



The Anti-car Movement in Britain

Preserving the American Dream Conference
November 10-12, 2007

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Introduction

I have been a member of the ABD for 10 years. I am professionally qualified in civil engineering and transportation engineering, and spent over 30 years in local authorities in the UK as a transport planner, highway engineer and traffic engineer, including road safety engineering. I joined the ABD because of my concern about the rise of anti-car policies in the UK, especially following the election of the Labour Government in May 1997. Fortunately, I was able to take early retirement in 2002.

The ABD was founded in 1992 because of concern that the introduction of speed cameras would lead to large numbers of safe drivers being criminalized. That fear has been realized to a far greater extent than the founder members could possibly have foreseen. But attacks on drivers in the UK now go far beyond draconian speed limit enforcement.

Successive British governments have for decades failed to invest adequately and consistently in the highway network. During times of economic recession, spending on roads has always been the first to be cut. The recession of the early 1990s led the then Conservative government to reduce highway expenditure. It also authorized the use of speed cameras, in the belief that this would be a cheap way to be seen to be 'doing something' about road safety, without spending money on engineering solutions.

At the same time, the rise of the militant 'green' movement, with its ideological hatred of cars as symbols of individual freedom, demanded a halt to road building and the introduction of measures to reduce car use. It found sympathetic ears in the Labour administration that took office in 1997, which immediately halted what was left of the strategic road-building programme.

It is commonly claimed that new roads should not be built because they simply generate more traffic. But this can easily be demonstrated to be false: traffic flows are driven by economic growth, not investment in the road network. Traffic levels in Britain have continued to grow throughout the last ten years, despite low levels of road building. The resulting increase in congestion is affecting competitiveness, yet it is still not generally accepted in Britain that you cannot have a world-class economy with an inadequate network of strategic roads.

Alongside reductions in road building, increasingly drastic and authoritarian measures are used to 'encourage' people to get out of their cars, and use buses or cycles instead. One way of doing this is by taking away road space in towns and cities from cars and trucks.

Road Space Re-allocation

Bus Lanes. Most main roads in British cities have no more than two traffic lanes in each direction. When one of them is dedicated to buses, capacity for other vehicles is halved.

Typical bus occupancies in Britain are around 10 passengers per bus, 15 in London where the public transport network is highly developed. Those are daily averages, but even in peak periods, with an average 44 passengers per bus in London (less elsewhere), more than 15 buses per hour need to use a bus lane to carry as many people as the cars that could otherwise use the lane, with an average of around 1.35 people per car.

Few bus lanes carry that many buses, especially outside London. So the result is reduced highway capacity and more congestion.

As well as reducing capacity, bus lane restrictions are increasingly being enforced, especially in London, by cameras. Drivers who enter a bus lane, even briefly, risk having to pay a penalty charge of £120 (reduced to £60 if you pay within 14 days without making a fuss – how generous!).

This is applied even if a driver enters a bus lane to avoid, say, a vehicle waiting for a gap in oncoming traffic to turn right, and even if no bus is inconvenienced as a result. So a sensible action to keep traffic moving is criminalized.

Similarly severe penalties are also applied for breaches of parking restrictions. Enforcement of both bus lanes and parking restrictions is increasingly being taken away from the police and handed to local authorities, who keep the income from the penalty charges. Thus they have an incentive to issue as many penalties as they can – in 2005, 6 million penalty charges were issued to drivers in London alone, mostly for parking violations.

Cycle Lanes. Cycle lanes are also provided on some roads, usually alongside the kerb. While most of these are advisory, an increasing number of mandatory cycle lanes are being installed, making it an offence for drivers of motor vehicles to enter them, on pain of another penalty charge.

Cyclists are also given priority over drivers at some traffic signals. They are encouraged to pass other traffic on the inside and occupy the space between two stop lines at the head of the queue. When the lights go green, cyclists are slower away and reduce the capacity of the junction. It is an offence for drivers of motor vehicles to wait in the space between the two stop lines

(This assumes that cyclists stop at the red light at all, and British cyclists are famous for ignoring traffic regulations – and are rarely punished for doing so, unlike car drivers.)

Another cause of reduced capacity is the installation of more traffic signals.

Traffic Signals

Buses are often given priority over other traffic at traffic signals: a transponder in a bus that is approaching traffic signals causes them to go green in its favour, or hold an existing green until the bus has passed through, reducing overall capacity.

Buses are sometimes allowed to make movements at a junction, such as a right turn, that are prohibited to other traffic. This may mean an additional stage in the signal sequence, increasing the cycle time when a bus wants to make the turn, thereby increasing congestion for other traffic.

More traffic signals are being installed at junctions and pedestrian crossings. In London in 2005 there were almost 5,000 sets of traffic signals, an increase of nearly 750 in five years, and signal timings are often used to discourage drivers from using certain roads, rather than to optimise junction capacity.

While the capacity of main roads in cities is being reduced in these ways, so-called traffic calming measures are making drivers' lives miserable on minor and residential roads.

Traffic Calming

The most common form of traffic calming in Britain – and the most detested – is the road hump. Usually 3 inches high at the centre, they can be up to 4 inches. They can damage a car's suspension, tyres and exhaust system.

Drivers (and their passengers) with back problems may also suffer discomfort, or worse, from repeatedly travelling over humps. This is also a concern for ambulance crews transporting people with suspected spinal injuries, or attempting emergency treatment on the way to hospital. Delays to emergency services' vehicles as a result of road humps are also of serious concern. In 2003 the chairman of the London Ambulance Service estimated that 800 victims of cardiac arrest in London die for every minute of delay caused.

Residents of streets where road humps have been installed suffer from the increased noise of vehicles accelerating and braking, often in a lower gear than if they were travelling at a constant speed. They may also suffer from vibration as vehicles, especially trucks, drive over the humps.

Forms of traffic calming other than road humps usually attempt to reduce traffic speeds by bringing drivers into conflict with one another. Chicanes and pinch points limit road width, forcing one driver to give way to another from the opposite direction. This sometimes leads, however, to drivers accelerating in an attempt to get through the obstruction first, thus increasing speeds rather than reducing them. Just as worrying, it causes drivers to focus further ahead, instead of watching out for hazards closer in front of them, as they should be doing in a built-up area.

Traffic calming features that restrict traffic to a single lane introduce hazards that did not previously exist. When badly sited, such as on or just after a bend, they can be particularly dangerous. Cyclists may find themselves squeezed by motor vehicles if they cannot ride around the obstructions.

Given all the negative impacts of traffic calming, it seems astonishing that so many schemes have been installed in recent years. Road humps first came to widespread public attention as a means of discouraging criminal 'joy riders' from racing stolen cars through deprived housing estates. Residents of other areas then started demanding them as a perceived solution to 'speeding' by drivers generally.

There are signs, however, that the tide of opinion is turning against intrusive traffic calming, as the proliferation of schemes exposes more people to their negative effects. Residents who are initially in favour of road humps often change their minds when they have to live with them. Some highway authorities have stopped installing road humps and others have even begun to remove them. One example is the London Borough of Barnet, which is not just removing humps but is also freeing up its main traffic routes to reduce the temptation for drivers to cut through residential streets. This is despite strong

opposition from the anti-car lobby, with threats to withhold future funding and dire predictions of more accidents – which have not materialised.


Congestion Charging

Not surprisingly, people do not like driving along roads with traffic calming, especially road humps, but if they try to use the main road network instead they find the capacity has been reduced because of the measures already described. So, having created congestion by their own actions, local authorities then say the solution is – congestion charging!

Britain's first (and so far, only) congestion charging scheme began in London in February 2003. A flat fee is charged for entering or driving within the zone on weekdays, regardless of the number of miles travelled.

The scheme was brought in by London's car-hating Mayor, Ken Livingstone. He is a colourful and often controversial figure, and was the 'Loony-Left' leader of the Greater London Council, until it was abolished in 1986 by Margaret Thatcher, specifically to be rid of 'Red Ken', as he was known.

Tony Blair's government created the Greater London Authority and the position of London Mayor in 2000, and was greatly embarrassed when Ken was elected. He fulfilled his promise to introduce the congestion charge.



The charging zone introduced in 2003 covered the eastern half of the orange area on the map, including the City of London financial district, the West End shopping and theatre area, and the City of Westminster, which includes the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey – a total area of about 8 square miles.

The charge for entering the zone was originally £5 per day, which had to be paid in advance or by 10 p.m. on the day itself, or risk a penalty of £80. In July 2005 the daily charge was raised to £8 and the penalty charge to £100.

In February 2007 the zone was extended westwards to include the districts of Kensington and Chelsea, almost doubling the size of the zone. This followed a public 'consultation' in which an overwhelming majority of people and businesses voted against the extension, but such is Ken Livingstone's love of democracy that he ignored the result and went ahead anyway!

Enforcement of the congestion charge is by a network of cameras monitoring every entry point to the zone and other locations within it. These are automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras. The licence plate of every vehicle entering or moving in the zone is compared with a list of those for which payment has been made. If the congestion charge has not been paid, a penalty charge notice is sent to the keeper of the vehicle, as registered with the government's Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Initially, payment of the congestion charge had to be made by telephone or on the internet, but many drivers had difficulty getting through by the deadline and were forced to pay a penalty charge. A senior official of Transport for London, the agency that administers the charge, actually admitted later that the charge had deliberately been made difficult to pay initially in order to increase penalty income!

Ken Livingstone is now planning to jump on the climate change bandwagon by charging a daily fee of £25 to enter the zone in cars he considers to be 'gas guzzlers', meaning cars that emit more than 225 grams per kilometre of carbon dioxide. For cars registered before 2001, for which official CO₂ emissions are not available, the £25 charge would apply to all cars with an engine capacity greater than 3 litres (183 cu. in.).

(The role of climate charge alarmism in many anti-car policies is discussed in the appendix to this paper.)

Has the London congestion charge actually reduced congestion? The chart below (from Transport for London official reports) shows travel rates, in minutes per kilometre, within the charging zone, from 2002 until early 2007, so the taller the bars the worse the congestion. The red bars apply to the period before charging commenced and the blue bars from its start in February 2003.

On the face of it, it looks like congestion eased when the charge was first introduced. The figures for 2002 are artificially bad, however, because Transport for London embarked on a major programme of road maintenance and other works in the run-up to the start of the scheme. These miraculously finished just before the charge came into effect, and there is little doubt that this was a deliberate and cynical attempt to make the scheme look good.

It can be seen that congestion is now back more or less to where it was before the scheme was introduced, largely due to more bus lanes, cycle lanes, traffic signals, etc – and more buses.

It has not been a great financial success, either. The figures in the table below were extracted from Transport for London reports by a Conservative councillor in the London Borough of Ealing. They show that, for the first five financial years of the scheme, total revenue was £930 million, but the cumulative surplus was just £14 million. This is despite the 60 per cent increase in the daily charge after less than three years, and a significant part of the revenue coming from enforcement activities.

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Revenue	177	197	251	251	251	1027
Operating costs	11	11	11	11	11	55
Operating costs management	4	4	4	4	4	20
Capital costs for enforcement	14	14	14	14	14	70
Capital costs	11	11	11	11	11	55
Capital costs charge	11	11	11	11	11	55
Capital costs	11	11	11	11	11	55
Capital costs	11	11	11	11	11	55
Capital costs	11	11	11	11	11	55
Cumulative surplus			14	14	14	42

The scheme was supposed to pay for improved public transport, but the extra buses in London have been paid for primarily out of taxes and central Government grants, not by surplus income from the congestion charge.

The Surveillance Society

I have already mentioned that the London congestion charge is enforced using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras, but these are increasingly being installed nationwide to track all vehicle journeys. The police have been given the power to set up a database of vehicle movements which, once fully operational, will keep records for five years.

As well as the ANPR cameras, the database will use information acquired from CCTV networks set up by local authorities for traffic management purposes. They will also use data from private CCTV cameras installed on filling station forecourts.

Britain is one of the most spied upon nations on Earth – certainly in the ‘free’ world:

There are over 4 million CCTV cameras in Britain – 20 per cent of the world total

Britain has just 1 per cent of the world’s population

In a British city, you can be recorded on a CCTV camera more than 300 times per day

This is all justified in the name of fighting crime and, of course, terrorism. As if we weren’t watched enough already, there are now plans for continuous vehicle tracking by satellite.

Proposals to introduce nationwide road user charging, based on the mileage travelled, the type of road and time of day, have been floated for some time. As the government has developed the plans, opposition has grown, based on the civil liberties issues and the fact that British road users are already taxed very heavily – nearly £50 billion is taken from them in tax every year, but only £7 billion is spent on roads (although this figure is set to rise next year).

A national charging scheme would be based on satellite global positioning technology, with a unit in every car recording exactly where a car is driven, at what time and at what speed. These details would be sent by mobile phone networks to a central processing body, from where monthly invoices would be issued – and the data stored for purposes that can only be guessed at.

The impetus behind this scheme comes from the European Union, which is developing its Galileo satellite system for military purposes. In order to pay for Galileo – which is already running late and over-budget – the EU wants all member states to introduce road user charging utilising the satellites (assuming they are ever made to work!).

All these surveillance initiatives and controls on mobility mean that Britain is sleepwalking towards a police state. The stupidity of allowing this to happen was summed up by Benjamin Franklin:

“Any society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both.”

Earlier this year, ABD member Peter Roberts set up a petition opposing national road user charging on the Downing Street website. This was an initiative set up by Tony Blair, under which members of the public could start petitions, to try to convince the electorate that the government was interested in the opinions of ordinary people – which it is not, of course.

It backfired spectacularly with Peter’s petition, which attracted over 1.8 million signatures – not bad out of a total population of 60 million. At times, so many people were trying to sign that the website crashed repeatedly. Otherwise the total could have gone beyond 2 million.

Naturally, the government’s response was dismissive, but it was clearly rattled. It pretends there are no firm plans for a nationwide system, but local authorities are free to introduce road user charging in their areas if there is support.

In fact, the government is blackmailing local authorities of Britain’s largest cities by demanding that they introduce congestion charging if they wish to get government grants for transport improvements. This is a tactic frequently used by the current government, by forcing local authorities to introduce unpopular policies in an attempt to divert criticism from itself.

The first area outside London to try introducing charges is Manchester, where the ABD is running a strong campaign against the proposals. Manchester Against Road Tolls (MART) is an ABD subsidiary organisation and has joined with the local Chamber of Commerce in opposing the plans.

MART has already exposed projections of revenue as wildly optimistic, and the use of biased questioning in the official ‘consultation’. MART has carried out its own surveys of residents’ and businesses’ opinion and found strong opposition to the charging proposals.

The backlash is growing!

Speed Cameras

Returning to the reason the ABD was founded in the first place, we now have a plague of speed cameras across the UK. There are believed to be around 6,000 fixed speed cameras, of which the most numerous is the Gatsometer, or Gatso as it is usually known. This uses a radar speed meter, and also takes two photographs of the rear of a vehicle, enabling the distance it travels between them, in a known time period, to be measured manually as a check.

Other types of camera photograph a vehicle from the front, using infra-red light, and with detectors in the road surface to measure speed.

Becoming increasingly common in the UK are 'Specs' cameras, named after the company that makes them (Speed Check Services). They look like, and indeed are, number plate recognition cameras that record the licence plate – and exact time – of every vehicle passing. Mounted on gantries half a mile to a mile apart, they calculate the average speed of every vehicle. Unlike spot-speed cameras, therefore, drivers can't just slow down past the camera and speed up afterwards; they have to monitor their speedometers very frequently, which can be quite stressful.

In addition to fixed speed cameras we have mobile ones, often operating out of vans. Many of these use laser speed meters, which have been banned from some U.S. states because they can give false readings – accidental or otherwise. They are still legal in the UK despite several high-profile cases in which their evidence was deemed unreliable, but the government is unwilling to admit that its testing and approval procedures could possibly be flawed.

We have always been told that speed cameras are there to save lives by slowing people down, not to make money. The ABD mounted a successful campaign a few years ago to have cameras mounted in full sight and painted bright yellow, arguing that if the purpose of cameras was indeed to slow people down then drivers should be able to see them!

However, from 2001 the number of cameras increased rapidly, after the government allowed the police and local authorities to pay for their use from the income raised by fixed penalty notices. Although rules were laid down about where cameras could be sited and what expenses could be reclaimed, the 'camera partnerships' found inventive ways to maximise their income and build their empires.

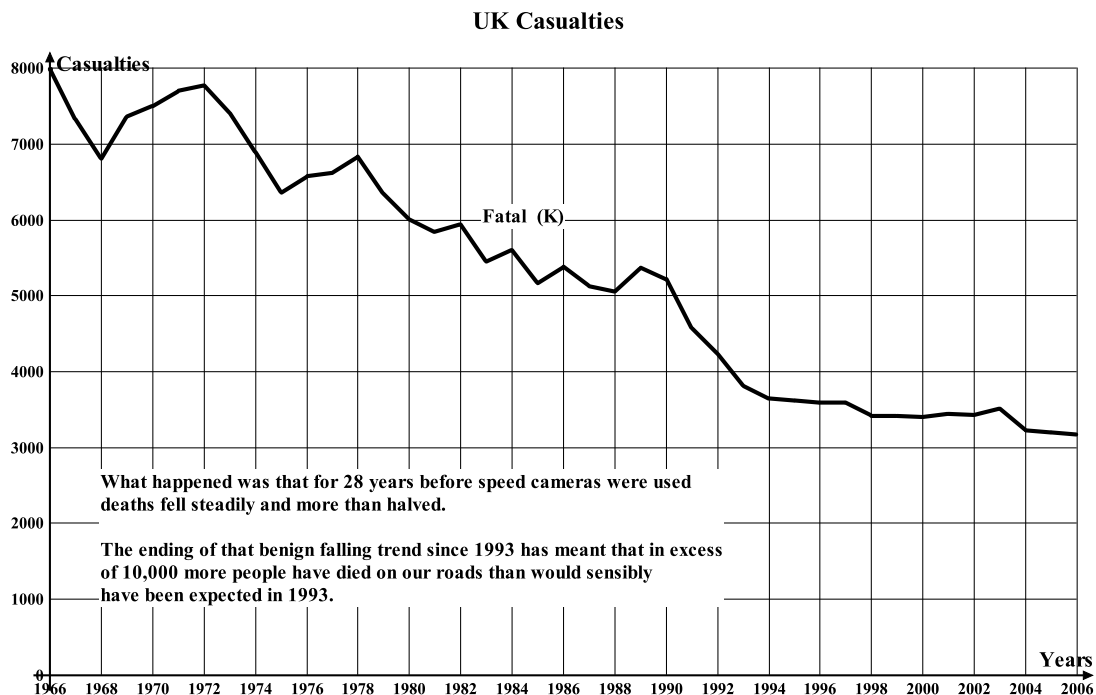
Although the cost-recovery scheme for funding the camera partnerships has not applied since April 2007, the hardware, accommodation, processing systems and staff are still in place and anxious to justify their existence. They lobby hard, therefore, for their share of the road safety budgets allocated to local authorities. As there is no longer a direct link between tickets issued and income for the partnerships, they are no longer restricted by the previous requirements on site selection and camera visibility, so there has been little let-up in driver prosecutions.

Most speed enforcement in the UK is now after the event, without drivers being stopped at the time. The first they know about it is when a notice of intended prosecution arrives in the mail, two weeks later. Many drivers will not even remember using the road in question, let alone what speed they were doing, so only the most determined defend the charge.

One of the greatest injustices of this system is that only drivers whose details are correctly recorded in the DVLA database can be issued with speeding tickets. These are the essentially law-abiding citizens who may stray a few miles per hour over an unreasonably low speed limit, causing no danger to anyone. The really reckless drivers often do not bother to notify the DVLA when they buy a car, and may also fail to comply with other requirements, such as insurance or even a driving licence.

The spread of speed cameras has been accompanied by a reduction in police traffic patrols, thus reducing further the opportunity to deal with the reckless minority. Consequently, camera enforcement causes great resentment, and is widely regarded as a money-making ploy having little to do with road safety.

Speeding fines in the UK increased from 200,000 to over 2 million per year in ten years (there are around 32 million regular drivers). If exceeding the speed limit were as inherently dangerous as government propaganda suggests, this massive increase in enforcement should have had an effect on road deaths. It has...



The graph shows annual UK road deaths from 1966 to 2006. From a peak of around 8,000 deaths per year in the mid 1960s, they fell to about 3,600 by

1994. The peaks and troughs reflect oil crises and fluctuations in the national economy, but the overall trend during this period was strongly downwards. In the 12 years since 1994, the annual death toll has fallen by only a further 400 to around 3,200. The flat-lining is very obvious.

The first speed cameras were installed in 1992 but they did not appear in significant numbers for a couple of years. As mentioned already, the decision to concentrate road safety policy on speed limit enforcement coincided with cutbacks in improvements to the strategic road network during the recession of the early 1990s. It was cheaper (and it later became very lucrative) to persecute drivers than to build the road network the country needs.

We are now paying for those short-sighted decisions in lost lives. But the obsession with speed limit enforcement continues to grow. We are now threatened with Intelligent Speed Adaptation – a fancy name for speed limiters.

Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA). A black box installed in every car would contain a database of the speed limits on every road in the country. Satellite navigation technology would pinpoint the car's location, and the device would control the engine management system and brakes to ensure that the speed limit could not be exceeded.

The ISA project is being driven by a research team at Leeds University – headed by a historian. Early trials using simulators showed that drivers in an ISA-equipped car were more likely to follow too close to the car in front, more likely to jump traffic lights, and would drive faster on a foggy motorway than they would otherwise! Undeterred, the researchers claim that accidents could be reduced by 20 per cent if all vehicles were fitted with the device.

Trials with ISA-equipped cars have been taking place around Leeds, but the results have not been published yet. They are already three years late according to the original timetable, and a year late by the revised one – one wonders why. Transport for London is proposing trials of its own in London.

The accident reduction claims for ISA are based solely on a theoretical relationship between average speeds and accidents, put forward in two reports by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL).

The reports are the origin of the claim that a 1 mph reduction in average speeds leads to a 5 per cent reduction in accidents. Accident rates were compared for roads claimed to be of the same type but with different average speeds. If the roads were indeed comparable, then the differences in speed must be due to different traffic volumes. While the reports acknowledged that accident rates decrease with flow, they only made an adjustment for this based on the assumption of a linear relationship – which is incorrect. If the correct, non-linear adjustment is applied, the claimed relationship disappears.

This false relationship was the basis of new guidance from the Department for Transport to local authorities in 2006 on setting local speed limits. It has abandoned the 85th percentile principle, which had been used for decades – based to a great extent on U.S. experience – as the basis of choosing speed limits, in favour of the mean speed. Local authorities have been reducing speed limits, sometimes to absurd levels, for several years, but the new guidance is expected to make things even worse.

TRL was once a government research facility but is now a commercial organisation. The Department for Transport is still one of its main clients, and it produces what its clients pay for.

TRL is a large organisation and, as often happens, the left hand does not always know what the right hand is doing. Reports like those that produced the false speed/accident relationship have an obvious political application, while some are intended only for a purely technical readership. The latter are not always screened to prevent potentially embarrassing admissions slipping out, like the following, taken from TRL Published Project Report PPR026 (2004): “Accident Analysis on Rural Roads – a technical guide”:

“The relationship between accidents and vehicle flows is not a linear one (e.g. see Walmsley and Summersgill, 1998). For this reason, it is recommended that roads with very different flow levels are *not* studied together.”

The two speed/accident reports were published in 1994 and 2002, so the latter at least should have had the benefit of the 1998 findings referred to in the quote above.

The speed/accident claim was clearly produced to justify political decisions that had already been made about the use of speed cameras and allowing enforcement agencies to benefit financially from them. It is now being used to justify open-ended speed limit reductions that will criminalize safe drivers, cause immense frustration, and increase accidents rather than reduce them.

Research published by the Department for Transport in 2006 showed that exceeding a speed limit was a factor (not necessarily the main or only one) in just 5 per cent of all accidents and 12 per cent of fatal ones. The emphasis on speed limits cannot be justified – it is case of making important what can be measured and easily enforced.

Red light cameras. Just a brief mention of red light cameras. These were introduced in Britain at the same time as speed cameras, but have never caused nearly as much controversy. This is probably because most people

recognise that jumping a red light is always potentially dangerous, whereas breaking a speed limit, in itself, does not necessarily cause danger. There is a big difference between driving at a speed that is too fast for the conditions (quite possibly within the speed limit) and exceeding an arbitrary and inflexible figure posted at the side of the road.

Conclusion

As I hope I have shown, the drivers of Britain are under attack as never before, with technology being used to track, control and penalise.

These attacks are partly motivated by popular misconceptions, such as a misplaced faith in the value of speed limits, but there is also a strong political ideology at work. The car is the ultimate symbol of personal freedom, allowing people to go where they want, when they want, without needing the help – or permission – of the State. They have thus become a symbol of hate for those who seek to control every aspect of our lives.

It is no coincidence that the rise of environmentalism as a world political force began after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism. The ABD is fighting an uphill struggle in Britain against government propaganda, a largely left-leaning media, and the apathy of much of the public. By the time people wake up to what is happening, it may be too late.

Don't let it happen in America!

Appendix A1: Climate Change and Anti-car Policies

The unproven and increasingly discredited hypothesis that the essential plant food gas, carbon dioxide, drives climate change is being used to justify many tax increases and restrictions on liberty. We are told, for example, that we must use our cars less, that speed limits must be reduced and enforced more strictly, that we must fly less, and so on, in order to 'save the planet'.

This is the trump card of those who promote anti-mobility policies, when their other claims are shown to be false. They are largely succeeding because of biased media reporting and the repression of opposing views.

Climate change is too complex a subject to cover in detail here, but suffice to say that man-made climate change is a political, not a scientific phenomenon, and is all about power and money. Appendix A2 contains a transcript of answers given by Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, to a U.S. Congressional Committee in March 2007. Klaus spent most of his life under communism, so he is familiar with the methods of repressive regimes. His exposure of the politics of climate change is excellent.

For anyone interested, I recommend the following as just a few of the excellent sources of information available on the subject of climate change.

www.abd.org.uk/climate_change_truths.htm: The ABD's spokesman on environmental issues is qualified in chemistry, astronomy and atmospheric sciences, and put together the information on the ABD's website.

The Politically Incorrect Guide to Climate Change & Environmentalism by Christopher C. Horner: Horner's book exposes many of the scientific fallacies put forward by the man-made global warming industry and also covers the political aspects of environmentalism, especially from an American perspective.

The Chilling Stars by Henrik Svensmark & Nigel Calder: This is the story of Svensmark's research on the cosmic ray/climate connection, leading up to the successful experiment he conducted in 2006 showing that cosmic rays really do start a chain reaction that creates cloud condensation nuclei. The book is essential reading for those who wish to understand how solar and galactic forces affect the climate over all time scales, by altering the production of low altitude clouds, which reflect the sun's radiation.

Both books are very readable, while covering the science in sufficient depth to enable readers to grasp the issues.

The Great Global Warming Swindle DVD from WAG TV (www.wagtv.com): The DVD is of a television programme broadcast early in 2007 on Channel 4 in the UK, with some additional footage included. It is the perfect antidote to Al Gore's fantasy *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Appendix A2: Answers from Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, to questions from the House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress, Committee on Energy and Commerce, on the issue of mankind's contribution to global warming and climate change

Q. Concerning mankind's contribution to climate change and in keeping with obligations towards the welfare of our citizens: what, in your view, should policymakers consider when addressing climate change?

A. The – so called – climate change and especially man-made climate change has become one of the most dangerous arguments aimed at distorting human efforts and public policies in the whole world.

My ambition is not to bring additional arguments to the scientific climatological debate about this phenomenon. I am convinced, however, that up to now this scientific debate has not been deep and serious enough and has not provided sufficient basis for the policymakers' reaction. What I am really concerned about is the way the environmental topics have been misused by certain political pressure groups to attack fundamental principles underlying free society. It becomes evident that while discussing climate we are not witnessing a clash of views about the environment but a clash of views about human freedom.

As someone who lived under communism for most of my life I feel obliged to say that the biggest threat to freedom, democracy, the market economy and prosperity at the beginning of the 21st century is not communism or its various softer variants. Communism was replaced by the threat of ambitious environmentalism. This ideology preaches earth and nature and under the slogans of their protection – similarly to the old Marxists – wants to replace the free and spontaneous evolution of mankind by a sort of central (now global) planning of the whole world.

The environmentalists consider their ideas and arguments to be an undisputable truth and use sophisticated methods of media manipulation and PR campaigns to exert pressure on policymakers to achieve their goals. Their argumentation is based on the spreading of fear and panic by declaring the future of the world to be under serious threat. In such an atmosphere they continue pushing policymakers to adopt illiberal measures, impose arbitrary limits, regulations, prohibitions, and restrictions on everyday human activities and make people subject to omnipotent bureaucratic decision-making. To use the words of Friedrich Hayek, they try to stop free, spontaneous human action and replace it by their own, very doubtful human design.

The environmentalist paradigm of thinking is absolutely static. They neglect the fact that both nature and human society are in a process of permanent change, that there is and has been no ideal state of the world as regards natural conditions, climate, distribution of species on earth, etc. They neglect the fact that the climate has been changing fundamentally throughout the existence of our planet and that there are proofs of substantial climate

fluctuations even in known and documented history. Their reasoning is based on historically short and incomplete observations and data series, which cannot justify the catastrophic conclusions they draw. They neglect the complexity of factors that determine the evolution of the climate and blame contemporary mankind and the whole industrial civilization for being the decisive factors responsible for climate change and other environmental risks.

By concentrating on the human contribution to the climate change the environmentalists ask for immediate political action based on limiting economic growth, consumption, or human behaviour they consider hazardous. They do not believe in the future economic expansion of the society, they ignore the technological progress the future generations will enjoy, and they ignore the proven fact that the higher the wealth of society is, the higher is the quality of the environment.

The policymakers are pushed to follow this media-driven hysteria based on speculative and hard evidence lacking theories, and to adopt enormously costly programs which would waste scarce resources in order to stop the probably unstoppable climate changes, caused not by human behaviour but by various exogenous and endogenous natural processes (such as fluctuating solar activity).

My answer to your first question, i.e. what should policymakers consider when addressing climate change, is that policymakers should under all circumstances stick to the principles free society is based on, that they should not transfer the right to choose and decide from the people to any advocacy group claiming that it knows better than the rest of the people what is good for them. Policymakers should protect taxpayers' money and avoid wasting it on doubtful projects which cannot bring positive results.

Q. How should policies address the rate and consequences of climate change and to what extent should regulation of emissions of greenhouse gases be a focus of any such policies?

A. Policies should realistically evaluate the potential our civilization has, as compared with the power of natural forces influencing climate. It is an evident waste of society's resources to try to combat an increase of solar activity or the movement of ocean currents. No government action can stop the world and nature from changing. Therefore, I disagree with plans such as the Kyoto Protocol or similar initiatives, which set arbitrary targets requiring enormous costs without realistic prospects for the success of these measures.

If we accept global warming as a real phenomenon, I believe we should address it in an absolutely different way. Instead of hopeless attempts to fight it, we should prepare ourselves for its consequences. If the atmosphere warms up, the effects do not have to be predominantly negative. While some deserts may get larger and some ocean shores flooded, enormous parts of the earth – up until now empty because of their severe, cold climate – may become fertile areas able to accommodate millions of people. It is also

important to realize that no planetary change comes overnight.

Therefore, I warn against adopting regulations based on the so-called precautionary principle, which the environmentalists use to justify their recommendations, the clear benefit of which they are not able to prove. Responsible politics should take into account the opportunity costs of such proposals and be aware of the fact that the wasteful environmentalist policies are adopted to the detriment of other policies, thus neglecting many other important needs of millions of people all over the world. Each policy measure must be based on a cost- benefit analysis.

Mankind has already accumulated tragic experience with one very proud intellectual stream that claimed that it knew how to manage society better than spontaneous market forces. It was communism and it failed, leaving behind millions of victims. Now, a new -ism has emerged that claims to be able to manage even nature and, through it, people. This excessive human pride – just as the previous attempts – cannot but fail. The world is a complex and complicated system that cannot be organized according to an environmentalist human design, without repeating the tragic experience of wasting resources, suppressing people's freedom, and destroying the prosperity of the whole human society.

My recommendation, therefore, is to pay attention to the thousands of small things that negatively influence the quality of the environment. And to protect and foster fundamental systemic factors without which the economy and society cannot operate efficiently – i.e. to guarantee human freedom and basic economic principles such as the free market, a functioning price system and clearly defined ownership rights. They motivate economic agents to behave rationally. Without them, no policies can protect either the citizens or the environment.

Policymakers should resist environmentalist calls for new policies because there are too many uncertainties in scientific debates on climate change. It is impossible to control natural factors causing climate change. The negative impact of the proposed regulation on economic growth is to the detriment of all other possible risks, including the environmental ones.

Q. What will be the effect on national economies, consumer well-being, job creation, and future innovation under various climate change policy scenarios that have come to your attention?

A. If the policymakers accept the maximalistic environmental demands, the effects on national economies will be devastating. It would stimulate some, very small parts of the economy while leaving a bigger part of it choked by artificial limits, regulations, and restrictions. The rate of growth would decline and the competitiveness of the firms on international markets would be seriously affected. It would have a negative impact on employment and job creation. Only rational policies, making spontaneous adjustments possible, can justify government intervention.

Q. What impact and effectiveness will so-called cap-and-trade policies have upon the reduction of climate change threats and our ability to address these threats in the future?

Cap-and-trade policies are a technical tool to achieve pollution reduction goals by more market compatible means. They can help if the general idea behind the scheme is rational. I do not believe the whole idea to combat climate change by emission limits is rational and I, therefore, consider the technicalities of its eventual implementation to be of secondary importance.

Q. What is the moral obligation of developed countries to the developing countries of the world? Should developed countries embark on large emissions reduction schemes while developing countries are allowed to continue to increase emissions unabated?

The moral obligation of developed countries to the developing countries is to create such an environment which guarantees free exchange of goods, services, and capital flows, enables utilization of comparative advantages of individual countries and thus stimulates economic development of the less developed countries. Artificial administrative barriers, limits and regulations imposed by developed countries discriminate the developing world, affect its economic growth, and prolong poverty and underdevelopment. The environmentalist proposals are an exact example of such illiberal policies that are so harmful for the developing countries. They will not be able to cope with the limits and standards imposed on the world by irrational environmental policies, they will not be able to absorb new technological standards required by the anti-greenhouse religion, their products will have difficult access to the developed markets, and as a result the gap between them and the developed world will widen.

It is an illusion to believe that severe anti-climate change policies could be limited to developed countries only. If the policies of the environmentalists are adopted by developed countries, sooner or later their ambitions to control and manage the whole planet will spread the emissions reduction requirements worldwide. The developing countries will be forced to accept irrational targets and limitations because “earth is first” and their needs are secondary. The environmentalist argumentation gives ammunition to protectionists of all colours who try to eliminate competition coming from newly industrialized countries. Therefore, the moral obligation of the developed countries is not to introduce large emissions reduction schemes.

Václav Klaus, March 19th, 2007