

Climate Change is (is NOT) a myth: Is the jury IN...or still OUT?

If one follows the rhetoric swirling in the ether, it would be easy to conclude that the "fact" of climate change (global warming) is a GIVEN. However.....one would be so far adrift from the reality of the situation. Sure the "pros" are seemingly ahead...but in some quarters, it is politically correct (and financially abiding, for global corporate anyway), to support same. Truth or fiction, big business does not care. Really. In either case, they come out on top of the money pile...and business as usual. As far as profits are concerned, the pros have it now ... and paying.

Soon, I believe, the "cons" will finally get their voices of dissent heard above the roar of the noises in the market. And then, the global interests will support the new world view ... and business as unusual. The arguments go something like this (and by the way, reserve your prejudices until the end of the discussion ... your personal take will be sought... a bit later):

Climate Change (global warming)

is NOT a Myth

It has been reported that "Months before make-or-break climate negotiations...a conclave of scientists warned" that "the impact of global warming was accelerating beyond a forecast made by U.N. experts. Sea levels this century may rise several times higher than predictions made in 2007 that form the scientific foundation for policymakers." In March 2007, the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded "that global warming, if unchecked, would lead to a devastating amalgam of floods, drought, disease and extreme weather by the century end." The world's oceans would "creep up 18 to 59 centimetres (seven to 23 inches)." Enough to "wipe out several small island nations, and wreak havoc for tens of millions living in low-lying deltas in east Asia, the Indian subcontinent and Africa."

But a new study, presented at the Copenhagen meeting, "factored in likely water runoff from disintegrating glaciers in Greenland and Antarctica, and found the rise could be much higher."

The IPCC estimate had been based largely on "the expansion of oceans from higher temperatures. That is, rather than melt water and, "the impact of glaciers tumbling into the sea."

Climate experts of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research noted that, using the new model, "we get a range of sea level rise by 2100 between 75 and 190 centimetres when we apply the IPCC's temperature scenarios for the future." Even if the world manages to dramatically cut the emission of greenhouse gases driving global warming, the "best estimate" is about one metre (3.25 feet), it is noted. Glaciologists of the University of California at Irvine also chimed in, noting: "A few years ago, those of us who talked about the impact of the ice sheets were seen as extremists. Today it is recognized as the central issue."

"The world has very little time," according to the IPCC. The "shrinking of the Arctic ice cap, and the release of billions of tonnes of greenhouse gases trapped in melting permafrost, are two such "positive feedbacks" that could become both cause and consequence of global warming." Britain's top climate negotiator, noting even rich nations had yet to take such scenarios seriously, warned: "We need to look at what is a "reasonable worst case" in the lifetime of people alive today." For example, "A sea level rise of one or two meters would not just be damaging for China, it would be an absolute catastrophe. And what is catastrophic for China is catastrophic for the world," he said. Head of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences in Boulder, Colorado, claimed "Up to 600 million people living close to coast lines in poor and rich countries alike could be affected."

"They will have to move – it would change the whole structure of populations, and we know how badly we deal with migration," he told AFP. Among the worst hit countries will be Bangladesh, which would lose some 17 percent of its land mass, displacing nearly 15 million people. These startling new predictions on sea levels rise spell disaster for millions of the world's poorest people. "This must be a wakeup call, for rich countries are not doing anywhere near enough to prevent these cataclysmic predictions becoming a reality, he insisted.

More than 2,000 researchers from 80 countries responded to the open invitation to present their findings, which were then vetted by a panel of climate experts, many of them top figures in the IPCC. A researcher from the University of Tasmania in Hobart, Australia noted: "I and a lot of scientists see this meeting as an opportunity to update the science that has come out since the last IPCC report." Head of the Danish government's Commission on Climate Change Policy noted the huge response from scientists comes from a sense of urgency, "but also a sense of frustration."

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IS a Myth

Following published international; news agencies' reports: As the U.S. president "tries to green the United States by slapping limits on carbon emissions," Congress was told to "ignore his plan because climate change does not exist." British aristocrat Lord Christopher Walter Monckton, a leading proponent of the "climate change is myth" movement was reported as saying: "The right response to the non-problem of global warming is to have the courage to do nothing." Once an advisor to former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, he argued before the Energy and Environment Subcommittee that "for 14 years, contrary to broadly accepted scientific beliefs, there has been no statistically significant global warming."

The House hearing, titled "Adaptation Policies in Climate Legislation," was to discuss ways to address U.S. cap-and-trade proposal in the 3.55-trillion-dollar budget plan presented to Congress. The proposal would limit emissions of greenhouse gases for manufacturers, and permit companies to "trade the right to pollute to other firms" – a similar cap-and-trade system to the European model.

The moves are now subject of intense political opposition in Congress, notably from lawmakers representing U.S. states heavily invested in energy production through fossil

fuels. "Adaptation is at present unnecessary," said Lord Mon-ckton at the hearing, adding: "Mitigation is always unnecessary. It is also disproportionately expensive" and, "Green jobs are the new euphemism for mass unemployment."

National spokesman for the Cornwall Alliance, a coalition of clergy, theologians and religious leaders also addressing the hearing on the "balanced Biblical view" for environment and development issues, and questioned proposed efforts to combat climate change. "I am convinced that policies meant to reduce alleged carbon dioxide-induced global warming will be destructive," he said. "The Biblical world view sees Earth and its ecosystems as the effect of a wise God's creation and ... therefore robust, resilient, and self regulating, like the product of any good engineer," and argued that "policies to reduce carbon emissions would destroy jobs and be prohibitively expensive."

"The truth is that no alternative fuels can compete at present with fossil fuels for price," he said. (I thought this position rather unique....in an argument in support of biblical references...but..).

A Congressman from the oil-rich state of Texas maintained that "mankind always adapts," and that "adaptation to shifts in temperature is not that difficult." What will be difficult, he argued, was "adaptation to rampant unemployment and enormous, spontaneous and avoidable changes to our economy if we adopt such a reckless policy as cap-and-tax or cap-and-trade."

Facing down the non-believers, an array of government agency representatives and environmental organizations described the mounting threats to humanity from devastating climate change – including rising sea levels, soaring temperatures and increasingly violent weather phenomena.

The Director of the National Climatic Data Center at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), stressed "mitigation would not suffice." While increased mitigation measures will "likely reduce the need for future adaptation," the United States and the world "will continue to experience changing climate conditions and resulting impacts."

President of National Wild-life Federation urged lawmakers that the United States "must invest now in safeguarding the natural world from the inevitable impacts of global warming." Recalling the report from the Nobel Prize-winning U.N. intergovernmental panel on climate change, the meeting was warned that due to cataclysmic climate change, "in the lifetime of a child born today, 20 to 30 percent of the world's plant and animal species will be on the brink of extinction, if we don't take action now."

What's my take

(the house I support) in this debate?

The U.S. Congress, it was said at the time of the last climate change conference, remained "deeply skeptical about adopting a market-based mechanism to cut carbon emissions," fearing it may "hit the competitiveness of U.S. firms and products on global markets" – particularly "while China and India refuse to make concessions in tandem." So much so, then, for fear of inaction to a perceived "fact" that the globe tethers on

"annihilation of biblical proportions" if we do nothing – but the discussions by superpowers center on who is the biggest bully on the block. Simply amazing!

It has been reported that Czech President Vaclav Klaus once called global warming "a new religion, a Trojan horse for imposing a global tyranny worse than communism." Details about the Copenhagen Conference prove how right he was – according to published reviewers' reports.

"The first of three marathon negotiating sessions designed to hammer out the details of the Copenhagen Accord on climate change to be signed ... in Bonn, Germany," noted a European report, adding: "from what we know, it will be a surrender to tyranny as significant as another negotiated 71 years ago."

An informational document outlining the goals and agenda of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), listed an "alphabet soup" of ideas and talking points for what the U.N. calls an "ambitious and effective international response to climate change."

This document prompted a USA analyst to comment: "We're not sure how effective it will be, but it's certainly ambitious as it seeks to reorder the world economy in a de facto repeal of the Industrial Revolution. Under the supervision of the U.N., free trade would die, industries that survived could be relocated across borders, and we would have mandatory carbon offsets and cap-and-trade imposed on a global scale." The proposed "framework" agreement was also referred to by USA interest as "this new and more draconian Kyoto pact," and was "a new kind of tariff known as a "border carbon adjustment" that was also described as "a levy on imported goods equal to that which would have been imposed had they been produced domestically." In other words, "if the exporting country does not impose a carbon tax, the importing country will" this analyst also maintained.

Planet ... be damned!

So....The entire circumstance surrounding the advent (or NOT) of climate change (global warming) were not what should be done (or NOT) at all. The debate, my friends, is a question of how corporate profits and profitability can be maintained and augmented incrementally; such that stocks and financial markets are minimally "disturbed." And some semblances of the control these global forces are/were created to ensure, remain in place. The planet going to the dogs be damned.

Another form of USA (for example) "adjustment" concerns is to require exporters to "buy (carbon) offsets at the border equal to that which the producer would have been forced to purchase had the goods been produced domestically." Imagine the U.N. forcing American exporters to buy carbon offsets. Under this global climate regime, tariffs would be allowed "as protective barriers to shelter producers of climate-friendly goods, and endorses subsidies for producers of goods that are deemed "environmentally sound." Protectionism, thus, goes green.

Writing in the Financial Times recently, Czech President Vaclav Klaus said: "As someone who lived under communism for most of his life, I feel obliged to say that I see the biggest threat to freedom, democracy, the market economy and prosperity now in

ambitious environmentalism, not communism." Klaus told the Cato Institute recently that "environmentalism is a religion" that accepts global warming on faith, and seeks to exploit it to reshape the world and economic social order. Its commandments are now being written. The U.N. "will be its temple and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon its high priest."

Global warming is the increase in the average temperature of the Earth's near-surface air and the oceans since the mid-twentieth century and its projected continuation. Global surface temperature increased 0.74 ± 0.18 °C (1.33 ± 0.32 °F) during the 100 years ending in 2005. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that anthropogenic greenhouse gases are responsible for most of the observed temperature increase since the middle of the twentieth century, and natural phenomena such as solar variation and volcanoes probably had a small warming effect from pre-industrial times to 1950 and, a small cooling effect from 1950 onward. These basic conclusions have been endorsed by more than 40 scientific societies and academies of science, including all of the national academies of science of the major industrialized countries.

Climate change is any long-term significant change in the expected patterns of average weather of a specific region (or, more relevantly to contemporary socio-political concerns, of the Earth as a whole) over an appropriately significant period of time. Climate change reflects abnormal variations to the expected climate within the Earth's atmosphere and subsequent effects on other parts of the Earth, such as in the ice caps over durations ranging from decades to millions of years.

Well ... what do you think? As far as you are concerned ... the Jury's IN... or still OUT?

Presented, as always, in the best interest of the Bahamian public. Freemanwthurston4907@hotmail.com

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