

NZCPR Weekly

24 May 2009

NEW ZEALAND CENTRE FOR POLITICAL RESEARCH

COOLER WEATHER HEATS UP DEBATE

Dr Muriel Newman

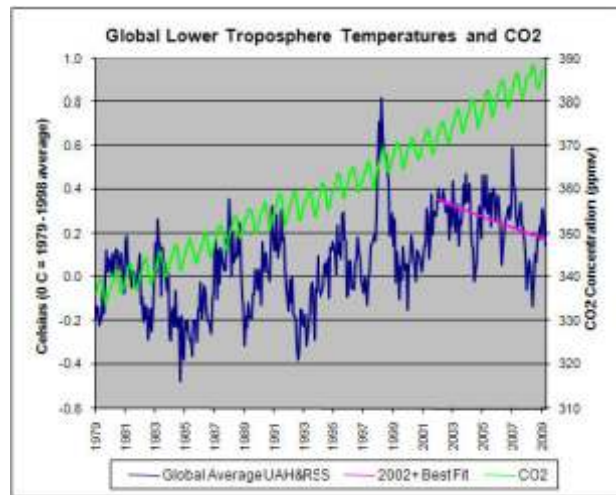
Earlier this month a briefing paper for US government officials and environmental leaders on ways to “re-frame” the global warming debate in order to build stronger public support for climate change legislation, found its way into the hands of the New York Times.[1] Re-framing is a technique used by politicians to make radical ideas more palatable to the public by replacing controversial expressions with language that evokes empathy, cooperation, and a sense of interconnectedness.[2] The concept is largely based on the work of George Lakoff, Professor of Linguistics at Berkley University and well known adviser to the environmental movement, who believes that if you control the language of a debate then you control the way that people think.

The report obtained by the New York Times had been prepared by the Washington-based public relations firm EcoAmerica. They explained that terms like “global warming” turned people off because they fostered images of “shaggy-haired liberals, economic sacrifice and complex scientific disputes”. The report suggested that rather than talking about ‘global warming’ they should be discussing “our deteriorating climate”. They went on to recommend that instead of using the term the “environment”, they should use “the air we breathe, the water our children drink”, rather than “energy efficiency” which made people think of “shivering in the dark”, they should be saying “saving money for a more prosperous future”, and instead of confusing people with “cap and trade”, they should be using terms like “cap and cash back” or “pollution reduction refund.”

The report stressed the need for aspirational language and shared ideals like “freedom, prosperity, independence and self-sufficiency while avoiding jargon and details about policy, science, economics or technology”.

Of course, there has already been a major shift in the language of the global warming debate, whereby the term “global warming” has been replaced to a large extent by “climate change”. This has occurred mainly because the physical evidence on global temperature change does not match the predictions.

According to the theory of global warming being touted by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Al Gore and many others (who have spent an estimated \$50 billion trying to show man-made greenhouse gas emissions are causing catastrophic global warming) the earth's temperatures should be rising in line with a continuing increase in carbon dioxide emissions.[3] The problem is that the planet stopped warming more than a decade ago. In fact, as the graph below shows, global warming has now been replaced by global cooling and while carbon dioxide levels continue to rise, temperatures continue to fall. This graph demonstrates that the global warming theory based on the computer models of the IPCC and others, is wrong.



The graph above shows the temperature changes of the lower troposphere from the surface up to about 8 km as determined from the average of two analyses of satellite data. The best fit line from January 2002 to April 2009 indicates a decline of 0.25 Celsius/decade. The Sun's activity, which was increasing through most of the 20th century, has recently become quiet, causing a change of trend. The green line shows the CO2 concentration in the atmosphere, as measured at Mauna Loa, Hawaii. [4]

The fact that the earth is now in a cooling phase should come as no surprise to New Zealanders, given the unseasonably cold weather we are presently experiencing. Some weather analysts are even predicting that we may miss out on autumn altogether this year!

But what is a continuing surprise is how our political leaders could be so unaware of what is going on that they can be contemplating passing laws to combat catastrophic global warming when the climate stopped warming of its own accord more than a decade ago. Could this possibly be a modern day version of the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale “The Emperor Has No Clothes”, where everyone can see that the planet is cooling but with the country's rulers claiming they are fighting global warming, loyal subjects are afraid to speak out for fear of ridicule or persecution?

Yet with global warming well and truly over and global cooling upon us, serious questions need to be asked. How can the government justify appropriating taxpayers' money for schemes based on global warming when the warming stopped over a decade ago? Where are the government's science advisers in all of this? Why are they not advising the government that we are now in a global cooling phase - and if they are advising the government of this, but the government is not listening, why not?

A quick review of the 200 or so organisations that are run by the government shows that at least 20 deal with climate related matters.

Surely some of these publicly-funded bodies must have raised concerns that the policy responses (if any at all are needed) for global cooling would be very different from those presently operating on the basis of global warming. In particular, surely the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) has a particular responsibility to keep the government well informed about such matters.

Another question that needs to be answered is why isn't the press inquiring into the fact that the government is still running global warming policies a decade after global warming stopped? As the fourth estate, the free press has a crucial responsibility in a democracy in scrutinising the actions of government and acting

as a watch dog for the public. When they are doing their job well, the media play a vital role in facilitating greater transparency and accountability in government. Not only that, but by highlighting problems in the government's agenda by providing details of all sides of an argument, they enable the public to become well informed about important public policy issues.

It is worth noting that last year SKY TV did an outstanding job in this regard by screening both Al Gore's film “An Inconvenient

Truth”, which claims that man-made carbon dioxide is causing catastrophic global warming, and Martin Durkin's documentary “The Great Global Warming Swindle”, which explains that it is natural forces such as the sun, the deep ocean currents, the clouds, and other climatic factors such as snow and ice cover, that drive the climate. They even followed up with a studio debate between climate realists, broadcaster Leighton Smith and scientific expert Dr Willem de Lange, and a team of three global warming advocates, Dr David Wratt NIWA's chief climate scientist, Prof Martin Manning of the NZ Climate Change Research Institute, and Cindy Baxter from Greenpeace.

I have invited Dr Willem de Lange, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of Waikato, to be this week's NZCPR Guest Commentator and share with us not only why he is a climate realist, but his experience of working with the IPCC.

Dr de Lange begins his article by explaining that as an expert on sea level change, he was asked by the IPCC to contribute to a chapter on that matter for their Second Assessment Report: “In keeping with IPCC procedures, the chapter was written and reviewed in isolation from the rest of the report, and I had no input into the process after my review of the chapter draft”. In fact, as he explains, he disagreed with the assumptions of a one metre sea level rise that was being proposed in the report, stating instead that “sea level rise would not necessarily result in flooding of small island nations, because natural processes on coral atolls were likely to raise island levels”.

Dr de Lange explains that when the report was finally published he found himself to be one of the 3,000 or so 'scientists' who were listed by the IPCC as agreeing with their proposition that *there was discernable human influence on climate* even though “I was not asked if I supported the view expressed in my name.” In fact, he states “my understanding at the time was that *no evidence* of a discernable human influence on *global climate* existed”!

In his article he exposes not only how “extreme scenarios were added at a late stage of the review process” into the IPCC and New Zealand climate impact reports, but that he was asked “to state that sea level rise was accelerating, or at least could be accelerating”, which he refused to do.

Dr de Lange also explains that while it is well known that satellite data gives an accurate measure of global sea levels, they are grossly inaccurate at measuring tidal changes. There, tide gauge data must be used. In spite of this he recounts a situation where the IPCC in its Fourth Assessment Report “spliced the satellite data onto the tide gauge data to 'find' acceleration in sea level rise over the period of satellite measurement. This is being used to imply that global sea level

rise is accelerating due to global warming (now renamed Climate Change). The satellite data only covered the period of increasing sea level associated with decadal cycles, **and the known discrepancy between satellite trends and tide gauge trends was not corrected for**. This is poor science comparable to the splicing of proxy and instrument data in the infamous Hockey Stick graph, and the splicing of ice core and instrumental CO2 measurements to exaggerate the changes”. To read the full article including Dr de Lange's explanation of what drives climate change, see www.nzcpr.com.

In the report on reframing the global warming debate obtained by the New York Times, EcoAmerica suggested that discussions about carbon dioxide should be dropped in favour of expressions like “moving away from the dirty fuels of the past”. This demonising of carbon dioxide by deliberately calling it a dangerous pollutant is one of the dirty tricks being used by global warming advocates. Some readers of this column have accused me of not caring about pollution or the environment because I have raised concerns about the agenda of global warming alarmists. To set the record straight, the reduction of dangerous pollutants is a separate issue and one that is to be encouraged because a clean, green environment is in all of our best interests. And as technology advances, over time the emission of dangerous pollutants will be substantially reduced.

However, carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. It is one of the raw materials that plants use to make food and is therefore at the heart of the food chain. Without carbon dioxide, there would be no life on earth. Making up a miniscule 0.038 percent of our atmosphere (380 parts per million), carbon dioxide levels are presently amongst the lowest they have ever been in the history of the earth. In the Jurassic Period 200 million years ago, carbon dioxide concentrations were around 5 times higher causing plant growth to flourish to levels that could sustain dinosaurs and other massive herbivores.[5] The highest recorded carbon dioxide concentrations at 7,000 parts per million 18 times higher than today - were found during the Cambrian Period, over 500 million years ago. Clearly, rises in carbon dioxide do not threaten the planet as the alarmists claim.

FOOTNOTES:

1. NY Times, Seeking to Save the Planet With a Thesaurus
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/02/us/politics/02enviro.html>
2. Katy Butler, Winning Words
http://www.globalpublicmedia.com/george_lakoff_says_environmentalists_need_to_watch_their_language
3. Jerry Carlson, Will Media Expose Global Warming Con Job?
http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/reprint/media_con_job_global_warming.html
4. Friends of Science, Global Lower Troposphere Temperatures and Co2
<http://www.friendsofscience.org/>
5. Ray Evans, Thank God For Carbon
<http://www.lavoisier.com.au>

Supporting the NZ Centre for Political Research

The New Zealand Centre for Political Research is an independent public policy think tank run by former Member of Parliament Dr Muriel Newman. The NZCPR's mission is to educate and inform the public about the benefits of freedom, liberty and limited government through research, publications and open public debate.

The NZCPR Weekly electronic newsletter is the biggest in the country and the www.NZCPR.com website is one of the busiest political sites. Material produced by the NZCPR helps to shape public opinion by being widely circulated through local and international media, websites, blogs and by individuals.

The NZCPR received no government funding. It is supported by individual readers who value a free and open society and want to assist in changing the direction of New Zealand. Subscribers receive a range of benefits including an exclusive copy of the NZCPR's electronic book “The Treaty of Waitangi” by Hon Sir Apirana Ngata. Further information can be found on the website at www.nzcpr.com/support.htm.

Thank you for your interest.