

Green Junta

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A radical suggestion for creating a global infrastructure that is both sustainable and green might rely on nations working together to find a solution to a range of potentially devastating problems, according to Cardiff University's Peter Wells. Writing in the *International Journal of the Environment and Sustainable Development*, published today by Inderscience, Wells warns that of a Green Junta that could bring about a right-wing agenda by stealth, in the name of environmentalism.

Attempts to achieve lasting positive change at the local, national, and international level often fails because consensus between many different groups and interested parties is very difficult to achieve. The US and Australia having yet to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on climate change could be seen as one such failed consensus. Agreement at certain levels is possible, but Wells points out that consensus between multiple stakeholders, while acceptable at a political level, increasingly seems inadequate to the task of creating sustainable societies.

Wells explains that there are several global problems we now face that present us with an increasingly uncertain future. These include, climate change, formerly known as global warming, the North-South imbalance, failing oil reserves, dwindling water resources, reduced biodiversity and species extinction, deforestation, population growth and the rural-urban shift, globalization and over-consumption, and the detrimental distribution of wealth. The increasing impact of these problems on individuals, regionally and globally, he says, suggest a world almost in freefall. "Drastic, rapid and dramatic change is needed," Wells says.

The failure of global governance, Wells' research suggests is to blame, but the current political spectrum across the globe cannot hope to bring about the drastic and rapid changes the solution requires. Instead, Wells speculates that a "strong government for a crowded planet" might be the only approach that will work. Such an approach could implement solutions quickly and without having to seek a consensus decision.

However, Wells warns that such a solution might be hijacked by the political right who would seize the opportunity to enforce a more authoritarian approach. "A modern Green Junta is unlikely to arrive with tanks on the streets and the overnight capturing of control," he explains, "Rather, it creeps upon us through multiple small steps - each one justified by 'necessity'."

"Unless we are able to construct rapid and effective decision-making structures then there is a real danger of events being seized and controlled by an authoritarian military-environment elite," he says, "Unfortunately, current democratic processes seem too slow, too flawed and too compromised in the face of the scale and pace of the threat emerging."

Wells himself has had personal involvement in the sustainability process for fifteen years and suggests that, "It still feels as though we are collectively not prepared to ask the really difficult questions about what happens next if, as seems likely, all our efforts to head off a crisis come to nothing." He adds that, "Our impending demise is in this sense the ultimate in a social problem and it requires a collective solution."

Source: Inderscience Publishers

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