

We Are All Doomed – The Gulf Oil Spill, And What We Must Do Now

Hello, good evening and welcome, Shalom, Assalamu alaikum. It is July 2010, my name is Alexander Baron, I am an independent researcher based in London, England, and this is Internet Sermon number seven from me.

It is also, by far the most important document I have ever produced. I am not the only person who is currently reiterating this message; I am not the first; and I am certainly not the best qualified; but you ignore me, and all the other Cassandras, at your peril.

Unless you have been living on another planet, you will have heard of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. On April 20 this year, an explosion on this rig led to what was rapidly to become the worst oil spill in American history, and what is now the worst in world history. The explosion killed eleven rig workers and injured another seventeen. Tragic though that was, that death toll pales in comparison with the damage this spill has the potential to cause. At this point in time, the resulting oil slick is known to cover over twenty-five hundred square miles. The Atlantic Ocean covers over 20% of the Earth's surface, so that is quite a small percentage, but let's try another comparison; the island of Jamaica is around forty-five hundred square miles. So we are looking at a slick probably the size of Jamaica, maybe bigger. And that is only the oil that we know about.

If you have been following this story only in the mainstream media – newspapers, radio, television – you will have missed the real story. I needn't tell you that you can't believe everything you read on the Internet anymore than you can believe everything you read in the paper or see on TV, but there are many reports available from reputable, knowledgeable sources, which contain a wide array of expert and informed opinion, not all doom-mongering – but intelligent speculation, projections, and unavoidable scenarios – all these are but a few keystrokes away. If you put them all together, and if you apply a little foresight, the conclusion is ominous. Unless we do something now, and I mean now, we are all doomed. Even if we do act now, we could still be doomed.

You can see photographs of some of the devastation the oil slick has already caused on many websites such as the Alexander Higgins Blogspot.









The devastation to wildlife is already clearly immense, but this is a drop in the ocean to what we can expect. There have been reports of immense plumes of oil under the surface, and there has been intelligent speculation from highly qualified scientists that the seabed itself may have been fractured, or that vast quantities of methane gas will be released, which will have disastrous consequences not simply for the people living in the immediate area, but for all Mankind.

I am not qualified to comment on such speculation, I can say only that we must all hope for the best, but if this leak is not stopped permanently it has the potential to kill every fish in the Atlantic.

Earlier this month, BP suspended its dividend payout for the rest of the year, and is expected to pay out at least \$20 billion dollars to clear up the mess – as far as it can be cleaned up. The company's share price has plummeted and continues to fall, and, we are told, investors including pension funds are extremely worried. But what good will their dividends or all the money on Earth do them if the world's oceans die?

Now here is the heart of my message, we must shut down the oil now. On May 7, the Obama Administration banned off-shore drilling, a ban which was extended on May 28. Since his honeymoon period ended, Obama has come in for a great deal of personal criticism over many of his policies, but he should have been given a medal for this one. So what do the oil companies do? They take the US Government to court, and a Federal district judge, in New Orleans of all places, like Hurricane Katrina, District Judge Martin Feldman lifts the ban. Is he and are the oil companies insane? What happens if there is another, similar spill? This is a ludicrous decision. As I said, we must shut down the oil now. Not just deep sea drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, but everywhere.

Leaving aside the terrible consequences of this particular disaster, doesn't anyone realise what all this drilling is letting us in for? Oil under the seabed is compressed, but if it is pumped out, what is going to replace it? They teach you in primary school that nature abhors a vacuum. Extracting oil from under the sea, especially so far down, is a recipe for disaster. Whatever blame is rightly attached to BP, this was an accident waiting to happen. We, our planet, can't afford anymore.

Leaving aside phony pseudo-economic arguments against shutting down oil production, I hear people saying we can't afford to, we need oil, there are no other sources of cheap energy available in such quantity. First, cheap is not a word we can afford to use after Deepwater Horizon. Second, if you think we need oil, that we have enough oil to last for the foreseeable future, or even for the next fifty years, check out the lecture on the exponential function by Professor Alfred Bartlett. You can find this on the YouTube website under the modest sounding title *The Most IMPORTANT Video You'll Ever See*. I would suggest you watch the entire lecture, but Parts 5 & 6 are most relevant to fossil fuels. And no, this is not Professor Bartlett's title.

There is not enough oil, and even if there were, the cost of extracting it in both economic and ecological terms is far too great. So what am I suggesting? What is Al's recipe for avoiding total global disaster? I've already written an article about this which was published on the *Mathaba* news website, but I'd like to expand on it here for a wider audience.

Firstly, we live on a planet that is rich in natural resources beyond all meaning of the word. We have three forms of power that are both free or virtually free, and continuous. In order of importance they are the Sun, the waves, and the wind.

Some critics have complained that the free lunch that was once promised by solar power has not materialised. This is manifestly not true, what has not materialised is the willingness to invest in this still relatively new technology. Earlier this month, a light aircraft powered entirely by solar cells flew for twenty-six hours non-stop.



Okay, it will be years, probably decades before that feat can be repeated with a 747, but using the solar technology we have today we could cover half the world's deserts with solar cells; all new buildings could have them built into their rooves. With existing solar technology, we could heat and/or air condition and provide electricity for every home, every building, from Saudi Arabia to San Francisco; from Aden to Adelaide, Australia. Solar power can also be used with some degree of success in temperate countries such as Britain and Canada, and that is only as things stand.

To date we have done precious little with wave power, but again, this is a vast, and totally free source of energy. Harnessing energy from the wind is the least promising of the three, but windmills have been with us for hundreds of years. Again, this is both free and clean, once they are up and running, solar, wave and wind generators require only occasional maintenance, and perhaps the odd tweak from an oil can.

What are we waiting for? If we utilise all three of these free natural energy sources, we can also drive the majority of cars off the roads, at least in cities. With free or near free power, we can have a totally subsidised public transport system in most large cities: electric trains and electric buses. And do cars and larger vehicles need to run on petrol – that's gas to you Americans – or diesel oil? The answer is an emphatic no. Cars have been run on alcohol successfully since the turn of the Century. The Twentieth Century, that is. There are other, environmentally friendly fuels too, and that is without those which can surely be developed.

Okay, assuming we convert all or almost all our domestic and land based transport to electric or alternative fuels, that still leaves two big consumers of oil: boats and planes. Though we can't run either ships or aircraft off solar cells in the foreseeable future, we can run ships off alternative fuels, and sometime ago a Brazilian company developed an aircraft that runs off ethanol. As with so many advances in technology, what is needed most here is investment. We can also reduce our dependency on aircraft by using alternative methods of transport. For the foreseeable future that means the train. To ask the people of America or

Russia to travel by rail or road instead of by air is probably too much, but for smaller countries like Britain, Germany, and Holland where there are not vast distances to be covered, is a free or heavily subsidised high speed train such a terrible alternative to flying?

It may take less than an hour and a half to fly from London to Edinburgh as opposed to four and a half to five hours by train, but by the time you allow for checking in times, enhanced airline security and so on, the difference isn't that great.

Now the really big question, where would all the money come from to pay for all this investment: the implementation of alternative energy sources, the enhancement of existing such technologies and the development of new ones? Who is going to pay for it? There's the rub.

In the wake of the recent phony recession, the Bank of England created around two hundred billion pounds of new money. In its own words, the Bank purchased assets with electronic money which it created literally out of thin air. And the assets it purchased? Worthless bits of paper, if that. What the Bank could have done, and should have done, was create this new money, and instead of giving it to the banks, it should have spent it into circulation itself. This is what governments have done in the past to fund great public works, and this is what they should do now. Instead of creating new money and giving it to the banks to play stupid casino games, something they've as good as admitted in the past few weeks, they should create new money debt-free and put it to good use to save our planet. Because it's the only one we've got.

The two hundred billion I alluded to is just the Bank of England. Now, suppose all the Central Banks of all the EEC countries, and the Federal Reserve, and some of the untold billions the Saudis and other oil rich nations have squirrelled away, suppose that, or a tiny fraction of it were to be invested now in alternative technologies.

In October 2009, over one hundred and sixty thousand new cars were sold in the UK. That was a particularly good month, but imagine what it would mean for the environment if every one of these vehicles had been adapted for an alternative fuel. Imagine if similar resources had been invested in alternative technologies such as solar power, and what this would entail. Of course, regular economists ask how can we afford it? The real question though is how can we not afford it? After all, we have millions of men and women in Britain who are unemployed, including graduates. The situation is no different in Europe or across The Pond. What would it take to put those idle hands to work to produce something to reduce our dependence on oil and to save the environment, rather than giving the same money to the banks so that parasitic traders can gamble on the futures and derivatives markets, and then expect the government - ie the taxpayer - to bail them out after the next crash?

This is the biggest crisis facing Mankind since the bubonic plague. It is bigger than AIDS, bigger than global warming - whatever one thinks of that - bigger than even a limited nuclear war in the Middle East. If the oceans die, we die with them. From a personal perspective, this is something that doesn't matter much to me; a few days from now, I will be fifty-four years old, an age I had never expected to reach; I don't have any children or grandchildren who will be around fifty years from now, but if you do, then you owe it to them to do whatever is necessary to save what's left of this planet from these madmen.

I've given you the facts, and I've told you what has to be done. Mine is not a lone voice, far from it. You ignore me, and all the other Cassandras, at your peril.

A few notes on the above. First and most important, the paragraphs in green were not included in the YouTube video. I'm sure I recorded them, but somehow I appear to have edited them out. I could re-record them, indeed I could re-record the entire video, but if and when this happens I would like it to be done professionally. And as things stand, that ain't gonna happen. My apologies, in any event.

Second, if you dear reader find any inconsistencies between the video and this transcript, the latter is to be taken as the definitive.

Third, I had intended to make an irreverent reference to Judge Martin Feldman, but figured the bulk of my audience – both of you – would not understand. Martin Feldman was also the name of a once well-known comedian. Known as Marty Feldman, he had big, bulging eyes which were his trademark. Although an accomplished writer, he was better known for his TV and film appearances, including the Mel Brooks parody *Young Frankenstein*, in which he played Igor (pronounced eye-gore). For some reason I found this coincidence more unnerving than humorous.