



Don't ruin economy over tiny temp rise

(Published in *Chicago Sun Time*, February 11, 2007)

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Colaboraciones n° 1531

March 2, 2007

Our Thought For The Week comes from the Boston Globe's Ellen Goodman: "I would like to say we're at a point where global warming is impossible to deny. Let's just say that global warming deniers are now on a par with Holocaust deniers, though one denies the past and the other denies the present and future."

That would be yours truly: the climate holocaust denier. I wrote last week about "global warming," or "cooling," or "climate change," or (the latest term) "climate disruption" -- for those parts of the world where the climate isn't really changing but you get an occasional blip: a warm day in winter or a flurry of snow in late April, or (for British readers) a summer's day where it rockets up to 58 and cloudy instead of being 54 and drizzling. As a result of my cli-

mate holocaust denial, I received a ton of letters along the lines of this one:

"Your piece gave most of my students, most of whom are conservative, a laugh. A journalist's word against six years of peer-reviewed research conducted by world authorities on the subject.

"But, as one my student's [sic] put it: 'Steyn's piece could prove valuable: We often run out of toilet paper here.'

"How is it that you can make a living writing what you do is a wonder. But then, the vulgar wish to be deceived, after all.

"Steve Pierson,
Professor of English."

Presumably Professor Pierson signs himself "Professor of English" to establish his credentials for opining on how I can make a living writing. To be honest, I'm flattered to know I'm being discussed at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, N.Y.: Did I displace Shakespeare? Or Maya Angelou? Or the class where you learn not to put an apostrophe in noun plurals? Has Professor Pierson's judgment of my writing also been peer-reviewed by world authorities?

Not all of us are quite so hung up on credentialization. But, if you are, you might want to read the December issue of the Journal Of Atmospheric And Solar-Terrestrial Physics in which Cornelis de Jager of the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research and Ilya Usoskin of the Sodankyla Geophysical Observatory in Finland test the validity of two current hypotheses on the dependence of climate change on solar energy -- the first being that variations in the tropospheric temperature are caused directly by changes of the solar radiance (total or spectral), the other that cosmic ray fluctuations, caused by the solar/heliospheric modulation, affect the climate via cloud formation. The Finn and the Dutch guy from the A-list institutions with the fancypants monikers writing in the peer-reviewed journal conclude that the former is more likely -- that tropospheric temperatures are more likely affected by variations in the UV radiation flux rather than by those in the CR flux.

Are you thinking maybe it's time to turn over the page to the Anna Ni-

cole Smith "A life in pictures" double spread? Well, that's my point. Most of us aren't reading the science, or even a precis of the science. We're just reading a constant din from the press that "the science is settled," and therefore we no longer need to think about it: The thinking has been done for us. Last week's U.N. IPCC "report," for example, is not the report, but a political summary thereof. As David Warren wrote in the Ottawa Citizen:

"Note that the IPCC report's conclusions were issued first, and the supporting research is now promised for several months from now. What does that tell you?"

Indeed. However, when you do read the actual science, you quickly appreciate that it's not by any means "settled" -- that there all kinds of variables. To quote the Finnish-Dutch big shots:

"There is general agreement that variations in the global (or hemispheric) tropospheric temperature are, at least partly, related to those in solar activity (e.g., Bond et al., 2001; Solanki and Krikova, 2003; Usoskin et al., 2005; Kilcik, 2005)."

Therefore: "Variations of the mean tropospheric temperature must include stratosphere-troposphere interaction." However: "A detailed mechanism effectively transferring stratospheric heating into the troposphere is yet not clear."

Whoa, whoa, come back. There's no point skipping ahead: The illustrated excerpt on page D27 from

Roger Ebert's *Anthology of Great Lesbian Movie Scenes* was swiped by the delivery boy. The thing is there are still huge disagreements about the climate change that's already taken place: in Ellen Goodman Holocaust terms (and remember: This is her analogy, not mine), it's as if we knew a lot of people died but still had no idea who or what killed them. For example: increased monsoon activity off the central west coast of India in the wake of the Sporer and Maunder Minimas. Been following that one?

The record of experts in this field -- or, at any rate, the record of absolutist experts in this field -- is not encouraging. Just to cite Ellen's corporate masters at the New York Times Company, here (from Christopher C. Horner's rollicking new book *The Politically Incorrect Guide To Global Warming*) is the Times' shifting position on the issue:

"MacMillan Reports Signs Of New Ice Age" (Sept. 18, 1924)

"America In Longest Warm Spell Since 1776: Temperature Line Records A 25-Year Rise" (March 27, 1933)

"Major Cooling Widely Considered To Be Inevitable (May 21, 1975)

"Past Hot Times Hold Few Reasons To Relax About Global Warming" (Dec. 27, 2005)

"Climate change" isn't like predicting Italian coalition politics. There are only two options, so, whichever one predicts, one has a 50 percent

chance of being right. The planet will always be either warming or cooling.

By now you're probably scoffing: Oh, come on, Steyn, what kind of sophisticated analysis is that? It doesn't just go up or down, it could sorta more-or-less stay pretty much where it is.

Very true. In the course of the 20th century, the planet's temperature supposedly increased by 0.7 degrees Celsius, which (for those of you who want it to sound scarier) is a smidgeon over 1 degree Fahrenheit. Is that kinda sorta staying the same or is it a dramatic warming trend?

And is nought-point-seven of an uptick worth wrecking the global economy over? Sure, say John Kerry and Al Gore, suddenly retrospectively hot for Kyoto ratification. But, had America and Australia signed on to Kyoto, and had Canada and Europe complied with it instead of just pretending to, by 2050 the treaty would have reduced global warming by 0.07C: a figure that would be statistically undetectable within annual climate variation. And, in return for this meaningless gesture, American GDP in 2010 would be lower by \$97 billion to \$397 billion -- and those are the U.S. Energy Information Administration's somewhat optimistic models.

And now Jerry Mahlman of the National Center for Atmospheric Research says "it might take another 30 Kyotos" to halt global warming: 30 x \$397 billion is . . . er, too many zeroes for my calculator.

So, faced with a degree rise in temperature, we could destroy the planet's economy, technology, communications and prosperity. And ruin the lives of millions of people.

Or we could do what man does best: adapt.

You do the math.

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