

THE RESEARCH PLAYERS

Let's start with the little guys—like me. The scientific research establishment is widely assumed to be the unbiased purveyors of global warming knowledge, trying to fight back political pressure that would keep them from revealing to the world how serious the threat of global warming really is. But trust me, scientists are not unbiased, and you can rest assured that you have already heard about every possible catastrophic scenario that our fertile scientific imaginations can dream up.

With very few exceptions, we climate scientists are funded by the federal government. We write research proposals to NASA, NOAA, NSF, or the Department of Energy. It is you, the taxpayer, who are footing the bill for our research. I assume that you would like to see your money spent in such a way that is not biased toward any particular political persuasion. Unfortunately, both the scientists and managers within the funding agencies tend to have political biases and financial motivations which then influence how they approach the global warming problem and its solutions.

In my discussions with various climate researchers and funding managers over the years (typically over a beer or three), I have found that many of them are closet socialists. Most would probably dispute this, or don't even realize it, but the politics they support are pretty close to being socialistic. At the very least, they believe that we must "do something" about global warming, and most of them specifically support the Kyoto Protocol approach. (The Kyoto treaty will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter.) Some have even admitted that they would hold the same opinion even if global warming ends up not being a threat to civilization, which is a sure sign that something more than science is influencing their opinions.

Like so many other affluent westerners, most scientists and their governmental funding managers share a worldview in which mankind is ruining the Earth. This paradigm influences the kinds of research programs that are formulated, the proposals that



The Environmental Protection Agency
cranks it up a notch.

Chapter 7: The Politics of Climate Change

THE COSTS AND consequences of "doing something" substantial about global warming in the near future are staggering. All of humanity needs a source of abundant and inexpensive energy to thrive, and no matter what energy policy changes are implemented by governments, there will be big winners and losers, financially and politically.

If governments (rather than people in a free market) can control what kinds and amounts of energy are acceptable, they will have vastly increased their control over their citizenry. Since global warming respects no international boundaries, the United Nations' dream of global governance is now closer than ever.

But while global warming might be portrayed as an enemy against which politicians from around the world can unite, it is more accurate to say that global warming is an opportunity to accomplish selfish goals that might never have been achieved through legitimate means.

scientists write to receive funding from those programs, and even how the research is carried out. While I am not accusing anyone of scientific misconduct, I am saying that it is difficult to make global warming research totally independent of political beliefs and worldviews.

Remember, we scientists do not provide goods or services that are useful to the public, at least not in a direct way. We don't have to "earn" a living in the normal sense of the word. As I explained in the last chapter, this makes scientists a little disconnected from what makes a free market economy work. It isn't our job to create wealth—it is to spend it. Besides, our PhDs are proof that we are above any provincial, mundane tasks like providing goods and services that folks need on a daily basis. We have a higher calling. We deal in the Discovery of Knowledge.

What I find amusing about many scientists' views on global warming policy is that they are contrary to the process by which the scientists reached their comfortable position in life in the first place. A democratic form of government and free market economy are what allow sufficient wealth to be generated to provide these scientists the luxury of pursuing their research interests. The United States funds most of the climate research being performed in the world, which has now amounted to many billions of dollars.

Yet the majority of these researchers are totally unaware that they are pawns in a political power game that cares little about whether global warming is a threat or not. Even in a subconscious way, scientists know that by playing this game in which mankind is the enemy of the environment, they can propose to a government agency to gain funding. And if scientists can help the government administrators build their global warming research programs still further, it is more likely that they will continue to get funding.

And, as a side benefit, we get to Save the Earth, too! What a great gig this is!

Global warming researchers were funded to study evidence for manmade global warming, not against it. Thus, their research

results have a built-in bias that supports the theory of manmade global warming. Their published research is then inevitably colored by these biases.

As a result, we have papers published in the scientific literature that claim that this or that human influence is destabilizing the climate, which is then pointed to by the funding agencies as evidence that more money is needed to study the problem. These are not totally objective conclusions, as they have been biased by the way research questions have been posed and investigated.

I am not suggesting that there shouldn't be global warming research programs, nor am I suggesting that most of these researchers only purport to believe in manmade global warming just to get funding. As scientists, we all will agree that global warming could, at least theoretically, be a serious problem. Instead, I am merely pointing out that the research scientists, as well as the government managers that support them, cannot be considered to be unbiased. We all have a dog in this hunt.

I have often wondered if it would have been more fruitful for the federal government to request climate research proposals that would fall into one of two groups, with a goal of funding an equal number in each category. While one group would investigate evidence for climate destabilizing mechanisms, the other would look for evidence for climate stabilizing mechanisms. I don't know whether such an approach would work, but it seems like it would help to diffuse the bias inherent in global warming research today where researchers are falling all over themselves trying to discover some new negative consequence of global warming.

Through the peer review process, scientists help government managers decide which research proposals to fund. This is good, since the managers seldom have sufficiently detailed knowledge to make decisions about what scientists have proposed to do. But since the scientists involved in the review process are themselves chosen from the same pool of researchers, there is some level of professional incest that exists.

Compounding the problem is that fact that research disciplines

have become so specialized that there might be only a half dozen people in the world qualified to review each other's proposals. This process further entrenches specific political and financial biases that already exist among scientists and managers.

If you still doubt whether there is inherent bias among the global warming pessimists, consider this. Imagine if the global warming threat were to disappear—for instance, some scientist convincingly demonstrates that we really do not have anything to worry about. Do we really believe that the environmentalists, scientists, and funding managers would breathe a collective sigh of relief and say, "What wonderful news for humanity! Now we don't have to worry about this problem any longer!"? I don't think so. Entire careers and scientific reputations which now depend upon global warming continuing to be a serious threat would simply end.

Government managers of climate research programs have to play up the threats of global warming in testimony to Congress in order to get a maximum level of funding for their programs. This is their job. Part of the reason for this is survival, since other agencies seeking funds are doing the same thing. And, admittedly, the global warming horror scenarios they paint for Congress might well materialize in the future. But when the whole research program is centered around, and even encouraging, the finding of evidence for an unstable climate system, you can bet the results will be biased in that direction.

When NASA was selling its *Mission to Planet Earth* to Congress, some legislators were honestly expecting that we would have global warming answers soon after launch of the new satellites that NASA was developing. Surprise! Nearly ten years later, we are still trying to figure out from all this satellite data how sensitive the climate system is to manmade greenhouse gases.

In my experience, government managers shy away from exerting direct pressure to come up with specific scientific results, or to change a scientist's testimony to congress. But more subtle pressures do exist. In my congressional testimony as a NASA scientist, I was reminded to limit my testimony to my area of expertise,

and not to be drawn into policy discussions, in which I was not an expert. At that time, this meant I could talk about our satellite-based global temperature measurements, and nothing else.

I knew that my agency's research program could be hurt if I expressed doubts about the "manmade" part of global warming theory, and so I accepted the "advice" like a good employee should. It is almost inevitable, however, that during congressional testimony a senator will ask, "What would you do about global warming policy if you were me?" And when that finally happened to me, I so artfully dodged the question that members of the committee laughed. They said I sounded like a politician. Ouch.

In contrast, other NASA employees that were more in line with the status quo in their global warming views didn't seem to be dissuaded from offering more dramatic opinions in their testimony. For instance, Dr. James Hansen of NASA in 2006 made a pretty big deal about being pressured by the Administration regarding his interactions with the media. The public affairs office at NASA Headquarters started pressuring Hansen regarding what Hansen wanted to say, and the administration had some concern over whether some of Hansen's conclusions about global warming could be supported by the evidence.

What the public wasn't told during all of this was that NASA public affairs always wants to be kept in the loop regarding NASA employees' interactions with the media. Understandably, NASA managers do not like to be blind-sided by reading what their employees have told reporters in the morning newspaper. It's part of the rules which I accepted as a NASA employee, and I tried to abide by those rules.

Regarding any "meddling" by the Administration in NASA's business, NASA is an independent agency within the government's Executive Branch, and so NASA and its employees answer to the president. He's the boss. NASA employment is a privilege, not a right, and NASA has historically liked to present a unified message for public consumption.

But as our godfather of global warming research and public

awareness, Jim Hansen had more political capital to spend than I did, and complained to the media. It is my opinion that Dr. Hansen had become accustomed to saying whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted, to whomever he wanted, on the science and policy of global warming. It sounds to me like the Administration might have simply asked NASA to start enforcing its own rules and Hansen balked.

Who knows? If I felt like I was on a mission to Save the Earth and was in his shoes, I might well have done the same thing.

But instead, in contrast to Dr. Hansen, I finally tired of the restrictions on what I felt I could and couldn't say to the media, and I voluntarily resigned from NASA in 2001. I didn't make any big media splash about the issue, and harbored no resentment over the matter.

As the U.S. government's leading global warming researcher, Hansen's job is probably secure no matter what he says or does. On the positive side, the whole episode has probably made NASA management more tolerant of diverse views being presented to the public by NASA's employees. In the case of scientific research, I'm afraid I don't see how a unified scientific message can be presented to the public by any governmental agency unless some scientists are, in effect, muzzled. Scientific research inevitably leads to a variety of opinions. The only way to avoid more than one scientific opinion is to fund only one scientist.

Is important scientific information being withheld from the public on the subject of global warming? No. One way or another, every possible global warming horror scenario has been already beaten to death by the media. You haven't missed anything. Other than the moon landings, Area 51, and NASA's weather control machine, we government scientists have no secrets to keep.

Of much more concern to me are the politicians with agendas that will now start making a big deal about perceived muzzling of scientists, further wasting time with political spin to try to discredit other politicians.

POLITICIANS, CONGRESS, AND THE EPA

Members of Congress fall into one of two camps on global warming. They either already have an established opinion on the subject and are looking for scientists that will tell them what they want to hear, or they genuinely want to understand a range of views so that they can make an informed decision.

Ha-ha! Okay, I was just kidding about that second group.

In any case, most politicians recognize the potentially huge impact that policy changes will have on the economy. That is why the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the Byrd-Hagel Resolution in 1997, 95-0, stating that the sense of the Senate was that it would not ratify the U.N.'s Kyoto treaty to reduce greenhouse gases. Since it did not include any restrictions on the developing countries like China and India, companies in the U.S. could just move to other countries with fewer environmental restrictions and pollute even more.

So, while some politicians would have you believe that it was the Bush Administration that stood in the way of adoption of the Kyoto treaty, they are simply letting someone else take the heat for a position that most of them still take as well.

In all fairness, Congress is stuck between a rock and a hard place when it comes to global warming policy. There is a constant roar of voices from environmentalists, and even much of the public, to "do something," and yet public surveys show that people don't want to "do something" if it is going to cost them very much. The political commentator and funnyman Bill Maher made an excellent point when he asked how many of us would give up our TV remotes if that was all it took to avoid global warming.

The business community reminds Congress that "doing something" will hurt business—which, as the last chapter on economics demonstrates, means all of us. We all will suffer economically if we are not smart about global warming legislation. As long as we consumers want to continue to buy our stuff at the lowest prices, we *are* big business. If factories and electric utilities are forced to spend money to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, do you really

think they are going to take it out of their hide? We are the ones who will pay for it.

While some politicians do indeed approach the global warming policy problem from a very pragmatic point of view, there is one politician for whom the global warming issue is spiritual and personal. His rhetoric sets him apart from other politicians because of the passion he has for Saving the Earth. He is the Former Next President of the United States, Al Gore, Jr.

If James Hansen is the scientific godfather of modern global warming research, F. N. POTUS is the political godfather of modern global warming policy. Mr. Gore deserves the credit for helping to bring the potential threat of global warming into the public consciousness in 1988 while he was a U.S. Senator. During a hearing that was allegedly scheduled on a day that was forecast to be unusually hot, Senator Gore had Hansen testify on the possible role that manmade global warming might have had in the drought that the Great Plains was experiencing that year.

This led to Dr. Hansen's shocking testimony that that he was 99 percent certain that some part of the drought was probably caused, to some extent, by the likely influence of manmade greenhouse gases ... maybe. Dr. Hansen thus became the first successful purveyor of scientific obfuscatory exaggeration, in which one can state something in carefully phrased, yet biased terms so as to cause a maximum amount of alarm, without being factually incorrect.

It appears that Mr. Gore has chosen to ignore all of the inconvenient truths that do not support the catastrophic view of global warming. He has surrounded himself with only those scientists who have bought into the present culture of global warming alarmism. Most reporters similarly get much of their juicy input from these global warming pessimists.

I do consider Mr. Gore to be a relatively science-savvy person. But his 1990 book, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*, makes it clear that the issue is also a profoundly spiritual one for him. He has claimed that a wide variety of human activities, such as driving cars, should be done away with. As I addressed in

Chapter 5 (The Scientists' Faith, The Environmentalists' Religion), such spiritually-based motivations for changes in public policy come very close to being a state-supported Pagan religion.

The year after Hansen first testified I had the honor of being asked by Senator Gore to testify on our new satellite measurements of global temperature variations over the previous ten years. It being my first experience at providing congressional testimony, I marveled at the beauty of the hearing room. Wow ... high ceilings ... cool molding ... this place looks old.

A C-SPAN TV camera was being set up to record the hearing. As the starting time approached, I realized that Senator Gore, the committee chairman, would be presiding over this one alone. None of the other members of the committee showed up. I asked a staffer, "Doesn't this look bad, him being the only member here?" The answer was, "No, it's better this way ... he gets all the camera time."

The first scientist to testify in the hearing was Phil Jones, a British scientist who is best known for his development of a global surface thermometer temperature record extending back to the 1800s. The overhead projector that he would be using was seriously out of focus, and the focusing dial was obviously not fixing the problem. So, while I stood at the projector trying to remember my optical physics, Senator Gore was looking at me (thinking I was Phil Jones) and recounting the quality time "we" had spent together when he visited England. While this seems kind of humorous now, Mr. Gore probably has a better memory than I do for faces—I have only two children, and I still get them mixed up.

Mr. Gore remained dedicated to the issue of global warming during his public service. A few years later, there was a major weather event in the United States that Vice President Gore flew to in order to examine the damage and console the victims. A high-level weather expert, whom I'll call "Dr. Expert," was also on that flight. Vice President Gore asked Dr. Expert whether the severe weather event could have been the result of global warming. Dr. Expert said, well, probably not. The Bermuda high pressure area had stalled, leading to a persistent flow of moist air, blah, blah, blah.

Then, a few minutes later the V.P. was overheard telling President Clinton's diminutive female assistant, "Hey, Dr. Expert said this might have been caused by global warming!" The assistant looked up at the Vice President, and responded with something to the effect of, "Al, these people we are going to visit are suffering. The President doesn't want to hear about your global warming crap."

You can't say that Gore isn't passionate about the global warming issue.

I have to confess to not acting in a very professional manner at times when dealing with politicians. Maybe I'm just trying to see if they have any sense of humor. I was giving a talk at the National Press Club on some global warming mumbo jumbo, and the speaker just before me was Senator Chuck Hagel. Before the event started, I was shooting the breeze with the Senator. (His chief staffer later told me we can't call him "Chuck," only "Senator Hagel"). The Senator knew I was a NASA employee at the time, and we were discussing the landing of the first successful Mars rover, *Sojourner*, on July 4, 1997. I then "let it slip" that, "it sure looked realistic ... you would never know we put that whole thing together on a Hollywood sound stage." Senator Hagel looked genuinely concerned. I'm pretty sure he wasn't amused.

I also tried that line on Art Bell's popular Coast-to-Coast AM radio show, which routinely addresses government conspiracies and alien visitations. My comment was followed by a few seconds of dead silence. Once again, no sense of humor.

But seriously, folks ... the United States Congress has a history of making knee-jerk policy decisions based upon the testimony of only a few alarmist "experts"—two of whom are real experts, and the third being an actor who played an expert in a popular movie on the subject. Fortunately, Congress is gradually recognizing that there must be greater scrutiny of scientific findings that end up influencing public policy. Congress is tired of making bad policy decisions in response to a single scientific study, only to find later that the results of the study were disproved. An even bigger problem is Congress passing feel-good legislation that has

short-term benefits for the legislators, but long-term negative consequences for the rest of the country.

You are probably not aware of how flimsy the science was that led to acid rain legislation. The National Acid Precipitation Assessment Project (NAPAP) was a ten-year research effort to determine the causes and effects of acid rain. In 1990, after ten years of study, it was concluded that prior fears of widespread acid rain damage from industrial pollution to lakes and forests were largely unfounded. Only one species of tree at high elevation was noticeably affected, and most acidity in lakes was traced to natural causes.

Nevertheless, the regulatory groundwork had been laid at the Environmental Protection Agency, careers established, promises made, and so expensive acid precipitation legislation was passed. At the very least, we can say that the acid rain threat was greatly overblown, yet most of our citizens still do not realize this. Fortunately, our country produces enough wealth to be able to afford the extra cost of partly cleaning up smokestack emissions to abide by Clean Air Act regulations. Cleaning up carbon dioxide emissions is another matter entirely.

The EPA deserves special mention when it comes to the politics of climate change. I remind you that government agencies have two central goals. The first is to forever perpetuate their own existence. Once these agencies are created, it seems they can never be destroyed. While the President of the United States has only temporary job security, it is almost impossible to get rid of a rank and file government employee. The second goal of a government agency is to spend as much of your money as they can get their hands on. That is their job.

The mindset that pervades federal agencies is usually diametrically opposed to the basic economic truths of environmental policy that I reviewed in the last chapter. The EPA is in a never-ending quest for more and more stringent pollution regulations. A country can't have too many environmental laws, you know. Just ask the environmentalists. Some environmentalists seem to live in a dream world where pollution is optional. They don't

realize that it is impossible to not pollute. They won't be happy until that last 0.00001 percent of the pollution has been eliminated, no matter what the cost. And what happens if anyone tries to fight overly expensive and restrictive environmental regulations? They are accused of being enemies of the environment, in the pockets of Big Business and Big Oil, or out to destroy the health of our children.

Politically, the EPA depends upon activist environmentalists. Call them the EPA's cheerleaders. With the environmentalists' help, the EPA is the altruistic defender of our fundamental right to clean air, clean water, and clean dirt. And if the EPA is our champion, Big Business must be our enemy.

THE ENEMY: BIG BUSINESS

Politicians pander to the resentment that the public has toward "big business." As I have already mentioned, you and I are big business. From a basic economics standpoint, we consumers willingly give our money to corporations in exchange for goods and services that we value more than the other stuff that money could have bought for us. If a corporation, its executives, and its investors become obscenely rich in the process, it is only because we have "voted" with our money to make them that way.

Even though our high standard of living actually depends upon allowing people the opportunity to become rich, it seems like we can't help being resentful toward them when they succeed. We like our high standard of living, but we don't want others who have spearheaded that success to profit from it. Jealousy is an ugly thing.

I have come to believe that political pandering to class envy is the motivating force behind many proposed policy solutions to the global warming problem. People have a basic desire to see everyone equally sharing in the abundance of a society's productivity. While this is a laudable goal, it is impossible to achieve. As history has clearly taught us, maximum economic efficiency at producing wealth is only achieved when we are willing to

reward the talents and creativity of the relative few among us who develop those efficiencies.

You can have equality of outcomes, or abundance, but not both at the same time.

If the profit incentive is removed, competition disappears, and then you can say goodbye to much of our prosperity.

A lot of politicians, like many citizens, hold these mistaken views of how wealth is built in a free market economy. This is especially true of career politicians—those who have never been part of the wealth-building process as, say, the owner or CEO of a company. If I were King of the United States, I would decree not only term limits on elected officials, but also a requirement that they have some prior experience actually doing something economically useful before running for office.

As a result of common misunderstandings about how a free market economy works, we see congressional investigations into the "windfall profits" of oil companies when the price of gasoline rises abruptly. In the case of petroleum, it is global supply and demand that determines the price of gasoline (before taxes, anyway), not some cigar-chomping oil executive. There are multiple oil companies competing for your business, and competition keeps prices as low as possible given the existing supply and demand. But I suppose it is easier to just hate the rich than it is to face economic realities.

Price fixing through collusion between companies is extremely rare in a free market economy, simply because competition keeps it from happening. A price-fixing conspiracy would have to be kept secret across an entire industry, and then any competition that arises to offer lower prices would have to be secretly thwarted. In the case of a global commodity like petroleum, the conspiracy would have to be international. You probably can't get executives from five different oil companies to conspire to have lunch together, let alone pull off a global price-fixing conspiracy like that.

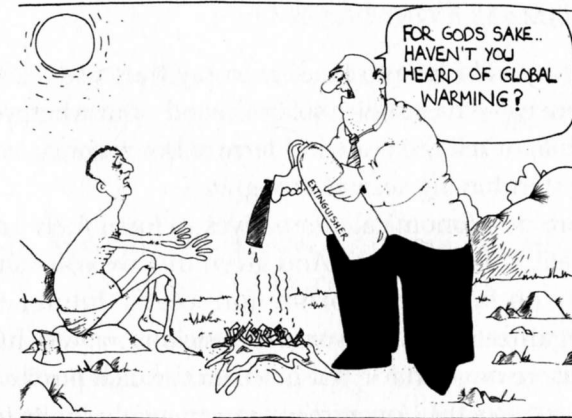
As long as we hold misguided views about the role of big business in the prosperity of the country, we will continue to waste time chasing our tails with regulation and taxation experiments.

Politicians and environmentalists will continue to paint business as the enemy in their efforts to gain your support for their cause. Many politicians are more than happy to take advantage of widespread misunderstandings on issues related to global warming. They increasingly pander to public perceptions regarding wealth, big business, and pollution. This trend cannot be sustained without seriously hurting the economy.

And there is a very good reason why environmentalists should also be concerned about hurting the economy. When economic hard times hit, taxpayers will start to jettison their concerns about superfluous issues—like environmentalism.

The global warming issue now provides politicians with the ultimate weapon to push for policies that are anti-freedom and anti-prosperity. If big business can be painted as the polluters, instead of you and me, politicians will continue to accumulate power at the expense of our prosperity and freedom.

As we will see, all proposed policies to fight global warming will have no measurable effect on future global temperatures anyway, and will definitely hurt the economy (the poor being the most vulnerable). In fact, we will see that economically damaging policies could actually delay the development of real solutions to the global warming problem.



Western powers make their contribution to resolving environmental issues

Chapter 8: Dumb Global Warming Solutions

WHEN FACED WITH a threat like global warming, it is only natural for people to want to “do something” about it. The trouble is, it is not obvious what can be done that will make much difference in the foreseeable future. Mankind needs an abundant source of inexpensive energy in order to prosper, and for now fossil fuels fit the bill. Any alternative energy sources currently proposed to reduce manmade global warming will have little impact in the next twenty years or so, no matter what you believe about future levels of warming.

I’ll admit to being conflicted on the subject of renewable sources of energy like wind and solar. While these do have their place in the energy mix, their ability to help the global warming problem is pretty limited. I routinely encounter people who argue that renewable sources of energy can “fix” global warming. But the global demand for energy is so large that renewables will probably never be able to substantially contribute to our needs.