

4 February, 2007

The IPCC and AR4.

Ray Evans

In January 2001, the IPCC launched its Third Assessment Report (TAR) in Shanghai. Behind the speakers was a giant projection of what became known as Mann's Hockey Stick - a temperature-time graph - which purported to represent global temperatures from 1,000 AD to 2,000 AD, and which showed temperatures declining very gradually from 1,000 AD to 1900 AD and then taking off like a rocket over the next 100 years. The graph looked like an ice hockey stick lying on its handle (1000 - 1900 AD) with the blade pointing to the sky (1900 - 2000 AD). The inference was that global temperatures had been more or less stable for 900 years and then, because of anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide, had increased by an unprecedented 0.9 deg C.

Mann's Hockey Stick turned out to be fraudulent. The Mediaeval Warm Period, and the Little Ice Age had been washed out through statistical manipulation of the data, and the IPCC spent quite some time and energy in damage control after being exposed. One of the consequences of that exercise is that the Policy Makers' Summary (PMS) of the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), having been released in Paris on 2 Feb 2007, is rather more cautious about predictions of temperature and sea level rises than TAR. Instead of the 5.8 deg C of 2001, we are back to 3 deg C, and sea level rises have been scaled back to the 500 mm range.

This has caused considerable angst amongst more hard-line members of the anthropogenist movement - the group of radicals who believe passionately that anthropogenic CO₂ will bring about the end of the world as we know it, and who demand immediate decarbonisation of the world's economy. Australia's Graeme Pearman, formerly head of the CSIRO's Division of Atmospheric Research, is an adherent of this group.

For example, Robin McKie, Science Editor of the London Observer wrote (18 Jan 2007)

Serious disagreement has broken out among scientists over a United Nations climate report's contention that the world's greatest wilderness - Antarctica - will be largely unaffected by rising world temperatures.

The report, to be published on Friday, will be one of the most comprehensive on climate change to date, and will paint a grim picture of future changes to the planet's weather patterns. Details of the report were first revealed by The Observer last weekend.

However, many researchers believe it does not go far enough. In particular, they say it fails to stress that climate change is already having a severe impact on the continent and will continue to do so for the rest of century. At least a quarter of the sea ice around Antarctica will disappear in that time, say the critics, though this forecast is not mentioned in the study.

The IPCC had to steer a difficult course between making a fool of itself - again - as in 2001, and satisfying the demands of the decarbonising radicals. The solution the IPCC chose was to

moderate its predictions but to lay the blame more firmly on the shoulders of mankind. The Policy Makers' Summary is adamant (90 per cent confidence) that man is responsible for continuing global warming. The fact that the satellite record shows temperature decline since 1998 is ignored. Indeed, the historical record as manifest, for example, in the Greenland Ice Cores, corroborated by sediments from the ocean floors and by cave stalactites, tells us the Mediaeval Warm Period (900 - 1300 AD), the Roman Warm Period (250 BC - 100 AD), and the Minoan Warm Period (1400 BC - 1200 BC), were warmer than our present late C20 Warm Period.

Anthropogenic carbon dioxide cannot explain these warm periods nor can lack of anthropogenic CO₂ explain the Little Ice Age which was familiar to the citizens of 17th century London, and indeed to their heirs in the 19th century. The Napoleonic Wars were fought in a period known as the Dalton Minimum when sun spot activity was extremely subdued and temperatures were very low indeed, as La Grande Armee discovered on the retreat from Moscow. In 1816, the year after Waterloo, England had no summer, followed by massive crop failure. This was the consequence of the eruption of Mt Tambora in the Indonesian archipelago, overlaid on what were already cold and miserable conditions. Anthropogenic carbon dioxide was not in play here.

The 20th century record shows a warming trend from 1920 to 1945, cooling from 1945 to 1976, and warming since then. The only non-trivial correlation between anthropogenic CO₂ and global temperature is found between 1976 and the present. On this slender thread the entire current anthropogenist hysteria is based.

Former US Vice President Al Gore, in his much celebrated movie *An Inconvenient Truth*, made much of the close tracking found in the Vostok Ice Cores between global temperatures over the past 500,000 years and atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide. The correlation is indeed extraordinary, and in the movie Gore climbed up on a step ladder to show that current concentrations exceed those calculated from the ice cores by 150 ppmv. Al Gore with his private jet and his imperial life style reminds me of Elmer Gantry, the fictional American preacher of the 1950s who was against fornication and other sins of the flesh, but whose frailty in these matters matched the vigour of his preaching. In particular I am reminded, from the same era, of the Methodist opposition to fornication, on the grounds that it could lead to dancing. Gore has a similar problem in that the CO₂ concentrations from the Vostok ice cores lag the temperature record by between 500 and 800 years.

The climate models which take up so much computer time in the Hadley Centre in East Anglia and the CSIRO's Division of Atmospheric Research at Edithvale Victoria, amongst 7 or 8 other such models, are constructed to prove the results required of them. The degree of positive feedback which is necessary to transform small perturbations in carbon dioxide concentrations (a very minor greenhouse gas) into substantial changes in water vapour (by far the dominant greenhouse gas) is so great that the climate models are inherently unstable, and require constant dampening in order to obtain any results.

The explanatory power of these climate models, when the known climate history of the world over the last century is replayed and they are asked to predict what we know has taken place, is zero. But it is because these same climate models predict temperature increases (as in AR4) of 2 to 4.5 deg C as a consequence of doubling of CO₂ concentrations, that attempts are being made to bully us into accepting decarbonisation of the Australian economy. The new

Labor Leader, Kevin Rudd, is being disingenuous about the economic consequences of decarbonisation. His statement on 30 January 2007 was reported thus:

"The first thing the federal government can do is recognise that climate change is real," he said.

"Mr Howard's cabinet still has in it an industry minister who only a few months ago said climate change was a pile of hogwash."

Australia should implement its own national emissions trading scheme and develop an effective renewable energy target, he said.

"We need global leadership on climate change, and instead Mr Howard follows (US President George) Bush in ignoring the Kyoto Protocol and ignoring practical programs of action which will help deal with, and turn back, the challenge of climate change."

Kevin Rudd must be aware that an "emissions trading scheme" is just a carbon tax under another name, with the added opportunity for the suits to trade the permits sold or allocated by the state. He must also be aware that so-called renewable energy, of which wind-mills are the most bizarre example, increase the cost of electricity by a factor of at least three, and that most of those countries, particularly Germany, which have expended huge sums on these symbols of politically correct energy, have begun to draw back from the serious economic consequences of carrying out Green programmes of de-industrialisation.

Since WWII Australia has developed as a world class economy based on the comparative advantages we enjoy as a producer of mineral and agricultural commodities. This type of economic success has been much derided by members of the chattering classes who deemed mining, particularly, to be a seriously embarrassing way of earning a living. But as the current minerals boom reminds us, minerals and wool and grains and other rural commodities have been the source of our enviable wealth since the 1830s, and our huge resources of low cost coal, notably the vast brown coal resources of the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, provide the basis for low cost electricity which powers many billions of dollars worth of exports containing "congealed electricity", aluminium being the prime example.

Taxing the generation of coal based electricity to render it so expensive as to seriously reduce its consumption will bring about huge economic dislocation. Already problems concerning investment in the next generation of base load power stations are besetting us, since no board of directors can sign off on an investment worth say \$10 billions, if a carbon tax as proposed by Kevin Rudd should suddenly render that investment uneconomic.

Similarly the future of the aluminium smelting industry is in question since the electricity supply contracts which underpin that industry are coming up for renewal. Once again, investments here worth many billions are at risk and the current behaviour of State governments (perhaps with the exception of Queensland) suggests they do not understand the enormity of the losses they will impose on their state economies if they try to play both sides of the fence in this farce of "saving the planet" from carbon dioxide.

It used to be the case that the citizens of advanced societies such as our own, looked with interest and sometimes sympathy on the rituals performed by primitive societies in attempts to persuade the gods to send rain, or otherwise increase the stock of available food. The

current guilt-ridden hysteria, which seems to have captured the chattering classes of the West in entirety, and is built on the gross superstition that we can “control climate change” by forswearing the consumption of carbon based fossil fuels, shows that the veneer of rationality is very thin indeed. The Duke of Wellington, walking one day in Hyde Park in the company of an attractive lady - a Mrs Smith - responded to the person who accosted him with the greeting “Mr Smith, I presume?” with a curt “Sir; If you believe that, you’ll believe anything,.” They are the words we should use in this current contagion.