



Episode 1,386: Down With the Green New Deal, Says Former Greenpeace Director Patrick Moore

Guest: Patrick Moore

WOODS: Some time ago, you had an interesting response, let's say, a newsworthy response to Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, congresswoman from New York, about her so-called Green New Deal proposal. And what's astonishing to me is the thing is so sweeping and basically insane, it's as if you want to retrofit every single building in the entire country, the fact that this is being taken seriously – the excuse that use is, *Well, the scope of it is commensurate with the scope of the crisis itself, so yeah, of course it's radical, because we face a civilizational catastrophe if we don't do anything.* And you had a fairly pithy response. Can you reproduce some of that for us?

MOORE: Well, my pithy response, and it didn't come until I got fed up with her, because, of course, I know how completely ridiculous the Green New Deal is. And I had talked about that, that basically it would cause an immediate collapse of the agricultural system worldwide if it was adopted worldwide, and that would result immediately beginning in the center of the large metropolises with starvation and death and cannibalism, no doubt, as it spread outwards, to end up with only a few subsistence farmers surviving in the wild. So that's kind of my take on it, if we just instantly implemented it, which is pretty quick. Ten years is pretty much instantly.

But at one point, she said, "I'm the only one who's come up with a plan that can deal with the scope of this problem, so I'm in charge, and the rest of you are just in the cheap seats." And then not long after that, she said, "I'm the boss," in one of her little clips. That got my hackles up so I tweeted out, "You pompous little twit, you don't have a plan to feed 8 billion people without using fossil fuels." And to the effect, "There's these things called tractors, and there's these other things called semi trailers that need to carry 40 tons of food at a time into the inner cities in all our metropolises, where there's not enough room to grow the food for the people that are in the 60-story high rises, and this would immediately result in mass death. And in addition to that, if we quit fossil fuels tomorrow, there wouldn't be a tree left on this planet within a very short time. Is that the future we want for human civilization, to absolutely decimate the entire global environment for firewood to cook and heat our homes, which is what would happen with this many people?" So that's how it got started.

WOODS: So let's pick up then from there. Of course, when you look at the Green New Deal as a whole, you notice something about it right away, that, I don't know, maybe two-thirds of it really has to do with her social and economic goals much more than it does with the environment, which is so obviously a cover for her social and economic goals. If you really thought the world was ending in X number of years, your first concern would not be, well,

let's make sure women get to have the new construction jobs, and that – you would say, you know what? Let's let that all shake out the way it shakes out. Right now, we have to make sure the world doesn't end. But she's making sure that all kinds of racial and gender balances are going to be maintained and that certain wages will be maintained and labor unions will do this and that. Those might all be highly desirable things for all I know, but they would not be the main thing on my radar. I would be saying anybody talking about that is crazy. The world's about to end.

MOORE: Well, Tom, I just don't understand what she means when she says the world will come to an end. It's not going to actually explode into small bits.

WOODS: Right.

MOORE: So what does the world coming to an end look like? To me, the world coming to an end looks like eliminating fossil fuels practically overnight, and you know, getting rid of 85% of the energy that runs our entire civilization globally. To me, that would be something along the lines of Armageddon, the end times, although some people would survive that, but it wouldn't be a very nice form of survival, and we'd probably go back to a 35-year average age for individual people. So I don't know what she means.

I agree with you, though, that the whole thing is just a front for her social program and her so-called economic program, which is also ridiculous. The only part about it that I agree with is I do agree with equal rights. I don't agree with equal wealth, though. I know some people are more capable of creating wealth than other people are, and I think it's a good thing that there are safety nets, and that there's medical care for people, even if they don't have insurance, that hospitals will take them in. And so we have a caring society in the Western world, to a large extent.

But these dreams of having this – you know, I just don't understand the socialist agenda being adopted when we can see that it's been under socialism, fascism, and communism that hundreds of millions of people have been killed. And today, even now, we have these dictatorships and socialist, basically, juntas and dictatorships around the world where it's centralized control and lack of individual freedom, and it's not a good model. And there's no example of it having been a good model. And people who have this dislike for the United States, it's almost a self-loathing, writ large, and this is also a hallmark of a lot of these people, is I don't think they actually like themselves. Because no one could project a dislike for the whole of the United States of America unless they didn't like themselves, in my estimation. I'm not there, so I don't really understand the psychology, but it's something like that, I think.

WOODS: It puts me in mind of what Robert Frost once said. He says, "A liberal is somebody who refuses to take his own side in an argument." And there is a bit of that. But you know what, I want to switch gears entirely. I want to talk about nuclear power for a minute, because I was checking just before going on here about what Greenpeace thinks about nuclear power. And they describe it as "a distraction from the real solutions to climate change." And that I found so revealing. They say it's a distraction. Well, it can solve a lot of your problems without a lot of the dislocation and revolutionary change, but if the point of what you're doing is dislocation and revolutionary change, then yes, nuclear power would be a distraction from that. Am I being too cynical?

MOORE: No, not at all, Tom. That's the reason Greenpeace was the first one to put up the big sign saying "Resist" in front of the White House after Donald Trump was elected. And that is their motto now, from behind closed doors too. When was the last time you saw Greenpeace actually do any action out in the real world, like we did when I was with Greenpeace for 15 years back in the '70s and '80s? They do nothing. They're like a bunch of college kids on a summer cruise on their \$32 million yacht, which they claim is run by sails, that actually has an 1850 horsepower diesel engine down in the basement. So they are completely bereft of any moral model, of any kind of credibility or any kind of righteousness. Some people say these kind of movements, and the reason I left of course, is these kind of movements start with noble intentions. They eventually turn into a business because they've got a payroll to keep, and then they become a racket. Greenpeace is well into the racket stage, I'd say two decades into it at this point.

So the reason they disowned me in 2007 was because I came out publicly in favor of nuclear energy at that time. It was because I had made a serious mistake personally in the early years of Greenpeace by conflating nuclear weapons with nuclear energy because of the fear of radiation. And even as a science student, I did that. It just goes to show you how you can be molded by the overwhelming force of social opinion on something. And so when I came out in favor of nuclear energy in *The Wall Street Journal* — "A Green Goes Nuclear" was the headline — Greenpeace took my name off the Founders of Greenpeace website on Greenpeace International's website. 36 years after I helped start Greenpeace, they said I was no longer a founder, even though they had been saying I was for 36 years. So that's why I put up a fight on that subject, because I'm not going to let them memory-hole me or deep-six me or whatever that's called. Historical revisionism is one of the greatest enemies of progress, because, as Orwell said, he who controls the past controls the present, and he who controls the present controls the future, or something along those lines, anyway. He was very prescient in his understanding that historical revisionism was one of the most retrograde aspects of human nature.

WOODS: Well, on the subject of nuclear power, here you're dealing with an energy source that is clean as compared with the fossil fuels that not just the Greenpeace folks, but all the Green New Deal folks dislike. You can't make that complaint about nuclear power, so what they try to say is that it's expensive or it's dangerous. What is your response to those claims?

MOORE: First, it's not expensive if you look at how reliable it is and how long these reactors can operate. The capital cost is high, but these reactors can live longer than gas plants and coal plants by two or three times. So the payback is there. And in addition to that, the danger part is all based on what they call nuclear waste, which we call used nuclear fuel. Some people call it spent nuclear fuel, but that is wrong because it is in no way spent. The used nuclear fuel still has 99 or at least 95 extractable percent of the energy that it had in the beginning, because you're burning the uranium-235. While the uranium-235 burns, it creates plutonium-239 from the bulk of the fuel, which is uranium-238.

The distinction here is between fissile and fertile. Uranium-235, which is only .7% of natural uranium, is the only natural fissile isotope on planet Earth. So you've got all this other uranium called uranium-238, which is not fissile, but it is fertile. And all the thorium in the world, which is much more abundant than uranium itself, is also fertile, which means can be made into a fissile isotope in a nuclear reactor. In the case of thorium, it can be transmuted into uranium-233. So there is a vast store of future nuclear fuel. The Russians have already built two big nuclear reactors based on this principle. And in fact, the breeder reactor, as

people know that term, is the same idea. It's called fast neutron reactor. It is able to take the plutonium-239 that is automatically generated inside our existing conventional reactors and use it as fuel to make more plutonium-239 over and over and over again.

So what we should be doing with the US nuclear fuel is not being afraid of it, but storing it carefully, nice and dry and temperature-controlled for 200 or 300 years, until natural uranium becomes scarce – that is uranium-235 becomes scarce – and then we've got 10, 20, maybe 100,000 years' worth of nuclear energy into the future, long after the fossil fuels become scarce. So nuclear energy will be the primary energy source of the future once fossil fuels, which now provide over 80% of the world's energy, have been depleted.

WOODS: Now, I want to say something that will seem shocking to some people, but I just don't know what other conclusion to draw. I know it's quite possible to be – maybe you might not even want to use the term "environmentalist" because of how it's been hijacked, but it's quite possible to be somebody who loves the outdoors, loves the natural world, wants to preserve it as best as possible, but still believes in human progress and thinks the two things can be reconciled. But on the other hand – now, this is a very, very small sliver of the environmentalist movement, I will admit very small. But a lot of times, very small minorities can have a voice way out of proportion to their size.

And in particular, I'm talking about a group of people I've encountered in social media, because they've come after me, and they call themselves anarchoprimitivists. And their idea is that the problems that we are experiencing, things like depression and drug abuse and despair and hopelessness and meaninglessness, they derive from civilization itself, that civilization, they say – they're not joking. They say civilization was a mistake. We are not actually meant to live like this, and we ought instead to prefer a civilization where we have destroyed industry, and we do go back to a more direct relationship with nature and the land.

Now, for some people, if they want to live like that, of course, I have no objection. Why not? Go ahead and live like that. But obviously, that would mean literally billions of deaths. There's absolutely no way around that. And every time I would point that out to them, they would just go silent. They wouldn't indignantly deny that this would be the result. Do you think there is any part of that influence, that of course in the press releases they want to pretend doesn't exist, but do you think there is that influence behind some environmental organization, or am I exaggerating things?

MOORE: Tom, it's not as small a percentage as you think. This is basically the concept of rewilding, which was introduced by Friends of the Earth many years ago, the idea that we should turn the world back to wild nature and radically reduce the number of humans on the planet. I'm not sure how they think we're supposed to live or what sort of political system we'd be in or anything. It's all a lot of fantasy, as far as I'm concerned.

But when you take the fact that a majority of – and I don't call them environmentalists anymore; I usually use the word "green" in quotations. Using the word "green" to describe public policies is just so ridiculous. It has no technical or science meaning at all. So you can just use it willy-nilly as you would like to. And so many of the left's terminology are in that category these days. They say, *Well, you're not a climate scientists*, and I'm going, what you mean? I've got a PhD in ecology. I've studied climate for 40 years, and I'm not a climate scientist? *No, you're not*. And what they mean is I don't agree with them when they say I'm not

a climate scientist, because if I don't agree with them, I'm a climate denier. And so they've twisted the terminology in such a way as that John Kerry has more credibility – as a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science or something, he has more credibility than my former chairman in the CO2 Coalition, William Happer, who is, you know, physics Professor Emeritus, Princeton, in the School of Einstein. He's not a climate scientist, apparently, even though he has studied atmospheric physics for most of his life. So this is what it comes down to in terms of arguing with these people.

But when you look at the fact that they don't support either nuclear energy or even hydroelectric energy, which is just making a lake and using the gravity to make electricity, one of the most benign and most abundant forms of renewable energy we have, certainly the largest form of renewable electricity we have – they're against it too. Apparently they don't like to have more lakes, as if there's too many lakes and not enough valleys. As a matter of fact, there's a huge abundance of valleys and not as many lakes, so making a few more lakes is probably just fine. Well, it is just fine. I shouldn't even say probably. But they're against that, too.

So they're against both the large-scale, cost-effective, reliable technologies that could replace fossil fuels and at least for electricity production, which is about close to a third of the world's energy supply. And yet, they're opposed to that. That isn't the lie to them. If they don't accept nuclear and hydro, then they are full of you know what, in their whole campaign, because if they want to get rid of fossil fuels, that would be the first and easiest way to take a big chunk of them out. Instead, they're trying to turn the whole of transportation into being run by batteries. I bet the farmers are really looking forward to battery-powered combines and giant tractors, and I bet the truck drivers really looking forward to battery-driven semis to go on the interstate across the country, where you'd have to stop every five minutes to get new batteries. It's all just completely nuts.

And you know, I was reading today Captain Sully's remarks about the Boeing Max and his experience with automation. And everybody thinks we're going to have self-driving cars and self-driving Ubers and self-driving trains and self-driving everything. I don't think it's going to happen anymore than we're going to have self-driving airplanes. And that's what the mistake Boeing made, was they made that thing too self-driving, too smart, smarter than the pilots, who couldn't figure out what to do in what Sully calls "the situation." And this, I think, is a really important concept, because the computer itself and the pilot, him or herself, is one thing. But what about the situation that the pilot finds themselves in over New York with both engines going out because geese got in them? Like, that is a situation, and no computer is going to be able to be 100% perfect in responding quickly to unique situations as a result of the chaos of the world.

And so there is why I tweeted this morning that Sully quote, and that we don't have any chance of being able to make everything self-driving in my estimation. And a lot of people come back to me and say I agree with a lot of things you say, but this makes me really wonder about you, because I'm absolutely certain that we're going to have all self-driving cars. And they've been brainwashed into thinking this, in my estimation, and I don't believe it. On the other hand, this is an opinion about the future, and maybe they're right. But you see what I mean.

WOODS: This is why I had to ask the question about anarchoprimitivism or wilding or whatever it is, rewilding. Because what other explanation could there be for why you don't

want nuclear power when it does solve at least a chunk of the problem that you claim to have identified? So here's the question, though, that, as you said, Ocasio-Cortez is implicitly posing to people like you, which is: all right, I at least have some kind of proposal. Where's your proposal? We need something big and bold, because warming is happening. Warming is caused by human activity in large measure. Something substantial has to be done really fast, and if not this, then what? How do you answer that? What is your response to that?

MOORE: I say that if we were rational human beings, we would replace a considerable amount of the fossil fuels with other energy sources for the very purpose of preserving them for transportation for heavy transport, such as trucks and airplanes. Cars, maybe a lot of them can become battery-driven, because they're small and they're light loads. But I don't really have much faith in that either. So transport is where we need the oil and gas. Coal is a different matter. It can be used to produce electricity very cost effectively, and now with the pollution control we have, cleanly. So there's still a big place for fossil fuels in energy production. But all of all of the commercial shipping could be nuclear powered. The Russian icebreaker fleet is all nuclear. Five countries have nuclear ships in their navy, and lots of them, and submarines and surface vessels and big boats. So oil tankers could all be powered with nuclear reactors. And the type of people who come out of the nuclear navy are the ones who are running the hundred US nuclear reactor fleet for civilian use for electricity. So the United States could have 400 nuclear reactors instead of 100, and it would make a big dent in the consumption of fossil fuels. So that's a place where it could be used very effectively.

So there are adjustments that could be made in hydroelectric too. For example, in India, the "green movement," in quotes, has stopped basically all the potential hydroelectric projects coming out of the Himalayas, where there's huge flows of water from annual snowmelt coming out of there and rainfall from the monsoons. And all of the interior of India could be irrigated with this water instead of pumping out precious groundwater. The floods could be prevented, which cause deaths by the hundreds in these kinds of flood-prone areas. And then you could make your electricity, and even though Modi has done a good job with coal and nuclear, of getting electricity to many more people than had it previously, the hydroelectric would solve that problem overnight and give the farmers twice the yield of agriculture, just like the Three Gorges Dam has done in China. So India would be a place where a billion people or so could get their electricity switched from coal and nuclear to hydroelectric, if the green movement wasn't in the way of it.

So there's a whole bunch of potential situations where we could make electricity production cheaper, and come off being so reliant on fossil fuels and preserve them for the future, because you can make liquid fuel out of coal. South Africans have been doing it for decades at Sasol. And with high-temperature nuclear reactors, you can make the production of liquid fuels from coal much more efficient, like three times as efficient. So there's all kinds of things to aim for in technology at a large scale like this, where, you know, the computers and the microchips and all that, that is not very much energy required, even though the big servers and the cloud and all that, they do eat up a bunch of electricity. But it's nothing compared to the bulk energy that's used particularly for transport and heating in the cold climates. There's a lot of energy that goes into that, and a lot of improvements could be made there with ground source heat pump technology, for example, which is an extremely efficient technology. There's so much to do and lots of time to do it. It's not going to end in 12 years, we have more than that, in order to get on the right path and move in the right directions.

WOODS: Can you just tell me quickly what is their stated reason for opposition to hydro and what's wrong with that stated reason?

MOORE: It floods the valley and destroys the ecosystem, except they forget to notice that it creates a new ecosystem called a lake, which can have fish in it and other things. They hate change. You see, this is the deal. Climate *change* is the thing that they're against. And of course, the climate is going to change whether they want it to or not. And it's completely pointless to be against climate change, but they are against climate change, because they want everything to stay the same.

And when you ask them, well, what's the ideal temperature for Earth – because right now, the average temperature of the Earth is 60 degrees Fahrenheit, 15 degrees Celsius, just a little lower than that – is that the ideal temperature for Earth? We can't even live at that temperature unless we have fire, shelter, and clothing. We would die at 15 degrees Celsius. As a matter of fact, a human being in the shade will die of hypothermia at 20 degrees Celsius, that is, close to 70 degrees Fahrenheit, if you don't have any clothing, fire, or shelter to protect you, because our bodies are 96 Fahrenheit, 36 centigrade inside, and when we're in a temperature that is colder than that, we lose heat. And you have long as you eat lots, you can stand to be in a temperature that's lower than your internal body temperature, but at a certain point, you lose more heat than you gain from the food you eat, and you die from hypothermia.

And people just don't seem to have a sense of the fact that we are living now in one of the coldest periods in Earth's history. This is called the Pleistocene ice age, and thankfully the last 10,000 years have been one of many interglacial periods, whereas the glacial periods last much longer than that. They last for 50,000 years, as we gradually go into them, which we've started doing now. The Holocene interglacial period is now cooling, on average. We're in a warming blip in the last 300 years, which is, you know, a blink in nature's eye. But by and large, the last 5,000 years have been slightly cooling, and if all goes according to the last 2.5 million years of this Pleistocene ice age, we are beginning the descent, the 80,000-year descent into the peak of the next glaciation, and then we'll come out of it again. But we won't be here to come out of that, of course. But people don't have this long-term view of climate history, which is there for them to see on the internet in scads of graphs and information. The Vostok ice cores go back 400,000 years. The European ice cores go back 800,000 years, and the marine sediments go back 500 to 600 million years, where we can see what the climate of the Earth was like in the past.

WOODS: All right, as we wrap up, I do want to ask you one thing that some of my listeners have been asking about, because sometimes they share your material and their friends push back against you, because, man, have you been a thorn in the side of Greenpeace, and they just say nasty things about you. They say Patrick Moore is just a paid lobbyist, and you can safely ignore him. He's a lobbyist for the nuclear power industry, and so on and so forth. How do you answer that?

MOORE: Well, I answer that by saying I've actually never been a lobbyist. A lobbyist is a legal definition, and if you are going to visit politicians and try to convince them to pass certain legislation or to favor certain industries, then you are a lobbyist. You're acting on behalf of that industry to get something that is in their favor. That is not what I do. I am an environmental consultant. People hire me because they want to know what I think. They want me to tell them things that they don't know. They're not hiring me to be a parent. I'm not a

spokesperson in that sense, in that I say what I think. And that's why most of my work is public speaking, where nobody tries to tell me what to say. I tell people what I think about the environment and about all these issues, and they listen to me, and sometimes give me a standing ovation because they've learned something new. So you know, I'm not a paid lobbyist. I'm a paid public speaker and a paid environmental consultant, helping people deal with their environmental issues in a constructive way.

But Greenpeace, basically they say I work for polluting industries. And they include forestry in that. Like forestry produces the most important renewable energy and material resource in the world. It's called wood. And they just ignore that. They think that forestry is actually a polluting industry and should therefore be, I guess, eliminated. But aquaculture is another one they accuse me of being in favor of. Of course I'm in favor of farming marine species for food. That way, we don't wipe out all the wild ones by overfishing them. Same thing that happened when we started farming on the land. So I have no problem answering to their character assassination, is basically all it is. And it's not an argument. It's not anything about the environmental policy. It's just about trying to destroy a person's reputation. And they'll never succeed, because I'm telling the truth as best I can, and whenever I learn that I've got something a little bit wrong, I correct it immediately.

WOODS: Well, Patrick Moore, thanks so much for your time. How can people follow you if they want to know more and see what you're saying these days?

MOORE: Actually, the best place is on my Twitter feed @EcoSenseNow. My website is EcoSense.me, and that's more of an archive. I'm not really that active on it; I don't have a blog. I basically am a bit lazy in that way and use Twitter to only have 240 characters at a time. But it seems to me to be a very useful way to get into a big conversation. I've managed, talking about science and environment, to get more than 70,000 followers, and most of them are very attentive, and we have a really good conversation. We are a civilized conversation, enjoying what we're doing.

WOODS: Well, tremendous. All right, I'm going to let you go, but thanks so much again for your time. I'll link to these things on our show notes page, and perhaps we can talk again soon. Thanks so much.

MOORE: Oh, one thing more, Tom. My book is *Confessions of a Greenpeace Dropout: The Making of a Sensible Environmentalist*, available on Amazon as either a Kindle or a print book. The Kindle is less than \$10; the print book's a bit more, but some people like print. And I hope people will read it because it's the whole history of the early environmental movement and my role in it, and then the conversion to a sensible environmentalist when Greenpeace went bad, and then a discussion of all irrelevant issues on the environment today with a different take than they might get in the newspapers.

WOODS: I'll be delighted to link to that as well. Thanks again.

MOORE: Thank you, Tom. Take care.