

Global Warming etc. Sceptic's Overview - May 2008

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Dramatis personae and frequently used abbreviations

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Working Group 1 (WG1) – The Science, WG2 - Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability and WG3 - Mitigation of Climate Change. Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), the most recent 2007 Report of the IPCC, on which Bali was based. Summary for Policy Makers, (SPMs). Mann, Bradley, Hughes (MBH) – qv Hockey Stick graph. Global Warming (GW or sometimes AGW - anthropogenic (man made) GW). Medieval Warm Period (MWP). Troposphere – about six miles above our heads. NASA GISS – NASA is NASA; GISS is an offshoot, namely the Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

Is the planet overall warming? No, not since 1998 – notwithstanding an increase in CO₂ concentrations of 4-5%.

Has it warmed in the past? Yes, many times. It has also cooled – likewise many times.

Is it unusually warm now? No. Overall, the planet has warmed by less than 1°C over the past 150 years or so, and even this is highly debatable. We're emerging from a period known as the Little Ice Age (say 16th -mid-19th centuries), for which huge amounts of evidence exist (Breugel, Thames ice fairs, Lorna Doone, etc) which followed the MWP, also with lots of evidence - cathedral building, viniculture in Northern latitudes, Greenland etc. The phenomenon was worldwide. The MWP was a lot warmer than ambient temperatures today.

What is the greenhouse effect? The GHE posits that the presence of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere acts as a global blanket preventing solar radiation from being immediately reflected back into space - ie a good thing, for otherwise we'd freeze.

What are the greenhouse gases? There are several, water vapour being by far the most significant – 95% by volume. CO₂ is only a secondary ghg, and exists in minute overall concentrations (0.0385% of the atmosphere as a whole). Others are occasionally mentioned, and include methane and nitrous oxide.

Do CO₂ concentrations explain recent climatic variation - last 150 years but especially since late 70s? No. Even CO₂ cultists acknowledge that CO₂ of itself explains nothing. The first 20 ppm of atmospheric CO₂ give rise to roughly 1½°C of warming. The next 1½°C requires a further 400 ppm, and the next 1°C calls for a further 1000 ppm of atmospheric CO₂. In short, the forcing relationship between CO₂ and surface temperatures is highly logarithmic not linear. It requires a feedback mechanism, for which they've enlisted H₂O as the agent, ie more CO₂ means more warming, which means more water vapour, which means more warming. However, H₂O also forms clouds, which cool and, it now seems, to an extent greater than water vapour itself warms. CO₂ cultists have never understood the influence of clouds as well as several other natural variables (eg so called aerosols - mostly pollutants, such as SO₂, oxides of nitrogen, etc often blown off by volcanoes), and have never successfully integrated them into their models. This says pretty much everything one needs to know about the value of computer modelling for highly chaotic, non-linear systems such as the weather/climate.

Is there any evidence for the operation of this mechanism? None. It's the product of computer models. The real world contains none of the signatures that the theory demands - for example and very importantly, greater warming of the tropical troposphere as against near surface temperatures. Two datasets (satellite and weather balloon) show almost complete stability of tropospheric temperatures over the relevant periods, ie since these two methodologies were available - say the last 50 years for radiosond (balloon) readings, a bit less for satellite.

So, what of ice core sampling and Gore's two lines for temperature and CO₂ in lock step? Certainly, they're in lock step, but the relationship is the other way round. Warming drives CO₂, not the reverse.

Why? Because over time, as oceans warm, they release CO₂. The process, though, is slow. That said, there is a constant and lively exchange between the sea and the atmosphere. However, nobody has yet been able to determine what is the net balance between CO₂ absorption by the sea and emission from it. It's complicated. According to AGW theory, oceans should be getting warmer. Recent temperature data from buoys do not confirm this.

What is the hockey stick graph? Previous historical temperature fluctuations have always presented CO₂ “science” with a real problem. An investigator, Prof. David Deming, U of Oklahoma, wrote a paper at the end of the 90s, which persuaded a CO₂ “scientist”, Prof. Jonathan Overpeck, U of Arizona and an IPCC lead author, that he was “on side”. Overbeck sent a now notorious e-mail, which Deming exposed to the public domain. It read: “We have to get rid of that warm medieval period.” Three other CO₂ voodoo “scientists”, Mann, Bradley and Hughes, then proceeded to do exactly that. They contrived a computer model, which produced a temperature line, which ironed out the MWP and the Little Ice Age (ie the handle), and suddenly started to go vertical from the mid-1800s to 1998 (ie the blade). Their work has since been comprehensively discredited. With removal of the algorithm that smoothed out the MWP in the hockey stick graph, the MBH model has been shown always to produce a hockey stick - even if fed random numbers from a telephone directory! However, in its 2001 AR3, the IPCC presented the hockey stick as the “smoking gun” of AGW. Only reluctantly, and very quietly, has it been effectively dropped in AR4. The destruction of the hockey stick was accomplished by two other investigators, Profs. Stephen McIntyre and Ross McKittrick, whose findings were endorsed by the Wegman Report commissioned by Congress. In short, it was a blatant fraud, but one accepted and, for six years, ferociously defended by the IPCC. McIntyre has since had another massive coup. On 7 August 2007 NASA GISS conceded, again reluctantly and very surreptitiously, that he had correctly identified fundamental and serious flaws in the surface temperature records of the USA.

This was/is important because:

- GISS is headed up by James Hansen, the grand seer of CO₂ cultist science, and chief scientific adviser to Gore.
- It is the repository of official surface temperature records in the USA.
- By common consent, the USA has had the most complete and accurate temperature records in the world (weather stations not destroyed by wars etc, as in Europe/Asia).
- The USA is a big chunk of the earth's land surface.
- The temperature record for the USA has had to be recast, such that 1998 is no longer the century's hottest but rather 1934, and ten of the twenty hottest years of the 20th century occurred before large scale industrialisation, ie before significant man-made CO₂ emissions.
- Since the GISS exposure, closer attention has been focused on other anomalous aspects of surface temperature recording - recording stations atrociously located, as on a parking lot in Tucson, Arizona, one next to an industrial air conditioning outlet, one in Alaska likewise located close to external sources of heat emission, etc. And ‘etc’ here denotes about a third of them! Moreover, in the last some years the number of temperature recording stations has, anyway, fallen by two thirds from around 6000 to around 2000. Moreover, nobody has quantified the so called Heat Island Effect.

Lastly, on this point, the Bali Conference was based on AR4, which was published in May 2007. Apart from the 7 August coup, the science has moved on since summer 2007 – especially high definition ice core analyses, which blow Gore's lines to smithereens.

With regard to increases in CO₂ concentrations, do humans contribute significantly? No – about 4% of any annual increase, and that's now, not 100 years ago, when temperature rises overall were greater. Vastly more comes from natural processes.

Couldn't that extra 4% be doing all the damage? What damage? And, anyway, CO₂ cultists would still have to come up with a plausible mechanism to show how the additional 4% effected its supposedly malign and cataclysmic influence. CO₂ concentrations in the past have been much higher than they are today. Ice ages came and went. And, as has already been stated, there is no empirical observational evidence to show that CO₂, anthropogenic or otherwise, has any relevance at all to warming of the planet.

What is the Heat Island Effect? Ideally (in fact pretty well useless otherwise) temperature recording stations should be located in rural settings away from extraneous sources of heat. This was possible in the 19th/early 20th centuries. However, since then, urbanisation has been relentless, and many hitherto bucolically situated stations became engulfed by concrete and tarmac. Towns, cities and even villages are typically some degrees warmer than their surrounding countrysides. Arbitrary adjustments were made by modellers to allow for this. But the adjustments were (a) guesswork and (b) a factor of population size. No alterations were made when cities stayed broadly the same size, but dramatically increased their energy usage; Vienna is a good example. And this, remember, is supposed to be rigorous science.

So, what is the real climate driver? Above all, almost certainly the sun. Unlike CO₂ cultism, there is empirical observational evidence for this. Work by Profs Eriq Friis-Christensen in Denmark and Nir Shaviv in Israel has shown uncanny correlation between temperatures deducible over many centuries and the flux of sun spot activity. Moreover, lab work (not computer models) have demonstrated how the flux of cosmic rays can produce seeding which, in turn, generates clouds – etc, etc. Broadly speaking, more sun spots, fewer cosmic rays; fewer cosmic rays, less cloud; less cloud, warmer weather. One 19th century English economist correctly predicted the price of bread the following year from his knowledge of sun spot activity, ie warmer temperatures, better harvests; better harvests, more grain; more grain, lower prices.

So, what about all the evidence of increased frequency of natural catastrophes? There is none. None at all.

- **Sea level rise.** Authoritative estimates suggest that sea levels have been rising by about 1mm per century for the last 10k years. There is no evidence of any acceleration. Bangladesh? Bangladesh is an area of subduction – the coast is sinking not the sea rising. Tuvalu? Measuring buoys show no rise – in fact, ironically, a small fall. Apparent erosion from the sea has everything to do with ill considered exploitation of local resources as well as, maybe, its geographical location on an intersection of two tectonic plates.
- **Melting ice caps.** Rubbish – Greenland (about 4% of total land based ice) has been getting around an extra 20 inches (50 cms) of snow pa for the last decade. Ditto Antarctica (90%) – in 2007 sea ice was the most extensive since records began. Re Greenland, even the IPCC itself has acknowledged that it would take millennia at prevailing temperatures 5°C greater than today to melt even half the ice sheet.
- **North West passage.** Ice melted in summer 2007 due to unusually strong ENSO (El Nino Southern Oscillation) effects. The phenomenon is not unique or even that unusual. Amundsen negotiated the NW Passage by ship in 1906, and it was open for a whole season in the 30s.
- **Icebergs.** Icebergs break off when glaciers reach the sea. It's a natural process. For localised reasons, there has been some melting in the Antarctic Peninsula. The peninsula accounts for a bare 2% of a continental landmass 1½ times the area of the USA.
- **Glaciers.** There are about 160,000 glaciers worldwide. Of these about 80 have been studied in any detail, and only about 100 more have had a cursory inspection. Some are retreating, some are not. Some that have been retreating in recent years are expanding again. Europe this year has had one of its earliest ski seasons ever.
- **Mt. Kilimanjaro.** Satellite data show that the temperature at the Furtwangler glacier is a pretty constant minus 7°C. The glacier has retreated because of deforestation on the lower slopes – fewer trees, less transpiration, less condensation at the top.
- **Hurricanes.** Work done on extreme weather manifestations (hurricanes in the Atlantic, typhoons in the Pacific) reveal no increase whatsoever in either frequency or severity. Moreover, tornado strikes in the USA have tended to be less severe. More than any other single factor, weather patterns are dictated by the temperature differential between the tropics and the poles. Moreover, CO₂ theory implies that relatively greater warming will be experienced at the poles than at the equator, thereby reducing that differential. If, therefore, significant global warming was occurring, the expectation would be for fewer and lesser freak weather events. That is not at all the message of CO₂ cultists!
- **Spread of mosquito borne diseases.** Nonsense. Contrary to the pronouncements of the IPCC, mosquitoes do not require high temperatures to thrive. The most devastating outbreak of malaria of all time ravaged the USSR in the 1920s (13m cases pa and 600k deaths; Archangel north of the Arctic circle, 30k cases and 10k deaths). Gore states that the British established Nairobi at altitude to pre-empt mosquito borne infection. Rubbish. Malaria is endemic in Nairobi – I contracted it there myself.
- **Species decimation.** Rubbish. By and large, species flourish in warmer conditions - ergo hugely greater absolute numbers of individuals, as well as species, in the tropics compared to more extreme latitudes. Locally, temperate species that find conditions too hot will move further North or South until the porridge is just right. That, of course, is not to say that damage may not be caused in the short term. It may well be, but things will even out, if not interfered with in other ways by humans. The much hyped threat to polar bears is a tendentious myth. Polar bears are now a pest in many far Northern settlements. Numbers have gone from estimates of 5000 twenty years ago to 35,000 today. The Governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin, stated in mid-May 2008 that Alaska would sue to block inclusion of polar bears in the Endangered Species Act.

Peer Review? This is always being trotted out by CO₂ cultists – even by the cohorts of the feckless, ignorant, idle and irredeemably stupid outside Heathrow, for example. It is a fiction. The MBH clique, for example, will only be “peer reviewed” by one another and, in brazen defiance of IPCC guidelines (not to mention the dictates of plain, ordinary science and common sense), refuse to disclose details of their computer programs or their data. The same has been true of the Hadley Centre in the UK. In other words, it's incestuous, open to fraud and probably is fraudulent much of the time. Only double blind peer review is truly independent, which is why it's mandatory in medical research. It's emphatically not used in global warming “science”.

The consensus of 2500 top scientists? In some ways, the most outrageously mendacious claim of all, and for the following reasons:

- There aren't 2500 climate scientists in the world – true dedicated specialists about 100, per Prof. Siunichi Akasofu.
- Many of those named disagree with the Reports themselves but, above all, with the SPMs which flow from them.
- Since the reports of WGs 2 & 3 necessarily flow from the work of WG1, it is essential that this should be robust. It is anything but, as we have seen.
- SPMs, what 99% of people read - if at all, are not written by scientists anyway but by civil servants. Scientifically, they frequently clash with underlying WG reports. Protests are simply ignored - well documented, by the way.
- The UN has for the first time just released to the web the comments of reviewers who assessed the drafts of the WG1 report of AR4, together with IPCC editors' responses. 308 reviewers commented on WG1, but only 32 commented on more than three chapters. Only five commented on all 11 chapters. Only half commented on more than one chapter.
- It gets worse. The critical chapter is No. 9, in which the near certainty of GW increases being due to human activity is asserted. Only 62 reviewers commented. Of these, 55 had self-evident potential vested interests. Thus, precisely seven could reasonably be seen as impartial. Two rejected the findings of the report altogether, four turned out to have less transparent potential conflicts of interest, and the last made only a single comment on the entire report. Thirty four reviewers' comments/suggestions were rejected with no reason being given. Enough said!

Conclusion: Finally, who said science was about consensus or democracy? Scientific break through is rarely, if ever, marked by either. In fact, the record suggests that a good rule of thumb is to assume that a majority will be wrong, and there are quite good psychological explanations for this. In the case of GW, the lure of money is now obvious and grotesque; last guestimate in summer 2007 was US\$80bn and climbing. Enormous numbers of worthless jobs (worthless, that is, in terms of net economic contribution to society) are riding on the maintenance of the gravy train. Bureaucracies, especially in Europe, are fighting savagely to maintain influence and pre-empt dissolution. The disinterested and purely scientific priorities of these bureaucracies may be inferred from the following extract from a working paper of The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, a multi-sited operation funded by the UK tax payer. **Working Paper No. 58** - The Social Simulation of the Public Perception of Weather Events and their Effect upon the Development of Belief in Anthropogenic Climate Change – Dennis Bray & Simon Shackley, Sept. 2004)

Only the perception of positive anomalies will be registered as an indication of change, if the issue is framed as 'global warming'.

Both positive and negative temperature anomalies will be registered in experience as an indication of change, if the issue is framed as 'climate change'.

We propose that in those countries where 'climate change' has become the predominant popular term for the phenomenon, unseasonably cold temperatures, for example, are also interpreted to reflect 'climate change'/'global warming'.

Too hot and it's CO₂; too cold and it's CO₂!

What else is there to say?

Except, perhaps - lies, damned lies and CO₂ junk science!