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Dec. 04, 2009

**Driving the Conversation:**

Arena Ref: [Fred Barbash](#)

## 'Does the country need a new Fed chief?' \*

Also, on the eve of Copenhagen, "[have the greens failed?](#)"

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### Roger Pilon

Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

#### Have the greens failed?

If the greens have failed, it's not for lack of trying. For years now, in everything from pre-school programs to "educational" ads aimed at adults, they've been "greenwashing" our brains. In September the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that the EPA was focusing on children: "Partnering with the Parent Teacher Organization, the agency earlier this month launched a [cross-country tour](#) of 6,000 schools to teach students about climate change and energy efficiency."

Yet for all that effort, the public isn't buying. As [Politico](#) notes this morning: "The Pew Research Center found that by last January, global warming 'ranked at the bottom of the public's list of policy priorities for the president and Congress this year.'" And "Independent voters and Republicans ranked it last on a list of 20 priorities, while Democrats ranked it 16th." Meanwhile, "other polling suggests Americans are growing more skeptical of the science behind climate change, with those who blame human activity for global warming -- 36

percent -- falling 11 percentage points this year, according to Pew." And that was *before* "Climategate" came to light.

At bottom, the greens face three basic problems. First, by no means is the science of global warming "settled" -- if anything, the fraud Climategate surfaced has settled *that* question. Second, even if global warming were a settled science, the contribution of human activity is anything but certain. And finally, most important, even if the answers to those two questions were clear, the costs -- or benefits -- of global warming are unknown, **but the costs of the proposals promoted by the greens are astronomical.**

So how do they respond to all of this? Politico cites Greenpeace executive director Phil Radford: "'Obama's problem is not his position on the climate issue but, rather, his will,' says Radford. 'The question is how much the president will lead.' Americans have 'overlearned' the lessons of Kyoto, where President Bill Clinton agreed to a treaty that he never submitted for ratification because it faced near-unanimous rejection in the Senate, Radford said. 'They're using that as a reason to hide behind Congress instead of to lead Congress.'"

There you have it. It's all a matter of will -- indeed, of belief. The president needs simply to will this through, the people (and Congress) be damned. We, the anointed, know what's right, what needs to be done. Is it any wonder that the greens are failing, at least where the people can still be heard?

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