

(From Robert Griffith) As we are literally flooded with articles, blogs and FB Posts from those who support the climate-change prophecies of doom, it is good now and then to read something a little more objective ... assuming you want to think for yourself and hear all sides to this debate?

I do not endorse ALL that the said below or in the many links provided at the end for the serious students, however I do strongly support the need to read it all and let this information balance and inform the truckload of stuff we getting every day from the climate change 'experts'.

Demystifying Global Warming, Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol

By Piero Scaruffi

Politicians from all over the world reached an agreement in Kyoto to limit emissions of gases that are supposed to be dangerous to the planet's climate. Then in March 2001 president Bush announced that the United States will not ratify that treaty and will not abide by its recommendations. In other words, the United States (that produces 25% of those gases) reserves the right to continue polluting the rest of the world. This may sound arrogance, and certainly Bush is not the man who will make it sound otherwise. But this time US arrogance does have scientific support.

The Kyoto agreement was really the fruit of a phenomenon of mass hysteria. The masses (especially in Europe) have decided that the planet is warming up (even if no data have proven it conclusively), the masses have decided that this increase in temperature is dangerous (although temperature has been swinging for centuries), the masses have decided that this is caused by carbon dioxide (even if there is no conclusive evidence on the effects of carbon dioxide on the atmosphere), the masses have decided that this is the cause for "climate change" (never mind that climate change has been happening since the universe was created).

"Green" politicians like to point to the "Third Assessment Report" of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a ponderous document that contains the conclusions of a worldwide research program. Those politicians fail to disclose the truth: the scientists who worked on that research concluded that "prediction of a specific future climate is not possible". In other words, you can claim that carbon dioxide causes global warming just as you can claim that the soccer world-cup causes global warming. You can't prove either.

Interestingly, a team of politicians appended a completely different summary to this scientific investigation and their summary seems to come out of another research program, because it contradicts the experts: it details the devastating effects of carbon dioxide on climate. The politicians who wrote that summary never mention one single source for their conclusions. They seem to be unaware that the scientific report they are holding in their hands states the opposite.

European politicians (especially from southern Europe) have a tradition of not understanding the issues and then confusing them for their domestic audience. There could be no better example. Europe is now flooded with articles that depict the apocalyptic effects of carbon dioxide. Not a word on water vapor, which is by far the most important "greenhouse" gas. Not even a word on several reports that link carbon dioxide with global "chilling", not warming (see for example this article). Not a word on the thousands of reports that consistently admit there is no evidence for (long-term) global warming and there is no science yet that can provide that evidence. In other words, the planet could just reverse course at any time and start chilling out, regardless of what humans do or don't do.

Even if the assumptions were correct, study after study shows that implementation of the Kyoto protocol would have a negligible effect on world's climate. Tom Wigley (one of the very scientists who contributed to the UN report on climate changes) estimates that the Kyoto protocol would have a minuscule effect on reducing global warming: instead of an increase of 2.1 degrees by 2100, there would be a 1.9 degrees increase. In a century! If there is a problem, the Kyoto protocol is obviously not the solution.

Worse: since the Kyoto protocol allows for trading greenhouse gas emissions and the supply (mainly Russia) vastly exceeds the demand, it is expected that most countries will actually "buy" the rights to emit more gases.

It is estimated that the 38 countries that negotiated the original Kyoto protocol will, on average, increase greenhouse gas emissions by 8%, because that's what the protocol allows them to do. Without that protocol, they would probably curb gas emissions on their own.

Furthermore, China and India are excluded from the Kyoto protocol: they are the fastest growing "polluters", accounting for two billion people.

Supporters of the Kyoto protocol border on the criminal when they ignore other pressing problems that are already (already) causing devastating damage to countries worldwide. With the same money required to implement the Kyoto protocol, we could give everybody in the world the medicines, the water and the food that they desperately need to survive. The truth that green parties hide is that (assuming global warming is true and not pure fiction), the damages of global warming would mainly affect western countries, not the third world.

In other words, the Kyoto protocol invites western countries to spend a huge amount of money in order to prevent damages to the very same western countries. It ignores the fact that damages to most third-world countries would be negligible, while other kinds of damage are much more significant to third-world countries. It ignores the fact that the same money (spent on medicines and infrastructures) would save thousands of lives in third-world countries today (today, not in a century). The Kyoto protocol is not interested in thousands of lives in third-world countries: it is mainly interested in protecting rich cities in Europe, Japan and the US.

The Kyoto protocol is also bad mathematics because it does not disclose the cost of adapting to global warming (as opposed to fighting it). If global warming truly occurs at the rate predicted by pessimists, damages worldwide will be high: about five trillion dollars. But the same pessimists ignore what would be the costs (and the benefits) of simply adapting to higher temperatures (like rising Holland's dykes or building a dam to protect Venice, irrigating deserts and diverting rivers). Several models have been developed and many of them show that it would cost less to adapt than to prevent.

In particular, pessimists forget the benefits of higher temperatures. Far from being catastrophic, mildly higher temperatures would also bring some benefits to many regions of the planet. The mathematics is far from being clear on this issue. Thus even if one proves that temperatures are rising, it is far from clear what the response should be. After all, human civilization would not exist if temperatures had not risen after the Ice Age. "We "are" the effect of a major instance of global warming).

Carbon dioxide is pictured as a poison, when in fact it's necessary to the survival of life on Earth, and there is quite little of it available. If you increase the amount of carbon dioxide, it is not clear at all whether plants will be harmed or benefit from it.

The Kyoto protocol never mentions the one obvious remedy against carbon dioxide emissions: nuclear power plants do not produce carbon dioxide. In the US, nuclear power plants save the emission of 175 million tons of carbon a year. With the same money that the Kyoto protocol wants to spend on limiting gas emissions, the countries of the world could build enough nuclear power plants to shut down all fossil-fuel power plants and remove billions of tons of carbon from the atmosphere. Instead, politics prevailed: the politicians who favor the Kyoto protocol are the same politicians who oppose nuclear power, therefore no mention was made of this straightforward remedy.

Now about the relationship between CO₂ and temperature.

Nitrogen plus oxygen account for about 2,500 times the CO₂ in our atmosphere (try visualize 7,000 meters of Nitrogen on your head, then 3,000 meters of Oxygen and finally 4 meters of CO₂). CO₂ is a slightly better "conductor" of heat, so let's reduce 2,500 to 1,000. Yes, this means that oxygen and nitrogen are 1,000 times more important than CO₂ for determining the temperature of the Earth.

Furthermore, 50% of sun radiations are reflected by the atmosphere or absorbed by clouds, so whatever negligible effect CO₂ has on the Earth's temperature must also be divided by two. Also note that the entire atmosphere (including CO₂) is responsible for reflecting or absorbing the sun: if CO₂ increases in the atmosphere, the first effect is to reflect/absorb more, i.e. to cool down the Earth.

The secondary effect is to keep the heat on the Earth (the "greenhouse effect"). But it far from clear which of the two effects prevails. And, again, CO₂ only contributes 1/1000th of the atmosphere's greenhouse effect.

Global warming studies also tend to ignore the main factor: the Sun. The Sun is more active now than over the last 8000 years. An international group of researchers led by Sami Solanki from the Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research (located in Germany) has been carrying out the first detailed study of solar activity over the last 11,400 years (i.e., back to the end of the last ice age). Their findings ("Nature", 28 October 2004) are that the Sun is more active now than at any time over the last 8000 years. (See, for example, this summary).

A friend who was a geologist at Stanford once asked the global-warming crowd: "If we invented a substance that, released in the atmosphere, reduces carbon dioxide, would you authorize its use?" Think a second and you'll realize that you wouldn't authorize it: nobody knows the effect of reducing carbon dioxide. Faced with the decision of actually reducing carbon dioxide, you would start reading all the scientific studies backwards: instead of looking for evidence that an increase in carbon dioxide is bad, you would look for evidence that a decrease in carbon dioxide is bad; and you would probably find enough to stop you from messing with the atmosphere. Excellent paradox.

Last but not least, the Kyoto protocol takes it for granted that rising temperatures are bad for us. It turns out that several scientists believe that global warming, perhaps caused by humans, has avoided an ice age that would have wiped out most of us, including you and me. Maybe we never entered that ice age because our ancestors caused higher temperatures on the Earth. Today, we might still be in that situation. (See the article in Scientific American of March 2005 for details).

It is also fairly obvious that most humans move from colder climates to warmer climates: most people would welcome an increase in temperature. The impact on the overall environment of rising temperatures is not clear at all: in many places, it may make life better, not worse. Is an increase in average temperatures good or bad for us? The current models of global warming do not provide a convincing answer, one way or another. All we know is that most of us would like to live in warmer (not colder) climates, and that human civilization began when ice retreated (not expanded).

There is one more line of attack against Kyoto, at a higher level of abstraction. People who fanatically defend Kyoto are often fanatically opposed to any (human-made) change of climate. Basically, their crusade against global warming reflects an egocentric and static view of the world: the world (plants, animals, landmass) must remain the same that it was when they were born. If you ask them, they are fully aware that climate has changed, species have disappeared and evolved, and, in general, the planet has changed dramatically over the millennia; but they assume that now no more change should be allowed.

The average environmentalist thinks that the world should stop changing now that s/he (the environmentalist) has been born. Note that these environmentalists do not advocate recreating the planet as it was 50, 100 or one thousand years ago: only to keep it as it is today, now that they are alive. The planet should never change again. The evolution of species, climate and human settlements must stop now that s/he was born.

That protocol was born out of the incompetence of a number of politicians (mainly European, but also then vice-president Al Gore), who were trying to impress their own constituencies with their commitment to environmental issues. The political payback was expected to be huge, as the protagonists of the Kyoto protocol would be able to tell their voters "I did something historical". The practical consequences would have been negligible, as only the US would have had to pay a small amount to poor countries to buy rights to "pollute" from them (an amount that is lower than what the US already pays in foreign aid to poor countries). Had Gore become president, he would have passed legislation to reduce gas emissions anyway, so he was not bothered by the costs (Gore thinks that the legislation would have created jobs, thereby offsetting the nuisance of imposing new regulations to the US industry).

Therefore, Kyoto was mainly a publicity stunt. Little substance, lots of noise.

The problem is that Gore lost the election and the new president, George W Bush, had nothing to gain from signing an agreement that was wanted by the very man who defeated him at the elections (Bush became president, but Gore got more votes).

On the contrary, Bush has a lot to gain by showing that Kyoto was a scam and that he, Bush, is smart enough and bold enough to stand up against it. Politically speaking, Bush loses if he signs and wins if he does not sign. Therefore, Bush did not sign. Now Bush looks like a leader, not a follower.

Of all the European and Far-eastern leaders, the only ones who are stubbornly trying to rescue the Kyoto protocol are the ones who were behind it in the first place. New leaders like Koizumi or Berlusconi could care less. The European politicians who were behind Kyoto are now in trouble, because they have to explain to their constituencies that they were supporting a pathetic, failed treaty. So the Chiracs and Schroeders are desperately trying to salvage what they can.

In February 2005, the media widely reported the findings of Tim Barnett who claimed to have found evidence of global warming in the oceans. Almost no media reported the reason why Barnett studied the oceans instead of the atmosphere, as all other global-warming scientists had done before him. Here is a quote from Barnett himself that explains why he studied the oceans: "Climate models based on air temperatures are weak because most of the evidence for global warming is not even there." . So this scientist (the scientist that the pro-Kyoto media assume is reliable) is telling us that the models used so far (based on air temperatures) are "weak" and the evidence for global warming "is not even there".

Those **ARE** the models and the evidence that were used to justify the Kyoto protocol. (The funny thing is that the news of Barnett's findings was sent to me by someone who wanted to prove that there is scientific evidence in favor of the Kyoto protocol! when in fact Barnett is telling us that the Kyoto protocol is based on "weak" data and "no evidence").

In April 2005, the media widely reported a new study It turns out the study could be viewed as proving exactly the opposite of what the media thought it proved.

Quote from the Los Angeles Times: "the average global temperature, which has increased by about one degree Fahrenheit over the last century, will do so again over the next century". Thus (according to this study) the current increase is the same that occurred a century ago, when humankind was producing only a fraction of the greenhouse gases that it is producing today (world industrial production has increased dramatically over the last century). In fact the increase is a bit less: if you go from 10 to 11, and then from 11 to 12, it means that the increase has slowed down.

According to this study, the Earth is getting less warm today than it was a century ago! If the media used logic, not superstition, they would conclude that greenhouse gases have no effect on global warming (again, according to this study).

In June 2005, the media widely reported that nine Academies of Science urge action on climate change. The statement actually included the sentence ""a lack of full scientific certainty about some aspects of climate change". It did not mention the Kyoto protocol at all. And it provides no specifics about "what" actions should be taken).

Climatology is such an unreliable discipline that the most "scientific" studies are routinely proven unscientific. For example:

- A study on climate change based on data gathered from satellites was proven false when it was found that the orbital period of a satellite changes slowly over that satellite's lifetime: the "anomalies" were due to anomalies in the satellite's orbit, not to anomalies in the Earth's temperature. See this article).
- In 2007 NASA backtracked on the widely publicized announcement that the warmest years of the century came after 1990. It turns out that the warmest year was not 1998 but 1934, and that six out of ten were before 1940. Quote: "six of the top 10 hottest years occurred prior to 90 percent of the growth in greenhouse gas emissions during the last century."
- It also seems suspicious that scientists often serve what people want to hear. When the USA was struck by catastrophic floods, studies immediately began to appear that explained how global warming causes floods, despite the fact that until the day before almost no study pointed to that consequence of global warming. It is not that gas emissions are not harmful at all or that the Kyoto protocol would have been completely useless, but, as proven by all these contradictions, science knows too little about it and Kyoto would have done too little about it.

There is no question that humans are producing more greenhouse gases than at any point in time (duh...) but articles like these are pure hysteria.

Summarizing:

- Climate change is a certainty: the climate has changed every single year since the Earth was created
- There is no scientific consensus on human-made global warming
- If there is human-made global warming, it might be good, not bad, for the survival of our and other species (just like it has been so far: i would not be writing this article if global warming had not melted the glaciers and enabled my family to survive)
- If it is bad, the Kyoto protocol does not remedy it
- It is an egocentric viewpoint that our and other species should alter evolution and exist forever
- There are real, serious problems that are killing millions of people every year, and that could be solved with the same money that has been allocated to the Kyoto protocol. The Kyoto protocol seems to me just an excuse to avoid the real problems. Kyoto's is a dangerous agreement, because it creates the illusion of having found a solution to a problem, while the problem may not be a problem and the solution (if there is a problem to solve) may not be a solution.

(Incidentally, in the years since I wrote this article, I have received many emails of disapproval, but not one, not one, of the people who disapproved of this article had read the Kyoto protocol: they all strongly supported it, but they had never read it).

The following links are in no way endorsements of the opinions expressed in those pages, but merely a sample of "alternative" opinions on the Kyoto protocol.

http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/dysonf07/dysonf07_index.html

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/23/AR2006052301305_pf.html

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/lords/story/0,9061,1522251,00.html>

<http://www.ncpa.org/ba/ba299.html>

<http://www.cato.org/testimony/ct-pm072998.html>

<http://www.stanford.edu/~moore/health.html>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/6460635.stm

And here is a summary of the Kyoto protocol for those (too many) who support it without having ever read it.

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/kyoto/kyotobrf.html>

And this from an Economist:

http://www.economist.com/world/na/displaystory.cfm?story_id=7086861