

The Week That Was: 2013-06-08 (June 8, 2013)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *There is no harm in doubt and skepticism, for it is through these that new discoveries are made.* Richard Feynman

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Number of the Week: 73

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THIS WEEK:

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

Sea Levels: As nature continues to ignore the temperature projections by human climate models, some in the Climate Establishment are responding by making ever more alarming projections of sea level rise. Fred Singer discusses sea level rise and what can be expected in the 21st century. In short, not much different than what was experienced in the 20th century. Singer brings out the different projections produced by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in the past and the greater, new estimate, appearing in the draft of the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) as well as estimates by James Hansen, and Singer.

A new point Singer discusses is the possibility of two different mechanisms influencing Antarctica with opposite effects on sea levels. He suggests that the warming over the past century may increase the ice mass on the continent by promoting increases in snowfall on the continent. This mechanism may dominate the ice mass over decades or centuries and reduce projected sea level rise.

The second mechanism involves the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS). Unlike the Arctic ice sheets which are free floating, therefore, melting do not increase sea levels; much of the WAIS is anchored to bedrock that is below sea level, thus melting can increase sea levels. However, the melting, if it is occurring, is very slow and the time frame is in centuries or in millennia, and the extent and time frame of sea level rise have not been determined, should the globe continue to warm.

The melting of the WAIS, regardless of the cause, should be monitored; but, it does not pose a clear danger at this time. Humanity has decades, if not centuries, to determine the possible danger and how to address it.

Singer's analysis brings up an interesting test. In the draft of AR5, the IPCC predicts the sea levels will rise 45 to 110 cm by the end of the century – about 1 to 2 inches every five years. James Hansen predicts the sea levels will rise 20 feet, or about 30cm, 12 inches, every five years. But Fred Singer predicts a sea level rise of only less than 1cm, 0.4 inches, in five years. Who is right? We will know in five years. [Hansen plots the sea level rise as highly exponential, with an increase in the last decade of the century in excess of what occurred during the melting of the great ice sheets covering much of North American and Eurasia.]

As reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, the most recent paper in *Nature Geoscience* states that the rise from 2005 to 2011 was about 1.68 cm. This would work out to be about 1.4 cm per 5 years or 0.55 inches per 5 years – based on only six years of data. At this point, it appears that the IPCC

and Hansen, not Singer, are the climate contrarians. Of course, the headlines claimed accelerating ice melt, for which they seem to have little basis. Please see Articles #1 and #2.

Models v. Observations: Many people who have little experience in reading charts and graphs are confused by the graphs that show the temperature projections from the numerous climate models. When presented on one graph, the projections appear to be a mass of spaghetti. In an effort to clearly illustrate the differences between model projections and observations, Roy Spencer and John Christy simplified the model projections temperature into a linear form, covering the period from 1979 (when satellite measurements started) to 2012 and roughly covering the mid-troposphere over the tropics (20deg N to 20deg S). On the same graph, using 1979 as the base point, they compared these projections to the observations for that period over the same area from two satellite datasets (UAH and RSS) and four radiosonde datasets (from balloons), also in a linear form. The visual results are striking. The mean temperature increase of the projections from the models are about three times the temperature increase shown by observations.

One must be cautious in not inferring too much from such linear graphs. The richness of the data is lost by making it linear. For example, the jump in temperatures around the big El Nino year of 1998 is gone. The actual data indicates a climate shift around 2001-2002 which needs careful examination. A similar climate shift occurred in the mid to late 1970s.

In responding to critics, Spencer produced a similar graph, but without the linearization. The results are similar but for those not experienced in reading graphs the visual impact is not as striking. Spencer suggests that the reason for the disparity is that the models have too strong of a positive water vapor feedback to warming. But, there are also other possible explanations. Please see links under Models v. Observations.

Blinded: The governments of the UK and the US appear to be blinded by ideology and/or myths and are unaware that of the dire consequences their policies may have on the general public. For example, when considering an energy bill this week, the UK parliament narrowly defeated an amendment (290 to 267) to “decarbonize” electricity generation by 2030 – essentially abandon fossil fuels for the generation of electricity, with legally binding limits. Prior legislation had targets, without enforceable limits. Those who voted for the amendment appear to be unaware that industrial and household electricity costs are increasing and that shutting off fossil fuel generation will put a great burden on the entire generation and distribution system.

Similarly, the US administration appears to be blind to reality. As reported in last week’s TWTW, President Obama falsely declared that over the past 5 to 10 years the globe has been warming faster than anyone projected. The new Secretary of Energy claimed the cause of warming is not a subject for debate. This week, the Secretary of Agriculture made similar declarations, stating that climate change is new and different than anything the agriculture industry has faced. Apparently, he is unaware of the great “dust bowl” of the 1930s and the enormous benefits enhanced atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) provides to virtually all green plants, making them grow more robustly and more resistant to stresses such as drought.

Perhaps the strangest statement, backed-up by the Forest Service, which is part of the Department of Agriculture, is that western wildfires will increase significantly. For many decades, the policy

of the Forest Service was to fight fires as they were seen to be wasteful and destructive. This policy resulted in a large build-up of flammable vegetation in forests. In recent decades, the policy shifted to only fight selected fires. If more wildfires occur in the future, it will be a result of changing government policy rather than increasing CO₂, which makes the forests more resistant to drought and insects. Please see Article #3 and links under Defending the Orthodoxy and Problems in the Orthodoxy.

Ray of Hope? As the UK and US governments seem to be oblivious to the failure of global warming/climate change claims, there may be a shift occurring in Australia. Prime Minister Julia Gillard is facing an election on September 14, and indications are that Ms. Gillard, who implemented an unpopular carbon tax in spite of promises not to do so, may be in significant difficulty. One indicator of the extent of this difficulty is that The Climate Group, one of largest international pressure groups advocating the replacement of fossil fuels, is closing its offices in Australia, claiming an unfavorable political climate. Please see link under “Problems in the Orthodoxy.”

Whom to Blame? Recently, there have been a number of essays exploring why the Climate Establishment, which seemed so powerful a few years ago and had enormous government support, was unable to get the public to support international agreements, and the US to restrict carbon dioxide emissions. Among the more interesting ideas is that the establishment was too focused on the small number of skeptics and attacked them for non-science reasons, thus giving the skeptics greater credibility with the public than their numbers would suggest. The establishment railing against the skeptics rather than debating them, no doubt, played a role.

However, one can also argue that it was the willingness of a few skeptics to publically state, in spite of personal abuse, that the science is shoddy, ignores climate history and contradicting data, and is largely based on models that have not been validated and are failing. When the internet became popular, the skeptical blogs furthered skepticism of the establishment science. The issue will not be settled for years to come and many different opinions will appear. Please see links under Seeking a Common Ground.

Bureaucratic Games: Three years ago, the current US administration introduced the concept of Social Cost of Carbon (SCC) as part of its decision-making. Such concepts give bureaucrats and politicians great opportunity to play numbers games with the public under the guise of making important, necessary decisions. The Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Carbon, made up of 11 Federal agencies, raised a new SCC of \$35 per metric ton, from \$21 per ton, which is an increase of 67% in three years, ostensibly due to the increased risks from sea level rise. (See discussion in the first section.)

The SCC number may be adjusted to \$52 per ton simply by applying a different discount rate, and it is the discount rate that is the source of great game playing, the lower the discount rate, the higher the SCC. The \$35 per ton is derived from a 5% discount rate (the current value of money or property in the future) and the \$52 per ton is derived from a 2.5% discount rate. The extent of the game playing is highlighted by the fact that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has established that the base discount rate should be 7%. By rule of thumb, the SCC from the Interagency Working Group, which includes OMB, is 40% above what would be calculated using OMB’s accounting procedures.

No doubt, the EPA, and other agencies, will apply the new SCC in demanding changes to many products, such as appliances, to make them more energy efficient. Overall, such demands have resulted in higher prices and in many instances requiring far more time to operate to accomplish a specific task. The net effect is that energy efficiency in labor saving appliances results in human inefficiency. Please see links under Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up and http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a094

US Production of Oil: The US Energy Information Agency forecasts that, in September, US production of oil will exceed imports for the first time in two decades. The Mid-East is becoming less important for US energy security, which is really based on assuring safe lines of transport in case of war or other drastic emergency, rather than the production source. Foreign policy implications are beyond the scope of TWTW, but this simple fact further illustrates the misguided thinking of the US Navy in developing biofuel alternatives at a cost of over \$27 per gallon to replace petroleum fuels at a cost of less than \$4 per gallon (about 7 times) – all in the name of national security. Please see Article #4

Air Pollution and Rainfall: A press release by the Georgia State University claims that a study confirms that the passage of the Clean Air Act is linked to increased rainfall in Atlanta. With no geographic constraints, such as ocean, major rivers, or mountains, Atlanta is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the US in both area and population. According to the Bureau of the Census, in 1990 the MSA had a population of 3,069,000, in 2000 4,248,000, a growth of 38%, and in 2010 5,269,000, a growth of 24%. Could it be that population growth is linked to precipitation? Please see link under Below the Bottom Line.

Number of the Week: 73. This is the number of climate models that Spencer and Christy have analyzed in comparing the results of the models with observations (see above). All 73 climate models fail a simple test. One climate model would be sufficient, if it could be validated. The duplication of expensive climate models is but one example on how the Climate Establishment is squandering resources. Spencer and Christy analyzed the projections of 19 US models.

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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. Could Global Warming Slow Sea Level Rise?

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Jun 6, 2013

http://www.americanthinker.com/2013/06/could_global_warming_slow_sea_level_rise.html

2. Rising Sea Level Tied to Faster Melt

By Gautam Naik, WSJ, June 2, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324682204578517312171788462.html?mod=IT_P_pageone_1

Unable to locate link to paper.

3. Britain's No-Energy Bill

The Cameron government puts 'decarbonization' above growth.

Editorial, WSJ, June 3, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324063304578523304247959058.html?mod=W_SJ_Opinion_LEFTTopBucket

4. U.S. Oil Boom Scrambles Mideast Calculus

By Gerald Seib, WSJ, June 3, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324423904578523092713574764.html?mod=W_SJ_hps_sections_news

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

Revisiting Climategate as Climatedism Falters

By Steve Gorham, Master Resource, Jun 6, 2013

<http://www.masterresource.org/2013/06/revisting-climategate-climatedism-falters/#more-25983>

Suppressing Scientific Inquiry

Climatologists raise the shutters again

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jun 4, 2013

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2013/6/4/climatologists-raise-the-shutters-again.html>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Multiple, Intense, Abrupt Late Pleistocene Warming And Cooling: Implications For Understanding The Cause Of Global Climate Change

By Don Easterbrook, WUWT, June 2, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/06/02/multiple-intense-abrupt-late-pleisitocene-warming-and-cooling-implications-for-understanding-the-cause-of-global-climate-change/>

[SEPP Comment: Demolishing the argument that the rate of warming of the late 20th century was unusual.]

Can the Moon change our climate? Can tides in the atmosphere solve the mystery of ENSO?

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Jun 6, 2013 [H/t James Rust]

<http://joannenova.com.au/2013/06/can-the-moon-change-our-climate-can-tides-in-the-atmosphere-solve-the-mystery-of-enso/>

Carbon Dioxide

NZ Climate Truth Newsletter No 312

By Vincent Gray, NCTCS, Jun 4, 2013

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2013/06/carbon-dioxide.html>

Global Warming theory has failed all tests, so alarmists return to the '97% consensus' hoax

By Joseph D'Aleo, Weatherbell Analytics, Jun 5, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/06/05/global-warming-theory-has-failed-all-tests-so-alarmists-return-to-the-97-consensus-hoax/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Ag Dept. chief: 'America must take steps now' on climate change

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Jun 5, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/303661-ag-dept-chief-america-must-take-steps-now-on-climate-change>

Climate change causing US wildfire season to last longer, Congress told

US forest service chief says hotter, drier conditions mean wildfire season lasts two months longer than it did 40 years ago

By Suzanne Goldenberg, Guardian, UK, Jun 4, 2013

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/04/climate-change-america-wildfire-season>

Edward Davey speech: Climate Change, Acting on the Science

Speech by Edward Davey at the Met Office Climate Services event Originally given at Institute of Physics, London. This is the text of the speech as drafted, which may differ slightly from the delivered version. [H/t GWPF]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/edward-davey-speech-climate-change-acting-on-the-science>

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Canada Leads the World in Climate Deception

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Jun 1, 2013

<http://drtimball.com/2013/canada-leads-the-world-in-climate-deception/>

European Institute For Climate And Energy Calls Claims Of Climate Consensus “Absurd, Baseless And False”

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Jun 5, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/06/05/european-institute-for-climate-and-energy-calls-claims-of-climate-consensus-absurd-baseless-and-false/>

Problems in the Orthodoxy

British Newspaper Editors Oppose Attempts to Stifle Climate Debate

Some of Britain’s top newspaper editors hit back at minister who thinks he has the right to tell the Press what it can and cannot print.

By Staff Writer, GWPF, June 4, 2013

<http://www.thegwpf.org/british-editors-oppose-attempts-stifle-climate-debate/>

Blame News for Public's Ignorance About Climate

By Eric Alterman, Real Clear Politics, May 31, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2013/05/31/blame_the_news_for_the_publics_ignorance_about_climate_118638.html

Climate NGO quits Australia as clean energy politics turn sour

By Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, Jun 6, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://reneweconomy.com.au/2013/climate-ngo-quits-australia-as-clean-energy-politics-turn-sour-28643>

Energy policy: Government sees off rebellion over 2030 carbon target

The government has seen off a rebellion by Lib Dem and Conservative MPs over calls for a carbon emissions target for the energy industry.

By Staff Writers, BBC, Jun 4, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-22764955>

Reactions to the Energy Bill debate

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jun 5, 2013

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2013/6/5/reactions-to-the-energy-bill-debate.html>

Energy Bill Decarbonization Vote: The Reaction

By Staff Writer, Blue & Green tomorrow, Jun 4, 2013

<http://www.thegwpf.org/energy-bill-decarbonisation-vote-reaction/>

Seeking a Common Ground

A common understanding of climate change?

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Jun 7, 2013

<http://scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/common-understanding-climate-change>

How to Run a Really Bad Infowar Campaign

By Pointman, His Blog, Jun 7, 2013 [H/t Tom Sheahen]

<http://thepointman.wordpress.com/2013/06/07/how-to-run-a-really-bad-infowar-campaign/>

Have the climate sceptics really won?

Despite recent fears of sceptics winning public debates, they are not all powerful, but have cast a spell upon their opponents

By Roger Pielke, Jr, Guardian, UK, May 24, 2013

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/political-science/2013/may/24/climate-sceptics-winning-science-policy>

The inevitable climate catastrophe

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc., Jun 3, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/06/03/the-inevitable-climate-catastrophe/#more-11802>

What exactly are we debating?

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc., Jun 1, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/06/01/what-exactly-are-we-debating/#more-11806>

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Global Warming Charlatans are Meeting in Bonn

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Jun 4, 2013

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2013/06/global-warming-charlatans-are-meeting.html>

Questioning European Green

A dangerously deluded energy policy and why the greens want to hide the truth about your soaring bills

By Christopher Booker, Mail, UK, Jun 4, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2335982/CHRISTOPHER-BOOKER-A-dangerously-deluded-energy-policy-greens-want-hide-truth-soaring-bills.html>

Will Britain Have the World's Costliest Energy?

By Danny Fortson, Sunday Times, via GWPF, June 2, 2013

<http://www.thegwpf.org/britain-worlds-costliest-energy/>

[SEPP Comment: According to the chart, the cost of building a 1.2GW offshore wind farm is £3.2bn and the cost of a 1.2GW nuclear plant is £3.6bn. This ignores the major issue of often will the wind farms fail and standby generation required.]

GWPF comments on yesterday's vote

By Robyn Wilson, Her Blog, Jun 5, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.robynwilson.co.uk/1/post/2013/06/gwpf-comments-on-yesterdays-vote.html>

No one wants to pay for energy we need

By Anthony Hilton, London Evening Standard, Jun 6, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.standard.co.uk/business/markets/anthony-hilton-no-one-wants-to-pay-for-energy-we-need-8647071.html>

Questioning Green Elsewhere

The Green Jobs Chimera

By Walter Russell Mead, Via Meadia, June 3, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2013/06/03/the-green-jobs-chimera/>

It's time we learn what green energy costs states and cities

By Merrill Matthews, Dallas Morning News, May 27, 2013 [H/t NCPA]

<http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20130527-merrill-matthews-its-time-we-learn-what-green-energy-costs-states-and-cities.ece>

Funding Issues

Climate Aid: The \$39 bn industry, mostly used to slow developing countries

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Jun 8, 2013

<http://joannenova.com.au/2013/06/climate-aid-the-39-bn-industry-mostly-used-to-slow-developing-countries/#more-28820>

[SEPP Comment: 71% to emission reduction ventures!]

Lowering the Standards

Self admitted cyber thief Peter Gleick is still on the IOP board that approved the Cook 97% consensus paper

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Jun 4, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/06/04/self-admitted-cyber-thief-peter-gleick-is-still-on-the-iop-board-that-approved-the-cook-97-consensus-paper/>

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

Pollution in Northern Hemisphere helped cause 1980s African drought

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Jun 7, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/06/07/pollution-in-northern-hemisphere-helped-cause-1980s-african-drought/>

The Impending Deluge

By Brian Fagan, OP-ED, NYT, May 31, 2013 [H/t Cork Hayden]

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/opinion/global/brian-fagan-the-impending-deluge.html?emc=eta1&r=0>

[SEPP Comment: The author roughly doubled the sea level rise since the maximum extent of the last Ice Age. The great killing storm came during the Little Ice Age.]

How Climate Change And Budget Cuts Could Make This The Most Dangerous Hurricane Season Ever

By Kiley Kroh, Climate Progress, May 31, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2013/05/31/2082911/climate-change-and-budget-cuts-dangerous-hurricane-season/?mobile=nc>

Hidden effects of climate change may threaten eelgrass meadows

By Staff Writers, Gothenburg, Sweden (SPX) Jun 05, 2013

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Hidden_effects_of_climate_change_may_threaten_eelgrass_meadows_999.html

Link to paper: Consumers mediate the effects of experimental ocean acidification and warming on primary producers

By Alsterberg, et al., PNAS, May 21, 2013

<http://www.pnas.org/content/110/21/8603.full.pdf+html>

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Damian and the two-degree target

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jun 4, 2013

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2013/6/4/damian-and-the-two-degree-target.html>

The ‘Social Cost Of Carbon’ Is Almost Double What The Government Previously Thought

By Ryan Koronowski, Climate Progress, Jun 5, 2013

<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2013/06/05/2103261/the-social-cost-of-carbon-is-almost-double-what-the-government-previously-thought/>

White House Revises Dubious ‘Social Cost of Carbon’

By Robert Murphy, IER, Jun 6, 2013

<http://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/2013/06/06/white-house-revises-dubious-social-cost-of-carbon/>

Obama officials raise ‘social cost’ of carbon in federal regulations

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Jun 5, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/303645-obama-officials-raise-social-cost-of-carbon-in-federal-regulations>

[SEPP Comment: Now \$35 per metric ton, up from \$21.]

Social Cost of Carbon: Interagency Group Predictably Predicts Climate Change Worse Than Predicted

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming.org, Jun 5, 2013

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2013/06/05/social-cost-of-carbon-interagency-group-predictably-predicts-climate-change-worse-than-predicted/#more-16983>

Climate change threatens extinction for 82 percent of California native fish

By Staff Writers, Davis CA (SPX) Jun 04, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Climate_change_threatens_extinction_for_82_percent_of_California_native_fish_999.html

Link to study: Climate Change Vulnerability of Native and Alien Freshwater Fishes of California: A Systematic Assessment Approach

By Moyle, et al., Plosone, May 22, 2013

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0063883>

Models v. Observations

EPIC FAIL: 73 Climate Models vs. Observations for Tropical Tropospheric Temperature

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Jun 4, 2013 [H/t Roger Cohen]

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2013/06/epic-fail-73-climate-models-vs-observations-for-tropical-tropospheric-temperature/>

STILL Epic Fail: 73 Climate Models vs. Measurements, Running 5-Year Means

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Jun 6, 2013

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/>

Puzzled Schellnhuber: “Not At All Surprised” Short Term Models Are Wrong...But Insists Long-Term Models Are Correct!

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Jun 2, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/06/02/puzzled-schellnhuber-not-at-all-surprised-short-term-models-are-wrong-but-insists-long-term-models-are-correct/>

Changing Weather

Coldest Spring In England Since 1891

By Paul Homewood, WUWT, June 2, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/06/02/coldest-spring-in-england-since-1891/>

Changing Climate

Arctic current flowed under deep freeze of last ice age

By Staff Writers, New York NY (SPX), Jun 02, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Arctic_current_flowd_under_deep_freeze_of_last_ice_age_999.html

Unable to locate link to any paper.

Changing Seas

Catastrophic climatic events leave corals facing a decade-long fight for recovery

By Staff Writers, Plymouth, UK (SPX), Jun 04, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Catastrophic_climatic_events_leave_corals_facing_a_decade_long_fight_for_recovery_999.html

Changing Cryosphere – Land / Sea Ice

New map reveals secrets of Antarctica below the ice

By Staff Writers, Greenbelt, Md. (UPI), Jun 5, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/New_map_reveals_secrets_of_Antarctica_below_the_ice_999.html

Changing Earth

New Explanation for Slow Earthquakes on San Andreas

By Staff Writers, Cape Cod MA (SPX) Jun 05, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/New_Explanation_for_Slow_Earthquakes_on_San_Andreas_99.html

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Smithsonian scientists discover that rainforests take the heat

By Staff Writers, Panama City, Panama (SPX), Jun 06, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Smithsonian_scientists_discover_that_rainforests_take_the_heat_999.html

Is Fighting Global Warming the Solution to Water Shortages in Malawi (or Elsewhere)?

By E. Calvin Beisner, WUWT, Jun 7, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/06/07/is-fighting-global-warming-the-solution-to-water-shortages-in-malawi-or-elsewhere/#more-87789>

Rising CO2 Levels May Not Make Earth Warmer, But Is Making It Greener

Editorial, IBD, Jun 4, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/060413-658776-study-shows-co2-rise-is-causing-deserts-to-get-greener.htm>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Corn Production in the USA Is Already Adapting to Warming

Reference: Butler, E.E. and Huybers, P. 2013. Adaptation of US maize to temperature variations. *Nature Climate Change* 3: 68-72.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/jun/4jun2013a1.html>

Three Hundred Years of Western Mediterranean Precipitation

Reference: Camuffo, D., Bertolin, C., Diodato, N., Cocheo, C., Barriendos, M., Dominguez-Castro, F., Garnier, E., Alcoforado, M.J. and Nunes, M.F. 2013. Western Mediterranean precipitation over the last 300 years from instrumental observations. *Climatic Change* 117: 85-101.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/jun/4jun2013a3.html>

Cold-Climate Crises

Reference: Lee, H.F. and Zhang, D.D. 2013. A tale of two population crises in recent Chinese history. *Climatic Change* 116: 285-308.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/jun/5jun2013a1.html>

Lee and Zhang conclude that "both natural calamities and human catastrophes are clustered in periods of cold climate," primarily because cooling "generates a devastating impact on agricultural production everywhere," citing the work of Atwell (2001, 2002), while noting that "declines in temperatures often have had catastrophic consequences for the world's food supply."

The Drought Tolerance of Grasslands

Reference: Craine, J.M., Ocheltree, T.W., Nippert, J.B., Towne, E.G., Skibbe, A.M., Kembel, S.W. and Fargione, J.E. 2013. Global diversity of drought tolerance and grassland climate-change resilience. *Nature Climate Change* 3: 63-67.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/jun/5jun2013a3.html>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Low-Cost Carbon Credits Driving Europe to Import Coal, Wood and Biomass

By Staff Writers, Sustainable Plant, Jun 5, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.sustainableplant.com/2013/06/low-cost-carbon-credits-driving-europe-to-import-coal-wood-and-biomass/>

Myles, CCS and the T3 tax

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jun 6, 2013

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2013/6/6/myles-ccs-and-the-t3-tax.html>

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

National Grid's King says U.S. can double energy productivity by 2030

By Staff Writer, EE News, Jun 6, 2013

<http://www.eenews.net/tv/videos/1695/transcript>

[SEPP Comment: Another bureaucrat, of questionable competence, discussing spending large amounts of money for a purpose that is not clearly articulated.]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

EPA Climatism: Dictating Our Lives, Living Standards and Life Spans

By Paul Driessen, Townhall, June 1, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://townhall.com/columnists/pauldriessen/2013/06/01/epa-climatism-dictating-our-lives-living-standards-and-life-spans-n1610471>

EPA Honors Fake Employee

Just when you thought the federal government couldn't get more ridiculous

By Eliana Johnson, National Review, Jun 3, 2013

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/349934/epa-honors-fake-employee-eliana-johnson>

Newly released emails show EPA director's extensive use of fictional alter ego

Former chief's alias lauded for good job

By Stephen Dian, Washington Times, June 2, 2013

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jun/2/newly-released-emails-show-epa-directors-extensive/>

Energy Issues – Non-US

Fracking: The Death Knell Of OPEC

Editorial, IBD, Jun 5, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/060513-658979-fracking-is-the-death-knell-for-opec.htm?p=full>

OPEC Sweats: How Low Can Oil Prices Go?

By Walter Russell Mead, Via Meadia, Jun 4, 2013

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2013/06/04/opec-sweats-how-low-can-oil-prices-go/>
[SEPP Comment: Reminder that some OPEC nations cannot afford significantly lower oil prices.]

Canada's westernmost province rejects pipeline to Pacific

By Staff Writers, Ottawa (AFP) May 31, 2013

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Canadas_westernmost_province_rejects_pipeline_to_Pacific_999.html

Energy Issues -- US

We Need a 21st Century Energy Policy

By Mark Mills, Real Clear Energy, May 24, 2013

http://www.realclearenergy.org/articles/2013/05/24/we_need_a_21st_century_energy_policy.html

The Case for Exports: America's Hydrocarbon Industry Can Revive the Economy and Eliminate the Trade Deficit

By Mark Mills, Manhattan Institute, May 2013 [H/t NCPA]

http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/pgi_03.htm#.UayazUC1HWv

The U.S. should allow natural gas exports

Editorial, Washington Post, May 29, 2013

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2013/05/29/a6e94d94-c421-11e2-914f-a7aba60512a7_story.html

Climate change raises stakes on US ethanol policy

By Staff Writers, Houston TX (SPX), Jun 05, 2013

http://www.biofueldaily.com/reports/Climate_change_raises_stakes_on_US_ethanol_policy_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Climate models have not been validated.]

Washington's Control of Energy

Interior pumps brakes on fracking regs

By Ben Goad, The Hill, Jun 6, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/303853-administration-again-pumping-brakes-on-fracking-regulations>

Interior chief says no new drilling in Atlantic as GOP forges ahead

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Jun 6, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/303963-interior-chief-says-no-new-drilling-in-atlantic-as-gop-forges-ahead>

Obama's brown agenda

Don't expect the President to implement sweeping plans to decarbonise the US economy

By Steven F. Hayward, American Review, No Date

<http://americanreviewmag.com/stories/Obamas-brown-agenda>

[SEPP Comment: A continuation of the policies of the Bush Administration?]

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Eagle Ford oil output rises 77% to more than 500,000 barrels per day

By Staff Writers, Fuel Fix, May 29, 2013

<http://fuelfix.com/blog/2013/05/29/eagle-ford-oil-output-rises-77-to-more-than-500000-barrels-per-day/?cmpid=eefl>

Gas to Liquids in US

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Jun 4, 2013

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2013/06/04/gas-to-liquids-in-us/>

IGas: UK Shale Gas Resources Could Be Huge

As Britain aims to reverse its dependency on foreign gas, one energy firm says the UK's shale gas deposits show big potential

By Staff Writers, Sky News, Jun 3, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://news.sky.com/story/1098699/igas-uk-shale-gas-resources-could-be-huge>

Large oil firms hit record U.S. spending in 2012, as profits drop

By Staff Writers, Fuel Fix, Jun 4, 2013

<http://fuelfix.com/blog/2013/06/04/oil-and-gas-capital-investments-reached-186-billion-in-2012/>

[SEPP Comment: A major drop in natural gas prices, due to high production, was a major cause of the drop in profits.]

Return of King Coal?

Coal is India's Path Out of Poverty

By Frank Clemente, Energy Facts Weekly, Jun 3, 2013

<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=3dfad70285&e=>

FERC Staff: Coal Generation Could See Comeback on Pricier Natural Gas This Summer

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Jun 4, 2013

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/FERC-Staff-Coal-Generation-Could-See-Comeback-on-Pricier-Natural-Gas-This-Summer_5680_p3.html

The Rise of India: Coal, Cities and Steel

By Frank Clemente, Energy Facts Weekly, Jun 6, 2013

<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=1423b14730&e=>

Oil Spills, Gas Leaks & Consequences

Climate benefits from natural gas seen hinging on plugging leaks

By Staff Writers, Bloomberg, June 4, 2013

<http://fuelfix.com/blog/2013/06/04/climate-benefits-from-natural-gas-seen-hinging-on-plugging-leaks/>

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Japan's radiation disaster toll: none dead, none sick

By John Watson, The Age, Jun 4, 2013 [H/t ACSH]

<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/japans-radiation-disaster-toll-none-dead-none-sick-20130604-2nomz.html>

Japan's 2011 nuclear disaster 'unlikely' to have future health affects, says draft UN report

By Staff Writers, UN News Centre, May 31, 2013 [H/t ACSH]

http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45058&Cr=nuclear&Cr1=#.UbIN4_m1Fc5

Fear and stress outweigh Fukushima radiation risk

By Staff Writers, WNN, May 31, 2013

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/RS_Fear_and_stress_outweigh_Fukushima_radiation_risk_3105131.html

NRC issues post-Fukushima safety rule

By Julian Hattam, The Hill, Jun 6, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/regwatch/energyenvironment/304021-nrc-issues-post-fukushima-safety-rule>

Fracked off

Thanks to cheap natural gas, America's nuclear renaissance is on hold

By Staff Writers, The Economist,

<http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21578690-thanks-cheap-natural-gas-americas-nuclear-renaissance-hold-fracked>

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind

Offshore Wind: The New Math

By David Kreutzer, The Foundry, Jun 6, 2013

<http://blog.heritage.org/2013/06/06/offshore-wind-the-new-math/>

Floating Offshore Wind Turbine Prototype Deployed Off Maine's Coast

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Jun 4, 2013

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/5681.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2687282&hq_l=8&hq_v=5e660500d0

Solar gains in Spain may cause warmists pain

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Jun 6, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/06/06/solar-gains-in-spain-may-cause-warmists-pain/>

Few Wyoming wind projects making progress

By Adam Voge, Casper Star-Tribune, May 28, 2013 [H/t IWAG]

<http://trib.com/business/energy/f9e1b79c-ed1b-58ae-b732-0661e32439c7.html>

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Energy -- Other

DOE Launches Geothermal Regulatory Roadmap For Project Developers

By Silvio Marcacci, Clean Technica, Jun 6, 2013

<http://cleantechnica.com/2013/06/06/doe-launches-geothermal-regulatory-roadmap-for-project-developers/>

Other Scientific News

For the very first time, two spacecraft will fly in formation with millimeter precision

By Staff Writers, Madrid, Spain (SPX) Jun 03, 2013

http://www.spacemart.com/reports/For_the_very_first_time_two_spacecraft_will_fly_in_formation_with_millimeter_precision_999.html

Other News that May Be of Interest

Extinct frog hasn't croaked -- it's a 'living fossil'

By Staff Writers, Paris (AFP) June 04, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Extinct_frog_hasnt_croaked_its_a_living_fossil_999.html

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Study links increase in rainfall in Atlanta to Clean Air Act passage

By Staff Writers, Atlanta (UPI), Jun 5, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Study_links_increase_in_rainfall_in_Atlanta_to_Clean_Air_Act_passage_999.html

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ARTICLES:

1. Could Global Warming Slow Sea Level Rise?

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Jun 6, 2013

http://www.americanthinker.com/2013/06/could_global_warming_slow_sea_level_rise.html

The most widely feared consequence of global warming appears to be sea level rise (SLR). Environmental advocacy groups are polluting the airwaves and internet with lurid images of flooding of Bangladesh and Pacific islands, and raising the specter of hundreds of millions of environmental refugees. Even sober scientists, while not endorsing such obvious scare stories, predict an acceleration of the ongoing global rise, which a system of tidal gauges places at about 18 cm (7 inches) for the past century, Other scientists stoutly maintain that there has been no acceleration -- even during the strong global warming of 1920-1940.

Recall that Obama even predicted a deceleration of SLR when he accepted his party's nomination in 2008: "This was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow, and our planet began to heal." So far, the existing data can be used to support all three sides. Some tidal-gauge data tend to show deceleration starting in 1960 (Holgate).

With estimates of past SLR all over the place, how does one proceed? The principal data have come from gauges, which measure not only tides but storms and everything else. And from these measurements one extracts a steady rise in local sea level. There are about two dozen stations in the world with long-enough records dating back to the early 1900s, which have been used by the international tidal gauge network, located in Liverpool, England.

Leading researcher Bruce Douglas terms SLR a "puzzle" (Physics Today March 2003), while famed Scripps Institution oceanographer Walter Munk calls it an "enigma" (ProcNatlAcadSci).

Maybe we should use Churchill's quote on Russia: "A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma"

The difficulty with projections of sea level rise is nicely illustrated by the IPCC. The initial estimates of its first assessment report (1990) showed a range of 10-367 cm for sea level rise in 2100. The second report published in 1996 narrowed the range to 3-124 cm. Its third report published in 2001 showed 11-77 cm. The fourth assessment report published in 2007 showed 14-43 cm in draft form but changed it to 18-59 cm in the final printed version. As can be seen, the maximum SLR decreased successively as estimates improved. All these IPCC projections are very much smaller than the extreme values of about 600 cm (20 feet!) by activist-scientist James Hansen (and by climate multi-millionaire Al Gore) -- which assume excessive melting of the Greenland icecaps.

This narrowing of estimates by the IPCC produced great concern among alarmists who feared that the IPCC was being "too conservative." Probably as a result of this peer-pressure, estimates have now increased -- as will be seen in the fifth assessment report, due in September 2013. As a reviewer of IPCC reports, I have been able to look at the "second order draft," which was recently leaked to the press. It gives values of 45-110 cm (16-40 inches) -- about double what IPCC estimated just six years ago in their fourth report. But there is no guarantee that these values will survive in the final printed version. Still, they are very much smaller than some of the extreme estimates that have been written up in newspapers and magazines and blamed on Global Warming (GW) from carbon dioxide released in the burning of fossil fuels.

But recent observations and new analyses of existing data suggest an opposite result: A climate warming could slow down SLR not accelerate it. To understand this counterintuitive result, one must first get rid of false leads -- just as in a detective story. The misleading argument here is the oft-quoted statement that the climate warmed by 1 F (0.6 C) in the last 100 years -- and that sea level rose by 18 cm. Both parts of the statement are true; but the second part does not necessarily follow from the first.

Two clues

The first clue that there might be something amiss with the IPCC logic comes from the IPCC report itself. According to this authoritative source, the contribution to SLR of the past century comes mainly from three sources: (i) thermal expansion of the warming ocean contributed about 4 cm; (ii) the melting of continental glaciers about 3.5 cm. [Note that the melting of floating sea ice does not raise SL] (iii) the polar regions, on the other hand, produced a slight net lowering of sea level, with most of it coming from the Antarctic [IPCC 1996; Table 7.3]. (The mechanism is intuitively easy to understand but difficult to calculate: A warming ocean evaporates more water, and some of it rains out in the Polar Regions, thus transferring water from the ocean into snow and ice at the polar ice caps.)

The major new result here is that when one simply adds up all these estimated contributions (neglecting the large uncertainties), they account for only about 20 percent of the observed rise of 18 cm. The temperature rise since 1900 cannot account for the observed SLR. Something is missing here.

An additional fact is discussed in detail in my 1997 book "Hot Talk, Cold Science" (Independent Institute, 1997). During the strong warming of 1920-1940 there was no SLR -- indicating a rough balance between the opposing effects. In fact, scrutinizing the record, I can even discern a slight lowering of sea level, an over-compensation. Unfortunately, back then in 1997 we had no data on Antarctic ice accumulation; so the hypothesis was not publishable. However, now we do have sufficient data in support of such a scenario.

But if, as surmised, ice accumulation roughly balances ocean thermal expansion and contributions from melting mountain glaciers, why then is sea level rising? Another riddle requiring a solution.

The relevant clue comes from corals and from geological observations: It seems that sea level has been rising for the past centuries at about the same rate as seen by tidal gauges in the last 100 years. In other words, sea level was rising even during the colder Little Ice age, from about 1400 to 1850 AD. This provides further support for the hypothesis that the observed global SLR since 1900 is reasonably independent of the observed temperature rise. [It is also a killing argument against a widely quoted ('semi-empirical') theory that assumes rate of SLR is proportional to global surface temperature.]

The full explanation to this riddle had been suspected for some time, based on historic data on SLR from corals (Fairbanks) and ice volume (Shackleton). But the picture was filled in only recently (Bindshadler 1998) through measurements of the rate of melting of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS), by tracing the millennial-scale shrinking of the WAIS [Conway et al. 1999]. Note that the WAIS is not floating sea ice; like a mountain glacier, its melting contributes more water to the ocean, thus raising the global sea level.

We can therefore describe the broad scenario as follows: The strong temperature increase that followed the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) about 18,000 years ago has melted enough ice to raise sea level by 120 meters (400 feet). The rate of rise was quite rapid at first and controlled by the melting of the huge ice sheets covering North America and the Eurasian land mass. These disappeared about 8000-5000 years ago; but then, as sea level rose, the WAIS continued to melt, albeit at a much lower rate -- and it is still melting at about this rate today.

The principal conclusion is that this melting (and corresponding SLR of about 18 cm [7 inches] per century) will continue for another several millennia, until the WAIS is all gone -- unless another ice age takes over. And there is nothing that we can do to stop this future sea level rise! It is as inevitable as the ocean tides. Fortunately, coral reefs will continue to grow, as they have in the past, to keep up with SLR. The rest of us will just have to adapt to future SLR, as our ancestors did some 10,000 years ago. At least we are better equipped with technology to deal with such environmental changes.

Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) may not affect SLR

A final note: What about the effects of human-induced global warming on SLR? Will it really increase the rate above its natural value, as predicted by the IPCC? We do have a handle on this question by observing what happened when the climate warmed suddenly between 1920 and 1940, before cooling between 1940 and 1975. The answer is quite surprising and could not have been derived from theory or from mathematical models. The data show that SLR slowed down slightly when the climate warmed and accelerated when the climate cooled. Evidently, ocean-

water thermal expansion and mountain-glacier melting were less important than ice accumulation on the Antarctic continent (which would of course act to lower sea level).

By analogy, a warming produced by an increase in greenhouse gases should give the same result: i.e., reduce the rate of rise of sea level. This is not a policy recommendation that burning more coal might save Venice from drowning. It is a modest appeal to politicians to take note of scientific developments and to make the necessary corrections to the course of negotiations now underway.

We can now try to answer our original question: Can Global Warming (GW) really lower sea level rise? It all depends on the time-scale: Yes, if GW lasts only for some decades or less. No, if warmer temperatures persist for millennia.

NB: This essay ignores many less important features of global SLR, such as mining of ground water and construction of dams. It also ignores important regional and local effects that depend on isostatic adjustments, ocean currents and wind patterns, land subsidence, etc. Efforts are underway to harmonize conflicting data from tidal gauges and from direct measurements of the ocean surface by satellites.

2. Rising Sea Level Tied to Faster Melt

By Gautam Naik, WSJ, June 2, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324682204578517312171788462.html?mod=IT_P_pageone_1

Unable to locate link to paper.

Accelerated melting of polar ice sheets and mountain glaciers was the driving factor behind a rise in the global sea level of 16.8 millimeters, or about two-thirds of an inch, between 2005 and 2011, according to a study published Sunday in Nature Geoscience.

The findings are consistent with observed longer-term trends, but the study encompasses only a few years of observations, limiting its conclusions, scientists said. The study, funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, does resolve long-standing discrepancies that arose from different methods of measuring sea levels.

Scientists want to establish how much of the sea-level change relates to increased melt water, and how much relates to the water expanding as it warms up. Previous calculations indicated that melting might contribute about half of the increase. The latest study concludes that for the period 2005-2011 the contribution was closer to 75%.

"There was an increase in the melting rate in Greenland starting in 2005 and that is probably the underlying story why" a larger quantity of melt water has poured into the oceans in recent years, said Clark R. Wilson, geophysicist at the University of Texas at Austin and co-author of the study.

Data from the past two decades suggest a sea level increase of about 3.1 millimeters per year. Shorter-term snapshots—such as the annual sea level rise of 2.4 millimeters reported in the latest study—can fall slightly below or above that average.

Scientists estimate the overall change in sea level by using satellite-mounted radar that measures the height of the sea surface. Alternatively, they can add up two separately calculated components—the increased mass of water from melting and other sources, and the increased thermal expansion of the ocean.

To measure the thermal expansion of the oceans, data are collected from the Argo Project, which consists of about 3,500 torpedo-like devices that zoom around in the ocean measuring temperature and salinity.

Meanwhile, NASA's satellite-based GRACE mission measures the gravity field—the varying distribution of mass—across the surface of the earth. Water and air move around from month to month, altering the distribution of mass. By measuring these changes, GRACE can get a fix on how much water mass is being added to the oceans each year.

However, overall sea-level-rise findings from the satellite radars failed to agree with the data from Argo and GRACE. The discrepancy was significant.

That was because GRACE data obtained near the boundary of ocean and land wasn't clearly understood, said Dr. Wilson. The ocean signals get "contaminated" by the much stronger signals on land, whether from snow or groundwater or other factors.

Dr. Wilson and his colleagues have now reassessed the GRACE data to reduce "the bleeding of terrestrial signals into the ocean data." They conclude that melting ice was responsible for raising the sea level by about 1.8 millimeters per year, for a total sea level rise of 2.4 millimeters annually—bringing the two measurements in line.

"Previous estimates of water mass from GRACE were about half of what we got" after making the necessary adjustments, said Dr. Wilson.

"This mismatch has been a bit of an enigma," said Jonathan Bamber, a glaciologist at the University of Bristol in England, who wasn't involved in the study. The findings "give us confidence in all the kinds of data" that are used to assess sea-level change.

3. Britain's No-Energy Bill

The Cameron government puts 'decarbonization' above growth.

Editorial, WSJ, June 3, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324063304578523304247959058.html?mod=W_SJ_Opinion_LEFTTopBucket

The U.K.'s 2013 energy bill is up for a key vote Tuesday, and even the best-case outcome is likely to hurt an already weak British economy.

Three years into David Cameron's five-year term as Prime Minister, growth is at a standstill, government deficits remain stubbornly high, and Mr. Cameron's Conservatives are on track for a stinging defeat at the polls. Yet Mr. Cameron and his Liberal Democrat coalition partners seem intent on pursuing the economic folly of total "decarbonization" of the British economy.

Voters could be forgiven if they haven't noticed how crazy this policy is, as the government and its cheerleaders wrap the drive to zero CO2 emissions in the language of growth, jobs, investment and innovation.

The immediate flashpoint is a seemingly minor issue, but its symbolism is rich. The hard-core climate alarmists want to commit Britain to a zero-emissions target as soon as 2030. Mr. Cameron wants to put off that decision until 2016—that is, after the next election. For this, Mr. Cameron is being dressed down in the media for abandoning his commitment to running the greenest government of all time.

But even under the government's preferred language, U.K. carbon emissions are supposed to fall by 50% in 12 years and by 80% by 2050. The government insists it can do this and keep the lights on by "incentivizing" £110 billion (\$168 billion) of private investment to build Britain's new low-to no-carbon future. This means subsidizing new nuclear plants, renewables like wind and solar, and carbon capture and storage, or CCS. No country has been able to pull this off. CCS in particular is the great green whale of the climate-change movement, and every attempt at it on an industrial scale is over budget, behind schedule or both.

The government also claims the energy bill will create 250,000 jobs. Even if that is achievable, it's the product of the single-entry bookkeeping so common in political green-energy projections. You can create any number of jobs putting up subsidized windmills or installing solar panels. But if in the process you drive up energy costs or taxes throughout the economy, you're bound to destroy more work than you create.

Outlaw computers and you might create a boom in demand for typists. Ban ATMs and demand for bank tellers might rise—as President Obama himself once pointed out. But the economy would not be better off because you diverted people into lower-productivity or uneconomical work.

The Cameron government's gamble is similar. It's betting that if it outlaws cheaper ways of producing energy, the resulting investment in replacing it with more expensive, less reliable and unproven alternatives will somehow pay off. And despite it all, Mr. Cameron is under political attack for not being green enough.

Already British gas and electric bills are up 15% or more in real terms in the past five years, while real wages and growth have flat-lined. The U.K. counts for less than 2% of global carbon emissions, so even if it could cut CO2 to zero, its contribution to the fight against climate change would be wiped out by one year of decent growth in China.

In this context, Tuesday's debate in Parliament over whether to set a deadline of 2030 for radical decarbonization does seem trivial. Whether it's 2030, or 2050, the British government is taking a huge gamble with the livelihoods of millions of Britons for the sake of what amounts to a rounding error in the global carbon budget. Someone ought to ask the government whether those risks are worth the low-carbon candle.

4. U.S. Oil Boom Scrambles Mideast Calculus

By Gerald Seib, WSJ, June 3, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324423904578523092713574764.html?mod=W_SJ_hps_sections_news

Syria's civil war increasingly threatens to metastasize into a regional conflict, as Hezbollah fighters join the battle on the side of Syria's government, prompting the Syrian opposition to return fire directly into Hezbollah's home base in Lebanon. Calls for the U.S. to get involved persist.

Meanwhile, another interesting news development looms. Government projections show that in September, for the first time in almost two decades, the U.S. will produce more oil than it imports. Nor will that be a fluke; the trend is expected to continue, and domestic oil production is expected to outstrip imports by an increasingly wide margin throughout 2014.

These two developments may seem unrelated, but they are not. The worsening situation in Syria raises the question of whether the U.S. will feel compelled to do something militarily to help end the rule of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad. At the same time, though, declining U.S. reliance on Middle Eastern oil raises the question of whether Americans will find it ever harder to see the point of getting involved in that messy region.

Syria itself is an exceedingly marginal oil producer, so its direct role in the energy picture isn't an issue in calculating America's interests there.

But for four decades, a broader calculus has been at work: Americans' crying need for Arab oil meant it had to be constantly involved in the quest for stability and influence throughout the Middle East. The U.S. thirst for imported oil meant it needed allies and influence in the region, whether that meant billions of dollars in aid to friendly Arab countries, or a constant search to broker a deal for the Palestinian independence that Arabs demanded, or a military presence somewhere, anywhere.

It would be shorted-sighted in the extreme to think these imperatives are simply vanishing because of a shift in oil production. The dream of complete American energy independence remains "illusory for the time being," notes Aaron David Miller, a former U.S. Middle East negotiator in Republican and Democratic administrations who now is a vice president at the Wilson Center.

More importantly, Mr. Miller adds that "we'll always have a vital interest in energy security. That is to say, given that oil is sold, or not, in one [global] market, we still have a stake in ensuring no disruption, and that our allies in Europe and Japan have access, and that no hostile power controls this resource."

Beyond that, of course, the U.S. has a profound interest in ensuring that failed states in the region don't become incubators of Islamic terrorism, and in preventing a globe-rattling surge of nuclear proliferation that could be set off if Iran produces a nuclear weapon.

In short, bugging out of the region's problems shouldn't be considered an option. Still, there's no disputing that engagement is going to be a tougher sell, one requiring domestic as much as international leadership out of Washington.

Americans already are feeling war weariness because of the decadelong military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. There seems little doubt that the march closer to energy independence—brought on by the oil fracking revolution and the related discovery of giant and reachable domestic natural-gas reserves—has only begun to affect the American psyche.

That's true because the magnitude of the change is only starting to sink in. As oil analyst Daniel Yergin has pointed out, U.S. oil production is up 43% since 2008—a daily increase that is nearly equal to all of Nigeria's oil production.

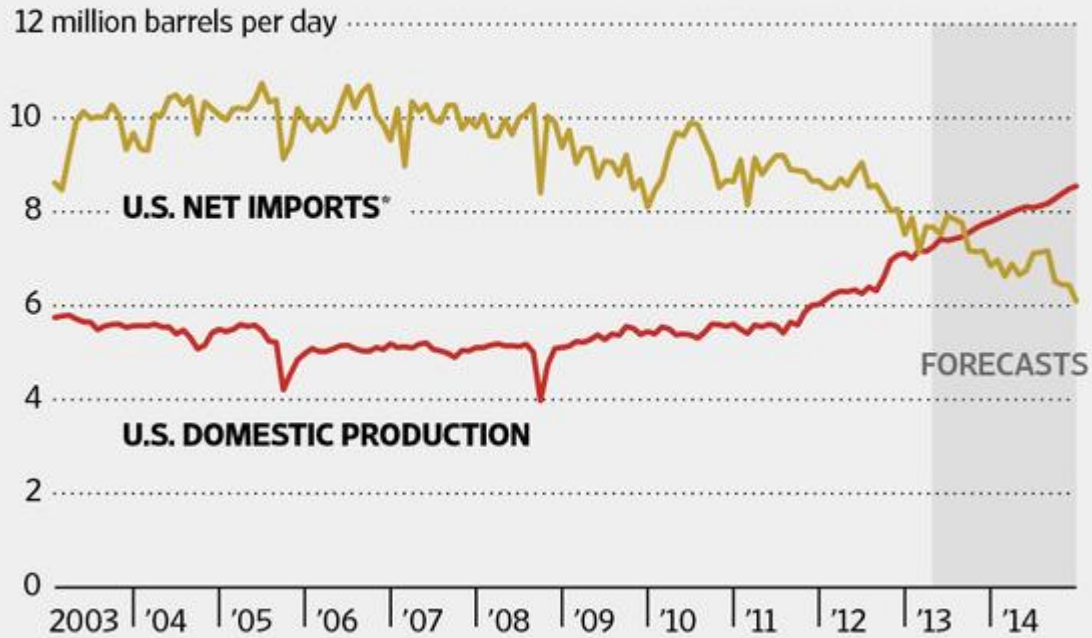
Is that affecting President Barack Obama's decision-making on Syria? There's no direct evidence of that. Mr. Obama offers other plausible reasons for his reluctance to get involved, principally the fear that even a small American intervention ultimately could require a much larger commitment to ensure Mr. Assad's departure—and that once the U.S. is involved in breaking down Syria, it will assume principal responsibility for the arduous task of putting the pieces back together again.

Still, Middle Eastern leaders, never noteworthy for their broad vision or foresight, would be wise to take note of the way the political landscape could change as the energy component of that landscape is altered. They can no longer assume that Washington can be easily lured, or simply blackmailed, into helping fix the region's messes. For decades, dependence on foreign energy went a long way toward holding at bay the American public's traditional isolationist tendencies; there's no guarantee that will continue.

At the same time, America's leaders assume some new obligations of their own. They will need to better explain why the U.S. can't afford to simply exit the region's affairs. "We need the oil" won't be a sufficient rationale any longer. But there are other, less obvious reasons—principally terrorism, nuclear proliferation and the overall health of the oil-fueled global economy—for America to remain engaged.

Energy Role Reversal

U.S. domestic oil production is on the verge of surpassing the level of net oil imports.



*Net imports equals gross imports minus gross exports.

Source: Energy Information Administration

The Wall Street Journal

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