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Global Warming: The Cold, Hard Facts?

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What would happen if tomorrow we were told that, after all, the Earth is flat? It would probably be the most important piece of news in the media and would generate a lot of debate. So why is it that when scientists who have studied the Global Warming phenomenon for years say that humans are not the cause nobody listens? Why does no one acknowledge that the Emperor has no clothes on?

Believe it or not, Global Warming is not due to human contribution of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). This in fact is the greatest deception in the history of science. We are wasting time, energy and trillions of dollars while creating unnecessary fear and consternation over an issue with no scientific justification. For example, Environment Canada brags about spending \$3.7 billion in the last five years dealing with climate change almost all on propaganda trying to defend an indefensible scientific position while at the same time closing weather stations and failing to meet legislated pollution targets.

No sensible person seeks conflict, especially with governments, but if we don't pursue the truth, we are lost as individuals and as a society. That is why I insist on saying that there is no evidence that we are, or could ever cause global climate change. And, recently, Yuri A. Izrael, Vice President of the United Nations sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirmed this statement. So how has the world come to believe that something is wrong?

Maybe for the same reason we believed, 30 years ago, that global cooling was the biggest threat: a matter of faith. "It is a cold fact: the Global Cooling presents humankind with the most important social, political, and adaptive challenge we have had to deal with for ten thousand years. Your stake in the decisions we make concerning it is of ultimate importance; the survival of ourselves, our children, our species," wrote Lowell Ponte in 1976.

I was as opposed to the threats of impending doom global cooling engendered as I am to the threats made about Global Warming. Let me stress I am not denying the phenomenon has occurred. The world has warmed since 1680, the nadir of a cool period called the Little Ice Age (LIA) that has generally continued to the present. These climate changes are well within natural variability and explained quite easily by changes in the sun. But there is nothing unusual going on.

Since I obtained my doctorate in climatology from the University of London, Queen Mary College, England my career has spanned two climate cycles. Temperatures declined from 1940 to 1980 and in the early 1970's global cooling became the consensus. This proves that consensus is not a scientific fact. By the 1990's temperatures appeared to have reversed and Global Warming became the consensus. It appears I'll witness another cycle before retiring, as the major mechanisms and the global temperature trends now indicate a cooling.

No doubt passive acceptance yields less stress, fewer personal attacks and makes career progress easier. What I have experienced in my personal life during the last years makes me understand why most people choose not to speak out; job security and fear of reprisals. Even in University, where free speech and challenge to prevailing wisdoms are supposedly encouraged, academics remain silent.

I once received a three page letter that my lawyer defined as libellous, from an academic colleague, saying I had no right to say what I was saying, especially in public lectures. Sadly, my experience is that universities are the most dogmatic and oppressive places in our society. This becomes progressively worse as they receive more and more funding from governments that demand a particular viewpoint.

In another instance, I was accused by Canadian environmentalist David Suzuki of being paid by oil companies. That is a lie. Apparently he thinks if the fossil fuel companies pay you have an agenda. So if Greenpeace, Sierra Club or governments pay there is no agenda and only truth and enlightenment?

Personal attacks are difficult and shouldn't occur in a debate in a civilized society. I can only consider them from what they imply. They usually indicate a person or group is losing the debate. In this case, they also indicate how political the entire Global Warming debate has become. Both underline the lack of or even contradictory nature of the evidence.

I am not alone in this journey against the prevalent myth. Several well-known names have also raised their voices. Michael Crichton, the scientist, writer and filmmaker is one of them. In his latest book, "State of Fear" he takes time to explain, often in surprising detail, the flawed science behind Global Warming and other imagined environmental crises.

Another cry in the wilderness is Richard Lindzen's. He is an atmospheric physicist and a professor of meteorology at MIT, renowned for his research in dynamic meteorology - especially atmospheric waves. He is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences and has held positions at the University of Chicago, Harvard University and MIT. Linzen frequently speaks out against the notion that significant Global Warming is caused by humans. Yet nobody seems to listen.

I think it may be because most people don't understand the scientific method which Thomas Kuhn so skilfully and briefly set out in his book "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions." A scientist makes certain assumptions and then produces a theory which is only as valid as the assumptions. The theory of Global Warming assumes that CO₂ is an atmospheric greenhouse gas and as it increases temperatures rise. It was then theorized that since humans were producing more CO₂ than before, the temperature would inevitably rise. The theory was accepted before testing had started, and effectively became a law.

As Lindzen said many years ago: "the consensus was reached before the research had even begun." Now, any scientist who dares to question the prevailing wisdom is marginalized and called a sceptic, when in fact they are simply being good scientists. This has reached frightening levels with these scientists now being called climate change denier with all the holocaust connotations of that word. The normal scientific method is effectively being thwarted.

Meanwhile, politicians are being listened to, even though most of them have no knowledge or understanding of science, especially the science of climate and climate change. Hence, they are in no position to question a policy on climate change when it threatens the entire planet. Moreover, using fear and creating hysteria makes it very difficult to make calm rational decisions about issues needing attention.

Until you have challenged the prevailing wisdom you have no idea how nasty people can be. Until you have re-examined any issue in an attempt to find out all the information, you cannot know how much misinformation exists in the supposed age of information.

I was greatly influenced several years ago by Aaron Wildavsky's book "Yes, but is it true?" The author taught political science at a New York University and realized how science was being influenced by and apparently misused by politics. He gave his graduate students an assignment to pursue the science behind a policy generated by a highly publicised environmental concern. To his and their surprise they found there was little scientific evidence, consensus and justification for the policy. You only realize the extent to which Wildavsky's findings occur when you ask the question he posed. Wildavsky's students did it in the safety of academia and with the excuse that it was an assignment. I have learned it is a difficult question to ask in the real world, however I firmly believe it is the most important question to ask if we are to advance in the right direction.

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