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5 Best Wednesday Columns

By ERIK HAYDEN AND RAY GUSTINI | November 17, 2010 8:59am

· **Bjorn Lomborg on Cost-Effective Ways to Address Climate Change** The author of *The Skeptical Environmentalist* reviews humanity's "pretty impressive track record" of adapting to various climates in [The Washington Post](#). He believes man-made climate change is real, and the effects will be drastic. But he also thinks we can find ways to cope: from Tokyo to Holland, humans have already successfully protected themselves from rising tides, for example, using relatively low-cost, high-impact floodgates and dikes. Another problem associated with global warming is the urban "heat island effect," where cities tend to get much warmer than the countryside because of the sheer amount of tar roofs and asphalt roads in the areas. But if we took \$1 billion to paint Los Angeles's streets and rooftops white, explains Lomborg, it would "reduce temperatures in the L.A. Basin more than global warming would increase them over the next 90 years." Mere adaptation, he notes, will not be a lasting solution to global warming, but "will enable us to get by while we figure out the best way to address the root causes of man-made climate change."

· **Penny Junor on Kate Middleton** Prince William's engagement to "commoner" Kate Middleton could save the monarchy, writes royal biographer Penny Junor in [The Telegraph](#). "Between them," says Junor, "they could make a devastating pair and secure the long-term future of the monarchy that, when Diana died, 13 years ago, looked in grave danger of disappearing at the end of the current reign." More than anything, William wants "to be seen as relevant in his public life" and not "out of touch with his people," a charge commonly levied against his father. In proposing marriage to a "real person" like Middleton, he's well on his way.

· **David Ignatius on America's Image in the World** Anti-Americanism is nothing new, but [The Washington Post](#) columnist reports on a new phenomenon growing overseas: simply put, they think we're coming apart at the seams. The world sees "a weak U.S. president who isn't solving domestic economic problems, let alone global ones" and "a breakdown of the U.S. political system's ability to find consensus and make decisions." Tea Partiers say "Washington *doesn't work*"--that's increasingly the view abroad, as well. Ignatius also cites the Fed's "unilateralism" as upsetting to other countries. "There's a cost in appearing so clearly to put our own welfare first," he cautions. "Other countries will do the same."

· **Warren Buffett Thanks the Government for Intervention During the Financial Crisis** "Dear Uncle Sam, My mother told me to send thank-you notes promptly. I've been remiss," begins an unusual letter penned in [The New York Times](#) from the Berkshire Hathaway chief executive to the U.S. government. Buffett describes the "fog of panic" that enveloped Wall Street and D.C. during the collapse of some of the nation's most venerable financial institutions in 2008. The U.S. government, he argues, was the only "counterforce" available to stem the tide of falling dominoes and "Uncle Sam, you delivered." Buffett congratulates Ben Bernanke, Hank Paulson, George W. Bush, among others, who "in the darkest days" acted with "courage and dispatch" to "improvise solutions on the run" and stave off an even greater crisis. "Often [Uncle Sam] you are wasteful, and sometimes you are bullying....But in this extraordinary emergency, you came through--and the world would look far different now if you had not," Buffett concludes.

· **The Los Angeles Times Editorial Board: 'Shut Up and Be Scanned'** "There's no bright line to indicate where our quest for security becomes intolerably invasive of our privacy, but we're still pretty sure the TSA hasn't yet crossed it," declares an editorial in [The Los Angeles Times](#). "We're not wild about the new methods either, but they're a necessary evil in the era of suicide bombers who board planes with chemical explosives in their underwear," they write. About radiation concerns they report that "half the machines being deployed use X-ray technology that exposes passengers to radiation, yet the amount is so tiny--it would take 5,000 trips through the scanner to equal the exposure of a single chest X-ray." And the board dismisses the idea that the nearly unrecognizable nude scans--with key areas already blurred--will be widely disseminated on the internet. "It's reasonable to ask, what's next?" they admit. "Anal probes at the airport? It's safe to say that if the TSA gets to that point, it will have crossed the line," the board remarks. "Meanwhile, though, a full-body scan isn't a terribly high price to pay for a measure of peace of mind."