

Editorial

Good-bye, environmentalism

The extraordinary U.S. war mobilization has brought one note of sanity to the fore: More and more Americans are speaking out against the insanity over U.S. politics of the past decade and more of environmentalist hegemony.

The United States is facing the consequences of the restriction of oil production due to a number of environmentalist regulations already in place. One is the prohibition of drilling in large sections of Alaska, which have been turned into national wilderness areas. Then there is the recent prohibition, ratified by President Bush, against offshore oil drilling, and the restrictions against the use of tankers to transport oil off the coast of California. Oil refiners are forced to adhere to a variety of regulations purportedly intended to render the combustion of petroleum products less polluting of the atmosphere. With the passage of the new Clean Air Act, if Bush signs it, these measures will be far more restrictive, raising the price of oil and reducing the flow of the refined product.

Whatever happens in the Middle East, nothing is going to stop the great financial collapse already in progress—what we are already seeing as the Great Depression of 1990. Bills such as the amended Clean Air Act will accelerate the current collapse by imposing an unbearable tax upon basic industry and even many sections of the service economy. The mooted figure of an immediate loss of 750,000 jobs upon implementation of the new provisions of the act, is an underestimate by a long shot.

The United States is going to require a major recovery program, and fast. Near the top of the agenda is going to be power sources. Whatever happens to the oil fields in the Middle East, we're going to require a great deal more power inside the United States, generated inside the United States, and not just from petroleum.

At the time of the great oil hoax in 1972, during the Carter administration, the government wasted billions of dollars in support of alternative energy sources—solar power, windmills, development of ethanol and

methanol fuels as an alternative to gasoline, and so on.

Of course, the real non-polluting alternative to burning petrochemicals is nuclear energy, and, not too far down the road, fusion power. The environmentalist Carter administration was opposed to both. While President Reagan ostensibly supported nuclear power, his economic policies were the final straw in the collapse of a nuclear industry which had been bankrupted by being forced to meet more and more regulations which stretched out the time of construction, and then approval, and operation of plants.

The Shoreham and Seabrook plants are classic instances of this ruinous policy. While Seabrook is now finally operational, overcoming a decade of obstacles put in its path, the newly completed Shoreham nuclear plant has been put on the scrapheap by the government of New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, for no reason other than accommodation to the prejudices of the environmentalist lobby.

One lesson of the impending shortage of oil and the accompanying high prices which we will be paying for, is the lunacy of allowing environmentalists to set energy policy. The United States desperately needs massive sources of clean energy, and we are already seeing many disparate forces—not least the supporters of Lyndon LaRouche, but also many others who might have opposed LaRouche's policy under normal conditions, and who are now joining with him to say: "We must have enough power to keep the United States afloat, and recover economically. And that means a lot of safe nuclear plants."

This will be just one step toward economic sanity; but it is an important one.

We must have, in the Congress, a new force, a new leadership, or at least a new pole of leadership, which represents competence in designing a scientifically sound energy program and an economic recovery program. That competence must be based on successful forecasting and analysis of the problem, which too many people, in the Congress and elsewhere, have been denying for much too long.