

## MY NIGHTMARE OF THE GREEN DREAM

Megacity during a real “Earth Day”

By En Passant

I am always somewhat bemused by the environmental activists’ and the political Greens’ vision of life without ‘carbon’, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) or energy. Their dream seems so detached from reality that I often get the impression that there is no connection between the logic part of their brains and their mouth as they cannot seem to equate cause and consequences. Now, we know I am exaggerating a little as they do support CO<sub>2</sub> producing, inefficient, part-time, landscape and health destroying uneconomic, unsustainable wind farms and (repeat all of the above) solar power generation. They also support ‘hot rock’ geothermal power, if only they could find a site within miles of an urban centre and were able to develop the technology to make it work. Sigh, it just isn’t easy being Green when you have to oppose coal, gas and nuclear; the only technologies that are cheap enough and reliable enough to provide the base load electric energy which I need to type this on my laptop so I can send it out to the world.

What made me think of this was the recent story about the wonderful and totally useless Earth Hour, so I thought it was worth adding some reality when you consider living the Green romance of an ‘energy-free’ world. I have lived their Dream, so I know the consequences of the inability of these environmental terrorists to think out the results of their ‘vision’ with its unintended and unforeseen consequences.

Several years ago this incident happened in a well-known megacity (which will hereafter be known as ‘**Megacity**’ to protect me from any retribution as I still go there often). Basically, there had been a decade long building frenzy and expansion that had outstripped the infrastructure’s electricity generating capacity – but nobody stopped the developers. I had been in Megacity for ten days and was due to fly out on a 02.00am flight for London that night. I had a lazy day to kill.

I woke up at about 9.00am (I know, I know, but I have a peculiar sleeping skill which I like to use when I can). I had woken up, not because it was time to get up but because my hotel room was uncomfortably hot. Sweat was soaking the bed sheets. I usually sleep with the air conditioning set to ‘Igloo – 3°C’ as I find that snuggling under a doona in the cold leads to a better and deeper sleep. That’s just me. I called Reception and was told that the air conditioner was off due to an electrical fault, but should be OK in an hour or so. As I was sticky with sweat (I am male, so I sweat, and do not genteelly perspire) so I had a shower, or at least I began a shower. 3-minutes into it the water stopped. I was covered in soap and hair conditioner, so this was a problem. I considered my options, and in the end selected Option A and just used a towel to dry myself off as best I could. Option B was to use the water from the toilet bowl to get the soap off. As I found out some hours later, the toilet bowl alternative solution, was clearly the better option, as I will explain at the appropriate time.

It was not yet 10.00am and the room was stifling. The windows were sealed, so no chance of fresh air or jumping out. I sat down to check my emails. There were plenty, but I found none were leaving my Outbox as the server was down. I was out of contact with the world. About 30-minutes later the battery on my laptop expired, so that was that.

Although I had plenty of time before I was due to check out, I packed and decided to leave my bags with the Concierge so I could go to a cool restaurant in a cool Mall for a cool drink of cool water. Once packed, I left the room and dragged my suitcases to the lift. I then found out that none of the lifts were working. I was not surprised to find that I could not return to my room as the door was electronic. Using the Emergency Telephone (totally inappropriately) as it was still working (don’t ask me why) I asked Reception for help. They declined as all staff were allocated to other tasks.

## MY NIGHTMARE OF THE GREEN DREAM

Oh well, it's not really that bad, I thought, as I dragged my bags down 10-flights of stairs to the ground floor (the stairwells were never air conditioned so I suspect the temperature in that trapped space was always 46°C – 50°C). This turned out to be a near fatal move as the Ground Floor door was electronically alarmed and when the power failed it sealed! Surely a serious safety design flaw? Going back up 10-floors, or even a few floors was not an option as the floors were not accessible from the stairwells without a pass key as they were for escape, not inter-floor travel. Anyway, I found I was not alone as approximately 60 – 80 people had had the same idea and were now jammed into the lower stairwell in the same position. It was not really an option to leave my possessions as that would have been a worse disaster than the now likely alternative of dying of heatstroke. The people at the front were now banging very stridently on a steel door and now the stairwell behind me had filled with as many people as I had in front. I thought I caught a glimpse of Dante and Milton in the crowd as we descended into the fires of Hell, blocked only by a steel security door. Eventually the door opened as a tradesman of sorts had smashed the lock. 200 people staggered into a cool 42°C Lobby and were each given a bottle of cold water. They were finished in seconds.

I had a late checkout arranged for 8.00pm, but decided that this was no place to be, so I tried to check out now and head for a cool coffee shop in a Mall. I must have been near delirious as I could not stop Frankie Laine's country pop song "Cool Water" playing in my head. The words fitted my sentiments exactly.

When I got to the counter after another hour's wait I discovered they had a problem. No electricity, meant no bill, which meant no checkout and no Visa card payment plus no ATM was working to get more cash. I was luckier than most as I was carrying several thousand USD\$, so I could pay cash - but how much cash? Now I found out what the staff were doing – (THEY had pass keys that bypassed the electronic locks on every floor except for the Ground Floor!) so they were climbing the stairs for up to 30 floors checking mini-bars, laundry, restaurant hard copies, etc. I was asked to take a seat while they sorted my bill manually. My bill had already been collated on the computer, but the computer had an angry dark black screen and it was not telling. I sat on the carpet as there were no seats as the whole hotel was now in the Lobby. Again I was lucky as after only another hour they called my name and presented me with the handwritten bill a (now warm) bottle of water and some sushi they were giving away before it spoiled. We agreed on the bill, I handed over the cash, checked out, gave my bags to the Concierge and went to find a taxi. It was just after 3.00pm, 11-hours before my flight was due to depart.

Once more I was among the more fortunate as I had one within 15-minutes. There were actually very few taxis around and not the usual swarm, but I presumed this was because the power outage had made them busier than normal as people followed my example and headed for the Malls. Not so, as I found out.

I thought of rejecting the cab driver's demand for 5x the usual fare, but as no other taxi was in sight and as more people checked out the queue would only grow, I accepted. However, thinking of causes and consequences I realised the transport situation could only get worse, so I decided to go straight to the airport and relax in the Business Class Lounge. I could even have a shower. This was becoming an obsession as my skin itched and I found it impossible not to scratch like a mangy dog with fleas. There are only so many poses you can adopt before everyone knows your crotch is the worst affected area in need of serious attention.

I have driven the journey to the Megacity Airport dozens of times so I knew it would only be a 20 – 30 minute journey at most, depending on the traffic. Nearly 2-hours later the airport finally came into sight in the distance ...

## MY NIGHTMARE OF THE GREEN DREAM

The drive from the hotel to it was like a scene from a B-Grade mega-disaster movie. When the power and air conditioning failed throughout Megacity (not just our hotel as we had been lead to believe) the whole Megacity population piled their families into their SUV's, turned on the vehicle air conditioning and happily and aimlessly drove around – until they got low on fuel. Only then did they find out that petrol and gas pumps need electricity ... Most cars were driven until they simply stopped – usually in the middle of the road. The family then piled out and sat under the shade of a nearby tree, or lay down under their car. My taxi-driver chased some people out of their shade as he mounted the kerb, or took to the painstakingly watered and nurtured green verge, or squeezed between abandoned cars. No traffic lights were working so each junction was clogged – and they were by far the most favourite place to abandon the out-of-fuel cars. We finally made it to the departure ramp nearly 3-hours after leaving the hotel.

It was now only 8-hours until my flight, but at this point things deteriorated.

This world renowned mega airport had no power either! No flight details, no check-in terminals, no baggage conveyors and, apparently no radar. Fortunately the Control Tower could still talk to the pilots so they were able to divert 90% of the air traffic to other airports. Again my luck held because they had already printed a hard copy of the manifest for my flight. As the plane was already on the tarmac they would be able to take my bags write the flight number on them and manually load them on to the aircraft. However, as no intercom was working I had to stay within a designated area from midnight while waiting for my flight to be called.

Nothing worked. No coffee, tea or cooked meals were available and all transactions were cash, but there was nothing for sale, not even water or salty potato chips. As a Business Class passenger I staked out a piece of carpet for a rest mat come bed, rather than taking a spot on the polished floor. After all, as the passengers on the Titanic demonstrated (almost) to a man, one has to maintain standards. Although it was still daylight, I did not go to the Business Class Lounge as it was on the upper floors in the bowels of the airport building, as I thought ahead as to what it might be like in the unlikely event that there was still no power after dark. Unlike the Green, blind numpties, I planned ahead and assessed the future consequences of my current actions. One of the considerations I had in not making my way to the Business Class Lounge was that as soon as it got dark, well, it got dark, really, really dark. There might be no lighting to find my way back from the Business Class Lounge to the right entrance as (literally) thousands of people were already crowded near the entrances either just inside or just outside the building. Having been told to be in a location at midnight I had to be sure that I could find that location, probably in the dark, so I had to stay where I was. I also had the experience of my hotel room to go by and decided that without any working air conditioning and with sealed windows, I felt that 12-hours later the concern would be a lack of oxygen combined with a surfeit of CO<sub>2</sub> and heat. It was also a long way from the rallying point – which I might have to find in the dark.

Darkness fell, but there was no relief from the heat. One serious improvement was that I could now to my heart's content scratch my head, my armpits and my crotch like a demented chimpanzee, but without the disapproving looks of my soap-free non-travelling companions.

At midnight, right on the dot (as the Airline had told us) my flight was called. We gathered in the darkness in expectation, but the announcement was to tell us that the flight was delayed until sometime the next day as they could not take off in the dark. The Air Traffic Controllers were only able to control traffic on the emergency backup system as the main system did not have its own generator (something they have since fixed).

## MY NIGHTMARE OF THE GREEN DREAM

All water from taps stopped quite quickly and bottled water ran out about 02.00am – in 40°C heat. Surprisingly, there was no riot, no robberies and no violence, (as in New Orleans after Katrina) just a subdued resignation, though the possibility of some people dying of dehydration was probably real. Airline staff with torches did distribute bottled water to women and children, but I did not see any men demanding their place in this Titanic's lifeboat. One of the advantages of travelling Business Class is ... you sometimes get a little class.

Sometime between 04.00am and 08.00am power was partially restored to about 60% of Megacity (including the airport) and life began again. However, they had to manage the load, so the airport air conditioning was set at 28°C, which is still uncomfortable, but better than 42°C. Also, the recovery of power meant getting the toilets and facilities working again as nothing had been flushed for the past 18-hours. The lowest paid foreign workers entered the toilets and went to work. No sooner was this done than the toilets went down again as a backlog of desperate people filled them up faster than the system could cope.

Time passed slowly, but I have to praise the Airline staff as some of the girls had been at their posts for more than 24-hours. Finally, at noon the conveyors and terminals sprang to life and civilisation returned. I am sure FoE's (I think it stands for "Foes of Everyhuman") and the Greens cursed, as less than a dozen CO<sub>2</sub> producing humans were reported as having expired in the heat, thus returning their carbon to the Earth and ceasing their polluting, breathing ways. Surely a poor result from their perspective.

Suffice to say that at 2.00pm we were bussed to the plane where I found the smell of my fellow passengers somewhat unpleasant. No doubt the feeling was reciprocated as I had been in the same clothes in 40°C heat for over 30-hours. Our departure then had another 2-hour delay as two of the toilets were blocked to overflowing while we sat on the tarmac ... some people have to go when they have to go and just cannot wait.

It was only after we took off that the pilot made an interesting comment (but I cannot know how true it was) that the Control Tower was supplementing radio communications with binoculars in addition to the emergency back up radar. He said it was the first time in ten years he had made a 'visual take off', but as only 10% of planes were taking off and landing in this airspace it was not an issue and there was no danger. Oh, good.

My good fortune continued on my arrival in London for two reasons: firstly I had an EU Passport, so was not checked by Immigration. Those with foreign Passports did not have an exit stamp from Megacity, and secondly my checked luggage was distinctive, so I found my bags with ease. There were no labels on any of the bags and none had been security checked in Megacity. Heathrow management was not pleased and put every bag through their own intense security screen. It took me more than an hour to clear Customs, with 'Nothing to Declare'.

The nightmare of the Green Dream had taken me 54-hours 'bed-bed and 'shower to shower' in constant 40C+ heat. I had red soap burns on my skin and my crotch was raw from scratching. I noted that the toilet bowl option was at the 95% certainty level as the best option for removing soap in an 'energy-free' world.

It was at this point I decided to reread Orwell's "**1984**" and "**Animal Farm**" to see what would happen to Australia if the Dark Green, Fabian, Socialists, lead by our current, soon to be ex-PM gained power and implemented their plans. I have since done so and am amazed that 60-years ago Orwell was brilliantly right, a prophet with an uncanny prescience.

## **MY NIGHTMARE OF THE GREEN DREAM**

Well, a few years after my Megacity experience, they have resolved the majority of their deficiencies, but under the guidance of the committed Dark Greens in charge of our fair land, Australians are beginning to live the Green Dream. While we limit our funding for medical research and substantive infrastructure and dams we waste \$Bn's uselessly building windmills that even Don Quixote would balk at. We bury CO2 at hundred's of times the cost of adapting to climate change in a few centuries time – if the scam has one iota of reality to it. Unfortunately, poor fellow my country as energy rich Australia has chosen to deliberately revert to the uncivilised 'Age of Unreason' and the short, brutal, unpleasant lives of the Dark Ages to pay for 'saving the planet'. The Green Dream is simply amoral.

The option of moving to an Igloo in Megacity has appeal as they now have excess generating capacity and they have no concerns about my changing the climate – except via the thermostat on the wall of my room.

*Written during the idiocy of Earth Hour, 2013*