

## CORRESPONDENTS



## Conor Clarke

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## An Omnibus Response to Some Stuff that Happened On the Internet Last Week

This is mostly a housekeeping note: I've been in South America for the past week and had a lot of fun not paying attention to the Internet. But now that I've caught up on sleep and emails I do want to respond, in highly annoying omnibus fashion, to a bunch of things that came up while I was gone. (Some of these I'll try to get into in more detail over the course of the week, but I want to list them all for the sake of due diligence.)

**1. The Future of Sarah Palin:** While guestblogging for Andrew Sullivan, I wrote a [medium-sized post](#) about Sarah Palin's op-ed in the Washington Post. [Rob Harrison](#) of Conservatives 4 Palin and [Stephen Spruiell](#) of The National Review took me to task. I will write more about this tomorrow, and in general I think there's a lot of point-missing going on here. But I want to say now that I find it somewhat funny that most of the controversy seems to spin around one sentence, contra Palin, from me: "I don't think cap and trade has many supporters who think it's the best way to become 'less dependent on foreign energy sources.'" (That last clause is a quote from the Palin op-ed.)

Well, look. I think my original sentence is obviously and self-evidently true. But since it's somehow proved controversial I'll say it again: I don't think cap and trade has many supporters who think it's the best way to reduce dependence on foreign energy! But read the Spruiell post and the Harrison post and decide for yourself. I'll make an actual argument tomorrow.

**2. Climate Change:** A couple of weeks ago I wrote a post about a provocative and well-known climate-change paper by Indur Goklany. My post had four general criticisms. Over at Cato, Goklany [responded](#) to one-half of one of the four points. This raised the tantalizing possibility of an eight-part response to a blog post, but I'm yet to see additional parts. I will update my original argument as Goklany responds.

**3. Lying About Climate Change:** I published an interview with the great economist Thomas Schelling before I took off for Argentina, and [some bloggers](#) were offended by Schelling's suggestion that it might be worth exaggerating the risks of climate change, or hoping for a dire climate event to occur in the United States. Most of this criticism is really fine, but I think I should say, as the person who spoke with Schelling on the phone -- and had the benefit of tone and inflection and timing, and all the other qualities of the spoken word that don't translate terribly well into text -- that these interpretations are a mite too literal. (Perhaps another "[laughs]" in the text would have helped clear things up.)

I think the point Schelling was making was this: It is not the self-interest of Americans who are alive today to pass climate change legislation. This isn't really a controversial point and it's certainly not worth dissembling over it. But if you believe, as I do, that (1) climate change legislation is still worth it, for a variety of altruistic reasons; and (2) most people are self-interested, then we do face the question of how you should make the argument on the bill's behalf, and it isn't an easy question.

**4. The Case Against Polls:** John Sides [continued his case](#) against my [original piece](#). I think John is winning the argument, but I'd like to write more on this... As soon as I come up with something to say.

One final housekeeping note: I'll be around and blogging all week, and then I'm off to India -- Hyderabad, Kerala and Goa, three places I've never been -- for the first half of August, on Monday night. I'll be blogging from there too, assuming the Internet is as reliable as my host promises.

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## CONOR CLARKE

Conor Clarke is the editor, with Michael Kinsley, of "Creative Capitalism," an economics blog that was recently published in book form by Simon and Schuster. He was previously a fellow at The Atlantic and an editor at the Guardian. He is also on [Twitter](#).

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