

## Grand Perspective

There has been an illuminating succession of major stages of economic and social development in human history. Each of these stages has been characterized by its own distinct economic fundamentals, its own worldview, its defining modes of technology, its evolving morals and correlated legal codes, its attitude towards the natural world, its characteristic religious beliefs, and its changing relative status of men and women. These principal stages have been: nomadic hunting and gathering; primitive cultivation and the beginning of settlements; extensive agriculture and the growth of cities; the industrial era; and the information age.

Every stage in the evolution of various epochs of human development has eventually run into its own set of inherent limitations. These limitations, for every civilization stage, inevitably lead to either a breakdown or to transcendence to a new and higher order. The world today can arguably be said to be in the greatest transition ever. It is, of course, at a critical juncture due to the growing numbers of human beings, current and looming conflicts, and the escalating harmful impacts of human activities on the earth.

Humankind can, and will, profoundly change its fundamental methods of living in the world during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The changes are, indeed, already underway in cultural, demographic and technological senses. But time is critically short. Human population is on track to increase to 9 billion in the next 50 years. To embrace the magnitude of changes that are required to mitigate our habitat destruction, resource depletion and climate change impacts, we must act much more decisively and quickly than we are doing today.

**It is clear that the problems we face will grow more severe as we add 3 billion more people to Earth's limited biosphere by the year 2050. There will inevitably be more poverty, starvation, conflict, aggressive competition, and distinctly increased demands on water resources, forests, agricultural lands, rangelands, fisheries, and non-renewable mineral resources --- not to mention the production of greater quantities of waste, pollution, and greenhouse gases. We cannot allow the resistance to bold mitigating measures to overcome the growing need to pursue courageous, farsighted action. We must stave off the ecological disaster and harmful repercussions that will be caused by rapid human population growth, and we must slow down the accompanying and terribly inauspicious increase in extinctions that are being caused by mankind's activities.**

The primary cause of ecological devastation is probably IGNORANCE. Greed and corruption seem to exacerbate the tendency for human beings to consume and damage Planet Earth in the course of everyday life. Scientific understandings give us the motive and means whereby we can overcome ignorance, and do the right thing with regard to our environment and future generations. The great risk, on the other hand, is that science unfortunately also gives us the technological means whereby we can destroy civilization on a global scale.

Good solutions exist to many of the great problems facing humanity today, but we cannot waste time before beginning to embrace them --- certainly not **FOUR MORE YEARS** of the current **only-Vested-Interests-matter Administration**. The Earth Manifesto provides valuable ideas which can help "save the world", including fair full cost pricing, intelligent incentives, the greening of taxation, progressive social initiatives, and a renewed regard for the value of peace in the world. Implementing these plans depends on our collective understanding, our foresight, our earnestness, our perseverance, and our committed caring about our wonderful Planet Earth.

## Expansive Envisionation

All of the utopian visions of humankind are characterized by both **FREEDOM** and **EQUALITY**. Yet freedom and equality are in many ways diametrically opposed --- the greater the freedom in human affairs, the greater that inequalities naturally multiply. The best that we can hope for, and should strive to design our social and political institutions to embrace, is an approximate equality of legal justice --- and of educational and economic opportunity.

Additionally, it seems sensible, fair and wise to design democratic societies in which the extremely fortunate are obligated to contribute towards a minimal safety net for the extremely unfortunate. This is one way in which the most privileged thereby pay for an insurance policy that allows them to retain their extraordinary good fortune.

Progressives strive to actualize this idea by establishing an empathetic insurance policy of social programs that are designed to mitigate the extreme inequalities of wealth and poverty, in recognition of the fact that social inequities inevitably lead to injustices, increased crime, social instability, greater insecurity, a greater potential for terrorism, or even revolutionary conflict.

Conservatives, on the other hand, always seem to want to insure the privileges of the fortunate by policies that are hard-nosed and very costly, involving widespread gun-ownership, strong police forces, severe sentences for wrongdoing, lots of prisons, and a powerful military. Conservatives believe strongly that government should be niggardly with regard to social program spending, in order to be generous with military spending. Traditionalist ideals are subverted by the right wing and the wealthy, powerful privileged into generous government spending for often misguided subsidies to Big Business and tax breaks to the wealthy. The selfish Traditionalist attitudes that advocate such policies are ironically shortsighted, creating a less fair and a less secure world, one that is consequently more dangerous for everyone. ✓

Humanity is engaged in the evolutionary dance of survival, wherein both our rights and responsibilities are increasing, together with our capabilities and our culpabilities. Rather than dividing our societies more aggressively, and increasingly fragmenting the natural world, we must integrate our consciousness, our cultures, our personal values, and our collective wisdom. Spiritual understandings, art, innovation, science, and technical know-how must come together to create enduring societies, an authentic environmental ethic, and a fair balance between freedoms and equality. The freedom of individuals in a society requires some regulation of conduct, so freedom must include certain civic responsibilities and self-discipline.

Individuals and nations must work together, cooperatively and with a reasonable spirit of compromise, to envision and actualize better solutions to common problems, and to defuse the risk created by growing inequities, increasing crowds, and the heightened potential for social instability and conflict.

## Down-to-Earth Grandiosity

**“In the nineteenth century, anticapitalist critics like Marx insisted that economics must be contained within an ethical context; they contended that social justice counted for more than industrial efficiency or private profit. In the late twentieth century, the environmental movement is trying to teach us that both economics and ethics must be contained within an ecological context.”**

--- The Voice of Earth, Theodore Roszak

Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung gave us, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new and clearer understanding of our human nature, with powerful insights into the then-new discipline of psychology. The ancient wisdom, counsel of Apollo and Socrates --- Know Thyself --- had taken a leap forward, and inward. Healing therapies sought to mend conflicts within the self, and to heal the sense of alienation between one person and another, between a person and other family members, and between a person and society.

Today, there is a growing awareness of the even more profound subconscious alienation between we humans and nature. The new discipline of ecopsychology is beginning to shed light on this more fundamental alienation, this repression of our evolutionarily inherent yet submerged sense of interconnectedness with the natural world.

We are beginning to be able to compose respectful, balanced and insightful Letters to Mother Earth, ones which, recognizing the voice of the earth in the deepest recesses of ourselves once again, must be woven into the very fabric of our everyday lives.

**It seems cogently clear that the sensible and visionary must coincide: the best public policy consists of social progressiveness, fiscal conservatism, a commitment to sensible environmental protections, powerful initiatives to assure fairness and peace, and the maintenance of a pervasive, sustained-unto-the-Seventh-Generation awareness of the impacts of decisions made on, as Theodore Roosevelt’s put it, “the greatest good for the greatest number over the greatest period of time.”**

**Self-interest is almost always the most powerful of motivations. But our self-interest is ultimately not identical with our individual selfish interests. Self-interest is inextricably linked to the common good! Greater understanding and cooperation in human affairs is essential to a prosperous future.**

This daunting task faces humanity: first, we must understand our ethical responsibility to ourselves and to the Planet to mitigate the destructiveness of our activities; second, we must live our lives more wholesomely in accord with this understanding; and third, we must demand changes in our economic system, our politicians and our societies which will allow us to live in harmony with the health, the balance, and the limits of natural systems.

**The Earth Manifesto --- Art Serving Society**

## Competition, and Its Consequences

Competition stimulates creativity and innovation in an evolutionary dance of survival between individuals, communities, businesses, and forms of organization. The Industrial Revolution started and accelerated profound changes in technological advances and energy usages, and these changes greatly affected the economic roles of workers, as well as trends of urbanization, demographics, gender roles, and the exploitation of nature.

Adam Smith, a Scottish economist, wrote the manifesto of capitalism, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations in the year 1776. This was the same year as the American Declaration of Independence was written, and both documents emphasized freedom. Adam Smith strongly advocated free enterprise and unrestrained free trade, noting that the wealth of a nation is measured not by its accumulated wealth, but by the productivity and living standards of all of its people. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century subsequently saw the rise of Big Business and the Corporation; the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was characterized by the growth of marketing, advertising and a consumer economy in America; and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is seeing the export of U.S. Business civilization to the rest of the world.

Early abuses of power by businesses, and the growing inequities caused by unrestrained free enterprise, resulted in the historical inevitability of two extraordinary movements in world history. The first, heralded by the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848, was a reaction to the sink-or-swim ruthlessness of capitalism. It advocated social equality, the empowerment of workers, and a classless society. It had fatal flaws, like a dictatorship that just would not wither away, centralized planning that was not efficient, and a failure to recognize fundamental characteristics of markets and human motivations. The Cold War between capitalist and communist ideologies after World War II became a titanic and absurdly costly cultural, economic, social, political and military struggle.

Meanwhile, the muckrakers of the period from 1890 to 1914, and the Great Depression of the 1930's, led to reforms to combat unfair privileges, monopoly practices, and a myriad of social ills, worker abuses, long hours, low wages, unsafe workplaces, and product quality and safety shortcomings. Franklin D. Roosevelt advocated a new role for the federal government to safeguard against the vulnerable cycles of growth and recession in the business world: he created the "New Deal", an ambitious reform, economic recovery, relief, and social security plan to benefit the American people.

The faults of capitalism from a social and environmental perspective were further remedied by reform and regulation during the progressive movements of the 1960's and 1970's. These movements helped establish rights or protections for citizens, workers, minorities, women, the environment, endangered species, and public lands and wilderness areas.

However, a powerful backlash by the Wealthy and Big Business against all of this progress was started by Ronald Reagan, the apostle of the Stern Father (masquerading as a benevolent good guy). He used the fear of Communism (and today we use the fear of terrorism) to increase military spending and unprecedented deficit spending to benefit Big Business and the rich. Simultaneously, Conservatives pushed their agendas of regressive social legislation, the reversal of environmental protections, the exalting of law and order at the expense of fairness and civil rights, opposition to union/worker organizations, more conservative courts, and escalating culture wars.

**Citizens of the United States, you must assert the power that you have as voters to take back the power usurped by Vested Interests --- and once again demand democratic fairness, social progressiveness, and government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Soon, more sensible, fair, and farsighted ideas must begin to prevail, as outlined in the Earth Manifesto!**

## Corporate Power, and Its Abuses

The dominant human institutions on Earth are corporations. They have achieved this status only in the last century, in conjunction with free-market capitalism having achieved supremacy as an economic and social credo worldwide. No empire in history has had the reach of the modern global corporation, which extends across borders, cultures, and governments to acquire markets and assets, and to achieve sales and earn profits.

The Corporation began as an entity whose principal advantage was that it shields its owners from liability. It gathered significant power when it was able to assume legal "personhood", ironically using the post Civil War 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, which was intended to give former slaves citizenship rights. The valuably thought-provoking 2004 Canadian film The Corporation analyzes the implications of this development. As the Corporation has grown in power and influence, it has transcended national boundaries and it has often behaved unethically, abusing its creative potentials with a multitude of destructive consequences.

**The film The Corporation provides the viewer with a daunting perspective of some of the negative characteristics of Corporations. They can, and do, in numerous instances mimic most of the aspects that, in an individual, define a psychopath. They are singularly self-interested in profit, they are often grandiose in self-justification, and they can be incredibly irresponsible, creating great harm to workers, communities, and the environment; they do not feel guilt or remorse for the damages they cause; they eagerly deceive and manipulate in order to maximize profit; and they strive to externalize all costs that they are, by any means, able to avoid. If the metaphor of the firm as a person is a valid one, then the Corporation matches the description of pathological clinical insanity!**

Most protections that have been enacted against the abuses of Corporate power in America have evolved as government mandates --- for everything from anti-monopoly practices, child labor laws, and workers compensation programs to workplace safety programs, securities regulations, and environmental protections. Most vehicle manufacturers derive the majority of their profit today from the production and sale of large Sports Utility Vehicles, whose principal reasons for being are to satisfy advertising-created demand for macho image and luxurious comfort, and to take advantage of loopholes that exempt "small trucks" from auto-emissions regulations. The Ford Motors Company commendably releases an annual Corporate Citizenship report that describes many aspects of its organization that it has tried to make more environmentally friendly, but it does admit the obvious: that the production of large, poor-mileage, excessively polluting SUV's is socially irresponsible.

**Our present industrial economy, because of the extent of its power and influence, must evolve from its current immature stage to a more mature economic stage. The new system must embrace ecological perspectives, mitigate its harmful impacts, respect limits, have goals of sustainable energy and resource usages, and honor the humanity of its workers and the society in which it operates. Free-market capitalism must be redesigned, so that it actually becomes restorative --- minimizing waste, limiting harmful spillover effects to others, embracing more responsible accounting and social practices, adopting an overriding long-term orientation, and striving to really solve problems and to improve the lives of workers and consumers --- not just to singularly maximize short-term profits.**

## The Catch-22 of Change and Complacency

“There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one’s own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. ... Orr would be crazy to fly more missions, and sane if he didn’t, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn’t have to; but if he didn’t want to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle. ‘That’s some catch, that Catch-22,’ he observed.”

--- Catch-22, Joseph Heller

**We humans are faced with a Catch-22 of our own natures in confronting change. We usually require a crisis --- an injurious accident, a disease, a job loss or a calamitous relationship conflict --- in order to open ourselves to alternative ways of looking at things, and before we embrace changes in our actions. We seem to require a crisis to cause us to broaden and deepen our perspective and to reexamine our lives, our beliefs, and our actions.**

**Yet in order to avert terrible social and environmental crises during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we will first, paradoxically, need to make serious and significant changes in our understandings, societies and institutions. Tiffany Twain urges humanity not to complacently wait for new, ever more calamitous crises before demanding true social, economic and political change. Let us use the monumental international crisis caused by the 9/11 attacks to wholeheartedly embrace critical thinking about conflicts, about wasteful fossil fuel usages, about injustices that cause terrorist acts, and about our economic and psychological addiction to aggressive militarism.**

✓ Just open your eyes And realize, the way it’s always been  
Just open your mind And you will find The way it’s always been  
Just open your heart And that’s a start. ✓

--- The Balance, A Question of Balance, The Moody Blues

We humans are creatures of habit. Our convictions and propensities are influenced by profoundly complex factors. We are generally not open-minded to changing our prejudices or our points of view. In crisis we become more aware, more receptive, and more open to possibility. Personal growth and healing are ironically stimulated the most when circumstances deeply challenge us, as it then becomes vibrantly clear that the way that we are living our lives is not functionally healthy.

“We have two opinions: one private, which we are afraid to express, and another one --- the one we use --- which we force ourselves to wear ... until habit makes us comfortable in it, and the custom of defending it presently makes us love it, adore it, and forget how pitifully we came by it. Look at it in politics.”

--- The Autobiography of Mark Twain

Better Safe than Sorry? The “precautionary principle”, as enunciated in Principle 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, says that “Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.” This principle of precautionary action has sparked great controversy due to the complex scope of uncertainties, the risks inherent in production and innovation, and the resistance of Industry to paying for pollution, for harm to human health, and for environmental damages associated with their activities. Paradoxes abound in our policy determinations --- but the time has come today to find a way to be more sensible with regard to the great problems of humanity, judging what course is best in any given circumstance by balancing competing interests, taking into account the Big Picture, and keeping in mind fairness and foresight.

# Earth Summit Sensibility

The first Earth Summit gathering took place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The conclusions reached at this meeting of representatives of most of the countries of the world were that all countries of the world must address issues of global warming, species extinctions, and consumerism's waste of the planet's natural resources.

The first President George Bush ignited a diplomatic furor by rejecting accords to protect biodiversity and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Partially as a consequence, U.S. energy consumption has jumped 21%, and greenhouse gas emissions are up 13%, in just the first ten years after the Rio Summit.

In the year 2002, a World Summit for Sustainable Development convened in August in Johannesburg, South Africa. The second President George Bush refused to attend, fearing a media stage forum for criticism of the United States, which continues to exhibit very strong tendencies to be unwilling to commit to real progress in addressing sustainable development and strong environmental protections.

**The United States, in fact, continues to stifle many global environmental accords inspired by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. This is because Big Oil, Big Auto, Big Coal, Big Chemical, Big Drug, Big Military --- Big Business in general --- effectively have dominant control over our government, and they generally oppose environmental regulations, social fairness initiatives, intelligent incentives and disincentives that promote the common welfare, and other policies that are in the best interests of American citizens and the world.**

We simply must reduce Vested Interest influence on our elections, and elect visionary leaders who are not beholden to the Status Quo! In order to establish rational and reasonable priorities, it is common sense that our political system cannot be allowed to continue to be radically skewed by interests whose primary activities are contrary to the general good.

Amedeo Postiglione (love that name!) is the President of the Foundation for an International Court of the Environment. He is working with judges worldwide to help establish an institution to formulate and enforce international laws, in order to help achieve environmental justice at both the national and international levels. The need for this is significant due to the fact that global businesses are becoming more multinational, and there is currently no jurisdiction or authority that can apply fundamental environmental protections internationally.

**The United States must find some way to move progressively towards the support of intelligent planning and new institutions that will help protect the world and its peoples.**

“Knowledge, above all, is a responsibility for the integrity of what we are, primarily of what we are as ethical creatures.”

The Ascent of Man, J. Bronowski

## BUSINESS AND SOCIAL ACTION

"Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not, and a sense of humor to console him for what he is."

--- Francis Bacon, 1561 - 1626

The historically effective organizational and marketing techniques of free enterprise must be redirected away from:

- (1) taking too much from the environment, and doing so in a terrible harmful way;
- (2) making products that require excessive amounts of energy, water, pollutants and toxic substances; and,
- (3) producing extraordinary quantities of waste and poisons, and causing harm to present and future generations of all species of life, including humans.

Trillions of dollars of subsidies are given worldwide every year. These are shortsighted mechanisms that distort market principles, encouraging environmental degradation, stimulating unwise consumption, creating inefficiencies, exacerbating the misallocation of resources, discouraging innovative change, impeding the success of entrepreneurial businesses, and hindering the development of intelligent usage of alternatives.

Additionally, we allow businesses to externalize enormous costs onto society, instead of including these costs in the price of their products. These costs include healthcare costs related to air and water pollution, acid rain, toxic waste cleanup costs, wetlands and rainforest destruction, and future costs to be incurred due to species extinctions, global warming, and climate change.

No business could exist for long if it continuously spends its capital resources; yet we exploit the resources of the Earth with no regard for their depletion.

We must redesign our economy and business systems so that they encourage true efficiency and conservation. And this redesign must work for owners, investors, employees, and life on earth, without requiring a complete transformation of mankind. Incentives and disincentives could be used wisely to shift taxes from income to taxes on pollution, waste, and environmental degradation. This would create a powerful impetus to revise and constantly improve methods of production, distribution, and consumption.

Accounting scandals in the year 2002 shook the business world, bringing into question the ethics and ethical conduct of both businesses and the government. The seamy side of crony capitalism was exposed, and the system moved to patch up the damage, the risks, and improprieties. We must use that crisis as an opportunity to reform our system. We must examine our value systems, and courageously address the corrupt practices in our systems, and the honesty and rectitude of our businesses and public institutions.

Theodore Roosevelt defined Conservation as the means to achieve the economic goal of providing the greatest good for the greatest number over the greatest period of time. The need for Conservation is increasing! We cannot figuratively "fiddle while Rome burns." We cannot adopt an attitude of "après moi, le deluge." Intelligent planning for the future of life on Earth cries out for open-minded debate, for cooperation, for working together locally, nationally, and internationally to address our common problems.



## Gambling Egregiously

**Planetary life-support systems are being degraded at an increasingly rapid rate. Business and political leaders, and most consumers as well, are in denial about the scale and seriousness of the ecological damage being done today. The irreversible trends of global extinctions, and of the alteration of the gaseous composition of the atmosphere, are exacerbated by each further moment of inaction.**

Consider this: Andrew Marshall, the founder of the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment commissioned a new study that concluded "it may be a dangerous act of self-deception" to suppose that global warming will cause only gradual global climate change. A much more massive ecological threat to the national security of the United States is the increasingly probable potential for global warming to trigger an Abrupt Climate Change event, creating worldwide havoc in food production and natural disasters, costing millions of lives due to starvation and wars, perhaps within the next 20 years.

Scientists talk of the potentiality of Abrupt Climate Change due to the fact that paleontologists have discovered proof from Arctic ice-core drilling that rapid, dramatic changes in the earth's climate have occurred in the past. They now understand the mechanisms of such changes --- and human beings are contributing to circumstances that may be mimicking such conditions by spewing billions of tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere each year.

**The entire global climate is affected by what oceanographers call "thermohaline circulation" in the earth's oceans. The sinking of cold water from the Arctic Ice Sheet drives the Gulf Stream and other currents in the Atlantic Ocean. The Gulf Stream consists of warm Caribbean waters drawn north by the sinking of the cold water from the Arctic Ice Sheet, making Europe's climate about 15 degrees warmer than it would otherwise be. Aerial photography has recently disclosed that the Arctic Ice Sheet has shrunk by 20% in the past 20 years, due to global warming. The Arctic Ocean could be ice-free within one human generation. This could alter Atlantic currents, disrupting weather patterns worldwide.**

The U.S. Department of Defense has thus been made aware that the risk of Abrupt Climate Change should be elevated beyond a scientific debate to a critical national security concern. How has the Bush Administration responded to this risk? Incredibly, it is sticking with its friends in the Oil and related industries, misleading the public and opposing even the first step in controlling greenhouse gas emissions, continuing to oppose ratification of the Kyoto Accords. It is further delaying the implementation of significant steps towards mitigating our dangerous dependence on the extravagant burning of fossil fuels. This is Proof Positive that politicians are radical risk takers, gambling with our future to let Big Business profit more irresponsibly in the short term. THIS IS STUPID! Help pressure politicians to be more responsible to our best interests!!

It is rash, reckless gambling not to aggressively address this potential problem by more cautious and efficient uses of fossil fuels. Instead of spending enormous amounts of money prosecuting war on entire countries in a crude, injustice-filled, human-rights abusing approach to fighting terrorism, we should refocus our priorities. Social justice in the Arab world should be given more importance. Sensible environmental protections, sustainable development in poor countries, the improvement of fresh water systems, and urban slum cleanup would also help alleviate disaffection and antagonism that contributes to terrorism.

**The National Academy of Sciences has stated, with regard to global warming and climate change, that "A wait-and-see attitude might mean waiting until it is too late." NOW is the time to begin tackling the problems caused by greed, profligacy, pollution, heartlessness, injustices, and extremism!**

**Let us remember the words of the Lorax (Dr. Seuss), and begin to "care a whole awful lot"!**

## Tailspin of Terrorism

The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 created an enormous reaction of fear, insecurity, feelings of violation, and self-righteous anger. It is understandable that our response to the 9/11 attacks are aggressive and vindictive --- but we are foolishly almost certainly creating more terrorism than we are vanquishing by means of our heavy-handed, authoritarian, American supremacist, militaristic, and in many ways indiscriminately unjust "War on Terror". The number of terrorist attacks in the world has doubled in the period since 9/11, compared to the number in the same span of time before September 11<sup>th</sup>, and Muslim countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are becoming increasingly destabilized.

It is shortsighted, unjust, extremely expensive, and self-defeating to prosecute a "War on Terror" without addressing the underlying causes of terrorism. In addition to military, law enforcement, intelligence, and financial measures, we must address social issues and the valid grievances that contribute to terrorism. Instead, we are perpetrating injustices on whole nations with our bombing and warfare offensives, humiliating people who are already desperate victims of injustices and a lack of education and opportunity --- and who further believe that their causes are just, and that God is on their side. Social initiatives such as helping other countries build schools, hospitals, and civic infrastructure, and helping guarantee minimum human rights, would be a far better investment than enormous military expenditures and aggressive authoritarian measures. We should reduce our interferences in the sovereignty of other nations.

**Social conservatives, the political bureaucracy, Big Business, and the right wing have taken great advantage of the terrible calamity of 9/11 to increase their power and advance their self-interest and hyper-conservative causes. Specifically, politicians have used the impetus of fear and insecurity in the wake of terrorist attacks to manipulate the American public into reinforcing support for the following retrogressive actions:**

- ✓(1) **Significantly increasing military spending, the power of the federal government's executive branch, and foreign policy aggressiveness in prosecuting preemptive warfare;**
- ✓(2) **Reducing citizen's civil liberties with greatly expanded government powers in the Patriot Act, empowering an increasingly Big-Brother-like federal government;**
- ✓(3) **Making oil and gas development the primary purpose and use of the nation's public lands, in such environmentally sensitive places as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, instead of making bold commitments to advancing intelligent plans to develop renewable alternatives and cleaner technologies, and to use fossil fuels more efficiently and less wastefully;**
- ✓(4) **Continuing to oppose better mileage standards for vehicles and incentives for better fuel efficiency, with the apparent goal of making the Oil and Auto industries more profitable and delaying the investment in innovative technologies to move away from fossil fuel dependence; and,**
- ✓(5) **Exploiting our National Forests and public lands more rapidly and with fewer restrictions, rolling back and significantly weakening existing environmental laws and regulations.**

Tiffany Twain says: These policies are exceedingly misguided, foolish, and irresponsible! The powerful capitalize on fears to advance their socially and environmentally retrogressive agendas, precisely at a time that we must begin to far more boldly change the fundamental premises of our economic and political systems! The time has come today for greater individual caring about social fairness and environmental protections --- and for new leadership reflecting these important concerns.