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## Will The Overselling Of Global Warming Lead To A New Scientific Dark Age?

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Will the overselling of climate change lead to a new scientific dark age? That's the question being posed in the latest issue of an Australian literary journal, *Quadrant*, by Garth Paltridge, one of the world's most respected atmospheric scientists.

Paltridge was a Chief Research Scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO). The latter is Australia's equivalent of the National Science Foundation, our massive Federal Laboratory network, and all the governmental agency science branches rolled into one.

Paltridge lays out the well-known uncertainties in climate forecasting. These include our inability to properly simulate clouds that are anything like what we see in the real world, the embarrassing lack of average surface warming now in its 17th year, and the fumbling (and contradictory) attempts to explain it away.

While the politically correct name for the last 17 years is "the pause," it's much more like the P-wave, which reflects the crustal slippage that occurs before the shaking (and tsunami, if beneath the sea) of a catastrophic earthquake. Humans can't feel them, but many animals can, which is why birds alight shortly before all hell breaks loose.

Climate scientists have been profoundly defensive about the known problems. Paltridge elegantly explains that this has to be the case, and describes the likely horrific consequences when the day of reckoning finally arrives.

That day is coming closer, because, as Paltridge notes, people are catching on:

"...the average man in the street, a sensible chap who by now can smell the signs of an oversold environmental campaign from miles away, is beginning to suspect that it is politics rather than science which is driving the issue."

The scientific establishment has painted itself into a corner over global warming. Paltridge's explanations for this are depressingly familiar to those who read these columns.

Science changed dramatically in the 1970s, when the reward structure in the profession began to revolve around the acquisition of massive amounts of taxpayer funding that was external to the normal budgets of the universities and federal laboratories. In climate science, this meant portraying the issue in dire terms, often in alliance with environmental advocacy organizations. Predictably, scientists (and their institutions) became addicted to the wealth, fame, and travel in the front of the airplane:

“A new and rewarding research lifestyle emerged which involved the giving of advice to all types and levels of government, the broadcasting of unchallengeable opinion to the general public, and easy justification for attendance at international conferences—this last in some luxury by normal scientific experience, and at a frequency previously unheard of.”

Every incentive reinforced this behavior, as the self-selected community of climate boffins now began to speak for both science and in the service of drastic regulatory policies. In the measured tones of the remarkably lucid and precise writer that he is, Paltridge explains how the corner got painted:

“The trap was fully sprung when many of the world's major national academies of science (such as the Royal Society in the UK, the National Academy of Sciences in the USA and the Australian Academy of Science) persuaded themselves to issue reports giving support to the conclusions of the IPCC [the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]. The reports were touted as national assessments that were supposedly independent of the IPCC and of each other, but of necessity were compiled with the assistance of, and in some cases at the behest of, many of the scientists involved in the IPCC international machinations. In effect, the academies, which are the most prestigious of the institutions of science, formally nailed their colours to the mast of the politically correct.

Since that time three or four years ago, there has been no comfortable way for the scientific community to raise the spectre of serious uncertainty about the forecasts of climatic disaster.”

Every year that elapses without a significant warming trend more and more erodes the credibility of not just climate science, but science in general:

“In the light of all this, we have at least to consider the possibility that the scientific establishment behind the global warming issue has been drawn into the trap of seriously overstating the climate problem—or, what is much the same thing, of seriously understating the uncertainties associated with the climate problem—in its effort to promote the cause. **It is a particularly nasty trap in the context of science, because it risks destroying, perhaps for centuries to come, the unique and hard-won reputation for honesty which is the basis of society's respect for scientific endeavour.**” [emphasis added]

This is the scariest part, and it is apparent that this unravelling has already begun. Serious scholars of science, like University of Montreal's Daniele Fanelli, and Stanford's John Iannadis

are publishing quantitative analyses of the proliferation of scientific errors that is malignantly invading the profession because of, in part, the funding and reward model. When this “third rail” is actively being researched by people of such quality, it is apparent that the sickness of climate science is not just confined to climate science.

When the climate science tsunami breaks the shore, the destruction will be massive and universal. It’s fair to say that scientific seismologists like Garth Paltridge have already detected the P-wave of the earthquake, in the form of the lack of warming, which is now likely to extend to at least 23 years. The S-wave isn’t far behind. Scientists, run for cover. Now.