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Doug Craig Climate of Change

The AEI and Geoengineering (1)

Sunday, April 4, 2010

"The aide said that guys like me were "in what we call the reality-based community," which he defined as people who "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. "That's not the way the world really works anymore," he continued. "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality – judiciously, as you will – we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."

Alleged to be Karl Rove speaking to Ron Suskind in 2004

"Faith, Certainty and the Presidency of George W. Bush"

New York Times Magazine

In my last few blogs I have been focusing on conservatives and climate change as represented by the [American Enterprise Institute \(AEI\)](#), the quintessential conservative think tank.

The AEI was established nearly 70 years ago and while the Brookings and Hoover Institutions are much older, the AEI remains one of the most important repositories of conservative thought in the modern era. So when they refuse to parrot the automatic, distorted, pseudoscientific drivle on climate change manufactured by the denial wing of those on the far-right (i.e., Cato Institute, Heritage Foundation, Thomas Sowell, Rush Limbaugh, George Will, Fox News, etc.), it should give all of us a reason to cheer.

It's hard to solve common problems when the livelihood of so many of the rich and powerful depends on denying those problems exist while "creating other new realities". Those of us who "believe that solutions emerge from (our) judicious study of discernible reality" (i.e., science) as opposed to stuff we make up are in what Karl Rove purportedly once referred to as "the reality based community."

We can either deal with the reality of climate change or it will deal with us. You may not like the way the

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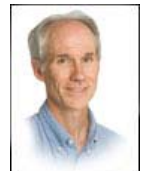
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About Doug Craig

Doug Craig is an Air Force brat born in Germany, grew up in L.A., Northern Virginia and Dayton, Ohio. Obtained a B.A. in Journalism and a Doctorate in Psychology. Employed as a clinical psychologist in private practice in Redding for 22 years. One wife, two daughters, two cats, two dogs, 36 solar panels and one electric car.



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AEI thinks we should deal with the problem but at least they are dealing with it. How sad and strange that so many among us prefer comfortable lies that confirm their prejudices and secret hatreds rather than deal with the hard, frightening, gritty scientific realities. For that I applaud the AEI. Perhaps the rest of the conservative community will stumble along one day for the sake of their children, grandchildren and their souls.

I became reacquainted with the AEI in February in San Diego at the [Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science \(AAAS\)](#). The very first symposium I attended was on [Human Dimensions of Geoengineering](#). I expected to hear from scientists. Thus it came as a surprise that [Samuel Thornstrom](#), an AEI "Resident Fellow" and "Codirector of the AEI Geoengineering Project" was a last-minute replacement for one of the scheduled speakers.

I was surprised because all I knew about the AEI and its connection to climate was the [story about its efforts to undermine the IPCC report in 2007](#). But here was Thornstrom, who I learned was President Bush's Director of Communications of the White House Council on Environmental Quality from 2001 to 2003, talking about human-caused climate change as if it was a fact that everyone accepted. I don't have a transcript of his talk but he is a prolific writer so I can convey the gist of his message.

One month ago he published a piece titled, "[What Role for Geoengineering?](#)" It is abundantly clear from the first line that he accepts the scientific consensus that humans are responsible for global warming. He wrote, "Any effective climate strategy will have to rely upon a combination of emissions reductions, adaptation, and, **if circumstances warrant (as appears likely), some degree of geoengineering.**"

Now that is refreshing. No denial. No lies. Just pragmatic and matter-of-fact. Clearly reality-based.

He referred to "Nobel Prize laureate and atmospheric chemist" [Paul Crutzen's 2006 article "calling for research on geoengineering."](#) He also mentioned a 2001 "Department of Energy...white paper proposing a five-year research program on geoengineering" and how "the Bush administration balked, fearing how such a proposal would be perceived. A conservative president who opposed emissions limits could not afford to call for geoengineering research."

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Comments (2)

April 4, 2010 5:59 PM

Dane Wlgington

Thank you Dr. Craig for continuing to cover the most dire subject of geoengineering. Any that care at all about their health,(the air they breath) their environment, their water, the climate, etc, should objectively research geoengineering. Dumping tens of millions of tones of aluminum into the atmosphere with aircraft is not a cure for anything, but only a curse. This is the promise of "geoengineering"

April 4, 2010 9:26 PM

Gnosis

Dr. Craig
Yes, it is refreshing when conservatives embrace science and take responsibility for their actions, as we all must at some point. I guess my worry is that AEI is one of the NeoCon strongholds and that their motives may not be very humane, ethical or democratic. Geoengineering is an international concern. When they have the politics of American unilateralism and unchecked arrogant hegemony as their modus operandi, I get worried about the application of any science they embrace.

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