

# OBAMA'S BIGGEST RADICAL

*by Ben Johnson*



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When Barack Obama nominated John P. Holdren as his Science Adviser last December 20, the president-elect [stated](#) "promoting science isn't just about providing resources" but "ensuring that facts and evidence are never twisted or obscured by politics or ideology." In nominating John Holdren, his words could scarcely have taken a more Orwellian ring.

Some critics have noted Holdren's penchant for making apocalyptic predictions that never come to pass, and categorizing all criticism of his alarmist views as not only wrong but dangerous. What none has yet noted is that Holdren is a globalist who has endorsed "surrender of sovereignty" to "a comprehensive Planetary Regime" that would control all the world's resources, direct global redistribution of wealth, oversee the "de-development" of the West, control a World Army and taxation regime, and enforce world population limits. He has castigated the United States as "the meanest of wealthy countries," written a justification of compulsory abortion for American women, advocated drastically lowering the U.S. standard of living, and left the door open to trying global warming "deniers" for crimes against humanity. Such is Barack

Obama's idea of a clear-headed adviser on matters of scientific policy.

## First Lab on the Left

All of these positions are consistent with a man who began his career as a "dissident scientist." Peter Collier remembers Holdren working by day at a national laboratory and by night writing for *Ramparts*, the intellectual journal of the New Left. Holdren has authored numerous books and journal articles with his mentors Paul and Anne Ehrlich, the infamous doomsayers who predicted overpopulation would force most of the world's population to perish during the 1980s ["great die-off."](#) Holdren has gone on to a distinguished academic career in his own right. A longtime professor at the University of California at Berkeley, Teresa Heinz Kerry used her late husband's tax-exempt billions to [endow](#) a chair at Harvard for Ehrlich's disciple; Holdren is now the Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, where his (and her) ideas influence the next generation of policymakers. Holdren himself has a background in political "philanthropy," [serving](#) for 14 years on [John D. and Catherine T.](#)

[MacArthur Foundation](#)'s Board of Trustees, steering its grants to far-Left organizations. He also pursued the intersection of science and diplomacy by joining the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, an organization founded during the Cold War by former nuclear scientist and [fellow traveler](#) Joseph Rotblat. Pugwash hewed to the Communist Party line and was subsequently feted by Czechoslovakian and Polish Communist leaders.

### **The Neo-Malthusians**

Holdren gave a clear indication of his philosophical views in the 1977 book *Ecoscience*, which he co-authored with Paul and Anne Ehrlich. [1] In its pages, the authors noted, "The neo-Malthusian view proposes ... population limitation and redistribution of wealth." They concluded, "On these points, we find ourselves firmly in the neo-Malthusian camp" (p. 954).

Economist Thomas Malthus is one of the most literally anti-human theorists in human history. He viewed overpopulation as the fount of all woe, but one which could be staunched with enough blood. In "[An Essay on the Principle of Population](#)" Malthus wrote, "All the children who are born, beyond what would be required to keep up the population to a desired level, must necessarily perish, unless room be made for them by the death of grown persons...if we dread the too frequent visitation of the horrid form of

famine, we should sedulously encourage the other forms of destruction, which we compel nature to use...and court the return of the plague." Like their intellectual forebear, Holdren and the Ehrlichs proposed their own acceptable sacrifice to the environment.

### **Compulsory Abortion for American Women**

The trio prescribed a rigidly enforced, government-imposed limit of two children per family. Holdren and the Ehrlichs maintained "there exists ample authority under which population growth could be regulated." Hiding behind the passive voice, they note, "it has been concluded that compulsory population-control laws, even including laws requiring *compulsory abortion, could be sustained under the existing constitution* if the population crisis became sufficiently severe to endanger the society." (Emphasis added.) To underscore they mean business, they conclude, "If some individuals contribute to general social deterioration by overproducing children, and if the need is compelling, they can be required by law to exercise reproductive responsibility" (pp. 837-838). Moreover, if the United States government refuses to take proper measures, they authorize the United Nations to take compelling force.

## "A Comprehensive Planetary Regime"

Holdren believed a world government might play a moderate role in the future: setting and enforcing appropriate population levels, taxing and redistributing the world's wealth, controlling the world's resources, and operating a standing World Army.

Such a comprehensive Planetary Regime could control the development, administration, conservation, and distribution of all natural resources, renewable or nonrenewable...not only in the atmosphere and oceans, but in such freshwater bodies as rivers and lakes...The Regime might also be a logical central agency for regulating all international trade...The Planetary Regime might be given responsibility for determining the optimum population for the world and for each region and for arbitrating various countries' shares within their regional limits...the Regime would have some power to enforce the agreed limits. (p. 943.)

Part of the power wielded by this "Regime" would be in the form of a World Army. The trio wrote that the United States must destroy all its nuclear arsenal. But this would not render us defenseless against Communist aggression. "Security might be provided by an armed international organization, a global analogue of a police force...The first step necessarily involves partial

*surrender of sovereignty to an international organization*" (p. 917, emphasis added).

Far from distancing himself from this woolly-headed notion as he matured, Holdren explicitly reaffirmed it in his [1995 Nobel Prize acceptance speech](#) on behalf of Pugwash, declaiming, "The post-Cold-War world needs a more powerful United Nations, probably with a standing volunteer force -- owing loyalty directly to the UN rather than to contingents from individual nations." As recently as last January, he [told](#) the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) the world needs "a universal prohibition on nuclear weapons, coupled with *means to ensure confidence in compliance.*" (Emphasis added.)

## U.S. Blood and Treasure for the UN

The redistribution of blood and treasure were high priorities for Holdren, et. al. They advised the "de-development of overdeveloped countries...should be given top priority" (p. 926), and such nations -- e.g., the United States and the developed West -- should "divert their excess productivity into helping the poorer people of the world rather than exploiting them" (p. 931).

How much wealth redistribution would be sufficient? The authors favorably cited a proposal that "the rich nations devote 20 percent of their GNPs for ten or fifteen years to

the task of population control and development of the poor countries." They comment, "We believe an effort of this magnitude is not only justified but essential." (p. 925). Reaffirming the goal in his 1995 Nobel speech, he stretched this to a program "sustained over *several decades*." (Emphasis added.)

He detailed the mechanism for global socialism just two years ago. In a [February 2007 report](#) of which he was a coordinating lead author, urges the United Nations to undertake "a global framework" that is "more comprehensive and ambitious" than the Kyoto Protocol. Holdren states the UN must mandate "A requirement for the early establishment of a substantial price on carbon emissions in all countries, whether by a carbon tax or a tradable permit approach." Although he prefers a global carbon tax presided over by a United Nations-strength IRS, he is open to a stringent global cap-and-trade program. However, that program must contain: "A means for transferring some of the revenue produced by carbon taxes upon, or permits purchased by, countries and consumers with high incomes and high per capita emissions to countries and consumers with low incomes and low per capita emissions" (pp. 70-72). (Emphases in original.)

### **Every Man a Duke**

His thirst for economic redistribution (read: socialism) is not limited to

foreign affairs. In a chapter of *Ecoscience* entitled "Changing American Institutions," Holdren and the Ehrlichs call for a "considerably more equitable distribution of wealth and income" in the United States, offering in passing, "Possibly this would be achieved by some formal mechanism" (p. 875). Might that mechanism perchance be government force? The text praises an economist's plan to limit American achievement at a \$100,000 maximum annual salary, or just under \$350,000 in 2009 dollars, [adjusted for inflation](#) (p. 850). Such would be the most socialistic proposal made in modern times. Even Huey Long allowed men a million dollars a year, [in 1934](#).

### **"The Meanest of Wealthy Countries"**

But the intervening years have not been pleasant ones for such as Holdren. In a [1995 article](#) co-written with Paul Ehrlich, he lists among the factors preventing a "sustainable" world such "Underlying human frailties" as "Greed, selfishness, intolerance, and shortsightedness." These, he expounds, "collectively have been elevated by conservative political doctrine and practice (above all in the United States in 1980-92) to the status of a credo."

Holdren [blasted](#) his country last January before the AAAS as "the stingiest among all" wealthy nations in its development of the Third World, making us "the meanest of

wealthy countries." He summed up his view of the U.S. budget by favorably quoting Robert Kates: "[Too much for warfare, too little for welfare.](#)"

### **Making You Poorer For Your Own Good**

The function of such welfare is twofold: to enrich citizens of the Global South and to impoverish Americans for their own good. In a [2006 paper](#), Holdren noted that reducing "GDP per person" -- that is, cutting your personal wealth -- also reduces Greenhouse Gas emissions. True, it is "not a lever that most people would want to use to reduce emissions"; "People are not getting rich as fast as they think, however, if GDP growth is being achieved at the expense of the environmental underpinnings of well-being" (pp. 15-16).

Holdren addressed the economic costs of his massive restructuring of the economy some 32 years ago, acknowledging it "will entail considerable retraining and temporary unemployment in the workforce" (p. 853). Yet he continues to support economy-crushing energy taxation. In a 1997 press conference, he [surmised](#) that if alternative energy sources were to get a foothold, either they "would have to get a great deal cheaper, which seems unlikely, or natural gas would have to get considerably more expensive. The latter is actually a good idea." One is hardly encouraged to learn that last

December, environmentalist Dr. James Hansen sent a [four-page letter](#) via Holdren to "Michelle and Barack." (Hansen wrote it as surgeons in Vienna placed a stent in his wife's chest following an unexpected heart attack.) His personal note to "John" states, "When gasoline hits \$4-5/gallons again, most of that should be tax." Five months earlier, Holdren [rated](#) Hansen "one of the most distinguished climate scientists in the world."

### **Anti-Military, Anti-Christian Statements**

Dr. James Hansen may be in Holdren's good graces, but neither the military nor the Apostle Paul are. Holdren and company warn, "Civilians should realize that peace and freedom from tension are not viewed as an ideal situation by many members of the military-industrial-government complex. By and large, professional military officers, especially field grade and higher, hope for an end to international tensions about as fervently as farmers hope for drought" (p. 918).

And in their eyes, what soldiers are to war, Jesus is to the climate. "The Christian concept of life in this world, as voiced by Saint Paul, that 'here we have no abiding city,' for example, conceivably could help explain why some people show rather little concern for the long-term future of the global environment or for the

well-being of future generations" (p. 807).

### **P.S.: He's Frequently Wrong**

With a values system like this, it should come as little surprise that Holdren is frequently mistaken about his alleged field of specialization, environmental science -- often tremendously so. As with Ehrlich, he has been predicting global catastrophes since the 1970s, beginning with the [global cooling](#) scare. Modern critics have noted his role in Paul Ehrlich's famous [wager with Julian Simon](#): Holdren chose five metals that he believed would be more expensive in ten years' time due to scarcity, while Simon predicted each would be less expensive. A decade hence, Ehrlich's group was \$1,000 poorer (a chance to reduce their carbon footprint, perhaps). Holdren [advised](#) Al Gore on *An Inconvenient Truth*, a film that by one scholar's count contained [10 pages](#) of falsehoods, exaggerations, distortions, and ignored evidence.

And there is the little matter of his prediction a billion people will die within the next 11 years.

Paul Ehrlich [recorded](#) that in 1986 Holdren predicted "carbon dioxide-induced famines could kill as many as a billion people before the year 2020." Holdren [reiterated](#) this view in *Newsweek* just two years ago. When he faced Senate questioning this February 12, only one man, Sen. David Vitter, R-LA, dared to ask him

about his failed predictions. *The Washington Post* [reported](#) Holdren's response as a brilliant riposte, artfully parrying the query. On the contrary, the [transcript](#) shows Holdren actually reaffirmed that he still believes one billion people may die within the next 11 years from a climate-related drought:

**Vitter:** So you would stick to that statement?

**Holdren:** I don't think it's likely. I think we should invest effort - considerable effort - to reduce the likelihood further.

**Vitter:** So you would stick to the statement that it could happen?

**Holdren:** It could happen, and ...

**Vitter:** One billion by 2020?

**Holdren:** It could.

Vitter managed to show Holdren was wrong on yet another front: just two years ago, he [wrote](#) that current emissions levels could cause the a 13-foot rise in sea levels. Under cross-examination, Holdren admitted science's most dire estimates are now half as much as Holdren pronounced just two years ago. Yet this "expert" will have the ear of the president in setting scientific policy.

### **Criticizing Holdren = "Crimes Against Humanity"?**

Holdren reacts to correction the way a rattlesnake reacts to sudden movement: with velocity and venom.

As long ago as the early 1970s, he and Paul Ehrlich engaged in [a campaign to silence](#) fellow radical Barry Commoner, a onetime fringe presidential candidate, because the latter viewed technology as more damaging than overpopulation. More recently, he co-authored a [scathing, 11-page attack](#) against Bjorn Lomborg for having the temerity to question Green-Left orthodoxy. Yet that pales in comparison to his view of some global warming "deniers."

[Last July 3](#), as an advisor to the Obama campaign, Holdren appeared on the radical program "[Democracy Now!](#)" hosted by [Amy Goodman](#). Goodman asked him about comments made by his friend Dr. James Hansen (see above). Specifically, Hansen said, "large energy companies are guilty of crimes against humanity, if they continue to dispute what is understood scientifically and to fund contrarians, and if they push us past tipping points that end up destroying many species on the planet and having a huge impact on humanity itself." Goodman asked Holdren if he agreed "the CEOs of large energy companies are guilty of, should be tried for crimes against humanity?"

Holdren [replied](#): "I couldn't really say. I'm not qualified to assess what the heads of oil companies, past or present, have done in this domain. My understanding is that Exxon, in particular, did fund a variety of small think tanks to generate what amounts to propaganda against

understanding of what climate change was doing, the human role in causing it. Whether that sort of activity really constitutes crimes against humanity is something for people more embedded in the legal system than I to judge." He went on to say heads of oil companies now were more "enlightened" on carbon emissions, so "I guess I would find the statement that *all* oil company CEOs, *past and present*, are guilty of crimes against humanity is *maybe* a *little bit* over the top." (Emphasis added.)

In other words, he hedged his bets, pleaded that he was not a legal scholar, but still held out that at least some of the CEOs may well be guilty of crimes against humanity. His reply to whether American citizens should be tried for a capital offense because they exercised their First Amendment rights to disagree with him was a firm maybe.

### **DDT: A Truly Malthusian Policy**

The lack of correction has led to a correlative lack of introspection. This author could find no retraction of his 1977 statement, "In our opinion, no biologist has made a greater contribution to humanity in this century than Rachel Carson" (p. 854). Carson's primary contribution, through banning the DDT on erroneous grounds, has been the [preventable death of 50-90 million souls](#) in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian subcontinent.



In a way, Holdren's support for Carson is a microcosm of his entire philosophy: a deadly and ill-conceived policy based on false evidence of potential harm, whose catastrophic impact has been the opposite of that intended -- never retracted, never regretted, never reconsidered. Such a reflexively self-

reverential tone is unhelpful in any public servant. John Holdren's globalist, redistributionist, Malthusian views could prove more damaging for the world than those of his hero.

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## ENDNOTES:

1. Unless otherwise noted, all page citations are from Paul Ehrlich, Anne Ehrlich, and John Holdren. *Ecoscience: Population, Resources, and Environment*. (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1977).
2. Blog commentaries with extended information and quotes can be found here: [http://beltwayblips.dailyradar.com/story/john\\_holdren\\_obama\\_s\\_science\\_czar\\_says\\_forced/](http://beltwayblips.dailyradar.com/story/john_holdren_obama_s_science_czar_says_forced/)

**Ben Johnson** is Managing Editor of FrontPage Magazine and co-author, with David Horowitz, of the book *Party of Defeat*. He is also the author of the books *Teresa Heinz Kerry's Radical Gifts* (2009) and *57 Varieties of Radical Causes: Teresa Heinz Kerry's Charitable Giving* (2004).

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