

The “Near-Virtual Reality” of Man-Made Global Warming by Dennis T. Avery

“As Barack Obama shifts from a waking dream to the real world, he faces the near-virtual reality of climate change. He has to move decisively.” (Ian McEwan, “A New Dawn,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 8/9.)

What is near-virtual reality? I’m fascinated that McEwan starts his sermon upholding his belief in man-made global warming by quoting George Berkeley, the 18th-century Irish philosopher. Berkeley contended that the physical world does not exist; that it’s a “virtual” product of our minds.

That’s pretty much the case with man-made global warming.

Temperatures are lower today than in 1940. Over the past two years, global temperatures recorded by Britain’s Hadley Centre and the U.S. satellites have dropped sharply, by about 0.6 degree C.

The ice which used to fill Alaska’s Glacier Bay has retreated 57 miles since 1800, but the glacier gained mass during 2008—because the sun became less active, temperatures fell, and 20 feet of Alaskan snowfall turned to ice this spring. There was nothing surprising about such a shift—unless your computer model keeps predicting a continuing rapid decline in ice and an inevitable man-made increase in the earth’s temperatures.

Samuel Johnson famously refuted Berkeley’s idea of virtual reality by kicking a stone and watching his foot bounce off of the rock. The world’s thermometers are likewise refuting man-made global warming by dropping sharply while atmospheric CO₂ increased another 5 percent in the past decade.

McEwan makes a vital point, however. “In an age of electronic media, where rumor, opinion and fact are tightly interleaved, and where politicians must sing to compete for our love, public affairs have the quality of a waking dream . . . whose precise connection to the world of kickable stones is obscure, though we are certain it exists.” McEwan says Barack Obama might succeed in “tipping the nations toward a low-carbon future simply because people think he can.”

“There are fears that Mr. Obama will move too cautiously on climate change for political reasons, and that would be a tragic error,” McEwan warns. He says if Obama went to next year’s Copenhagen summit with a bold emissions reduction commitment, “he would become a hero of the planet, for good.”

The idea must be tempting. However, Gordon Brown has put his Prime Minister’s chair at risk in Britain by demanding new green taxes and more dramatic emissions cuts while the planet is cooling. The London *Observer* said in June that 60 percent of Britons doubt our global warming is man-made.

Inevitably, charging ourselves hefty prices for emitting CO₂ will cost a lot of money, which the Congress will gleefully collect and distribute to its favored recipients. Based on the world’s recent erratic temperatures, moreover, it won’t make any difference to global warming.

Falling thermometers underline the importance of understanding the 1,500-year solar-linked climate cycle, revealed since 1984 in hundreds of peer-reviewed studies of oxygen isotopes (in ice cores and cave stalagmites), seabed microfossils, fossil pollen, and carbon 14 all over world.

Sunspots had predicted the recent temperature drop since 2000, and sunspots have a 79 percent correlation with our past thermometer record (with a ten year lag). The correlation between our temperatures and CO₂ is a dismissive 22 percent and falling as we speak.

Before we dismantle the most productive economy in history, maybe the new Obama administration should at least examine the long, proven relationship between the sun's activity and our climate.

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