

Scientists Gain New Insight Into Climate Change ... And What To Do About It

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Theme: [Environment](#)

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Frack That

“Clean natural gas” from fracking has been touted for years as a cure for global warming.

But scientists say that fracking pumps out a lot of methane ... into both [our drinking water](#) and [the environment](#).

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas: [72 times](#) more potent as a warming source than CO2.

As such, fracking actually [increases - rather than decreases - global warming](#).

(The fracking boom is also causing [other harmful effects](#).)

Nuclear Dud

Numerous scientists have also pushed nuclear power as a *must* to stop global warming.

But it turns out that nuclear is [not a low-carbon source of energy ... and funding nuclear crowds out the development of better sources of alternative energy](#).

Scam and Trade

One of the main solutions to global warming which has long been pushed by the powers that be - cap and trade - is a scam. Specifically:

- The economists who invented cap-and-trade [say](#) that it won't work for global warming
- Many environmentalists [say](#) that carbon trading won't effectively reduce carbon emissions
- Our bailout buddies over at Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Morgan Stanley, Citigroup and the other Wall Street behemoths are buying heavily into carbon trading (see [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#)).

As University of Maryland professor economics professor and former Chief Economist at the U.S. International Trade Commission Peter Morici [writes](#):

Obama must ensure that the banks use the trillions of dollars in federal bailout assistance to renegotiate mortgages and make new loans to worthy

homebuyers and businesses. Obama must make certain that banks do not continue to squander federal largess by padding executive bonuses, acquiring other banks and pursuing new high-return, high-risk lines of businesses in merger activity, carbon trading and complex derivatives. Industry leaders like Citigroup have announced plans to move in those directions. Many of these bankers enjoyed influence in and contributed generously to the Obama campaign. Now it remains to be seen if a President Obama can stand up to these same bankers and persuade or compel them to act responsibly.

In other words, the same companies that made billions off of derivatives and other scams and are now getting bailed out on your dime are going to make billions from carbon trading.

War: The Number One Source of Carbon

The U.S. military is the [biggest producer of carbon on the planet](#).

Harvey Wasserman [notes](#) that fighting wars more than wipes out any reduction in carbon from the government's proposed climate measures.

Writing in 2009 about the then-proposed escalation in the Afghanistan war, Wasserman said:

The war would also come with a carbon burst. How will the massive emissions created by 100,000-plus soldiers in wartime be counted in the 17% reduction rubric? Will the HumVees be converted to hybrids? What is the carbon impact of Predator bombs that destroy Afghan families and villages?

The continuance of fighting all over the Middle East and North Africa completely and thoroughly undermines the government's claims that there is a global warming emergency and that reducing carbon output through cap and trade is needed to save the planet.

I can't take anything the government says about carbon footprints seriously until the government ends the [unnecessary wars ... all over the globe](#).

So whatever you think of climate change, all people can agree that ending the wars is important.

(War also [destroys the economy](#).)

Fascism: Not a Great Idea

In 2010, James Lovelock – environmentalist and creator of the “Gaia hypothesis” – [told](#) the Guardian that we might need fascism to curb global warming:

We need a more authoritative world. We've become a sort of cheeky, egalitarian world where everyone can have their say. It's all very well, but there are certain circumstances – a war is a typical example – where you can't do that. You've got to have a few people with authority who you trust who are running it. And they should be very accountable too, of course.

But it can't happen in a modern democracy. This is one of the problems. What's the alternative to democracy? There isn't one. But even the best democracies agree that when a major war approaches, democracy must be put

on hold for the time being. I have a feeling that climate change may be an issue as severe as a war. It may be necessary to put democracy on hold for a while.

Lovelock [subsequently apologized](#) for being too alarmist and going too far.

Dumb as a Mongoose In Hawaii

In addition, “government scientists are studying the feasibility of sending nearly [microscopic particles of specially made glass into the Earth’s upper atmosphere to try to dampen the effects of ‘global warming.’](#) ” Others are currently suggesting [cutting down trees and burying them](#). Other ways to [geoengineer the planet](#) are being studied and tested (and see [this](#) and [this](#)), involving such things as dumping [barium, aluminum and other toxic metals](#) into the atmosphere.

Remember, the [mongoose](#) was introduced to Hawaii in order to control the rats (which were eating the sugar cane used to make rum). It didn’t work out very well ... mongeese are daylight-loving creatures while rats are nocturnal. So the mongeese trashed the native species in Hawaii, and never took care of the rats.

Similarly, the harm caused by many of these methods have not been thought through ... and they could cause serious damage to our health and our ecosystems.

So - whatever you think about climate - you can obviously agree that we should approach climate change from the age-old axiom of “first, do no harm”, making sure that our “solutions” do not cause more damage than the problems.

So What’s the Answer?

If nuclear, fracking and cap and trade aren’t the answer, what *is*?

[Decentralization of power generation and storage.](#)

That would empower people and communities, produce less carbon, prevent nuclear disasters like Fukushima, reduce the dangers of peak oil (and thus [prevent future oil spills like we had in the Gulf](#)), and have many other positive effects.

In addition, top climate scientists say that soot plays [a huge role in the melting of snow and ice](#). The director of Stanford’s Atmosphere and Energy Program and professor of civil and environmental engineering (Mark Jacobson) [believes](#) that soot is the *primary* cause of melting arctic ice, and [says](#):

Controlling soot may be the only way to significantly slow Arctic warming over the next two decades ...

Reducing soot will be cheaper than the “decarbonation” which many policy-makers have proposed. And it would increase the health of [millions of people worldwide](#).

We don’t need fascism to make this happen. A modest amount of money could replace quite a few of [these](#) with [these](#) ... drastically reducing the amount of soot in the atmosphere.

Our Changing Scientific Understanding of Climate Change

When I studied environmental science at UCLA decades ago, we were taught that increased CO2 leads to global warming and melting ice ... and that *no other* factors were involved.

Scientists have since discovered that climate change is a little more complicated.

For example, scientists [announced last week](#) that heat from the Earth's upper crust and mantle contribute to melting the ice sheets ... and that more melting occurs where the Earth's crust is thinner.

A scientific experiment by one of the world's top scientific laboratory showed that [cosmic rays affect cloud formation ... which in turn affects climate](#).

How could climate scientists be wrong about the factors which go into climate change?

Science is not a one-time, all-or-nothing endeavor. It is the process of refining our understanding of the universe and - if our model doesn't fit reality - adding details or changing the model altogether.

And even well-known, well-intentioned scientists sometimes push incomplete or counter-productive ideas.

For example, top scientists, government agencies and publications have - for over 100 years - [been terrified of a new ice age](#). (And - in the "for what it's worth department", NASA said 7 months ago that [we could be on the verge of another solar minimum](#).)

Well-known scientists [considered pouring soot over the Arctic in the 1970s to help melt the ice - in order to prevent another ice age](#). That would have been stupid.

Even Obama's [top science adviser](#) - John Holdren - [warned in the 1970's of a new ice age ... and is open to shooting soot into the upper atmosphere](#). That might be equally stupid.

We have to think like true scientists ... and learn from our mistakes.

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