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Why Climate Change Doesn't Scare Me

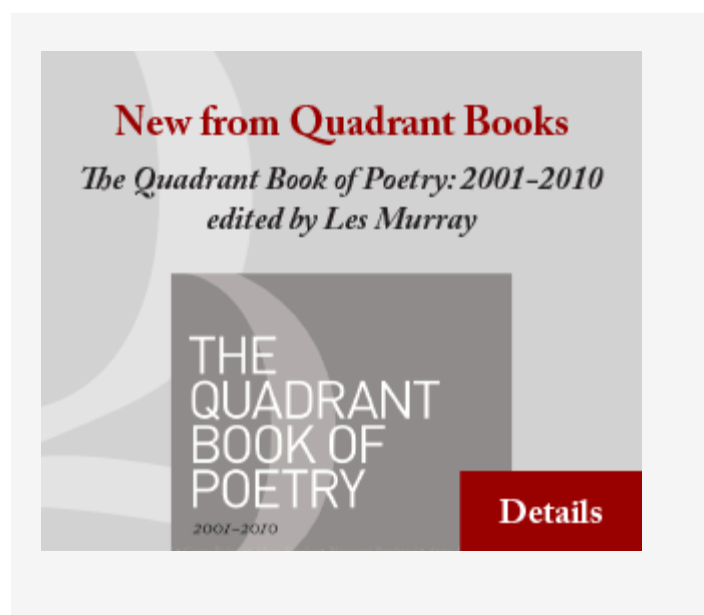
Be scared, the experts tell us, be very scared. Well there is certainly cause for concern, but not about those "rising" temperatures, which refuse to confirm researchers' computer models. A far bigger worry is the corruption that has turned 'science' into a synonym for shameless, cynical careerism



Despite the increasingly shrill insistence by climate alarmists that we face an imminent catastrophe, reason and evidence continue to indicate otherwise. Both the theoretical

understanding of anthropogenic global warming (a.k.a. climate change) and the empirical evidence remain highly uncertain, tainted by dubious claims and manipulations.

While the basic physics of infrared heat absorption by CO₂ is well established, both theoretical understanding and real world evidence strongly indicate the effect of increased CO in the complex dynamics of the global climate system has been greatly exaggerated. The



amount of back-radiated infrared energy from the planet's surface is limited and is not increased by more CO₂ in the air above. Although a small amount of CO₂ in the air results in significant warming, this effect is quickly saturated. At pre-industrial levels of CO₂ the portion of the IR spectrum in the absorption bands of CO₂ was already 99.9% absorbed within a few tens of metres of the surface. Although doubling CO₂ must halve the distance over which such absorption occurs, any increased heating near the surface is continuously distributed into a much larger volume of the atmosphere by wind, convection and turbulence. How close to the surface initial warming occurs has minimal effect on the total amount of heat energy being absorbed or on the temperature of the much larger volume of atmosphere into which it is being mixed.

However, concentrating the initial heating nearer to the surface must also strengthen both convection and evaporation which, in turn, increases transport of heat away from the surface to higher in the troposphere, where the increased evaporation then results in increased condensation. In this process the latent heat of evaporation absorbed from the surface is released high in the atmosphere, where the thinner gases permit it to radiate into space. At the same time more cloud cover and precipitation also results, acting as a further negative feedback to cool the surface.

A shadehouse is not a greenhouse

To call the warming induced by CO₂ a greenhouse effect is highly misleading. A greenhouse affects its warming by enclosing the air inside with walls and a roof. Without a roof only very limited warming is possible before convection wafts away heated air like a hot air balloon. A greenhouse with no roof or walls, where the warm air is free to blow away with the wind or drift into the sky is something only an academic could imagine. (Note to climate experts: a greenhouse without a roof does not work.)

A better analogy for the effect of increased atmospheric CO₂ might be that presented by an absorption refrigerator – an old-fashioned gas or kerosene fridge. In such systems a heat source is used to drive an evaporative cooling cycle, much as the warm surface temperature of the planet drives convection, augmented by the evaporation/condensation cycle, to cool the lower troposphere and transport heat to greater altitudes where reduced gas density permits it to radiate away.

The so called greenhouse effect is limited. No heat is being “trapped” by a greenhouse with no walls or roof. The real world effect of more CO₂ is much more like that of a shade house equipped with evaporative cooling.

Dubious evidence of anthropogenic warming

The prime physical evidence for AGW is the global temperature record. Declaring an emergency because some researchers claim to have detected an average warming of three-quarters of a degree over the past century (amidst a highly variable and extremely noisy record spanning over 100 degrees) borders on hysteria. For a start, the amount of warming being claimed is less than the margin of uncertainty. A similar amount of warming commonly takes place many mornings while we eat breakfast. It also occurs with a decrease in elevation of about a hundred metres, or with a decrease in latitude of about 2° (*ca.* 200 km). Orders of

magnitude warming occurs seasonally, even daily in many places. Not only is the purported amount not alarming, we have no idea how much of it is due to CO₂ and how much may be attributable to measurement error, the urban heat island effect, 'adjustments' to the record, natural cycles or other natural causes of variability. Even more absurd is that the only global effect of increased CO₂ about which we are reasonably certain is that there has been a significant and very beneficial greening of arid regions, plus an enhancement of food production.

The mild warming trend from 1978 to 1998 which prompted the global warming hysteria followed a period of cooling which excited similar alarm about a coming ice age. This warming ceased almost two decades ago and mild cooling now appears to be taking place. In recent years the rate of sea-level rise has also declined. Hurricanes and tornadoes are at record lows. Polar sea ice is increasing. Blizzards, droughts and floods are below past extremes. Attributing every vagary of weather to anthropogenic climate change is not reasonable, not science and definitely not honest.

Conflicting evidence ignored

Other "evidence" claimed for climate change is equally dubious. Two recent studies, for example, have received wide news coverage. The first maintains that trade winds are driving surface heat into the ocean depths, where it cannot be measured, and this explains the lack of recent warming. The second study claims to explain the "collapse" of the West Antarctic ice sheet. Both these studies fail the fundamental scientific requirement in their refusal to address conflicting evidence.

If the missing surface heat was indeed being driven into the deep sea this would have to appear as distinct deep water warming in the record from the global network of ocean monitoring buoys. It does not. It would also have to appear as an increased rate of sea level rise, due to the thermal expansion of the oceans which would necessarily accompany any such warming. To the contrary, the rate of sea level rise has declined in recent years.

The so called "collapse" of the West Antarctic ice sheet is likewise claimed to be caused by melting due to warming seas; however, the thirty-five year record from satellite monitoring of sea ice around Antarctica presents a clear trend of increasing ice cover with the recent extent at record highs. A better explanation for any increased glacial flow might be that the increasing snowfall, also recorded, is increasing the flow of ice as the Antarctic ice cap is already at the level to induce plastic flow. The more snow and ice that falls on the ice cap, the higher will be the pressure driving glacial flow. When glaciers retreat, climate alarmists say it is due to global warming. When they advance, alarmists re-badge it as "acceleration", and that too is claimed to be evidence of warming.

In view of the uncertain and conflicting evidence, the claim that there is a 97% scientific consensus regarding climate change says more about the corruption of science than it does about any change in the climate.

Models are not evidence

Projections from computer models of the global climate have been presented as firm "evidence" for future

warming, but models are not evidence. There are about a hundred different climate models. None has been verified, no two agree and none reproduce the actual temperature record. Moreover, the range of uncertainty in the estimates used for various inputs permit “adjustments” which can result in widely varied results. For some important inputs there is even uncertainty about whether their net effect is positive or negative. In the end the models represent nothing more than an elaborate personal guess by the modellers. Although models may provide insights into the possible dynamics of the climate system they have no credibility for use in predicting future warming. Ironically however, they do support the claimed 97% consensus in one respect. About 97% of the models yield exaggerated warming well above the actual temperature record and the few exceptions closer to the record are obscure models which receive no credence from climate change researchers.

Real problems ignored

Meanwhile, back in the real world, major problems with chronic deficits, ballooning debt, unaffordable health care and education, debasement of basic rights, malignant over regulation, uncontrolled immigration, an ageing population, economic stagnation and growing unemployment are all being left to fester while governments tilt at climate windmills in a desperate search for popular approval. These are all hugely more certain, pressing and addressable problems than is some highly uncertain degree of possible climate change a century or more from now.

Fantasy vs. Reality

Fossil fuel reserves are limited. Most of the low cost high quality deposits are already depleted and the rate of new discoveries is decreasing. Maintaining production increasingly depends upon non-conventional sources and advanced technologies with low production rates and high costs resulting in increasing prices for end users. At the same time technological advances are making alternatives more effective and affordable.

At present we could not feed, clothe and shelter the existing population without fossil fuels, nor could we maintain the economic health necessary to develop effective alternatives. Trying to force wide scale adoption of premature technologies is a recipe for disaster as has been every other attempt at central planning of economies.

Both theory and practice indicate that complex interactive systems (*e.g.* climate, ecosystems, and economies) incorporating numerous non-linear relationships cannot be managed from top down but can effectively self-organise if permitted to do so. Despite the sometimes messy self-adjustments, free markets have repeatedly proved to be the best way we have found to do this in the economic sphere. Failing to recognise this and mindlessly repeating to attempt a centrally planned approach proposed by self-anointed “experts” is beyond simply foolish. It requires wilful ignorance compounded by unbounded self-regard.

Trying to implement the climate alarmist’s half-baked theoretical solutions to imaginary problems can at best only result in economic stagnation and delay. More likely the harm would be even greater as the recognition of failure and the necessity to change course then determining what to do next would all be impeded by political resistance, uncertainty and compromises while the damage continues to intensify.

Although the danger from climate change itself appears to have been greatly exaggerated the economic impact of ill-conceived measures to control it are already real, substantial and on-going. These include significant increases in the cost of energy and food, job losses, large scale environmental degradation from wind farms and bio-fuel production as well as the diversion of hundreds of billions of dollars from other far more real and urgent needs.

Biggest threat is corruption, not carbon

Perhaps the greatest harm of all has been the damage to the integrity and credibility of science itself. This affects not just science but also our ability to effectively govern ourselves in the increasingly complex technological world we are creating. Gross scientific malpractice has become endemic in climate science. Misleading or even false claims, cherry-picking of data, hiding or ignoring conflicting evidence, unexplained manipulations of data, refusal to permit independent examination of methods and evidence, abuse of peer review to suppress adverse findings and vicious personal denigration of dissent have all become widespread practice in climate research. Worse yet, when such conduct has been exposed, the response of alarmists has not been to condemn it, but to first try to deny it, then to attempt to justify it and finally to pretend to dismiss it as trivial and of no consequence. In the most prominent examples a post script has been to announce some prestigious sounding award to the miscreants thus appearing to erase the taint of any impropriety.

The climate change bandwagon has afforded a tantalising shortcut to generous funding and expert status for any third rate academic willing to abandon the scientific ethos and many have done so. For the unwilling, any public dissent means a level of professional ostracism and personal denigration few are willing to bear.

Research is not a license for fraud

The evidence of widespread corruption in climate and other environmental science is clear and abundant. The harm done has been great and is increasing. Relevant laws against fraud, professional misconduct, misleading parliament and other offences are being blatantly violated. The research institutions involved have also routinely made false claims in press releases widely reported in the mainstream media. It is past time to begin to demand professional honesty and apply the relevant laws to academic researchers that are applied to all other activities. Terminating both current and future government funding of those found guilty of serious violations of scientific standards could be a simple effective cure to treat the malaise now infecting environmental science. To continue to ignore it can only assure more disastrously poor decisions in the future.

The idea that we must take drastic steps now for the benefit of our great grandchildren is also emotive nonsense. History clearly shows that the problems faced by future generations and the means to solve them are almost certain to be very different from anything we can predict. If we leave them a healthy economy and uncorrupted science, they will be equipped far better than we to decide if climate change is indeed becoming a problem and what to do about it. If we cripple our economy and debase our best tool for understanding the world we live in we will be doing our descendants no favour and they will not be thankful for our foolishness.

tags [broken models](#), [climate change](#),

