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ARTICLES

NEPA and the Next America: Designing Our Transition to Global Sustainability

Andrew Euston*

Greetings. As a contributor to section 102(2)(A)¹ of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), I attach the utmost importance to these two days for building upon the first twenty years of our country's internationally precedent-setting law, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. I am deeply challenged to be asked by Dinah Bear, the General Counsel of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), to address you. Her request that I look back invited my looking ahead as well. For this I am particularly grateful. What lies immediately ahead for America are its ten, or with any luck, its twenty most critical years of influence upon humanity — upon the global prospects for the future well-being of the entire human race.

Thirty years ago next Monday, as a recent graduate architect and new Medical Service Corps Lieutenant, I arrived at the headquarters of the United States Air Force's Tempo-8 and thereby launched a federal career. As a colleague, therefore, I welcome to Washington, D.C. the seven hundred of you who are here to learn what may be in store for our work as the nation's environmental policy implementors.

It is an honor and a pleasure to be sharing the introduc-

* This article is a keynote address by Andrew Euston, FAIA, Senior Urban Design and Energy Program Officer, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), delivered before the "NEPA 20th year" conference of the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) concerning "THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT: TODAY'S LAW FOR THE FUTURE," Washington, D.C. (Sept. 21-22, 1989).

1. 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(A) (1969).

tion for this genuinely profound occasion with the University of Indiana's esteemed Dr. Lynton K. Caldwell. Dr. Caldwell's focus has included section 102(2)(C)² and the police power aspects of NEPA. My own focus is to be upon the law's potentially creative and administrative aspect: section 102(2)(A), known as NEPA's interdisciplinary environmental design mandate.

Dr. Caldwell is arguably the dean of public administration education in America as well as being the principal author of NEPA. Three weeks from now, Lynton will join me at a four-day national workshop being hosted by the Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) forward-looking partners and some pioneering citizens and officials of Richmond, Indiana, and its surrounding Wayne County. We will explore the Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace concept, a promising component for HUD Secretary Jack Kemp's Enterprise Zone Program.

These days we hear lots of new terms that may help emphasize certain points of view. Globalists use terms such as a "soft" versus a "crash landing" to express concern about environmental and economic events in store for industrialized civilization. The Prime Minister of Trinidad used the term "surplus countries" to characterize resource "have" nations in contrast to "have not" ones such as his own. Words are curious. In law, much rests upon where a word appears, why it is there, who is using it, and when it is used. NEPA's words come close to expressing a transformation within the national character. Substantively, for me, "interdisciplinary" stands as NEPA's key word.

Section 102(2)(A)³ of NEPA reads, "[a]ll agencies of the Federal Government shall — (A) utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and decision making which may have an impact on man's environment. . . ."

The section's author, NEPA draftsman, William Van

2. *Id.* § 4332(2)(C).

3. *Id.* § 4332(2)(A).

Ness, was staff to Senator Skip Jackson when that Senator called for, sponsored, and positioned NEPA for ultimate use by President Nixon in 1969. Bill drew the language from my testimony⁴ for presentation at Senate hearings on Urban Affairs in 1967. It was one of those purer instances where a person had something to say and said it, and another was listening for something and heard it.

What were my concerns? As I stated in my testimony, our nation is rapidly amassing an accurate and compelling literature of alarm: *God's Own Junkyard*,⁵ *The Other America*,⁶ *The Wasted Americans*,⁷ *Silent Spring*,⁸ *Unsafe at Any Speed*,⁹ *Manchild in the Promised Land*¹⁰ — the list builds. A time has come for meaningful reform which recognizes, as our great writers do, the social consequences of the environment. Our environmental garden needs tending. For one thing, we conquered nature when we should have adapted to it.

Positioned at the American Institute of Architects as the Director of Urban Programs, I worked with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to bring political scientists, sociologists, urban designers, and others into its mission. Senator Jennings Randolph's Public Works staff called upon me to help design their Urban Highway Hearings with them. Rioting and assassinations were, let's say, in the air. Before enacting NEPA, Congress acted on preservation, intergovernmental cooperation, flood insurance, architectural barriers, and after NEPA's enactment, on relocation, archaeology, energy conservation, and fire prevention.

The following specialized suit, concerning community impaction, may serve as illustrations of the section's litigious

4. Exhibit B, *Socio-Physical Design Policy*, of testimony by A. Rogers on behalf of the American Institute of Architects before the Senate Subcommittee on the Executive Reorganization of Government (Apr. 19, 1967).

5. P. BLAKE, *GOD'S OWN JUNKYARD* (1964).

6. M. HARRINGTON, *THE OTHER AMERICA* (1981).

7. E. MAY, *THE WASTED AMERICANS* (1964).

8. R. CARSON, *SILENT SPRING* (1962).

9. R. NADER, *UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED* (1965).

10. CLAUDE BROWN, *MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND* (1965).

uses. In *Trinity v. Romney*,¹¹ New York City attorney Martin Baker cross-examined numerous expert witnesses in many disciplines in a HUD challenge around issues of neighborhood socio-economic tipping points. As for the goals and context of the passage of NEPA, I shall attest here only to the history behind my original statement. NEPA has a minimal legislative history and there are no illuminating court tests of it. No standards were set by which it is to be interpreted, for they would prove cumbersome, and if needed, the adversary process offers a remedy. The passage of the statute, placed before the police and other interpretive powers of NEPA, serves as an invocation. It appeals to one's higher sense of fairness and balance, and it calls upon the wisdom of our predecessors, or rather that reservoir which we attribute to certain disciplines.

NEPA's police power enforcement appears to fare well with the premise as it stands. Most environmental impact reporting and litigation adheres to what can be termed the "interdisciplinary environmental design mandate" of NEPA. If there has been a shortfall, it lies with internal administrative and creative pursuit of the law, for indeed it is the law. Few agencies tend to the environment as well as they could. The federal government is not yet an environmentalist. It is the "L" word, leadership, and the level of political vision which makes this so. As Americans become aware of the import of the global environmental crisis, I foresee this creative role for NEPA taking on a centrality in our very character as a people. Such is the case I bring before you today.

Today I will be sharing a NEPA-based perspective for the shaping of a positive outcome, but let's look first at some troublesome things in our way. The title I chose for this talk is "NEPA and the Next America: Designing Our Transition to Global Sustainability." It has implications we have yet to cover. I proceed first by portraying our current troublesome reality — a point from which we must make our transition. For Americans, it is a double-pronged global threat of economic competition and environmental decline.

11. 387 F. Supp. 1044 (S.D.N.Y. 1974).

As a part of my work, myself and a colleague have structured six annual national conferences for the HUD Department of Energy (DOE) Community Energy Systems aimed at local energy-efficient investment partnerships. Last February's event focused upon "Energy Competitiveness and the Environment," for which dozens of scientists and experts were canvassed. I came away from that experience alarmed for my seven-year-old and more so for his successors. Current reality for humanity is grim. Hope lies in collective actions taken to transmute the prevailing baneful conditions of world ecology, hunger, justice, and governance. Taking ecology alone, this Nation's role is compromised by a range of bad habits such as: utter dependency upon cheap, carbonaceous fuel; the proclivity of corporate enterprise to engage in preemptive maneuvers in an attempt to ward off potential competition that would otherwise benefit our politically under-represented global ecology; and a prevailing popular disconnection (in this, our seventy-five percent urban/suburban-dwelling society) from local governance of our resource consumption patterns, and their global ecological sequences.

This last trait is perhaps the most grave. We all take part. It amounts to mass denial. As a result, this dysfunctional behavior perpetuates inefficiency and inaction in the face of declining competitiveness and a declining global ecological base of life support. Our lack of corrective focus and intent may yet bring this urban-industrial civilization down. Some conclude we have effectively done so already. Consider the fact that civilization is already determining what creatures go extinct; how long growing seasons shall be; how healthy food is to be; if there is food to feed the world; how much skin cancer people get; how many genetic booby-traps get planted; which waters are to be fishable, which water potable, and what soil tillable; how much phytoplankton is at sea; how much oxygen we have to breathe.

Hopefully, we are reaching a critical mass of news and scientific information with which to overcome this collective stupor. Our science base is critical for a mobilization of public concern and political action. Yet, arriving at a consensus on warming at the equator seems to be taking too long. In fact,

some biological sciences support the view that warming is the advent of the next ninety to one-hundred-thousand-year ice age that is due, give or take many centuries, along about now.

If at all possible, we must rapidly get beyond theory and into an effective predictive stance. It is central to humanity's strategic defense — a defense in point of fact against ourselves. Climatic symptoms, acting upon the United States alone, already indicate radical reductions for our arable resource base. This may further menace trade balances and world stability, should the United States continue changing its role from a food exporter to a food importer.

One thing I have discovered is how very diffident the scientific community can be regarding the introduction of environmental news — good or bad. Another discovery is the importance of encouraging a trans-disciplinary scientific spirit. It is reminiscent, for instance, of the disciplinary struggles around urban freeway design in the years that precipitated NEPA. Then, whole codes of legitimate ethics came into conflict along with the illegitimate customs of patronage. Today, sustaining civilization hinges fatefully upon a rapid decoding of the combined ozone-layer/global-warming/pre-ice age signals of the atmosphere, geology, and oceanic and biological life. Yet climatologists have exhibited their disdain toward biologists until recently. In any event, we may look forward to hearing tomorrow from the prominent scientists and others whose findings may further calm or ruffle our minds on many such points.

I see our Nation as, yet again one of pioneers or rather of pioneering communities. Those of us here today are potentially a community of pathfinders. Pioneering or pathfinding, Americans are already embarking on a transition with NEPA at the forefront. However, absent the fearful possibility of some eco-holocaust — an ecological Pearl Harbor of some sort to stir us into action — Americans have only our deliberate intent with which to mobilize the transition from where we are ecologically to where we should be, for the sake of the human family. Prefer it or not, ours is a global transition from the environmental era of the present to an emerging ecological epoch.

I say epoch advisedly. Mankind must adjust to global ecology rather than global ecology adjusting to man. It would appear that our adjustment is to be a very long-range enterprise, involving centuries. From my student notes, dating back to 1957, the German-born architect, Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe, once lectured about contemporary civilization and the mind-focusing value of determining its essence over a long span of time. Mies stated: "The epoch is so long-ranged. It cannot as a phase be shortened from 500 years to ten. By comparison to others we can find out the nature of this epoch. Science is there, technology. It is everybody's job to find out."¹²

Although it may have meant little to me before now, I find this curious imperative about epochs highly compelling today, and so I share it. Ecological epochs offer the concept of our shaping a meaningful temporal context in which to frame modern society's transitional mission — a context which relates us to those who are to come — ultimately, perhaps, a context for meaningful sacrifice as well. Mies may have been on to something. He had his own aphorism to add to this subject: "People make a lot of things possible, but not everything that is possible is essential."¹³ I hear a contemporary eco-environmental sage at work in such sentiments. Anyway, how about the "epoch of the essential"?

My talk now brings us back to NEPA by presenting the concept of the Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace. I believe it offers a unique means by which to mobilize public support in order to create a transition to global ecological balance and sustainability. Sustainable Enterprise derives from my own experiences at HUD in working with NEPA. With this presentation, therefore, I offer six basic principles for a strategic environmental policy. These are designed to reinforce our Nation's probable destiny as humanity's principal determinant in shaping the fate of our planet's vital systems of ecology — probable, that is, if we choose to grasp the opportunities

12. Informal conversation with Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe in 1957 during undergraduate studies at Yale University.

13. *Id.*

before us.

Concerning the creative work we have ahead, principle number one is that governmental agencies, at all levels which are associated in some significant way with construction, buildings, production, or resources, must become creative activists in support of the Nation's strategic environmental objectives. HUD offers an example of this environmentalism by demonstrating the potential for relating a domestic agency mission directly to these global concerns.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has begun to explore the potential for encouraging communities to enter a burgeoning, international, ecologically-responsive marketplace, which we at HUD have labeled as the Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace. The dynamics of this fast-evolving marketplace are characterized by the need for drawing, so to speak, upon the earth's ecological interest rather than using up its ecological principal. The global resource base necessary to sustain life then becomes harvested and replenished rather than spoiled, trashed, or lost.

The second principal which underscores the future virility of this Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace was presented this January in *Time Magazine's* unprecedented "Endangered Earth" issue.¹⁴ Civilization is "at a critical turning point: the actions of those living will determine the future, and possibly the very survival of the species We must do a thousand things differently."¹⁵

It is this marketplace which is examined in twelve in-depth articles of a special September issue of *Scientific American* on "Managing Planet Earth." Four articles specifically cover entrepreneurial strategies: strategies for agriculture,¹⁶ energy use,¹⁷ manufacturing,¹⁸ and sustainable economic de-

14. Sanction, *Endangered Earth*, *TIME*, Jan. 2, 1989, at 24.

15. *Id.*

16. Crossman & Rosenberg, *Strategies for Agriculture*, *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*, Sept. 1989, at 128.

17. Gibbons, Gwin & Blair, *Strategies for Energy Use*, *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*, Sept. 1989, at 136.

18. Frosch & Gallopoulos, *Strategies for Manufacturing*, *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*, Sept. 1989, at 144.

velopment.¹⁹ The issue's anchor article, entitled "Toward a Sustainable World"²⁰ and authored by former Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator William D. Ruckelshaus, explores principle number three for the work ahead in environmental quality. This principle states that people and nations are being faced with the global ecological crisis with a values shift which is to be compared historically to the transformative impacts of both the agricultural and industrial revolutions. It is this marketplace whose commerce was found to be coterminous with the world's most viable national economies in a study performed six years ago. This study led to the United Nation's authoritative Brundtland Commission Report, released last year, with its urgent warnings that industrial civilization mend its ways.²¹

It is also this marketplace that has established itself here in the United States over the past decade of energy cost fluctuations, agricultural difficulties, toxic waste revelations, and intensifying public concerns about healthy foods, potable water, and recycling. It also focuses on the great promise of district heating and cooling, bio-mass municipal waste-water treatment systems, rock dust soil remineralization, local import replacements, and value-added agro-forestry strategies. This same marketplace is the one in which the Japanese lead in photovoltaics, Canada leads in pursuit of hydrogen as a fuel, the Soviet Union leads in the use of district heating, Scandinavia leads in the techniques for thermal storage, and Switzerland leads in optimal public transportation. We can take our place alongside these precursors, if our local communities come to see the wisdom of it. We have the inventors, but our urban civilization must improve our patronage to them. Foreign investors are ahead of Americans in securing United States patents. Since 1986 we have had trade deficits in high technology. These points bring me to principle num-

19. MacNeill, *Toward a Sustainable World*, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, Sept. 1989, at 166.

20. *Id.*

21. See WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, *OUR COMMON FUTURE* (1987).

ber four: our communities equal the demand side of our ecological equation, and it is there where we must achieve sustainability — better as foresight than in crisis or cataclysm.

After the ecological lessons of 1988, little doubt should remain with this audience that civilization is emersed in an ecological crisis, and is at dire risk of suffocating and burying itself by its proudest handy-works. Each American community must begin somewhere to help save the environment if this dire objective is to be timely pursued. Principle number five is that our local communities directly control upwards of forty percent of the nation's energy and resource consumption choices. This calls for concerted local sustainable entrepreneurship that combines energy, environmental, commercial, industrial, and agricultural know-how and innovation.

If America's path-making entrepreneurship is to be sustained competitively within this new Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace, our communities will have to mobilize their own local transitions to make this happen. Directly tied to NEPA in some important ways, and adding one final premise for shaping our strategic environmental policies in the coming years, is principle number six: to sustain themselves, our communities will have to internalize the globally-scaled Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace. For example, the dynamic choice-making institutional infrastructure of our local public, profit, and non-profit sectors must re-adjust itself. Clearly, such complex shifts as these must come out of locally perceived need. As I shall touch upon, they can be made in the positive, creative spirit which the word "enterprise" implies.

Where the intent is present, people can begin by building upon the local community and economic development foundations already put into place over the past two decades. These foundations are influenced in large part by NEPA and its environmental design mandate. They entail active public involvement in such urban environmental design quality-of-life matters as historic preservation, balanced transportation, multiple-use and joint development, fair and decent housing, safe and amenable public spaces, and ancillary concerns about civic pride, cultural celebration, and diversity.

The six eco-environmental principles before you have lo-

cal business enterprise as their focus rather than NEPA, as our handy federal tourniquet for the ratcheting of remedial eco-environmental surgery. My two decades assigned to urban design with HUD offered me a unique purview of how an urban civilization operates when it urbanizes. As a direct consequence of this exposure, my emphasis is with the softer, creative, administrative potentialities of NEPA as opposed to its harder police powers. NEPA offers us both a metaphor and a model of an institutionally-supported community bridgework. Understanding this local-level picture may be helpful in positioning this federal level enactment to help solve the global ecological crisis.

As I have proposed it, the Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace is a means for entering the culture through the front door, through commerce, through jobs. If the wary public is to accept its situation ecologically, it is going to need an alternative to more restrictions. It is not enough to come down on water treatment compliance if construction grants are gone. It is not enough to say "conserve" if it is not the local crisis of the moment. Communities are becoming environmentally awakened, however, and there are people in them for whom alternative ways to respond would become a desirable avocation or vocation, if the option were put realistically before them. Local staging of such options could be greatly advanced by a coherent and orchestrated federal effort to set the stage nationally.

This is what the bad global ecological news is creating — a need for crafting and conveying to America's local community positive leadership, yet ecologically balanced remedial approaches, by which the fatally pejorative "environmental obstructionist" label need no longer stick. This is the crux, for many attitudinal barriers are fixed in place against NEPA's statutory missions. Potentially for each American community, these acceptable alternatives do exist in development and production contexts, such as the ones the term "Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace" suggests. These are the next acceptable waves of strategic urban environmentalism, I believe, and they need to reach our shores.

We all live at the local level and that is where our soci-

ety's transition to ecological balance must find its niches. Those concerned with the healing of our planet need to create non-threatening, pro-active alternatives for the transition that must take place. Though legislatively a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, a potential avalanche of new and restrictive enactments are appearing, some of which are highly repetitive of NEPA. It would be best if the federal message about the environment were a positive one tied to economics. If not, its vanguards are likely to reel from the backlash. At the federal level, we cannot afford to cause those citizens who can and do accept the ecological facts of life to become isolated.

If an economic development variant of NEPA policy were to be mounted, it could call upon the multitude of people having urban environmental competencies found in most communities. These are people who care deeply about their communities and do respond when attainable options are pointed out for them. They rally for these potentialities. An army of such people are in each of the three action sectors — the public, profit and non-profit sectors. These include people who know how to work out differences, and know how to implement and use tools of communication and negotiation. Our society is blessed with these human resources in almost every community.

Where did they come from? In environmental quality terms, originally most were quite unaware of what they could do or what the choices were. In 1967, I was asked by Bill Van Ness to suggest, on behalf of the environmental design professions, just how we viewed the environment. Bill, in all honesty, said that just two years before, in law school the word had never come up for him.

In 1972, you might have said the very same about reporter Genevieve Ray of York, Pennsylvania, after she ran for mayor and lost. She was guided by an inspired citizen-led interdisciplinary design process that successfully spared San Antonio's River Walk, our finest pedestrian-focused urban design setting. Ray followed her instincts by setting up a quasi-public development scheme to revitalize a riverside sector of York. Next, a pioneering banker named Aldrich Edwards per-

ceived that historic preservation could be a sound investment. What was to have become junkyards became a handsome, racially, and economically integrated residential area, and a major asset to the York community as a whole.

York's fledgling environmental designers invented their own financing schemes replete with revolving funds, design feasibility studies, budget hearings, and advisory components. Both Ray and Edwards have gone on in other communities to increasingly broader environmental careers. In my NEPA role at HUD, I delivered some coaching through which I learned a great deal. The analogy here is with the comparable steps yet to be taken in creating the local reality of a Sustainable Enterprise Marketplace. More importantly, when the local conditions are right, it is an analogy that will not be lost upon the millions of skilled, motivated, and well-placed urban environmentalists out there now.

All across the United States, new patterns of environmental design such as York's example became reinvented, swapped, and creatively cannibalized during the past two decades of NEPA. HUD's technical assistance program for local interdisciplinary urban environmental design (U.E.D.) was put into place nationally without fanfare, without formalism, and without unnecessary new layerings of credentialism. Instead, vital, formalized infrastructures of neighborhood, local, regional, and national associations, societies, and development groups emerged to span the gaps between individuals and the many impersonal forces shaping their communities. A rarely told story of community-based decision making, this infrastructure remains as a monument to the ideals of an "urban-mistrusting" Thomas Jefferson. It is comprised of many discrete and formalized infrastructures that fit conceptually under the informal NEPA-inspired umbrella of local urban environmental design that HUD set up.

In seeking technical assistance funds to promote this umbrella concept at HUD, there is a NEPA-derived mandate in HUD's regulations. It is under the eligible activities of the Community Development Block Grants program. In all, from 1974 through 1980, HUD's U.E.D. program plied perhaps two million dollars in HUD grants, including large amounts of in-

kind, from the National League of Cities, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Rice University, and the University of California at Berkeley. Before its swath was cut, U.E.D. cooperative arrangements and inter-agency agreements contributed another half million dollars from the National Endowment for the Arts, a million in National Science Foundation funds, and several hundred thousand in DOT grants. Many bit parts in other agencies were, of course, involved.

By our use of distinguished interdisciplinary juries and widely disseminated media coverage, the HUD Biennial National Awards for Urban Environmental Design communicated a potent interdisciplinary message and an even stronger community design administration message. U.E.D.'s agenda was taken up because our society was indeed poised to do business that way. Additional billions of dollars in urban development improvements resulted annually from this widespread upgrading of local decision making which flowed in part from the ethos surrounding HUD's NEPA-based environmental design movement. Many communities are the better for it. A presidential awards jury concluded as much in 1984.

There is more that could be said about the parallels here between the birthing and care of U.E.D. over the past twenty years in America and the need now to confront the twin economic competitiveness and ecological balance problems in American cities. There is also more to learn from the close analogy between people's inability to see what is sometimes called the "urban fabric" and what we are experiencing now as a distant, formless, menacing ogre — the ecological deterioration of the planet. It is in part our failure to see the forest because we focus only on the trees. City blocks, empty lots, and annexed farm lands are the so-called "trees" that almost everybody can perceive as urban dwellers. The urban fabric "forest" is the incremental but dominating overall patterns we tend not to see unless our awareness becomes attuned through culture, training, or predilection.

It is natural for most people not to experience the growth and changes of urbanization as the direct consequence of everybody's incremental choices and decisions. This was widely apparent as Americans gawked while the bull-dozer converted

a treasury of earlier urban fabric into parking lots. For most people the great blind spot today is with the environment. Yet even for those concerned about it, somehow the connection to the role of communities is not being made. Perhaps most of you do not easily perceive the significance of your own work in terms of the urban built environment, wherein most of our natural environmental resources come and go. This is particularly true when you consider that military bases, industrial parks, prisons, and ski resorts all qualify as urbanization, if not as communities per se.

These gaps in our outlooks hardly benefit physical environmental integration, but they should not surprise you. They prevail even at HUD, where the "UD" means urban development, yet it remains a work place where few consciously connect their decisions with the quality of the ultimate local physical end-products of their activities. These connections are real. For better and worse, once built, their consequences generally outlive their originators.

The main point is that at the level of local community action, we do have people who can tie together tangible, physical places, and things with abstractions, such as design quality, environmental quality, conservation, appropriate technology, and even the sustaining of life. America has this widespread, experienced, ecologically-sensitized, local decision-making infrastructure in place. In effect, well sized and designed human bridges exist locally for carrying a new NEPA payload. There are urban environmentalists to work with, to defer to, and to enlist.

The eco-environmental job ahead is not only, if at all, about lawyers and clerks who must pound out more and better impact statements. It is mainly about shaping a positive climate and positive visions for creative local-level solutions by ordinary, competent, community-oriented people. America has only begun the transition towards sustainability. Our cities and towns are the places to begin in earnest. Here is the deal: the genuine environmentalists in this society are equally urban environmentalists; the larger interdisciplinary urban environmental design field has never been broken; it does not need to be fixed; nor does it need to be reinvented; it needs to

be enlisted and mobilized, and that is about all.

In concluding these remarks, a time scan is offered that points to the present as a uniquely significant moment of confluence in the American legacy of historic influences. It points at transition as our Nation's current reality — a deliberate, conscious, and balanced transition toward a future destiny that is to compliment our glorious past and give it greater human dignity; twenty years ago: NEPA; fifty years ago: the British declared war against the Axis and called for our support; one hundred years ago: an industrial paradigm was in place that fixed the forms of modern urban design, communications, movement systems, and more with the confluence of elevators, lighting, the wireless, engines, and other inventions — a paradigm now in question; two hundred years ago: the Constitution was signed and sealed; five hundred years ago: Columbus was marketing his trans-Atlantic travel plans; two thousand years ago: Christ was heading for his ministry in the Holy Land.

One could go on. Today, the round number can ring magical notes that clarify the clamor of our culture's quantified complexity. Recently, I heard Sierra Club President Michael McCloskey cite *The Economist* as saying that the past forty years of global politics have focused upon warfare and power, but for the next forty they are to focus upon the environment. It occurred to me, however, that a British bias was present, as forty years ago life halted for their empire. The truth of the matter has been the miracle of our Constitution. Its first two hundred years, which we celebrate coterminously with NEPA's first twenty, have indeed overseen a pattern of warfare, expansion, and resource exploitation. Starting now, however, the next America has the option to show the way to sustainability of life, as well as to popularly shared political power. Ours is the time of transition to this option. It amounts to our destiny.

There are those who say that America's greatest contribution to the family of nations is the movement toward people owning the power. One cannot but marvel at the likelihood of this exultant possibility in light of China's paper-mache evocation of France's gift to American freedoms, the Statue of

Liberty. Others say that, globally, civilization is moving from reliance upon the authority to a reliance upon the group. In *The Face of the Enemy*,²² psychologist Sam Keen documents how easily in this century distortions manufactured by the state have induced rage and violence toward the innocent.²³ He also speaks of our society as "corporate society" — a conflicted one in need of new meanings, new ethical disciplines, and new distinctions about one's obligations beyond oneself.²⁴

Who can say with certainty what societal patterns are to prevail? Human adaptability may not have strict limits, but nature certainly has them, as our "teflon" technocracy now finds. Earth is to be our schoolhouse once again. I myself sense that, for most of their inhabitants, the "corporate limits" of a metropolis of two or three million, as is Washington, D.C., already exceed the carrying capacities of nature. Yet, several dozen cities are apt to exceed ten million during this next century.

We understand that a multiple crisis of change is now being imposed immutably upon civilization by global ecological reality. Now we may also choose to understand NEPA's first two decades of maturation as a prelude for what must come in terms of the internalizing of our Nation's vital eco-environmental priorities and values. We have set some ground rules for governing the next America. These two complex decades of public, profit, and non-profit sector environmental innovation can be compared to the constitutional decade, when the nation's democratic ground rules were formulated.

What we are meant to consider here is the nature of the transitions which are needed if America is to act sanely toward humanity and the earth. We need to seek ways in which the provisions of NEPA can remineralize the pioneering soils of eco-creativity in our country. Although our endeavors may yet beg a constitutional amendment, or better still a global ecological treaty, NEPA stands firm as America's formal constitution with the sacred systems of the earth.

22. S. KEEN, *THE FACE OF THE ENEMY* (1988).

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.*

The window of sanity may have been pried open for NEPA at the last possible moment for the sustaining of future human environments of any meaningful degree of quality. The past two environmentally-daunted decades are but a dress rehearsal for scores of ecologically critical decades to come. Their dire context is well established by science already — the context of global ecological survival for humanity. Urban industrial civilization is embarking upon a roadway leading from this present environmental plateau of national consciousness to the next plane of understanding. That opportunity for global ecological sanity has been opened. With the resurrection to prominence of the mission of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, our meeting takes on an importance which goes beyond any others to have taken place in this city heretofore.

Ours is the Nation best poised to set the stage at this moment in human evolution either for continued and fatal global ecological destruction and decline, or for the imperative of a deliberate transition to a global ecological balance. If we are to balance an irreversibly industrialized and urbanized humanity and its essential natural ecological sanity for future generations, all of us in this room have a role to play in the outcome.

Given the scientifically supported ecological facts of life, it is during the next two decades that a hopeful course of global ecological sustainability must be charted. Given the natural resource addictions of urban industrial civilization and given the likely prospects now for a rapidly industrializing and populated Third World, the utmost ingenuity must be applied to the creation of solutions. Given the ecological consequences of the coming decades, it shall be global ecological balance, along with global disarmament, by which history shall be judging this nation and, most particularly, those of us in this room whose job is about ecology. Given many specific creative attributes of our American society, it is our Nation's move.

A new epoch is upon us now to be characterized by humanity's issues of global ecological sustainability. These issues will dominate humanity's choices for centuries. Where expan-

sion and combat have characterized the first two centuries of our Constitution's application, the sustainability of life will dominate the next America.

I choose to believe that a new day is in store for environmental sanity in this society. With his reinstatement of our hosting agency and his Council on Environmental Quality, President Bush has opened the window of sanity for global ecological healing and balance. The President has cut the ribbon for the entrance to the next America. He has inaugurated the global ecological transition.

Our teflon technocracy is at last re-entering the global reality. We may yet become sanely grounded in this reality once again. This was so when NEPA was enacted. Hopefully, therefore, during these next two days you may empower yourselves, and hence our fellow citizens, to bring a saner vision to the vital works of environmental and ecological reform lying just ahead.

As this has been a personal statement, I close with a personal anecdote from 1959, involving my arrival in the Capitol with my classmate Don Velsey for our Air Force interviews. Don was my yoke-mate in prep school, college, and architectural school. Out of his keen interest in politics, Don led me to my Senator's office, Senator Prescott Bush, where to our amazement we three chatted for half an hour. Two of the Senator's boys went to school where Don and I had, plus I used to watch his other son, George, pitch a lot near my neighborhood. So we talked about all that, but mainly I recall how deeply we each shared a love for the land, especially, of course, for New England. We each wondered what was to become of the qualities that we were talking about that touched us so. Months later I visited my Congressman godfather, Gene Keough, of retirement plan fame. He and I ran into Irish temperament over some related sentiments about the quality of the environment, including the crass architecture of some proposed buildings for the Congress at that time. I then began to see how much it can matter for everybody that our leaders understand the things we know and care about the most. Now I know how many of them care as I do, but this time it is truly the whole planetary ecological ball game that is at stake.

This meeting's agenda is clothed in substantive rather than symbolic significance. Our contemplation of NEPA's meanings at this very deepest of moments in the evolution of human and global consciousness stands out undeniably as a signal event. The signal is for our transition into America's next historic era, for urban-industrial society's next paradigmatic technological shift, and for humanity's next epoch. The option for us here today is to acknowledge these numerous and remarkable confluences and seek to apply the collective message to our tasks. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.