



April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## Desperate Schemes

It could have been a scene from a badly produced 1950's science fiction movie: the President's science advisor telling him that as a last resort to save humanity, rockets could be launched to inject pollution particles into the upper atmosphere. The imminent threat? (cue up bad movie music...) Unrelenting doses of sunlight threatening to overheat the planet. The science advisor tells the President that blocking out the sunlight with pollution particles could save the day, but only as a last resort.

Unfortunately I'm not making this up, as these conversations are really taking place. Last week the Associated Press reported that the Obama Administration has been discussing radical technologies to cool the Earth's atmosphere because global warming has become such a dire problem that, according to John Holdren, President Obama's new science advisor, "We don't have the luxury of taking any approach off the table."

Mr. Holdren told the media that the administration is discussing the possibility of geoengineering the climate. One option includes creating an artificial volcano to shoot pollution particles into the air to reflect the sun's rays. Another includes artificial trees to suck carbon dioxide out of the air and store it. I thought that's what real trees were supposed to do.

With all this talk of artificial volcanoes and artificial trees, one begins to wonder if we have *artificial leaders* in Washington. In the example of the 1950's movie, there would have been an imminent danger calling for desperate measures. Life on Earth would have been under some sort of insidious assault. As previous Hot Air Reports have examined, however, we can see that in the real world this isn't happening.

Of course if you're convinced it's getting too warm none of that matters. One experiment to "fight global warming" has already been conducted in the Antarctic Ocean, and others have been proposed. We seem to be seeing a repeat of the mind-set present in the 1960's, when climate scientists and others were proposing large scale measures to warm the planet to ward off the coming ice age.

There are many problems inherent in attempts to tinker with the Earth's weather and climate. Chief among them is the issue of unintended consequences-since the atmosphere is a continuum, making a change in one part can have unwelcome effects in other areas. Concerns have already been raised that

injecting foreign material into the upper atmosphere could have a negative affect on the Earth's ozone layer, which shields us from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.

Historically, some of the coldest weather recorded in modern times has followed large volcanic eruptions. How will those injecting the particles know when they have sent up just the right amount? The last two winters have been very cold and snowy without injecting any particles. What if the scientists had injected particles into the atmosphere two years ago in an effort to make it colder? How much more snow would we have received and how much colder would it have been? Who would have benefited? How much more fossil fuel would have been consumed to heat our homes and businesses?

One can only hope the saner minds in the scientific community ultimately prevail. Meanwhile the believers in global warming will continue to sound alarms about the imminent peril we are facing while people in the real world hope we eventually get some warm spring weather.

Trying to make large scale modifications to the atmosphere when we don't completely understand it is a disaster waiting to happen. Historically cooler periods have been followed by warmer periods and vice versa. But those who live in the science fiction world of the coming global warming destruction seem to have lost sight of that fact.

In next week's report we will get back to the issue of global warming legislation, and what it would (not) accomplish.

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