

“Energy Independence”:

A Formula For Attacking Energy Production

by James Dellinger

Summary: Environmentalist groups want the new Congress to reject common sense policies encouraging more domestic energy production to wean America off foreign energy. Instead, green groups want to discourage energy production and consumption of the most readily available sources: coal, oil and natural gas, because they generate carbon dioxide (CO₂), and nuclear, which produces no CO₂. For green groups, “energy independence” seems to mean not depending on energy! Will the new Congress yield to their pressures?

Green groups say they want public policies that will make the U.S. less dependent on foreign energy sources, but they oppose efforts to produce energy using the natural resources in the U.S. that are most readily available. What’s wrong with this picture?

At every turn, radical environmental organizations block the creation of a domestic energy infrastructure for the large-scale energy-generating technologies (e.g. nuclear power, coal, oil and natural gas) that have been proven cost-effective, efficient, and reliable. Instead, they champion technologies that are not economically feasible without massive government subsidies (e.g. solar power, wind power). These groups pretend to support energy independence even as they undermine energy development at home.

Environmental Defense (ED), the network of Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Apollo Alliance, Greenpeace, Earth Island Institute, Defenders of Wildlife,



Rainforest Action Network is one of several environmentalist groups that espouses “energy independence” while simultaneously opposing all new energy development that actually decreases America’s dependence on foreign energy.

the CERES investors’ network, Rainforest Action Network (RAN), and the Sierra Club are masters of obstruction. Well-connected and well-funded, their power in Washington rests on a base of donors whose utopian vision of America’s future energy needs is radically at odds with the requirements of the American public.

Add to this the issue of climate change. For the environmental movement, “global warming” is yet another monkey wrench to throw at domestic energy development projects. If the U.S. is to reduce its imports of foreign oil and its dependence on the Mideast, Venezuela and other troubled parts of the world, then policymakers must support the expansion of U.S. coal and nuclear facilities and the development of America’s own oil and natural gas reserves.

America needs hydrocarbon-based fuel. Neither greed nor lust nor addiction explains why America runs on coal, oil and natural gas. The Energy Information Administration’s newly released Annual Energy Outlook 2007 states:

“Despite the projected rapid growth of biofuels and other non-hydroelectric renew-

January 2007

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able energies and the expectation of the first new orders for nuclear power plants in over 25 years, oil, coal, and natural gas are nonetheless projected to provide roughly the same 86% share of the total U.S. primary energy supply in 2030 as they did in 2005..."

What Price "Energy Independence"?

Since the Arab oil embargo of the 1970s American pundits and politicians have tirelessly urged the nation to end its dependence on foreign energy sources. The calls for "energy independence" have only grown louder and more frequent since the terrorist attacks of 2001, and they were endorsed by President George W. Bush who flatly stated in his 2006 State of the Union address: "America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world."

Regrettably, environmental groups believe this goal requires job-killing government regulations that will inflict long-term damage on the U.S. economy and reliance on costly and unproven new technologies. Their pie-in-the-sky ideas are expensive and, if implemented, would do little to augment U.S. energy supplies. Yet the mainstream media uncritically echo the views of environmental groups that claim America's energy problems can be solved by installing millions of solar rooftop panels and micro windmills and

Editor: Matthew Vadum

Publisher: Terrence Scanlon

Organization Trends

is published by Capital Research Center, a non-partisan education and research organization, classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity.

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Organization Trends welcomes letters to the editor.

Reprints are available for \$2.50 prepaid to Capital Research Center.

planting fields of switch grass. Quick to challenge the motives of industry groups, the media seldom question the green groups that lobby for higher energy taxes, want limits on industrial and household carbon emissions, and demand the removal of energy-producing dams said to threaten endangered species.

Labor unions might be expected to reject this approach, but they too have bought into the environmentalist view of "energy independence." The AFL-CIO is eager to cement a political coalition against the Bush administration, and unions like the United Steelworkers see prospects for job-creation and union-organizing in many green policy proposals. (See the October 2006 *Labor Watch*, "The New Labor-Environmental Coalition: Blue and Green and Red All Over," by Ryan Ellis, on the strategic alliance between the Sierra Club and steelworkers.)

In the post 9-11 world, almost every group claims to be an advocate for "energy independence," but that's because each defines the concept to its own benefit.

The Apollo Alliance for Good Jobs and Clean Energy is an offshoot of the left-wing group Campaign for America's Future. Its advisory board is peppered with left-liberal and labor-backed officeholders and advocates, among them unsuccessful California gubernatorial candidate Phil Angelides, NAACP chairman Julian Bond, Steel Workers president Leo Gerard and the Sierra Club's executive director, Carl Pope. The Alliance slogan: "Three million new jobs. No dependence on foreign oil."

But industrial labor unions, neo-conservative hawks and farm state Republicans have figured out a way to work together to promote "energy independence," which they argue will save the environment, create jobs, protect national security and support agriculture.

In March 2005 the Apollo Alliance announced that it would conduct "joint efforts" with the conservative-leaning Set America Free Coalition. The Coalition's members include Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy, Mideast expert Dr. Daniel Pipes, former CIA director James Woolsey, Representative Jack Kingston (R-GA), Cliff May of

the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, and former Republican presidential candidate Gary Bauer. However, the Coalition also includes former Senators Tom Daschle (D-SD) and Lincoln Chafee (R-RI), and Chafee's successor, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). The tag-line for Set America Free is "Cut dependence on foreign oil. Secure America."

Set America Free urges Americans not to settle for easy answers. When politicians blame Big Oil, voters should tell them that it's foreign governments that control most oil reserves. And when politicians mouth support for alternative fuels to generate electricity, Set America Free urges voters to "remind them that unlike in the 1970s, today only 2% of U.S. electricity is generated from oil, and that most of our oil is consumed in the transportation sector - a good reason to encourage plug-in hybrid electric vehicles."

Then there's the Energy Security Leadership Council, a group of retired military officers and corporate chiefs. It issued a statement in December calling for significantly tougher CAFE fuel efficiency standards, with the goal of making America less dependent on foreign oil. The group is co-chaired by former General P.X. Kelley, who was the top-ranked officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, and Frederick W. Smith, chief executive officer of FedEx Corp.

Lawmakers have responded to such calls. In the 109th Congress Representative Kingston introduced H.R. 4409, the proposed "Vehicle and Fuel Choices for American Security Act," a bill combining regulations and tax incentives to encourage automakers, farmers and consumers to reduce oil consumption by 20% in 20 years. In the House, 22 of its 26 original co-sponsors were Republicans. Kingston, whose home state is a major producer of peanuts, also supports using peanuts to produce biodiesel fuel.

A companion measure, S. 2025, was introduced in the Senate by Indiana Democrat Evan Bayh. Five of its ten Senate co-sponsors were Republicans, including Alabama's Jeff Sessions, Sam Brownback of Kansas, and Minnesota's Norm Coleman. Said Deron Lovaas of the NRDC, "This bill specifies the ends but leaves flexible the means." He regretted that the bill did not mandate the

tightening of CAFE fuel efficiency standards, but added the chilling observation: “Still, it’s a very ambitious mandate, somewhat like the Clean Air Act in its breadth and the flexibility of its interpretation.”

But keeping foreign energy out of America is easier said than done. Despite efforts by OPEC member states to set high energy prices, as tradable commodities hydrocarbons (i.e. oil, natural gas, coal) and other energy resources instantly respond to changes in supply and demand in world markets. Advocacy groups that support real “energy independence” will favor public policies that allow competition between energy sources, domestic and international. They will let the most efficiently priced sources generate buyers and sellers.

By contrast, the Apollo Alliance, the primary umbrella group for progressives in this fight, parrots a Malthusian line:

“Now America has an Apollo project for the 21st century. Today the stakes are much, much higher. We face an economy hemorrhaging its highest paying and most productive jobs, cities falling apart with over a trillion dollars in unmet public investment in crumbling schools, transportation, and infrastructure. The middle class is increasingly insecure as career ladders are broken and not replaced in new service sector jobs. And on a global scale we face never before seen environmental disruption, rising social inequity, and the emergence of fundamentalist anger that threatens our very security.”

The Green Agenda:

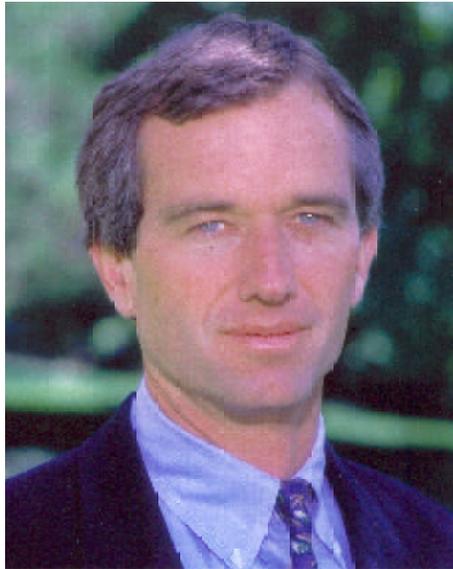
No Global Warming, No Nuclear Power

Business groups will have their hands full dealing with an onslaught of new energy legislation from the Democratic Congress. They are weighing the odds of their adversaries’ success and will cut deals to accommodate green demands. Even Bush Republicans are reassessing their positions on the environment.

Global warming is one issue high on the Democrats’ agenda. Truman Semans, director of markets and business strategy at the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, told the Washington Post that, “at least half a dozen of the companies that belong to the center’s Business Environmental Leadership

Council have recently hired staff members focused on global warming.”

Bush administration insiders seem ready to do something on global warming as well. GOP pollster Whit Ayres will conduct polling and grassroots operations work for Environmental Defense, which also has hired former Bush communications aide Tucker Eskew. Eskew embraced the green agenda a week after the election, according to news reports. “The president has indicated that a



**Environmentalist crusader
Robert F. Kennedy Jr.**

market-based cap [on carbon emissions] is on his list of options. And it’s pretty high on the list; it’s in second place,” he said.

Not surprisingly, former EPA director Christine Todd Whitman is urging the president to turn himself inside-out:

“Bush must compromise and the Democrats must meet him halfway. He has an opportunity in the next two years, but voluntary programs are not enough. There should be a mandatory cap on emissions. The White House has indicated they are willing to talk. The State of the Union address is the way to state these views. The climate of politics has to change. The president has an opportunity to work with the new Democratic leaders in Congress,” said Whitman, the former New Jersey governor.

California’s Barbara Boxer, who is slated to replace Oklahoma’s James Inhofe as the new chairman of the Senate Environment and

Public Works Committee, has announced hearings on global warming and climate change legislation. She expects her bill will look much like the law signed by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in September. It is supposed to cut carbon emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020, a 25% reduction.

Some green groups downplay expectations for the incoming Congress. Vicki Arroyo, director of policy analysis at the Pew Center, is cautious. The “incoming two-year Congress is relatively moderate,” said Arroyo, and it is “likelier to go for a gradualist approach, implementing climate-friendly laws that nibble at President George W. Bush’s voluntary approach on carbon emissions rather than bulldoze it away completely.” Such a tack “may not be as sweeping as, for example, the EU [carbon] trading system...but it could lay the groundwork for a trading system, for example, by requiring mandatory reporting of greenhouse gas emissions.”

Similarly, the Sierra Club’s Pope warns, “Over the next two years I don’t think environmental policy is going to change radically.” But he added, “I think the environmental agenda and conversation will change radically.”

Nuclear power is another priority issue for many environmental groups, and politicians are targeting the Indian Point Energy Center, a nuclear power plant that opened in the 1970s on the Hudson River in New York state. The plant generates 10% of the state’s electricity.

The center’s operating license is currently up for renewal with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which has provoked 70 groups, including Greenpeace, the Sierra Club and Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s group Riverkeepers, to form a coalition to shut the plant down. They say Indian Point threatens public safety because it is located only 40 miles from “Ground Zero” in Manhattan and could be targeted by terrorists. The plant, owned by Entergy Corporation, is unnecessary, they say, pointing to a report by the National Academy of Sciences that claims that shutting down the plant would be relatively easy and inexpensive. Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY), who cites the risk that radiation could be released in the event of an accident or

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terrorist attack, has said she is “thrilled” by the report’s findings.

However, that’s not all the report says. Supporters of nuclear energy counter that the \$1 million taxpayer-funded study states that shutting Indian Point would make electricity more expensive, strain natural gas inventories, and increase greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Electricity demand is growing so rapidly in the area that constructing another power plant would be too onerous and time-consuming. Patrick Moore, a Greenpeace co-founder who left the group he now considers extremist, observes, “Any politician who doesn’t support Indian Point is basically asking for more air pollution.”

This year Indian Point could pit two powerhouse New York politicians with presidential ambitions against each other. So far Senator Hillary Clinton has resisted pressure to come out against the plant. But she demands tougher inspections and improved safety policies. By contrast, former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani strongly favors license renewal. “Indian Point is as safe as a facility can be,” said Giuliani, head of Giuliani Partners LLC, a security consulting firm he created in 2002. The state’s new governor, Democrat Eliot Spitzer, favors shutting down the plant.

Texas Hold ‘Em--Coal

In addition to shuttering current energy facilities, environmentalists are also on a crusade to halt new facility construction, and coal power is an attractive target of opportunity.

Here the greens’ hope for victory is focused on an ambitious coal power development in Texas. Texas needs more electricity because it is the nation’s second fastest-growing state (after California). Now you might think that advocates for energy independence would applaud a Texas-based company that uses coal mined in-state to generate electricity for its Texas customers. You

would be wrong.

Environmental Defense (ED), Texas PIRG, RAN, CERES and other groups are mobilizing to stop TXU Corporation’s plans to invest \$11 billion to build up to eleven new coal-fired electricity-generating plants. It will spend \$2.5 billion on environmental technology upgrades and create 14,000 permanent jobs.

In its effort to bring affordable power to Texas, TXU is even willing to sign on to part of the greens’ campaign by offering to combat carbon emissions. TXU officials say the company supports “a comprehensive, voluntary, technology-based approach to global climate change based on carbon intensity that is both flexible and cost effective.”

But even that proposal is rejected by environmentalists, who prefer a command-and-control approach over voluntary technology-based emission reductions.

According to ED spokesman Colin Rowan, “We are at a point in time where other states and businesses are starting to take global warming seriously. California is heading toward the future, and TXU and Texas are sprinting full speed back to the 1950s.” Of course, Rowan failed to mention that according to the Energy Information Administration California’s electricity is among the most expensive in the lower 48 states, and that its power will be even more expensive thanks to Schwarzenegger’s global warming initiative.

Environmentalists aim to prevent TXU from securing financing for the project. RAN has sent letters to 54 financial institutions asking them not to lend money for the project. The letters are but a first step. Should any bank be so bold as to give TXU a loan it can expect to be vilified, subjected to boycott threats, shareholder protests and political pressure. (See “Rainforest Action Network,” in the May 2005 *Organization Trends*). RAN has urged readers of its blog to email TXU. “Let’s start

by turning up the heat on TXU—Write TXU CEO John Wilder an email and tell him climate protection MUST trump corporate greed or we’re all cooked.”

Unfortunately, these pressure tactics appear increasingly effective in changing corporate attitudes. According to a recent Conference Board survey reported by CFO Magazine in December, anti-lending campaigns conducted by CERES and RAN against projects they deem not environmentally-friendly are working. Such tactics have become standard operating procedure for obstructionist groups, writes John Berlau in a new book, *Eco-Freaks* (Nelson Current, 2006).

2006 Hits and Misses

Last year environmentalist groups fought many different battles in their attempt to force America to be carbon-free. The groups scored many hits but had their share of misses.

The California bellwether. In the fall election Defenders of Wildlife spent at least \$500,000 through its affiliated 527 group in its successful campaign to unseat property rights champion Representative Richard Pombo (R-CA), chairman of the House Resources Committee in the 109th Congress. Pombo was defeated by Democrat Jerry McNerney, a wind turbine entrepreneur.

But California’s Proposition 87, a measure to impose an extraction tax on California oil producers, was defeated at the polls. Even the liberal Los Angeles Times editorialized against the measure, saying the measure “defies Econ 101 principles.” The newspaper labeled the proposed levy an “extortion tax.” Hollywood playboy producer Steve Bing, a major Democratic Party donor, spent nearly \$50 million of his own money promoting the ballot initiative. Famed venture capitalist and ethanol enthusiast Vinod Khosla also contributed to the losing cause.

Wind power. On the East coast, NRDC’s Robert F. Kennedy Jr. created some consternation by opposing the Cape Wind Project, which would replace an old coal power plant with non-CO₂ emitting offshore wind power. It seems the Kennedy family summers in Hyannisport, Cape Cod, and the 130-turbine wind-power project would be built in Horsehoe Shoal in Nantucket Sound, south of the Cape. It’s probably the only wind project

For frequent updates on environmental groups, nonprofits, foundations, and labor unions, check out the CRC-Greenwatch Blog at

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RFK Jr. has opposed.

Kennedy opposes the project on esthetic grounds. In an op-ed, he wrote that “[h]undreds of flashing lights to warn airplanes away from the turbines will steal the stars and nighttime views. The noise of the turbines will be audible onshore ... [and] the project will damage the views from 16 historic sites and lighthouses on the cape and nearby islands.” Greenpeace and other groups have assailed Kennedy for his elitist hypocrisy.

The U.S. Supreme Court. In June 2006 the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear a case, *Massachusetts v. EPA*, on whether EPA has the power to regulate CO₂ emissions from automobiles. Environmentalists hope the high court will give the agency a power it does not think it should have but that future EPA appointees would be able to use to impose restrictions on carbon emissions -- whether or not the U.S. signs the Kyoto Protocol. The high court heard oral arguments November 29 and is expected to render a decision this year.

Iain Murray of the Competitive Enterprise Institute warns that a decision for the plaintiffs (Massachusetts and 11 other states, New York City, Washington, D.C. and numerous other petitioners from green advocacy groups) would mean that “some 70% of the electricity industry and 98% of the transportation industry - indeed the entire U.S. economy - would have to submit to regulation even more draconian than that set out in the greenhouse gas-limiting Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.”

Murray further points out that U.S. air quality is affected by countries that don't care how much carbon dioxide their factories emit: “California's air is affected by belching smokestacks and new cars in the rapidly growing economies of China and India, nations that are exempt from the Kyoto Protocol. Even if we reduced our CO₂ emissions to zero, our air might still violate standards.”

Biofuels: Many environmental groups hail ethanol as the fuel of the future and the key to energy independence, even though it is expensive to produce and yields fewer miles per gallon than gasoline. But a funny thing happened on the way to the farm. As more

and more farm state Republicans begin to tout ethanol's virtues, the more reluctant some green advocates are to endorse it.

An odd mix of free trade supporters, social justice campaigners and environmentalists has come out against ethanol. These strange bedfellows warn that increased reliance on ethanol could increase world hunger. Worldwatch Institute founder Lester Brown, now president of the Earth Policy Institute, complains that ramped-up ethanol production would cause grain scarcity: “The grain required to fill an SUV tank,” he told the Washington Post, “could feed one person for one year.” Although biofuel production fattens the wallets of Midwestern grain farmers, it puts upward price pressure on food commodities, which makes it much more difficult for poor people abroad to feed themselves. “By the end of 2007,” Brown wrote in a recent newsletter, “the emerging competition between the 800 million automobile owners who want to maintain their mobility and the world's 2 billion poorest people who want simply to survive will be on center stage.”

Oxfam and other humanitarian groups and environmental groups such as the Environmental Working Group (EWG) have joined with free-market think tanks such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) to push for cutting farm subsidies. EWG's online Farm Subsidy Database is perhaps the most comprehensive list of government farm subsidies and their recipients. In 2007 the five-year farm bill is up for reauthorization, and it will be interesting to see whether a left-right coalition emerges to fight the farm subsidy lobby. Market-oriented scholars like Hudson Insti-

tute senior fellow Dennis Avery refer to ethanol as “deathanol” because they agree that its widespread production may lead to massive worldwide food scarcity.

Conclusion

In 2007 it appears the environmentalist movement may be caught in a Catch-22 of its own making. The old warriors against energy consumption are running up against a new breed of environmentalists who look to high technology. They endorse promising new technologies such as plug-in hybrid vehicles that operate on both gasoline and electricity. By touting the benefits of hybrids, they argue that gasoline consumption can be cut and America will be less reliant on overseas oil.

But if Americans switch to plug-in hybrid vehicles, they will need more electricity, and if it doesn't come from foreign oil then it will have to come from domestic sources -- either hated fossil fuels, dreaded nuclear power, or “deathanol.”

And there's the rub.

Reducing foreign energy dependency will inevitably force Americans to increase their coal and natural gas-based electricity generation, which in turn will increase CO₂ emissions unless there is a breakthrough in technology. The feds can't mandate technological innovation. The environmentalists don't want nuclear-powered transportation. And, as much as greens yearn for it, our planes, trains and automobiles can't be powered by windmills.

James Dellinger is Executive Director of GreenWatch and EducationWatch at Capital Research Center.

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hour for the following 23 hours)

BrieflyNoted

The **Federal Election Commission** fined three 527 groups —**Swift Boat Veterans and POWs for Truth**, the **MoveOn.org Voter Fund**, and the **League of Conservation Voters 527** and **527 II**—a total of \$629,500 for electioneering in 2004. The FEC found that the veterans “expressly advocated” the defeat of presidential candidate **John Kerry** in ads and direct mail, while the LCV advocated Kerry’s election and the defeat of President **George W. Bush** through voter canvassing. MoveOn made TV ads targeting Bush. If the 527 groups, which may receive unlimited contributions but are not allowed to advocate for candidates or coordinate activities with them, wanted to become involved in the election campaign as advocates, they should have registered as political action committees and filed the required disclosure statements, the FEC said December 13. “The law is unconscionably vague,” Swift Boat founder **Roy Hoffman** reportedly said.

After winning the Maryland governorship, Democrat **Martin O’Malley** turned to fat-cat trial lawyer **John P. Coale** for a loan to cover a \$500,000 campaign debt, the Washington Post reported. The half-million dollar debt appears to be a record for a Maryland political campaign. Coale, husband of **Fox News** anchor **Greta Van Susteren**, is the ambulance-chaser who filed vexatious lawsuits against the gun industry and who took millions in fees from the \$200 billion-plus national tobacco settlement of 1997. He was also the first U.S. lawyer to arrive in Bhopal, India, to scout for clients following the **Union Carbide** disaster of 1984. O’Malley is the guitar-playing politician who as mayor of Baltimore called President Bush a terrorist in February 2005 for proposing to reduce federal aid for cities.

Incredibly, the **Southern Poverty Law Center** said it “probably” will include the **Michigan State University** chapter of the conservative group **Young Americans for Freedom** on its list of so-called hate groups. Such a listing would make YAF, which was founded in 1960 by **M. Stanton Evans** and **William F. Buckley Jr.**, the first university-recognized hate group in the nation, **Heidi Beirich**, assistant director of the SPLC’s Intelligence Project told the Lansing City Pulse. The SPLC, which maintains that race relations today are worse than in the days of Jim Crow, was profiled in the November issue of *Organization Trends*.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. is working overtime to transform itself into a bastion of politically correct political and social causes, according to the **National Legal and Policy Center**. “Political correctness is nothing new in corporate America, but it is truly breathtaking how quickly Wal-Mart is becoming a tool of the left under CEO **H. Lee Scott**,” said NLPC President **Peter Flaherty**. Under Scott, Wal-Mart has mandated numerical quotas for the hiring of minorities and women, placed **Jesse Jackson** associate **Christopher Williams** on its board, and is financially supporting gay rights groups advocating same-sex marriage. The company is also bullying its 60,000 suppliers to adopt its environmental standards, a move even the **Sierra Club** has dismissed as ineffective, according to a new NLPC report. Wal-Mart hired left-wing spin doctor **Leslie Dach** back in July and since then he has helped the company ramp up its cynically calculated capitulations to the left.

Joe Kennedy, a former Massachusetts congressman and son of the late anti-communist Senator **Robert F. Kennedy**, is appearing on television commercials backing Venezuelan strongman **Hugo Chavez**, an ally of Iran, North Korea, and Cuba. Head of nonprofit **Citizens Energy Corporation**, a beaming Kennedy touts the benefits of discounted home heating oil supplied by Chavez-controlled CITGO, saying the fuel comes “from our friends in Venezuela.”

Capital Research Center President **Terrence Scanlon** signed a letter December 12 with 41 leaders of other conservative groups urging President Bush to “publicly and forcefully repudiate proposals to increase taxes in any plan to reform Social Security.”