

Global Warming False Alarms

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GLOBAL WARMING FALSE ALARMS

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The government claim that global warming is more threatening than terrorism is alarmist and unwarranted. It is also suspect as an excuse for mounting taxes and controls. It is strikingly similar to the dire predictions of 40 years ago of an imminent ice age and to other past doom forecasts due to alleged overpopulation, depletion of food and fuel supplies, and chemical pollution.

There are serious doubts about the measurements, assumptions and predictions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), with regard to global CO₂ growth, temperature and the role of clouds. Indeed there is a strong case that the IPCC has overstated the effect of anthropogenic greenhouse gases on the climate and downplayed the influence of natural factors such as variations in solar output, El Niños and volcanic activity.

The empirical evidence used to support the global warming hypothesis has often been misleading, with 'scare stories' promoted in the media that are distortions of scientific reality. The high salience of the climate change issue reflects the fact that many special interests have much to gain from policies designed to reduce emissions through increased government intervention and world energy planning.

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Introduction: The Mother of All Scares

“The whole art of politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.”

H.L. Mencken

Tony Blair has claimed that global warming is more dangerous than terrorism. His Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir David King, has asserted that global warming will make Antarctica the only habitable place on Earth by the end of this century. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has chimed in with the suggestion that global warming will bring “millions, billions” of deaths. These are alarming pronouncements. Surely we should pay heed to these eminent folk who apparently speak with such authority. Well not necessarily. For truth is not the preserve of rank and status but the product of honest enquiry, accurate and relevant evidence and logical thought. As I shall show, the alarmist statements above lack many of these essentials of proof. Also the often-claimed consensus in support of global warming theory among the world’s scientists is wrong. A sceptical response appeared in a Sunday Telegraph article¹ by leading Australian climatologist, Professor Bob Carter. It was headlined “There is a problem with global warming ...it stopped in 1998”. More recently came a refreshing note of dissent from the festival of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BA). In a debate on climate change Nick Brooks of the University of East Anglia said that without dramatic changes of climate thousands of years ago we might have remained farmers, herders and hunter-gatherers. It was natural fluctuations in the Earth’s orbit causing more arid conditions which stimulated humans to adapt so vigorously that they started civilisation. The BA’s President, Frances Cairncross, eagerly took up the theme saying that instead of the “ineffectual” Kyoto Treaty response of reducing greenhouse gas emissions it was better to prepare for the inevitability of global warming and set about adapting to climate change.²

However it does appear from a Daily Telegraph opinion poll that most people in Britain have been scared by the danger of climate-induced disaster, though not overwhelmingly so. For a majority put global warming at the bottom of a list, including crime, education, terrorism, poverty and immigration when asked what was the most important issue facing Britain today. Again a poll for the Financial Times covering Britain and the main countries of the European Union found that while a majority were ready to accept a curb on their life styles in principle in order to reduce global warming, only a minority were prepared to make significant financial sacrifices - such as a charge on airline tickets – in order to curtail the threat. A third of respondents even said that they would not pay anything at all. It could be that the man or woman in the street is already getting turned off by the constant harping on the subject from the Great and the Good.

The Doom-mongering Habit

My own hunch is that global warming will, in a decade or so, be seen (especially if we manage to have a year with a really Arctic winter) as merely the latest in a series of scary prophecies to assail the public since the end of World War II. We have been warned in turn of mass starvation through overpopulation and diminishing food supplies, of death by chemical poisoning from agricultural fertilisers and economic paralysis by exhaustion of

¹ Sunday Telegraph, April 6, 2006.

² Times Online, September 4, 2006

sources of fuel (no more oil by 1990!), metals and other essential commodities. We have had dire warnings of cancer and other assorted pandemics, of the ending of biodiversity and wild life, of a new ice age and universal drought. In every case the eco-alarmists have wound up looking foolish. Yet are they apologetic? Not at all. Nor have they lost heart. So staunch is their belief that some global disaster awaits, that, if one fails to show, they brush it aside, confident that, as with London's Number 11 bus, if you miss one, another will be close behind. Their dedication to doom for humanity is so touching it seems almost cruel to dissuade them. The rest of us however can take comfort that, while this is not the best of all possible planets, the human species overall contrives to be healthier, better fed, better-housed and longer-lived than ever in history. In an uncertain world, of course, we may all be kidding ourselves, but, by most reasonable criteria, we've never had it so good and should count our blessings.

Needless Negativism

Yet, though the dire warnings from the prime minister and his chief guru should be taken with a jumbo-sized pinch of salt, they matter in one respect: they reflect a widespread pessimism, which flourishes despite all evidence that, materially speaking, the outlook for the human race has never been so bright. Sadly this morbidity is rampant in Britain's governing elite. Yet it reveals more about irrational upper-crust angst than about the actual state of the world. Global warming was aptly defined by the Times as the name for a form of Calamitology – a speculative theory which asserts that human use of fossil fuels is fatally changing the earth's climate through warming the air we breathe. It claims that, short of radical cuts in energy use, the human race is kaput. It is now the conventional wisdom among politicians and bureaucrats the world over. Many, who might dare to question it, are silenced by the bullyboy tactics of its advocates, who seek to quell all doubts and make global warming an article of faith, which no right-thinking person will dispute. That at least seemed to be the belief of Archbishop Rowan Williams when he called it a moral issue.

This pamphlet seeks to expose the fallacies and spin behind this pandemic of political correctness, which has spread world-wide. It will show how the policies it fosters would sabotage much of Britain's, indeed the world's, future prosperity for microscopic gain. It will offer explanations for climate change which are equally plausible, suggest that the growth of greenhouse gases is on balance not disastrous but benign and show how such problems as it presents are dealt with better and less disruptively by cooperating with market forces than by the officially-favoured central planning model, under the Kyoto scheme.

1. Prophecies of Doom: a Mini-History

Serial Alarmism

In years to come global warming will very likely be viewed in the context of a series of widely-publicised environmental alarms, concentrated particularly in the period since World War II. For the father, or rather the grandfather, of doom-mongering best-sellers, however, we must go back to the book on population by Thomas Malthus, published in 1798. His laudable aim was to demolish the belief of contemporary utopians (including his own father, Daniel Malthus, and such sages as Jean Jacques Rousseau, the Marquis de

Condorcet, and William Godwin) in the perfectibility of man. Malthus contended that, on the contrary, misery must prevail because population would always grow faster than food supply. Unless there was voluntary limiting of births, population growth would have to be curbed by war, pestilence and famine. He regarded the starvation of Great Britain as inevitable and imminent. Fortunately it didn't happen that way - courtesy of the agricultural and industrial revolutions and the development of contraceptives.

Depleting Resources

Sixty-seven years later the eminent British economist, Stanley Jevons, claimed that Britain, which led the world in its industrial revolution, would run out of coal in the course of the century and dismissed any hope of finding substitutes including oil, which, ironically, was just about to start on its explosive growth. Yet, in the same vein, in 1914 the United States Bureau of Mines forecast that American oil reserves would run out in ten years. Similar authoritative predictions have been made regularly ever since. Notable among them was the Club of Rome report in 1972 on the limits of growth. On the basis of this, President Jimmy Carter claimed that the whole world's oil reserves would be exhausted by 1990. Wrong again. The Club of Rome made similar and equally erroneous forecasts about natural gas, silver, tin, uranium, lead and zinc.

Carson's Fatal Fantasy

The most influential catastrophe-monger of the twentieth century was the American author Rachel Carson. Her best-selling book "Silent Spring"³ took the form of a fantasy about the future in which pesticides have poisoned the environment, kill off untold quantities of wildlife and then, because they are cumulative in all living organisms, proceed to wipe out humankind. Her imagination, however, ran way ahead of the facts. For instance she said that the Audubon Society's annual bird census from 1940-61 showed widespread declines in the bird population. Since this coincided with the period in which there was wholesale spraying of DDT, then DDT was to blame. In fact, however, the Audubon statistics show that the bird numbers in this period were rising, not falling. The reason for this was that the spraying had thinned the ranks of blood-sucking insects and reduced the spread of avian diseases, encephalitis etc. Also more seed and fruits were available, after plant-eating insects were decimated by spraying, while ingested DDT triggered hepatic enzymes in the birds, detoxifying carcinogens which would otherwise have made them sick. Moreover, far from being an ongoing danger to humans or their surroundings, tests showed that 92 per cent of DDT and its metabolites disappear from the environment within 38 days. Also DDT was so safe for humans that no symptoms were observed among the 130,000 spraymen or the 535 million inhabitants of sprayed houses over the 29 years of its existence and no poisoning of the wildlife in the countries participating in the malaria campaign. At least that's what the WHO director said in 1969. It is sad to relate that the US Environmental Protection Agency preferred to take Carson's outpourings as gospel, imposed a total ban on DDT and bullied countries in the developing world into banning it as well. The result was the worldwide revival of malaria which in many countries had been on the verge of being eliminated. Again, according to the WHO, "more people are now infected (with malaria) than at any time in history with "up to half a billion cases being reported every year." It is

³ Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1962

fair to say that as a result of Rachel Carson's book, over 100 million people, mostly children and pregnant women, have died.⁴

Too Many People (Except Us)

Another strong competitor for the title of champion scaremonger must surely be Paul R. Ehrlich, Professor of Biology at Stanford University, USA. In his best-selling book "the Population Bomb" he eagerly took up the torch from Thomas Malthus. He began with these words: "The battle to feed all of humanity is over. The famines of the 1970s are upon us – and hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death before this decade is out." He went on to say that lives could only be saved through a crash programme to "stretch" food production and "determined and successful efforts at population control."

A contemporary of his was Lester Brown of Worldwatch Institute. He claimed in 1973 that population would swiftly overtake food production. With the arrival of the green revolution brought by improved yields from cereals he changed his mind and began to worry about overproduction of food and about whether there would be big enough market demand for it. He later changed his mind again and reverted to his original belief in a future starving world. He is still one of the most quoted authorities on agriculture in the US press and continues to be in demand on the lecture circuits.

70s Cool Cats

As mentioned above, there was also widespread anxiety at this time about a cooling trend. According to Newsweek in 1975, one thing that meteorologists were agreed about was that this would reduce agricultural productivity for the rest of the century.

Yet the facts have refused to accommodate these claims. In the intervening period population has doubled while food production has much more than doubled. Yet the hysteria over global cooling was real enough. It is fair to pose the question: What if these concerns about an approaching ice age had been taken seriously enough to be translated into the radical policies that some activists were demanding? One scheme put forward by Soviet engineers was to paint the ice on the poles black or cover them in soot to reduce the albedo, i.e. reflection of the sun's rays, thus warming them and causing the ice to melt. If that suggestion had been taken up, how would the global warming alarmists feel about that now, especially those of them who, forty years ago, were demanding strong action to reverse the alleged anthropogenic cooling?

In the 1980s the fashionable reason for gloom was acid rain, which was reported, wrongly as it turned out, to be destroying half the trees in Germany. In the event the trees, not only in Germany, but in the rest of Europe have not only recovered but flourished. It appears that the damage they had suffered was mainly caused by local pollution not acid rain, which knows no frontiers. In any case an intensive ten-year inquiry in America showed that trees exposed to moderate amounts of acid rain actually grew faster!⁵

⁴ see, for example, Tren, R. and R. Bate (2001) *Malaria and the DDT Story*, London: IEA.

⁵ Lomborg, B. (1998) *The Sceptical Environmentalist*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A report by the United Nations in 1984 said that the world's deserts were growing at the rate of 21 million hectares per year. In fact it appears that there has been no subsequent net increase.⁶

2. How the Global Warming Scare Began

False Starters

It is intriguing how rapidly an alarmist theory blossomed into a hairshirt orthodoxy. The notion of how greenhouse gases can warm the planet had been around for a century, but as late as the early seventies the prevailing anxiety was about the opposite possibility of the Earth's freezing up. Indeed, three prominent contemporary advocates of the global warming thesis were then authors of books warning about the imminence of a new ice age. They included America's Professor Stephen Schneider in "The Genesis Strategy" and Britain's Sir Christopher Tickell, in "Climate Change and World Affairs". In 1971 Stephen Schneider co-authored an article for July 9 1971 *Science* magazine in which he warned that an "increase by a factor of 4 in the equilibrium dust concentration in the global atmosphere, which cannot be ruled out as a possibility within the next century, could decrease the mean surface temperature by as much as 3.5 °C (6.3 °F). If sustained over a period of several years, such a temperature decrease could be sufficient to trigger an ice age."⁷ A third u-turner was Professor James Lovelock, famous inventor of the idea that the earth behaves like a living organism, "Gaia" (1972). Recently (2006) he wrote a book, "The Revenge of Gaia". This suggests that poor Gaia is diseased (by an excess of CO₂) and that mankind is heading towards a "Stone Age existence on an ailing planet", which will eventually be as inhospitable as Mars. In it he refers to a few scientists who, over a generation ago, were speculating about the growth and increasing density of aerosol haze, which, by reflecting back the sun's rays, could lead to a global cooling of 2 to 3°C. He does not mention, however, that he was prominent among them.⁸

Cold Non-Comfort

In 1976, 13 years before he wrote his book "Global Warming", Schneider gave a ringing endorsement to Lowell Ponte's book "The Cooling" referred to above, saying that "it points out in clear language that the climatic threat could be as awesome as any we might face." The book, which was a best-seller, warned that "the cooling will cause world famine, world chaos and probably world war, and this could all come by the year 2000". It referred to one effect of the cooling that had already taken place – the southward migration of the warm climate armadillo – just the kind of cute and potentially cuddly creature whose plight was well calculated to appeal to the press. Popular magazines, including Time, Fortune and Newsweek joined the gadarene rush to proclaim the imminence of a new ice age and the massive tragedies it would bring for mankind. How did this near consensus in majority informed and popular belief in global cooling do a somersault and arrive at the global warming hysteria so rife today?

⁶ *The Economist*, 20 December 1997.

⁷ Richard Linzen, "Global Warming: The Origin and Nature of the Alleged Scientific Consensus", <http://www.eskimo.com/~bpentium/articles/articles/warming2.html>

⁸ Nigel Lawson, "Hot Air on the Greens", *Evening Standard*, 13 March 2006.

Global Warming Anxieties Take Off

The key date was apparently 1988, when the U.S. was suffering from a heat wave and severe drought. On 23 June of that year Dr James Hansen, Director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, told a U.S. Senate hearing on climate change that the world was warmer than at any time in the past 150 years. He said he was 99% certain that the increased global temperature was related to a global greenhouse effect enhanced by human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels. The media frenzy which followed this pronouncement was further stirred up by September 1988's fires in Yellowstone Park and throughout the western United States, by Hurricane Gilbert's devastation of Texas and by an almost unprecedented windstorm in southern England. These events fired the starting pistol for environmental groups world-wide to join the furore and for their leaders to pose as instant experts on the subject. In fact they were and still are better regarded as the camp-followers, or rent-seekers. They are the leading profiteers from the public alarm which they have helped to arouse – of this more later. Thereafter global warming was blamed for every exceptional weather event.

The UNIPCC

In order to clarify a highly complicated subject, the United Nations established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which published its first report in 1990. It was several hundred pages long and loaded with cautions and qualifications. The Policymakers' Summary, which accompanied it - mainly aimed at the press - harboured few such doubts. Summaries of subsequent reports have sustained this propagandist tone. These reports, or more accurately, their tendentious policymakers' abstracts - which were all the politicians or the media tended to read - argued the case for an action programme. This culminated in the Kyoto Protocol, which was duly signed by 172 countries in 1997. This international treaty had the purpose of controlling the emissions of greenhouse gases related to human activities, mainly carbon dioxide from carbon-based fuels. The aim was to reduce emissions from industrialised countries so that during the period 2008-12 they will be 5.2% below their levels in 1990. Most of the participants have ratified the treaty, including, crucially, Russia - enough support to bring it into force. The USA, however, decided in 2001 not to ratify and has incurred the venomous wrath of the environmentalists ever since. Under the treaty every country has limits set to its carbon emissions. Those countries, like Russia, which have their limit set above what they emit are allowed to sell their surplus to other countries under a carbon-trading scheme.

Alarms Galore

Scary projections by global warming propagandists include: melting of the Polar ice-caps (resulting in a 25 feet rise in the oceans), halting of the Gulf Stream (bringing Siberian winters to Europe), bigger and more frequent hurricanes, droughts, reduction of crops, reduced plant diversity and disappearance of wildlife.

All these claims are false or wildly exaggerated, but were confidently predicted by ideological environmentalists to further the Kyoto Protocol plan for limiting the greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity. The Kyoto scheme has been rightly dubbed the greatest exercise in central energy planning of all time.

3. Global Warming's Achilles Heels

Dodgy Science

Russia's ratification of the Kyoto treaty in 2004, crucial to its coming into effect, was apparently brought about as a result of pressure from the European Union. The generally accepted view is that President Putin wanted to curry favour with his pro-Kyoto European Union neighbours, hoping to get their support for Russia joining the World Trade Organisation. This was therefore a political move appearing all the more cynical, given that the Russian Academy of Science had said that Kyoto had no scientific basis. Indeed Andre Illarianov, Putin's senior advisor, called Kyotoism "one of the most destructive, intrusive ideologies since the collapse of communism and fascism". Of course that was just his opinion, though that alone casts doubt on the much-vaunted consensus among the world's scientific establishment in support of the global warming thesis. But let's now look systematically at the structure of the case for global warming. It is a chain with many links, which is why we should not forget the old adage that a chain is as strong as its weakest link.

CO2 Overestimate

The cornerstone of the global warming theory is that the CO₂ content of the atmosphere in the pre-industrial period at 280 parts per million by volume (ppmv) was over 25 per cent lower than the 370 ppmv of today. It has however been claimed by Professor Zbigniew Jaworowski of Warsaw University, who has been involved in glacier studies for 40 years, that the figure for the 19th century is wrong. It is based on the analysis of greenhouse gases in ice cores from Greenland and Antarctica. The flaws in this evidence, he says, are as follows: First there are chemical and physical processes, which have taken place within the ice cores which decrease the concentrations of all greenhouse gases they contain. It appears that there are leaks of these gases from the ice cores into the drilling liquid used in the boreholes and through cracks in the ice sheeting into the atmosphere. Second, there has been manipulation of the data and biased interpretation of it. In any case meticulous analysis of the abundant 19th century measurements of CO₂ shows that its average atmospheric concentration before 1900 was 335 ppmv. Further recent work on tree leaves, the frequency of the pores in the skin of which provide an accurate means of measuring CO₂ density in the atmosphere on a scale of centuries, show that the concentration nearly 10,000 years ago was 348 ppmv, or about the same as in 1987. A study by Dutch scientists of Holocene era deposits in Denmark, (to which Professor Jaworowski referred in his statement to the US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transport) thus discredited the much-touted ice core estimates. The authors of it stated bluntly "Our results contradict the concept of relatively stabilised Holocene CO₂ concentrations of 270 to 280 ppmv until the industrial revolution". Their tree leaf studies confirm earlier criticism of the ice core research and demolish the very basis of the global warming case. To put the whole matter in a long-term context it is worth pointing out that fifty million years ago the CO₂ concentration of 2000 ppmv was almost six times higher than it is today but the air temperature was only 1.5 degrees higher. This rather disposes of the green propagandists' scare about a runaway greenhouse effect.⁹

⁹ Statement to the US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transport, 19 March, 2004, by Zbigniew Jaworowski, Professor of the Central Laboratory for Radiological Protection in Warsaw, and his paper "The Global Warming Folly" (1999) for the Argentinean Foundation for Scientific Ecology.

Chief Scientist: Big Error

Incidentally the above upward revision of the pre-industrial CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere also makes a monkey of the warning by the Government Chief Scientist Sir David King, referred to above, that by the end of the century Antarctica would be the only habitable place on the planet. For Sir David justified his view on the grounds that levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are already 50 per cent higher than at any time in the last 420,000 years. The last time they were at this level, he said, was 60 million years ago during a rapid period of global warming in the Palaeocene epoch. Then, he said, levels soared to 1000 parts per million, causing a massive reduction of life on earth.

“No ice left on earth, Antarctica was the best place for mammals to live and the rest of the world would not sustain human life,” he said.¹⁰ However, since his figures are wrong for the gap between the present level of CO₂ density and that which prevailed before the industrial era, it is not surprising that his conclusion is absurd.

Warming Inflated

The IPCC forecast in the 2001 Report was that global temperature will rise, if nothing is done to prevent it, by between 1.4 and 5.8 °C by the end of the century - an extremely wide range, with very different outcomes. Curiously enough, in the 4th Report (2007) it increased the range to between 1.1 and 6.4 °C. This widening hardly bears out the IPCC's claims to growing accuracy and confidence in its research and predictions. Some experts believe that the lower figure would be a net benefit – a point to which I shall return. The alarmists go for the higher figure in order to frighten us. The wide range comes from the IPCC treating all the 245 computer models as of equal value. This conveys the impression that there is a normal distribution of predictions with an average value of 3.6 °C. In fact, as Stephen Schneider (often considered an alarmist, but also a stickler for statistical propriety) has pointed out, the distribution of forecasts is actually skewed towards the lower end, while just under 50% of them came in at under 2.5 °C.¹¹ The Kyoto Protocol works on the basis of a 2 °C world-wide increase in atmospheric temperature by the end of the century which is portrayed as a prospective disaster calling for urgent action now. Hence the plan for reducing carbon emissions proposed in the treaty.

Emissions Exaggerated

The assumption of both the climate modellers and the IPCC is that greenhouse gases are growing exponentially, that is to say that they are growing at a constant percentage rate. This amounts to saying that the trend is towards an absolute increase in the quantity of GHGs emitted every year compared with the previous year. This assumption is based on the further assumptions that world population is growing exponentially and that everyone on the planet wants the existing American (energy intensive) lifestyle. These assumptions are both hopelessly out of date. UN projections of future (2050) world population have declined from 15 billion in 1980 to 9 billion. Besides, all the evidence shows that, as standards of living rise, the number of births falls. In most European countries, indeed, the birth rate is well below replacement level, so the long-term prospect there and probably

¹⁰ Antarctica News Archives, May 4, 2004.

¹¹ Michaels, P. (2004) *Meltdown: The Predictable Distortion of Global Warming by Scientists, Politicians, and the Media*, Washington DC: Cato Institute, p. 25-26.

elsewhere is one of falling population. Besides, since the 1950s, carbon dioxide emissions per capita have become constant or actually declined. Thus the climate modellers and the IPCC assumption of an exponential growth of CO₂ emissions of 1 per cent per year has been behind the times for over thirty years. Yet the error is hugely important because it builds into the climate computer models, right from the start, the likelihood of a runaway greenhouse warming effect - given a constant relationship between greenhouse gas concentrations and temperature. However that assumption is disputable, as we have seen from the past history of greenhouse gases on our planet and also for reasons given below. This bias has been compounded by the models' and the IPCC's projection of GDPs in the developing world using market exchange rates (MEX), which, as a study by world-class statisticians Castles and Henderson proved, is totally misleading. Using MEX grossly underestimates the real incomes of developing countries. The correct basis for international income comparisons is purchasing power parity (PPP). The effect of the error was to project that the GDP of developing countries would increase by a factor of 65 between 1990 and 2100. Indeed the 100-year growth rates of the most conservative scenarios of the IPCC were in many instances higher than have been observed in any country in history. This shows that the economic grasp of the IPCC is of a very low order.

Phoney Warming Forecasts

The Kyoto plan is justified by an array of computer-based scenarios of what will happen in the course of the present century, though it fights shy of calling them forecasts. They start with the known warming effect of greenhouse gases in arresting the escape of the sun's heat. They concentrate on the impact of carbon dioxide – the gas produced by fossil fuel burning. They then argue that clouds heat the atmosphere further, as follows: The growth of CO₂ produces extra rainfall. This generates more clouds which retain more of the sun's heat. This is called the *Enhanced Greenhouse Effect*. Yet what the IPCC treats as forecasts, while denying that they are any such thing, are merely computer-based story-telling.

Although, other things being equal, additional GHGs have a warming effect on the atmosphere, the actual net effect in practice is subject to many other influences. These include water vapour, clouds of different types, particulates, snow and ice reflection, the El Niño, microbe activity, sunspots and volcanoes and the wind system, to name just a few.

Poor Correlation

The historical record doesn't fit in with the theory too well either, e.g. the biggest warming over the past century took place before 80% of the increase of GHGs. Another thing: Carbon dioxide increased exponentially from 1800 to 1973. Since then it has increased much more slowly. As industrialisation has not slowed down in the meantime, that suggests that the human contribution to the build-up of GHGs is not the cause of global warming. It may be that these gases are being absorbed at a greater rate. Are carbon sinks multiplying? Neither possibility offers much cheer to the global warming brigade.

Wrong Data

How much global warming is there? In the past fifty years during which most of the greenhouse gases caused by human activities were released, the conventional wisdom is that it has risen by 0.8 °F (0.4 °C) The IPCC says that most of this is due to humankind, namely 0.5 °F (0.25 °C). For the 20th century as a whole the average global warming has

been 1.33 °F (0.675 °C). However a recalculation by two meteorologists, Eugenia Kalnay and Ming Cai reported in *Nature* (2003), taking into account the effects of changes in land-use changes on surface warming reduced the change to something of the order of 0.8 °F (0.4 °C), or 40% less than the climate alarmists have long claimed it to be. Moreover the original warming trend used by the IPCC rests on a series of readings from ground-based thermometers, mostly situated on dry land and therefore providing poor coverage of the 70% of the world's surface, which is covered by water. The correction referred to above was mainly to eliminate the "urban heat island" effect – where the extent of building has grown over the years around the sites where thermometer readings have been taken. In these downtown areas, temperatures have risen more than elsewhere, reflecting the fact that in the same latitude towns are warmer than the country around them. This is because the bricks and buildings absorb the heat of the day and impede ventilating winds. One factor intensifying this urban heat island effect is motor traffic, which of course has been growing rapidly. These exhaust pipe emissions result in the formation of short-lived concentrations of ozone. Ozone is a greenhouse gas with great capacity for absorption and this can cause a local greenhouse effect leading to higher temperatures. The evidence for the greater warmth in cities was well documented in Michael Crichton's thriller (and send-up of the environmental movement) "Climate of Fear". In it a lady researcher who is sceptical about global warming produces a series of graphs to illustrate her doubts. They show that temperatures in New York have been in an upward trend since 1930. Meanwhile in smaller towns in New York State - Albany, Syracuse and Oswego for instance - temperatures have gone steadily down. Challenged on the grounds that she was selectively choosing a period which suited her case, she produced more graphs on her computer showing that New York has been warming since 1822, while, over the same period, the smaller towns in the state to which she had already referred, had been either stable or getting cooler. Another way of looking at the urban heat island effect came from ground level data from 107 stations in California for the period 1940 – 1996. This showed that temperatures increased with increases of population density in areas where these stations were located.¹²

Satellite Data Different

Looking at the matter worldwide, the original factual evidence on which the global warming theory rested was the temperature measured on the earth's surface. This pointed to a rise at the rate of 0.4 °F (0.20 °C.) per decade since the 1970s. Later, much more accurate, readings taken from satellites adjusted this to about 0.09 °F (0.05 °C) per decade, and confirmed by balloons, reduce the warming of the lower atmosphere, in the last thirty years by two thirds. Professor John R. Christy, the satellite measurements expert, says that since 1979 the global temperature trend is a modest 0.06 °C increase per decade through March 2002.¹³ During the same post-1979 period satellite measurements show that the temperatures in the stratosphere have fallen.

In the light of this evidence the *prima facie* case for an alarming rise in global warmth, let alone human-made global warming remains unimpressive. However, the sceptic Professor Patrick Michaels (who has debunked many global warming myths over more than a decade) thinks that there *is* global warming created by human-created carbon dioxide but that it is small and innocuous (and we can't do anything about it anyway). The proof of this, he says, is the departure of air temperatures from their long and close correlation with

¹² "The Global Warming Folly" by Zbigniew Jaworowski, Argentinian Foundation for a Scientific Ecology, <http://mitosyfraudes.8k.com/INGLES/Warm.html>

¹³ "Global Warming and Other Myths", Competitive Enterprise Institute, 2002.

the sun's activity in the mid-seventies. That warming is most effective, he argues, where there was little carbon dioxide to start with and there is very little water vapour. "The warming we are seeing is largely confined to the areas of Siberia and north-western North America, and the vast majority of that occurs during the winter months." and more by night than by day. Over the next 100 years he concluded, the main climate change will be slightly milder winters in Siberia and Northern Canada – hardly a doomsday effect!¹⁴

New Controversy on Satellite Data

The satellite evidence was challenged in 3 papers in the American magazine *Science* in August 2005. One claimed that the satellites had drifted in orbit causing errors of temperature measurement. Another study reported that tropical sunlight measurements skewed the balloon temperature measurements. The researchers claimed that, once corrected, the differences between the ground and satellite-based data disappeared. Not so, said University of Alabama-Huntsville researcher Roy Spencer, a prominent climatologist. When he factored in the reported corrections, he found the estimate of atmospheric warming was still only 0.12 °C – more than the previous figure of 0.09 °C. As geophysicist Dr Fred Singer said, the adjustments were "no big deal".

That view was reinforced in a definitive research paper by Dr. Vincent R. Gray, M.A., Ph.D., F.N.Z.I.C.A, New Zealand Climate Consultant.¹⁵ He rejects claims of the NOAA (US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to have removed the discrepancies between observed temperature readings for the earth's surface and the lower troposphere. On the contrary his analysis confirms these discrepancies. He shows, with graphs covering all the available series ground and satellite, that, after discounting the natural factors – El Niños and volcanoes – "there is no detectable warming in the lower troposphere, the place where the greenhouse forcing is claimed to be evident. For six out of seven of the lower troposphere records there is no influence of greenhouse forcing for a period of nineteen years". He concludes that "The warming evident on the surface for these periods cannot be due to greenhouse forcing, but must therefore have a different cause."

Holes in the Greenhouse and Wavelength Saturation

The warming effect of CO₂ occurs through trapping the radiant heat from the sun and stopping the infra red rays, which the earth exudes in order to cool itself, from heading back into space. This happens in the same way that the glass panes in a conventional greenhouse let in the solar rays one way and stop the convected heat from escaping. However CO₂ gases only trap solar heat at certain wavelengths. There are two major gaps or "radiation windows" (at 3-4 microns and 8-12 microns) where the infra red rays pass straight through. That means that there are leaks in the greenhouse rather like the man-made greenhouse having broken windows. Thickening the glass in those windows (analogous to increasing the amount of CO₂ in greenhouse earth) will not make much difference. There are grounds for believing that the earth's atmosphere is already approaching the point of wavelength saturation. Each extra unit of CO₂ added to the atmosphere contributes less to the greenhouse effect than the preceding unit. According to research by Dr Jack Barrett of Imperial College, at the present level of carbon dioxide 72.8% of solar radiations are already absorbed. Doubling the amount of CO₂ would only

¹⁴ Briefing for Congressional staff and media, November 5, 1999.

¹⁵ <http://www.climate-science.org.nz/assets/20065312045370.TemperatureTrendsVGray.pdf>

result in the absorption increasing to 73.5%. This implies that we are already near the limit of the amount of warming that increases in greenhouse gas can achieve. If correct it is one more nail in the coffin of the runaway greenhouse effect.¹⁶

Cloudy Computer Predictions

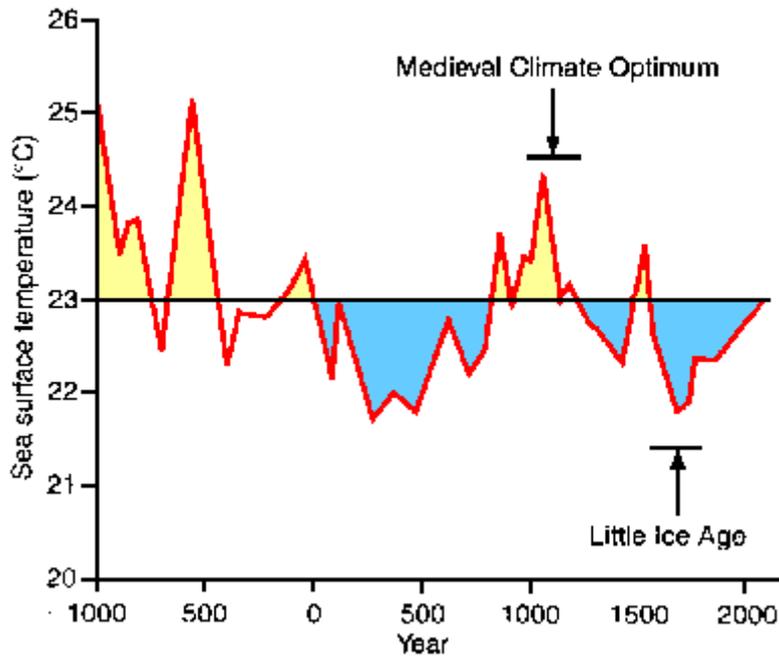
The computer-based forecasts are particularly awry in their estimates of the role of clouds. This is important because, “The impact of clouds on climate and temperature is more than a hundred times stronger than that of carbon dioxide. Even if the CO₂ concentration in the air were doubled, its greenhouse effect would be cancelled by a mere one per cent rise in cloudiness. The reason is simply greater cloudiness means a larger deflection of solar radiation reaching the surface of our planet”.¹⁷ The IPCC forecasts generally assume that increased rainfall brought about by growing GHG will result in more cloud cover creating an additional greenhouse warming effect. Yet clouds vary. High cloud cover may enhance warming: low cloud cover may result in cooling. More precisely, cirrus clouds warm because they let through a high proportion of sunlight, including its ultraviolet component. As they start off cold they retain the infrared energy they absorb which excites the molecules in them and adds to the warming. Marine stratocumulus clouds on the other hand are thin and the water droplets in them radiate into outer space thus cooling the earth. Cirrus clouds cover 16% of the earth while stratocumulus clouds cover 34% of it. So the cooling effect dominates. A number of studies in *Science* have reported that the earth has increased its energy loss in the period since 1980 by 4 watts per square meter while over the same period the amount absorbed from the sun increased by only 1 or 2 watts per square metre.

Unprecedented?

It is asserted, as an essential element of the global warming case, that the world’s rise in temperature since the beginning of the industrial revolution has been greater than any in previous history. That would imply that the blame for global warming falls squarely on the human race for its addiction to burning fossil fuels. This claim, however, does not tally with the generally accepted belief that there was a warm period early in the second millennium (roughly 900 to 1200 A.D), long before the industrial revolution. Moreover, during the Roman era there were vineyards in Northern England. In medieval times the Vikings were crossing the North Atlantic in open boats or in Arctic seas where there is now permanent pack ice. Meanwhile there was farming in Greenland (hence the name) where now there is only permafrost. This warm period was followed by a “Little Ice Age “, which started in the 14th century and continued up to the 19th century. That was the coldest period in the last 1000 years. From around 1850 there has been an unsteady rise until today.

¹⁶ “The Spectroscopic Contributions of CO₂ to the warming and cooling of the Earth’s atmosphere” by Dr Jack Barrett, London: European Science and Environmental Forum.

¹⁷ “Solar Cycles Not CO₂ Determine Climate” by Professor Zbigniew Jaworowski”, *21st Century*, Winter 2003-4.



Hockey Stick Broken

That was the accepted picture until American geoscientist Michael Mann published a chart purporting to trace average temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere during the last 1000 years. This showed only minor fluctuations in the first 900 years, then a sharp and continuous rise over the last century, giving it a hockey stick shape. This exercise was greeted like manna from heaven by the global warmers. Mr Mann's hockey stick appeared no less than five times in the IPCC's landmark 2001 report on global warming which paved the way for the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. However in 1990 two Harvard scientists attempted to restore the old view that there was a medieval warm period in an article in the journal *Climate Research*. As a result the two authors were treated as heretics and six of the journal's editors were forced to resign. Fortunately, this brutal attempt to suppress any doubts about the global warming orthodoxy failed dramatically. In 2003 two Canadian academics took the Mann exercise apart, showing that it was riddled with "collation errors, unjustifiable truncations and extrapolation of source data, obsolete data, geographical location errors, incorrect calculation of principal components and other quality control defects". Once these were corrected, the previously accepted medieval warm period was restored. Mr Mann did not help his reputation by refusing to disclose the mathematical algorithm by which he arrived at his conclusions. Also he was obliged to publish a retraction of some of his original data. It was later shown that, with Mr Mann's method, a hockey stick result would be produced by the computer models even using random data. Thus did Mann's hockey stick bite the dust.¹⁸

The Precautionary Principle

The precautionary principle - that action must be taken to anticipate and prevent the causes of environmental degradation where there are threats of serious and irreversible damage

¹⁸ "Hockey Stick on Ice", *Wall Street Journal Europe*, February 21, 2005.

even if there is a lack of full scientific certainty. It has been written into a number of international treaties including the 1992 UNCED Rio Declaration and The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. At first blush it seems reasonable, but, in the global warming case, it has been an excuse for sloppy treatment of evidence by self-styled authorities, arrogantly convinced of their own rectitude. The classic example is this comment by leading global warming enthusiast Professor Stephen Schneider in an interview for *Discover* magazine:

“...we have to get some broad-based support, to capture the public’s imagination. That of course entails getting loads of media coverage. So we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention about any doubts we might have....Each of us has to decide what the right balance is between being effective and being honest.”¹⁹

The obvious retort to this is to ask: What if that had been the basis of policies adopted in the 1970s when leading climate experts - including very prominently Professor Schneider - were predicting a big freeze unless urgent action were taken? Surely the logical response of governments, egged on by Professor Schneider and his ilk, would have been to set the world on fire.

In principle, of course, there is nothing wrong with seeking to prevent unreasonable risks to human health and the environment - better to be safe than sorry. The problem is that there is inherent uncertainty about predicting risks. Zero risk is unattainable and the danger to those who seek it is that they can hardly justify getting out of bed in the morning. Another objection to the precautionary principle is that, precisely because of the uncertainty of calculating and applying it, it allows too much discretion to regulators and undermines the whole process of democratic decision-making. The precautionary principle thus also becomes the source of unnecessary and expensive economic burdens, doing more harm than good. Risk aversion is more pronounced in Europe than America and that has much to do with its feebler economic performance.

Erratic or Opportunist Advocacy

As mentioned above, some of today’s leading proponents of global warming were raising the alarm about an imminent ice age thirty years ago.

This intellectual somersault does not invalidate their present view. People are entitled to change their minds if the evidence changes, or if they have found something wrong with their original reasoning. It is factual accuracy and the persuasiveness of the argument which should count, not the provenance of the arguer. However we are also entitled to be wary of those who are ever-ready to embrace modish ideas or, to put it more crudely are over eager to jump on each passing bandwagon and behave like serial alarmists. Much of the anxiety about global warming is founded on computer forecasts and it’s as well to remember that computer forecasts are just that, not fact. It is also worth bearing in mind the very real fact that, despite the American Government’s expenditure to date of \$18 billion plus on computer forecasting of climate change, the computer-modellers are still unable

¹⁹ Quoted in Michaels (2004), p. 230, op cit.

even to predict the past except by fudging, i.e. making adjustments in the models in order to arrive at the answer they already know.

3A Box

Rejoinder to the main points of the IPCC 4th Report on the Science of Climate Change.

IPCC: Global temperatures continue to rise with 11 of the 12 warmest years since 1850 occurring since 1995. Computer models suggest a further rise of about 3 °C by 2100 with a 6 °C rise a distant possibility

RL: Yes, but balance that with the fact that there has been no global warming since 1998. Besides, present historically high temperatures are due to the superimposition of a powerful El Niño (a huge cyclical climatic change in the Pacific) in 1998 on top of the rise of temperatures achieved earlier in the 20th century. Moreover the actual climb in temperatures has fallen far short of the scary computer predictions originally trumpeted which led to the setting-up of the UN International Panel on Climate Change.

IPCC: The rising temperatures resulting from greenhouse gas could be higher than previously thought because of the positive feedbacks from the growth of water vapour.

RL: Actually the reverse is likely because there are twice as many cooling clouds as warming clouds. Other things being equal, therefore, more clouds should mean more cooling.

IPCC: It is virtually certain that that carbon dioxide levels and global warming are far above the range of natural variability over the past 650,000 years.

RL: Past estimated levels of CO₂ have been disputed as too low, being based on evidence from ice cores, which leak and are otherwise contaminated. Global temperatures were higher than today in the medieval era and in Roman times.

IPCC: It is virtually certain that human activity has played the dominant role in causing the increase of greenhouse gases over the last 250 years.

RL: Let's get this in perspective: The amount of CO₂ going into the atmosphere each year: natural 169 billion tons (ocean: 106 bn, land: 63 bn.), man-made 6 bn. – hardly dominant! In any case, it is equally plausible to argue that the oceans have been warmed by the sun or the earth's core and in consequence have released most of the greenhouse gas increase over the last 250 years. This would mean that most of the growth of greenhouse gas is natural and not due to human activity.

IPCC: Man-made emissions of atmospheric aerosol pollutants have tended to counteract global warming which otherwise would have been significantly worse.

RL: This is merely an excuse for the failure of previous doom-laden computer predictions that the hemisphere should have warmed in the 20th century by 2.3 °C while the actual warming was only 0.65 °C. In any case, as Prof. Patrick Michaels put it: "Sulphates don't

do a good job of explaining the failure of the models. University of Washington scientist Peter Hibbs found that sulphates off the East Coast (of America) are overwhelmed in their own plume by black carbon particles that absorb radiation and cancel sulphate cooling. Also, through the eastern United States, where sulphates have been in decline for the last 30 years, the temperature hasn't budged during the entire century".²⁰

IPCC: The net effect of human activities over the past 250 years has very likely exerted a warming influence on the climate.

RL. This is a remarkably modest assertion, compared with the dire predictions usually accompanying it. Let us not forget, though, that forty years ago some of the most prominent of today's global warming scaremongers were forecasting an ice age caused by human activities. In any case it is fair to ask what human activity could have caused the temperatures in medieval times (long before the industrial revolution or the invention of gas-guzzling SUVs) to rise above those today?

IPCC: It is likely that human activity is also responsible for other observed changes in the Earth's climate system, such as ocean warming and the melting of the Arctic sea ice.

RL: On the contrary, many recent studies have shown a far more compelling link between sea surface temperatures and the 11-year solar cycle. But here's a surprise: between 2003 and 2005: the oceans suddenly cooled, losing 20% of the heat they had gained in the previous half century.²¹ As for the clearing of ice in the central Arctic, this was mainly due to changes in the wind system and the resulting ocean currents, which moved much of the ice into Canadian waters. Winds are a more important influence on Arctic Ocean ice than air temperature. In any case, in the high northern latitudes, including the North Pole, there has been no net warming since 1940.²²

IPCC: Tropical storms and hurricanes are likely to be stronger.

RL: Hurricane activity is cyclical but unrelated to global warming. Otherwise how to account for the fact that (to go by old British navy records from the Caribbean) there were twice as many major land falling hurricanes per decade during the Little Ice Age years from 1700 to 1850 as during the last 50 years of global warming.²³ Dr Christopher Landsea, a leading expert on tropical hurricanes, resigned from the IPCC because he could not support the view that global warming made hurricanes worse. He complained that the IPCC was politicised and not ready to be guided by the scientific evidence.²⁴

IPCC: Sea levels will continue to rise in the 21st century because of the thermal expansion of the oceans and loss of land ice.

RL: Sea levels have been rising at the rate of 6 inches per century since 1850. There has been no change in that trend.²⁵ The forecast loss of land ice is based on the mistaken belief

²⁰ Washington Times, 13 July, 1999.

²¹ Hudson Institute, 21 November, 2006

²² Michaels (2004), op cit.

²³ Hudson Institute, Internet, 15 December, 2006

²⁴ "Reaping the Hurricane" by Patrick Michaels, Cato Institute Online, 22 Jan 2005

²⁵ Prof. John R Christy in "Global Warming and Other Myths", op cit.

that Antarctica and Greenland, the two main masses of land ice, are melting. Yet Antarctica is growing. So is Greenland: see next item.

IPCC: The projected warming of the climate due to increases in carbon dioxide during the 21st century is likely to cause the total melting of the Greenland ice sheet during the next 1000 years, according to some computer forecasting models.

RL: The IPCC's computer models have, so far, completely failed to predict the past without fudging, so why believe them now? Actually the Greenland air temperature has declined by 2.2 °C, since 1987 and is gaining ice, nearly all above 5000 feet (which is most of it) – the inhospitable interior where the media photographers don't go.²⁶

IPCC: The warm Gulf Stream of the North Atlantic is likely to slow down in the 21st century, because of global warming and the melting of the fresh water locked up in the Greenland ice sheet. But no models predict the collapse of the warm current by 2100.

RL: Well thank you for that: no freeze-up of the Gulf Stream! I should think not either, because, for that to happen, it would be necessary to stop the wind system or the rotation of the earth or both. Or so says Prof. Carl Wunsch of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the leading authority on the subject.²⁷ As for the slowing-down theory, that's based on Greenland melting, which isn't happening.

The above is the essence of the gospel preached by the IPCC, which, it says, leads to the conclusion that things are much worse than they originally thought. Not very impressive is it?

4. Alternative Theories

Normal Variation

The notion that GHG (greenhouse gas) is the crucial factor in climate change is not the only horse in the race. There are other likely bets. The most obvious is that the very climatic changes about which so many people have got so excited are nothing more than events in the natural order of things. As the report of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences requested by President George W. Bush put it (sagely but rather long-windedly) in 2001:

“Because of the large and still uncertain level of natural variability inherent in the climate record and the uncertainties in the time histories of the various forcing agents (and particularly aerosols), a causal linkage between the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and observed climate changes during the 20th century cannot be unequivocally established.”

So here are some alternative theories:

²⁶ O.M. Johannsen, Science, Oct 2005

²⁷ “Day After Tomorrow: A Lot of Hot Air”, by Patrick Michaels, USA Today, June 24, 2004.

Natural Recovery from Cold Spell

In the long historical perspective there was an unsteady cooling from a warm period from a thousand years ago to the 19th century. The period of coolness from the 15th to the 19th century is often labelled “the Little Ice age”. The so-called period of global warming from the mid 19th century to today may plausibly be regarded as no more than a natural swing of the pendulum from cold to warm. Even so the global warming has been rather erratic:

to 1878 plus 0.15 °C
to 1911 minus 0.21 °C
to 1944 plus 0.43 °C
to 1976 minus 0.07 °C
to present plus 0.39 °C

There are several examples of natural influences at work in this period, which could have had nothing whatsoever to do with greenhouse gases. One is the slight drop from 1878 to 1911 which might have been the result of exceptional volcanic activity, sending clouds of dust – aerosols in the jargon – into the atmosphere and reducing temperatures by reflecting back some of the sun’s warmth. The enormous eruption of Krakatoa in 1883 for instance is thought to have briefly lowered world temperatures by 0.5 °C. The largest rise in temperatures took place in the subsequent period up to 1940, which was before 80 per cent of the growth of greenhouse gases occurred. The cooling period from then to the early seventies conflicts with the global warming theory because CO₂ was increasing and, according to that theory, should have produced rising temperatures. The Greens seek to explain this contradiction by claiming that aerosols acted to cancel the warming effect of GHGs. However some scientists say that the opposite is true and that aerosols exacerbate warming. The truth appears to be that at present the impact of aerosols is poorly understood.

Effect not Cause

The widely accepted explanation - that the increase in greenhouse gases brought about the warming - would be more persuasive if it could be demonstrated as *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, or simple cause and effect (though logicians will readily point out that sequence is not consequence). However, even that argument will not fly because the sequence is back to front. The record shows that the increase of CO₂ usually follows the warming, after a delay of up to 40 years, whereas, if it were the cause of the warming it would surely precede it.

On a longer time scale the key evidence quoted to show that CO₂ has long been the regulator of temperature comes from the Vostock ice core. This is an 11,775-foot-long sliver of Antarctic ice which apparently enables scientists to calculate changes both in the amount of CO₂ and in temperature over the last 420,000 years. These data show that CO₂ and temperature have risen and fallen roughly in tandem over these millennia. However, as Kevin Shapiro²⁸ puts it “...the key word here is ‘roughly’. The Vostock data make it clear that at the onset of the last glaciation, temperatures began to decline thousands of years before a corresponding decline in atmospheric CO₂. This observation cannot be replicated by current climate models, which require a *previous* fall in CO₂ for glaciation to occur.

²⁸ “Global Warming: Apocalypse Now?” *Commentary*, September 2006.

Moreover an analysis published in *Science* in 2003 suggests that the end of one glacial period, called Termination III, preceded a rise in CO₂ by 600 to 1000 years.” How to explain this? It may be that it is natural forces that are responsible for global warming and that the global warming in turn induces a growth of greenhouse gases. For instance it could be through the oceans (or the permafrost) being warmed by some other factor or factors and consequently releasing more greenhouse gas, because the warmer the sea, the less greenhouse gas it can retain.²⁹ But what can these other factors be? They are many and various. Here are some of them:

The Great Pacific Climate Shift

There is a whole array of natural sources of climate change, which have no certainly known connection with greenhouse gases. Of these the most startling occurred in 1976-7. This took the form of a sudden change of temperature, which spread across the Pacific Ocean. It became known as “The Great Pacific Climate Shift”. It began when an enormous mass of warm water bubbled up from the middle of the central Pacific to the surface. This event marked the end of a thirty-year period of global cooling. Ever since then the world has been in a warming or relative warming trend, at least as measured by ground-based thermometers. Inevitably, this momentous reversal in the world climate was greeted by global warmers as a proof of their case.

A Greenpeace veteran, writing in *Scientific American*, gleefully labelled the rapid and unprecedented rise in the temperature of the Western Arctic (actually exaggerated three times over) as “the canary in the coalmine for global warming.” In other words it was a foretaste of things to come for the rest of the world. In reality it was far from unprecedented. It was an example of what has become known as the “Pacific Decadal Oscillation” or PDO, a kind of gigantic flip-flop of climate in the North Pacific, oscillating from positive to negative and back to positive every 50 or 70 years or so. Far from being a new phenomenon it has been traced back to 993 A.D. by some ingenious research using tree rings from a hydrologically-sensitive species of pine in California and Alberta (near the two centres of high and low rainfall associated with the PDO). It is however only quasi-periodic and rather eccentric. As Paul Biggs put it in his review of Dr Robert E. Davis’s *Pacific Decadal Oscillation*³⁰, “the PDO is diving and leaping more than an Italian midfielder during the World Cup. It’s awfully hard to see any evidence of global warming in the last 150 years of that record” Its periodicity of 50 or 70 years was not present in the 13th, 17th and 18th centuries (also not related to greenhouse gases). As Biggs concludes, the abrupt change in world climate in the mid seventies and associated with the “great Pacific Climate Shift” was certainly preceded, but, on the previous occasions, unrelated to global warming.

El Niño

Possibly the most important weather-maker on our planet is a huge oscillation in the tropical Pacific known as the “El Niño”, or “El Niño Pacific Oscillation” This occurs when the easterly trade winds, the most powerful wind system on earth, suddenly stop or go into reverse over the tropical Pacific. It has dramatic effects, bringing cascading rains over Southern California, a drying up of the usually sodden Pacific Northwest and an upsurge of

²⁹ Jaworowski ,op cit.

³⁰ “You won’t find this in the Guardian”, www.marklynas.org, published 5/12/2005

cold water over a huge area off the coast of South America. All this makes for a sudden rise in planetary temperature, resulting on the last occasion in the record year for warmth in 1998. However, the impact is fleeting, leaving the previous trend unchanged. Vice President Gore, a noted Green, tried to link the El Niño with global warming. He claimed that the wildfires in Florida in 1998 heralded further mayhem. Yet the evidence does not support him. It is hard to maintain a causal connection between the growth of GHGs, resulting from the growth of fossil fuel burning due to the industrial revolution, and El Niños which have appeared regularly every few years for most of the last fifty million years.

Solar Heating

The most convincing alternative to global warming theory is that which gives primacy to the influence of the Sun. The problem with the idea that the earth's climate is controlled by CO₂ warming the atmosphere is that CO₂ (and methane likewise) is not as it were a free agent. It is, properly speaking, a secondary greenhouse gas because it follows and is controlled by temperature changes instead of the other way round. As mentioned above, the chronology over a long period shows that changes in the amount of CO₂ follow in the wake of temperature changes, implying that CO₂ does not control air temperature but that air temperature controls it. This is supported by ice core measurements over the last quarter of a million years and other observations. Water vapour (H₂O) is many times more important than CO₂ as a greenhouse gas and is known to vary by large amounts on all time scales. Water vapour and Ozone (O₃) are the primary gases, which govern world temperatures - including sea temperatures. They are in turn under the influence of the Sun. Their temperatures govern the equilibrium level of CO₂, which is why it is properly called a secondary greenhouse gas.

This is how it works:

- (1) Cosmic ray particles from deep space induce cloud droplet formation by ionising water molecules. During periods of high solar activity the sun's magnetic fields are stronger. These shield some of the earth's atmosphere from the cosmic rays, thus reducing cloud formation. This may result in an increase of temperature on the earth's surface or the lower atmosphere.
- (2) Changes in the amount of ultraviolet radiation from the Sun affect the ozone layer. This is a crucial part of the atmosphere where many chemical reactions occur. These affect the way the rest of the atmosphere works. Ozone is a potent greenhouse gas. Like water vapour it fluctuates considerably. There is increasing evidence that El Niño is driven by solar activity.³¹

One attraction of the theory that the Sun is the primary determinant of global temperature is that it may explain what the conventional global warming theory fails to explain. This is the gap between the warming of the earth's surface in the last few decades (not all of which can be explained by the urban heat island effect) and the near zero warming of the lower atmosphere measured by satellites and balloons.

³¹ "A (Solar-based) New Alternative to the Theories of Global Warming" by Piers Corbyn, Weather Action and South Bank University, South Bank Technopark, London, paper given to Climate Changes Symposium, Bonn, 10-11 Nov 1997. Also "Viewpoint: The Sun and Climate Change" by Dr Paul Brekke of the European Space Agency, BBC News 16 November, 2000.

5. Climate Change Politics

Global Warming Spin Doctors

The case for government action on global warming, especially when it is to be mounted on a world-wide basis, should stand on its own merits and be backed by evidence which is accessible and verifiable. It should not be skewed by appeals to authority or the distortions of propaganda. The advocacy both by the IPCC and at less elevated levels does not in general pass this test.

Browbeating by Numbers

Global warming advocates make great play with the so-called consensus of the thousands of IPCC scientists in support of the idea that global warming is caused by human activity. This is grossly misleading. Most of the 122 lead authors of the 2001 report had nothing to do with most of the report, while the Summary for Policymakers, which is what the politicians and journalists have read or seen boiled-down versions of, was edited and approved by a political body. In any case majorities are no guide to scientific truth any more than they were when Dr Goebbels claimed that ninety million Germans couldn't be wrong. Nor is academic authority a guide. That was the medieval argument. If it had been left unchallenged we might still believe that the earth is flat and Columbus's ship would never have set sail.

Remember the 100 scientists who damned Einstein's theory of relativity? Or the 364 economists who attacked Geoffrey Howe's 1981 budget, which fired the starting pistol for the Thatcherite economic recovery?

If we want to play the numbers game it is worth pointing out that only a third of the lead authors in the IPCC were climatologists. Not one of them, I understand, had a geological background. The team was also very weak in economic and statistical expertise. That's how the forecast for economic growth (and consequent growth of GHGs) in developing countries came to use current market exchange rates instead of purchasing power parity to estimate different countries' income per head at the end of the century. It arrived at the ludicrous conclusion that per capita incomes in the U.S. would be below those in Algeria, Argentina and North Korea and a host of other unlikely candidates. (Incidentally, anyone who has faith in this forecast of unrivalled economic expansion in these, until now, economically stagnant third-world countries, must look askance at the proposition, which also emanates from the UN climate change panel, that the developing nations will be the main losers from climate change). In any case this preposterous forecast led to what was no doubt the desired conclusion - a huge overestimate of GHG growth.

No Consensus

Besides, there is very far from being a consensus of scientists behind the IPCC reports. For example Dr Frederick Seitz, a past President Emeritus of Rockefeller University, former Chairman of the Defense Science Board and former Science Adviser to NATO stated:

“I have never witnessed a more disturbing corruption of the peer review process than the events which led to this IPCC report.”³²

A comment on the spin-doctoring of the report came in a revealing letter to the Sunday Telegraph from Robert Pate:

“...let us look at the IPCC’s makeup. According to the CVs of its scientists only a small proportion have conducted any considerable amount of original research. On the other hand it did have some top grade members, who collectively produced 200 peer-reviewed books and articles. They have left in disgust at the shenanigans of the panel – including the ad hominem attacks to force some members to produce correct answers.

I have a copy of an original draft report. At the foot of each page is an instruction that the information must not be communicated to the media. Why so? When the scientists go home, along come the spin merchants to make the material easier for the public. My copy shows sentences scored out and new ones inserted. It shows alterations of words altered to produce the required green effect.”³³

6 False Alarms

There are scare stories galore peddled by the IPCC and its camp-followers about the impact of global warming. They contain a large helping of science fiction. Here are some examples:

Meltdown at the Poles

The polar ice caps are supposed to be melting and the sea rising as a result. It is estimated that, if the whole Greenland ice cap were to melt, the sea would rise by about seven metres, inundating Florida, New York City, London and Bangladesh, though, in fact, even with extreme warming, this process would take centuries. It is true that, in the Arctic, the amount of ice has been reducing since the sixties. The IPCC Third Assessment drew attention to the 40 per cent decline of Arctic sea-ice thickness. This was based on submarine profiles in 1999. However, subsequent research by Holloway and Sou, writing in the *Journal of Climate*³⁴, showed that, by coincidence, the submarine’s samples had been taken along a line where the ice was thinning fastest, while at the same time there were areas alongside where ice was thickening which were not sampled. The prime factor in sea ice reduction was a change in wind patterns, which are more important than temperature in clearing the ice. What seems to have happened is that the winds have moved the ice out of the central Arctic. In any case the temperature of the Arctic has changed little in the last thirty years. The ice in the Arctic sea is of course floating. So, even if it all melted it would not affect the sea level, as Archimedes famously demonstrated over two millennia ago.

³² Wall Street Journal, June 12, 1996.

³³ Sunday Telegraph, 7 May, 2006.

³⁴ Referred to in Michaels (2004), op cit.

Particulates

Another factor in the melting of the Arctic ice during a period when the air temperature has changed little may be soot. Prof. James Hansen (of the Goddard Institute of Space Studies (and the father of the global warming scare) has suggested that soot particles on snow and ice have been responsible for reducing their ability to reflect heat and this results in their melting more than would otherwise be the case. Indeed he claims that soot particles may be twice as bad as carbon dioxide. If this is true, it is rather hopeful because it is easier to reduce the amount of soot produced by fossil fuels than the amount of carbon dioxide.

Greenland

The crucial issue regarding the fate of the ice in the Northern hemisphere is what happens to Greenland, the most important block of ice in the Arctic. Until recently one could say confidently that this was in balance and has been for thirty years.³⁵ However it was reported in February 2006 that American scientists using satellite data had found that sea levels were rising more quickly than expected because the amount of water that some of Greenland's glaciers were dumping into the Atlantic Ocean had doubled in the last five years. This is difficult to reconcile with the observations of O.M. Johannsen, published in *Science* (October 2005) that the trend in Greenland ice is a gain of 5.4 cm per year. "Almost all of the gain was in areas greater than 5000 feet in elevation (which is most of the place). Below that, there is glacial recession. It shouldn't be lost on anyone that because no-one ventures into the hostile interior of Greenland, all we see are pictures of receding glaciers near the coast."³⁶ Overall, however, the air temperature in Greenland has been declining significantly since 1958. Indeed, according to a report early in 2004 in the scientific journal *Climate Change* by Peter Chylek and his colleagues from Los Alamos Laboratory, average temperatures in Greenland have fallen by the rather steep amount of 2.2 °C since 1987. It also found that summer temperatures, which are most relevant to Greenland ice sheet melting rates, do not show any persistent increase in the last fifty years.³⁷

However for those who are nevertheless anxious about the extensive hype about the Greenland ice-cap melting and flooding the coastal areas, it has been calculated that if the ice-cap lost 0.15 inches per year – the outside limit – the melting would take 800,000 years. This period would include two or three ice ages and perhaps an end to the supply of fossil fuels.

Antarctica

As for the Antarctic, there the average temperature has been cooling since the mid-sixties. Major portions of the West Antarctic ice cap are thickening and the extent of sea ice around the continent has actually grown since 1980. According to a new study published in the online version of *Science* (19 May 2005) the East Antarctic Ice Sheet gained about 45 billion tons of ice between 1992 and 2003 Also the Antarctic snow pack – over an area the size of the United States – is increasing at the rate of five feet per year. That is why the previous four Halley VI research stations were all buried. With precipitation at this rate, it is absurd to suggest, as some have, that the sea level is rising faster than usual in the Antarctic area. Indeed in 2004 C.H. Davis published a paper in *Science* about how this

³⁵ See Michaels (2004), op cit.

³⁶ Patrick Michaels in TCS Daily, November 4, 2005.

³⁷ Climatologist Ronald Bailey in *Reasononline*, November 10, 2004.

accumulating snowfall over East Antarctica was reducing sea level rise. Around the Ross Ice Shelf the ice build-up is apparently acting to reduce the sea level.³⁸ Professor Zbigniew Jaworowski, an experienced researcher in the field who, among other things, organised 11 glaciological expeditions between 1972 and 1980, in a recent paper for the Argentinean Foundation for Scientific ecology gave his view that “ice is now growing up so quickly that by about 2050 it will have lowered the sea by 30 cm. Measurements of ice accumulation indicate that in a large part of Antarctica, the increase of the ice cap now corresponds to 5 to 25 per cent of global atmospheric precipitation, and to a lowering of sea level of 1.0 mm to 1.2 mm per year. Such behaviour of the cryosphere does not support claims that the climate is warming, and that the catastrophic visions of a man-made sea level rise will be fulfilled.”³⁹

Brits’ Splendid Isolation

These observations do not sit very comfortably alongside reports which have come back from the latest British Antarctic Survey team in January 2006 about large stretches of water where there used to be thick pack ice. The conclusion drawn by one BBC reporter, inevitably, was that this was the result of global warming. The superficiality of this claim arises from the fact that the British Antarctic Survey is established in the Antarctic Peninsula: the only part of the whole continent - about a half of one per cent of the total – which is getting warmer. Why is it getting warmer? One suggestion is ocean bed volcanic activity.

Dissolving Glaciers

The only other lumps of ice on the planet, which could, by their melting, affect the sea level are the non-polar glaciers. The largest is the Himalayan glacier but this is so high that most of it will always remain intact. The rest of them are relatively small. The trend since 1980 according the World Glacier Monitoring Service is towards glacier shrinkage. However the direction of glacier movement is far from uniform, which suggests that local conditions are more important than any planetary warming influence. For instance the Franz Josef and Fox glaciers in New Zealand are advancing. In any case, if all the non-polar glaciers including the Himalayan ice-cap melted completely, they would not raise the sea level by more than five to seven inches. To put the matter in perspective, ninety-five per cent of the world’s ice is stored in the polar ice caps – Antarctica and Greenland.⁴⁰

Rising Seas

The IPCC estimates that the sea will rise as a result of global warming by a metre over the next hundred years. This is too high because of the Panel’s overestimate of global warming. In fact the slow rise in the sea level, which has been going on for thousands of years – ever since the last ice age – has settled down to a rate of 6 inches per century since 1850. However, that doesn’t stop alarmist stories appearing about coastal floods due to human-induced climate change. A prize example was an article in *The Guardian* on October 29, 2001 about the tiny Pacific islands of Tuvalu saying that the 11,000 inhabitants were being forced to leave by rising seas due to global warming. This was eagerly picked up by Lester Brown, who runs the Earth Policy Institute. He said that the sea level had risen by a foot

³⁸ Michaels (2004), op cit.

³⁹ Jaworowski, op cit.

⁴⁰ Michaels (2004), op cit.

during the twentieth century, with salt water affecting its drinking water and food production. A fact check showed that the sea level had fallen in the past fifty years, according to French scientists who had studied the historical record. They found a close correlation between the sea level and the rise and fall of the deep-ocean temperatures. The ocean around Tuvalu has cooled sharply since 1955 and the sea level has dropped (precipitously) in consequence. According to climatologist Prof. Patrick Michaels, even at the IPCC's predicted rate of rise, it would take fifty years for the sea level to return to the level of 45 years ago and that this was most unlikely to happen. The reason for the Tuvalu people wanting to quit apparently was that they have wrecked the place. It has no rivers or sources of potable water, most of the vegetation has been burned as fuel and the beaches have been eroded because the sand has been used as building material.

Acid Oceans

A report issued by the Royal Society in July 2005 raised concerns about the increasing acidification of the oceans. This was due to the growing amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere which is increasingly being absorbed into the seas to form carbonic acid. Though guarded in its predictions, it claimed that the exceptional increase in CO₂ in the last 200 years was raising the acidity of the oceans to a higher level than had occurred naturally in the last 800,000 years and that this presented a threat to marine life. Danish marine expert Professor Katherine Richardson had a year earlier made the bold forecast that all coral would be banished from the world's seas by 2065. The implication was that those global warming sceptics who took comfort from the ever larger amounts of CO₂ being absorbed by the waters girdling the earth were deceived. For, it is argued, the end result would be the destruction of marine organisms, the disappearance of phytoplankton plus the whole food chain on which all the creatures of the deep including fish depend, and the creation of lifeless oceans. This would indeed be an alarming prospect. It was admitted however in the discussion at the Royal Society conference that the findings were mainly based on laboratory studies and models. These in turn were based on the IPCC's global warming models, which, as we have seen rest on the incorrect assumption of exponential CO₂ growth. The report's suggestion that crabs would be wiped out in the course of 300 years is striking but none of us is likely to be around to verify it. There is here the same assumption, which mars so many environmental futuristic scenarios, that earth's creatures are too dumb to adapt. Also, as Professor Patrick Michaels⁴¹ has pointed out, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have been higher than at present in 90 million out of the last 100 million years. Taking an even longer view, Douglas Cross commented in the *New Scientist* that for almost 500 million years atmospheric CO₂ has ranged between 1500 and 1700 parts per million volume. It is only in the last 100 million years that it has fallen to the present extremely low levels (currently, he says, 380 ppmv). During the Ordovician and Silurian periods there was an astonishing rise in the diversity and number of animals relying on shells and carbonate structures (the very ones that the Royal Society report said were especially under threat) although CO₂ concentrations were 10 times the level which this group of experts warns will soon threaten marine life as we know it.

⁴¹ Michaels (2004), op cit.

Ocean Bacteria: Take a Bow

In this context of the influence of the oceans on the amount of GHG in the atmosphere, a report in *Nature*⁴² about a study led by Imperial College, London, is highly relevant. It showed how the most abundant ocean photosynthetic bacterium controls levels of carbon dioxide, and supplies us with the oxygen we breathe. It provides details of how *prochlorococcus* cyanobacteria traps atmospheric carbon dioxide and stores it in the deep sea. Working with colleagues from the Observatoire Oceanologique de Roscoff in France, they showed that iron plays a crucial role in the ability of this marine organism to use energy from light to convert carbon dioxide into organic molecules by the process of photosynthesis. As Professor Jim Barber of Imperial College and senior author of the study observed: “Until recently the contribution of marine photosynthesis to the global carbon cycle was grossly underestimated. We now know that over 50 per cent of global photosynthetic activity takes place in the oceans”. Apparently these key cyanobacteria live at a variety of ocean depths and have adapted to make maximum use of available light to fuel photosynthesis. However they are limited by the amount of iron in the oceans they inhabit. In regions which have been artificially seeded with extra iron there is a dramatic increase of biomass production. The Professor arrives at the optimistic conclusion: “Our research opens up the possibility of artificially increasing ocean levels of iron to combat global warming.” That is of course assuming that global warming is occurring and, if it is, that we want to combat it.

Coral Blight

There have been recent claims that coral reefs are bleaching, that is losing colour and dying due to warm oceans. One report (in 2003) about the Caribbean said that coral was dying faster than rain forests and that this was due to more storms, pollution and fishing - all the fault of humans of course. Since then there appears to have been some recovery. As for bleaching, that is arguably a healthy response in which one form of algae gives way to a better-adapted species that allows corals to thrive in warmer waters.⁴³

Stormy Weather

The severe 2005 hurricane season provoked a flurry of warnings that this is only the start of more severe weather to come due to global warming. Yet the period before hurricane Lily hit the Louisiana coast in 2002 was the longest between hurricanes recorded since 1900⁴⁴. The average number of hurricanes to hit the U.S.A in the second half of the twentieth century was 1.41 per year compared with 1.94 in the first half – a full half a storm less per year. Also there was widespread concern about allegedly increasing numbers of tornadoes after a lot were reported in May 2003. The *Washington Post* had a cartoon, with the message: “these superpowerful tornadoes are the kind of storm we are likely to see more of with global climate change”. However it appears that the statistics supposed to show that the number of tornadoes had been rapidly growing in recent times merely reflected an increase in the number of radar stations recording them. When killer tornadoes were singled out, the position was actually shown to be improving. For the growth in the number of radar stations had led to the reporting of more weak tornadoes.⁴⁵

⁴² See *EurekAlert*, 27 Aug. 2003.

⁴³ National Centre for Policy Analysis, Study No. 285, 15 May 2006.

⁴⁴ Michaels (2004), *op cit*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

Tropical Hurricanes

Then again, global anxiety merchants have suggested that a warmer atmosphere should make hurricanes and tornadoes more furious by energising them. In fact the main difference any global warming could make would be to reduce the temperature contrast between the poles and the tropics. That should de-energise the jet stream, which puts the spin into the tornadoes and therefore make them less not more destructive.

In this context it is intriguing to note the resignation Dr. Christopher Landsea, a leading expert on the subject of tropical storms and hurricanes, from participation in the writing of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (due out in late 2007). He cited concerns that the IPCC has become "too politicised" and "motivated by preconceived agendas". The immediate cause of his resignation was that, after he had written a draft on Atlantic hurricanes for the Fourth Assessment, the lead author of the section in which it was to appear, took part in a press conference at Harvard on the subject "Experts to warn global warming likely to continue spurring more outbreaks of intense hurricane activity", along with more media interviews on the topic. Apparently none of the participants in the conference had performed any research on hurricane variability, nor were they reporting on any new work in the field. Previous IPCC assessments had found no upward long-term trend in the frequency or intensity of tropical cyclones either in the Atlantic or any other basin. When Dr. Landsea complained, the IPCC leadership saw nothing to be concerned about in their representative claiming that the busy 2004 hurricane season was caused by global warming, even though this directly contradicted the results of their own researchers. Dr Landsea concluded that this showed how the IPCC had ceased to be an independent research organisation and had turned into an advocacy group. He wanted no further part in it and resigned.⁴⁶

Gulf Stream Full Stop

Today's really hip, or dare one say, "cool" global warming scare is that it will upset the "ocean conveyor" which attracts the Gulf Stream to Europe. This mechanism has for thousands of years blessed our continent with warmer weather than, given its northerly latitude, it would otherwise experience. This climatic revolution was the theme of a Hollywood film "The Day After Tomorrow", which *The Guardian* gleefully predicted would win John Kerry the 2004 American presidential election. It certainly did its stuff as a disaster movie. It showed the effect of a sudden 15 degree drop in temperature in the high latitude Atlantic and Pacific. The tropics get hotter and the poles get colder. North of Washington the population is wiped out by hundreds of feet of snow. Then in the following summer the ice melts and brings a massive continental flood. England becomes another Siberia. The film is riven with climatic implausibilities. Suffice it to quote the leading authority on the subject, Professor Carl Wunsch of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In a letter to *Nature* he wrote that the only way to trigger a Gulf Stream-caused Ice Age "is either to turn off the wind system or to stop the rotation of the earth, or both".⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See <http://www.worldclimatereport.com/index.php/2005/01/18/2500-less-1-2/>

⁴⁷ *Nature*, Vol. 428, 8 April 2004, p.601.

Why was the movie so cavalier with the easily discoverable facts? Surely, because the motive behind the film was ideological. The spokesman for the film company Fox, Jeffrey Godsick, gave the game away when he said: “The real power of the movie is to raise consciousness on the issue of global warming.”⁴⁸ The film was based on a book, “The Coming Global Superstorm” by Art Bell and Whitley Strieber. Just how seriously it deserves to be taken is revealed by Strieber’s explanation in his previous work “Communion” - that he was told about the Earth’s forthcoming apocalypse by aliens.

Desertification

The message of most of the climate models is that plants and soil face a bleak future. Global warming is supposed to upset the ability of plants and soil to retain carbon to such an extent that they will add to the air’s carbon dioxide, thus supplementing the direct emissions from human activities and further intensifying global warming. However, many field and lab experiments contradict this view. For instance one study showed that soil around rye grass holds more carbon when CO₂ air content and air temperature increase. Working on the basis of this benign physiology, a model of a European conifer forest was estimated to double its CO₂ intake by the year 2100. This result makes short work of the doomsday notion of runaway global warming.⁴⁹ In any case this fits in snugly with the well-known fact that carbon dioxide is a fertiliser. The idea that, worldwide, droughts have been increasing is a myth. The record shows that plant growth including staple food crops, has accelerated with the increase of CO₂. This will increase diversity of plant and animal life, not reduce it. If the plants and animals could vote for it, there would be a landslide in favour of more greenhouse gas.

Our earth is getting more verdant and the future is greener.

Heatstroke

The notion that more people will die in a warmer globe because of heat waves is implausible: Far more people die of cold than from heat, which is easily dealt with by air conditioning – unless it is restricted to save energy. In general, abundant supplies of energy are the key to most of our material problems not the cause.

Wildlife at Risk

Ever since the late Rachel Carson’s bestseller “Silent Spring” - still, though discredited, one of the bibles of the environmental movement - her disciples have devoutly sought out examples of how the natural world is threatened by the indifference of our selfish, profit-seeking society to the fate of wild animals and birds, especially the more cuddly kind. Top of the pops undoubtedly are the penguins in their ice villages. Signs of population decrease among them, particularly among emperor penguins, in the Antarctic, are freely attributed to loss of habitable ice floes caused by melting on account of - you guessed it - global warming. Yet, as pointed out above, there has been no temperature rise in the Antarctic, but an overall fall since the 1960s. Also, as deep ice core research shows, the sea ice boundaries have not changed significantly over thousands of years. One suggestion is that any decline in the penguin population may be due to “eco-tourism” because the poor

⁴⁸ “Apocalypse Soon”, Patrick Michaels, Washington Post, May 16, 2004.

⁴⁹ Paper by PhDs Sallie Balliunas and Willie Soon of the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics, reported in *Environment and Climate News*, February, 2001.

creatures are uneasy at being buzzed by aircraft and helicopters. In any case the idea that penguins might be wiped out by rises in temperatures is ridiculous. Their present wide distribution shows how adaptable they are. Indeed. "Their habitat ranges from Antarctic's frozen shores to the Galapagos Islands' tropical beaches."⁵⁰

The Bear Truth

Polar bears are not as cute as penguins, but they are nice and furry. So the threat of their extinction is a good rallying cry for Greenpeace and ideal copy for *The Independent*, which is ever ready to pick up and run with any tale about approaching environmental doom. Their story is that the polar bears are finding it hard to cope with the warming of the icy surroundings to which they are accustomed and the food chain dependent on it. So they will be starving to death. Also, it's said, the earlier spring melts will expose them to the harsh Arctic environment too early. However, dire forecasts of their prospective doom underestimate the resourcefulness of these creatures. They have found a new food supply in garbage bins in Churchill, Manitoba, to which they make a yearly migration of some hundreds of miles. As a result the polar bears there have become fatter and more fertile.

Looking at the Arctic by area, in the Baffin Bay region (the territory between North America and Greenland) the temperatures are declining and so is the polar bear population. In the region between Siberia and Alaska temperatures have risen and adjacent bear populations have increased. This result shows a relationship between temperature and polar bear populations which is exactly the opposite of that asserted by the global warming lobby.⁵¹ Mitch Taylor, one of Canada's top wildlife experts, estimates that the Canadian polar bear population has increased by 25% - from 12,000 to 15,000, over the last ten years.⁵²

Wilder Claims

The World Wildlife Fund ran a publicity campaign in 1996 claiming that the number of wild ducks in the north-central U.S. and South Central Canada could halve as a result of the drying up of wetlands due to global warming. Yet a factual check shows that there has been a significant upward trend in rainfall in the area since the 1890s.

Green propaganda concentrates on the dangers to marquee species which make pretty pictures - it's not surprising that the World Wildlife Fund uses the Giant Panda as its Icon. Tigers, eagles, owls frogs, toads and butterflies are all roped in for the plea to preserve the diversity of the planet's species against the global warming with which predatory humans are threatening it. Yet these fellows know their market: they don't talk about the necessity of preserving snakes, slugs, germs, viruses or algae. The fact that diversity is increasing with the growth of greenhouse gases and the populations of many creatures - butterflies for instance - are expanding and extending the range of their habitats - is ignored. But then facts are only nuisances for folk who are so sure they know what's best for the rest of us.

⁵⁰ Michaels (2004), op cit.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Letter, Daily Telegraph, February 10, 2005.

Spread of Malaria

In 1995 the IPCC confidently forecast that malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases would move from the tropics to the temperate regions. It has repeated that claim in subsequent assessments. Similarly the American Government's Environment Protection Agency stated that in the 21st century there would be "an increase of approximately 45 to 60 per cent in the proportion of the world's population living within the potential zone for malaria transmission."

These apparently authoritative pronouncements have, of course, been seized on by interest groups like the World Wildlife Fund to support urgent action to stop global warming. Yet the forecast rests on the underlying fallacy that malaria is restricted to the tropics. In fact mosquitoes native to temperate regions have evolved ways of surviving the winter as have the pathogens they transmit. Malaria was rife in Europe in classical times. The barbarian armies of Goths and Vandals that swept the continent in the Roman era often suffered severe setbacks to their campaigns due to malarial outbreaks. In the time of Queen Elizabeth I the borough of Westminster was notoriously malarial. Oliver Cromwell died of malaria in the middle of the Little Ice Age (roughly 1550 to 1750). Malaria persisted until recent times in Europe. Indeed there was a pandemic in the Soviet Union in the 1920s in which 600,000 died. Tens of thousands of infections occurred as far north as the Arctic seaport of Archangel.

Not Just Tropical

It is clear therefore, from these snapshots of the history of malaria in Europe in periods when the climate was much colder, that the disease is not confined to the tropics. To spend huge amounts of money to combat global warming would be a very clumsy, wasteful and not very effective way of preventing its spread. How much better to attack the problem directly using methods already proved to work, including the use of DDT, which environmentalists to their shame have succeeded in banning in most parts of the world at the cost of tens of millions of deaths.⁵³ The good news is that some countries have defied the ban with happy results. Ecuador has increased its use of DDT since 1993 and this has brought a major reduction in malaria. When South Africa withdrew DDT from its malarial control programme in 1996 there followed the worst malarial epidemic in the country's history. It was only when DDT was reintroduced in 2000 that the epidemic was brought under control. Thankfully USAID is at last committed to supporting the use of DDT for indoor spraying, despite the response of the environmentalists who still call for a DDT ban. This is the way forward. From the point of view of combating malaria and other epidemics, the global warming issue is at best an irrelevance, at worst a distraction.

7. The Fat Cats of Global Warming

Why, if so much of the global warming theory is questionable, is there so little public criticism of it? The answer is surely that there are some very powerful vested interests making so much noise that the critics are scarcely audible.

⁵³ See 'Could global warming bring mosquito-borne disease to Europe' by Dr Paul Reiter in 'Adapt or Die', Ed. Kendra Okonski, International Policy Press, 2003.

Environmentalists Help Themselves

As I've pointed out earlier, the various bodies in the environmental movement have eagerly joined the march under the global warming banner. Global warming has all the ingredients of a good cry: - a threat to humanity and a gallery of culprits under the general heading of greedy capitalists, such as multi-billion pound oil companies and countless other industrial polluters, who can be portrayed as exploiters of the public. Add to the list a host of short-sighted politicians, too preoccupied with vote-seeking to face up to the dangers to the planet but vulnerable to claims that they are failing in their duty if they don't spend huge sums of taxpayers' money on saving it and the rogue's gallery is complete. Yet, those who think that, by contrast, environmentalists are saintly idealists should face the following facts:

Environmentalism, Mega, Thriving and Global

It spends vast sums from its ample funds on scaring people to death with extravagant claims about the actual and prospective harm being done by greenhouse gases which bear little relation to fact. The object of its angst-promoting propaganda is apparently to increase its subscriptions by persuading the public that the policies it advocates will save the planet.

Environmentalists have their early roots in the back-to-nature romanticism of the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau and the poet William Wordsworth. Yet in recent times they have provided the last refuge of many of the extreme left. The latter needed a haven because of the collapse of the original justification of their programme of centralised state ownership and control - that it was economically efficient and therefore on welfare grounds worth the sacrifice of freedom. That argument, together with the totalitarian prescription based on it, was shattered both by the fall of the Soviet Union and the wretched performance of nationalised industries in the West. Yet the more dyed-in-the-wool socialists, instead of ditching their creed, have transposed it. While remaining loyal to the old model of democratic centralism (to use an old Soviet term), they have shifted the rationale. The aim is no longer, even in theory, to raise the living standards of the workers. Indeed in some formulations the idea is to reverse economic progress and retreat to medieval or even more primitive conditions in order to serve the overriding object of preserving the environment.

Control Freaks

The true colour (red) of these reborn green collectivists is shown by the anti-capitalist and anti-free market policies they favour and their invariable preference for the top-down, bureaucratic and coercive approach. They generally adopt a militant, bullying attitude to those who dare to disagree with them. Any scientist who dissents is immediately labelled a right wing extremist or a lackey of the oil industry. The next move in their game, already under way in California, is for pressure groups like the Friends of the Earth to take major producers of CO₂ to court and try to enlist the power of the law to punish them for their alleged damage to the environment. Clearly the hope is to imitate the original success of anti-smoking campaigners in suing the tobacco companies in class actions.

The environmental activists have found ready allies in:

- Ecological organisations referred to above: They possess large funds, which they are eager to spend on propaganda and publicity stunts.
- National state bureaucracies. They are unrelenting in their quest for ethical justification for the regulative activities, which are their lifeblood, and the prop of their power and wealth. Many bureaucrats who were employed on security issues during the Cold War, which is officially over, have latched on to global warming as an opportunity to use their skills to defend the planet and coincidentally to extend the responsibilities of their department and their career prospects within it. It is also an area into which agency planners and computer-modellers can find new opportunities when their contracts run out or their schemes collapse. This is not a minor issue. Health Minister Patricia Hewitt has approved a £6 billion “choose and book” computer, which according to a revealing article by Simon Jenkins⁵⁴ is “an unnecessary machine for which no health professional ever asked” and, according to a leaked report in February 2006, “may end up costing a mind-numbing £50 billion”. Apparently such IT schemes are to be found all over Whitehall and there has been a high scrap rate. The most notable recent casualty was the farm payment scheme at Defra, the rural affairs department, which is a complete shambles, with the previous year’s subsidy cheques still not in the post at the time when the article was written.
- International technobureaucracies, especially the United Nations, but also the European Union: They are constantly on the lookout for ways of extending their supranational powers and jurisdictions. The UN’s International Panel on Climate Change has engaged in one-sided propaganda in favour of compulsory policies to reduce carbon emissions embodied in the Kyoto protocol. This lays down how much the reductions are for each signatory country. Global warming enthusiasts strongly advocate making these curbs much more severe, which would make the UN a mighty world energy planning authority.
- Business lobbies: Some industries have profited handsomely from environmental regulation. Waste management is an obvious example. According to Richard S. Lindzen, Professor of Meteorology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1.7 trillion dollars have been spent in America on the environment in the past decade. That makes the environment one of America’s major industries. Many businessmen are constantly looking either to turn a profit or damage their competitors by obtaining environmental regulations tailored to their purposes. Then again some firms might find it is worth their while to donate to the less scrupulous members of the environmental lobby to obtain guarantees against interference or nuisance from rentamob protesters. For the sake of a quiet life for themselves they are happy to pay protection money.
- Biased scientists: Environmental organisations have played their part in corrupting science, with the help of green-leaning governments, because tax-funded research grants go to those who support the official doctrine especially in the case of global warming.

⁵⁴ *Sunday Times*, April 2, 2006.

It has been estimated that more than \$40 billion has been spent on climate research since 1990, but without any unambiguous anthropogenic (human) effect on global climate being proved. Nevertheless the present bias in favour of the global warming dogma reigns almost supreme in academia while scientific journals give little space to alternative views. Indeed the situation is worse than this. Some scientific journals do not merely ignore dissent but seek actively to intimidate and discredit dissenters.

Dissenters in the Dock

A shameful example of this was the way that the prestigious magazine *Scientific American* sought to besmirch the reputation of Bjorn Lomborg, the number one sceptic about global warming. Apparently it hired Professor Stephen Schneider (who famously justified telling fibs about scientific evidence if this served the public interest) to excoriate Lomborg's book. A hostile review also appeared in *Nature*, which sad to say, for all its eminence, is not without bias on this subject. In each case Lomborg sought to get a reply published but was refused. Five months later he was allowed about a page in *Scientific American*, but that was immediately followed by the editor's equally long condemnation. More potentially damaging to Lomborg was the attempt by Danish environmentalists to brand him as a fraud. The Danish Committee on Scientific Dishonesty (DCSD) issued a condemnation of his book for being "objectively dishonest" and "clearly contrary to the standards of good scientific practice" and containing numerous inaccuracies. However nearly 300 scientists signed a protest against the ruling, which, it quickly emerged, was a fix. As Lomborg observed: "The complaints about my book were not based on science but on a desire to stop me being appointed Director of Denmark's Environment Assessment Institute (EAI)." His name was eventually and comprehensively cleared. The Danish Ministry of Science eventually rebuked the DCSD and condemned its judgement as "emotional", "not backed up by documentation" and "completely devoid of argumentation".

Silence of the (Scientific) Lambs

The effect of such intimidation of those scholars who do not conform to the prescribed official view is of course to stifle disinterested scientific inquiry. Scientists know that, if they do not follow the politically correct line on global warming, their prospects of academic promotion or serving on lucrative government inquiries and commissions are scant. They are all too aware that there is practically no money available for inquiries tending to show that any global warming is due to natural factors and that either there is nothing to worry about, or even if there is, we humans can do little about it except adapt to the inevitable.

Science Samurai

The redoubtable climatologist Patrick Michaels⁵⁵ (*Meltdown*, Cato Institute, 2004) doesn't find this hostility to free speech and thought among the scientific establishment that surprising. At least not in America, which tends to give a world lead in this as in much else. He attributes this growth of authoritarianism in science in great part to its federalisation. This is traceable back to the huge crash programme of research in the Manhattan Project for developing the atomic bomb. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, saw it coming. In his farewell address in 1961, spelt out the danger "that public policy could

⁵⁵ Michaels (2004), op cit.

itself become a captive of a scientific-technological elite”. That comment was prophetic. The great success of the Manhattan Project became and has remained the inspiration of a vast rise in Government-funded science, which is cumulative and self-promoting. It was led by the National Scientific Foundation, which received 15 per cent of U.S. federal research outlay and was placed under the authority of the President. Along with the cash come the motivating philosophy and the politicised rules and directions emanating from the top. Many agencies such as N.A.S.A. receive funding for global warming research. None of its staff is going to appear before a congressional committee and say that further funding is unnecessary. Any such statement would not be a clever career move. The line from that agency will predictably be that, in order to establish a firm basis for policy, more money is needed to improve our knowledge of climate change.

Bigoted Reporters

Journalists, even those who take pride in their professional objectivity, find they have an easier time if they follow the line of the recognised experts. The 2000 members of America’s Society of Environmental Journalists are particularly loyal. Egged on by serial alarmist outfits like the Sierra Club, the Union of Concerned Scientists and the World Wildlife Fund, they produce sensationalist doom-laden stories, and books, which are then fed back to the bureaucrats and serve to reinforce their bias and their complacency.

Eco-Imperialists

In the developing world the environmental lobby has fostered a form of neo-colonialism – note the way it has used its political pull in Europe to use aid programmes as a lever to effectively ban the growing of GM crops in some African countries, whose starving people direly need them. Environmentalists have pressured politicians to stop the building of dams for irrigation and electric power in India and Uganda because they are not “eco-friendly”. The result has been that poor people in these countries are condemned to continue with the cow-dung and firewood energy sources they are used to. These initiatives have, at a stroke, removed their possibility of progress in terms of clean water and agricultural and industrial development. As mentioned earlier, due to the environmental lobby, the U.S. banned the use of DDT, the cheapest and most effective chemical weapon against malaria, and put pressure on governments in the developing world, by threat of withdrawing aid grants if they use DDT. The result has been that in a number of countries such as Sri Lanka, where the disease came close to being wiped out, it has soared and in the world as a whole now kills a million people a year.

The current drive to “save” Africa is closely associated with contemporary environmentalism. The threat of global warming is used to bamboozle poor countries into agreements to pursue the U.N.’s “Clean Development Mechanism”, which will limit their energy consumption and perpetuate poverty. For example they are being pushed into adopting solar and wind technology, which is too expensive for poor people to buy. Even if they can afford the “clean” electricity generated by windmills and solar panels the product is weak and unreliable. As Andrew Kenny put it “Poor countries do not want a new eco-imperialism, or a sequel to Verwoerd’s apartheid in the form of windmills that hardly produce enough electricity to produce a piece of toast, solar cookers that can only cook in the middle of the day if there are no clouds, or tanks of fermenting pig waste that need a porcine multitude to supply them. These are hopelessly inappropriate, deeply patronising schemes of the wealthy green elite who think that energy comes from electric outlets or gas

taps.”⁵⁶ If this is the green option, Africa’s poor are likely to be still stuck into the far future with burning wood, dung, or, in townships, the cheap paraffin heaters, which are unsafe and kill and maim thousands of people every year.

Rent-Seekers

Yet it is doubtful if the environmentalists unaided could have swung the pendulum of public and official opinion so far in favour of a world-wide campaign to restrain global warming as to result in the Kyoto international treaty. As far back as 1989 a leading Australian expert on the Greenhouse effect, John L. Daly, in his book *The Greenhouse Trap*⁵⁷, pointed the finger at the nuclear industry. He posed the question - Why did the Greenhouse issue become public so suddenly in 1987-88? He considered it very suspicious that the Toronto Declaration suggested that nuclear power would be a “clean” energy alternative to fossil fuels, as nuclear reactors do not emit CO₂. He also thought it was worrying that in April 1989 President George Bush appointed prominent nuclear physicist, Allan Bromley, to be his chief scientific adviser. Daly wondered whether the nuclear industry or its proxies was behind the alarmist and exaggerated PR campaign both about the extreme perils of Greenhouse warming and in favour of nuclear fuels. He queried whether the nuclear industry was covertly funding research into the Greenhouse Effect and providing grants to universities and research institutes involved in climate studies. Was it mere coincidence? he asked, that the Greenhouse Effect only came to public attention after Chernobyl? Was it not strange?, he queried, that in January 1989 the West German Nuclear Research Institute entered into a joint venture with the New Zealand Meteorological Service to study the Greenhouse Effect. Daly suggested that this was an attempt by a nuclear interest to get control of research backing the idea of global warming, but sufficiently remote from Northern Europe to avoid too close scrutiny of the data. This is all circumstantial conspiracy theory stuff, and, if Daly’s suspicions prove justified, that does not in any way disprove the case for nuclear power. All the same it may indicate the reason why the case for global warming became so suddenly unbalanced.

Third World Firsters

When considering the beneficiaries of policies to combat global warming, one must not forget the developing world. For, though the picture could change radically in the future should the Kyoto-style policies be increased and extended more widely, under the present arrangements the developing countries have much to gain and little to lose. For they are not expected to carry any burdens and stand to benefit under the carbon trading arrangements under which many of them have a carbon pollution quota which they can sell. A cynic might even be tempted to see Kyoto as just another form of development aid. How long the exemption of the developing countries from any restriction on their emissions will continue is hard to say. For, while it is absurd that that exemption applies to China, one of the world’s champion CO₂ emitters, at the same time the whole Kyoto exercise offers a kind of neo-Marxist excuse for all except the wealthy western nations to keep on emitting. Kyoto is thus, arguably, an indictment of western colonialism in a new garb. It is a rejigged version of the rich living on the backs of the poor internationally because the clear implication is that wealth brings with it the high emissions which are wrecking the planet for everybody else. So why should the developing countries, it is urged, clean up their mess? Let the

⁵⁶ In Okonski (ed)(2003) *Adapt or Die*, London: International Policy Network.

⁵⁷ Sydney: Bantam Books, 1989.

nations of the West pay up for the damage they have inflicted through their extravagance, waste and self-indulgence, and let the rest of the world alone and without restraint to get on with raising their own living standards instead of those of their exploiters. Needless to say this subliminal message goes down well in the United Nations and pulls in the votes for the Kyoto agenda.

Corporate Lobbies

Green groups have been quite astute about obtaining subsidies, grants and investment from some of the most allegedly or actually pollutive industries (oil, nuclear companies, utilities etc) where the donations are paid, as a way of redeeming their status, as hush money to silence or soften criticism, or just as a form of extortion or protection fee against green activist attacks on their property - rather like the levies paid by Chicago club-owners and restaurateurs to Al Capone in the heyday of the U.S. gangster. There are some business lobbies which see the global warming issue less as a problem than as an opportunity, especially when there are generous government subsidies for alternative energy producers. British Petroleum, for instance, has sought to identify itself with the Greens by a bold PR campaign in which its acronym BP has been reinvented as “Beyond Petroleum”. In November 2005, nicely timed on the eve of Tony Blair’s speech to the CBI annual conference when he was expected to announce a review of Britain’s energy policy, BP’s Chief Executive Lord Browne made a pitch of his own. He pledged an investment of €8 billion (£4.6 billion) over 10 years in non-carbon energies like solar and wind and suggested that this could generate revenues of €6 billion by 2015. Yet, impressive as this seems, it is dwarfed by the €15 billion BP spends every year on exploring for oil and gas. Of course no-one can blame the boss of a company, in an industry, which since the days of Rockefeller has been popularly bracketed with the most ruthless side of capitalism, for thinking it worth spending money on giving itself a favourable image. Yet we should not fool ourselves that BP will escape from overwhelming dependence on petroleum for many decades. Shell, similarly, after a series of public relations disasters, has sought to reposition itself as environment-friendly. Even Exxon-Mobil, generally viewed by Greens as the arch villain in the global warming controversy, has published advertorials urging the American government to fund research on such technologies as fuel cells - which happen to be one of Exxon-Mobil’s corporate projects. Who can blame it? All of this shows that rent-seeking can occur in many quarters once there is a whiff in the air of government support.

8. Kyoto: World Energy Planning

The Kyoto treaty is about reducing the CO₂ emissions of the industrial nations to 5.2 % below the level of 1990 by limiting the use of fossil fuels. It is popularly presented as a historic and vitally necessary undertaking to prevent an eventual disaster and “save the planet”: end of story. However, the cost/benefit analysis carried out by Bjorn Lomborg in his pathbreaking book *The Sceptical Environmentalist* tells a different tale. In a nutshell he says: the cost would be considerable and the results negligible – equivalent to delaying the predicted rise in temperature in a century’s time by six years. As regards the costs imposed by global warming, Lomborg broadly goes along with the calculations of the IPCC. This indulgence to his opponents appears to me to be only for the sake of argument. A thoroughgoing sceptical position should fully take it into account that much is unproven about the alleged global warming, including whether there is any significant warming trend at all, and our ignorance of forthcoming improvements in technology, which have not been

invented yet. Given all that, it is impossible to calculate whether the prospect is good or bad. It seems, therefore, the height of folly to saddle this generation with the costs of preventing what is labelled a misfortune, which may never occur. Nevertheless, Lomborg is prepared to question the value of the Kyoto strategy, even when adopting the pessimistic, and questionable, IPCC assumptions about the costs resulting from the warming of our earthly environment. The annual bill for the earth as a whole a century ahead would include for example the cost of the sea rising and consequent coastal flooding or the cost of its prevention through building dams, or again the cost of losing agricultural land or of switching to new crops. The total would, it is estimated, be around 1.5 – 2% of the present global GDP, or between 480 and 620 billion US dollars. To offset this, the Kyoto protocol proposes to cut consumption of fossil fuels. The overall expense of this policy would depend on how much resort there is to the market in carbon emissions. The more that inefficient large CO₂-emitters are able to sell their emission permits to efficient low CO₂-emitters the lower the overall cost. This is because it is generally more costly to improve efficient, i.e. low emission, energy production than the reverse. The total cost of the Kyoto exercise to the Annex 1, namely the developed, countries, is estimated at between US\$344 billion and US\$1,507 billion in current value.

Record So Far

As a matter of fact in the year since the Kyoto protocol came into effect in February 2005 it has already cost \$150 billion for, supposedly, a prevention of warming by 0.0015 degrees C. “At that rate it would take 667 years and cost \$100 trillion hypothetically to avert just one degree C. of global warming”.⁵⁸ To sum up: the costly programme of fossil fuel cuts required by Kyoto would do no more than stall the 2 °C estimated rise in the world’s temperature at the end of the present century by six years. This disappointing result has led many advocates of the theory of global warming, such as Sir Crispin Tickell, to suggest that Kyoto is only the beginning. Indeed one went as far as to suggest that it would be necessary to have as many as 30 Kyotos in order to achieve the needed reduction of fossil fuel use. Those who blandly urge such measures should pause and consider the very close link historically between the growth of energy use and economic progress. The implication is that a “super-Kyoto”, with central enforcement of plummeting energy use, rigorously enforced no doubt by the United Nations, would prove a wonderfully swift route back to the middle ages or, for that matter, the stone age.

Chinese Puzzle

One further criticism of the Kyoto dispensation is that it exempts China, the world’s second largest emitter of greenhouse gases, from the restraints placed on the developed nations. This is on the grounds that it is a developing country – a strange way to categorise the nation, which now ranks fourth in the world in GDP terms. What makes this the height of absurdity is the fact that China also has the world’s fastest-growing economy, especially as the growth is concentrated in its industrial sector, the chief user of fossil fuels.

Kyoto Protection Racket

From the point of view of some industrial interests in old Europe, however, Kyoto, far from being absurd is rather useful. For instance the Kyoto controls will add to the costs of

⁵⁸ “Kyoto’s Quiet Anniversary” by Stephen Milloy, Fox News.com home>views, February 17, 2006.

energy-rich metal processors in Australia, Canada and the USA. The beneficiaries of this would be the high-cost European processors who are hobbled by high taxation and over-regulation. In their eyes the exemption of China, India and Brazil from Kyoto controls would be a boon. It would disadvantage their more efficient competitors in Australia etc while allowing them to obtain their ingots relatively cheaply. For them Kyoto is a welcome form of protectionism.

The Emissions Trading Scheme

The world's largest environmental programme is Europe's emissions trading scheme. The fundamental idea of this is that the countries, which are falling short of their emissions target, can buy from those countries which are in credit. This, in principle, is a good idea because it is far more costly for the countries which already use their fuel efficiently to reduce their emissions than for those which are backward. The net result should be a faster phasing-out of big emissions fuels like coal at a lower overall cost to all the countries involved. However, it hasn't worked out quite like that, because the European emissions trading scheme doesn't include everyone. So what tends to happen is that European countries reduce emissions by, in effect, transferring them to China, which is outside the scheme. One may see European emissions going down because the firms there stop manufacturing certain goods, like, say computers, which are bought instead, more cheaply, from China where they are made with far more energy-intensive equipment and in far bigger volume with greater pollution and higher carbon emissions. The market in emissions within Europe is not too happy either. At the time of writing, carbon prices had already crashed by 70% from 80 to 30 Euros per metric ton. This was apparently because the EU governments had miscalculated and inadvertently dumped too many permits to emit on the infant emissions market. Even if China were in the scheme, the same net increase in emissions might result if China were given too generous an allocation of carbon surplus – which is highly likely at the outset because such generosity might be treated as part of aid to the developing world and therefore politically correct.

Recently “OpenEurope” criticised the European Trading Scheme for its inequity between the countries taking part. The British government set stringent targets while the German government was more relaxed. It calculated that UK companies paid nearly £500 million for extra permits from business rivals in other Member States in 2005 while German companies made gains from permit sales of nearly £300 million. There was also unfairness in the British Government allocation of permits between different organisations in the UK. Thus the Electricity companies reduced their emissions by reducing output because they were short of permits. The result was higher prices for electricity consumers. Again Shell and BP received generous allowances of permits while NHS trusts, less lucky, wound up buying extra permits.⁵⁹

The Stern Review

The 700 page Review of the economic costs and benefits of dealing or not with climate change, by Sir Nicholas Stern, from the treasury staff, was commissioned by Chancellor Gordon Brown and appeared at the end of October 2006. It was obviously intended to be the sort of blockbuster, which would vanquish all further doubts. In fact, for all its length and the hype attending its publication, it proved a bit of a damp squib, adding little to our

⁵⁹ Ruth Lea, Personal View, Daily Telegraph, September 11, 2006.

knowledge. Its main conclusion was that the costs of climate change far exceeded the costs of acting to forestall it, which Stern spelt out as “equivalent to losing at least five per cent of global GDP each year now and for ever”. Professor Richard Tol, an expert on rising sea levels was so incensed at Stern’s misuse of his findings that he dubbed the latter’s report “alarmist and incompetent”.⁶⁰ Stern’s argument was indeed flawed. The pro-Kyoto conclusions were predictable since it started with an endorsement of the IPCC’s report and goldplated its pessimism. His assertions about the risks of melting glaciers and flood risk, crop yields declining, 40% of species facing extinction and more extreme weather patterns are either dubious or in flagrant conflict with the evidence, as indicated above. The suggested economic impacts – a 1% reduction in GDP due to extreme weather, or declining crop yields for instance, are therefore vitiated by the questionable environmental assumptions which support them. The report was also marred by an eccentric, some might say surrealist, notion of intergenerational equity, according to which a person born in 2106 should count for as much as a person born in 2006. It also brushed aside the probability, based on current economic trends, that our descendants of a hundred or two hundred years’ time will be vastly richer than we are. Hence his absurd calculation that substantial costs we incur now in order to spare our progeny some trivial discomfort in the distant future should be discounted at a derisory 0.1% rate of interest. Thus his earnest plea that we today should make substantial sacrifice for our prosperous progeny two centuries hence positively invites the ribald old jest: Why should we care about posterity? What has posterity done for us?⁶¹

Airlines and Carbon Tax

A proposal to go before the European Parliament at the time of writing is that the airlines should be subjected to a carbon tax and be drafted into an emissions trading scheme. The position to date is that airlines pay no fuel duty or VAT on their jet kerosene. Obviously there has been reluctance by national authorities to impose duties because this would tend to drive business away, let alone conflicting with the Chicago convention. However the urge to curb emissions has surfaced recently, perhaps because governments want to be seen to be doing something at a time of sharply rising oil prices while playing to the gallery on carbon emissions. The airlines are no doubt being picked on as vulnerable because they can be presented as a blameworthy target providing luxury services to the wealthy. Yet the most cursory glance at the facts refutes this view. Increasingly the air passenger market caters for all classes, especially with the explosive growth of low-cost services. It is more likely the snooty proposers of this tax dislike air passenger transport precisely because of its popularity with the working classes. The proposed tax on air passengers by President Chirac and his fellow French Enarchs falls into this category. It was projected to range up to £25 per flight depending on distance travelled and type of ticket. This is supposed to raise £210 million annually for developing countries. The justification put forward by the French Finance Minister, Thierry Bretonis was that the airlines should pay because they are the beneficiaries of globalisation. This misses the point in a big way since air transport is a causal factor not a beneficiary of globalisation and the world economic growth resulting from it, particularly in the poorer countries of Africa, which have gained so much from tourism. In Africa alone air transport supports half a million jobs. The tax can only set this back and to label it a tax to aid development when it is calculated to hinder it is laughably ironic.

⁶⁰ Daily Telegraph, January 27, 2007.

⁶¹ Economist, December, 2006.

Meanwhile Stockholm is also imposing a tax on air passengers of £19 for the cheapest trips to £45 for long haul journeys. This is explicitly aimed at curbing global carbon emissions. Yet none of the proceeds of the tax goes into improving the environment or improving the efficiency of aircraft engines for example, which *would* contribute to reduced carbon emissions. The revenues are simply swallowed into national taxation, to which airlines all over Europe already make larger net contributions than other forms of transport, some of which, like railways, are in receipt of substantial government financial support. Besides it is hard to take seriously claims of concern about the harm done to the environment by airlines when most European countries are still subsidising their national carriers and a group of leading European nations is supporting huge subsidies for the manufacture of Airbus. This is on a par with the German proclaimed enthusiasm for green policies to reduce carbon emissions while pouring millions into supporting the highly-polluting coal industry. As for the big picture it is worth bearing in mind that air transport supports 8% of the global economy but is responsible for only 3% of carbon emissions.

Britain's Performance

Our commitment under the Kyoto treaty is to cut CO₂ emissions by 12.5% below the 1990 level. However in a moment of buoyant optimism, or perhaps exhibiting Labour's weakness for indulging in gesture politics, this pledge was extended in the party's 1997 manifesto to 20% and repeated in the last general election. Britain in fact got off lightly with its original Kyoto target because many of its high-emission coal-fired generating plants have since changed over for purely commercial reasons to cheaper, clean-firing gas. By 2002 U.K. emissions were 14.4% below 1990 levels, but since then they have been going up again - 12.6% below the 1990 figure in 2004, just 0.1% below the Kyoto target which now looks to be in doubt. The Prime Minister and the then Environment Secretary Margaret Beckett have since admitted that their party's 20% target will not be met. The sharp rise in gas prices recently has not helped, prompting some companies to switch to coal.

The government's proclaimed policy of subsidising renewables, mainly wind and solar, is not popular with the Treasury, which is looking round for economies not new projects to prop up. It will surely not look kindly on the prospect of spending several billion pounds a year on renewables by 2020. Its lack of enthusiasm for wind farms will be echoed by many of the public, many of whom regard them as an ugly intrusion into the beautiful areas of open country where a lot of them are sited. Industry is already subject to the Climate Change Levy, a tax on energy use. It also has to bear the cost of the European Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). In 2004 ministers responded to industry's distress calls by applying for an increase in Britain's European emissions allocations. Outside electricity generation and manufacturing industry the main emitter is transport. Yet the Government has run scared of the roads lobby since the fuel protests of 2000. After that it abandoned the policy of annual tax rises on fuel, which might otherwise exercise some restraint on emissions. There is little hope of the scale of savings required for the government's target being met through increased energy efficiency, via improved insulation, double glazing etc., for all the upbeat official chatter about them. Circumstances were therefore not propitious for Tony Blair's declared intention to use his presidency of the G8 to persuade its members to adopt a new and more ambitious instalment of the Kyoto treaty, nor did they prove to be so in the event.

America in the Sin Bin

The global warming propagandists are ardently anti-American. This is partly because America is capitalist and free market, whereas the environmental movement is a home for mostly leftist control freaks. This is shown by the fact that nearly every proposal its leaders put forward is for top-down state restriction and compulsion rather than free market incentives. Their wrath knew no bounds when George Bush refused to ratify the Kyoto treaty and, given that Congress could hardly muster a vote in favour of it was not very likely to. America has been paraded as the prime villain in the global warming scenario. The usual rubric goes “America with 5% of the world population produces 25% of the GHG emissions and by refusing to curb those emissions is a free rider at everyone else’s expense.” Yet there is no mention of the other side of the equation: that America also produces 31% of world output, provides an open import market on which the rest of the world have thrived, and is also one of the world’s most efficient users of energy judged by value of output per unit of energy used. This is ironic because, though the U.S. produces arguably more than its share of the gross global emissions of CO₂, research suggests that it is in fact a net carbon sink, i.e. it swallows up more than it produces.

This contention is based on observation of the geographical concentrations of carbon dioxide. The prevailing winds in the U.S. blow from west to east. Given that fossil fuels burned there inject 1.6 billion metric tons of carbon into the air per year that should mean that there should be 300 parts per billion more carbon concentrations in the North Atlantic than in the North Pacific. The fact is that on the contrary they are 300 parts per billion lower. That indicates that the U.S. is absorbing about 1.7 billion tons of carbon dioxide.⁶² According to calculations in “The Bottomless Well” by Peter W. Huber and Mark P. Mills,⁶³ the total forest ecosystem in the United States holds about 52 billion metric tons of carbon. If that grows by a net 3% per year (about the going rate) it will absorb all the future carbon emissions of the U.S. economy.

Trees to the Rescue

This positive U.S. contribution to the alleged global warming problem is thus attributable to the extensive reforestation it has engaged in since 1987. Indeed, The Americans, in this as in much else, are an example to the rest of the world. That however is not the way that most of the politicians of the other nations have seen it. European leaders have serially accused Bush of being “irresponsible”. One of the more intemperate comments came from the then British Environment Secretary, Michael Meacher, who said that Bush’s decision could make the planet “uninhabitable”.⁶⁴ In retrospect this outpouring of indignation from Europe contains a large helping of humbug. *The Economist* commented at the time: “the EU’s dirty little secret is that very few of its own members are on track to meet their tough Kyoto targets by the deadline anyway.”⁶⁵ It may be that the EU deliberately sabotaged the Kyoto negotiations by adopting a position it knew would force the United States to pull out. That would figure because, assuming its members didn’t want to do very much about the greenhouse effect, it gave them the alibi that it was all America’s fault.

⁶² S. Fan et al. (1998) “A Large Terrestrial Carbon Sink in North America Implied by Atmospheric and Oceanic Carbon Dioxide and Models”, *Science* 282 No. 5388 (16 Oct. 1998): 442-446. Data are from 1998-1992)

⁶³ New York: Basic Books, 2005.

⁶⁴ *Guardian*, May 16, 2002.

⁶⁵ *The Economist*, April 2, 2001.

9. What Next?

Why the Hurry?

Why not postpone action for twenty years on the alleged, but far from proven, prospect of disastrous global warming? This would have many advantages. Improving technology will make it much cheaper to deal with the problem, if that is how it then appears, and we shall have saved the money, which might have been mis-spent in the meantime on wrongheaded policies. Also, the restrictions on economic growth resulting from, among other things, high energy costs, would be avoided. We shall therefore be that much richer, with more to spend on a more considered policy for dealing with the problem as it then appears. Global warmers often talk about our responsibility to our descendants to take timely action. Yet we have an even more compelling duty not to squander money on panicky responses to imaginary threats, leaving them less able to cope with the real tasks they will have to face.

Geo-Engineering

If the evidence for the alleged threat from global warming becomes less speculative and more compelling, that does not mean that the Kyoto response is the only or even the most sensible response. The debate has stimulated a fascinating crop of proposed emergency measures, some of which seem rather wild. However we should beware of treating them as cranky. It is worth recalling how many useful and practical ideas about extra-terrestrial travel were mapped out by space fiction writers long before the moon landing.

One of the more exotic of the schemes now being aired is for a monster sunshade a million miles out from the earth's surface. NASA has asked Arizona Professor Roger Angel to work out the details. He has suggested a "solar shield" made out of trillions of small lenses to span 1200 miles of space to bend the sun's rays away from the world's surface and thus making it cooler. The cost would be about \$3trillion, though this would be less than 2% of global GNP. The lenses would be about two feet wide, very thin and weighing little more than a butterfly.⁶⁶

Another scheme, this one put forward by Nobel laureate Paul J. Crutzen of the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Germany, proposed cooling our climate by injecting sulphur into the atmosphere.⁶⁷ James Hansen of NASA also warms to this idea. One objection is that it would put an end to blue skies, which would offend many besides the aesthetes.

A number of scientists have suggested blanketing the world's deserts with plastic sheets to reflect the sunlight back into space, passing through the greenhouse gases which only stop the lower temperature heat from infrared rays. This would diminish the sun's warming effect. Admittedly this might meet problems caused by dust storms which would reduce the plastic's reflection. The cost of regularly hoovering them might be rather high.

Perhaps a more promising approach is to fertilise the sea with iron, using a fleet of ships scattering iron filings on the waters. The idea is that the iron will feed the phytoplankton which will then gulp in the CO₂. A test was conducted in June 1995 in an area of 28 square

⁶⁶ *Science*, May 12, 2006.

⁶⁷ *N.Y. Times*, June 27, 2006.

miles of sea south of the Galapagos Islands into which 990 pounds of iron were disseminated. Almost immediately phytoplankton bloomed over an area of more than 200 miles, turning the sea from blue to green. Overall the iron apparently produced more than 2000 times its own weight in plant growth while the carbon dioxide in the sea plunged by 15%. It was rather sad that the originator of this idea, Dr. John H. Martin, an oceanographer of the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories of California, did not live to see the experiment. He had prophesied with a touch of playful exaggeration: "Give me a tanker full of iron and I'll give you another ice age". More soberly, it has been calculated that extensive sowing of the oceans with iron could lower the range of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by from 6 to 21 per cent. If this sort of operation worked on a large scale it could also provide a bonus in the form of bigger fish catches because the phytoplankton is what the fish feed on. Optimism therefore seems in order but caution is also needed because there may be unintended effects in the ocean depths of which we still have only limited knowledge.⁶⁸

Carbon dioxide can not only be buried or, as the expression goes, "sequestered", in the seas, but also on land. The potential of stimulating the take-up of CO₂ into the soil is indicated by the fact that soils hold more carbon than is contained in all vegetation and the atmosphere combined. I've already referred to the absorption of carbon dioxide by forests, which has been very significant in the US. This has been helped by improving productivity there in crops, which has made available more land for reforestation. At the same time agricultural soils, including pasturelands, sequester CO₂ on a large scale. This sequestration has been gradually increasing since 1998, partly because of different methods of cultivation such as no till farming, cover cropping and crop rotation. However, as this only applies to 5% of farming land at present, there is a large possibility of increasing the amount of CO₂ sequestered.

Various methods of burying CO₂ geologically, in declining oil fields, saline aquifers and unmineable coal seams, are now being energetically pursued. Pumping CO₂ at high pressure into oil and petroleum gas wells has the added advantage of boosting oil and gas output from declining fields.⁶⁹

Suggestions that the global warming might be addressed by eco-engineering methods have tended to be dismissed by the adherents of the Kyoto orthodoxy as either cranky, irrelevant, or harmful, because they are a diversion from they regard as the primary task of reducing CO₂. They suspect that what looks like the availability of quick fixes is likely to tempt people into thinking they can carry on with their old, bad, gas-guzzling ways and forget about their moral obligation to planet Earth. Besides, the very term Geo-engineering was given a bad name by its practitioners in the old Soviet Union where they dried up the inland Aral Sea, allowed the dumping of chemical wastes in Lake Baikal (the largest freshwater lake in the world) and diverted the Volga to create a marshland so smelly that the Soviet air force refused to fly over it. Yet what is the Kyoto plan to curb the world production of CO₂ by rationing fuel consumption world-wide other than a gigantic exercise in geo-engineering and social engineering to boot? Its really distinctive feature is that it is far more costly, wasteful and potentially corrupt, not to mention ineffectual, than some of the schemes mentioned above.

⁶⁸ *N.Y. Times*, November 12, 1996.

⁶⁹ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_Sequestration

10. A Better Approach.

- Most environmental problems are local. It is better to attend to tangible problems in the here and now, like malnutrition, AIDS and lack of clean water, than the will-o-the-wisp of global warming.⁷⁰
- How about some optimism? Why be miserable, through harping on about the dire consequences of greenhouse emissions, donning the hair shirt and planning for ways to make ourselves poor and miserable through raising the cost of energy which is the key to progress and a better life? Let us rejoice instead at some the boons bestowed on mankind by the growth of carbon dioxide.
- We shall have longer summers, warmer winters and fewer deaths from cold, which far exceed those from excessive heat.
- There will be longer growing seasons, larger crops and a further extension of the green revolution.
- Greater crop productivity will enable us to better preserve wild life and areas of natural beauty.
- Increased plant growth will mean greater absorption of carbon dioxide in forests on land and in plankton in the seas.
- However, perhaps in future, when there has been more fruitful inquiry into the workings of global climate, so that our knowledge of it is better, there may really appear to be a threat from an excess of greenhouse gases. Then, instead of tearing our hair and looking for restrictions on energy use, which will make life harder for everybody, let us accentuate the positive. There is good research evidence to indicate that seeding the oceans with extra iron can dramatically increase the amount of biomass, and increase the capacity of the seas to absorb carbon dioxide. There are also other ways of feeding the plankton – a fruitful direction for future research. On land, as agriculture becomes more efficient, then, as in America today, there will be more room for forest elsewhere in the world. More plantations to create wood will result in more CO₂ being locked up in furniture and timbers for construction.
- As indicated above, clouds have a huge impact on climate, far bigger than anthropogenic CO₂. It may be that, in future, mankind's dream of controlling climate will come to pass through mastering the clouds.
- Sack the IPCC. Instead of acting as a centre of disinterested scientific enquiry it has been a strong and biased advocate of the global warming thesis. A typical United Nations body, it has propagandised consistently for a policy of extending the power of the U.N. bureaucracy to impose a centralised plan for world energy and sacked or lost through resignation those researchers who refuse to go along with its green agenda. To that end, also, it has sought to bury or misrepresent key evidence such as the lower growth of global warming indicated by satellite and balloon observations.

⁷⁰ See Lomborg (2001), op cit.

In addition it has gone out of its way to highlight discredited research – like Mann’s “Hockey Stick” revision of world climate history.

- Britain and the other countries of the European Union should forget the Kyoto targets, drop restrictions on energy use, the costs of which far outweigh their likely benefits, and stop subsidising pollutive industries like coal. Instead they should follow the lead of the Americans and their partners in the Asia-Pacific Partnership in voluntary practical measures to create new investment opportunities, build local capacity and remove barriers to the introduction of clean, more efficient technologies. Their declared object is to improve energy security, reduce pollution and address whatever challenges are posed by long-term climate change. The emphasis of this programme is on voluntary market-orientated initiatives as opposed to the top-down planning and compulsion inherent in the Kyoto scheme.