

The Global Partnership for Oceans

Imposing “Limits to Growth” around the world

By Neil Maghami

Summary: Americans are all too familiar with fear-mongering campaigns organized by “green” nonprofits and their big foundation backers. Now some major environmentalist organizations appear to be shifting their efforts from stirring anxieties about the global atmosphere to new campaigns involving the world’s oceans. The focus of this new push is the “Global Partnership for Oceans,” which is yet another effort to squash private development of the world’s resources in favor of creating international bureaucracies that can stifle development around the world.

This past year marked the 40th anniversary of the release of the book *Limits to Growth* by the doomsaying body known as the Club of Rome. With 30 million copies distributed, the book has influenced policymakers around the world. Its premises are long discredited—yet it may soon be the basis for worldwide policy regarding earth’s oceans.

The Club is a think tank founded by academics, politicians, bureaucrats, and business people who came together in Rome in 1968. The founders represented a point of view then fashionable among the world’s elites: that earth’s resources were being rapidly used up.

The Club’s masterwork, *Limits to Growth*, argued that economic growth would be limited by the eventual depletion of natural resources. The Club’s logic was easy to follow: World population would increase, which



The Global Partnership for Oceans is part of an effort by international organizations to seize control of the riches of the world’s seas.

would raise demands on resources until eventually outright shortages would occur. The Club overlooked the pattern that has held throughout human history; namely, that exploration for new resources would increase as old sources were exhausted, which would mitigate any shortages.

Limits to Growth’s predictions were neither original nor borne out by events, yet it has had great influence. As Capital Resource Center author Bonner Cohen wrote in his 2006 book, *The Green Wave*, the concept of “limits to growth” went from being “a fashionable slogan” in 1972 to “the idea [that] has guided leading environmentalist advocacy groups to

this day.” (See “‘Sustainability’: The Slippery Watchword of the World-watch Institute” in the April 2012 *Green Watch*.)

Oceans and the New World Order

Until her death in 2002, Club member Elisabeth Mann Borgese devoted her

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career as an expert on maritime law to promoting the idea that the world's "oceans are our great laboratory for the making of a new world order" where the environment and economics could be closely integrated. (Hint: She wasn't thinking of enhancing the global role of private enterprise.) Mann Borgese spent many years fostering support for an international agreement known as the Law of the Sea Treaty (LOST). She once summarized her work on LOST as part of an effort, in connection with oceans and control of the oceans, to ensure "the replacement of a self-destructive system of *laissez faire* with a system of rational management."

More than 160 countries have signed on to LOST. Since 1982, however, the United States has refused to sign it, citing concerns about LOST's potential negative impact on U.S. energy interests, including the way that LOST would create a U.N.-supported redistributive global tax on undersea mineral development.

Treaty proponents have pushed for ratification repeatedly over the years and thought they might succeed in 2012, perhaps in the lame-duck session in which defeated Senators could still vote. Last July, then-Sen. Jim DeMint

(R-S.C.) predicted correctly that the treaty would fail again, despite heavy pro-LOST campaigning by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the World Wildlife Fund, the Center for International Environmental Law, Ted Turner's Better World Campaign, the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, and Defenders of Wildlife.

A July 16, 2012 op-ed by former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld observed that "President Reagan was convinced that the Law of the Sea Treaty's sweeping power grab would erode American sovereignty by ceding our constitutional right to self governance to an unelected and unaccountable international body." Rumsfeld should know. He carried out a study of the treaty for President Reagan.

LOST was up for consideration in the U.S. Senate this past summer, but was blocked when 34 Senators announced their intention to vote against it. Since a treaty requires a two-thirds vote in the 100-member Senate, 34 votes is sufficient to prevent ratification of any treaty.

Now the greens' desire to assert more control over the oceans has found a new vehicle—the Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO). It's time Americans learned more about GPO, its backers, its agenda, and the way it could harm U.S. interests.

Global Partnership for Oceans

On its website, the group defines itself as a "growing alliance of more than 100 governments, international organizations, civil society groups, and private sector interests committed to addressing the threats to the health, productivity and resilience of the world's oceans.

"It aims to tackle widely documented problems of overfishing, pollution, and habitat loss. Together these problems are contributing to the depletion of a

natural resource bank that provides nutrition, livelihoods and vital ecosystem services."

GPO's formal launch was announced in February 2012, during a speech delivered by Robert Zoellick, the Goldman Sachs alumnus appointed by George W. Bush to lead the World Bank (and whose term as Bank chief ended in June 2012). The speech contained high-minded rhetoric about using the economic potential of the oceans to alleviate global poverty. Yet in the same speech Zoellick expressed support for various green-promoted policies that would severely damage the U.S. economic recovery.

Back to Zoellick's speech and its contradictions in a moment. First some more history of the GPO.

According to "Toward a Green, Clean, and Resilient World for All," the World Bank's environmental strategy paper for the period 2012-2022, preparations for the GPO started in 2011, when the Bank "invited a wide range of partners to discuss the potential need and scope for a global partnership to support more sustainable use of the oceans and whether the Bank should play a role. The meeting sent a clear signal that the challenges and opportunities facing the oceans were beyond the scope of any one group or organization to address, and the Bank had a clear role to play based on its convening power around global public goods and its ability to leverage public investment across its portfolio."

Who is backing GPO? On the foundation side, according to GPO's website:

the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, and MacArthur Foundation. On the public charity side: Aquaculture Stewardship Council, National Geographic Society, Blue Ventures, Clinton Climate Initia-

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tive, Natural Resources Defense Council, Ocean Recovery Alliance, Conservation International, Counterpart International, Oceana Conservation International, Plastic Pollution Coalition, Environmental Defense Fund, Rare, Inc., Sailors for the Sea Global Development Research Center, Stakeholder Forum, Global Ocean Forum, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Global Oceans, The Nature Conservancy, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Wildlife Conservation Society, Marine Stewardship Council, World Wide Fund for Nature, and Marine Watch International.

In addition, a group of international organizations has also lined up behind GPO, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Environment Facility, Global Ocean Forum, the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization's (UNESCO) Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

All these groups have pledged support for GPO's central declaration of policy, which includes a direct reference to the Law of the Sea:

"Building upon and better coordinating existing efforts and programs, including in support of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, our Global Partnership will convene stakeholders to mobilize significant human, financial and institutional resources for effective public and private investments in priority ocean areas."

We've seen the greens convene other grand alliances to advance their agenda. Recall, for example, the United States Climate Action Partnership (USCAP), which brought together environmentalist groups and rent-seeking private businesses. (See "United States Climate Action Partnership" in the June 2008 issue of our sister publication *Organization Trends*.) What makes GPO different is how it attempts to augment the greens' activist and organizational strengths by aligning these with the World Bank, an international organization, part of the United Nations system, headquartered in Washington, D.C. The World Bank has a staff of 9,000, stationed in 100 offices around the world, and manages more than \$100 billion. The Bank's network of offices and its publication of seemingly authoritative research papers provide the GPO with considerable influence over policymakers, government agencies, and the media.

Myron Ebell, director of the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, pointed out some differences between LOST and GPO. "GPO is a kind of voluntary effort, while LOST is a treaty, which when signed becomes U.S. law. That means LOST can be used for litigation. Activist groups can point to LOST, argue that the current administration is not upholding the letter of the law, and attempt to impose some policy change through a lawsuit. The GPO, on the other hand, as a partnership, lacks the same teeth as a treaty—but does provide activists with one more platform" for their views.

Ebell added, "We're all for voluntary associations, of course. But keep in mind that GPO will be used as a platform to lobby for more, and pressure governments to make concessions. This partnership will, over time, in-

clude every statist organization in the world—all the foundations, all the groups that have the worst possible ideas for solving the problem of the 'tragedy of the commons.' The way to solve the tragedy of the commons is to establish property rights. The people involved with GPO are the people who think that the international establishment knows best, and that it can manage common resources in a way that private ownership cannot. We've seen how this works out, whether it is the Soviet Union or elsewhere.

"My expectation will be that this organization will contribute to the ocean's problems, rather than solve them. The way to solve problems is to give people the incentives that ownership provides. As problems worsen, the GPO will demand more and more resources—the same kind of perverse incentives you see domestically will come into play. As problems worsen, government agencies demand more resources and more staff. The same will happen with the GPO. It looks designed to fail in advance," Ebell concluded.

While the GPO's website makes some references to promoting "property rights" for fishermen, it is poised to obliterate potential property rights to undersea mineral and energy deposits.

Destination: energy scarcity?

Will the GPO fulfill one of the green movement's most dearly held wishes by making further development of U.S. off-shore energy resources next to impossible? This complements other existing green campaigns aimed at various sources of plentiful energy that are vital to the U.S. economy. (See "Big Green's War on Nuclear Energy," *Green Watch* June 2011, and "American Greens vs. Canadian Oil Producers," *Green Watch* March 2011.) And it isn't so far-fetched.

In his speech a year ago introducing the GPO, Robert Zoellick listed several goals for the new organization:

► “We should more than double the area covered by marine protected areas. Currently, less than 2 percent of the ocean’s surface is protected—compared to around 12 percent of land. Let’s increase that to 5 percent.”

► “We will need to work with governments and stakeholders to identify and establish sound marine protected areas where they can contribute direct economic benefits. The scale will depend on the context: for example, in some areas, we might work with communities to introduce small-scale protected areas on local coral reef systems, while in others we may work with national governments to identify and protect large areas as part of a wider strategy for the country’s ocean ecosystems.”

Promoting further marine protected areas effectively forbids the kind of exploratory drilling and other work necessary to find additional mineral and energy resources. Under the GPO regime, such resources would potentially be placed beyond the reach of any private interest seeking to develop them, and out of the hands even of any government that, out of national interest, wanted to stimulate resource development.

Zoellick did not explain how the GPO would impose this “protected area” designation. Once imposed, the designation would be difficult to overcome, so onerous that no private-sector company would attempt it. Protected areas would be a neat way to impose “limits to growth.” In fact, Zoellick’s words recall Elisabeth Mann Borgese’s desire to replace “*laissez faire*” with “management.”

Carbon trading with a blue tinge

The Capital Research Center has previously documented the links between

certain large financial institutions, environmentalists, and politically connected entrepreneurs (aka, “crony capitalists”) that attempt to profit from “carbon trading.” (See “Al Gore’s Carbon Crusade: The Money and Connections Behind It,” *Foundation Watch* August 2007.) As CRC research has revealed, this network includes the World Resources Institute, the Shell Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, the Pew Center for Climate Change, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Ford Foundation.

“Carbon trading” works this way: A government imposes a limit on the total allowable emission of carbon dioxide by all private companies. Companies are then provided with “carbon credits” that permit them to produce a particular quantity of carbon dioxide. If a company produces less carbon than is covered by its credits, it can sell its remaining credits to another firm that has exceeded its emissions limit. Greens see this scheme as an effective way to limit emissions of gases into the atmosphere and have promoted it as a global response to global warming/climate change. Critics have decried it as a kind of pyramid scheme built on the buying and selling of dubious financial instruments.

GPO appears poised to breathe new life into the carbon trading enterprise. “A Blueprint for Ocean and Coastal Sustainability,” a recent report published under U.N. auspices, endorses the idea of creating new carbon trading opportunities based on the world’s oceans. In U.N.-speak, carbon derived from forests is called “green carbon,” while that derived from the ocean is “blue carbon.”

Since 2006, the World Bank has been active in laying the intellectual and institutional foundations for a global carbon trading market. So it seems

almost inevitable that the GPO will become another avenue for the Bank to use to advance this idea. Christopher Sands, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, offered this perspective on how GPO may help create new institutional frameworks to advance policies like carbon trading:

“GPO’s proponents are trying to build a coalition in support of [certain] policy changes, and they are masking some of the changes they may have in mind. There’s all the usual stuff about cleaning up pollution, protecting resources, etc. But GPO also wants to monetize the oceans, and create what they hope will be a defensible methodology for valuing the oceans. The goal here could be to say that when a government preserves a part of the ocean, it can claim to have created a gain for their national economy.

“I find this dubious,” said Sands. “Such methods boil down, usually, to trying to claim that restrictive approaches to development are creating new value, rather than frustrating productive economic activity. Consider the long-running fights over wetlands in this respect. Governments get to claim that they are creating ‘new value’ by blocking off areas for development, except no one can see the value. It doesn’t appear in GDP calculations, for example.

“Over time, I think you may see GPO converge with some of the more problematic aspects of the Law of the Sea Treaty. Once you have firmed up an arrangement under which you can claim to value the ocean, you’ve paved the way for governments to attempt to seek rents by trying to extract value that they wouldn’t be able to seize otherwise. At a time when, around the world, taxpayers do not want to pay more, that would be an attractive proposition to some governments. Over time, GPO could become the ba-

sis for its backers to call for measures to redistribute wealth.

“GPO’s effort to put a value on the oceans reminds me in some ways of President Obama’s recent statement about how ‘If you got a business, you didn’t build that. Somebody else made that happen.’ GPO is inspired by the same kind of accounting. Someone else, so to speak, built the oceans, and people who benefit from them owe a transfer to everyone else,” Sands concluded.

Another way to outsource policy to greens?

In Robert Zoellick’s speech announcing the GPO, he promised that, “as part of the partnership, a new knowledge platform on oceans will be explored. The abundance of scientific and economic information on the oceans is critical for crafting solutions. With partners, particularly the [U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization], the [World Bank Group] will explore how data and knowledge platforms can be enhanced to serve real-time information needs and foster greater exchange of knowledge and South-South collaboration.”

Again, the possibilities for green mischief are not hard to see. The green movement has long tried to create supposedly objective policy organizations to whom elected officials can outsource research and consultation work. This has resulted in the creation of what could be called policy conveyor belts that feed the greens’ ever-more radical proposals directly to political decision makers. (See “The Center for Climate Strategies: How Governors Keep State Legislators Out of the Loop” in *Organization Trends*, April 2008.)

Green-controlled policy-shaping bodies follow a familiar pattern. As outlined by Christopher Horner of the Competitive Enterprise Institute,

these groups are often used to bypass elected legislators’ traditional role in formulating policy. “Only later are legislators brought in to ratify policies crafted by a rigged cookie-cutter process. When it’s done right, this process leaves lawmakers the sole option of rubber-stamping the policy prescriptions. A legislator who fails to do that risks incurring the wrath of the environmental movement.”

The degree to which green groups will be able to shape oceans policy in a global way through the World Bank is not yet certain, but Zoellick’s public embrace of such groups as Conservation International, the Nature Conservancy, and the World Wildlife Fund makes clear just which “partners” that Bank officials have in mind. This creates likely scenarios in which “partners” lash out at governments or individual elected leaders who hesitate to follow GPO-approved policy ideas—ideas that emerge from collaboration between some of the 9,000 or so World Bank employees and the green groups lined up behind GPO.

Conclusion

The Global Partnership for Oceans links up a network of foundations and activist groups with the powerful and influential World Bank. It is hard to imagine a better way to create new opportunities for greens to meddle in worldwide policy making, especially to limit development of the world’s offshore energy riches. As Christopher Horner puts it, “Schemes like [the GPO] to collectivize resources were more direct when socialism was on the ascendancy. Then they would try and come right through the front door. Think of the Law of the Sea Treaty, which has languished without its principal target for the punitive measures—the United States—on board. That delay is despite a leading LOST proponent, Professor Bernard

Oxman, counseling fellow supporters to ‘exercise restraint and wisdom in at least the immediate future lest they complicate the ratification process in one or more states.’ Prof. Oxman offered specific political and legal ways to avoid upsetting certain horses until [they are] fully harnessed.”

Horner added that just as the Kyoto treaty became “sustainability” and LOST became GPO, “various Plan Bs appear, as they fiddle with the powder room window, basement door or any other way in to get where they still want to go: collective resource management and wealth transfers on a global scale, managed by our ever-transparent, accountable and incorruptible friends at the U.N. and its satellite organizations.”

What could possibly go wrong?

Neil Maghami is a free-lance writer and frequent contributor to CRC publications.

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Terrence Scanlon
President**

GreenNotes

The **Sierra Club**, formerly seen as a mainstream environmental group, is showing more radical colors as controversy over the **Keystone XL** pipeline escalates. At a protest outside the **White House** February 13, various left-wing celebrities were arrested, including **Robert Kennedy Jr.**, actress **Daryl Hannah**, former **NAACP** president **Julian Bond**, and, with the approval of his board, Sierra Club executive director **Michael Brune**, making him the first leader in the group's 120-year history to be arrested at a protest.

Interviewed on the radical radio program "**Democracy Now!**" Brune insisted, "If we want to keep our temperature increases below three and a half degrees Fahrenheit, at least two-thirds of the oil, and coal, and gas that we know about all around the world has to stay in the ground." Again: According to the head of the nation's oldest environmentalist organization, *two-thirds of all the oil, coal, and gas in the world must stay in the ground!* Even that draconian limitation, Brune added, would be "reckless"—that is, not strict enough.

Keystone supporters respond that, if that pipeline is not built, **Canadian** oil will instead be piped to that nation's west coast and shipped to **China**, which has few if any environmental standards.

Brune, along with officials from **Greenpeace**, the **Communication Workers of America**, and the **NAACP**, is at the forefront of a new coalition called the **Democracy Initiative**, which aims to annihilate the free-market movement by eliminating the **Senate** filibuster and ID checks for voting, and eviscerating the **First Amendment**. Organizers had their first meeting in December at the **D.C.** headquarters of the **National Education Association**, the largest teacher's union.

The President's "green energy" program has met with one failure after another—**Solyndra** (\$535 million from taxpayers), **Abound Solar** (\$374 million), **UniSolar** (\$100 million), **Ener1** (\$118.5 million), and so on. Don't be too quick to oppose such expenditures, though; you may be a criminal, or worse. **Van Jones**, the original "green jobs czar" in the Obama administration, declared on **Bill Maher's HBO** program that questioning the money for Solyndra is "almost criminal," adding, "**Republicans** tried to make the word 'Solyndra' this kind of horrible word. . . . [That's a] war on American technology. . . . This is quasi-treasonous." The audience cheered.

Why did that asteroid come so close to earth in February? Could it could be—global warming? **CNN** anchor **Deborah Feyerick** was interviewing **Bill "The Science Guy" Nye** about a snowstorm that was supposedly caused by warming. Then she said, "Talk about something else that's falling from the sky, and that is an asteroid. What's coming our way? Is this an effect of, perhaps, of global warming, or is this just some meteoric occasion?"

Why has the murder rate skyrocketed in the President's hometown? Could it could be—global warming? **Christie Hefner** was CEO of **Playboy** but left that position because, she said, she was inspired to go into charitable work by the election of President Obama. She is now on the board of the left-wing **Center for American Progress Action Fund**. On **MSNBC**, Hefner noted 2012's record number of gun murders in **Chicago**, "and this year we are already outpacing last year's numbers. Now, there are contributing factors that are not under anybody's control and may seem odd, but it is factually true. One of them is actually the weather. There is a dramatic increase in gun violence when it is warmer. And we are having this climate change effect that is driving that."

Critics of the U.S. government's treatment of carbon dioxide as a pollutant point out that, if CO₂ were a pollutant due to its role as a "greenhouse gas," then the #1 greenhouse gas—water—would likewise be a pollutant. And declaring water to be a pollutant would be ridiculous, right? Yes, but that didn't stop the **EPA** from trying—not on global warming grounds, but on the grounds that water, such as storm water that feeds into a creek, stirs up sediment, and sediment can pollute a creek, so the water that stirs up the sediment is a pollutant under the **Clean Water Act**, which protects water. A local government in **Virginia** would have been forced to spend \$200 million replacing homes and businesses with grass and storm ponds, but Virginia attorney general **Ken Cuccinelli** sued the EPA and won in **U.S. district court**.