

Freedom Matters

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We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

Sustainable Development Is Unsustainable. Part 5. "I'm not dead yet!"

by Bob Bowman

A Monty Python skit spoofing the Black Plague of medieval Europe showed a crier trundling a cart through a city and calling out at each house, "Bring out your dead!"

The answer comes back from one house, "I'm not dead yet."

So it is with the issue of *The Limits to Growth*. The industrial world is not dead yet. Still, neither is the idea dead that says we are doomed like the neo-Malthusians claim we are.

Last issue, I raised the Neo-Malthusian question: Will our industrial civilization hit a Malthusian limit? I reviewed criticisms of the modeling done in *The Limits to Growth*, which had population overwhelming resources in 100 years (i.e., in 2070). But, proving a model wrong does not prove its prediction wrong.

Moreover, *The Limits to Growth* did **not** claim that doom was inevitable. Rather, it proposed that the world could achieve "ecological sustainability"; i.e., that governments could **plan** development so growth did not exhaust the earth's resources.

Subsequently, a U.N. commission chaired by Brundtland coined a similar idea, "sustainable development," that was later embodied in Agenda 21, adopted by more than 178 nations at the U. N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio De Janeiro in June 1992. Full implementation of Agenda 21 was urged at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, August-September, 2002.

The United States Senate spurned the Agenda 21 treaty, so President Clinton proceeded to implement it by presidential executive orders. So-called "smart growth" laws are another way that the U.N. Agenda 21 is being implemented in the United States, without a treaty, via piece-meal legislation.

Beckerman, in his critique, *A Poverty of Reason*, argues that the world can continue to develop without exhausting or polluting the planet, but he rejects the concept of "sustainable development" as a way to do it. He argues for classical economics and a market economy, rather than for socialistic governmental planning of development. He notes that **socialistic planning itself has always led to economic collapse**, so it is **not** the way to confront Malthusian limits. Also, he criticizes other concepts included in the Brundtland/U.N. definition of sustainable development; i.e., socialistic aims of economic and inter-generational equality (wealth redistribution), plus socialistic claims that development increases pollution, and pollution is causing global warming which threatens the planet.

Thus, both Beckerman's "Classical Economics Camp" and the U.N.'s "Sustainable Development Camp" **reject** the neo-

Malthusian doomsday prediction that population will overwhelm the earth, either by exhausting its resources or by polluting it. Both sides believe that "growth" can continue because human ingenuity will find ways to overcome each catastrophic Malthusian limit. In effect, both camps argue, not for Malthusian limits, but merely for Malthusian **reefs**, on which we only need to ensure that the good ship Development does not run aground. A scan of the internet confirms that view to be the mainstream view. So, doomsday neo-Malthusians are in the minority; still, they exist, so we still must ask: Are they correct?

What Malthusian limits to growth might exist? A looming one is energy. Matthew Simmons, a major energy investment banker, addresses it in a white paper titled *Revisiting the Limits to Growth*, dated October 2000, and available in pdf via internet. One message in Simmon's paper is that we do not have to wait for the world population (currently at 6.4 billion people) to increase more, for us to confront a Malthusian limit. About 20% of the world's population use 80% of the energy currently being consumed. If the lagging part of the **existing** world population caught up, the increase in energy use would be so great, it could not be met by current technology. Simple arithmetic.

Simmons makes another main point: we are 30 years into the 100 years modeled in 1972 in *The Limits to Growth*, and the numbers are right where the model predicted. When half of the planet's total crude oil is used up, **classical** oil theory says that the world oil production rate will peak, and thereafter decline. Simmons believes we will reach that point in 2007, which is close to industry predictions known now for 30 years or more, and again, on target as predicted in *The Limits to Growth*.

So, we will soon see. Next issue, *Freedom Matters* will further review these sources of turmoil for the U.S. and the world.

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