



## U.S. should switch to nuclear power for sake of 'green'

A number of groups are promoting various "green" resolutions for mayors and city councils to sign in the Rock River Valley and all over the country. While all are well-intentioned, what they seek to do is no less than overturn the American lifestyle of conspicuous consumption.

That's a tall order. Can you imagine a future "Department of Energy Security" impounding SUVs, closing big box shopping centers and ordering people to quit jobs that require driving more than 10 miles? Why, that's un-American!

Now, I'm a fan of green cities, not because I believe for one moment they have anything to do with climate change, but because they make cities nicer places to live. I love what Mayor Richard M. Daley has done in Chicago. When I went to college there in the 1970s, the city was cold, gray and stark — a great big Detroit.

Today, Chicago is spectacular. It's colorful, zippy and vibrant. With all of Daley's greenways, flowery boulevards and new gardens, the city finally lives up to its motto: Urbs in Horto, meaning City in a Garden.

If we really were to do what the enviro groups promoting "green" or "cool" cities require, we'd have to live as slightly modified Amish. Which is fine if you're Amish. But if you're reading this column, you're not.

No, for the World's Last Remaining Superpower to tackle climate change, abandon foreign oil and reduce carbon and CO2 emissions, it will require a World's Last Remaining Superpower Solution. And that's why I think Bob Abboud, the Democrat and nuclear scientist/engineer who will challenge U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo, R-Egan, in 2008, has some intriguing thoughts about our nation's energy future.

I had a conversation recently with Abboud about his Superpower Solution, which I will humbly try to simplify: The U.S. goes nuclear. Big-time. In a project that rivals the building of the Interstate Highway System.

We can find the "all nuclear" model just across the Atlantic Ocean, Abboud says, in France. You remember France? Oh sure, you mock them now, but without the French fleet blasting away at Cornwallis' army at Yorktown, George Washington and his federal troops would have lost the decisive battle in our war for independence and we'd still be part of British North America, eh?

France runs on nuclear energy. Its plants are well built and safe. Its work force is highly trained. France also reprocesses its nuclear fuel waste, which we in the States are not allowed to do, Abboud says. So, it has largely eliminated the problem of radioactive waste disposal.

With a nuclear-powered, nonpolluting electric grid, we could move into an era of electric cars that use powerful batteries. We'd plug them in at night along with our mobile phones. Totally carbon neutral.

In past columns, I have supported production of ethanol and other nonfossil fuels that we can make here. I still do, but the more I learn, the more I realize that we could turn the entire Great Plains into the Field of Windmills, convert every kernel of corn to alcohol, process all the coal to oil and still cover only a fraction of our energy needs.

Abboud's pro-nuclear stand will no doubt confound the dominant Luddite wing of the Democratic Party. And for a political writer, that will sure be fun to watch.

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