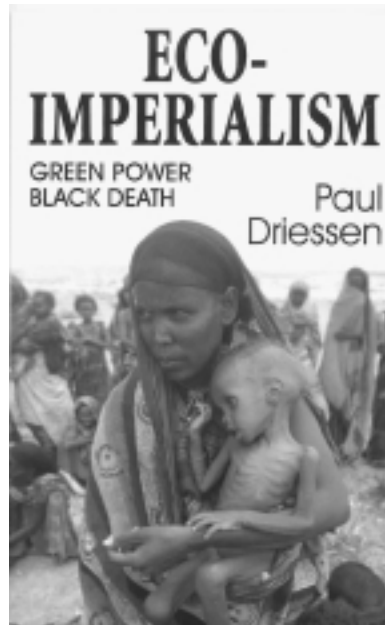
These kinds of things just left me with a bad taste in my mouth.

**EIR:** As they should anyone, I think.

**Driessen:** You would think.

**EIR:** You also work for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). And when you bring up Paul Ehrlich and Prince Philip, I remember in the Ehrlich book, *The Population Bomb*, he suggests that we decrease population growth by actually targeting the black and brown populations of the planet. He's very explicit about it. In the case of Prince Philip, with his World Wildlife Fund, one of the things that *EIR* has previously put together is a report that shows that much of the so-called "protected lands" of Africa, are controlled by the World Wildlife Fund from the standpoint of strategic control over raw materials and resources—not allowed to be accessed by the people of those countries, which helps also keep population growth in check. Do you see tendencies in other areas to go after population control, or even a decrease in population along racial lines?

**Driessen:** They're rarely as open or blunt as Cousteau, Prince Philip, and Ehrlich were in the past. But if you just look at the environmental movement's policies, you see programs they would never get away with in Canada, Australia, the United States, or Europe, if they resulted in even a dozen deaths. They're trying to shut down the use of genetically modified (GM) crops in poor countries, where nutrition is marginal at best, people are starving, and GM crops would grow better, resist insects and plant diseases, require less wa-



*Driessen's Eco-Imperialism describes the life-and-death consequences for Africa, and poor people in general, of greenie policies.*

ter and pesticides, and bring in bumper crops. Even without the modern high-tech farming practices we use, biotech crops could and do make a huge difference.

But Sierra Club and Greenpeace have launched campaigns that are based on lies about the dangers of GM food and claims that planting any GM crops (or using DDT to stop malaria) would threaten these poor farmers' exports to Europe. They tell people: "If you plant GM crops, your exports to Europe, the mainstay of your economy, will dry up. If any crops in your country are bio-tech, there could be pollen contamination, and Europe is going to ban all your crops." And then they use their political muscle to stir up more European Union paranoia about GM food, DDT, and even air transport of crops from Africa.

I think we're beginning to see a change in attitude by people in these poor countries. South African farmers, for example, have been planting Bt corn, and their yields have risen so far—ten times or more—that they are making money for the first time, have more corn than they can sell, and are planting other crops they couldn't afford to plant in the past. They've also cut way back on their water and pesticide use, and their exposure to pesticides. They get much higher yields, much higher quality, at less human and environmental risk.

But there's sizable pressure against GM crops and DDT. They didn't get the ban on DDT until long after we had used it to eradicate malaria in Europe and the United States. But once malaria was gone, environmentalists, politicians, and regulators began to worry about things that only people in wealthy, healthy, disease-free countries can afford to worry about. And they exported their obsessions and paranoia, by getting them into international treaties and trade programs. They even tried to get DDT banned completely from the

health-care arena. Only because of Amir Attaran and a few other health-care activists from Africa and Britain, during a Stockholm Convention summit, did DDT remain available for disease control.

But the radical greens still fight DDT to this day, even after it has been approved by the U.S. Agency for International Development and World Health Organization, even after it has been shown, over and over, that the chemical is safe for people and the environment, and that it does what no other chemical in existence, at any price, can do: keep 90% of mosquitoes from even entering a home, for six to twelve months with a single spraying, and prevent those that do enter from biting, and thus reduce the malaria rate by 75% or more.

And the countries are beginning to use DDT again, to spray the indoor walls of houses. They're saying, "We're not worried about unlikely risks of using DDT. We're worried about dying of malaria, we're worrying about 3,000 women and children dying every day from malaria—"

**EIR:** Every day!

**Driessen:** *Every day.* So African countries are saying, "Why do you want us to worry about something as speculative as 'lactation failure,' where you don't have any scientific evidence and just make these crazy claims? And we're not supposed to use a weapon that could save people's lives, prevent brain damage from malaria, get people healthy enough so they can work instead of being sick in bed, taken care of by other people who otherwise would be working productively?"

And then you get to the other issue that I've been writing about, and that is, electricity. In sub-Saharan Africa, some 95% of the people don't have electricity. In one week, Al Gore uses more electricity than 25 million Ugandans use in a year. And yet the radical greens battle every mode of electricity generation, except the most nominal, irrelevant generators. Rainforest Action Network and other activists are constantly pressuring banks and construction companies not to build coal- or gas-fired power plants in Africa or other developing countries.

Friends of the Earth and the International Rivers Network battle hydroelectric projects, like the Bujagali dam in Uganda, because it will interfere with kayaking. And Greenpeace and Sierra Club hate nuclear power.

**EIR:** Isn't their argument, or the argument you hear a lot of the time, that by man changing nature in that way, we are interfering with the so-called natural process on the planet; that it's somehow unnatural for us to be using these man-made innovations to change the Biosphere in which we live?

**Driessen:** Yes, that is clearly part of what they say. But it goes deeper than that. They also say human beings are a "cancer" on the planet, that we're really *not* part of the eco-system, that we interfere so much with natural planetary cycles, that we should be restricted in number, scope, and influence.

And yet, I have not seen a lot of them in the environmental



WHO/P. Viot

*A baby with advanced malaria at Garki General Hospital in Abuja, Nigeria. Ninety percent of malaria deaths in Africa are children under five.*

movement, whether they're Al Gore or some Hollywood glitterati, or the head of the Natural Resources Defense Council, say they're ready to live in a mud hut in Africa for even a month or two. Some friends of mine in South Africa have offered to put Drew Barrymore and Cameron Diaz and their "Trippin" crew up for a month in a state-of-the-art mud hut, out in the middle of nowhere, so they can live the cute, indigenous lifestyle that they extol and want to perpetuate. They can go without lights and refrigeration; drink the same filthy water that's loaded with parasites and bacteria; go without bug repellants and DDT, and battle malarial mosquitoes all night long; eat the same meager, insect-infested organic food the locals eat. And when they come down with malaria, they can walk, just like the locals, 20 miles to the nearest clinic, and hope that nurse has something other than chloroquine to treat their malaria.

If they survive, they might come back changed people. I don't see any of them volunteering to do something like that, even for one month. But they're happy to keep these people in that state of permanent poverty.

As my friend June Arunga from Kenya says, "indigenous lifestyles" just mean indigenous poverty, indigenous malnutrition, indigenous disease, and childhood death. And that's really what it comes down to: When you don't have these modern technologies, your lifespan is cut almost in half.

**EIR:** Let's talk about some of these modern technologies. There are a number of people out there, who aren't necessarily part of this Hollywood clique or this upper echelon of the financial bracket (like Al Gore, as you mentioned), who are hypocritically putting forth these sorts of policies. I mean, there are people who see that perhaps we are consuming more resources than we may be replenishing at this point, and they might be saying: "Don't we have to do a better job of so-

called protecting the Earth. And if that's the case, why can't we develop Africa with so-called 'smarter' technologies?"

They would say, "Can't we put a solar panel on every hut? And give Africa wind power?" And, with the Gore testimony on Capitol Hill last week, certainly a number of people are now suggesting this for the United States. Does that policy make sense to you?

**Driessen:** Absolutely not.

Just think about it: 95% of Africans have no electricity. It would certainly be an improvement to have a little solar panel on a hut and maybe a couple of wind turbines for the village. But in essence, what you're telling them, is, "You can't have electricity, except on the most *minimal* scale. You can never have it for a modern home, hospital, clinic, office, school or society." If you put a solar panel on a hut, for example, the people might have enough electricity to power a couple of light bulbs, a radio, a 1- or 2-cubic-foot refrigerator, and a hot plate—but that's it!

And it would be intermittent. It would only work when the Sun is shining. You may have a battery backup, but just to have a solar panel and battery to operate a couple of light bulbs, a radio, and a tiny TV, it's going to cost you about \$1,500 per hut. Wind turbines are also very expensive and, whenever the wind stops blowing, whatever you've got hooked up to that turbine shuts down. Just imagine yourself strapped on an operating table with your chest cut open, in the middle of open heart surgery . . . and the wind stops blowing, or the Sun stops shining. There goes your electricity.

You cannot *possibly* get enough affordable, reliable, abundant electricity off of these so-called "appropriate, renewable" resources. They just aren't going to be there at the levels or with the reliability that we in this country, or anywhere in the developed world, demand.

That said, there can be a place for wind and solar power—as an interim improvement in remote African villages, for instance, or to supplement household electricity in the U.S. Wind power can add juice to an electrical grid in the U.S., whenever the wind is blowing, but you just can't rely on it as a primary source, because it is too expensive and unreliable.

**EIR:** This brings up an interesting point. Last week a number of leading Senate Democrats voiced a certain consensus that serious changes need to be made in our own energy policy and so-called sustainability here in the United States. This brings to mind what Lyndon LaRouche and others have called the "Great Global Warming Swindle" or the "Al Gore Hoax."

So, I want to hone in for a moment, on Al Gore: What is your take on his theory that man-made carbon dioxide emissions are going to create a 20-foot rise in sea level, that will wipe out Manhattan and create hurricanes like Katrina, that have the potential to wipe out life as we know it on the Earth?

**Driessen:** Well, I think the whole thing is ludicrous. Even the alarmists in the UN don't buy into this hysteria. Their



WHO

*Women with severe cases of malaria in an African hospital. There are 3,000 deaths of women and children per day in Africa—while environmental activists organize against the use of DDT for indoor house spraying, which is the most effective way to stop malaria's spread.*

latest report is suggesting an 18-inch rise in sea levels over the next century is the most likely scenario. Gore's 20 feet is pure Hollywood scare-mongering. Certainly, we're experiencing some global warming, and certainly in certain places especially, humans are having some effect on local weather and climate, and so forth. But to suggest that human carbon dioxide is responsible for this stuff is crazy.

**EIR:** What is responsible?

**Driessen:** Well, let's go back for a second. Look at carbon dioxide: The total amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 0.05%—the equivalent of about 1.9 inches on a 100-yard football field. And less than one-twentieth of that total is man-caused. The rest comes from plants, decaying plant matter, and the oceans.

More importantly, Al Gore has the theory backward. Gore claims that rising carbon dioxide causes warmer planetary temperatures. In reality, according to the ice core data and other records going back thousands of years, the planet warms first and then—400 to 800 years later—the carbon dioxide increases. As the oceans warm in response to various natural forces, they cannot hold as much carbon dioxide as when they're cool, so they release some of their built-up stores of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Even Gore had to admit, in response to a question after his testimony, that sometimes temperature increases have preceded CO<sub>2</sub> increases. Even his own graph, the one he uses in his lectures, the one featured in the "Great Global Warming Swindle," shows this time lag. The temperature goes up and, several hundred years later, up goes the carbon dioxide. The temperatures go down and, several centuries later, the carbon dioxide levels go down.

**EIR:** So, you're saying the reason for the increase in carbon

dioxide is the heating of the oceans, which is caused by something else?

**Driessen:** Which is caused by global warming, which is caused by a variety of natural forces. As solar radiation changes, the amount of heat energy reaching the Earth increases. Changing cosmic ray levels from the Sun affect cloud formation here on Earth, and thus the amount of sunlight reaching the surface. The tilt of the Earth's axis and shape of the Earth's orbit around the Sun also change over thousands of years. And the atmosphere and the oceans themselves are dynamic, turbulent, chaotic liquids, moving and changing on their own.

And so, you combine all of these forces in ways that we certainly don't understand very well—as real climatologists like MIT's Dick Lindzen will tell you—and you get a climate that changes constantly, repeatedly, to varying degrees, in long and short cycles, due to natural forces, and with only very limited inputs from humans. But Al Gore—the passionate true believer, well-rehearsed, with friends and protectors in Hollywood and Congress—still insists that we are about to have a climate cataclysm, brought on by the very technologies that improve and enrich our lives.

So, the bottom line is this: Even if we did something as stupid as what Al Gore is talking about—and put a ban on the construction of new coal-fired power plants here in the United States—it would make no difference whatsoever. It certainly wouldn't stabilize carbon dioxide levels, because they're already going up, as warmer planetary temperatures warm the oceans and release more CO<sub>2</sub>—and as China, India, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil, and other countries burn more coal and other fossil fuels, to fuel their growing economies and lift their people out of poverty.

Within a year or so, experts say, China will exceed the United States as being the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide—and I'm certainly not going to tell China or India or any other poor nation, especially in Africa, that they cannot aspire to and enjoy better lives, even if it means more carbon dioxide.

Moreover, carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. It's a plant nutrient. It makes plants and crops grow better, and need less water. And, I'm firmly convinced, CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere are not the cause of climate change. The *Sun* and other natural forces are what drive climate change cycles, just as they have for millions of years. They haven't taken a holiday, just because we started burning fossil fuels.

**EIR:** So Al Gore is even more extreme than the other alarmists?

**Driessen:** That's right. All kinds of environmentalists, politicians, and grant-seeking scientists want to talk about climate catastrophes that are vastly overblown—a figment of their imaginations, Hollywood special effects, and a few computer models that spew out crazy scenarios. But no real climatologist is talking in these terms; even the IPCC has reduced its forecasts for temperature and sea level increases. Aside from



UNICEF/John Issac

*“Indigenous lifestyles just mean indigenous poverty, indigenous malnutrition, indigenous disease, and childhood death.” How many supporters of indigenous life would like to spend most of their day collecting water to drink and firewood for cooking, as these Ethiopian women must do?*

some hysterical types, almost no one but Al Gore is talking about massive inundations of Manhattan and Bangladesh, or other climate Armageddons straight out of “The Day After Tomorrow” and “Convenient Lies and Half-Truths.”

Plus, it's really hard to believe that even Al Gore believes his own rhetoric. He uses huge amounts of electricity and natural gas—20 times more than the average American—and he refuses to cut back. He's flying all over the planet, often in private jets, spewing out greenhouse gases. He refused to take an energy pledge that Sen. Jim Inhofe offered him last week, refused to agree to use no more energy than the average American. But he wants Africa to rely on wind and solar power, and he thinks everybody else should cut back to the level of the new middle classes in India or China, which still use only a fraction of what Americans, Canadians, and Europeans do.

**EIR:** One of the things that we've uncovered through our *EIR* research is that Al Gore is also the head of a financial management company, which was set up in 2004, which is going to make a killing off the so-called “carbon swap” and the financial speculation associated with that, if a carbon tax and carbon swap system were put in place internationally.

**Driessen:** That's correct. Basically, the rule of thumb is, follow the money. Follow it for Al Gore, follow it for the environmental groups, follow it for the scientists, who are going to get *billions* of dollars in grant money from the U.S. government, the Canadian government, the European Union, the UN, and so forth. If they start talking like climate catastrophe skeptics, that money is going to dry up.

Look at Al Gore. Not only does he have this company that's going to rake in millions of dollars by selling and trading

these various emissions credits, but he gets free emission credits from his company—he doesn't even have to *buy* them! And he only started using these emission credits this year, just before his movie came out.

So, again, the hypocrisy is boundless, it seems.

**EIR:** So if you've got money, you're an exception to the rule.

**Driessen:** As Marie Antoinette allegedly said, "Let the peasants eat grass, like my horses." If you've got money, and you're important, you can buy the credits to sustain your grand lifestyle.

---

---

*"What right does anyone have to tell a poor country it can't develop, because we're concerned (all of a sudden, now that we're rich) about climate change?"*

---

---

And that raises another question. Who are they buying the credits from? Who are they paying not to use electricity, not to have energy? In many cases, what it's going to come down to is, they're going to pay a billion dollars here and there to somebody like Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, and he's going to take that money, put it in a Swiss bank account, and tell his people: "We've accepted money as part of an emission trading arrangement, to save Africa from climate chaos. Now you are going to have a sustainable energy future. You get to have a couple of wind turbines and little solar panels on your huts. Aren't you happy?"

So my question is: What right does anyone have to tell a poor country it can't develop, because we're concerned (all of a sudden, now that we're rich) about climate change, and your political leaders are trading emission credits with rich country folks like Al Gore, who can't be expected to cut back on their energy use. It's fascinating and hypocritical, and, unfortunately, Democrats in Congress did their level best to keep these issues from coming up. Nobody was allowed to ask Al Gore really tough questions, and nobody on the Democratic side wanted to touch any of these issues.

**EIR:** Even the *New York Times* ran a front-page story a couple weeks ago, about how extremist Al Gore really was. In his book *Earth in the Balance*, you can see his extreme views about energy, population growth, and so forth. What can you say about things he proposed to the Senate?

**Driessen:** I would love to see them actually start enacting some of proposals that Gore is recommending: That everybody has to get rid of their incandescent bulbs, and buy new ones that are far more expensive and don't put out as much light. That they have to cut way back on coal-fired electricity

generation, which would mean big increases—10, 20 maybe even 30%—in their electrical bills, which would gouge consumers and really hammer minority families and people on low and fixed incomes.

And for what? So that politicians can say they did something about climate change—about this Hollywood Frankenstein monster they created. Anything they do—aside from committing political suicide by requiring that we slash greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050, will not stabilize atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels. So all we're talking about is \$400-billion-dollar-a-year environmental *symbolism*.

Even if you assume CO<sub>2</sub> levels are driving climate change—even if you bash and trash out economy, spend countless billions, and cause jobs to migrate to India and China, because they're the only places companies can still get abundant, reliable, affordable energy—you're not going to affect the climate. The climate's going to continue to do what it always has. It's going to change naturally.

**EIR:** I think that gets at the real intent of what Al Gore is trying to do, Gore's so-called solution for the United States. As you mentioned, he's called for banning the incandescent light bulb, lowering carbon emissions overall by 90%. He wants to set up a "Connie Mae," which I guess is a "Fannie Mae" for energy *conservation* and carbon emission credits. He seems to be proposing that we cut down a lot of power lines, and put solar panels on every house in America, as part of the new financial bubble. And he's saying this at the very time that the housing bubble seems to be rupturing, and we have growing financial instability in that sector.

**Driessen:** On one level, I'm in favor of little things that people might want to do. If they want to switch light bulbs, that's fine. It's not going to make a lot of difference, but it can help.

Where I have a problem is when the government *mandates* them. Not only does that destroy personal freedom and put bureaucrats and radical green activists in charge of all our energy and economic decisions. It also means government picks the energy and economic winners and losers, subsidizes certain politically favored sectors, often against politically disfavored sectors—or just companies that are less adept at lobbying and currying political favors. It means your lobbyist becomes more important than your R&D department.

Moreover, and here's where the rubber meets the road: 80% of our energy right now comes from fossil fuels; about 53% of our electricity is generated by burning coal. How Al Gore thinks we're going to cut our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over the next 30 or 40 years by 90%—without destroying our economy and impoverishing families—I sure don't know. And even if we do, it's not going to cause the rest of the world's emissions to go down. It's a lose-lose proposition. All pain for no gain.

Just look around you. What's going to happen as the U.S. population increases, and demand goes up? What's going to happen to your electricity bill, if demand soars and we can't build new coal-fired power plants? I haven't heard Gore say,

“I think we need to build 50, or 100, or 200 nuclear power plants.” I haven’t heard him say, “We’re going to stop burning coal, but we’re going to drill for oil and natural gas off our shores, in the Great Lakes, in the Rockies, in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.” He wants to force us—you and me, not him—to switch to wind and solar, which brings us right back to this energy sufficiency, affordability, and reliability issue. The wind stops blowing, the Sun stops shining, and you get brownouts and blackouts. It’s tough enough to run a hut with a couple light bulbs off a solar panel and a wind turbine. How do you run a modern nation this way?

When you look at the amount of electricity we use in this country, to improve living standards, improve people’s health, increase life spans, power wondrous new technologies—enjoy a standard of living that Al Gore is certainly not going to give up! Nor are these environmentalists or the Hollywood crowd ready to give all this up. How do you power a modern society with wind turbines—even with a million or 50 million—blanketing an area the size of Virginia, slicing and dicing birds and bats by the millions, destroying beautiful scenic vistas, and making unbelievable noise . . . to provide expensive intermittent electricity?

And how many of these clever, environmentally conscious but economically and energy-illiterate politicians have figured out that—if you want a forest of wind turbines and an ocean of solar panels—you need gas-fired power plants for backup, because they’re the only thing that can kick in instantaneously when the wind stops blowing, or the Sun stops shining. And that means you’ve got to drill for natural gas, which they absolutely oppose.

**EIR:** Isn’t it also true that you couldn’t actually manufacture a windmill or a solar panel with the amount of power produced by a solar panel or a windmill? That it actually takes nuclear or fossil fuel power to generate enough energy to even create a solar panel.

**Driessen:** You’re talking about the energy it takes to get the minerals out of the ground, to mill and process them into steel and other components, and then build that windmill or solar panel?

**EIR::** Right, that process.

**Driessen:** Yes, it does take a lot of energy. And this is where these guys just don’t think things through. Many of them—the politicians, activists, and journalists—would fail miserably trying to run a company, especially a utility or manufacturing company. But they want to be in charge of the people who are in charge of those companies.

Go back a second to my point about gas-fired power plants. If you mandate wind power, you need gas-fired power plants and natural gas to operate those plants. Who in the Democratic Party or the environmental movement is now going to support drilling for natural gas, so that they can get this utopian wind-energy system they keep dreaming about?

Which Senator is going to run his or her office solely off wind or solar power? Which one is going to be the first to volunteer for open heart surgery run entirely off a solar panel or wind turbine?

Your point about the energy needed to manufacture wind and solar systems is extremely well taken: The energy level required to make these alternative energy systems is far higher than they can put out. Right now, you take one 50-megawatt power plant in California, a gas-fired power plant: It’s putting out more electricity in the course of a year, than all 13,000 of California’s first-generation wind turbines. The gas-fired power plant is on about 20 acres; the wind turbines are on 106,000 acres. Those are significant environmental impacts—and then you have to add in the bird and bat kills, and transmission lines to carry electricity hundreds of miles from the wind farm to the major city.

**EIR:** I read in your book, that in some places, the raptors are actually being driven out of their natural habitat, or are just chopped up, by these windmills.

**Driessen:** I’m not sure to what extent you can say they’re being driven out, but certainly they’re being chopped up. Sierra Club and Audubon Society don’t call wind turbines the “Cuisinarts of the Air” for nothing. As we expand these wind systems, we’re going to be talking about tens of thousands of birds and bats, and a huge number of raptors that come in looking for prey and whack, we get peregrine paté.

So, again, there is no free lunch. There is an environmental cost to all of this, a human cost to all of this, a huge economic cost to all of it. Don’t let us get conned by Al Gore, whose bogus solutions are going to place most of the burdens squarely on the shoulders of the poorest families in our country; and whose proposed bans on fossil fuels and other electricity-generating systems are going to keep the poorest people on the planet impoverished, diseased, destitute, without jobs, without a functioning, modern economy, and dying many years before their time. It’s simply unconscionable. If you want to talk about the morality of climate change, *that’s* the morality of climate change. It’s the *immorality* of telling people they can’t have energy, they can’t take their rightful places among the Earth’s healthy and prosperous people.

We must not, and need not, go down that route. We have the time, technology, creativity, and humanitarian instincts to think this through, determine whether we really have a climate problem—another natural cycle or something else—and then take the wise steps to address the problem or adapt to it.

**EIR:** Well, Paul, being a member of the Democratic Party and being raised in Seattle, Washington, the greenie headquarters of the world, these are issues that I have wrestled with for a long time, and I appreciate your shedding some light on these subjects, because they’re not easy questions, but I certainly think that the work that you’re doing brings us closer to the truth on these matters.