

Dear Editor: Re “Scientist: Stop carbon emissions or face ruin.”

Oh, my, the sky is falling—again! Despite the complete refutation of such previous doomsayers as Ehrlich (*The Population Bomb*) and the 1970s Club of Rome reports, global warming ideologues (GWIs) continue to insist that, this time, the planetwide crisis is real and that it requires immediate, expensive action. Dr. Hansen is a scientist; he is also a former government employee (NASA). So his scientific outlook favors governmental action to avert this latest “crisis.”

To examine his doomsday scenario, let’s review a brief summary of scientific logic and factual evidence. I believe that most independent scientists and fair-minded citizens would accept the following five points:

1. The earth is currently in a warming period, which periods have occurred throughout the history of the planet. We are not absolutely certain of this fact (or any fact acknowledged by science), as questioning and debate are the very essence of science. But this particular fact appears to be strongly supported by evidence. Earth is warming, but we do not know how much, nor how long this warming period will last.
2. There is quite a bit of questioning/debate among serious scientists as to the contribution of humankind to this warming period. While I am not a climate specialist, I am strong in the methodology of science, which is founded upon four principles: (1) operational definitions—what we are researching is clearly defined in terms that permit analysis by any competent methodologist; (2) objective measurements—using techniques, formulae and computations recognized and accepted by that competent methodologist; (3) clear and complete communication to any methodologist of definitions, measurements, results and conclusions; and (4) willingness to re-examine the first three in light of open questioning/debate. Having examined the global warming evidence according to these principles, I am certain, based on my methodological background, that there is no conclusive scientific evidence of the contribution of humankind to global warming [see, for example, Singer & Avery, *Unstoppable Global Warming—Every 1500 Years* and Solomon, *The Deniers: Who are the Global Warming Skeptics?*].
3. Even if science were to arrive at such a conclusion, the costs of stopping global warming, in terms of planetary resources expended, would be unacceptable to humankind. Attempting to stop the global warming for which people are believed responsible would require regressing economically to a pre-industrial-revolution agrarian economy planetwide. No single developed-nation government on earth could subject its citizens to such regression, and survive. And it is highly unlikely that planetwide international cooperation to stop human-caused global warming could be achieved.
4. Even if humankind were somehow to agree to allocate that level of resource expenditure, there are phenomena more factually founded, more immediately threatening, and more likely to be damaging to humankind—nuclear proliferation among potentially hostile nations; the AID crisis and other dangers to human health, e.g., famine and its

obverse obesity, bacterial and/or viral mutation; providing potable water to a population growing at an increasing rate; etc.—upon which humankind should focus such resources.

5. If we humans did somehow decide to attack global warming or other more threatening phenomena planetwide, market-based approaches are more likely to succeed than are government projects. The *2007 Index of Economic Freedom* presents irrefutable evidence (to those who are methodologically competent) of this assertion. The top ten nations—Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, the United States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Canada—are the most free intellectually and economically. The bottom ten—North Korea, Cuba, Libya, Zimbabwe, Burma, Turkmenistan, the Congo Republic, Iran, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau—are governed by despots and dictators, who allow little if any market activity or intellectual freedom.

In sharp contrast to independent scientific logic and evidence, GWIs rely upon dogmatic assertion, stifling scientific questioning/debate, and blind adherence to the accepted dogma: (1) warming of the earth is accepted absolutely; (2) unlike previous warming periods, humankind is responsible for most, if not all of this warming, as the inevitable consequence of profligate squandering of the earth's resources; and (3) the costs of global warming must be borne. And GWIs viciously excoriate anyone, scientist or concerned citizen, who dares question this dogma—even calling us “deniers”, a false analogy to Holocaust Deniers.

To give their ideology a patina of science, GWIs frequently cite the classic wager proposed by the mathematician Blaise Pascal. In pondering the existence of God, Pascal suggested he wager that it would be prudent to behave as if he were sure of God's existence, because the costs of so doing were relatively small even though God did not exist, while the costs of denying existence would be severe, in the afterlife, if God did in fact exist. In scientific terminology, Pascal postulated that the costs of rejecting a true hypothesis (God in fact exists), termed a Type I or alpha error, were severe, i.e., eternity in hell. However, the costs of accepting a false hypotheses (behaving as if God exists though He in fact does not), termed a Type II or beta error, were relatively small, to wit, living a sinless life.

But this analogy, applied to global warming, is false. Pascal's wager “payoff” could only occur after his death; no one still alive could know the outcome. Applied to the global warming debate in this lifetime, the costs of the alpha error (taking planetwide action to stop global warming) would in fact be unacceptable to humankind, while the beta error costs (not taking such drastic action even though warranted) are at best uncertain.

Finally, global warming ideologues just flat do not trust market-based solutions. Despite all the evidence planetwide of government mismanagement—the fall of the USSR, the increasing acceptance of market approaches to overcome their economic shortcomings by China and India, the current economic malaise in such resource-rich countries as Venezuela and Zimbabwe, the U.S. public school system and other

government monopolies—global warming ideologues continue to insist that only planetwide government regulation can solve this imagined crisis. Self interest is manifest here: such regulation provides continued employment to public-sector “scientists” and bureaucrats. Perhaps self interest explains why so many GWIs who call themselves scientists enjoy public-sector payrolls as university faculty and/or government grantees. Their incomes would be cut off if scientific logic and factual evidence were to prevail.

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