

The Week That Was: 2011-12-03 (December 3, 2011)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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SEASONS GREETINGS

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SEASONS GREETINGS

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Quote of the Week:

"If you think that science is certain—well that's just an error on your part." Richard Feynman [H/t Daniel Botkin, WSJ]

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Number of the Week: 28.5, 47, and 1.3 billion

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THIS WEEK:

By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)

Climategate II: Although largely ignored or dismissed as “more of the same” by the mainstream press, the Climategate II emails continue to reveal the extent of the deceit, misinformation, and underhanded tricks the “team” uses to suppress challenges to their cause. As can be gleaned from in their emails, the “cause” is not the scientific cause of global warming, which is no longer occurring, but their cause is claiming human emissions of carbon dioxide are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming. In other words, their cause is to lay the blame for global warming / climate change on human emissions of carbon dioxide.

It is important to recognize that the leaked emails come from the computer servers used by the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia, thus are limited to the correspondence going through CRU.

Roger Pielke Sr. strongly believes that humans cause local and regional climate change, but in many ways other than carbon dioxide emissions. In discussing the Climategate II emails, he makes an important differentiation between the “team”, those involved in Climategate emails,

and what he calls the “oligarchy” – the few who control key decisions and reports of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Limiting the failings of the IPCC science to the “team” and criticizing the team it is not sufficient. The “oligarchy” must be changed before there is any hope of unbiased scientific rigor in the reports of the IPCC.

A number of web sites are reporting interesting revelations from the Climategate II emails. In Climate Audit, Steve McIntyre is focusing largely on the discredited “hockey-stick” and the efforts to “hide the decline.” In establishing any scientific credibility to Michael Mann’s “hockey-stick” it was important to calibrate the proxy, tree-ring data with instrument data. Since proxy data may have shown no warming a cooling after about 1980 while surface temperatures showed a warming, the calibration was impossible. Mann’s “Nature” trick was to eliminate the proxy data after about 1980. This is one of the subjects of the “Freedom of Information” quest for Mann’s emails while at the University of Virginia, which is still under court review.

Anthony Watts in <http://wattsupwiththat.com/> is providing ongoing threads on the significant revelations from the emails. Marc Morano in Climate Depot, <http://www.climatedepot.com/>, is providing some details and reactions. AW Montfort, in <http://bishophill.squarespace.com/>, is focusing on the British efforts and is compiling a list of the most outrageous efforts by the “team.” Perhaps the most egregious was by Tom Wigley of the US National Center for Atmospheric Research trying to open an investigation to revoke the Ph.D. earned by Patrick Michaels, a luke-warmer. No doubt, until Climategate II, Wigley was unaware that his own team members considered his statistical efforts to defend the claims were substandard. Please see links under “Climategate” and “Suppressing Scientific Inquiry.”

Person or Persons of Interest: TWTW seldom links to web postings in which the writers are not identified. But, Jo Nova has posted an interesting speculative description of the Climategate leaker(s) by someone only identified as Pointman. Among the issues brought up is why the leaker(s) have not been caught. Hint: there are still 200,000 plus emails behind a special code. Please see links to “Person or Persons(s) of Interest.”

COP 17: The 17th Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convened on Monday in the resort city of Durban, South Africa, and will last until next Friday. Ostensibly, the goal is to continue the agreements of the Kyoto Protocol to control human emissions of carbon dioxide, which expires at the end of 2012. As of this time, that appears not possible. Canada has announced that it will pull out, the US was never in, and Russia, South Africa and other nations are not interested. China has stated it is willing to continue the Protocol – which places all the efforts for such controls onto Western countries, yet but does not include China.

What now appears to be the current primary goal of the UN organizers of this conference is to have developed countries pay into the newly invented UN Green Climate Fund \$100 Billion (US) per year by 2020 for pretended damages from global warming caused by human emissions of carbon dioxide. This money will be distributed by UN bureaucrats as they see fit. The UN is not noted for its financial accountability, and, of course, the fact that carbon dioxide emissions of China exceed those of the US does not deter the UN demand the US must pay.

COP 17 will present new demands, and work for an agreement of past demands that will justify more such multi-million meetings in the future – none of which have great meaning except to waste money better used for other purposes. Such meetings will continue as long as the UN leaders believe they can extort money from developed nations by using the fear of global warming. Please see Articles # 1 and #2, and links under “Questioning the Orthodoxy.”

Climate Ethics or Morals: Global warming activists have introduced a new, lower dimension in their advocacy that human emissions of carbon dioxide are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming. The “National Climate Ethics Campaign” declares that it is the moral and ethical responsibility for national leaders to aggressively respond to climate change. Among US politicians who publically endorse the campaign are those who advocated carbon dioxide cap-and-trade in the US, such as Sen. Barbara Boxer, Reps. Ed Markey and Harry Waxman. The advocates give no evidence supporting their assertions of ethics and morality other than their belief of the orthodoxy.

The Climate Ethics or Morals campaign is another dogma. The advocates accept no dissent. Those who question claims that human emissions of carbon dioxide are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming are labeled as deniers, immoral and unethical. Those who promote such claims are “scientists,” even when they distort scientific methodology and knowledge. Please see links under “Expanding the Orthodoxy.”

Raising Energy Costs to Consumers: Two agencies under the administration announced plans that will no doubt raise energy costs to consumer. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission announced that it will recalculate the payments that hydropower licensees must pay for use of Federal land. Many of the nation’s major hydropower projects were funded by the Federal government to create prosperity using Federal lands. These include the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the Southeast, the Colorado River projects in the Southwest, and the largest, the Bonneville Power Administration in the Northwest. The extent to which charges will increase has not yet been determined.

The EPA announced it will release a “guidance” document concerning the use of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) to extract oil or natural gas. These methods are greatly adding to the prosperity of several states, including Pennsylvania for natural gas and North Dakota for oil. The announcement has alarmed officials in North Dakota, where the oil boom has resulted in the lowest unemployment rate in the nation – about 3.5%. The alarm is based upon the EPA actions against Alabama, where it issued a similar document and then declared a moratorium on fracking until the state passed regulations complying with the “guidance” document. Officials in North Dakota fear moratoriums expected to last one to two year. All the wells being drilled in North Dakota depend on fracking. While in a special session for other purposes, the legislature allocated \$1 million to fight the EPA. The EPA has failed to produce scientific evidence justifying such actions and officials expect if EPA is successful each well will require a long approval process. Drilling in Alabama has still not recovered from EPA guidance. Please see links under “EPA and other Regulators on the March.”

Extreme Weather: As of December 4 the US will pass 2,232 days without a hurricane making landfall in the US (Irene was a tropical storm when it hit this fall). This is the longest such period

since 1900. As Roger Pielke, Jr. points out, what is the probability of models predicting catastrophic climate events predicting such a dearth of hurricanes – zero?

NUMBERS OF THE WEEK: 28.5, 47, and 1.3 billion. Over the past decade, global carbon-dioxide emissions rose by 28.5%, while US emissions fell by 1.7%. Over the past decade coal use rose by 47%. 1.3 Billion people do not have access to electricity today. Please see “Nothing Doing In Durban” by Robert Bryce under “Questioning the Orthodoxy. “

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see this week’s TWTW at: www.sepp.org. The articles are at the end of the pdf.

1. Durban Climate Conference: The Dream Fades

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Nov 28, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/11/durban_climate_conference_the_dream_fades.html

2. The Great Global Warming Fizzle

The climate religion fades in spasms of anger and twitches of boredom.

By Bret Stephens, WSJ, Nov 29, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203935604577066183761315576.html>

3. Absolute Certainty Is Not Scientific

Global warming alarmists betray their cause when they declare that it is irresponsible to question them.

By Daniel B. Botkin, WSJ, Dec 2, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204630904577058111041127168.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

4. U.S. Nears Milestone: Net Fuel Exporter

By Liam Plevin and Russell Gold, WSJ, Nov 30, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203441704577068670488306242.html?mod=WSJ_business_LeftSecondHighlights

U.S. exports of gasoline, diesel and other oil-based fuels are soaring, putting the nation on track to be a net exporter of petroleum products in 2011 for the first time in 62 years.

5. The United States of EPA

Ms. Jackson's agency takes over automobile design.

Editorial, WSJ, Nov 28, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204630904577056393981840650.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

Hide-the-Divide Plus

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Dec 1, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/12/01/hide-the-divide-plus/>

Direct Action at Harvard

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Nov 28, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/11/28/direct-action-at-harvard/#more-15067>

Behind Closed Doors: “Perpetuating Rubbish”

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Nov 25, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/11/25/behind-closed-doors-perpetuating-rubbish/>

Climategate II: An Open Letter to the Director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research

By Patrick Michaels, Forbes, Dec 2, 2011

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/patrickmichaels/2011/12/02/climategate-ii-an-open-letter-to-the-director-of-the-national-center-for-atmospheric-research/#more-247>

Climategate 2.0 emails – thread #2

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 30, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/11/30/climategate-2-0-emails-thread-2/#more-52304>

Climatic Research Unit Shameful Peer-Review Control Tactics: The Soon/Baliunas Debacle.

By Tim Ball, His Blog, Nov 28, 2011

<http://drtimball.com/2011/climatic-research-unit-shameful-peer-review-control-tactics-the-soonbaliunas-debacle/>

Scientists Behaving Badly

More nails for the coffin of man-made global warming

By Jim Lacy, National Review, Nov 28, 2011

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/284137/scientists-behaving-badly-jim-lacey>

Significance Of Climategate #2 – Further Evidence Of The Failure Of An Appropriate and Accurate Assessment Of Climate Science

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Nov 2, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/12/02/significance-of-climategate-2-further-evidence-of-the-failure-of-an-appropriate-and-accurate-assessment-of-climate-science/>

Climategate II: More Smoking Guns From The Global Warming Establishment

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Nov 29, 2011

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2011/11/29/climategate-ii-more-smoking-guns-from-the-global-warming-establishment/>

ClimateGate II: Handy Guide to spot whitewash journalism – The top 10 excuses for scientists behaving badly

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Dec 2, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/11/climategate-ii-handy-guide-to-spot-whitewash-journalism-the-top-10-excuses-for-scientists-behaving-badly/>

Further Documentation Of Inappropriate Behavior By A Subset Of Members Of The CCSP 1.1 Committee And The NRC Review Committee

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Nov 30, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/11/30/further-documentation-of-inappropriate-behavior-of-members-of-the-ccsp-1-1-committee-and-the-nrc-review-committee/>

I'm not supposed to talk to anyone of the report authors !!"[the exclamation point was in the e-mail].

Climategate 2.0

A new batch of leaked emails again shows some leading scientists trying to smear opponents.

By James Delingpole, WSJ, Nov 28, 2011 [H/t Roger Cohen]

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204452104577059830626002226.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

[SEPP Comment: May be behind a paywall.]

Suppressing Scientific Inquiry

Crushing of dissent

By AW Montford, Bishop Hill, Dec 3, 2011

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2011/12/3/crushing-of-dissent.html>

OMSI cancels global warming presentation, saying panel was one-sided

By Scott Learn, The Oregonian, Nov 28, 2011

http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2011/11/omsi_cancels_global_warming_pr.html

[OMSI is the Oregon Museum for Science and Industry.]

OSU's Mote helps block AMS function featuring local skeptics; Battig letter on students against coal

By Dr. Gordon Fulks and Dr. Charles Battig, ICECAP, Nov 29, 2011

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/new-and-cool/letter_students_against_coal_would_benefit_from_more_research1/

Climate change science being stifled by NSW Labor bureaucrats

By Malcolm Holland, Telegraph, AU, Dec 2, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/sydney-nsw/climate-change-science-being-stifled-by-nsw-labor-bureaucrats/story-e6freuzi-1226211748047>

Ideology And Climate Change: How To Silence Journalists

By Markus Lehmkühl, Wissenschafts-Pressekonferenz, Dec 1, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.thegwpf.org/science-news/4472-ideology-and-climate-change-how-to-silence-journalists.html>

Person or Persons of Interest

A dead man's hand detonator on hidden emails may protect ClimateGate whistleblower

By "Pointman", Jo Nova, Nov 29, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/11/pointman-a-dead-mans-hand-detonator-on-hidden-emails-may-protect-climategate-whistleblower/>

README of FOI2011, Nov 2011

<http://thepointman.wordpress.com/readme-of-foi2011/>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Met Office Climate Forecasts: Always Wrong But Never In Doubt

By David Whitehouse, The Observatory, Dec 1, 2011

<http://www.thegwpf.org/the-observatory/4468-met-office-climate-forecasts-always-wrong-but-never-in-doubt.html>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Why climategate is a catastrophe for science

By Christopher Cadwell, FT.com, UK, Nov 25, 2011 [H/t Warren Wetmore]

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/b8bfa07e-1692-11e1-be1d-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1ex2gu0vh>

Until the replacement of the Italian government earlier this month, the climate change establishment was probably the most robust technocracy in the west. [SEPP Comment: No comment needed.]

Past decade ties for world's hottest: UN agency

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 29, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Past_decade_ties_for_worlds_hottest_UN_agency_999.html

2011 ranks as the 10th warmest year since 1850, when accurate measurements began.

While La Nina, and its meteorological cousin El Nino, are not caused by climate change, ...

[SEPP Comment: We have had comprehensive global temperature measurements since 1850?]

After apartheid, Tutu aims at 'huge enemy' climate change

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 27, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/After_apartheid_Tutu_aims_at_huge_enemy_climate_change_999.html

Durban and the climate change deniers

A repeat of the failed Copenhagen summit is likely unless the global north is prepared to take its fair share of CO2 cuts

By Praful Bidwai, Guardian, UK, Nov 28, 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/nov/28/durban-climate-change-deniers-copenhagen>

£1 billion of UK aid to fight climate change in Africa

The UK is set to pour up to £1 billion of taxpayers money into helping African countries fight climate change.

By Richard Gray, Telegraph, UK, Nov 26, 2011 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/8918045/1-billion-of-UK-aid-to-fight-climate-change-in-Africa.html>

Global warming forgotten in 2012 race

By Ed Rogers, Washington Post, Nov 30, 2011 [H/t Warren Wetmore]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-insiders/post/global-warming-forgotten-in-2012-race/2011/11/30/gIQA29CBDO_blog.html

Questioning the Orthodoxy

U.N. Climate Conference's Goal? One-World Gov't

By Phyllis Schlafly, IBD, Nov 29, 2011

<http://news.investors.com/Article.aspx?id=593094&p=1>

Nothing Doing In Durban

By Robert Bryce, Energy Tribune, Dec 2, 2011

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/9287/Nothing-Doing-In-Durban>

Durban Due Diligence

By Kelvin Kemm, Townhall, Nov 30, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/kelvinkemm/2011/11/30/durban_due_diligence/page/full/

Global warming alarmism cooling

At U.N. climate conference, poorer nations still want to soak richer ones.

Share

Editorial, Orange County Register, Nov 30, 2011 [H/t Warren Wetmore]
<http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/nations-329358-global-warming.html>

Secrecy in Science – An Argument for open Access

By Fred Pearce, Index on Censorship, Nov 29, 2011 [H/t GWPF]
<http://www.indexoncensorship.org/2011/11/climate-change-secrecy-freedom-information/>

The Confused Climate Change Consensus

By Art Horn, Energy Tribune, Nov 30, 2011
<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/9264/The-Confused-Climate-Change-Consensus>

Eco-Absurdity

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Dec 1, 2011
<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2011/12/eco-absurdity.html>

The moral climate

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Nov 28, 2011
<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/11/28/peter-foster-the-moral-climate/>
[SEPP Comment: First of two parts.]

Closing the door on Kyoto

By Terence Corcoran, Financial Post, Nov 28, 2011
<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/11/28/terence-corcoran-closing-the-door-on-kyoto/>

Questioning European Green

Environmentalism in a recession

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Dec 2, 2011
<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/environmentalism-recession>
[SEPP Comment: The first US Park was Yellowstone, established by Congress 1872.]

Expanding the Orthodoxy

BBC sought advice from global warming scientists on economy, drama, music... and even game shows

By David Rose, Daily Mail, Nov 27, 2011
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2066706/BBC-sought-advice-global-warming-scientists-economy-drama-music--game-shows.html>

Britain's leading green activist research centre spent £15,000 on seminars for top BBC executives in an apparent bid to block climate change sceptics from the airwaves, a vast new cache of leaked 'Climategate' emails has revealed.

National Climate Ethics Campaign

Climate Change: The Ethical Dimension
New campaign focuses on moral responsibility to tackle global warming
Press Release, Nov 30, 2011
<http://climateethicscampaign.org/>

Groups frame climate as a moral cause

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post, Nov 30, 2011 [H/t Conrad Potemra]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/groups-frame-climate-as-a-moral-cause/2011/11/30/gIQAFABdEO_story.html

Penn State to lecture on “climate ethics”

Posted by Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 29, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/11/29/penn-state-to-lecture-on-climate-ethics/#more-52190>

Open letter to Dr. Erickson, President of Penn State University

By Reed Coray, WUWT, Dec 1, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/12/01/open-letter-to-dr-erickson-president-of-penn-state-university/#more-52337>

UN mobilizes civil society for Rio's environment summit

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 28, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/UN_mobilizes_civil_society_for_Rios_environment_summit_999.html

Problems within the Orthodoxy

Europe Completely Isolated At Durban Climate Summit

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 30, 2011

<http://www.thegwpf.org/the-climate-record/4460-europe-completely-isolated-at-durban-climate-summit-.html>

Climate change conference lures no congressmen

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post, Nov 30, 2011

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/climate-change-battle-framed-in-moral-terms-by-environmental-coalition/2011/11/30/gIQA4NhADO_blog.html

Salvaging Kyoto a 'tall order': UN climate chief

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 27, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Salvaging_Kyoto_a_tall_order_UN_climate_chief_999.html

Rifts emerge as UN climate talks open

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 28, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Rifts_emerge_as_UN_climate_talks_open_999.html

Canada rejects new binding climate change pact

Setback for 100 bln dollar aid fund at climate talks

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 30, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Setback_for_100_bln_dollar_aid_fund_at_climate_talks_999.html

Seeking a Common Ground

Santa Fe Conference: Part II – Some presentations

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Nov 19, 2011

<http://judithcurry.com/2011/11/19/santa-fe-conference-part-ii-2/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate, or be Vague?

19 hurricanes in third-most active Atlantic season

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 28, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/19_hurricanes_in_third-most_active_Atlantic_season_999.html

[SEPP Comment: See Pielke below, longest period ever with no hurricane making landfall in the US. When Irene made landfall it was no longer a hurricane. Until recently, many storms passed unnoticed.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Weather's Too Nice For Global Warming Alarmists

Editorial, IBD, Nov 30, 2011

<http://news.investors.com/Article/593290/201111301836/fewer-strong-storms-disproves-global-warming-.htm>

World on track for nearly 11-degree temperature rise, energy expert says

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post, Nov 28, 2011 [H/t Conrad Potemra]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/world-on-track-for-nearly-11-degree-temperature-rise-energy-expert-says/2011/11/28/gIQAi0IM6N_story.html?sub=AR

[SEPP Comment: So much for the climate expertise of the International Energy Agency.]

The worst kind of ugly climate propaganda: David Suzuki targets kids at Christmas in the name of climate change

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 30, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/11/30/the-worst-kind-of-ugly-propaganda-david-suzuki-targets-kids-at-christmas-in-the-name-of-climate-chnage/>

Changing Weather

A New US Hurricane Record

By Roger Pielke Jr, His Blog, Nov 28, 2011

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2011/11/new-us-hurricane-record.html>

Weather, Not Climate

By Walter Russell Mead, American Interest, Nov 28, 2011

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2011/11/28/weather-not-climate/>

Thailand counts cost of monster floods

by Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 25, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Thailand_counts_cost_of_monster_floods_999.html

The Political Games Continue

US lawmakers seek to force Obama move on pipeline

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 30, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/US_lawmakers_seek_to_force_Obama_move_on_pipeline_999.html

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Australia picks last possible moment to leap ONTO burning ship

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Nov 26, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/11/australia-picks-last-possible-moment-to-leap-onto-burning-ship/#more-19080>

JP Morgan Follows UBS Cutting Carbon Jobs as Permits Plunge

By Staff Writers, Businessweek, Dec 2, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://news.businessweek.com/article.asp?documentKey=1376-LV5XUS0D9L3501-50H9RJNUM2M4OTOD1JNVVJTGR>

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Era of energy subsidies is over

American consumers, not Congress, should choose best power sources

By Reps Raul Labrador and Mike Pompeo, Washington Times, Nov 26, 2011 [H/t John Droz]

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/nov/26/era-of-energy-subsidies-is-over/>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Helms says EPA could halt fracking in oil patch

By Lauren Donovan, Bismarck Tribune, Nov 27, 2011 [H/t Gretchen Randall]

http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/helms-says-epa-could-halt-fracking-in-oil-patch/article_fe9a3284-18b9-11e1-ba39-001cc4c03286.html

The Legislature allocated \$1 million in the recent special redistricting session for a legal challenge against the EPA

Will The EPA Choke Oil Shale Production

Editorial, IBD, Nov 30, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://news.investors.com/Article.aspx?id=593291&p=1>

EPA Wastewater Regulation—What a Waste!

By Jackie Moreau, Global Warming.org, Dec 1, 2011

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2011/12/01/epa-wastewater-regulation%E2%80%94what-a-waste/>

FERC Proposes Annual Charge for Federal Land Hydropower Licensees

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Nov 30, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4207.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2336079&hq_l=10&hq_v=5e660500d0

NERC: EPA Rules Could Stress the Nation's Grid

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Nov 30, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4210.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2336079&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e66050d0

Chesapeake Bay 'pollution diet' is really about control

By: Barbara Hollingsworth, Washington Examiner, Nov 29, 2011

http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/11/chesapeake-bay-pollution-diet-really-about-control/1958766?utm_source=11/30%20Opinion%20Digest%20-%2011/30/2011&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Washington%20Examiner:%20Opinion%20Digest

Energy Issues

Canadian energy sector marches to its own drummer

Claudia Cattaneo, Financial Post, Nov 28, 2011

<http://business.financialpost.com/2011/11/28/canadian-energy-sector-marches-to-its-own-drummer/>

Venezuela, China sign \$6 billion oil deals

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 24, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Venezuela_China_sign_6_billion_oil_deals_999.html

[SEPP Comment: No environmentalists protesting dirty oil here.]

Remembering 'Green' Enron (Part II: Corporate Social Responsibility)

By Robert Bradley Jr., Master Resource, Dec 2, 2011
<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/12/remembering-green-enron-part-ii-corporate-social-responsibility/>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Field of dreams, or an environment nightmare?

Energy companies are planning a huge increase in the number of British drilling sites for shale gas, as arguments rage over whether the controversial fuel is safe.

By Andrew Gilligan, Telegraph, UK, Nov 26, 2011 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/gas/8918399/Field-of-dreams-or-an-environment-nightmare.html>

The Non-Green Jobs Boom

Forget 'clean energy.' Oil and gas are boosting U.S. employment.

Editorial, WSJ, Nov 28, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204190704577024510087261078.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

[SEPP Comment: May be behind a paywall.]

Administration's Control of Oil and Gas

Badly-Needed Alaskan Oil Is Kept From Market By Obama Decision

Editorial, IBD, Nov 29, 2011

<http://news.investors.com/Article.aspx?id=593183&p=1>

Obama's Green War Continues

By Gary Jason, American Thinker, Nov 26, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/11/obamas_green_war_continues.html

Return of King Coal?

IEA: The Forward March of Coal Continues

By Frank Clemente, Energy Facts Weekly, Nov 29, 2011

<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=0997459526&e=>

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Reactor Core Melted Fully, Japan Says

Fuel Breached Vessel Floor, Operator Says, In Its Gravest Fukushima Status Report

By Mitsuru Obe and Tom Fowler, WSJ, Dec 1, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204262304577069302835999204.html?mod=ITP_pageone_2

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Energy

Chu'd out

Americans can't afford a wasteful energy secretary

Editorial, Washington Times, Nov 24, 2011 [H/t SPPI]

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/nov/24/chud-out/>

Wind power truly in the realm of mysticism

By Kelvin Kemm, Engineering News, ZA, Nov 25, 2011 [H/t John Droz]

<http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/wind-power-truly-in-the-realm-of-mysticism-2011-11-25>

Watching The Wheels Come Off The Green Machine

By Bill Frezza, Forbes, Nov 29, 2011

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/billfrezza/2011/11/29/watching-the-wheels-come-off-the-green-machine/>

Windpower's PTC: Secondary to State Mandates

By Lisa Linowes and Bill Short, Master Resource, Nov 28, 2011

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/11/windpower-ptc-state-mandate/#more-17611>

[PTC stands for production tax credit.]

Wind power to account for half of Danish energy use in 2020

By Staff Writers, AFP Nov 25, 2011

http://www.winddaily.com/reports/Wind_power_to_account_for_half_of_Danish_energy_use_in_2020_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The highest electricity rates in Europe should be no obstacle – households will cut back on electricity consumption.]

Why Silicon Valley will never become Green Energy Valley

By Andrew McKillop, European Energy Review, Nov 29, 2011 [H/t John Droz]

<http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=3385>

OSU study questions cost-effectiveness of biofuels and their ability to cut fossil fuel use

By Staff Writers, SPX, Dec 01, 2011

http://www.biofueldaily.com/reports/OSU_study_questions_cost_effectiveness_of_biofuels_and_their_ability_to_cut_fossil_fuel_use_999.html

Carbon Schemes

Pipelines Required For CCS

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Dec 2, 2011

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2011/12/02/pipelines-required-for-ccs/>

Consortium begins injection of CO2 for storage at Illinois Basin

By Staff Writers, SPX, Nov 30, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Consortium_begins_injection_of_CO2_for_storage_at_Illinois_Basin_999.html

Ameren Quits Federally Backed Clean Coal Project

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Nov 30, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4211.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2336079&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e66050d0

California Dreaming

Want To Be Carbon-Free? Bring On The Nukes

Editorial, IBD, Nov 29, 2011

<http://news.investors.com/Article/593182/201111291848/california-in-denial-about-its-nuclear-needs.htm>

A how-to guide to slashing California's greenhouse gas emissions by 2050

By Staff Writers, SPX, Nov 30, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/A_how_to_guide_to_slashing_Californias_greenhouse_gas_emissions_by_2050_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Item # 1, drive up the costs to force the public to stop consuming electricity.]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

Surface Mass Balance of the Greenland Ice Sheet

Reference: Ettema, J., van den Broeke, M.R., van Meijgaard, E., van de Berg, W.J., Bamber, J.L., Box, J.E. and Bales, R.C. 2009. Higher surface mass balance of the Greenland ice sheet revealed by high-resolution climate modeling. *Geophysical Research Letters* 36: 10.1029/2009GL038110.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/nov/29nov2011a3.html>

With respect to the stability/longevity of the Greenland Ice Sheet, Ettema *et al.* state that "considerably more mass accumulates on the Greenland Ice Sheet than previously thought, adjusting upwards earlier estimates by as much as 63%," which suggests that the Northern Hemisphere's largest ice sheet is not in danger of disintegrating any time soon

Millennial Climate Variability Along the Coast of the Northwestern Iberian Peninsula

Reference: Andrade, A., Rubio, B., Rey, D., Alvarez-Iglesias, P., Bernabeu, A.M. and Vilas, F. 2011. Palaeoclimatic changes in the NW Iberian Peninsula during the last 3000 years inferred from diagenetic proxies in the Ria de Muros sedimentary record. *Climate Research* 48: 247-259.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/nov/30nov2011a2.html>

Humanity's Future: Will There Be Enough Water ... to Grow Enough Food?

Reference: Fereres, E., Orgaz, F. and Gonzalez-Dugo, V. 2011. Reflections on food security under water scarcity. *Journal of Experimental Botany* 62: 4079-4086.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/nov/29nov2011a4.html>

The Next Forty Years of Hypothetical Global Warming

Reference: Fu, C.-B., Qian, C. and Wu, Z.-H. 2011. Projection of global mean surface air temperature changes in next 40 years: Uncertainties of climate models and an alternative approach. *Science China Earth Sciences* 54: 1400-1406.

"most of the individual model runs fail to reproduce the MDV of past climate, which may have led to the overestimation of the projection of global warming for the next 40 years or so." [MDV stands for multi-decadal variability.]

Environmental Industry

Chemical fear mongering goes into overdrive

By Dr. Gilbert Ross, the Executive Director and Medical Director of the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) in New York., The Hill, Nov 28, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/energy-a-environment/195599-chemical-fear-mongering-goes-into-overdrive>

Other Scientific News

Drop in Carbon Dioxide Levels Led to Polar Ice Sheet, Study Finds

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Dec 1, 2011

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/12/111201174225.htm>

"The evidence falls in line with what we would expect if carbon dioxide is the main dial that governs global climate; if we crank it up or down there are dramatic changes,"

[SEPP Comment: Does not address Arctic ice nor ice ages for the past 2.5 million years. Also does not explain how ice ages start even when carbon dioxide levels are rising.]

NASA launches biggest-ever rover to Mars

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 26, 2011

http://www.marsdaily.com/reports/NASA_launches_biggest-ever_rover_to_Mars_999.html

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

US Could Achieve Over \$80 Billion In Lower Energy Costs By Focusing On Safer, Renewable Energy

By Staff Writers, SPX, Nov 29, 2011

[http://www.energy-](http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/US_Could_Achieve_Over_80_Billion_In_Lower_Energy_Costs_By_Focusing_On_Safer_Renewable_Energy_999.html)

[daily.com/reports/US_Could_Achieve_Over_80_Billion_In_Lower_Energy_Costs_By_Focusing_On_Safer_Renewable_Energy_999.html](http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/US_Could_Achieve_Over_80_Billion_In_Lower_Energy_Costs_By_Focusing_On_Safer_Renewable_Energy_999.html)

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ARTICLES:

1. Durban Climate Conference: The Dream Fades

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Nov 28, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/11/durban_climate_conference_the_dream_fades.html

Things don't look promising for the perennial climate confab which convenes in Durban, South Africa today. There is little chance of extending the expiring 1997 Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. Kyoto has turned into a giant international scam that has already wasted hundreds of billions, with little to show for it; in fact, the increase in atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases has been accelerating.

What brings nearly 200 delegations together is a dream -- the forlorn hope that developed nations who have ratified the Protocol will come up with a \$100-billion-per-year aid program. This is supposed to allow developing nations to adapt to the putative climate disasters that the IPCC, the U.N.'s climate-science panel, has been predicting for more than 20 years. The U.S., which never ratified Kyoto, is expected to supply the lion's share of this subsidy. Fat chance; just look at the polls and listen to the statements from leading Republican presidential candidates who denounce these disaster predictions as "hoax" and "poppycock."

But the 10,000 or so Durban attendees -- official delegates, U.N. and government officials, journalists, NGO types, and other hangers-on -- will have a grand old time: two weeks of feasting, partying, living it up in luxury hotels, and greeting old friends at this 17th reunion -- all at someone else's expense. Statesmen will arrive on the last day to sign important-sounding communiqués and quickly depart before having to explain just how they will "save the climate" and humanity.

Developed nations are on a guilt trip, convinced that their industrial development has resulted in most of the past rise of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. But is this necessarily bad? Have extreme climate events really increased? Can we even trace and prove a measurable anthropogenic effect on climate? Or, more likely perhaps, have higher CO₂ levels improved crop yields and averted mass starvation of a growing world population? What does science have to say about this?

That's where the U.N.-IPCC should come into play. But its credibility has been irreparably damaged -- especially in the past two years. Personally, I tend to discount the recent revelations of the e-mails of "Climategate" bearing on IPCC incompetence and lack of trustworthiness. These e-mails are not telling me anything new. The "usual suspects" are seen to be plotting and scheming to support "the cause" -- even as some of them are beginning to have doubts. Yet they continue to hide information, manipulate data, and subvert the peer-review process, the bedrock of scientific integrity. The damage they cause to the general scientific enterprise is hard to overestimate.

But quite aside from the non-ethical behavior of the IPCC principals, what about the science itself? Perhaps the science isn't so certain after all -- even though the IPCC report of 2007 claims to be 90 to 99 percent sure that most of the claimed warming between 1978 and 2000 is anthropogenic, caused by carbon dioxide from the burning of fuels to generate energy.

As an atmospheric scientist, I am intrigued by the results of the [BEST project](#), said to "confirm" the findings of the temperature analyses of the IPCC. Indeed, they all seem to show a rapid warming of the land surface between 1978 and 2000. So, it is claimed, this proves that "global warming is real."

But I wonder about the logic of this assertion. After all, BEST and IPCC are not really independent; they all rely on readings from land-surface thermometers at weather stations. Even though BEST used about five times as many stations, these covered the same land area -- less than 30% of the Earth's surface -- with recording stations that are poorly distributed, mainly in the U.S. and Western Europe.

The warmistas apparently have not listened to the somewhat skeptical pronouncements from Prof. Richard Muller, the originator and leader of the well-documented and transparent BEST study. He states that 70% of U.S. stations are badly sited and don't meet the standards set by government; the rest of the world is likely worse.

But unlike the land surface, the atmosphere has shown no warming trend, either over land or over ocean -- according to satellites and independent data from weather balloons. This indicates to me that there is something very wrong with the land-surface data. Climate models, run on supercomputers, all insist that the atmosphere must warm faster than the surface -- and so does theory.

How, then, does one explain the absence of any warming of the atmosphere? I have real doubts about reported warming of the oceans during the same time period. And there is little question that proxy (non-thermometer) data show mostly no post-1978 warming trend. I note that the multi-proxy analysis published by Michael Mann et al (*Nature*, 1998) suddenly stops in 1978. I would place a small bet that this analysis shows no post-1978 warming -- which may be why it was withheld.

None of the warmistas can explain why the climate hasn't warmed in the 21st century, while CO₂ has been increasing rapidly. Muller is careful to make no claim whatsoever that the warming he finds is due to human causes. He tells us that one third of the 39,000 stations used by BEST show cooling, not warming trends -- and admits that "the uncertainty [involved in these stations] is large compared to the analyses of global warming." Muller nevertheless insists that if he uses a large enough set of bad numbers, he could get a good average. I am not so sure.

It might be a good idea if BEST would carry out some prudent internal checks to eliminate possible sources of error. Of course, the most important checks must come from records -- atmosphere, ocean, and proxies -- that are independent of weather station thermometers. Even then, it may be difficult to pinpoint the exact causes of climate change.

I conclude, therefore, that the balance of evidence favors little if any global warming during 1978-2000; it contradicts the main conclusion of the IPCC -- i.e., that recent warming is "very likely" (90%-99% certain) caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gases like CO₂. There is no evidence at all for significant future warming. BEST is a valuable effort, but it does not settle the climate debate.

So we are left with a puzzle: why do land-surface data differ from all other independent climate results? Is there really substantial global warming to support the IPCC's conclusion of AGW? These are the fundamental questions to focus on in Durban -- not extension of the moribund Kyoto Protocol.

2. The Great Global Warming Fizzle

The climate religion fades in spasms of anger and twitches of boredom.

By Bret Stephens, WSJ, Nov 29, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203935604577066183761315576.html>

How do religions die? Generally they don't, which probably explains why there's so little literature on the subject. Zoroastrianism, for instance, lost many of its sacred texts when Alexander sacked Persepolis in 330 B.C., and most Zoroastrians converted to Islam over 1,000 years ago. Yet today old Zoroaster still counts as many as 210,000 followers, including 11,000 in the U.S. Christopher Hitchens might say you can't kill what wasn't there to begin with.

Still, Zeus and Apollo are no longer with us, and neither are Odin and Thor. Among the secular gods, Marx is mostly dead and Freud is totally so. Something did away with them, and it's worth asking what.

Consider the case of global warming, another system of doomsaying prophecy and faith in things unseen.

As with religion, it is presided over by a caste of spectacularly unattractive people pretending to an obscure form of knowledge that promises to make the seas retreat and the winds abate. As with religion, it comes with an elaborate list of virtues, vices and indulgences. As with religion, its claims are often non-falsifiable, hence the convenience of the term "climate change" when thermometers don't oblige the expected trend lines. As with religion, it is harsh toward skeptics, heretics and other "deniers." And as with religion, it is susceptible to the earthly temptations of money, power, politics, arrogance and deceit.

This week, the conclave of global warming's cardinals are meeting in Durban, South Africa, for their 17th conference in as many years. The idea is to come up with a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, which is set to expire next year, and to require rich countries to pony up \$100 billion a year to help poor countries cope with the alleged effects of climate change. This is said to be essential because in 2017 global warming becomes "catastrophic and irreversible," according to a recent report by the International Energy Agency.

Yet a funny thing happened on the way to the climate apocalypse. Namely, the financial apocalypse.

The U.S., Russia, Japan, Canada and the EU have all but confirmed they won't be signing on to a new Kyoto. The Chinese and Indians won't make a move unless the West does. The notion that rich (or formerly rich) countries are going to ship \$100 billion every year to the Micronesias of the world is risible, especially after they've spent it all on Greece.

Cap and trade is a dead letter in the U.S. Even Europe is having second thoughts about carbon-reduction targets that are decimating the continent's heavy industries and cost an estimated \$67 billion a year. "Green" technologies have all proved expensive, environmentally hazardous and wildly unpopular duds.

All this has been enough to put the Durban political agenda on hold for the time being. But religions don't die, and often thrive, when put to the political sidelines. A religion, when not physically extinguished, only dies when it loses faith in itself.

That's where the Climategate emails come in. First released on the eve of the Copenhagen climate summit two years ago and recently updated by a fresh batch, the "hide the decline" emails were an endless source of fun and lurid fascination for those of us who had never been convinced by the global-warming thesis in the first place.

But the real reason they mattered is that they introduced a note of caution into an enterprise whose motivating appeal resided in its increasingly frantic forecasts of catastrophe. Papers were withdrawn; source material re-examined. The Himalayan glaciers, it turned out, weren't going to melt in 30 years. Nobody can say for sure how high the seas are likely to rise—if much at all. Greenland isn't turning green. Florida isn't going anywhere.

The reply global warming alarmists have made to these disclosures is that they did nothing to change the underlying science, and only improved it in particulars. So what to make of the U.N.'s latest supposedly authoritative report on extreme weather events, which is tinged with admissions of doubt and uncertainty? Oddly, the report has left climate activists stuttering with rage at what they call its "watered down" predictions. If nothing else, they understand that any belief system, particularly ones as young as global warming, cannot easily survive more than a few ounces of self-doubt.

Meanwhile, the world marches on. On Sunday, 2,232 days will have elapsed since a category 3 hurricane made landfall in the U.S., the longest period in more than a century that the U.S. has been spared a devastating storm. Great religions are wise enough to avoid marking down the exact date when the world comes to an end. Not so for the foolish religions. Expect Mayan cosmology to take a hit to its reputation when the world doesn't end on Dec. 21, 2012. Expect likewise when global warming turns out to be neither catastrophic nor irreversible come 2017.

And there is this: Religions are sustained in the long run by the consolations of their teachings and the charisma of their leaders. With global warming, we have a religion whose leaders are prone to spasms of anger and whose followers are beginning to twitch with boredom. Perhaps that's another way religions die.

3. Absolute Certainty Is Not Scientific

Global warming alarmists betray their cause when they declare that it is irresponsible to question them. By Daniel B. Botkin, WSJ, Dec 2, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204630904577058111041127168.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

One of the changes among scientists in this century is the increasing number who believe that one can have complete and certain knowledge. For example, Michael J. Mumma, a NASA senior scientist who has led teams searching for evidence of life on Mars, was quoted in the New York Times as saying, "Based on evidence, what we do have is, unequivocally, the conditions for the emergence of life were present on Mars—period, end of story."

This belief in absolute certainty is fundamentally what has bothered me about the scientific debate over global warming in the 21st century, and I am hoping it will not characterize the discussions at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, currently under way.

Reading Mr. Mumma's statement, I thought immediately of physicist Niels Bohr, a Nobel laureate, who said, "Anyone who is not shocked by quantum theory has not understood it." To which Richard Feynman, another famous physicist and Nobel laureate, quipped, "Nobody understands quantum mechanics."

I felt nostalgic for those times when even the greatest scientific minds admitted limits to what they knew. And when they recognized well that the key to the scientific method is that it is a way of knowing in which you can never completely prove that something is absolutely true. Instead, the important idea about the method is that any statement, to be scientific, must be open to disproof, and a way of knowing how to disprove it exists.

Therefore, "Period, end of story" is something a scientist can say—but it isn't science.

I was one of many scientists on several panels in the 1970s who reviewed the results from the Viking Landers on Mars, the ones that were supposed to conduct experiments that would help determine whether there was or wasn't life on that planet. I don't remember anybody on those panels talking in terms of absolute certainty. Instead, the discussions were about what the evidence did and did not suggest, and what might be disprovable from them and from future landers.

I was also one of a small number of scientists—mainly ecologists, climatologists and meteorologists—who in the 1970s became concerned about the possibility of a human-induced global warming, based on then-new measurements. It seemed to be an important scientific problem, both as part of the beginning of a new science of global ecology and as a potentially major practical problem that nations would have to deal with. It did not seem to be something that should or would rise above standard science and become something that one had to choose sides in. But that's what has happened.

Some scientists make "period, end of story" claims that human-induced global warming definitely, absolutely either is or isn't happening. For me, the extreme limit of this attitude was expressed by economist Paul Krugman, also a Nobel laureate, who wrote in his New York Times column in June, "Betraying the Planet" that "as I watched the deniers make their arguments, I couldn't help thinking that I was watching a form of treason—treason against the planet." What had begun as a true scientific question with possibly major practical implications had become accepted as an infallible belief (or if you're on the other side, an infallible disbelief), and any further questions were met, Joe-McCarthy style, "with me or agin me."

Not only is it poor science to claim absolute truth, but it also leads to the kind of destructive and distrustful debate we've had in last decade about global warming. The history of science and technology suggests that such absolutism on both sides of a scientific debate doesn't often lead to practical solutions.

It is helpful to go back to the work of the Wright brothers, whose invention of a true heavier-than-air flying machine was one kind of precursor to the Mars Landers. They basically invented aeronautical science and engineering, developed methods to test their hypotheses, and carefully worked their way through a combination of theory and experimentation. The plane that flew at Kill Devil Hill, a North Carolina dune, did not come out of true believers or absolute assertions, but out of good science and technological development.

Let us hope that discussions about global warming can be more like the debates between those two brothers than between those who absolutely, completely agree with Paul Krugman and those who

absolutely, completely disagree with him. How about a little agnosticism in our scientific assertions—and even, as with Richard Feynman, a little sense of humor so that we can laugh at our errors and move on? We should all remember that Feynman also said, "If you think that science is certain—well that's just an error on your part."

Mr. Botkin, president of the Center for the Study of the Environment and professor emeritus at the University of California, Santa Barbara, is the author of the forthcoming "Discordant Harmonies: Ecology in a Changing World" (Oxford University Press).

4. U.S. Nears Milestone: Net Fuel Exporter

By Liam Pleven and Russell Gold, WSJ, Nov 30, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203441704577068670488306242.html?mod=WSJ_business_LeftSecondHighlights

A combination of booming demand from emerging markets and faltering domestic activity means the U.S. is exporting more fuel than it imports, upending the historical norm.

U.S. exports of gasoline, diesel and other oil-based fuels are soaring, putting the nation on track to be a net exporter of petroleum products in 2011 for the first time in 62 years, Liam Pleven reports on Markets Hub.

According to data released by the U.S. Energy Information Administration on Tuesday, the U.S. sent abroad 753.4 million barrels of everything from gasoline to jet fuel in the first nine months of this year, while it imported 689.4 million barrels.

That the U.S. is shipping out more fuel than it brings in is significant because the nation has for decades been a voracious energy consumer. It took in huge quantities of not only crude oil from the Middle East but also refined fuels from Europe, Latin America and elsewhere to help run its factories and cars.

As recently as 2005, the U.S. imported nearly 900 million barrels more of petroleum products than it exported. Since then the deficit has been steadily shrinking until finally disappearing last fall, and analysts say the country will not lose its "net exporter" tag anytime soon.

"It looks like a trend that could stay in place for the rest of the decade," said Dave Ernsberger, global director of oil at Platts, which tracks energy markets. "The conventional wisdom is that U.S. is this giant black hole sucking in energy from around the world. This changes that dynamic."

So long as the U.S. remains the world's biggest net importer of crude oil, currently taking in nine million barrels per day, it isn't likely to become energy independent anytime soon. Yet its growing presence as an overall exporter of fuels made from crude gives it greater influence in the global energy market.

If the trend toward net exports persists, it could also influence the national political debate over U.S. energy policy, which has been driven primarily by concerns about upheaval in the Middle East over the past decade. The independence of the U.S. from foreign oil sources has long been a lightning-rod issue in Washington, one further inflamed by last year's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Supporters of off-shore drilling have used the desire for independence to push their cause, setting up a battle with environmental groups and others who prefer a shift away from carbon-based fuels.

The growth in exports is part of a "transformation of the energy system," says Ed Morse, global head of commodity research at Citigroup Inc. "It's the beginning signs of a process that will continue for the next decade and will point toward energy independence."

The reversal raises the prospect of the U.S. becoming a major provider of various types of energy to the rest of the world, a status that was once virtually unthinkable. The U.S. already exports vast amounts of coal, and companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp. are pursuing or exploring plans to liquefy newly abundant natural gas and send it overseas.

The shift is one of the clearest demonstrations of the diverging fates of the U.S. and emerging market economies. While the U.S. labors under stubbornly high unemployment and sluggish growth, emerging-market economies are growing strongly, bolstering demand for fuel.

Now, "we're not using as much," said James Beck, an analyst at the EIA. "Prior to 2008, basically anything we produced, we used."

But U.S. drivers aren't seeing much benefit in the form of lower prices because refineries on the Gulf Coast are shipping much of their output to places where demand is strong, keeping prices high.

The U.S. was a net exporter of petroleum products in six of the first nine months this year, and the trend accelerated in the third quarter, with September data released Tuesday showing net exports of 919,000 barrels per day, more than any month this year. That indicates to observers that this year will be the U.S.'s first as a net exporter since 1949, when the U.S. economy was ramping up rapidly after World War II.

Mexico and Brazil were major consumers of U.S. exports, according to the September data, while the Netherlands—home to key European ports—and Singapore also were significant net importers.

Gasoline and low-sulfur diesel continued to be among the biggest lures for foreign customers, as was petroleum coke, which is used to make steel. Those are among the many products that are thrown off in the process of refining crude oil.

The growing exports have made the U.S. a pivotal part of the supply chain. In 2006, the U.S. was a net importer of petroleum products from Brazil, but last year it sent a net 106,000 barrels a day.

Argentina and Peru are now net importers from the U.S. For the next year or two, "the economies in Latin America will be growing faster than in the U.S. and the trend of increasing exports should continue," says Daniel Vizel, U.S. head of oil trading for Macquarie Group Ltd.

Singapore's net imports from the U.S. roughly quadrupled in the past five years, while Mexico's rose by about two-thirds. Mexico, in particular, is having trouble keeping pace with gasoline demand and buys about 60% of gasoline exports from the U.S.

The figures illustrate the impact of the significant increase in domestic production thanks to new sources of oil coming from North Dakota and Texas. North Dakota's oil production of 424,000 barrels per day in July was up 86% over the same period in 2009.

Growing domestic output means refineries in the U.S. are making more fuel than the local market needs. That has given those on the U.S. Gulf Coast added incentive to look for customers abroad.

Also adding to the U.S. exporting firepower: Refineries are more efficient, giving them an edge over older facilities in Europe. New drilling methods are boosting U.S. oil production, helping ensure steady supplies of raw material for refiners to process.

The U.S. could expand its export trade further next year. Motiva Enterprises LLC, a joint venture between Shell and Saudi Arabian Oil Co., is expected to finish work next year on a refinery expansion in Port Arthur, Texas, which would double the facility's capacity and make it the largest in the U.S. Kinder Morgan Energy Partners LP and TransMontaigne Partners LP plan to build a \$400 million terminal on the Houston ship channel.

For decades through World War II, the U.S. was a net exporter of petroleum products, with sales reaching a high of 126 million barrels in 1944. The country then became a net importer in 1950, and grew increasingly dependent on foreign supply in the 1960s. Net imports peaked just above a billion barrels in 1973, the year domestic oil prices spiked amid the Arab oil embargo. After falling off in the 1980s and 1990s, net imports spiked again in the middle of the last decade before tapering recently.

To be sure, the balance could shift back relatively quickly. If the U.S. economy were to rebound sharply, domestic need for fuels refined from crude oil could also shoot back up, which could increase crude import demand. In addition, U.S. refineries could lose customers if foreign economies falter, sending the U.S. back to being a net importer.

Meanwhile, export demand is boosting corporate profits for oil majors, such as Exxon and Royal Dutch Shell PLC, and major U.S. refining firms, such as Valero Energy Corp. and Marathon Petroleum Corp.

"Unless there is a recession around the world, we're going to be exporting for quite some time," says Mike Loya, head of Americas for Swiss energy-trading firm Vitol Group, which moves more than five million barrels of crude oil and petroleum products every day.

5. The United States of EPA

Ms. Jackson's agency takes over automobile design.

Editorial, WSJ, Nov 28, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204630904577056393981840650.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

Here's one good way to consider the vote in 2012: It's about whether to re-elect President Lisa Jackson, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, which these days runs most the U.S. economy.

The EPA heaved its weight against another industry this month, issuing a regulation to sharply increase fuel economy. Under this new rule, America's fleet of passenger cars and light trucks will have to meet an average of 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025, a doubling of today's average of about 27 mpg. By the EPA's estimate the rule will cost \$157 billion, meaning the real number is vastly greater.

The fuel-economy rule is classic Obama EPA. Until this Administration, fuel standards were the remit of Congress, via its Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) program. In 2007, the legislative branch raised those standards with a bill requiring the U.S. fleet to hit 35 miles per gallon by 2020, a 40% increase. The industry is struggling to keep pace with those steep requirements.

President Jackson is now casting aside 35 years of Congressional prerogative. Because the Obama EPA has declared carbon dioxide a "pollutant," and because cars emit CO₂, Ms. Jackson is citing the Clean Air Act in her bid to commandeer Detroit. While the EPA officially worked with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (Nhtsa, the agency previously in charge of efficiency standards), it's clear the EPA is calling the shots.

At least when Nhtsa was overseeing efficiency, it was charged by Congress with taking into account vehicle safety and a rule's effect on the economy and consumer demand. The EPA can't be bothered with such detail.

The National Automobile Dealers Association, which has opposed the EPA rule, has compiled Obama Administration documents showing the average price of a new vehicle will increase by \$3,100 by 2025, thanks to the cumulative fuel-efficiency rules. Vehicles that currently cost \$15,000 or less will effectively be regulated out of existence. The rule will reduce the mass of a car by 15% to 25%, decreasing safety.

The only way Detroit can hit these averages will be by turning at least 25% of its fleet into hybrids. But hybrid sales peaked in the U.S. two years ago at 3% of the market and are declining. The EPA's \$157 billion price tag includes only the estimate of what manufacturers will have to invest in new technology, not the billions more that will hemorrhage when nobody buys their EPA-approved products.

Yes, 13 automakers agreed to this standard in July, confirming behavioral science on hostages. The industry has been living for years under the threat of California's strict efficiency mandate. Federal law pre-empts states from setting their own standards, and the Bush Administration refused to grant California a waiver. But the Obama administration made clear to automakers that their choice was between one crushing EPA-devised rule, or a national patchwork of crushing rules from California and acolyte states. They chose the federal poison.

House Republicans are pushing to return efficiency standards to the one regulator Congress has decreed: Nhtsa. They note that not only are California bureaucrats dictating federal policy, but the EPA has wasted \$25 million to duplicate or demolish Nhtsa rules.

The EPA is seeking to impose, by fiat, greenhouse gas reductions that even a Democratic Congress rejected with the Waxman-Markey bill in 2009, and that would drive policy at least 13 years past this Administration. It's all more than a tad authoritarian. Welcome to the Obama-Jackson Presidency.

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