

**G8 Summit: Capacity for “Global Climate Change”
July 11, 2008**

Many countries around the world find it difficult to take Canada and its government seriously on energy conservation and climate change issues. Who can blame them? A quick glance – that’s all our critics need – at the G8 chart below (compiled from various sources) tells them our exhortation on climate change merit only one response “physician heal thyself !”

Country (A)	Population in Millions (B)	Barrels of Petroleum Consumed Per Day in Millions (C)	Barrels of Petroleum Consumed Per Day Per Person (D)
Britain	60.8	1.696	.28
Canada	33.4	2.303	.70
France	63.7	1.919	.30
Germany	82.4	3.393	.29
Italy	58.2	1.745	.30
Japan	127.4	5.051	.30
Russia	141.4	2.699	.20
USA	301.0	20.698	.69
		* measured in light sweet crude.	* Rounded to nearest 10 th of a percent

Column D tells everyone Canadians are truly the “fat cats” of fat cat industrialized nations. We have the smallest economy but are 5th in terms of daily consumption, and first (worst) on a per capita basis. As long as greater consumption of carbon-based, Green House Gas (GHG) emission-producing energy of petroleum, equals greater contribution to global warming and climate change, then we Canadians are in greatest need of altering life styles.

Are we up to it? We’d have to revolutionize our industrial base and our consumer practices: a true “Green Shift” in Research and Development, Manufacturing, as well as Consumption.

Consider that others might legitimately want to enjoy what we collectively take for granted and one can better appreciate the public (and international) policy challenges ahead. Ten years ago, in one of my then many trips to the ever-increasingly, economically dynamic China, one Canadian anti-nuclear activist prompted me to ask my hosts if the Chinese authorities were aware of the potential dangers of the “nuclearization” of their energy program.

The official took my question elegantly (given that Canada was trying to sell them CANDU reactors) and reminded me that, on a per capita basis, Canadians consumed 1000 times more electrical energy than their average Chinese counterpart. Put differently, on average, a single Chinese used as much electrical energy in 3 years as the typical Canadian used in one day - everyday! Moreover, Chinese coal fired hydro-electric plants were clouding up Chinese skies in a way we could not tolerate in Canada. Nuclear energy was the easiest and “safest” catch-up mechanism that they had.

They are catching up, but still have a long way to go. Beijing, one of China's richest cities now has approximately 3.5 million cars spewing pollution and GHGs into the environment. That's less than one car for every 5 inhabitants – and they feel the congestion! The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) with 1/3 of Beijing's population has an equal number of cars - two cars for every 3 inhabitants!

We cannot blame them for wanting our standard and quality of life. Why should they listen when we preach change? Our challenge is this: on a personal basis, how many are willing to cut back and vacate space that others must and will fill in?

On a country basis, for how long can we pursue goals that can only be achieved in collaboration with the very countries and societies we refuse to engage? We need serious soul searching followed by “innovative” approaches in domestic [industrial, inter-provincial] and foreign policy. Failing that, our manufacturing and green plans will both go up in smoke.

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