

# Obama's keeps priorities in the right order

James Semp's March 1 letter of appreciation to President Obama has my profound endorsement.

We are evidently in agreement in our great admiration for Obama and in our approval of his first two major steps in confronting the two emergencies he inherited from the Bush administration — the massive bailouts of financial institutions and, especially, his economic stimulus programs to combat the rapid recession deepening into depression.

Whatever the relevant counter-considerations in both cases, the president was right to have addressed himself first to the threat of massive financial institutional failure and next to the frightful increases in unemployment. Despite the understandable questions about them, the first of these is a success. As John Cassidy points out in the March 15 New Yorker, larger banks already have repaid the major part of the

money they received from taxpayers and credit is once again flowing.

As to the second, the loss of millions of jobs demanded drastic government action to ameliorate the hardship and cushion the decline in aggregate demand by extending unemployment benefits and tax inducements to subsidize additional private business hiring, such as that provided on March 5 by the House of Representatives on a disgracefully divided and partisan 217-201 vote.

To these steps, I recommend adding direct government investments in our decaying infrastructure, education and technology. As a single example of the first of these, I recall a sobering and terrifying article in the National Geographic less than a year before hurricane Katrina struck, fore-

casting in specific detail the failure of levees and other bulwarks against just such a hurricane — “one of the most dire threats to the nation, up there with a large earthquake in California or a terrorist attack on New York City.”

Recall, as another example, the famously successful Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program early in the first Franklin Roosevelt administration, the benefits of whose labors we still enjoy, in relation to the New York governor's recommended closing of 55 of our precious state parks this summer because of the state's inability to afford their upkeep.

This is emphatically not to ignore the consequent additional increase in our national debt — even if it were adjusted downward, as it would be in private business, by the

increased total national assets produced by such investment expenditures. In the 1930s, we could take comfort from the fact that we “owed it (mainly) to ourselves.” Today, in contrast, we owe it increasingly and massively to foreign governments — particularly China, which has been purchasing massive quantities of dollars flowing from our huge trade deficits, and dollar-denominated obligations by keeping the foreign-exchange value of the dollar artificially high — and the dollar cost of Chinese exports correspondingly low — in order to sustain its enormous balance of trade surplus with us (and our deficits with them).

How our mounting national debt is ultimately resolved and continuing deficits reduced are important questions. We must confront the underlying fact that over recent decades our total national private savings rate has been close to zero or negative — with

private consumption and home purchases financed by sharply increasing consumer and tax-encouraged mortgage debt.

As Semp rightly points out, the \$5 trillion, 10-year projected federal government surplus bequeathed to Bush by the outgoing Clinton administration quickly converted into a projected \$5 trillion deficit — by large tax cuts disproportionately benefitting the wealthy, including an unconscionable total abolition of what the Bush administration was pleased to call the “death tax” — rejecting a much more modest and reasonable alternative of a few million dollar exemption to prevent the necessity of dissolving modest family farms and businesses — and the Iraq adventure, a \$10 trillion shift. An early priority must be to reverse those highly regressive tax cuts and ultimately to shift our taxation from income to consumption — and strictly limiting

the deductibility of mortgage interest for housing.

The next, more fundamental reform must be to shift the base of our taxation from income to consumption. Meanwhile, we can take some consolation from the maxim that if you owe a bank \$100 and can't pay, you're in trouble. If you owe a bank hundreds of millions of dollars and can't pay, the bank is in trouble.

Our job is to take advantage of those Chinese subsidies to prevent extreme hardship, to give work to the unemployed — preferably, of course, to improve our national capital — human, physical, and technological. By that measure, Mr. Semp and President Obama have the priorities exactly right.

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**ALFRED E. KAHN**  
Guest Viewpoint

## Sectors of academia cling to denial in Climategate

Tompkins County will soon long for the good old days of “global warming.” Earth is entering a cooling phase unrelated to carbon dioxide. But the fundraisers exposed by the United Nations Climategate have now admitted that these natural climate cycles have no positive correlation to human activity.

The farce that human CO<sub>2</sub> drives climate was not just bad science; it was a conspiracy that preyed upon human emotions. The whistleblower release of documents exchanged by Dr. Phil Jones at the Climate Research Center of East Anglia University revealed a new low for academia. These global conspirators had indicted humanity on the basis of its CO<sub>2</sub> output.

The mainstream media remain equally sanctimonious, debasing taxpayer outrage as merely “polemical denials.” But Climategate constituted criminal activity and threatens true environmentalism.

When discussing the claim that CO<sub>2</sub> drove climate, we endured behavior rooted in serious character flaws or deep emotional problems. Scientific questions were rarely answered with honesty or civility. Previously, supporters of the Climategate conspirators touted them as having high ethical and intellectual status. My alma mater had continuously accredited the junk sci-

ence of the United Nations, but refuses to issue a formal statement condemning Climategate. According to Cornell Professor Frank DiSalvo, “There's no doubt people know about it, and are chagrined by it.”

Ithaca Mayor Carolyn Peterson, who exploited this junk science to enact her Carbon Tax Resolution, also has not issued a statement on Climategate.

Competent climate scientists (once slandered as “Holocaust deniers”) respond honestly and on-the-record. In stark contrast, alarmists refuse to submit to the scientific method, are antagonistic to honest peer review, and have derided relevant ques-

tions. This ethical divergence is well-established.

Last November, just before Climategate, I interviewed a Rutgers University professor; a close friend to Dr. Jones and American Geophysical Union member. He demands “global warming” research funding through carbon tax schemes, but would only talk off-the-record. Under that pretense this Rutgers official immediately resorted to slanders about “climate deniers.” Why the anger?

The underthought of alarmists is not rigorous science, but the exploitation of human emotion. For example, in a Climategate editorial, Al Gore offered fear-mongering warnings about an “unimaginable calamity.” Futurist Dr. Patrick Dixon

explains, “Global warming is an emotional issue. Remember, the future is not about science it's about emotion. I don't mind what your view is about the science, it's irrelevant!” Huh?

The “Psychological Profiling of Global Warming” is now under study. Professor Phillip Stott, editor of London's Journal of Biogeography, says, “We need a much deeper profiling. Global warming has morphed into the ultimate metonym for those members of society who combine a sense of guilt with an internal anger. This reflects a set of personality traits, not a naively constructed political dichotomy.” I am less optimistic. Climategate is notoriously lacking broad official condemnation by the vested

interests of academia and government. That blatant ethical failure reveals that the true issue confronting us is political ponerology.

Scientists who rant “Cooling is warming!” suffer from cognitive dissonance. But a notorious indication of character flaws or mental illness is suicide. After his Climategate crimes were confirmed by a British court, Dr. Jones announced thoughts of suicide. However, he never declared that those thoughts were motivated by true environmentalism.

*Paul V. Sheridan of Dearborn, Mich., is a Cornell graduate with degrees in physics, mathematics and business, and is a nationally recognized automotive safety consultant.*



**PAUL V. SHERIDAN**  
Guest Viewpoint

### Saturday April 17 9-Noon

EAST HILL PLAZA PARKING LOT OPPOSITE  
TOMPKINS TRUST COMPANY

# COMMUNITY Shred Day

FREE SHRED & RECYCLE WITH TOMPKINS TRUST COMPANY

Bring your old personal documents and computer equipment to us! Our document shredding vendor provides on-site document destruction that is 100% guaranteed to irreversibly destroy your confidential records safely and securely.

Brought to you by Tompkins Trust Company and Cayuga Radio Group. Join us for activities provided by Tompkins County Solid Waste, refreshments and fun!



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