

June 30, 2013

Ross Douthat on the great disconnect between DC and the citizens.

THIS January, as President Obama began his second term, the Pew Research Center asked Americans to list their policy priorities for 2013. Huge majorities cited jobs and the economy; sizable majorities cited health care costs and entitlement reform; more modest majorities cited fighting poverty and reforming the tax code. Down at the bottom of the list, with less than 40 percent support in each case, were gun control, immigration and climate change.

Yet six months later, the public's non-priorities look like the entirety of the White House's second-term agenda. The president's failed push for background checks has given way to an ongoing push for immigration reform, and the administration is reportedly planning a sweeping regulatory push on carbon emissions this summer. Meanwhile, nobody expects much action on the issues that Americans actually wanted Washington to focus on: tax and entitlement reform have been back-burnered, and the plight of the unemployed seems to have dropped off the D.C. radar screen entirely.

In part, this disconnect between country and capital reflects the limits gridlock puts on governance. The ideological divides in Washington — between right and left, and between different factions within the House Republican caucus — make action on first-rank issues unusually difficult, so it's natural that politicians would look for compromises on lower-priority debates instead.

That's the generous way of looking at it, at least. The more cynical take is that D.C. gridlock has given the political class an excuse to ignore the country's most pressing problem — a lack of decent jobs at decent wages, with a deeper social crisis at work underneath — and pursue its own pet causes instead.

Craig Pirrong has more on the foolishness from the administration this week.

Obama gave a big speech on the environment, and specifically climate change and CO2. The left swooned. The right raged.

Me-meh.

Not that I like the content of the speech (if you can call what he said "content")-more on this in a bit. It's just that presidential speeches tend to be long on promises and calls to action, and very short on follow through. That's doubly or triply true of Obama speeches. Look at all his speeches on gun control, and how little that came from them. Like nothing. This is a little different, because he can actually direct the EPA to do some things, and nothing in the speech was dependent on legislative approval (which is revealing in itself). Moreover, even the EPA process will be long and drawn out, and its outcome uncertain. Obama was equivocal on Keystone XL, basically setting out a set of criteria that he will use to evaluate it. These criteria are so elastic that it is possible to use them to justify rejection or approval, and indeed, both sides said they were encouraged by Obama's remarks.

Righties should actually like the speech. The fact that Obama feels obliged to pander to his base should make them happy. Hedge fund billionaire Thomas Steyer had made Keystone a

litmus test for continued proggy support for Obama. If he has to spend time, effort, and political capital to appease the Steyers of the world, righties should be pleased.

Insofar as the content, such as it is, goes, a couple of things jumped out.

The first is the condescending characterization of the state of the science on global warming. The snide references to the "Flat Earth Society" and the like. ...

Andrew Malcolm says of course he turns to globalony. Nothing else is working. *President Obama is running out of pivot points.*

So many of his bright ideas have been busts. Or worse. Let's see, the \$1 trillion jobs stimulus package that was going to produce a gazillion jobs by today.

Now, Obama's jobs plan is a laugh line for late-night comics. Jay Leno: "Obama told Morehouse College graduates they have bright futures ahead. Unless they want jobs. Then, they're totally screwed."

That policy reset with Russia? Obama gave up the Eastern European missile defense shield as a naive sign of good faith. Got no thanks. And now he can't even convince the Russians to get the NSA leaker out of the transit lounge at Moscow's airport. "Passenger Edward Snowden, please check at the KGB counter if you have a minute."

ObamaCare? Collapsing under its own weight and fundraising scandal as Democrats run from any connection to it. When's the last time you heard even its namesake tout its value?

Virtually everything the guy touches this year turns to Shinola. He went to Ohio State, urged Americans to dismiss all this silly talk about evil government out to control lives. Days later, oops, here comes the infamous ongoing series of revelations about the Internal Revenue Service harassing Obama opponents, as other government agents coincidentally knock on doors.

But the nation's chief executive didn't know about it. ...

... jobs aren't really Obama's thing. Never have been. If Obama can pit more Americans against more Americans -- say, coal miners worried about disappearing jobs against indebted college students who can't find any -- that suits this Alinsky acolyte just fine.

The more social turbulence and distrust the better. The less faith Americans maintain in their once-revered institutions the better for someone who wants to transform them all into something else. And still has 1,304 long days to do the deed.

Bjørn Lomborg, author of *Skeptical Environmentalist*, thinks we need to worry about economic growth.

... Obsession with doom-and-gloom scenarios distracts us from the real global threats. Poverty is one of the greatest killers of all, while easily curable diseases still claim 15 million lives every year--25 percent of all deaths.

The solution is economic growth. When lifted out of poverty, most people can afford to avoid infectious diseases. China has pulled more than 680 million people out of poverty in the last three decades, leading a worldwide poverty decline of almost 1 billion people. This has created massive improvements in health, longevity, and quality of life.

*The four decades since *The Limits of Growth* have shown that we need more of it, not less. An expansion of trade, with estimated benefits exceeding \$100 trillion annually toward the end of the century, would do thousands of times more good than timid feel-good policies that result from fear-mongering. But that requires abandoning an anti-growth mentality and using our enormous potential to create a brighter future. ...*

Jonathan Tobin asks if the Dems really want to wage a war on coal.

President Obama may think his speech today outlining an unprecedented package of measures aimed at stopping global warming will burnish his legacy. The set of executive orders announced today was exactly what his liberal base has been yearning for throughout his presidency, and the ideological tone of his speech must be highly satisfying for a president who enjoys dictating to what he considers his intellectual inferiors and despises working with a Congress that rejected these measures. But while liberals are cheering Obama's far-reaching fiat, a lot of Democrats, especially in coal-producing states, must be far from happy.

The president's orders that will impose new carbon emission levels on existing power plants will raise the price of energy for everyone and harm an already fragile economy that has struggled to maintain an anemic recovery. By itself that may prove to be a political liability for Democrats running in next year's midterm elections even if by now most Americans have had their natural skepticism about global warming alarmism pounded out of them by an ideological media. But an all-too-candid Obama advisor may have made a crucial gaffe that could kill the president's party in coal-producing states next year. ...

NY Times

[The Great Disconnect](#)

by Ross Douthat

THIS January, as President Obama began his second term, the Pew Research Center asked Americans to list their [policy priorities](#) for 2013. Huge majorities cited jobs and the economy; sizable majorities cited health care costs and entitlement reform; more modest majorities cited fighting poverty and reforming the tax code. Down at the bottom of the list, with less than 40 percent support in each case, were gun control, immigration and climate change.

Yet six months later, the public's non-priorities look like the entirety of the White House's second-term agenda. The president's failed push for background checks has given way to an ongoing push for immigration reform, and the administration is reportedly planning a sweeping [regulatory push on carbon emissions](#) this summer. Meanwhile, nobody expects much action on

the issues that Americans actually wanted Washington to focus on: tax and entitlement reform have been back-burnered, and the plight of the unemployed seems to have dropped off the D.C. radar screen entirely.

In part, this disconnect between country and capital reflects the limits gridlock puts on governance. The ideological divides in Washington — between right and left, and between different factions within the House Republican caucus — make action on first-rank issues unusually difficult, so it's natural that politicians would look for compromises on lower-priority debates instead.

That's the generous way of looking at it, at least. The more cynical take is that D.C. gridlock has given the political class an excuse to ignore the country's most pressing problem — a lack of decent jobs at decent wages, with a deeper social crisis at work underneath — and pursue its own pet causes instead.

After all, gun control, immigration reform and climate change aren't just random targets of opportunity. They're pillars of Acela Corridor ideology, core elements of Bloombergism, places where Obama-era liberalism overlaps with the views of Davos-goers and the Wall Street 1 percent. If you move in those circles, the political circumstances don't necessarily matter: these ideas always look like uncontroversial common sense.

Step outside those circles, though, and the timing of their elevation looks at best peculiar, at worst perverse. The president decided to make gun control legislation a major second-term priority ... with [firearm homicides](#) at a 30-year low. Congress is pursuing a sharp increase in low-skilled immigration ... when the [foreign-born share of the American population](#) is already headed for historical highs. The administration is drawing up major new carbon regulations ... when [actual existing global warming](#) has been well below projections for 15 years and counting.

What's more, on the issues that Americans actually prioritize — jobs, wages, the economy — it's likely that both immigration reform and whatever the White House decides to do on greenhouse gases will make the short-term picture somewhat worse. The Congressional Budget Office's [recent analysis](#) of the immigration bill errs on the side of optimism, but it still projects that the legislation would leave unemployment "slightly elevated" through 2020, and average wages modestly reduced. Given that similar estimates greeted the Waxman-Markey [cap-and-trade bill](#) in 2009, it's reasonable to assume that carbon regulations would slightly raise the unemployment rate as well.

These costs might be more acceptable in a world where Washington was also readying, say, payroll tax relief for working-class families, or measures to help the long-term uninsured. But since those ideas currently lack constituencies in the capital, we're left with the peculiar spectacle of a political class responding to a period of destructive long-term unemployment with an agenda that threatens to help extend that crisis toward 2020 and beyond.

This disconnect is the most serious threat to the current liberal ascendance. President Obama has a good chance to be remembered as "the liberal Reagan," but the Reagan recovery was far better for most Americans than this one has been, and right now the president's [mediocre job approval numbers](#) contrast sharply with the [highs of Reagan's second term](#).

In this sense, for all the (justifiable) talk about conservatism's dysfunction, Republicans have more freedom of movement today than Democrats did after their 1984 defeat. As Yuval Levin wrote in *The Weekly Standard* in April, there has been no "morning in America"-style vindication for this administration; instead, "both parties give the impression of having outlived their eras," and "the moment feels more like the late 1970s than the late 1980s." The country clearly prefers Obama to the available alternatives, but it might prefer another alternative still.

But so far, Republicans have mostly used liberalism's relative weakness as an excuse for not moving much at all, and sticking with an agenda that's even more disconnected from the anxieties of the average voter than the White House's second-term priorities.

Their assumption seems to be that eventually the public will simply have to turn to them. But their obligation should be to address both parties' most conspicuous failure, and actually meet the voters where they are.

Streetwise Professor **Cost-Benefit Confusion**

by Craig Pirrong

Obama gave a big speech on the environment, and specifically climate change and CO2. The left swooned. The right raged.

Me-meh.

Not that I like the content of the speech (if you can call what he said "content")-more on this in a bit. It's just that presidential speeches tend to be long on promises and calls to action, and very short on follow through. That's doubly or triply true of Obama speeches. Look at all his speeches on gun control, and how little that came from them. Like nothing. This is a little different, because he can actually direct the EPA to do some things, and nothing in the speech was dependent on legislative approval (which is revealing in itself). Moreover, even the EPA process will be long and drawn out, and its outcome uncertain. Obama was equivocal on Keystone XL, basically setting out a set of criteria that he will use to evaluate it. These criteria are so elastic that it is possible to use them to justify rejection or approval, and indeed, both sides said they were encouraged by Obama's remarks.

Righties should actually like the speech. The fact that Obama feels obliged to pander to his base should make them happy. Hedge fund billionaire Thomas Steyer had made Keystone a litmus test for continued proggy support for Obama. If he has to spend time, effort, and political capital to appease the Steyers of the world, righties should be pleased.

Insofar as the content, such as it is, goes, a couple of things jumped out.

The first is the condescending characterization of the state of the science on global warming. The snide references to the "Flat Earth Society" and the like. And silliness like this:

Here at home, 2012 was the warmest year in our history. Midwest farms were parched by the worst drought since the Dust Bowl, and then drenched by the wettest spring on record. Western

wildfires scorched an area larger than the state of Maryland. Just last week, a heat wave in Alaska shot temperatures into the 90s.

And we know that the costs of these events can be measured in lost lives and lost livelihoods, lost homes, lost businesses, hundreds of billions of dollars in emergency services and disaster relief. In fact, those who are already feeling the effects of climate change don't have time to deny it — they're busy dealing with it. Firefighters are braving longer wildfire seasons, and states and federal governments have to figure out how to budget for that. I had to sit on a meeting with the Department of Interior and Agriculture and some of the rest of my team just to figure out how we're going to pay for more and more expensive fire seasons.

Farmers see crops wilted one year, washed away the next; and the higher food prices get passed on to you, the American consumer.

Yeah. Like that's never happened before.

And the mention of higher food prices is a nice segue to the next problem: the confusion over costs and benefits.

I am convinced this is the fight America can, and will, lead in the 21st century. And I'm convinced this is a fight that America must lead. But it will require all of us to do our part. We'll need scientists to design new fuels, and we'll need farmers to grow new fuels. We'll need engineers to devise new technologies, and we'll need businesses to make and sell those technologies. We'll need workers to operate assembly lines that hum with high-tech, zero-carbon components, but we'll also need builders to hammer into place the foundations for a new clean energy era.

Obama touts these things as benefits of policies that encourage development of renewable fuels, when in fact they are the costs. Scientists could spend their time and brains working on producing other things that could be of even greater value. Farmers could grow crops to feed people, instead of growing them to feed an insanely inefficient renewable fuels industry that brings dubious environmental benefits (and may actually be environmentally destructive, all things considered). And which also brings higher food prices, which hit poor people both in the US and abroad with particular force: the Arab Spring owes not a little to discontent over rising food prices. If Obama is so concerned about higher food prices, as his one remarks suggests, he would take seriously the implications of his support of renewables for food prices. A serious man would make an argument that acknowledged the true costs of what he advocates. And a serious man would not tout costs as benefits. But we're talking Obama here.

In fairness to Obama, he is by no means alone in his inability to tell costs from benefits. It is a failing of politicians of all stripes and parties. It is this confused thinking that results in government programs producing waste rather than results. In the un-economical minds of politicians, spending, jobs, etc., are ends in themselves, and are counted as benefits, when they are in fact the costs of implementing the policy.

Insofar as the specifics of the policies Obama advocates are considered, a few quick words. Assuming that the EPA does implement restrictions on CO2 output, this will be a boon for natural gas consumption and production in the US, and a hit to coal. The main domestic impact will be that it would reduce LNG exports, and reduce the profitability of the firms in that

business. It will encourage export of coal, to both Europe and China, which will reduce the environmental benefits of the reduction of coal consumption in the US. Not one for one, but considerably. The impact on gas markets overseas will be mixed. Less US LNG exports will keep gas prices higher, but the substitution of cheap coal for expensive gas will mitigate that impact. Probably close to a push for European electricity consumers, and for sellers of gas in Europe (notably Gazprom).

Investor's Business Daily

Obama's climate-change blather only adds to global warming

by Andrew Malcolm

President Obama is running out of pivot points.

So many of his bright ideas have been busts. Or worse. Let's see, the \$1 trillion jobs stimulus package that was going to produce a gazillion jobs by today.

Now, Obama's jobs plan is a laugh line for late-night comics. Jay Leno: "Obama told Morehouse College graduates they have bright futures ahead. Unless they want jobs. Then, they're totally screwed."

That policy reset with Russia? Obama gave up the Eastern European missile defense shield as a naive sign of good faith. Got no thanks. And now he can't even convince the Russians to get the NSA leaker out of the transit lounge at Moscow's airport. "Passenger Edward Snowden, please check at the KGB counter if you have a minute."

ObamaCare? Collapsing under its own weight and fundraising scandal as Democrats run from any connection to it. When's the last time you heard even its namesake tout its value?

Virtually everything the guy touches this year turns to Shinola. He went to Ohio State, urged Americans to dismiss all this silly talk about evil government out to control lives. Days later, *oops*, here comes the infamous ongoing series of revelations about the Internal Revenue Service harassing Obama opponents, as other government agents coincidentally knock on doors.

But the nation's chief executive didn't know about it.

Then, the FBI goes after phone records of journalists, long a helpful part of Obama's base. The attorney general lies to a federal judge about one reporter's criminality, then lies to Congress about knowing about it. The chief executive knew not of that too.

Obama's State Department snuffs internal investigations of wrongdoing. The lethal Benghazi incident still festers. We still don't know where POTUS was, what he was doing as four Americans died with no rescue efforts. And, predictably, Obama's oft-repeated promises to hold those murderers accountable go unfulfilled, while he's not held accountable for that.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Obama launched an undeclared war against Libya to prevent civilian deaths and deliver democracy to a dictatorship. Libyans got lawlessness instead. Egypt? We got rid of a friendly ruler and got the Muslim Brotherhood instead as Sharia law looms.

Syria, scene of nearly 100,000 civilian deaths? The bad guy's still there, using poison gas on his own people as Obama tries to cure his international impotence with the shipment of diplomatic Viagra in the form of small-arms.

Promises of new domestic gun controls to somehow protect every American child? Dished off, like the jobs bill, to Joe Biden. So, they were doomed.

Remember Sequestration? The end of civilization as we know it. Obama killed White House tours to save \$70G's. But somehow he found a spare \$100 million for his family's summer trip around Africa this week. Because, hey, first things first.

The latest attempted pivot to redirect the topic of conversation is climate change. Forty years ago the big fear was global cooling. Now it's global warming. In Obama's parallel universe, the science is beyond doubt.

"The question now is whether we will have the courage to act before it's too late. And how we answer will have a profound impact on the world that we leave behind not just to you, but to your children and to your grandchildren. As a President, as a father and as an American, I'm here to say we need to act."

Don't worry, fellow Americans. The oblivious man who flies a four-engine, 747 jumbo jet four hours for a 30-minute photo op urging fuel conservation was not addressing the nation's nearly \$17 trillion national debt that ranks so much higher on average Americans' priority list.

No. Between ostentatious handkerchief wipes of his sweating face in the sun (Get it? Warming), Obama emitted 6,181 words on his so-called energy strategy. It's a pipe plan like his annual budgets that go nowhere in Congress and take a long time to do it.

But -- and here's the key -- it makes his enviro left-wing happy, gleeful even. One adviser admitted the strategy was a war on coal, which Obama blames for 40% of carbon emissions, although not for the electricity that runs his teleprompter.

No doubt in the interests of energy conservation, Obama has been recycling speech parts from last year's disappointing campaign when he earned millions fewer votes than the first time. Remember this one? "America produced more oil than we have in 15 years."

Obama skips the part about federal lands' production being down because of his regs and production only increasing on private and state lands where he can't screw it up. He also didn't have time to mention all the extra costs of his plan like, oh, say, soaring electricity rates for consumers.

The Democrat warns he doesn't "have much patience" for skeptics of his plan. Apparently, he only has patience for Iranian nuclear bomb-builders.

Obama also adds, "We don't have time for a meeting of the Flat Earth Society." Although he's the one talking as if his nation's costly new environmental regulations alone will improve the planet without affecting America's competitive standing against the economies of other less-regulated lands.

But jobs aren't really Obama's thing. Never have been. If Obama can pit more Americans against more Americans -- say, coal miners worried about disappearing jobs against indebted college students who can't find any -- that suits this Alinsky acolyte just fine.

The more social turbulence and distrust the better. The less faith Americans maintain in their once-revered institutions the better for someone who wants to transform them all into something else. And still has 1,304 long days to do the deed.

Slate

The Limits of Panic

Obsessing over doom-and-gloom scenarios distracts us from real global threats.

by Bjørn Lomborg



An oil and gas pumping station in Santa Cruz, east from Havana, Cuba.

We often hear how the world as we know it will end, usually through ecological collapse. Indeed, more than 40 years after the Club of Rome released the mother of all apocalyptic forecasts, [The Limits to Growth](#), its basic ideas are still with us. But time has not been kind.

The Limits to Growth warned humanity in 1972 that devastating collapse was just around the corner. But, while we have seen financial panics since then, there have been no real shortages or productive breakdowns. Instead, the resources generated by human ingenuity remain far ahead of human consumption.

But the report's fundamental legacy remains: We have inherited a tendency to obsess over misguided remedies for largely trivial problems, while often ignoring big problems and sensible remedies.

In the early 1970s, the flush of technological optimism was over, the Vietnam War was a disaster, societies were in turmoil, and economies were stagnating. Rachel Carson's 1962 book [*Silent Spring*](#) had raised fears about pollution and launched the modern environmental movement; [Paul Ehrlich's](#) 1968 title [*The Population Bomb*](#) said it all. The first Earth Day, in 1970, was deeply pessimistic.

The genius of *The Limits to Growth* was to fuse these worries with fears of running out of stuff. We were doomed, because too many people would consume too much. Even if our ingenuity bought us some time, we would end up killing the planet and ourselves with pollution. The only hope was to stop economic growth itself, cut consumption, recycle, and force people to have fewer children, stabilizing society at a significantly poorer level.

That message still resonates today, though it was spectacularly wrong. For example, the authors of *The Limits to Growth* predicted that before 2013, the world would have run out of aluminum, copper, gold, lead, mercury, molybdenum, natural gas, oil, silver, tin, tungsten, and zinc.

Instead, despite recent increases, commodity prices have generally fallen to about a third of their level 150 years ago. Technological innovations have replaced mercury in batteries, dental fillings, and thermometers: Mercury consumption is down 98 percent and, by 2000, the price was down 90 percent. More broadly, since 1946, supplies of copper, aluminum, iron, and zinc have outstripped consumption, owing to the discovery of additional reserves and new technologies to extract them economically.

Similarly, oil and natural gas were to run out in 1990 and 1992, respectively; today, reserves of both are larger than they were in 1970, although we consume dramatically more. Within the past six years, shale gas alone has doubled potential gas resources in the United States and halved the price.

As for economic collapse, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that global GDP per capita will increase 14-fold over this century and 24-fold in the developing world.

The Limits of Growth got it so wrong because its authors overlooked the greatest resource of all: our own resourcefulness. Population growth has been slowing since the late 1960s. Food supply has not collapsed (1.5 billion hectares of arable land are being used, but another 2.7 billion hectares are in reserve). Malnourishment has dropped by more than half, from 35 percent of the world's population to under 16 percent.

Nor are we choking on pollution. Whereas the Club of Rome imagined an idyllic past with no particulate air pollution and happy farmers, and a future strangled by belching smokestacks, reality is entirely the reverse.

In 1900, when the global human population was 1.5 billion, almost 3 million people – roughly one in 500—died each year from air pollution, mostly from wretched indoor air. Today, the risk

has receded to one death per 2,000 people. While pollution still kills more people than malaria does, the mortality rate is falling, not rising.

Nonetheless, the mindset nurtured by *The Limits to Growth* continues to shape popular and elite thinking.

Consider recycling, which is often just a feel-good gesture with little environmental benefit and significant cost. Paper, for example, typically comes from sustainable forests, not rainforests. The processing and government subsidies associated with recycling yield lower-quality paper to save a resource that is not threatened.

Likewise, fears of overpopulation framed self-destructive policies, such as China's one-child policy and forced sterilization in India. And, while pesticides and other pollutants were seen to kill off perhaps half of humanity, well-regulated pesticides cause about 20 deaths each year in the U.S., whereas they have significant upsides in creating cheaper and more plentiful food.

Indeed, reliance solely on organic farming—a movement inspired by the pesticide fear—would cost more than \$100 billion annually in the U.S. At 16 percent lower efficiency, current output would require another 65 million acres of farmland—an area more than half the size of California. Higher prices would reduce consumption of fruits and vegetables, causing myriad adverse health effects (including tens of thousands of additional cancer deaths per year).

Obsession with doom-and-gloom scenarios distracts us from the real global threats. Poverty is one of the greatest killers of all, while easily curable diseases still claim 15 million lives every year—25 percent of all deaths.

The solution is economic growth. When lifted out of poverty, most people can afford to avoid infectious diseases. China has pulled more than 680 million people out of poverty in the last three decades, leading a worldwide poverty decline of almost 1 billion people. This has created massive improvements in health, longevity, and quality of life.

The four decades since *The Limits of Growth* have shown that we need more of it, not less. An expansion of trade, with estimated benefits exceeding \$100 trillion annually toward the end of the century, would do thousands of times more good than timid feel-good policies that result from fear-mongering. But that requires abandoning an anti-growth mentality and using our enormous potential to create a brighter future.

Contentions

[Do Democrats Really Want a War on Coal?](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

President Obama may think his speech today outlining an unprecedented package of measures aimed at stopping global warming will burnish his legacy. The set of executive orders announced today was exactly what his liberal base has been yearning for throughout his presidency, and the ideological tone of his speech must be highly satisfying for a president who enjoys dictating to what he considers his intellectual inferiors and despises working with a

Congress that rejected these measures. But while liberals are cheering Obama's far-reaching fiat, a lot of Democrats, especially in coal-producing states, must be far from happy.

The president's orders that will impose new carbon emission levels on existing power plants will raise the price of energy for everyone and harm an already fragile economy that has struggled to maintain an anemic recovery. By itself that may prove to be a political liability for Democrats running in next year's midterm elections even if by now most Americans have had their natural skepticism about global warming alarmism pounded out of them by an ideological media. But an all-too-candid Obama advisor may have made a crucial gaffe that could kill the president's party in coal-producing states next year. As the *New York Times* [reported in their piece](#) on the president's speech:

[Daniel P. Schrag](#), a geochemist who is the head of Harvard University's Center for the Environment and a member of a presidential science panel that has helped advise the White House on climate change, said he hoped the presidential speech would mark a turning point in the national debate on climate change.

"Everybody is waiting for action," he said. "The one thing the president really needs to do now is to begin the process of shutting down the conventional coal plants. Politically, the White House is hesitant to say they're having a war on coal. On the other hand, a war on coal is exactly what's needed."

To which Democrats running in places like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia and more than a dozen other [coal-producing states](#) may say, "Thanks for nothing."

Even if one accepts the constant lecturing from the White House and much of the media that claims there is no debate about their dire predictions of warming—a point that was undermined by [a New York Times story](#) published earlier this month which spoke of rising temperatures having actually slowed over the last 15 years rather than going through the roof, as we keep being told—the impact of Obama's plans on the economy could be severe. While the ideological left is more worried about their doomsday predictions for the planet than the job-killing aspects of the president's proposals, most Americans have their eyes firmly fixed on their wallets in an economy that remains in the doldrums despite the optimism created by housing prices and a booming stock market (until the last week).

Coal is still responsible for 37 percent of America's energy production and with new technologies for mining it is no longer the ecological nightmare that it was routinely depicted as being for decades. That means that the president's new regulations will have a drastic impact on energy prices and reduce the income of a vast cross-section of Americans.

By signaling to the country that, despite official denials by the White House, what the administration is contemplating is a "war on coal," the president is more or less consigning Democrats in coal-producing states to a grim fate. The president's cheerleaders [are quick to remind us](#) that elections have consequences and that since Obama campaigned on these issues, we should not be surprised that he would attempt to govern as he campaigned. They're right about that. But now that the "war on coal" tag can be directly traced to an architect of the president's plan rather than being attributed to GOP propaganda, it may be that there will be elections in the future with consequences that Democrats don't care for as much as the one in 2012.

Liberals have been delighted with the idea that the president would use his executive powers to enact measures that have already been turned down by Congress. Though cap and trade bills were defeated by huge margins, Obama is now putting them into effect for all intents and purposes by a vote of 1-0. Yet it is exactly the freedom to act with impunity by a reelected president that should scare many Democrats. Were these issues put to congressional debate and votes, Democrats in coal states could count on using the legislative process to derail any war on coal.

But with Obama acting alone all they can do is stand by and watch in horror. The war on coal may cost American consumers dearly. But it may cost some Democrats their seats in the House and the Senate.



CLIMATE CHANGE THE SUBJECT

OBAMA'S WAR ON FOSSIL FUELS



UNION COAL MINERS:
OBAMA JUST DECLARED WAR ON YOU



YOU HAVE VOTED
YOURSELVES OUT OF A JOB

Obama's economic touch.



©TerrellAfterMath.com

