


Bridges to nowhere - promises, promises

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Some thought the moment to save the earth had passed in Copenhagen nearly three years ago. Phew!! What a relief!!! Oil companies started exploration for oil and gas in the Arctic, thought to have as much as Russia.

Not so, of course. Now, on the heels of [reports](#) - just in time for the half-way mark of [a 100-month countdown to a game of climate roulette](#) - (see Simms, later) - that the Arctic is warming at a rate unprecedented in centuries, that [ice-free Arctic may be years, not decades away](#), self-proclaimed well-wishers of the world unite. To do what? Write a [letter to the Editor](#) of the Guardian. Led by the head of the National Federation of Women's Institutes and signed on - or off - by tens of others,

including the usual suspects (Carbontracker, Good Energy, New Economics Foundation, Student Switch-off Campaign), including Bianca Jagger.

Gus Speth - the harbinger of the doom in the Global 2000 report under Jimmy Carter, then as head of the World Resources Institute, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, then of the Yale School of Organization (a some-time refuge of R. K. Pachauri of the IPCC) - appeals for mass non-violent protest. As asserted by Andrew Simms, one of the letter signers (as Fellow, New Economics Foundation) doubling as one of "the world's leading green journalists" for a Guardian [blog](#). The Guardian dutifully reports on the letter and the blog entry as a news item, declaring in the headline [Ignoring global warming is 'reckless' of the government, warn campaigners](#)". Perhaps Mr. Speth would lead the masses to occupy petrol pumps and coal mines, power plants and gas pipes, freeze people or let them be scorched by solar energy, or keep them in the dark, force a return to renewable biomass?

Newspapers are not expected to create news; what is the British (or any) energy finance minister to do trying to balance defence, pension, education, health, foreign aid, and subsidies for renewable energy and nuclear power? What is the least reckless thing to do - perhaps shove the ill and the elderly out in the cold? What if the outside is too hot suddenly?

The Kyoto Protocol was a bridge to nowhere, to be left unfinished so suicidal drivers can jump off. Just like nuclear power. Both had a determined official push - There Is No Alternative!

Nearly everybody (least of all the US, Germany, and now Japan, France) has found alternatives - natural gas, renewables - if only because markets were let looser. UK will soon come around. It may well be that [the honeymoon with renewables is over](#), but the marriage seems [workable](#) and worthwhile. After all, there is more variety in renewables than in nuclear; even the [Chinese solar PV industry](#) will get some rest, some tonic, some cosmetic touch. Nuclear power is an old hag that only the drunkards find pretty enough to woo, with enough matchmakers still in business, since they can't be put to other jobs. France and [Japan](#) are still continuing as vendors of terror - instruments of mass incineration of investment if not human destruction; Australia can't suffer to be left behind. And then there is always Russia, eager to turn oil and gas money into paycheck diplomacy.

[The news on Arctic oil drilling](#) isn't so rosy either.

The music shall continue; is it not clear who the Neros are. "Fighting global warming" is no different when it comes to fooling enough people long enough.

- [Nikhil Desai](#), NAPSNet contributor

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