

Costs and Benefits in the War on Terror

Since 9/11, the U.S. government has poured a breathtaking amount of resources into investigating suspected terrorism operations within the United States. A key component of these investigations is known as “ghost-chasing”—the thousands of leads and tips investigated daily, and classified as “threats,” despite the fact that only one in 10,000 fails to be false.

These efforts are often criticized on the basis of civil liberties abuses. But, convinced that terrorism is an “existential” threat, many people are perfectly comfortable overlooking these abuses. In their new book, *Chasing Ghosts: The Policing of Terrorism*, Cato’s John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart of the University of Newcastle, Australia, take aim at the very premises of U.S. counterterrorism operations. Is terrorism truly a significant threat? Are most would-be terrorists actually skilled enough to pull off an attack? Is it true that we can “never be safe enough”? Mueller and Stewart examine the methods of the FBI, National Security Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, and local policing agencies, revealing the government’s exaggerated claims about the “threats” they divert. The question, they write, is not whether any real terrorists exist—but whether the chase is worth the cost.

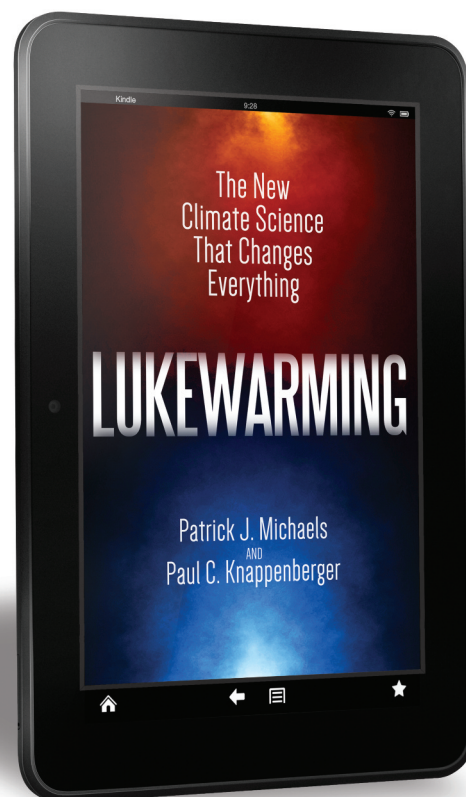
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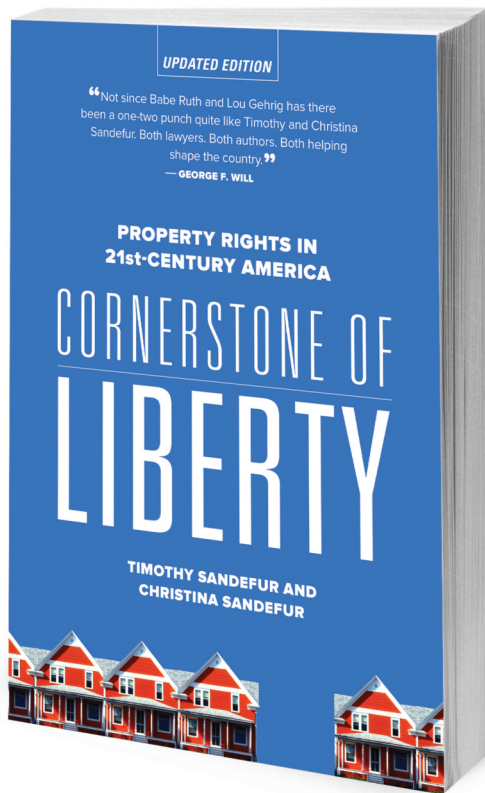
You Might Be a “Lukewarmer” If...

When it comes to global warming, most people think there are two camps: “alarmist” or “denier” being their respective pejoratives. Either you acknowledge the existence of manmade climate change and consider it a dire global threat, or you deny it exists at all. But there’s a third group: the “lukewarmers.” As Cato scholars Pat Michaels and Paul C. Knappenberger write in their new ebook, *Lukewarming: The New Climate Science that Changes Everything*, “Lukewarmers believe the evidence of some human-caused climate change is compelling, but it is hardly the alarming amount predicted by models.”

Lukewarmers are skeptical that government pacts, like those sought at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, will do much to temper climate change’s effects. They also tend to question the incentive structure of climate science, where scientists are vying for millions of dollars of government funding—meaning that any proposal that global warming’s effects have been overforecast “threatens to derail everyone else’s gravy train.” This, they argue, has brought about “a systemic distortion in the direction of alarmism.” *Lukewarming* tells a different story—one that ends with optimism. “Lukewarmers know,” they write, “that economic development is the key in adaptation to the vagaries of weather and climate, even climate change induced by people.”

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Property Rights after *Kelo*

When Cato published the first edition of *Cornerstone of Liberty: Property Rights in 21st Century America*, the infamous Supreme Court case of *Kelo v. New London* had only recently been decided, declaring that the government can seize private property by eminent domain under a broad definition of “public use.” In the decade since, by one estimate, the government has taken over a million homes from their owners.

Cato adjunct scholar Timothy Sandefur of the Pacific Legal Foundation and his wife Christina, vice president for policy at the Goldwater Institute, set out to revise the book for its second edition—but, as they write, “So much has happened in the years after *Kelo* that what started as a simple update to this book became a complete renovation.”

As in the first edition, the Sandefurs narrate the heartrending stories of Americans forced from their homes, explaining along the way how property rights became eroded. But this updated edition also contains a wealth of new material on the ever-changing threats to property owners. The Sandefurs conclude by examining the backlash from *Kelo* and suggesting a new path forward. As *Washington Post* columnist George Will wrote, “Not since Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig has there been a one-two punch quite like Timothy and Christina Sandefur. Both lawyers. Both authors. Both helping shape the country.”

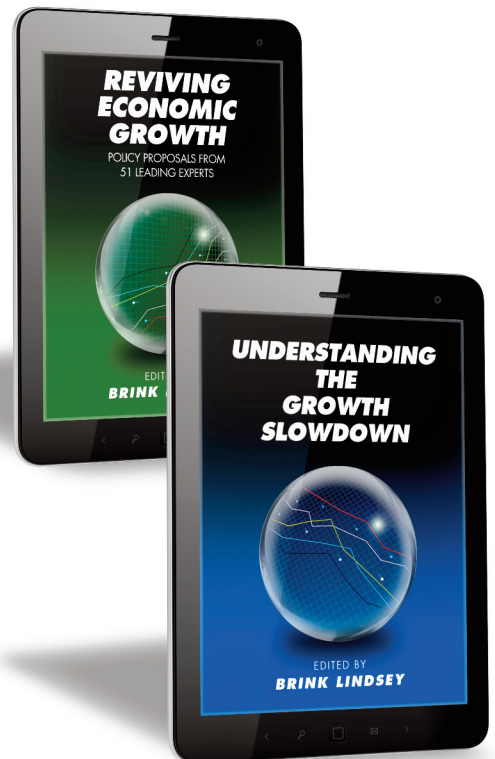
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Paving the Path to Growth

“If you could wave a magic wand and make one or two policy or institutional changes to brighten the U.S. economy’s long-term growth prospects, what would you change and why?” Brink Lindsey, Cato’s vice president for research, posed this question to 51 prominent economists and policy experts for his ebook *Reviving Economic Growth*.

Their ensuing essays constitute a “brainstorming” session from an eclectic group of contributors, featuring libertarian, progressive, and conservative perspectives. “By bringing together thinkers one doesn’t often see in the same publication,” writes Lindsey, “my hope is to encourage fresh thinking about the daunting challenges facing the U.S. economy—and, with luck, to uncover surprising areas of agreement that can pave the way to constructive change.”

In a second ebook, *Understanding the Growth Slowdown*, Lindsey and his contributors dive yet again into the pressing questions surrounding the disappointing performance of the U.S. economy in recent years. Lindsey asks whether this could be more than a temporary trend, but rather the “new normal”—and if so, why. “The U.S. economy is a phenomenon of mind-boggling complexity,” Lindsey observes. These collected essays don’t aim to provide all the answers, but to provoke new ideas—without which an economic revival will certainly not be possible.



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