

MANMADE MYTH

By Bryan
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IS GLOBAL WARMING MANKIND'S DEADLIEST CREATION? YOU DECIDE

Billions of dollars are being spent to stop so-called manmade global warming. Already we have been told it is “a bigger threat to mankind than international terrorism”, with runaway warming, rises in sea levels and increases in the number of floods, hurricanes, droughts and tropical diseases predicted.

Faced with this, a pragmatic technological society might decide it would get best value for money by modernising existing inefficient coal-fired stations, building nuclear power stations and efficient transport. But instead, we have poured resources into renewables.

Worldwide, about 50,000MW of wind power has been developed at a cost of around \$75bn. The windmills generate about 110,000GWh per annum costing 5.5-7.2p/kWh and are subsidised well beyond the actual cost.

If this \$75bn was spent on nuclear power, 3.2 times more energy would be generated – with corresponding carbon dioxide reduction – at less than half the cost. Engineers are supposed to be people who can “do for five bob, what any fool can do for a quid”. We seem to have lost the plot.

What's more, many policies that encourage renewable generation are bizarre. Replacing the runner and guide vanes of hydrostations of less than 20MW, will earn the generator three times as much as before. But if the plant generates more than 20MW, no such windfall exists.

And consider this: a recently constructed \$1m solar-voltaic installation in the UK will have an annual output of 68,700 kWh and will save 48t of carbon dioxide emissions annually. So this power will cost around 70p/kWh while the carbon dioxide reduction will cost around £1000/tonne.

TACKLING GLOBAL WARMING

Kyoto is held up as an international agreement that will significantly limit global warming by reducing the amount of man-made carbon dioxide, but many have doubts. According to climate models from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if fully implemented, Kyoto will reduce the world temperature in 2050 by about 0.07°C at a cost of as much as \$150bn a year. The Copenhagen Consensus has concluded that this money would be better spent on fighting disease and providing clean water.

In 1998 a Professor Mann generated the ‘hockey stick’ curve showing temperatures declining at a steady rate from about 1000 years ago to around 1850 and then warming



rapidly. This became a cornerstone of Kyoto and the basis of “the world is warmer than it has been in the last 1000 years and is warming at an unprecedented rate.”

However, the curve denies that the ‘Middle Ages Warm Period’ and the ‘Little Ice Age’, included in the 1995 IPCC report, ever happened. This contradicts written history, ice cores and other evidence. World temperatures before and since 1850 show a stronger correlation with sunspot activity than with CO₂ levels.

If the curve is binned then the climate history of the last 150 years is not ‘unprecedented’ compared to the changes occurring in the last 1000 or 10,000 years. Temperatures peaked in 1998 and may now be trending to a 2030 low.

Projections of future temperatures come from computer models of the climate. However, climate models must be based on a detailed understanding of a world with water vapour, clouds, winds, ocean currents, El Nino, the greenhouse effect, changes in solar emissions, sunspot cycles. In fact very few aspects of manmade global warming survive close examination. Logic, commonsense and hard science are hard to find.

Should we believe in manmade global warming because a “consensus of climate scientists” believe in it? No. Science is not decided by majority vote. Galileo was in the minority. Most stockbrokers recommended Enron. Who got it right? ■

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