

CLIMATE CHANGE: DANGERS OF A SINGULAR APPROACH AND CONSIDERATION OF A SENSIBLE STRATEGY

Timothy F. Ball

PhD, Climatologist, Environmental Consultant

E-Mail:timothyball@shaw.ca

ABSTRACT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has convinced many, including most governments, that the only future is global warming. IPCC's structure and directions required it only examine human causes of climate change. It also created a view that warming was only disastrous. Actually, there are more benefits to warming than cooling. Evidence indicates cooling is already occurring, because of changes in solar activity. Cooling is much more problematic. A logical strategy regardless of the trend is to prepare for cooling. Adaptation to warming is easier than to cooling.

1. INTRODUCTION

The predominant message says global warming is a potential worldwide disaster with only negative impacts. Ironically, just thirty years ago global cooling was presented in a similar singular way. In late 1973 the US Office of Research and Development (ORD) was satisfied that forecasts of a global climate change, specifically cooling, required further research and planning. The CIA produced two reports, one titled "Potential Implications of Trends in World Population, Food Production, and Climate" (Office of Political Research – 401, August 1974). The report notes:

The precarious outlook for the poor and food – deficit – countries, and the enhanced role of North American agriculture in world food trade outlined above were predicated on the assumption that normal weather will prevail over the next few decades. But many climatologists warn that this assumption is questionable; some would say that it is almost certainly wrong.

Gratefully, nobody was prompted to act by proposing we try to offset the cooling. Would they have recommended adding CO₂ or some other action? Some actions were proposed, such as blocking off the Bering Straits to prevent cold Arctic water entering the North Pacific. If you don't know what is causing change, it is wise to do nothing - rather than cause further problems by acting incorrectly. This is especially true if

your lack of knowledge and poor understanding makes reasonably accurate forecasts impossible.

The CIA used the word climatocracy to describe the role of climate in political action. It is very applicable today. Political involvement in climate research is global and profound. Demand for action is very loud. Frighteningly, the demand is for action to deal with only one possibility based on the false assumption that today's forecasts for the next 30, 50 and 100 years are anymore accurate than the belief in 1970 that cooling was going to occur.

The reality is that when change occurs, there are positive and negative effects. Science normally presents all the facts, and both sides of the effects of change. The total focus on negative effects of warming reflects the political nature of climate change. How has this imbalance developed? Most countries, and a great number of the world's population are located in cooler climates and would benefit from a warmer world.

2. IPCC STRUCTURE AND MANDATE

The primary cause of the imbalance is institutionalized by the mandate and structure of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It only looks at human causes of climate change, and the impacts of those changes. There are 2500 people in three separate groups working on what is generally known as Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW). Working Group I (WGI) comprise 600 people who prepare the Scientific or Technical report. Working Groups II and III (WGII and WGIII) are the remaining 1900 people who study the impact of climate change. They accept without question the conclusions of WGI. Although some of the concerns and limitations of climate science are identified in WGI's Technical Report, they are suppressed and seriously downplayed in the Summary for Policymakers (SPM). Rules of the IPCC require publication and release of this Summary before the Technical Report is released. The rules also require that the SPM go back to WG I to make sure that the Technical Report confirms the SPM statements. This procedure is as if a Chief Executive Officer wrote and released to the board and shareholders an Executive Summary and then directed employees to write a report that confirmed the summary.

Both the SPM and the Technical Report of the IPCC conclude with over a 90% certainty that global warming will continue, and that climate change is due to human addition of CO₂ to the atmosphere. This, is despite the fact that in their computer models they exclude major climate mechanisms, and assume an increase in atmospheric CO₂ concentration will cause a temperature increase. There is no record for any time in the Earth's history, for any duration, in which a CO₂ increase precedes a temperature increase. In fact, all the evidence shows an increase in temperature precedes an increase in CO₂.

So WG II and III research is based exclusively on the impact of global warming. Almost all governments accept the conclusions of the IPCC. In doing so they are committed to political action that requires policies and programs to offset the potential problems identified by WG II and III.

3. POSITIVE BENEFITS OF WARMING

Worldwide government policy on climate change is single-minded, without scientific foundation, incredibly expensive, and leading us in completely the wrong direction. Governments are planning for warming based on computer model predictions already proven incorrect, and based on the unproven assumption that a CO₂ increase causes a temperature increase.

But let's assume for a moment they are correct, and warming will continue. Surely, a realistic assessment would include both the negative and positive implications; but that is not happening. A classic example is the much-touted Stern Review produced for the British government. Sir Nicholas (now the Lord Stern of Brentford) essentially produced a risk analysis study identifying only the negative implications. A more common and reasonable approach is a cost benefit study; but promoters of AGW don't want positive benefits and they don't fit the sensationalism the media prefers.

The following comments relate to Canada, which as the second largest nation qualifies as representative of most other regions of the temperate Northern Hemisphere. History shows the Hemisphere was better off with warming, whether it was long term as with the retreat of the Wisconsin ice sheet or the expansion of agriculture as the world emerged from the Little Ice Age. Canada is at the northern limits of agriculture, and a warmer world offers much greater potential for flora and fauna including agriculture. Even some AGW advocates acknowledge Canadian agriculture benefits from warming. Warmer temperatures provide more heat units, longer frost-free growing seasons, greater acreage as land currently unsuitable becomes available, and a greater choice of crop varieties will grow. Weather risks are reduced in current farming regions, while the area and opportunities for agriculture increase.

A few years ago I had a debate with an AGW advocate in front of 900 farmers in southern Saskatchewan. The person used the usual warming is disaster scenario and threatened the farmers with a warming of some 2°C over the next 50 years. I explained this meant little to the farmers, and asked the person to identify a region to the south of Saskatchewan currently with the predicted temperature. The answer, South Dakota, caused laughter from the audience. As one farmer noted that South Dakota has very successful farms, producing far more grain than us..

You can apply this shift of effective latitude to all locations, and determine the temperatures any community would experience. You quickly realize that temperature shifts are not as critical as changes in the pattern of precipitation. Arguments of increased deaths due to high temperatures simply don't make sense. First, many large cities already exists in hot regions. Second, more people die from cold than heat, especially in middle latitude cities.

Other benefits of a warmer world include reduced home heating costs, reduced fuel consumption for all forms of transportation, reduced road damage from frost, reduced traffic accident rates with less snow and ice, reduced labor and energy costs currently required to remove snow and ice, a year-round shipping season on the Great Lakes and in many northern ocean regions.

4. COLD-CLIMATE GOVERNMENT REACTION TO IPCC REPORTS

Government bureaucracies, who contribute most of the participants to the IPCC, worked actively to convince their political masters of the inevitable serious threat of global warming. Fear, lack of knowledge and misinformation has driven this misguided policy forward. In most cases official policy in one government department becomes the basic assumption for climate impact studies in other departments. This means we're preparing for only one temperature scenario across all government agencies and most private agencies are directly influenced in that direction as well. But what happens if the world gets colder? What are the chances of that occurring? What is being done to prepare for this distinct possibility?

Global temperatures have declined since 2000 A.D. despite continued increase in CO₂ levels. Many experts attribute the cooling primarily to a decrease in solar activity manifest in a reduced number of sunspots. The historical relationship shows higher temperatures with more sunspots and cooler temperatures with fewer. This correlation was ignored because there was no known mechanism for a cause and effect. Until Svensmark introduced the cosmic theory explanation of the mechanism the correlation was acknowledged but rejected. It is not included in the models and analysis of the 2007 IPCC Report even though the hypothesis was first ventured in 1991 and consistently expanded, tested and proven since.

Sunspot cycles are counted from Cycle 1 in 1610 to the current situation where Cycle 23 has ended but Cycle 24 has not begun. This delay has prompted solar physicists to predict a lower number of sunspots in cycle 24 and even fewer in cycle 25. Comparisons are made with a similar pattern that preceded a below-average sunspot number pattern known as the Dalton minimum. This was from approximately 1800 to 1820 A.D. and was a period out distinctly cooler temperatures. As the delay in cycle 24 extends the predictions for even lower sunspot numbers grows. Some are even suggesting conditions associated with the Maunder Minimum from 1645 to 1710 A.D., which was coincident with the Little Ice Age.

Only minimal global cooling threatens Canadian agriculture. Most occurs within 300 km of the 49th parallel so a small drop would make conditions difficult if not impossible for most crops. Cooler conditions in 1992 when dust from Mount Pinatubo reduced solar energy by 2 percent resulted in a 1°C drop in the 15°C global annual average temperature. It was the coolest summer on record in many regions. Winnipeg summer temperatures were similar to the average for Churchill 1000 km to the north. Harvests were delayed and yields were reduced across the country. Grains remained unripened into September across the Prairies. Heat units were low for corn in Southern Ontario. The drop was significant, but remember, the world was in a warmer period. Imagine the impact if global temperatures were already low. The volcano Tambora erupted in 1815 and lowered global temperatures by about 1.5°C, and caused harvest failures in 1816 known as "the year without a summer." Snow fell at Albany, New York, on June 6, while hard frosts occurred in every month of the summer throughout New England States.

The impacts of cooling are far more problematic for the world overall, but especially cold climate countries. Despite claims called increased deaths due to warmer temperatures far more people die from the cold even under current conditions.

Costs of living in a colder climate are already acknowledged through the provision of one in Canada is called a northern allowance. The total costs of a cooler world far exceed those of a warmer world. However, there is a more logical strategy that allows for warming or cooling.

Evidence indicates cooling is next in the natural temperature cycles driven by the sun. History shows cooling is a greater threat than warming. Logic, which is not evident in any policy to date, suggests we should prepare for cooling. Pascal was a rationalist and therefore not supposed to believe in God, but said he did when asked. He reasoned, and that's the important word, if he believed in God and there wasn't one he hadn't lost anything, but if he didn't believe and there was one he was in a trouble. The message; don't let your belief blind your reason.

It's usually foolish to prepare for only one outcome, but IPCC Reports leave little choice. However, it's even more foolish to prepare for warmer temperatures. If it gets warmer we simply adopt and adapt the crops and practices to our south. There is a very efficient well-developed agriculture already operating under expected conditions. If it gets colder we are on our own. Nobody is farming north of us and only isolated pockets of agriculture exist in harsher climates. There are no crops or farming practices to adopt or adapt. If you plan for warmer and it gets cooler you are in trouble, but if you plan for cooler and it gets warmer there is little adjustment needed. It's essentially a 'no lose' situation to prepare for cold. This is especially true for cold climate countries like Canada but also for all countries.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The world is preparing for warming based on politically directed and motivated science. It is a direction that makes no sense in the light of previous forecast failures; the political nature of the agency advocating such an approach; the degree to which climate changes naturally in relatively short time periods; historic evidence that cooling is far more problematic for flora and fauna; evidence that cooling has already begun and is expected to continue based on evidence not considered by the IPCC; and the fact there is a more logical strategy available. Prepare for cooling. This even suits the Precautionary Principle AGW advocates push, which demands action even in the face of great uncertainty.

SUGGESTED READING

Ball, T.F. 2008, <http://canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/1272>

Fagan, B., 2000, *The Little Ice Age* Basic Books NY

Grove, J., 1988, *The Little Ice Age*. Methuen & Co. Ltd, London.

Harington C.R., (ed) 1992, *The Year Without a Summer: World Climate in 1816*, Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Canada.

Lamb, H., 1977, *Climate; Present, Past and Future*. Methuen & Co. Ltd, London.

Lamb, H., 1995, *Climate, History, and the Modern World*, Routledge, London

<http://www.questia.com/library/book/climate-history-and-the-modern-world-by-h-h-lamb.jsp>

Soon, Willie Wei-Hock. And S. Yaskell., 2003, *The Maunder Minimum and the Variable Sun-Earth Connection*. World Scientific, NJ.

Stern, Nicholas, 2006, *The Economics of Climate Change: the Stern Review*, Cambridge University Press, 692 p.