

Given the lack of public trust elucidated by Mr. Miller and the need for far more transparency in the making of Canadian policy on climate change, I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that we need an independent institution here in Canada to perform practical policy-oriented research on climate change and energy policy. If it is of interest to you, I would be happy to explore this more in detail in the question period.

I think the third lesson we have learned from the last two or three days is that climate change is principally an issue of energy policy. The only way to achieve meaningful savings in carbon dioxide emissions in the short run is by major gains in energy efficiency and in energy conservation. We have heard that many countries think this is indeed possible and that it is sometimes possible with significant cost savings both to the industry and to the consumer. This is important, because in the not too distant future, if the climatologists are right, we will need to be looking toward an energy economy that is producing 50% to 80% less carbon dioxide.

Rather surprisingly, in the omissions category, I heard little mention of nuclear power in the discussions. Although it has massive environmental problems of its own, it is the only way we currently have of generating large amounts of electricity without producing large amounts of carbon dioxide.

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I feel the nuclear option is not an important short-term solution because of its cost, its inevitable and growing siting problems, and because of the time-lags involved in constructing the stations. If we doubled the world's existing stock of nuclear power stations overnight, we would only achieve savings equivalent to 5% of the current production of carbon dioxide.

When the climate change issue first arose, and when the 20% goal of the Toronto conference was first established, there was a general feeling of hopelessness. There were cries that this could not be achieved, that we would have to stop driving cars, that we would need to de-industrialize, etc. This has since been revealed as baloney, in part because we are relearning how to do studies we first learned to do in the period following the oil shock—i.e., how to manage energy demand.

As Jim MacNeill pointed out, the post-Arab-oil-boycott period has decoupled the inevitable and intractable link we used to have between economic growth and energy growth. These studies are now beginning to be reflected in a number of national policy shifts around the world. Some of these were mentioned yesterday. Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway and Finland now have some form of emissions freeze or cut as national policy. These have been accompanied by carbon taxes, emission taxes or the like.

The Swedes, on the outset, have apparently painted themselves into an impossible corner. A number of years ago Swedes voted to dismantle the country's nuclear power stations. They are wary of developing their few remaining hydro sites because these developments will result in the disappearance of the last of Sweden's wild rivers. And their