

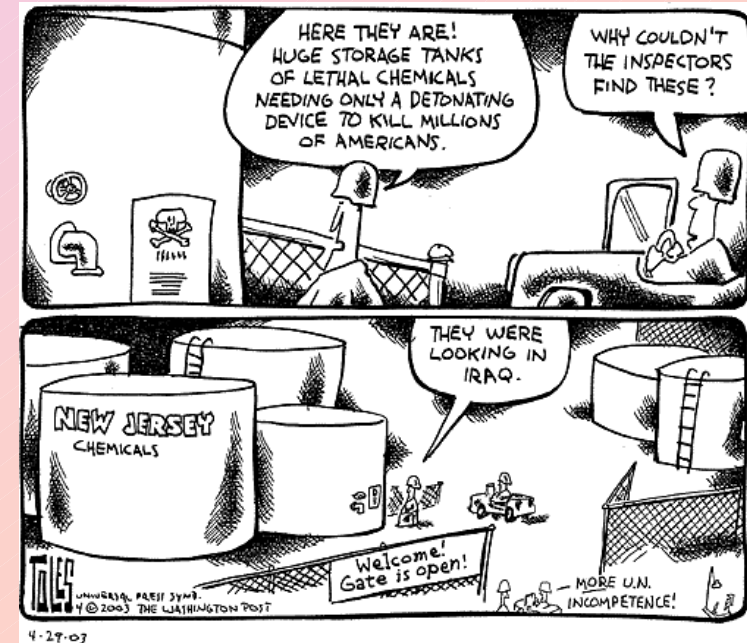
Sustainable Development Beyond the « nice and easy »

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Starting point: Sustainable development *may* hurt

- Perception of SD #1: ‘Do good today and don’t forget about future generations’
- Perception #2: ‘Minor adjustments to today’s choices and behaviours are enough’
 - Evidence: SD goals and labels are now everywhere, but changes are hardly perceptible
- In fact: implementing SD could imply hard conflicts. Policy decisions need to tackle these seriously for change to be possible.

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«Future generations? What about **today’s** generations?»

- Needs in the North (e.g., pensions) and South (water, energy services, etc.)
- Climate change issues
 - Adaptation needs: now, not in 30 years
 - CO2 reduction policy in *developing* countries
 - Focus on development policies that could *also* lead to lower emissions
- Should not separate inter-generational from intra-generational equity

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Role of scenarios in SD discussions

The supremacy of 'business-as-usual' (BAU)

- «We have a huge problem if we go on like this» (climate, local pollution, congestion)
- Underlying BAU projections:
 - Steady economic growth (exponential)
 - No tensions or crises seem to interfere...
 - **Overall**, is this not a good scenario?
- Hard to 'sell' SD to policy-maker when overall picture is mostly optimistic
 - Less linear approach to scenario building?

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Role of scenarios in SD discussions

The weakness of 'radical change' scenarios

- «Goal: -75% in CO2 emissions by 2050»
- Requires radical changes
 - «Utopia!» (= Impossible conflict with today's reality)
 - «Just wait, technology will save us!» (= Why worry?)
- Rather: Shed light on path from 2050 to 2003 and ask:
 - Which of the current policy choices matter for the long run?
 - Where **exactly** are major irreversibilities?
 - Empower policy-makers rather than leave them hopeless

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SD implies tough political decisions

Effective change: revolutions or reforms?

- Two – ineffective? – approaches to change:
 - « Activity Z is guilty: it must stop now! »
 - « Slow changes will work, no-one gets hurt »
- Alternative:
 - In some cases, accept necessity of radical change
 - And address related distribution issues directly
 - E.g. compensation schemes in climate policy.

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Summary

- SD: Intra-generational equity matters too
- Business-as-usual scenarios are always more attractive
- Projections should reveal effects of today's decisions (irreversibility)
- Policy making towards SD may require handling major distribution issues

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Things are returning to normal in Iraq



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