

# The Week That Was: 2011-1-15 (January 15, 2011)

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### The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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PLEASE NOTE: The complete TWTW, including the articles, can be downloaded in an easily printable form at the SEPP web site: [www.sepp.org](http://www.sepp.org), which has been reactivated.

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#### Quote of the Week:

"Extraordinary claims should be backed by extraordinary evidence." Carl Sagan (See Article # 5)

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#### Number of the Week: 86.7%

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#### THIS WEEK:

*By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)*

On Tuesday, the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling issued a 300 plus page report that was long on recommendations for increased regulations but short on specific facts. Among other things it failed to identify the exact causes of the spill. However, the report recommended increased regulations on Arctic oil exploration and development – which some thought was totally beyond the scope of the investigation.

The report came as no surprise to those who examined the composition of the commission which was loaded with politicians and environmentalists. Scientists and engineers with extensive knowledge of the petroleum industry were not welcome. It was rather like appointing a commission to investigate the causes of a disastrous airline crash without including members who understood the intricacies of how airplanes fly. No doubt the document will be used by the environmental industry to batter the petroleum industry, possibly to the effect of reducing US production of oil.

There is one positive note. Most of the recommendations cannot be implemented without the approval of Congress. Many members of Congress are witnessing how increased regulations on petroleum exploration and development by the current administration are damaging their state economies in a time of extreme state budget shortfalls. The states need the taxes that petroleum development will bring. (Please see Article # 2 and articles under *BP Oil Spill*.)

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Climategate returned to the web blogs this week in a rather unusual manner. Meteorologist Anthony Watts reported on his blog, Watts Up With That, that Kevin Trenberth, who was part of "the team", identified in the Climategate emails is giving a speech to the American Meteorological Society (AMS) during the "Joint Presidential Session on Communicating Climate Change" at the annual AMS conference on January 26.

The AMS preprinted Trenberth's, speech which Watts posted on the web site. Some may consider the speech a self-serving interpretation of Climategate. For example, repeatedly, Trenberth refers to his critics as deniers, a value laden term more fitting of propaganda than of science.

A number of bloggers have pointed out significant inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the contents of the speech. Perhaps the comments of Steve McIntyre are most germane. McIntyre points out substantial passages which were lifted from a prior commentary by human-caused global warming advocate Klaus Hasselmann. Even though he suffered tremendous abuse when he and Ross McKittrick debunked Mann's "hockeystick," McIntyre has been one of most gentlemanly commentators on the issue, yet has carefully commented on the entire debacle. (Please see articles under *Climategate Continued*.)

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The extreme weather continues in varying parts of the globe. But one the worst right now is the flooding of Queensland, a state in Northeast Australia. Based on reports this is the worst flooding since 1974 and Queensland's capital city, Brisbane, is inundated. Although some may attribute this flooding to human-caused global warming, it is clearly associated with a strong La Niña, a well established natural event.

**[Reader John Cribbes requested that TWTW announce to its Australian readers that information on how to help in Queensland can be found at: Queensland Premier's Appeal on [www.qld.gov.au/floods](http://www.qld.gov.au/floods).]**

Richard Lindzen points out that a year and a half ago the Australian online journal, *Quadrant*, published one of his articles on climate hysteria will reduce efforts to protect humanity against naturally occurring climate events. The same can be asserted for general environmental hysteria.

An article published in the UK Telegraph reports that a dam to help control flooding of the Mary River in Queensland was stopped for environmental reasons, including endangered fish. If true, some of the current human suffering may have been avoidable, as with New Orleans in 2005.

After hurricane Betsy, in 1965, caused a storm surge in Lake Pontchartrain that over came the levees and flooded a part of New Orleans, the Corps of Engineers announced it would build a barrier system similar to that used by the Dutch to stop storm surges from the North Sea. Environmental groups successfully sued to stop the project. In *Save Our Wetlands, Inc. vs. Early J Rush III*, Federal Judge Charles Schwartz, Jr. ruled "it is the opinion of the Court that plaintiffs herein have demonstrated that they, and in fact **all persons in this area, will be irreparably harmed if the barrier project . . . is allowed to continue.**" (Emphasis added) The decision was proudly posted on the web site of Save Our Wetlands, Inc. until hurricane Katrina in 2005 flooded New Orleans in the same manner as Betsy, and then it quietly disappeared. Please see Article # 6 and articles under *Climate Hysteria*.

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For excellent explanations of the weather patterns in the Northern Hemisphere please see "December 2010; A December To Remember" by Joe D' Aleo and Art Horn and "Forecaster: two phenomena responsible for world's bizarre weather" under *Extreme Weather*.

The extreme cold in northern Europe and the UK has brought a surprising turn of events. The BBC has filed a Freedom of Information Demand to the British Government for documentation relating to the issue referenced in TWTW last week: if the Met office had previously told the government that December would be unusually cold and if the government had withheld this information from the public. Please see articles under *Extreme Weather*.

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With appropriate fanfare, NOAA and NASA-GISS announced that the average annual global surface temperature for 2010 was as hot as 2005, the previous hottest year according to their records. These announcements were immediately repeated in the mainstream press as authoritative and additional proof of human-caused global warming.

As stated in TWTW last week, Roy Spencer reported that the average temperature, as measured by satellites, for 2010 was lower but not statistically different from 1998, the high during the satellite record. 1998 was a strong El Niño and 2010 began with an El Niño. Yet most of the press as well as NOAA and NASA-GISS ignore temperatures measured by satellites.

One can only speculate why NOAA and NASA-GISS ignore space age measurements. Is it that satellites measure temperatures of the atmosphere where the greenhouse effect takes place, is it that the measurements are comprehensive is it that they are unaffected by human land use changes, is it that the data is published monthly and open to independent review, therefore subject to correction of error by

independent parties, or is it that the historical satellite measurements have not been repeatedly revised? Only the general press and NOAA, NASA-GISS can answer.

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This brings us to the Number of The Week: 86.7%. As TWTW reported last week, Professor Emeritus of Geology Don Easterbrook has given the annual temperature reports in a different frame of reference. Based on his calculations from the GRIP-2 ice cores from Greenland, for 9,100 of the past 10,500 years it was warmer than today. That is, 86.7% of the time during this 10,500 year period it was warmer than today, and 13.3% of the time it was colder (at least in Greenland).

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**ARTICLES:**

For the numbered articles below please see: [www.sepp.org](http://www.sepp.org).

**1. Reasons to cool in on global warming**

Editorial, Orange County Register, Jan 13, 2011  
<http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/-284004--.html>

**2. BP Oil Spill Panel’s Dry Hole**

Editorial, IBD, Jan 12, 2011  
<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=559680&p=1>

**3. Ocean acidification: one less thing to worry about**

By Barbara Hollingsworth, Washington Examiner, Jan 12, 2011  
<http://washingtonexaminer.com/blogs/beltway-confidential/2011/01/ocean-acidification-one-less-thing-worry-about>

**4. America Is Losing the Resource Race**

By Jeffrey Folks, American Thinker, Jan 14, 2011  
[http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/america\\_is\\_losing\\_the\\_resource.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/america_is_losing_the_resource.html)

**5. Junk Science Isn’t a Victimless Crime**

Vaccines don’t cause autism—and there was never any proof that they do. Too bad kids had to die while we figured that out.  
By Paul Offit, WSJ, Jan 11, 2011  
[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703779704576073744290909186.html?mod=ITP\\_opinion\\_0](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703779704576073744290909186.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0)

**6. Resisting climate hysteria**

A Case Against Precipitous Climate Action  
By Richard Lindzen, Quadrant, July 26, 2009  
<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2009/07/resisting-climate-hysteria>  
[As revised – Jan 15, 2011]

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**NEWS YOU CAN USE:**

***Climategate Continued***

**Trenberth’s upcoming AMS meeting talk; ClimateGate Thoughts**

By Anthony Watts, Watts Up With That? Jan 13, 2011 [H/t Joe D’Aleo]  
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/01/13/trenberths-upcoming-ams-meeting-talk-climategate-thoughts/#comment-572900>

## **Trenberth and Lifting Text Verbatim**

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Jan 14, 2011 Also prior posts

<http://climateaudit.org/>

[SEPP Comment: McIntyre exposes the Trenberth lifted text from a commentary by Klaus Hasselmann.]

## **Scientists Challenged to Become Better Global warming Propagandists**

By Norman Rogers, American Thinker, Jan 14, 2011

[http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/scientists\\_challenged\\_to\\_becom.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/scientists_challenged_to_becom.html)

## **Challenging the Orthodoxy**

### **Alarming Warming?**

Reality Trumps Dire Predictions

By Christopher Monckton of Brenchley, SPPI, Jan 5, 2011

[http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/originals/alarming\\_warming.pdf](http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/originals/alarming_warming.pdf)

*“Four cold winters in a row ought to have raised questions in legislators’ minds about the competence of the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, which they have generously but unwisely funded and trusted. The IPCC’s dire predictions of dangerous warming are not happening in observed reality.”*

### **“2010 was the Warmest Year on Record”**

By Christopher Monckton of Brenchley, SPPI, Jan 8, 2011

[http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/originals/q2010\\_was\\_the\\_warmest\\_year\\_on\\_recordq.html](http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/originals/q2010_was_the_warmest_year_on_recordq.html)

*“Michael Steketee, writing in The Australian in January 2011, echoed the BBC (whose journalists’ pension fund is heavily weighted towards “green” “investments”) and other climate-extremist vested interests in claiming that 2010 was the warmest year on record worldwide. Mr. Steketee’s short article makes two dozen questionable assertions, which either require heavy qualification or are downright false. His assertions will be printed in bold face: the truth will appear in Roman face.”*

## **All Politics Climate Is Local**

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming.org, Jan 4, 2011

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2011/01/04/all-politics-climate-is-local/>

## **Defenders of the Orthodoxy**

### **The Price of Change**

Chinese leadership can save humanity in the fight against global warming. But fossil-fuel companies must be forced to pay for their carbon emissions

By James Hansen, South China Morning Post

[http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/mailings/2010/20101122\\_ChinaOpEd.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/mailings/2010/20101122_ChinaOpEd.pdf)

[SEPP Comment: A US government scientist writes: “The climate crystal ball is clear – the physics undeniable.” “Carbon dioxide amounts of 400ppm (parts per million), expected in 2016 with current emissions, will cause an eventual sea level rise of about 25 meters.”]

## **2010 ties 2005 as warmest year on record, researchers say**

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post, Jan 12, 2011

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/12/AR2011011204692.html>

## **Figures on Global Climate Show 2010 Tied 2005 as the Hottest Year on Record**

By Justin Gillis, NYT, Jan 12, 2011 [H/t David Rossin]

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/13/science/earth/13climate.html?\\_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha2](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/13/science/earth/13climate.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha2)

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## **At Least Some Politicians Get It**

Editorial, NYT, Jan 9, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/10/opinion/10mon3.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha211>

## ***Extreme Weather***

### **December 2010; A December To Remember**

By Joe D'Aleo and Art Horn, SPPI, Jan 11, 2011

[http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/reprint/december\\_2010\\_a\\_december\\_to\\_remember.pdf](http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/reprint/december_2010_a_december_to_remember.pdf)

### **Forecaster: two phenomena responsible for world's bizarre weather**

CNN, Jan 13, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2011/01/13/forecaster-two-phenomena-responsible-for-worlds-bizarre-weather/?hpt=C2>

### **BBC Hits UK Govt with Freedom of Information Demand in Cold Winter Forecast Fiasco**

By John O'Sullivan, Canada Free Press, Jan 11, 2011 [H/t WUWT}

<http://canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/32017>

### **The Met Office fries while the rest of the world freezes**

As the Met Office desperately tries to salvage its reputation, another of this 'warm' winter's ice disasters is unfolding in the Sea of Okhotsk, writes Christopher Booker.

By Christopher Booker, Telegraph, UK, Jan 11, 2011

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/christopherbooker/8248146/The-Met-Office-fries-while-the-rest-of-the-world-freezes.html>

### **Climate Change: Junk In, Junk Out**

Editorial, IBD, Jan 12, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/559681/201101121855/Climate-Models-Junk-In-Junk-Out.htm>

### **Climate inquiry needed**

By Des Moore, Quadrant Online, Jan 9, 2011

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2011/01/climate-inquiry-needed>

## ***Climate Hysteria and some Results***

### **Queensland floods: but at least the 'endangered' Mary River cod is safe, eh?**

By James Delingpole, Telegraph, UK, Jan 11, 2011

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/jamesdelingpole/100071290/queensland-floods-but-at-least-the-endangered-mary-river-cod-is-safe-eh/>

### **U.S. Supreme Court Will Not Hear Bogus Global Warming Case**

By Carter Wood, Shopfloor, Jan 10, 2011 [H/t Russell Cook]

<http://shopfloor.org/2011/01/u-s-supreme-court-will-not-hear-bogus-global-warming-case/17268/comment-page-1#comment-40777>

## ***BP Oil Spill and Aftermath***

### **BP Explosion Led to 'Oil Spill Hysteria'**

Newsmax

<http://news.newsmax.com/?ZK4DaTeZ-k2juhal27z.5nES6OrkxJU1Z>

### **Oil spill commission report is a case study in self-delusion**

By William O'Keefe, Washington Examiner, Jan 11, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/2011/01/oil-spill-commission-report-case-study-self-delusion>

### **BP spill panel to urge tougher oversight on offshore drilling**

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Jan 11, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/137165-spill-panel-urges-tougher-oversight-better-arctic-drilling-safeguards>

### **Did We Learn Anything From the BP Oil Spill?**

The National Oil Spill Commission has given marching orders on how to prevent another disaster. But will Congress listen?

By Kate Sheppard, Mother Jones, Jan 12, 2011

<http://motherjones.com/politics/2011/01/oil-spill-commission-final>

### ***Cap-and-Trade***

#### **Frustration on global warming deepens for supporters of climate change bill**

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Jan 13, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/137889-frustration-on-global-warming-deepens-for-supporters-of-climate-change-legislation>

#### **Major bank calls US 'significant outlier' on greenhouse-gas action**

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Jan 13, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/137723-major-bank-us-significant-outlier-in-largely-positive-climate-change-investment-environment>

[SEPP Comment: Is US failure to act hurting the bank's carbon trading portfolio?]

### ***EPA and other Regulators on the March***

#### **Congress Should Rein in EPA**

By William Shughart II, Independent Institute, Jan 9, 2011

<http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2957>

[SEPP Comment: The cost of protecting against "heat pollution" caused by water discharge from existing power plants will be staggering.]

#### **Evidence Mounts: Lagging Truck Fuel Economy Opportunity Costs of EPA Emission Rules**

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming. org, Jan 11, 2011

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2011/01/11/evidence-mounts-lagging-truck-fuel-economy-an-opportunity-cost-of-epa-emission-rules/>

#### **Environmental group plans to sue Interior Dept. over polar bear habitat**

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Jan 13, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/137831-green-group-plans-lawsuit-over-polar-bear-habitat>

[SEPP Comment: The false claim by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, a bureau under the Interior Department, that global warming threatens polar bears is being used as leverage to intensify Interior's regulatory powers.]

## ***Subsidies and Mandates Forever***

### **Gresham's Law of Green Energy**

High-cost subsidized renewable resources destroy jobs and hurt consumers

By Jonathan Lesser, Continental Economics, Regulation Winter 2010-2011 [H/t Glenn Schleede]

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/regulation/regv33n4/regv33n4-3.pdf>

*[SEPP Comment: A rather technical economic analysis of the folly of subsidizing wind and solar.]*

### **Military v climate spending: How China outguns the US on clean energy**

By Elizabeth McGowan, Guardian UK, Jan 12, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jan/12/military-climate-spending-us-china>

*[SEPP Comment: Is the US falling behind in the war on climate?]*

## ***Energy Issues***

### **To save the planet and the budget, cut energy off the dole**

By Jeffrey Leonard, Washington Post, Jan 14, 2011 [H/t David Manuta]

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/13/AR2011011304994.html?referrer=emailarticle>

*[SEPP Comment: Agreed! Remove all subsidies to all types of energy, including mandates for alternative sources that are a form of subsidy by requiring consumers to buy from a particular source.]*

### **Coal takes the strain ... again**

By Paul Hudson, BBC, Jan 10, 2011 [H/t A.J. Meyer]

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/paulhudson/2011/01/coal-takes-the-strainagain.shtml>

*[SEPP Comment: Will the British public realize that when it gets cold, wind power fails?]*

### **Plant will shut after \$58 m in state aid**

Evergreen Solar to cut 800 jobs as it tries to compete with China

By Todd Wallack, Boston Globe, Jan 12, 2011 [H/t Jim Rust]

[http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2011/01/12/evergreen\\_solar\\_to\\_cut\\_800\\_jobs\\_as\\_it\\_tries\\_to\\_compete\\_with\\_china/](http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2011/01/12/evergreen_solar_to_cut_800_jobs_as_it_tries_to_compete_with_china/)

### **More Bad News for Stirling: So. Cal. Edison Cancels Power Purchase Agreement**

How long will it go on?

By Michael Kanellos, Greentech Solar, Dec 23, 2010

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/more-bad-news-for-stirling-so-cal-edison-cancels-power-purchase/>

*[SEPP Comment: Solar thermal without storage capacity is having trouble competing with solar photovoltaic.]*

### **Alleged leaks from carbon storage project questioned**

By Nathan Vanderklippe, Globe and Mail, CA, Jan 13, 2011 [H/t hauntingthelibrary]

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/technology/science/alleged-leaks-from-carbon-storage-project-questioned/article1869487/>

*[SEPP Comment: It was only a matter of time before Carbon Sequestering and Storage (CSS) comes under attack.]*

## ***Whistling in the Wind***

### **Wind farm future questionable, but CSU committed to reducing emissions**

By Trevor Hughes, Coloradion.com, Dec 18, 2010 [H/t Global Warmin.com]  
<http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20101218/UPDATES01/101218018/Wind+farm+future+questionable++but+CSU+committed+to+reducing+emissions>

[SEPP Comment: Ideology hits cold economics. How long did it take for the University to realize if it uses wind driven electricity, when the wind stops is computers stop?]

### ***California Dreaming***

#### **California dreaming – nightmaring**

By John Nichols, Canada Free Press, Jan 7, 2011 [H/t Francois Guillaumat]

<http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/31879>

[SEPP Comment: California regulators come to Delaware.]

### ***Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC***

***For a full list of articles see [www.NIPCCreport.org](http://www.NIPCCreport.org)***

#### **Earth's Freshwater Resources of the Past Two Millennia**

Reference: Kummu, M., Ward, P.J., de Moel, H. and Varis, O. 2010. Is physical water scarcity a new phenomenon? Global assessment of water shortage over the last two millennia. *Environmental Research Letters* **5**: 10.1088/1748-9326/5/3/034006.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jan/12jan2011a6.html>

#### **A Brief History of Northwest Australian Tropical Cyclones**

Reference: Goebbert, K.H. and Leslie, L.M. 2010. Interannual variability of Northwest Australian tropical cyclones. *Journal of Climate* **23**: 4538-4555.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jan/11jan2011a1.html>

#### **A 1600-Year Temperature History of Tropical South America**

Reference: Kellerhals, T., Brutsch, S., Sigl, M., Knusel, S., Gaggeler, H.W. and Schwikowski, M. 2010. Ammonium concentration in ice cores: A new proxy for regional temperature reconstruction? *Journal of Geophysical Research* **115**: 10.1029/2009JD012603.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jan/11jan2011a7.html>

#### **Terrestrial Plant Responses to Global Warming**

Reference: Lin, D., Xia, J. and Wan, S. 2010. Climate warming and biomass accumulation of terrestrial plants: a meta-analysis. *New Phytologist* **188**: 187-198.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jan/12jan2011a3.html>

### ***The Changing Climate***

#### **Climate change contributed to rise and fall on Roman empire**

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Jan 14, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/137945-study-climate-change-contributed-to-fall-of-roman-empire>

#### **New Esper Study Confirms Warm Periods Lead To Prosperity, Cold Periods To Death And Misery – Climate Extremes Were Greater In the Past**

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Jan 14, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://notrickszone.com/2011/01/14/new-esper-study-confirms-warm-periods-lead-to-prosperity-cold-periods-to-death-and-misery-climate-extremes-were-greater-in-the-past/>

#### **2500 Years of European Climate Variability and Human Susceptibility**

By Ulf Buntgen, et al., Science Jan 13, 2011

<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/early/2011/01/12/science.1197175>

[SEPP Comment: The Abstract contains the sentence: “Recent warming is unprecedented, but modern hydroclimatic variations may have at times been exceeded in magnitude and duration.”

### **Other Scientific Issues**

#### **Be Scientific (Skeptical) about Scientific Research**

By Clarice Feldman, American Thinker, Jan 9, 2011 [H/t A.J. Meyer]

[http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/clarices\\_pieces\\_be\\_scientific.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/clarices_pieces_be_scientific.html)

#### **New global network to precisely measure emissions**

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post, Jan 12, 2011 [H/t Manny Medeiros]

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/11/AR2011011107140.html>

“Jim Butler, who heads NOAA’s global monitoring division at its Earth System Research Laboratory in Boulder, Co., said the proliferation of these networks will help give scientists a better sense of how the climate is changing and how to effectively curb global warming.”

[SEPP Comment: Wouldn’t validating the IPCC models be a better use of the funds? Precise measurements of carbon dioxide emissions will not increase our knowledge if the assumptions in the models are untested and wrong.]

#### **Chicken Little eats crow**

Skies surprise with enhanced ability to clean themselves

Editorial, Washington Times, Jan 12, 2011

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/jan/12/chicken-little-eats-crow/>

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### **BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:**

#### **Penguins Harmed by Tracking Bands, Study Finds**

By Sindya Bhano, NYT, Jan 14, 2011 [H/t James Fleming]

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/18/science/18obpenguin.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/18/science/18obpenguin.html?_r=1)

[SEPP Comment: Killing penguins to ascertain if they are being harmed by global warming?]

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### **ARTICLES:**

#### **1. Reasons to cool in on global warming**

Editorial, Orange County Register, Jan 13, 2011

<http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/-284004--.html>

A man perhaps as responsible as anyone for debunking global warming hysteria was in town last week to speak to the curious and the converted at [Chapman University](http://www.chapman.edu). Dr. Fred Singer also spoke with us about the state of global warming.

Dr. Singer, chairman of the Science and Environmental Policy Project and professor emeritus of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia, concedes that global warming alarmists persist in their efforts to control our lives, fortunes and economies, but he notes that opposition from scientists and others like him have significantly impeded that cause.

Congress and the White House have, at least for now, abandoned plans to adopt a cap-and-trade regulatory scheme that would drive up energy prices and penalize emitters of carbon dioxide and other so-called greenhouse gases. House Republicans have introduced several bills to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from doing administratively what Congress couldn’t muster enough votes to do, curtail carbon emissions, also at great economic harm. When the new Congress convened last week, the House killed the committee devoted solely to climate change and energy issues.

Back-to-back annual international climate conferences resulted in no binding agreements among the attending 190-plus nations to implement carbon trading, carbon taxing or wealth redistribution, all foundational to alarmists' plans to wean the world from fossil fuels to combat global warming.

Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli is in court to force release of documents at the University of Virginia to determine whether a fraud investigation is warranted into tax-funded climate research conducted by global warming proponent Michael Mann. The private American Tradition Institute Environmental Law Center filed a freedom of information request last week seeking similar records concerning Mr. Mann, a leading proponent of global warming theory who now is at Pennsylvania State University.

The new chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee wants to investigate "the quality of climate science." Meanwhile, public sentiment has turned against alarmists as the more immediate press of economic issues have outweighed questionable claims of climate catastrophe predicted for decades in the future.

Dr. Singer contends the science always has been on the side of skeptics. We tend to agree. On close inspection, the much-touted "consensus" that global warming is a manmade threat never was true. Such matters in the scientific community are difficult to document, other than anecdotally. But thousands of scientists, including climatologists, meteorologists and researchers, even some formerly affiliated with the U.N.'s own climate-change panel, have voiced their qualms and complaints with warmist orthodoxy.

Dr. Singer estimated "the number of skeptical qualified scientists has been growing steadily." He estimates "it is about 40 percent now."

Climate computer models that forecast frightening temperature increases over the next century "basically, are unreliable," Dr. Singer said. Nontoxic CO2 is not a pollutant and, contrary to alarmists' claims, is beneficial as a natural plant food. "One of the best things to do is put more CO2 into the atmosphere," he suggested with a smile.

Dr. Singer contends the fanatical drive to subsidize so-called renewable energy sources will only drive up conventional energy prices, while some people will purchase faddish alternative energy devices that will be less reliable and still more expensive, even after their subsidies. Atmospheric temperatures will be unaffected, but special interests' pockets will be lined. All things considered, it's prudent to cool it on the global warming front.

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## **2. BP Oil Spill Panel's Dry Hole**

Editorial, IBD, Jan 12, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=559680&p=1>

**Energy Policy:** A commission appointed to investigate BP's well disaster in the Gulf of Mexico and recommend ways to drill safely has labored mightily and produced the functional equivalent of a tar ball. The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling cites the "incredible incompetence" of British Petroleum and its upper management in at least nine specific decisions. Then it unjustifiably extrapolates BP's errors to the entire oil industry, whose safety record is ignored.

It mattered not that between 1969 and 2009 oil companies drilled more than 50,000 offshore wells without a serious mishap. Brazil, Britain, Norway and others drill safely offshore. No major spills were recorded when hurricanes Katrina and Rita roared through some 3,050 offshore oil and gas platforms operating in the Gulf.

Besides blaming an entire industry with an impeccable safety record for BP's failure, the commission also ignores the failure of federal oversight or advance preparation for such a spill and recommends the creation of another entirely new federal agency to oversee all offshore oil and gas drilling.

The commission did not recommend a needed resumption of offshore drilling under safer rules. It just recommended more rules, costly studies and the hiring of outside "experts" to promulgate new regulations to stifle an already dying industry.

Considering the commission's makeup, it was like a panel of vegetarians deciding how to regulate the meatpacking industry. President Obama appointed to the seven-member panel National Resources Defense Council President Frances Beinecke, Union of Concerned Scientists board member Fran Ulmer and five other Democratic donors who have one thing in common — opposition to oil and gas exploration in any shape or form.

Since the Gulf drilling moratorium allegedly ended three months ago, only two new drilling permits have been issued, the Heritage Foundation reports, adding that new drilling permits are down 88% from their historical average. Even shallow-water permits, supposedly unaffected by the moratorium, are down 11%.

The Energy Information Administration said last month that offshore oil production in 2011 would decline 13% from 2010 due to the effects of the moratorium and the snail's-pace permitting process. That's about 220,000 fewer barrels of oil per day.

As Heritage notes, 85% of our coastal waters remain off-limits to drilling. The administration has announced that the eastern Gulf and the Atlantic and Pacific coasts will be off-limits for seven years. Interior has canceled four pending lease sales in Alaska.

This administration's hostility to fossil fuels is documented. Right after taking office, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar canceled 77 leases for oil and gas drilling in Utah. Recently, in a stunning land grab, Salazar allowed Bureau of Land Management officials to place land with "wilderness characteristics" off-limits to energy development. Six million acres in energy-rich Utah will be affected.

At least 130 billion barrels of oil and trillions of cubic feet of natural gas lie offshore, and hundreds of billions of barrels more are locked in shale deposits in the Northeast. Robert Bryce, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, says we may be sitting on the natural-gas equivalent of 350 billion barrels of oil — double the proven oil reserves of Saudi Arabia and Venezuela combined.

The operative phrase here is "sitting on," something to think about this cold winter that has seen snow falling in 49 states, including Hawaii. (The only exception is Florida.) Something to think about as home heating oil inches up and gasoline prices climb.

The commission started with a conclusion and back-filled phony facts to justify the Obama administration's war on oil. Our one recommendation remains: drill, baby, drill.

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### **3. Ocean acidification: one less thing to worry about**

By Barbara Hollingsworth, Washington Examiner, Jan 12, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/blogs/beltway-confidential/2011/01/ocean-acidification-one-less-thing-worry-about>

Carbon dioxide has been named as the chief culprit in rampant "ocean acidification" which, according to environmentalists on the Natural Resources Defense Council, will soon start killing off fish and dissolving coral reefs, putting a major dent in the seafood and eco-tourism industries.

According to a 2009 statement by Britain's [Royal Society](#), co-signed by Dr. James Hansen, of NASA's Goddard Center, and Dr. Mark Spalding of The Nature Conservancy:

"Temperature-induced mass coral bleaching causing widespread mortality on the Great Barrier Reef and many other reefs of the world started when atmospheric CO2 exceeded 320ppm.

"At today's level of ~ 387ppm CO2, reefs are seriously declining and time-lagged effects will result in their continued demise with parallel impacts on other marine and coastal ecosystems...

"Proposals to limit CO2 levels to 450ppm will not prevent the catastrophic loss of coral reefs from the combined effects of global warming and ocean acidification. To ensure the long-term viability of coral reefs the atmospheric CO2 level must be reduced significantly below 350ppm."

Except that there's practically no evidence that the depth in which coral shells dissolve faster than they accumulate has gotten any shallower over the past 250 years, geoscientist David Middleton points out in "[Chicken Little of the Sea Strikes Again](#)".

"There is solid evidence that elevated atmospheric CO2 levels have actually caused carbonate deposition to increase over the last 220 years," Middleton writes.

In fact, CO2 may actually be good for coral reefs. "It appears that in addition to being plant food... CO2 is also reef food," he points out:

"Over the last 400+ years the Earth's climate has warmed ~0.6°, mean sea level has risen by about 9 inches and the atmosphere has become about 100 ppmv more enriched with CO2; and the Great Barrier Reef has responded by steadily growing faster.... Once again, we have an environmental catastrophe that is entirely supported by predictive computer models and totally unsupported by correlative and empirical scientific data," he concludes.

"We can safely pitch ocean acidification into the dustbin of junk science."

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#### **4. America Is Losing the Resource Race**

By Jeffrey Folks, American Thinker, Jan 14, 2011

[http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/america\\_is\\_losing\\_the\\_resource.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/america_is_losing_the_resource.html)

Although the Obama administration seems completely oblivious of the fact, the U.S. has now embarked on a race of global proportions, one that will have even greater consequences than did the space race of fifty years ago. The resource race in which we are now engaged will determine the future prosperity, security, and very survival of America as a nation.

Our main rival in the resource race is China. Unlike our present leadership in Washington, the Chinese leadership recognizes the vital importance of natural resources. In response, they have adopted a long-term strategy to secure rights to crucial natural resources on every continent. From iron ore to coal, from farmland to oil and gas, Chinese state-controlled companies are determined to acquire the energy, minerals, and food supplies that will be necessary to propel China into the forefront of nations by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Evidence of this effort surfaces daily. In 2011, the Chinese are expected to acquire five times the amount of overseas resources as they did in 2004. In April 2010, the Chinese oil company "Sinopec" purchased a [large stake](#) in Canadian oil sands. Chinese companies have bought up [iron ore rights](#) in West Africa and acquired massive Australian [coal reserves](#). In October 2010, CNOOC, a state-run Chinese oil company, [acquired substantial lease](#) rights from Oklahoma City-based Chesapeake Energy. In joint deals with American gas-producers, the Chinese are set to acquire advanced technology necessary to

exploit shale gas fields at home and overseas. They have entered into long-term joint ventures with Russia, Mongolia, Brazil, and dozens of other countries to assure a plentiful and affordable supply of resources.

What of the United States? How are we faring in the resource race?

It is true that Energy Secretary Steven Chu has spoken of an "energy race" with China, but his use of the phrase is just another Obama-appointee exercise in Orwellian newspeak. Secretary Chu is a man with no experience in the production of conventional fuels or in the private sector generally, and when he speaks of the energy race, he does not mean a race to develop greater energy resources, as one might assume. Instead, he means the destruction of our current sources of energy and their replacement by unproven and costly alternative fuels.

In other words, America has an energy secretary who is fixated on subsidizing technologies that supply only one percent of our nation's energy needs. Meanwhile, he is ignoring -- and, worse than that, undermining -- the development of the other 99%. He believes that by starving America of fossil fuels, intentionally driving up the price of gasoline to \$4 a gallon, and more, he can force the public to espouse less efficient but politically correct green technologies.

Unlike China, which is pursuing a well-coordinated policy of securing resource rights, America is hobbled by an administration that is ideologically hostile to the exploitation of natural resources. Obama's fetish for green solutions has created a regulatory climate that has blocked the development of domestic resources, including mountaintop coal and offshore oil. The same bias has resulted in tax and regulatory policies such as [SEC ruling 1504](#), which forces American resource companies to disclose lease pricing while overseas companies do not. That ruling, driven by ideological bias rather than reason, puts American companies at a disadvantage when it comes to acquiring overseas resource rights.

Another case in point is the [report recently issued](#) by the president's hand-picked drilling commission -- a commission stacked with academics, environmentalists, and Democratic politicians, but not a single representative of any resource company. By laying blame on "structural problems" in the oil industry and inadequate regulation of said industry, the commission has set the stage for greater bureaucratic control by government. The commission's recommendations include increased funding for new regulation and the lifting of liability caps on energy companies. These recommendations will delay energy exploration in the Gulf and drive all but the largest companies out of the region.

As it is, Obama's regulators have not approved a single new deep-water drilling permit in the Gulf of Mexico since the Deepwater Horizon accident, nor are they expected to until well into 2012 at the earliest. Now the president's drilling commission tells us that this is not regulation enough!

The drilling commission was one of a thousand cuts intended to bring down America's resource companies. The anti-growth regulatory actions of the Obama administration are far too numerous to cite here, but they include the EPA's finding that carbon dioxide is a pollutant, the EPA's apparently baseless investigation of groundwater pollution from hydraulic fracturing, the EPA's "war with Texas" over state-level environmental regulation of industry, the raising of CAFÉ standards for cars and trucks and the subsidy of electric vehicles, the SEC's proposal that all listed companies must assess the potential effects of climate change in their annual reports, the presidential directive to extend wilderness protections to as much as 140 million acres of public land, the blocking of offshore drilling along both coasts and offshore Alaska, and on and on.

Not content to bleed resource industries dry by regulation and taxation, the Obama administration has facilitated environmental and class-action lawsuits directed against resource companies. The Justice

Department has made no effort to support companies such as Chevron facing lawsuits drummed up by American tort lawyers on the behalf of overseas peasant plaintiffs. Nor has the administration created a business-friendly legal climate in the United States, as it might by introducing "loser pays" and other fair protections for defendants against frivolous legal actions. As a result, resource companies, which are often the target of such suits, are drained of capital, and projects are stalled for decades.

In effect, Obama has sold out his country to every special interest group opposed to resource development and economic growth. Sadly, Americans will be paying the price for this administration's enslavement to these special interests for decades to come.

Unless government changes direction quickly, America is going to lose the resource race. When that happens, the effects will be devastating and permanent. Without access to cheap and reliable fuels and other resources, the U.S. will sink to the level of a second-rate nation. Having won the resource race, China will stride ahead, eventually surpassing America as a military and economic powerhouse. And for this, America will have Barack Obama to blame.

*Jeffrey Folks is author of many books and articles on American culture and politics.*

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## **5. Junk Science Isn't a Victimless Crime**

Vaccines don't cause autism—and there was never any proof that they do. Too bad kids had to die while we figured that out.

By Paul Offit, WSJ, Jan 11, 2011

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703779704576073744290909186.html?mod=ITP\\_opinion\\_0](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703779704576073744290909186.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0)

In 1998, a British surgeon named Andrew Wakefield published a paper claiming that the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine might cause autism. To support his case, Dr. Wakefield reported the stories of eight children who had developed symptoms of autism within one month of receiving MMR. He proposed that measles vaccine virus travels to the intestine, causes intestinal damage, and allows for brain-damaging proteins to enter children's blood streams.

The problem with Dr. Wakefield's study—published in the *Lancet*, a leading medical journal—was that it didn't study the question. To prove his hypothesis, he should have examined the incidence of autism in hundreds of thousands of children who had or hadn't received MMR. This kind of study has now been performed 14 times on several continents by many investigators. The studies have shown that MMR doesn't cause autism.

As several different investigations—summed up in a *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) editorial this month—have shown, not a single aspect of Dr. Wakefield's notion of how MMR causes autism has proven correct. He wasn't just wrong, he was spectacularly wrong. Moreover, some of the children in his report had developed symptoms of autism before they had received the vaccine—and others never actually had autism.

In addition, as journalist Brian Deer found, Dr. Wakefield received tens of thousands of pounds from a personal-injury lawyer in the midst of suing pharmaceutical companies over MMR. (After Mr. Deer's discovery, Dr. Wakefield admitted to receiving the money.) Last year, when the *Lancet* found out about the money, it retracted his paper. But it was far too late.

Dr. Wakefield's paper created a firestorm. Thousands of parents in the United Kingdom and Ireland chose not to vaccinate their children. Hundreds of children were hospitalized and four killed by measles. In 2008, for the first time in 14 years, measles was declared endemic in England and Wales.

Dr. Wakefield's claim sparked a general distrust of vaccines. In recent years—as more parents chose not to vaccinate their children—epidemics of measles, mumps, bacterial meningitis and whooping cough swept across the United States. The whooping cough epidemic currently raging in California is larger than any since 1955.

Although it's easy to blame Andrew Wakefield, he's not the only one with dirty hands. The editor of the *Lancet*, Richard Horton, sent Dr. Wakefield's paper to six reviewers, four of whom rejected it. That should have been enough to preclude publication. But Mr. Horton thought the paper was provocative and published it anyway.

Many others in the media showed similar poor judgment, proclaiming Dr. Wakefield's paper an important study even though it was merely a report of eight children that, at best, raised an untested hypothesis.

Meanwhile, public-health officials and scientists were slow to explain in clear, emphatic terms that Dr. Wakefield's hypothesis didn't make a bit of sense.

Even today, important voices aren't drawing the right conclusions. The *BMJ*, for example, wrote in its editorial that "clear evidence of falsification of data should now close the door on this damaging vaccine scare." But it's not Dr. Wakefield's lapses that matter—it's that his hypothesis was so wrong.

Even if Dr. Wakefield hadn't been fraudulent, his hypothesis would have been no less incorrect or damaging. Indeed, by continuing to focus on Dr. Wakefield's indiscretions rather than on the serious studies that have proved him wrong, we only elevate his status among antivaccine groups as a countercultural hero.

The American astronomer and astrophysicist Carl Sagan once wrote that, "Extraordinary claims should be backed by extraordinary evidence." Dr. Wakefield made an extraordinary claim backed by scant evidence. Undoubtedly, bad science will continue to be submitted for publication. Next time, one can only hope that journal editors and the media will be far more circumspect.

*Dr. Offit, the chief of infectious diseases at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, is the author of "Deadly Choices: How the Anti-Vaccine Movement Threatens Us All" (Basic Books, 2011).*

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## **6. Resisting climate hysteria**

A Case Against Precipitous Climate Action

By Richard Lindzen, *Quadrant*, July 26, 2009

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2009/07/resisting-climate-hysteria>

[As Revised Jan 15, 2011]

The notion of a static, unchanging climate is foreign to the history of the earth or any other planet with a fluid envelope. The fact that the developed world went into hysterics over changes in global mean temperature anomaly of a few tenths of a degree will astound future generations. Such hysteria simply represents the scientific illiteracy of much of the public, the susceptibility of the public to the substitution of repetition for truth, and the exploitation of these weaknesses by politicians, environmental promoters, and, after 20 years of media drum beating, many others as well. Climate is always changing. We have had ice ages and warmer periods when alligators were found in Spitzbergen. Ice ages have occurred in a hundred thousand year cycle for the last 700 thousand years, and there have been previous periods that appear to have been warmer than the present despite CO<sub>2</sub> levels being lower than they are now. More recently, we have had the medieval warm period and the little ice age. During the latter, alpine glaciers advanced to the chagrin of overrun villages. Since the beginning of the 19th Century these glaciers have been retreating. Frankly, we don't fully understand either the advance or the retreat.

For small changes in climate associated with tenths of a degree, there is no need for any external cause. The earth is never exactly in equilibrium. The motions of the massive oceans where heat is moved between deep layers and the surface provides variability on time scales from years to centuries. Recent work (Tsonis et al, 2007), suggests that this variability is enough to account for all climate change since the 19th Century.

For warming since 1979, there is a further problem. The dominant role of cumulus convection in the tropics requires that temperature approximately follow what is called a moist adiabatic profile. This requires that warming in the tropical upper troposphere be 2-3 times greater than at the surface. Indeed, all models do show this, but the data doesn't and this means that something is wrong with the data. It is well known that above about 2 km altitude, the tropical temperatures are pretty homogeneous in the horizontal so that sampling is not a problem. Below two km (roughly the height of what is referred to as the trade wind inversion), there is much more horizontal variability, and, therefore, there is a profound sampling problem. Under the circumstances, it is reasonable to conclude that the problem resides in the surface data, and that the actual trend at the surface is about 60% too large. Even the claimed trend is larger than what models would have projected but for the inclusion of an arbitrary fudge factor due to aerosol cooling. The discrepancy was reported by Lindzen (2007) and by Douglass et al (2007). Inevitably in climate science, when data conflicts with models, a small coterie of scientists can be counted upon to modify the data. Thus, Santer, et al (2008), argue that stretching uncertainties in observations and models might marginally eliminate the inconsistency. That the data should always need correcting to agree with models is totally implausible and indicative of a certain corruption within the climate science community.

It turns out that there is a much more fundamental and unambiguous check of the role of feedbacks in enhancing greenhouse warming that also shows that all models are greatly exaggerating climate sensitivity. Here, it must be noted that the greenhouse effect operates by inhibiting the cooling of the climate by reducing net outgoing radiation. However, the contribution of increasing CO<sub>2</sub> alone does not, in fact, lead to much warming (approximately 1 deg. C for each doubling of CO<sub>2</sub>). The larger predictions from climate models are due to the fact that, within these models, the more important greenhouse substances, water vapor and clouds, act to greatly amplify whatever CO<sub>2</sub> does. This is referred to as a positive feedback. It means that increases in surface temperature are accompanied by reductions in the net outgoing radiation – thus enhancing the greenhouse warming. All climate models show such changes when forced by observed surface temperatures. Satellite observations of the earth's radiation budget allow us to determine whether such a reduction does, in fact, accompany increases in surface temperature in nature. As it turns out, the satellite data from the ERBE instrument (Barkstrom, 1984, Wong et al, 2006) shows that the feedback in nature is strongly negative -- strongly reducing the direct effect of CO<sub>2</sub> (Lindzen and Choi, 2009) in profound contrast to the model behavior. This analysis makes clear that even when all models agree, they can all be wrong, and that this is the situation for the all important question of climate sensitivity. Unfortunately, Lindzen and Choi (2009) contained a number of errors; however, as shown in a paper currently under review, these errors were not relevant to the main conclusion.

According to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the greenhouse forcing from man made greenhouse gases is already about 86% of what one expects from a doubling of CO<sub>2</sub> (with about half coming from methane, nitrous oxide, freons and ozone), and alarming predictions depend on models for which the sensitivity to a doubling for CO<sub>2</sub> is greater than 2C which implies that we should already have seen much more warming than we have seen thus far, even if all the warming we have seen so far were due to man. This contradiction is rendered more acute by the fact that there has been no statistically significant net global warming for the last fourteen years. Modelers defend this situation, as we have already noted, by arguing that aerosols have cancelled much of the warming (viz Schwartz et al, 2010), and that models adequately account for natural unforced internal variability. However, a recent paper (Ramanathan, 2007) points out that aerosols can warm as well as cool, while scientists at the UK's

Hadley Centre for Climate Research recently noted that their model did not appropriately deal with natural internal variability thus demolishing the basis for the IPCC's iconic attribution (Smith et al, 2007). Interestingly (though not unexpectedly), the British paper did not stress this. Rather, they speculated that natural internal variability might step aside in 2009, allowing warming to resume. Resume? Thus, the fact that warming has ceased for the past fourteen years is acknowledged. It should be noted that, more recently, German modelers have moved the date for 'resumption' up to 2015 (Keenlyside et al, 2008).

Climate alarmists respond that some of the hottest years on record have occurred during the past decade. Given that we are in a relatively warm period, this is not surprising, but it says nothing about trends.

Given that the evidence (and I have noted only a few of many pieces of evidence) strongly implies that anthropogenic warming has been greatly exaggerated, the basis for alarm due to such warming is similarly diminished. However, a really important point is that the case for alarm would still be weak even if anthropogenic global warming were significant. Polar bears, arctic summer sea ice, regional droughts and floods, coral bleaching, hurricanes, alpine glaciers, malaria, etc. etc. all depend not on some global average of surface temperature anomaly, but on a huge number of regional variables including temperature, humidity, cloud cover, precipitation, and direction and magnitude of wind. The state of the ocean is also often crucial. Our ability to forecast any of these over periods beyond a few days is minimal (a leading modeler refers to it as essentially guesswork). Yet, each catastrophic forecast depends on each of these being in a specific range. The odds of any specific catastrophe actually occurring are almost zero. This was equally true for earlier forecasts of famine for the 1980's, global cooling in the 1970's, Y2K and many others. Regionally, year to year fluctuations in temperature are over four times larger than fluctuations in the global mean. Much of this variation has to be independent of the global mean; otherwise the global mean would vary much more. This is simply to note that factors other than global warming are more important to any specific situation. This is not to say that disasters will not occur; they always have occurred and this will not change in the future. Fighting global warming with symbolic gestures will certainly not change this. However, history tells us that greater wealth and development can profoundly increase our resilience.

In view of the above, one may reasonably ask why there is the current alarm, and, in particular, why the astounding upsurge in alarmism of the past 4 years. When an issue like global warming is around for over twenty years, numerous agendas are developed to exploit the issue. The interests of the environmental movement in acquiring more power, influence, and donations are reasonably clear. So too are the interests of bureaucrats for whom control of CO<sub>2</sub> is a dream-come-true. After all, CO<sub>2</sub> is a product of breathing itself. Politicians can see the possibility of taxation that will be cheerfully accepted because it is necessary for 'saving' the earth. Nations have seen how to exploit this issue in order to gain competitive advantages. But, by now, things have gone much further. The case of ENRON (a now bankrupt Texas energy firm) is illustrative in this respect. Before disintegrating in a pyrotechnic display of unscrupulous manipulation, ENRON had been one of the most intense lobbyists for Kyoto. It had hoped to become a trading firm dealing in carbon emission rights. This was no small hope. These rights are likely to amount to over a trillion dollars, and the commissions will run into many billions. Hedge funds are actively examining the possibilities; so was the late Lehman Brothers. Goldman Sachs has lobbied extensively for the 'cap and trade' bill, and is well positioned to make billions. It is probably no accident that Gore, himself, is associated with such activities. The sale of indulgences is already in full swing with organizations selling offsets to one's carbon footprint while sometimes acknowledging that the offsets are irrelevant. The possibilities for corruption are immense. Archer Daniels Midland (America's largest agribusiness) has successfully lobbied for ethanol requirements for gasoline, and the resulting demand for ethanol may already be contributing to large increases in corn prices and associated hardship in the developing world (not to mention poorer car performance). And finally, there are the numerous well meaning individuals who have allowed propagandists to convince them that in accepting the alarmist view of anthropogenic climate change, they are displaying intelligence and virtue. For them, their psychic welfare is at stake.

With all this at stake, one can readily suspect that there might be a sense of urgency provoked by the possibility that warming may have ceased and that the case for such warming as was seen being due in significant measure to man, disintegrating. For those committed to the more venal agendas, the need to act soon, before the public appreciates the situation, is real indeed. However, for more serious leaders, the need to courageously resist hysteria is clear. Wasting resources on symbolically fighting ever present climate change is no substitute for prudence. Nor is the assumption that the earth's climate reached a point of perfection in the middle of the twentieth century a sign of intelligence.

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