



Delaney: "What to do in a failing civilization"

Posted by [Prof. Goose](#) on September 19, 2005 - 3:40pm

Topic: [Policy/Politics](#)

<http://energybulletin.net/8990.html> (snippets under the fold)

Can global civilization adapt successfully to degradation of the biosphere and depletion of fossil fuels? I argue that it cannot. Important elements of all constituent societies would have to be reformed. Reform would have to be radical and would be uncertain of success.

It could be undertaken only in the presence of incontrovertible necessity--a necessity that will reveal itself incontrovertibly only when catastrophic collapse has become unavoidable. I conclude that those who seek to preserve civilization should plan for its survival in restricted regions.

The nature and scale of our economic behavior is reducing the capacity of the Earth to support us in the future. The list is long: destruction of biological diversity, over fishing, ozone holes, aquifer depletion, the drying up of rivers and lakes, the pollution of ground water with salt and industrial chemicals, soil degradation, desertification, fossil fuel depletion, mineral depletion, and climate change.

In spite of these trends, we demand more from the Earth each year. The demographers say that there will be 8 or 9 billion of us in 2050, absent intervening catastrophe, just when some of these trends will have reached their full destructive capacity, and all of them will be working furiously to demolish the support Earth lends us. Can we react in time to oppose these trends effectively?



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