

Editorial

It's the Physical Economy, Stupid!

Regardless of who wins the election Nov. 2, or even if the outcome of that election drags out over weeks and months, there is no question but that the crucial issue facing the American and world population will be the economy. Our future will be determined by how we deal with an onrushing collapse that threatens to throw us into the worst breakdown crisis in centuries. The issues to be confronted will be matters of life or death.

Nothing epitomizes this reality better than the flu vaccine crisis. On the one hand, this disaster gives us a clear snapshot of the irresponsible, even murderous state of mind of the Bush Administration. Even when confronted with the fact that tens of millions of health-care providers and members of the most vulnerable portion of the population will not be able to be immunized against the flu, Bush and Cheney and their underlings will not give up the mantra of free enterprise and the market. They won't declare an emergency, and re-allocate supplies: They would rather let people die. (It'll be after the election, right?)

On the other hand, this crisis is the result of a long-standing commitment to the insanity of the post-industrial consumer society, under which we have taken down our capabilities to provide for the health and welfare of our population. We concentrated on our "money" economy, not the physical economic prerequisites for providing medical care, and, in fact, we let our management of the money economy *loot* and shut down the physical infrastructure required for public health.

Thus, today, it doesn't matter if you have all the money in the world: *There is not enough flu vaccine to go around.* There are not enough hospital beds to handle the surge of illness which can be expected as the flu season deepens. There are not enough public health workers, not enough researchers for new vaccines, not enough nurses.

Hence, we have a concrete lesson in the fundamentals of physical economy. If you don't invest in the long and medium term in educating your workforce, building necessary public infrastructure, and establishing insti-

tutions to provide for the general welfare—when the crisis comes, you die! And in the case of the flu crisis, those otherwise avoidable deaths may add up into the tens of thousands.

The flu vaccine crisis is only the most dramatic example of this lesson that must be learned. We face a similar potential disaster in the areas of transportation infrastructure, water and sewer treatment, and power production and transmission. Breakdowns in any one of these areas of vital hard infrastructure can also lead to the deaths of individuals—or of whole areas of the economy upon which they depend for a livelihood. All the money in the world won't prevent such crises, once they have been permitted to develop.

Thus, the agenda must be set for the post-election period: Put our physical economy in order! To those who say that we can't afford it, we have to be blunt. The financial system is bankrupt anyway, and will only get worse in the immediate months ahead, with the rise in the price of oil and the like. We must put it into bankruptcy reorganization, with measures similar to those FDR took, and simply go ahead and create the Federal credit that will put people to work building what must be built for our physical and human survival.

EIR will be devoting a substantial amount of its publication efforts over the coming months to precisely this issue, and our *EIR Online* will provide the kind of animated graphics which are required for conveying the process of construction, and destruction, which brought us to the point we're at now. The key will be to shift the mindset of the population away from money, and the idea of what we can consume, to the prerequisites for feeding, housing, transporting, employing, educating, and otherwise uplifting the population of the United States, and the world.

The crises are inevitable, no matter who is elected. The only question is whether the American population demands a solution that rebuilds our physical economy, or whether it submits to those bankers who want to save their power, at the expense of our physical survival.

Either way, the focus is clear: It's the physical economy, stupid!