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From The Sunday Times

February 14, 2010

World may not be warming, say scientists

Jonathan Leake

467 COMMENTS | RECOMMEND? (422)

The United Nations climate panel faces a new challenge with scientists casting doubt on its claim that global temperatures are rising inexorably because of human pollution.

In its last assessment the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said the evidence that the world was warming was “unequivocal”.

It warned that greenhouse gases had already heated the world by 0.7C and that there could be 5C-6C more warming by 2100, with devastating impacts on humanity and wildlife. However, new research, including work by British scientists, is casting doubt on such claims. Some even suggest the world may not be warming much at all.

“The temperature records cannot be relied on as indicators of global change,” said John Christy, professor of atmospheric science at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, a former lead author on the IPCC.

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The doubts of Christy and a number of other researchers focus on the thousands of weather stations around the world, which have been used to collect temperature data over the past 150 years.

These stations, they believe, have been seriously compromised by factors such as urbanisation, changes in land use and, in many cases, being moved from site to site.

Christy has published research papers looking at these effects in three different regions: east Africa, and the American states of California and Alabama.

“The story is the same for each one,” he said. “The popular data sets show a lot of warming but the apparent temperature rise was actually caused by local factors affecting the weather stations, such as land development.”

The IPCC faces similar criticisms from Ross McKittrick, professor of economics at the University of Guelph, Canada, who was invited by the panel to review its last report.

The experience turned him into a strong critic and he has since published a research paper questioning its methods.

“We concluded, with overwhelming statistical significance, that the IPCC’s climate data are contaminated with surface effects from industrialisation and data quality problems. These add up to

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a large warming bias," he said.

Such warnings are supported by a study of US weather stations co-written by Anthony Watts, an American meteorologist and climate change sceptic.

His study, which has not been peer reviewed, is illustrated with photographs of weather stations in locations where their readings are distorted by heat-generating equipment.

Some are next to air-conditioning units or are on waste treatment plants. One of the most infamous shows a weather station next to a waste incinerator.

Watts has also found examples overseas, such as the weather station at Rome airport, which catches the hot exhaust fumes emitted by taxiing jets.

In Britain, a weather station at Manchester airport was built when the surrounding land was mainly fields but is now surrounded by heat-generating buildings.

Terry Mills, professor of applied statistics and econometrics at Loughborough University, looked at the same data as the IPCC. He found that the warming trend it reported over the past 30 years or so was just as likely to be due to random fluctuations as to the impacts of greenhouse gases. Mills's findings are to be published in Climatic Change, an environmental journal.

"The earth has gone through warming spells like these at least twice before in the last 1,000 years," he said.

Kevin Trenberth, a lead author of the chapter of the IPCC report that deals with the observed temperature changes, said he accepted there were problems with the global thermometer record but these had been accounted for in the final report.

"It's not just temperature rises that tell us the world is warming," he said. "We also have physical changes like the fact that sea levels have risen around five inches since 1972, the Arctic icecap has declined by 40% and snow cover in the northern hemisphere has declined."

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts has recently issued a new set of global temperature readings covering the past 30 years, with thermometer readings augmented by satellite data.

Dr Vicky Pope, head of climate change advice at the Met Office, said: "This new set of data confirms the trend towards rising global temperatures and suggest that, if anything, the world is warming even more quickly than we had thought."

[Surface temperature records: policy driven deception? - a report by Joseph D'Aleo and Anthony Watts](#)

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467 Comments (Displaying 1-10)

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Kevin Kirchman wrote: @Michael Elston,

"I fail to see how a method of censorship is less likely to be established by peer reviewed research than by simply accepting ideas untested."

That was not suggested, you are misrepresenting my point with a straw man argument. You are advocating limiting the peer review process to a closed group. That's censorship, especially when the public is paying for this "science" through government grants.

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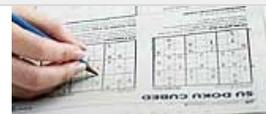


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others, for if it isn't we must simply accept the unqualified word of the author".

Totally incorrect. It is the empirically demonstrable quality of ideas that is their epistemic foundation, not their endorsement.

Science is looking out the window and seeing that it is raining. Science is looking at the ice-core data in an Excel spreadsheet on a BBC website that with a cursory review shows that the relationship between CO2 and temperatures does not support that the former is the _cause_ of the latter, but more than likely the latter causing the former.

You are presuming that the capacity to validate an idea is limited to a select group of people. That is simply not true.

"If a group of alchemists believe they have the ability to transmute metals and it can be demonstrated and reproduced to the satisfaction of the sceptic then I fail to see how that is not a valid challenge to their method".

In your peer review, the sceptic is left outside if he is not approved by the clique. The pompous claim to eminence of today's climate scientists has no foundation, as they have all shown their backsides. We have seen through the technobabble that government grant-getters use to obfuscate their work to baffle the tax-payers eyes.

"Leaving aside the point that nothing can rightly be called science before 1833, when William Whewell coined the term."

What rubbish. "Science" the word derives from scientia, a Latin term. "Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est : And thus knowledge itself is power" said Si

February 16, 2010 2:18 PM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (2)

Kevin Kirchman wrote:

@Michael Elston,

"I feel that the theory of scientific method that we have derived from Kant, Karl Popper, Imre Lakatos and Thomas Kuhn, to name but a few, is under no serious threat from the 'evidence' you presented in your argument".

The theory of scientific method you suggest is founded on those unscientific philosophers is not an empirical science itself, which is a very funny thing for you to posit. Are you telling us all that the grand edifice of subjectivity that is philosophy today is a science? Ha! A philosopher can't on one hand assert the subjectivity of his field, and on the other claim such assertion as objective knowledge. That old paradigm is self-contradictory, just a means of reducing the academic standards for ideas to make funding easier to get. By that rule, any thing goes in the University research lab.

February 16, 2010 2:14 PM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (1)

Michael Elston wrote:

Kevin Kirchman,

I fail to see how a method of censorship is less likely to be established by peer reviewed research than by simply accepting ideas untested.

No, peer reviewers are not unbiased, although it is the least imperfect system of testing ideas we have yet devised and yes, scientific knowledge is derived from the endorsement of others, for if it isn't we must simply accept the unqualified word of the author.

Are you perhaps suggesting that we abandon the sceptical testing of ideas altogether and simply accept everything we read, unquestioned?

If a group of alchemists believe they have the ability to transmute metals and it can be demonstrated and reproduced to the satisfaction of the sceptic then I fail to see how that is not a valid challenge to their method.

Leaving aside the point that nothing can rightly be called science before 1833, when William Whewell coined the term, it is a grotesque anachronism to apply the modern scientific method to the discoveries of earlier natural philosophers, whose work was indeed

SEARCH

heavily peer reviewed, as is attested by the large volume of published correspondence generated by these researchers.

I feel that the theory of scientific method that we have derived from Kant, Karl Popper, Imre Lakatos and Thomas Kuhn, to name but a few, is under no serious threat from the 'evidence' you presented in your argument.

February 16, 2010 1:17 PM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (2)

Sarah Higgins wrote:

I wish these "experts" would make up their minds. It is then it isn't. Stop confusing, blaming and also taxing us for something that Mother Nature has had control of for millions of years, not us humans!!!!!!!

February 16, 2010 12:18 PM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (9)

George Nomen wrote:

John Galt,

"Now that we've established you are reading my posts, how about going back and "disproving" my far more serious post to Sea Bee about the application of Henry's Gas Law accounting for the rise in atmospheric CO2, thereby dismissing the AGW "theory" entirely?"

Fair enough. You have put forward a suggestion that is actually a proper scientific hypothesis, in that it makes predictions, can be tested and thus can be falsified. You suggest that rather than CO2 being the cause of warming, CO2 is instead the result of warming, due to out-gassing from the oceans as they rise in temperature as the earth warms after the Little Ice Age.

OK first you will have proven that the LIA was global rather than confined to the north atlantic region. I will assume you have done that (you have, haven't you?).

Then you have to have a source for the warming - note that 'It's a natural cycle' is not a reason - there has to be a physical cause. I will assume you have done that (you have, haven't you?)

Then I assume you have calculated the amount of CO2 released from sea water given a particular rise in the water temperature and the solubility of CO2 (you have done that? what temperature change did you use?)

Then, given that temperatures in the medieval warming period were allegedly similar to now, you must be predicting that similar releases of CO2 would have occurred then (if not, why not) which means that atmospheric CO2 would have been lower before the MWP, rise during it, fall as the LIA occurred, and rise after it, and that these changes would be similar in magnitude to those observed now. Do you agree that those would be the predictions implied by your hypothesis (if not, why?). In that case your suggestion is testable - your game or not?

February 16, 2010 12:13 PM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (3)

Kevin Kirchman wrote:

@Michael Elston,

"Without peer review the 'paper' in question must only be viewed as mere pseudo-science and personal opinion".

That's how a method of censorship is established. Your theory of valid scientific knowledge presumes two errors; firstly, that the peer reviewers are unbiased, and secondly, that knowledge or science derives from its endorsement by others.

If an independent person challenges the findings of a peer group of alchemists claiming the ability to turn iron ore into gold, for you that is not a valid challenge.

Likewise, if Galileo endorses the Copernican theory of the Earth revolving around the sun, if it is not peer reviewed, then it is not science, but pseudo-science. If Gregor Mendel independently establishes the foundation of the science of genetics, as a teacher in a monastery, that is not science either.

Your theory of peer-review is flawed, and invalid from historical evidence just presented.

February 16, 2010 12:01 PM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (9)

Alan Rex wrote:

This is all a cop out and means that lets do nothing is again back in fashion which will of course please the politicians and industry.

I am not a scientist or into ecology or whatever it is called but even I know it is just plain stupid to make things we can not dispose of safely or that will not degrade on their own safely.

I also know that there is a finite amount of fossil fuel and that we are using it much faster than it is being created.

I know that the earth is a system which we depend upon entirely for our survival.

I know that there is a limit to how many people each area and the world as a whole can support.

It is madness to continue the way we have been. I doubt that I will suffer because of it and my children may also be OK but I do fear for my grandchildren.

All efforts should be directed towards living with, not off of the earth, so that what we do is sustainable. This is just plain common sense.

The way the planet functions to support us is very very complex and as with anything of this nature it is easy to talk down someone else's point of view.

Perhaps the scientists will agree on what is happening but if we just wait for this it is certain to be too late.

It is not credible for us all to become self-sufficient there are just too many of us but that does not mean that we can not start to change our ways and look after this place in which we all live.

February 16, 2010 11:39 AM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (6)

Maria A wrote:

The world may not be warming..let's move on. The world may be experiencing extreme weather events..lets look into that to see if it's true by comparing historical data (the met office has some). Is it connected with pollution/solar weather/another cause. I'm keeping an open mind.

February 16, 2010 11:35 AM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (1)

Roger B wrote:

All I seem to remember is scare stories about the planet dying. Remember the new Ice Age that was fast approaching? What about the Gulf Stream changing course and freezing Britain up? With the death of Communism some people have invented new religions - multiculturalism and Global Warming being two.

February 16, 2010 10:47 AM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (15)

Michael Elston wrote:

The simple phrase 'His study, which has not been peer reviewed' really should ring very loud alarm bells. Without peer review the 'paper' in question must only be viewed as mere pseudo-science and personal opinion; a few, doubtlessly specifically selected, photographs does not make for a statistically valid scientific conclusion.

February 16, 2010 10:28 AM GMT

 RECOMMEND? (12)

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