Twitter Thread by Kevin Surprise



Kevin Surprise
@KevinSurprise

Along w/ Biden climate news, some thoughts on solar geoengineering (SG) research under Biden Admin. SG closer to Biden/Democratic politics than Trump/Conservative: science-based, multilateral “green” capitalism. Recent moves indicate SG steadily moving into climate policy: THREAD

US is the world leader in SG research, with most funding from private sources – largely billionaires, wealthy individuals, and their boutique foundations – with ties to Silicon Valley tech firms, venture capital, and Wall Street hedge funds (also major donor bases for Dem Party)

Some philanthropists funding SG research include Bill Gates, Rachel Pritzker (billionaire heir of Pritzker family; Chair of Board at Breakthrough Institute), Chris Sacca/Lower Carbon Capital (billionaire VC, deep ties to Silicon Valley). All representatives of “green” capitalism

Leading centrist think tanks and environmental orgs like EDF and Resources for the Future (RFF), both of which take corporate funding (with RFF taking money from fossil fuel industry, e.g. Aramco, Chevron, Shell) support SG research and promote its inclusion in US climate policy

RFF recently published an SG policy paper by Harvard economists Joseph Aldy (fmr. Special Advisor to Obama for Energy and Environment) and Richard Zeckhauser that advocates SG as merely one prong of “prudent” climate policy: https://t.co/zfDffkS2J3

Harvard is home to the leading SG research program in the world, with millions in funding (much of it, again, from tech and finance billionaires). Harvard SG researchers are currently moving forward with outdoor experiments (SCoPEx): https://t.co/lPk3yqXvEv

Harvard’s David Keith and MIT’s John Deutch recently published a paper similarly advocating SG as one tool in a “rational” climate toolbox, presented at the elite Aspen Institute Economic Strategy Group, co-chaired by Fmr. Treasury Secretary (and Goldman Sachs exec) Hank Paulson

Deutch is representative of corporate power and the defense community: former CIA Director and Deputy Sec. of Defense, board member of Citigroup, Raytheon, Schlumberger, member of National Petroleum Council. Link to Keith and Deutch Paper: https://t.co/RmJaqr62w0

Deutch also recently published a proposal for federal SG research: $50 million to 10-15 universities, overseen by a congressional blue ribbon committee. Written w/ Maria Zuber, new co-chair of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology: https://t.co/VbxSLAu7WJ

This would go well beyond existing congressional funding: FY20 saw allocation of $4 million to NOAA to support SG research, FY21 proposals call for an additional $9 million. Funding originates from Rep. McNerney's (D-CA) "Climate Intervention Research Act" https://t.co/Km6s3TGWn8

Guidance for further federal SG funding and research will come from the National Academies of Science report on "blocking sunlight to cool earth," which is expected to shape US SG policy. The NAS committee was initially chaired by Susan Biniaz, top US lawyer at the Paris Accords

Biniaz has published on SG, and is on the board of SG funding and research organization SilverLining. SilverLining is connected in Rep. McNerney's office, and backed by billionaires like Pritzker, Sacca, and other Silicon Valley/venture capital interests: https://t.co/p9uksniOvo

SilverLining recently provided $3 million in grants for SG research to leading programs, and couches their work in the language of humanitarianism and "climate justice:" https://t.co/zmjilGIgd1 ... this is the increasingly dominant framing of SG research

Biniaz is now a top staffer in John Kerry's Cabinet-level climate office within the National Security Council. SG easily aligns with Biden/Dem approach to climate security, and has long been on the agenda of military/intelligence agencies (e.g. CIA, DARPA) https://t.co/VpAvxEcOls

US remains an imperial empire, climate security will be enfolded into the imperial project. SG under US-led capitalist hegemony – driven by endless accumulation/growth via global south dispossession and imperialist rivalry – cannot be humanitarian even if nominally "multilateral"

The climate-friendly wing of the capitalist class, the policy/security elite, and politically connected scientists comfortable with billionaire money and green capitalism are embracing SG. This is no road to climate justice, merely a slightly "greener" version of status the quo

Compare this to signatories of the HOME Campaign's Manifesto Against Geoengineering. I don't fully share HOME/ETC's politics, but the signatories make clear that those struggling for climate justice on the ground across global north and south oppose SG: https://t.co/Yi6hbJcqe0

Green capitalism (tweaks in market-policy-technology) cannot manage climate crises. Carbon removal at relevant scales remains dubious (see work on CDR by @wim_carton) ...likely the only way to deal w/ climate under capitalism is to "buy time" at a planetary scale, i.e. solar geo

Left climate organizations and journalists need to start paying closer attention to the development of solar geoengineering in the US: @SteveAHorn @KateAronoff @aldatweets ...thoughts? @mclaren_erc @OlafCorry @jenniecstephens @InaMoller @hollyjeanbuck @VozSilvestre @maxajl