

“Pathetic. Truly Pathetic”

“If we are to learn to live sustainably on the single planet we share, we each need to try harder to understand each other”

“I want to make it clear that if Bush is re-elected, people around the world should expect no environmental leadership from the US”

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ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

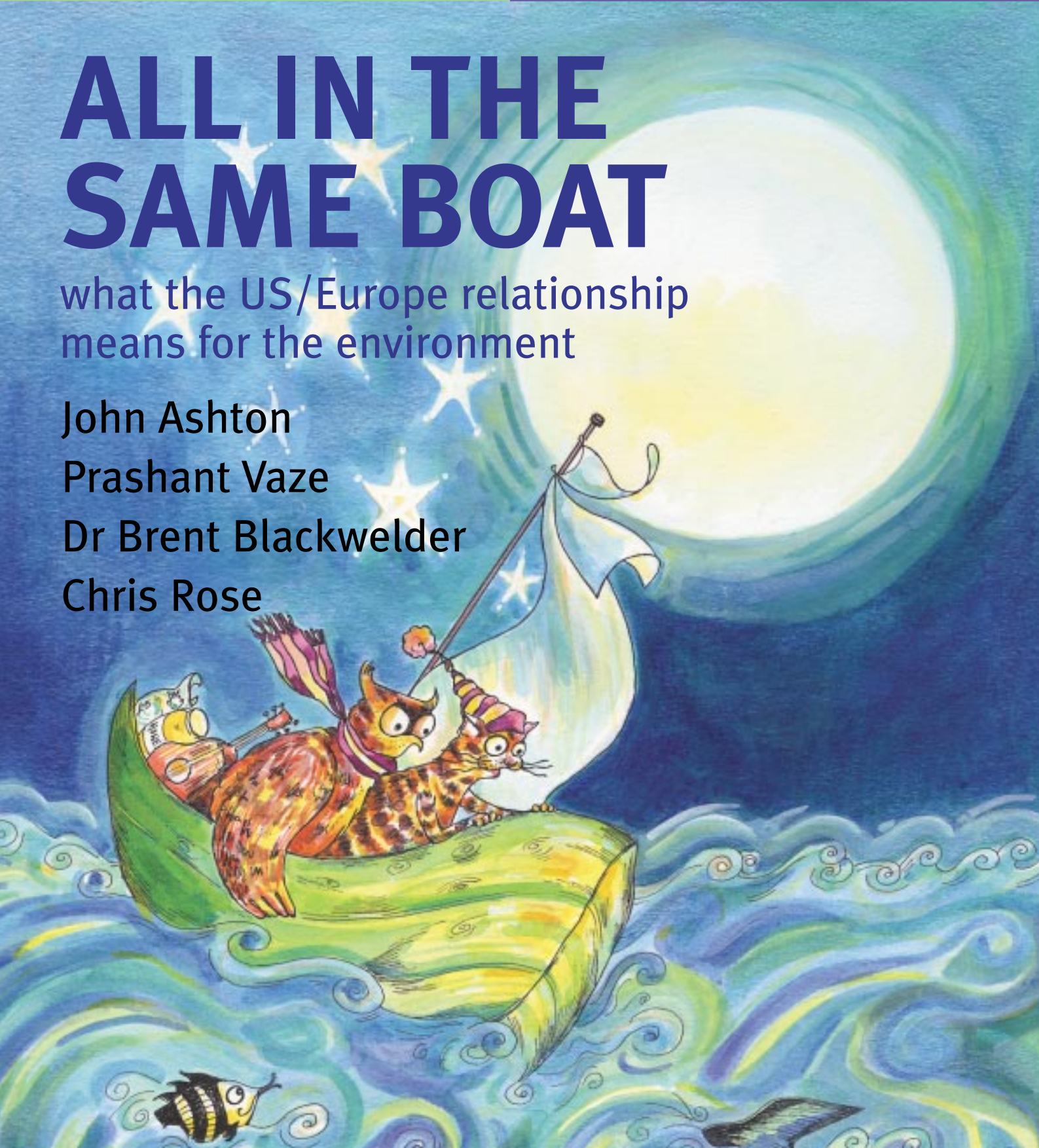
what the US/Europe relationship means for the environment

John Ashton

Prashant Vaze

Dr Brent Blackwelder

Chris Rose



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The views of contributors are not necessarily those of Green Alliance.

Cover: Illustration by Victoria Wainwright for Tall Stories Theatre Company's production of *The Owl and the Pussycat*

comment



Ben Shaw
head of strategy

Britain, as the old saying goes, is just the same as America only ten years behind. If there is any truth in this, it is a deeply worrying prospect for the future of the UK environment. The thought of a future UK government taking as destructive and self-interested a stance on international environmental negotiations as the Bush administration has is alarming to say the least.

If this is the nightmare vision there are positive alternatives that can be drawn upon at the state, city and company level, that go beyond the best of what is happening in the UK and Europe.

Whether the lessons are good and bad, one thing is sure, the US continues to exert influence over environmental outcomes in the UK, Europe, and globally. With this in mind, our aim must be how we can get the best from our relationship with the US.

In this edition of *Inside Track* we delve behind some of the knee-jerk reactions to the US. John Ashton convinces us that better understanding of the cultural differences between the US and Europe is essential to move the environmental debate forward. In the US election year, Dr Brent Blackwelder, tells us what to expect post-election. Fresh back from the US state department's visitor programme, Prashant Vaze gives us his observations on the fragmented nature of US policy. And finally, Chris Rose reflects on political and social trends in the US and what these could mean for NGO and political strategies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Back at Green Alliance there is no shortage of activity. Recent highlights include a speech by the Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy; and new projects on the private finance initiative, and childrens' environments.

building sustainability

the potential of the Private Finance Initiative

Green Alliance has begun new research, looking at how the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) could best address environmental and social issues.

The UK government is investing billions of pounds in public services with new hospitals, schools and other public buildings springing up all around the country. With much of this investment being carried out through long-term PFI contracts with private developers, there is the opportunity to require the highest standards of design for environmental sustainability. Where this means more natural light, ventilation and comfort, this can also make for a better education or healthcare experience. However, despite this potential, there are few examples of sustainability best practice in PFI.

Green Alliance is exploring the reasons for the current lack of sustainability considerations in PFI. We are interviewing key players involved in the PFI process, from central government to public sector clients and developers, to understand the barriers to sustainability in PFI, and the ways forward, to ensure that future PFI projects maximise their sustainability potential.

We hope to publish our findings in May 2003. In the meantime, please contact Joanna Collins for more information. jcollins@green-alliance.org.uk

We are very grateful to AWG for their support of this project.

show us the money

As departments gear up to submit their draft bids for the Spending Round to the Treasury, Green Alliance is making the case for green spending. In contrast to previous Spending Rounds the government has little room for manoeuvre meaning that smaller departments, like Defra, are having to fight every inch of the way to hold onto their budgets. Green Alliance has an important role in strengthening the environmental aspects of departments' spending bids and working closely with the Treasury to ensure that the green voice is heard.

Concentrating on influencing the detailed composition of departmental spending bids, we launched a report in November showing the cost of delivering existing government targets on five key areas: energy, waste, agriculture, biodiversity and marine. This work has been well received by officials, advisers and Ministers in both the spending departments and the Treasury.

From the end of April, the process moves to the high level negotiation between Ministers and the Treasury that will ultimately determine the final decisions in July. Together with the other green groups, Green Alliance will focus on the key priority issues for the environment. For example, we will push for the Department for Transport to be brought into the Public Service Agreement target on climate change, currently shared by Defra and the DTI, and for the extra money needed to deliver the step-changes in energy and waste policy sought by the government.

For more information on this work please contact Guy Thompson gthompson@green-alliance.org.uk



putting children in the picture

With child poverty rising up the political agenda and the tabloids full of scare stories on child obesity, concern about the well-being of children has never been higher. In response to the Lord Laming inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, the Government has introduced a Children's Bill to Parliament, which amongst other things will establish a Children's Commissioner to put the views and interests at the heart of policy-making and national debate.

As powerful symbols of the future, children remind us of our obligation to protect the environment to meet the needs of future generations, a concept that is weaved into the most widely-used definition of sustainable development. Or, as John Gummer more memorably put it, "Not cheating on our children". Despite this, policy on children remains only loosely connected to thinking on sustainable development.

The irony is that many of the issues which affect the life opportunities of children - for example, road safety, health, food safety, access to safe outdoor environments for play and exercise - would benefit from a more explicit link between environmental and children's policy. That is why Green Alliance and DEMOS are running a project to look at what the environment means to children from their perspective. We are holding a series of interviews with 9-11 year olds and their parents and will produce a short film, as a way of including children's voices directly in the dissemination of the project. The findings, including the film and final report, will be launched at the end of May 2004.

new report from Green Alliance
delivering resource
productivity:
the service solution

Green Alliance has been looking at business models that have less environmental impact. Over the past year, we have focused on how companies can move away from selling increasing volumes of product to make profits. We have been examining how the service model – for example selling a painting service instead of pots of paint – can achieve a more efficient use of resources and less environmental impact.

The findings from this work are published in a new report, *Delivering Resource Productivity: The service solution*. It focuses on two sectors where the service model is already being used by companies, chemicals and energy. And one sector, agriculture, where there is potential to successfully employ the service model approach. Case studies illustrate how the service model is being used in the UK, for Chemical Management Services and Energy Services.

The report outlines the major economic and environmental benefits of the model, and the barriers to its wider uptake. We recommend how the government can support further development of the service model in the UK, through regulatory and fiscal mechanisms and broader policy initiatives.

Delivering Resource Productivity: The service solution is available to download free of charge from www.green-alliance.org.uk

what price our planet?

Charles Kennedy, addressing a Green Alliance audience, boldly attacked the government's environmental record and set out the Liberal Democrat's alternative vision during his second major environment speech in March.

"Pathetic. Truly Pathetic." was Charles Kennedy's assessment of the government's progress on renewable energy, at an event hosted by Green Alliance, WWF, and RSPB.

Press coverage of the event focused on his proposal to replace passenger airport departure taxes with a duty on flights to promote more efficient aeroplane use, as part of what he called a new 'environment incentive mechanism' across all areas of policy. This would be "not about taxing more, but taxing differently, and intelligently".



Green Alliance Director Guy Thompson cited variable charging for household waste as another policy that the Liberal Democrats should champion. This would entail taking the waste charge out of council tax, and replacing it with a variable charge as an incentive for recycling, making householders a far more active part of the solution.

'Demand' and 'management' were two words that Kennedy did not appear afraid to bring together. This is crucial as consumers will often plump for the cheapest thing going but, as citizens, they expect government to ensure that consumption choices do not jeopardise the planet or their own health. It is up to government to make prices reflect the true social costs of environmental damage, in the way that, for instance, energy and water markets are regulated.

Charles Kennedy proposed bringing environment back to the heart of policy-making with a new Department of the Environment, Energy and Transport. But it is actually on another key portfolio, planning, that the Liberal Democrats are in the strongest position to act, using their leverage at local level. As Kennedy said, much of the environmental agenda "is about local planning decisions, taken by local people, in local town halls". Before his speech, Kennedy had fitted in a trip to the inspirational zero energy BedZed development in Sutton. But BedZed has stood alone too long. The Liberal Democrats need to be supporting zero energy developments in all their constituencies, especially the proposed HarrowZED where they have the casting vote. As Kennedy himself said, governments at all levels need to be "willing to take tough decisions at home".

Green Alliance will be working closely with the Liberal Democrat shadow cabinet as they develop their environmental policies in the lead up to the General Election next year.

The speech is available to download from www.green-alliance.org.uk

It's time to set a drip

For better or worse we live in a society dominated by consumption. The environmental movement has always had a hard time with the concept of consumption. Telling people to consume less when you live in a consumer society is akin to going into a pub on a busy Friday evening and exhorting everyone to drink less, it doesn't meet with much success. Politicians realise this and have been reticent to do anything about consumption. Indeed for most political parties increasing consumption is one of their main objectives. This tension between environmentalists' focus on the environmental impact of consumption and politicians' focus on the benefits it provides has led to a policy debate focused on getting more from less, not having less. Talk of reducing consumption has generally been considered beyond the pale.

Yet dealing with consumption is moving up the agenda. The government produced a Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production last year

to take forward commitments it made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In the broader public debate hardly a week goes by without a new report in the media highlighting that we may be richer than we have ever been but we are not any happier. To continue the pub metaphor are we suffering a hangover from too much consumption?

While consumption may be being talked about more publicly it is far from clear what we can actually do about the problems it creates. Green Alliance's seminar series *Getting to grips with consumption*, has been wrestling with these issues.

Why focus on consumption? was the question posed at the first seminar in December. There is the obvious problem of environmental impacts and the fact that in many cases technology isn't keeping up with increasing demand, but there is a broader range of issues. First, increasing consumption doesn't seem to be making us any happier. Second, there is an increasing gulf between the have and the have-nots, both within the UK and internationally, which is socially divisive and drives a pressure to consume. Third, the consumer mindset undermines people acting as public-spirited citizens and governments' ability to act in the public interest.

Consumption isn't just a problem for the environment movement. Similar issues arise in debates on food and obesity, alcohol abuse and pension provision, for example. These hinge on the issue of what is an appropriate level of state intervention in decisions which are typically considered to be private, but ones in which the state often picks up the bill in terms of ill health or welfare benefits.

These issues were discussed at a second seminar, *Getting under the skin of the consumer*, in March. Policy responses to consumption are based on simple models of the consumer as being rational, welfare maximising, well-informed and so on. These

simplify and misrepresent the reasons people consume. Sociological and psychological analyses provide a very different picture of consumer motivations. People base their consumption decisions on a wide range of factors, not just price. These include meeting basic needs, consuming out of habit, to demonstrate status, and to give construct meaning in their lives amongst others.

Policy-makers need to respond to this more complex picture of consumption and systems of consumption. It is not enough to alter prices through taxes, setting standards through regulation and providing better information to consumers although these are important. Our final seminar in the series will discuss the nature of these responses and how the sustainable consumption agenda can be taken forward. The outcome of these seminar discussions will be published as a short report in May.

For more information on this work please contact Ben Shaw bshaw@green-alliance.org.uk

This project is supported by the ESRC Sustainable Technologies Programme and Defra.

generating opportunities

Micro-generation technologies have the potential to transform patterns of energy use and help meet climate change targets

Climate change concern is alive and kicking but it isn't being related to home energy use.

One answer is to get the buildings we live in clad in micro-generation technologies. There is nothing like urban renewables to help close the gap in people's minds between the origins and impacts of energy and the way they use energy themselves. The incentive to try to only use free energy generated on-site is not to be sniffed at. Planning and regulating for new homes capable of generating their own sustainable energy could be a key part of the government's climate change leadership agenda, beating traditional public education campaigns for relevance and immediacy in people's lives.

To clarify what role planning and building regulations could play in promoting micro-generation Green Alliance convened a high-level seminar earlier this year. From the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the leads on planning policy and building regulations updated the assembled architects,

developers, planners and micro-generation experts on the latest government thinking. There was long-awaited, clear legal guidance from ODPM that local authorities may follow in the footsteps of Merton Borough Council and require on-site energy generation in large new developments without fear of a legal challenge from developers.

Encouragingly, leading developers at the seminar were positive about the rising tide of interest in micro-generation. Countryside Properties and Taylor Woodrow, having pioneered some of the best practice schemes around today, such as Greenwich Millennium Village, and the Earth Centre in Doncaster, could be well placed to gain market advantage from a raised regulatory floor on sustainable construction.

The government's Sustainable Communities Plan will see 90,000 new homes built in the Thames Gateway region alone. This is a unique opportunity to build in micro-generation on a huge scale, and Green Alliance is working to ensure that this is not overlooked.

For more information on this work please contact
Joanna Collins
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what price clean water?

Water bills pay for a lot more than safe, clean drinking water. It is also the responsibility of water companies to make sure that rivers, lakes, seas and wetlands are protected and their environments are improved. But how much should we pay? There's much that needs to be done, but as pockets are not bottomless, protracted negotiations take place every five years, known as the 'periodic review of water pricing' to set the level.

The Periodic Review is a long, complex dance of negotiation between water companies, the environment minister, Ofwat – the water regulator – and interest groups representing consumers and the environment. Its aim is a tricky balancing act to allow companies to invest in essential maintenance and environmental improvement, whilst ensuring a fair deal for customers. This January, just before the environment minister issued guidance on the process, Green Alliance held a high-level seminar, with representatives from all these groups.

This time around, there are some real challenges to grapple with. It's widely accepted that prices need to rise, in part to pay for a huge backlog in maintenance of the water supply network. But significant environmental improvements must be made, too, looking ahead to the implementation of the EU's Water Framework Directive. This requires a much more holistic approach to water resources, based on 'catchment management', looking at water management in a whole ecosystem, rather than relying on end-of-pipe mitigation.

It is encouraging that companies like United Utilities and Northumbrian Water have included, in their plans for this Review, trial catchment management schemes which anticipate the EU legislation. But, like other companies, they can only invest in the environment if they have the resources to do so. As the Review process ploughs on through 2004, it will become clearer whether the government will bite the bullet and agree.

With thanks to United Utilities, sponsors of this work.

a chilling tale turned heart warming story

How a home health visit can turn an unhealthy cold home into a beacon of energy efficiency

Anybody working in the front line of health and social care could give a first hand account of the link between poor housing and ill health.

Fortunately, partnerships between those connected to housing and health are providing a sustainable solution.



One such partnership that has helped to deliver real benefits to around 3,500 homes, so far, is called npower Health Through Warmth (HTW), an innovative scheme from energy supplier npower,

the NHS, and the energy efficiency charity National Energy Action (NEA).

The scheme operates by training NHS or community based staff to actively identify unhealthy cold houses whilst on home visits. Those homes are then referred back to HTW who facilitate urgent heating and insulation measures, and help to access grant aid to finance it. For those not eligible for financial aid or Warm Front grants, an *npower crisis fund* exists to catch them.

Started as a pilot scheme in the West Midlands in 2000, HTW has expanded to health authorities across the UK including Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, Dudley, Herefordshire, Kent, Glamorgan, Wrexham, East Riding of Yorkshire, Middlesbrough, Leicester, Wiltshire, Merseyside, Portsmouth,



Newcastle, New Forest, and four London boroughs. To date, over 6,200 key health professionals have been trained to spot the signs of poorly heated and insulated, and damp homes, and almost 6,100 referrals have been made to improve the living conditions of their clients.

Phil Kear, npower's Head of Energy Services and Social Action concludes "Health Through Warmth is about delivering **real action, quickly, and where it is really needed...**this is possible only by our great partnerships. No one organisation has all the skills and expertise required to deliver all that is needed."

[npower, part of RWE Innogy, are members of Green Alliance's corporate support scheme](#)

case study – warmer home, cheaper bills

In June 2003, 83 year old, Mr Wetton was referred to npower HTW by a health visitor. He was finding his solid fuel central heating system expensive to run, and due to his arthritis extremely hard work, bringing in the coal. With a lack of insulation his home still felt cold despite the expensive bills.



Thanks to the Health through Warmth partnership he has now had a hot water tank jacket, draught proofing, loft insulation, low energy light bulbs and a replacement gas central heating system installed.

"What a great christmas present we had. It was costing us over £90 a month in coal, and we weren't warm then. We didn't know there was such help available. You don't like to ask, we were bought up that unless you can afford it you don't have it, whatever that means to your life/health."
Mr Wetton

the chilling facts

- In a cold winter over 46,000 people die from cold and damp related illnesses
- 750,000 older people in the UK are estimated to be at risk from hypothermia each winter
- The NHS spends £1 billion per annum treating cold and damp related illnesses
- Many people cannot afford to heat their homes to recommended temperatures during colder months
- Housing which is not energy efficient costs more to heat

Europe's Mars mission

Get used to it: Europeans and Americans are both from Earth



John Ashton signals how to open constructive dialogue with the US on environment

The current dysfunctional state of transatlantic dealings on the environment has deep cultural roots. No one should imagine that Europe and America will stop talking past each other on issues from climate change to GMOs and the role of international institutions simply because of a change in US Administration.

The rule of law is fundamental on both sides of the Atlantic. But it operates in different ways. In the US, law is explicit. It must include provision for every circumstance. There is little discretion to interpret the law, even if its rigid application leads to absurdity.

The law is embedded in the founding experience of modern America: as settlers streamed westward, departing wagon trains would agree their own constitutions to govern their affairs on the journey. There were no rules already in place, so everyone got

involved in deciding them. From these roots, the letter of the law is everything.

In Europe - whether in common law or Napoleonic jurisdictions - the law has evolved organically, woven out of a richer tapestry of custom and practice. It is a matter of interpretation as well as code. Discretion to interpret the law comes with the job for courts and administrators. A stronger sense of the underlying purpose of laws guides their application. In Europe, the spirit of the law can matter more than its letter.

The EU is thus happy to subject its choices on biosafety or hazardous chemicals to the legally indeterminate precautionary principle. When US negotiators object, that is not necessarily because they are in the grip of corporations with a disregard for those at environmental risk. Rather, it is culturally more difficult for Americans to accept binding commitments without precise rules covering every circumstance in which they might be applied.

There are other differences between the cultural baggage we carry into international conversations.

US political culture is adversarial. There has been no shared vision of US society since Roosevelt's New Deal. The middle ground is less crowded than in Europe. Where the EU consults stakeholders to the clink of coffee cups, the US holds hearings under the gavel.

In the US, policy proceeds by legislation. Every detail must be elaborated in law. This is driven not by political parties but by individual politicians, who pull together constantly shifting coalitions according to the latest wind direction on Capitol Hill or its local counterparts. Political parties are loose associations, only coming together fully to secure the election of preferred candidates to public office.

The budgets required to carry out policy are themselves subject to separate legislation. Policies already legislated for are often reopened in subsequent line by line budgetary warfare.

In Europe, political parties are policy-forming engines. Coalitions are assembled not around individual lines in a piece of legislation but around policies and programmes. Only the goals and broad budgetary framework of policy have to be enshrined in law. Implementation is part of the administrative process, including detailed spending allocations.

Public trust is also allocated differently across the Atlantic. NGOs are less trusted in the US than in Europe. The public is more likely in the US than in Europe to believe what it is told by government or corporations. In Europe, NGOs have more credibility than either, and are correspondingly more important in building legitimacy for any course of action.

It is hard to agree on what to do without some common understanding of what science says about the nature of the problem. In Europe the science underlying policy choices remains less politicised than in the US, where debate over the substance is more likely to degenerate into attacks on the personal integrity of individual scientists.

In the US, the environment is on the political front line. It is part of the contest between conflicting views of national identity, inseparable from arguments about states' rights, sovereignty, and wilderness. In Europe, there is a broad consensus on the environment, and debate is conducted at a less iconic level.

Why worry about these differences?

The effort to build an international framework for sustainable development is in crisis. The agenda has been clear for a generation. But on all the big issues of the global commons - climate, ecosystems, freshwater, soil, oceans, fisheries - we are no closer to the outcomes we need.

We will not break out of the crisis unless we can turn sustainable development into a common purpose powerful enough to harness the combined resources available on each side of the Atlantic.

The key requirement for sustainable development is the capacity to

innovate. It needs to span six dimensions: not only technological but also legal, social, financial, institutional, and cultural. What we have learned over the last generation is that it is not enough to drive change separately in each sphere. We need an integrated approach, recognising that the outcomes we seek, like the problems we are trying to address, themselves reflect the combined effect of what happens in each dimension.

“We will not break out of the crisis unless we can turn sustainable development into a common purpose...”

Innovation of this ambition is beyond the scope of any single country – even a global hegemon – or region. It is in Europe and North America that the necessary capacity is currently concentrated. But it will not be released unless the EU and the US can stop defining themselves by how different they are from each other.

Here are five things the EU can do for a start.

First, we should redirect the thrust of our environmental politics, from sacrifice to benefit, from “gives” to “gets”. We can debate the cost of

climate action or the value of a stable climate: the goal is the same in either case, but the latter is likely to be more productive with the US, where the EU is too easily criticised for its moralising tone. That is not a comment on whether or not the US is less moral than the EU. The point is simply that we need a language of engagement that will get us closer to the outcomes we want.

Second, much of the environmental debate can be expressed in terms of the need to channel investment in new directions. If international treaties do not provide a stimulus for this, there is little point in wasting time arguing about them. Climate policy can certainly be couched as an investment proposition. A transatlantic dialogue of that kind is more likely than the current one to shift US investment in the right direction.

Third, we need to connect better with the anxieties that drive policy in the US. Currently the most powerful driver is security. That is what persuaded Congress to approve expenditure in 2003-04 of \$160 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan alone. The basic condition for security in the 21st century will be sustainable development, but the EU needs to make that case more eloquently. Senator Lugar, the powerful Republican Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is now calling for a new commitment of US civilian resources for nation-building in failed states. Europe should tap into that impulse.

Fourth, we should remember that the US is not the same as its Administration. There is no more multifaceted society on the planet. There are many forces that can be mobilised beyond the Administration, from powerful States like California, to multinational companies and professional associations. Europe must learn to engage them.

Fifth, we need Europe's strengths to be better understood in the US. Many there have never got beyond Kissinger's question: who do I call if I want to speak to Europe? But that is the point. The EU is the world's most advanced experiment in sharing sovereignty while maintaining diversity. That achievement, and its significance for dealing with the stresses of a globalising world, would resonate much more strongly in the US if we explained it better.

US commentator Robert Kagan characterised Europeans and Americans as "two peoples living on separate strategic and ideological planets" with Americans on Mars and Europeans on Venus. In terms of politics, culture and values that is a grotesque and misleading caricature. For the environment, the notion is a luxury we cannot afford. But if we are to learn to live sustainably on the single planet we share, we each need to try harder to understand each other.

John Ashton is Cofounder and CEO of E3G: Third Generation Environmentalism.

sustainable development and environment policy in the USA



Just back from a visit with the US government, Prashant Vaze gives us an insight into the battlegrounds for US environment policy

Environmental policy-making in the US is much more fragmented than in the UK. Legislation is proposed and drafted by Congress, rather than the administration. Congress also decides how much money should be appropriated for each programme. To become law, drafted legislation has to be agreed by both houses of Congress and approved by the President. The system is set up, as far as possible, to avoid making new laws. It gives rise to 'pork barrel' compromises; where arms have to be twisted and sweeteners introduced to ensure smooth passage of legislation. The controversial Clean Air Act took 13 years to clear all these hurdles.

There is fragmentation vertically too, where swathes of environmental issues are totally outside the federal government's mandate. Federal government's main powers arise from: directly owning land (national parks, forests and wilderness); from issues that effect interstate commerce like acid rain; and through providing matching funds for state spending, for instance on interstate roads. State governments set up and enforce (federally agreed) pollution standards, energy policy and transport. County and city governments decide ordinances on planning, waste disposal and provide infrastructure like local roads and sewage lines, with very little control or guidance from above.

This has the positive effect that policy-making is closer to the people, and more experimental. A toxic emissions inventory, that publishes the amount of pollution emitted by each regulated plant, has played an important role in ensuring that water and air quality standards have improved. Set up in New Jersey it was later copied by the federal Environment Protection Agency (EPA), and then by the UK's own Environment Agency. In California, the proposed, tougher than federally mandated, exhaust pipe emissions standards have spurred on innovations like improved catalysts and reformulations of fuel which have been copied the world over.

The fragmentation can cause difficulties for public sector services that need to be joined-up, like transport and development. Greater Atlanta, with a population of over four million, has a two line subway system and several un-coordinated bus services, because the 28 counties were unable to agree the routing and financing of a more integrated system. In the US, most development occurs on greenfield sites as counties and municipalities are keen to cultivate high-end office and affluent residential development. The concept of brownfield reuse (in the US called "smart growth") is still controversial. Oregon is at the vanguard of smart growth but manages to direct a measly ten per cent of new developments on brownfield sites. Sprawl in the US is a major environmental issue, giving rise to unsustainable transport modes, congestion and air quality problems and there is little prospect that the settlement between county and state administration is capable of addressing it.

It's perhaps an over generalisation, but Americans appear more trustful of big

business than Europeans, and less trustful of government. US citizens' support for GM seems to reflect their affront at the notion companies would wilfully release damaging foods into the marketplace. On the flip side, citizens' impatience with bureaucracy has resulted in local government being cautious in proposing any new spend. In some matters government seemed overly defensive, afraid of judicial challenge by environmentalists and business. In Atlanta the road authority has spent \$7.5 million on defensive transport studies to avoid legal action from environmentalists.

One cannot avoid being staggered by the size and resources of the US Government. Despite the rhetoric about low taxes and low public spending, the public sector is a mighty 35 per cent of the economy compared to our own 42 per cent, all the more remarkable

considering the limited public involvement in the two big spenders: health and social security. The EPA has a staff of 18,000 and a budget of \$7 billion, compared to our Environment Agency's budget of £780 million.

This understates the disparity in resources, since much water management is undertaken by the US Army Corps of Engineers, and states have their own, sometimes substantial, environmental agencies (Southern California employs 800 staff in air quality management) which do the grunt work of inspecting individual sites.

Many businesses, NGOs and, to a lesser extent, governments have a 'can-do' approach to environmental challenges. Local water districts in California are investing hundreds of millions in inventing and developing water conservation and water treatment technologies. A port authority in Florida had invested

millions to create a high quality habitat for birds to 'compensate nature' for its own activities. In many cases these individual initiatives are world class.

It will be interesting to see how much will be made of environment issues in the Presidential election later this year. In January's State of the Union speech the President made no mention of the environment, his aides no doubt assessing that this was an issue his campaign should stay clear of. The democrat candidate John Kerry is positioning himself as a staunch defender of the environment, willing for instance to "re-engage in the development of an international climate change strategy". But the big picture is that the substantial environmental challenges facing the US, on transport, waste, energy infrastructure, are going to be fought at the local and state level and will arise from the still muted local demands.

Prashant Vaze is an economist working in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. In January he participated in the US State Department's International Visitor (IV) Programme. The IV programme has run for over thirty years and gives staff in Government, business, journalism and pressure groups an opportunity to visit to the US as part of an international group of professionals to meet with and learn about US policy making. Participants are nominated by the US Embassy.

“Many businesses, NGOs and, to a lesser extent, governments have a ‘can-do’ approach to environmental challenges.”

a bushed environment?



Having worked under all the US administrations since Earth Day, 1970, **Dr Brent Blackwelder** tells us what to expect post-election for environmental policy in the US at a national and international level

Background on US environmental policy from Earth Day 1970

The future of environmental policy in the US will be dramatically different, depending upon whether President Bush is re-elected. A quick review of the presidencies since 1970 shows that environmental progress was made under two Republican administrations: Nixon's and Bush senior's and also under the Carter and Clinton administrations. The Nixon administration, for example, put in place major environmental laws like the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act with its requirement for environmental impact assessments of all governmental actions that have significant ecological effects.

With the Reagan and Bush junior administrations, however, we have lost significant ground. As one who has worked with every Administration in the US on a non-partisan basis since Earth Day 1970, I can say unequivocally that the Bush administration has been the most opposed to environmental progress of any since that year. One figure is particularly telling: Bush has weakened environmental protection on 500 million acres of public land which is more than the three leading land conservation Presidents: Teddy Roosevelt, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton, together were able to set aside for protection.

November 2004: A dramatic fork in the road

I want to make it clear that if Bush is re-elected, people around the world should expect no environmental leadership from the US on crucial global problems like climate change, loss of biological diversity, sustainable agriculture, protection of oceans, etc. The Bush administration is mostly comprised of people who do not believe in multilateral treaties like those governing endangered species, protection of the earth's ozone layer, or ocean pollution. They believe in unilateral military action and in safeguarding oil supplies because they are intimately and personally tied to the oil industry.

We who live in the US will face the prospect of no environmental progress legislatively or through the federal agencies. Furthermore, we will likely see judicial appointments that will more and more foreclose the opportunity of seeking redress in the courts. What is likely to occur then, with the three branches of the federal government being essentially closed to public input, is a shift in strategy on the part of environmental organisations to consumer and corporate strategies, as well as greater activity in those individual states with receptive governors and legislators.

On the other hand, if Senator Kerry of Massachusetts is elected president,

there is the strong possibility that the US will play a much more helpful role on international environmental problems. Senator Kerry has the highest environmental voting record of any presidential candidate (96 per cent League of Conservation Voters). Furthermore, people who care and have proper credentials will be appointed to agencies with environmental responsibilities. The Bush fox-guarding-the-hen-house approach of placing officials from the biggest polluting industries in key positions will no longer be the rule of the day.

Where the US is headed under Bush on environmental policy

To understand the Bush administration agenda it is helpful to view it in the overall context of where Bush intends to take the nation. Although he promised to govern in a moderate bipartisan way, in light of the closeness of the election in 2000, the reality is that he has advanced an extreme right-wing agenda in almost every area, except in terms of balancing the budget which he conveniently lost sight of. In the case of environment, the ideas of deregulation and volunteerism have dominated his approach to pollution, public health, and land use.

Regulations on business are seen to be an evil. When combined with large tax cuts for the very wealthy and spending

on the Iraq war, the Bush policies have caused an evaporation of the surpluses achieved at the end of the Clinton administration. What this means for environmental programmes is a drastic reduction in the amount of money available for the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), which has to enforce pollution laws. The proposed Bush budget for EPA, for the fiscal year 2005, would give it the second biggest reduction of any agency, more than a seven per cent reduction over last year.

Why is Bush destroying environmental protections?

The Bush administration is more responsive to campaign contributors than any administration I have witnessed over the past 34 years. In the case of energy policy, the Bush administration convened secret meetings of the biggest polluters and took their recommendations to craft an energy plan calling for massive new government handouts to oil, coal, and nuclear companies, all of whom had handsomely contributed to the Bush presidential campaign.

Similarly, in the case of public lands such as national forests, parks, wildlife refuges and the like, which amount to about one-third of the total acreage in the lower 48 states, Bush has appointed to the land management agencies people who have been the chief lobbyists for the extractive

industries such as timber, mining, coal, and oil. The number two person at the Interior Department (Steven Griles) came straight from representing the energy companies doing business on the public lands and has violated his recusal agreement and met with former clients who now have billions of dollars at stake in decisions on leasing oil and gas. To date Griles and other administration officials appear beyond the point of embarrassment over conflicts of interest.

Again, the situation is similar in the area of agriculture and food safety. The beef industry is running the Department of Agriculture. Secretary Anne Veneman's chief of staff is the former lobbyist for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Friends of the Earth pointed out last October that the number of US companies violating our mad cow rules had almost tripled since April 2002. But this administration does not focus on enforcement of food safety and pollution regulations.

When the first mad cow was discovered in the US in December, Secretary Veneman deceived the public and assured consumers that beef was safe to eat. The incident is reminiscent of the scene a decade ago in England when the agriculture minister appeared on TV with the assertion that mad cow disease will never jump to people. The fact that the Bush administration has tried to cover up this incident will

ultimately undermine its credibility with the public.

Evidence free zone

The Bush administration has taken a cue on the use of language from George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Recall that the top pig informs the horse that all animals are equal but some are more equal than others. Thus when Bush moves to weaken the Clean Air Act he calls the program 'clear skies'. When he moves to open up more National Forests to logging, he labels the plan 'healthy forests'. The host of the *Tonight Show* Jay Leno was prompted to joke that Bush's healthy forests initiative was actually part of the clear skies plan: "If you cut down all the trees, you get a better view of the skies," he wryly observed.

As we have attempted over the past three years to discuss with administration officials their plans to weaken protections for wetlands, for safe drinking water, for mercury levels, etc., they don't say: "we are not concerned about wetlands or that requirements for mercury or arsenic are too strict and we will just go with the industry recommendation". Rather they vigorously assert: "our plan will save more wetlands and get rid of more mercury than yours." They operate in an evidence free zone and then they employ words to disguise the real intent and effect.

No need to visit outer space

If Bush is re-elected president, the life and vitality of our planet is in serious peril far beyond the jeopardy it is now

in. Bush has accelerated the role of the US in polluting the planet and has systematically attempted through his Cabinet officers to undo virtually every meaningful environmental standard.

There will be no need for people to visit outer space since the Bush administration is creating a veritable Martian landscape in West Virginia via its mountain-top-removal coal mining. In contrast, a Kerry administration would offer hope for re-engagement with the global community on urgent environmental matters as well as leading the way for a reduction in US air, water, and toxic emissions.

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changing times, changing strategies



Chris Rose explains how NGOs need to rethink their approach if they are to capitalise on the political changes seen under the Bush Presidency.

Since the '9/11' watershed it's been easy to forget that, until the twin towers were struck, the defining event of the Bush Presidency was the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol.

We now know that the Bush move didn't kill Kyoto. In fact it fanned, rather than dampened, international efforts to save the climate. Yet, his decision could be a sign of political climate change and NGOs need to adapt their strategies accordingly.

Two significant political currents came together in America in 2001 and prompted Bush to try and sink Kyoto. First, political psychology: a new American unilateralism, also expressed in US conduct of war.

Bush shares the instincts of those Americans who are psychologically security-driven, conservative, xenophobic, and happiest with continuation of the past, including the use of fossil fuels.

Key Bush strategists are very different: people of vision, neo-conservative global crusaders, externally focused on protecting American interests. Terror and oil-dependence are the logical pins connecting Bush's domestic mandate to hegemonic foreign policy.

When Bush was elected, this joined a second current: the professionalisation and corporatisation of politics. While this is as important as the move in political psychology it is far less discussed by existing political players.

Professionalisation means the political dialogue becomes politician-with-media rather than politician-with-people, and in first past the post systems, political offers shrink to the few deciding issues for a handful of swing voters. Other groups and issues just get lip-service, hence NGO issue-based politics flourishes, while trust in politicians spirals down.

Corporatisation means politics connects to business rather than the public or ideas. Governments retreat to facilitating commerce and cede delivery to markets. Their role becomes as competing managers of business-parks.

Politicians rising to government find reward not for public service, now seen as quaint, but through the revolving door of corporate appointment. The rejection of Kyoto revealed the control of US climate policy by Exxon, right down to the removal of Bob Watson as Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

To fight global warming, NGOs staked almost everything on the Climate Convention. NGOs relied on government action in an era of dwindling government leadership. Strategically they have failed to capitalise on the fact that NGOs, not professionalised politicians, are now the trusted guardians of the public interest.

Families Against Bush or FAB Climate was set up to use brand war in the climate war. FAB Climate created a guided-shopping mechanism to help consumers 'vote' for or against a brand, depending on corporate attitudes to the Bush stance on Kyoto. Its selective boycott call was designed to unpick the supposed solid business support for Bush. After months of persistent faxing and phoning to companies, and publicity for its red (no buy) and green (buy) shopping baskets in the *Wall Street Journal*, and on the BBC, FAB, with very limited resources, managed to get six companies with a significant US profile to oppose or dissociate from

the Bush line. These were Dow Corning, Shell Oil, BP Amoco, Colgate-Palmolive, Cartier of New York and Bank of America.

FAB worked to expose fault-lines between corporations, to help drive politics. FAB was for shoppers, of whom there will always be millions, not protestors or activists. FAB exploited the global brand market to influence politics irrespective of borders. 9/11 ended FAB's shopping days.

Since then, the Enron collapse and growing actions on climate by individual US States, have moderated the Bush Administration's stance on climate but the fundamentals remain. The window for another FAB-type operation has re-opened. More widely, if NGOs want to work the new politics effectively, they too need to change with the times.

Key to this is to have transparent dialogue with companies and consumers, forcing them out as public players in a political arena where politicians claim the public interest is good for business.

Campaigners need mechanisms to tip the rewards of markets towards change in the public interest e.g. to speed the market to switch from fossil fuels to renewables.

Once, this was a practical impossibility - products changed too quickly, communication costs were too high - but the internet has changed that. Business really is running the world, and it sets the pace that politicians follow. Campaigners should make business work for the world.

Chris Rose is a campaign and communications consultant, formerly with NGOs such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and WWF as a campaigner. He has just completed a 'how to' campaigns book for Earthscan and is working on one about campaigns and politics. He has a free campaign planning website aimed at NGOs at www.campaignstrategy.org and can be contacted by email at: mail@tochrisrose.idps.co.uk

Details of FAB are available at www.fabclimate.org

Green Alliance is an independent charity. Its mission is **to promote sustainable development by ensuring that the environment is at the heart of decision-making.** It works with senior people in government, business and the environmental movement to encourage new ideas, dialogue and constructive solutions.

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who's who



We are very pleased to announce that Guy Thompson has been appointed as Green Alliance's new director. Guy joins us from Forum for the Future where he was the Principal Policy Advisor. Prior to that Guy worked as Head of Government Affairs at RSPB.

Jennie Oldham left Green Alliance in February after three years with us. She has now joined ERM as a consultant in their corporate advisory services.

We welcome Caroline Read as our new policy officer, and Nasser Yassin as Green Globe Network assistant convenor. Caroline has worked over the past two years as a policy officer in the Australian Department of Environment and Heritage. Nasser is a PhD student at UCL with experience working in the planning and implementation of development projects in Lebanon with both the Lebanese government, UNDP and UNICEF

After five years, Tony Hams has stood down as Green Alliance chair. Tony has been an invaluable support to Green Alliance through a period of rapid development. He remains as a trustee.



Tony's successor as chair is Dorothy MacKenzie. Dorothy has been a trustee of Green Alliance since 1998. She is Director of Dragon Brands and is a member of business and government advisory groups, she also sits on the board of the Design Council.

Professor Adrian Phillips and Andrew Gifford have retired as Trustees of Green Alliance. We are very grateful for their help and guidance over the years. Newly appointed trustees are Philip Parker, our new Treasurer, who is Director of Resources at Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Deborah Mattinson, joint CEO of Opinion Leader Research; and Alistair Keddie, formerly at the DTI in charge of its sustainable development policy and latterly overseeing the innovation review.

A big thanks also goes to the following individuals who have given their time volunteering for Green Alliance over the last quarter:

Qamer Anwar Rose Baker Daniella Hawkins Errol Walter

members

Green Alliance welcomes the following individual members:

Ms Coralie Abbott	Victor Anderson	Anna Collar
Stephen Crisp	Katie Elliot	Lord Norman Foster OM
Philip Merricks	Julia Thrift	Jane Vaus
Errol Walter	Nick Wood-Dow	

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