

Memo 11/08

Climate change. South Africa and the international scene

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South Africa has become the unwitting leader in the collapse of climate alarmism. In the discussions held two days ago in Paris, our responsible minister condemned the USA for not taking more active steps to combat its rising greenhouse gas emissions. This was for home consumption. Sooner or later, he is going to be blamed for the delays in expanding our coal-fired power generation network. This has resulted in the unpopular planned electricity blackouts that will extend for years into the future.

Our state-owned power generation utility Eskom, has applied to the authorities for approval of a 60 per cent increase in the price of electricity. The trade unions have threatened to organise nationwide strikes if it is approved. This is because of the inevitable loss of income and job losses.

Also in Paris, our Minister announced that biofuels were no longer considered as an option for South Africa because of the adverse effects on food production. That leaves South Africa with only two options for large scale electricity production - coal and nuclear. We have an abundance of both raw materials.

In South Africa, we had a diamond rush, then a gold rush, and now a coal rush. Our coal exploration activities have risen dramatically in recent months, not only to meet rising domestic demand but also for our exports. After Australia, we are the world's largest coal exporter. Richards Bay has the world's largest coal export terminals.

The world-wide retreat to coal is a direct consequence of the rapidly escalating oil prices. These in turn are related to the global economic recession that has yet to reach its peak. Despite all the talking at the international climate change conferences, there is simply no way that global greenhouse gas emissions will be meaningfully stabilised, let alone reduced in the foreseeable future.

Adaptation

The UNFCCC will not succeed in its global mitigation (prevention) goals and will be forced to switch to adaptation to unnatural climate change. Here it will again bang its head against the wall. The reason is that there is simply no scientifically believable evidence of quantifiable changes of the nature required by engineers and others in the applied sciences to develop and implement adaptation measures.

Frequent references by international climate change scientists to changes that have already occurred in Africa, are demonstrably no more than false propaganda in support of the lack of evidence in their own countries. Mathematical computer models routinely used by civil engineers and applied hydrologists for water resource development and flood design application are far superior to the descriptive models produced by climate alarmists. These are incapable of being used for adaptation applications.

Natural climatic extremes.

The greater the aridity of the climate, the greater the natural variability of the climatic processes - specifically floods and droughts. South Africa's average annual rainfall is close to 500 mm per annum, compared with the world average of more than 800 mm. As a result we have an excellent hydrometeorological database. We also have many technical reports and publications, particularly on multi-year periodicity, stretching back for more than a hundred years.

The first publication on multi-year climate predictability was published in 1889 - more than a hundred years ago. In 1948 - 60 years ago - our Department of Irrigation published a memoir in which it specifically addressed and discounted the role of atmospheric carbon dioxide on climatic responses. Last year, five of us published a paper in the peer-reviewed Journal of the South African Institution of Civil Engineering in which we demonstrated an unequivocal synchronous linkage between the multi-year periodic changes in the hydrometeorological processes, and the acceleration and deceleration of the sun as it moves along its trajectory through galactic space.

I have references to the wealth of South African technical reports and publications on this subject through to the present day. I have copies of most of them in my possession.

Global drought?

South African civil engineers and hydrologists carried out extensive and comprehensive studies of multi-year prediction methods for flood and water resource analyses during the last century through to the present. These studies lead to the confident prediction that South Africa, and possibly the rest of the world, is about to enter a period of serious drought sequences. These have about a 20% probability that they could be equal in severity to the Great Depression Drought of the 1930s. This was labelled the Dustbowl Drought in the USA.

Early this week, I accepted an invitation to address the Council of the South African Institution of Civil Engineers (8000 members), where I expressed my concerns and submitted documents to support them. I suggested that my predictions be independently evaluated and that discussions be held with the respective authorities and research institutions to address this issue as a matter of urgency. My presentation was favourably received.

Should such drought sequences occur, they will have tremendous adverse effects on the peoples and prosperity of South Africa and the countries to the north of us.

Global future

The global future looks bleak. Global trade agreements are not succeeding. International agreements on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions will not succeed. The world is on the brink of a global economic recession. The possibility of imminent global drought sequences is a frightening possibility. This is particularly so in Africa where millions of people are already suffering from the consequences of poverty, malnutrition and disease. Taken together these could have catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

The fundamental, underlying science in the IPCC reviews is increasingly being challenged. The existence of a causal linkage between multi-year, periodic changes in solar activity and climatic responses is no longer in doubt. It is also becoming increasingly clear that the postulated causal linkage between atmospheric carbon dioxide emissions and rising global temperatures, has failed. Global temperatures have started to decrease, while the carbon dioxide emissions continue to rise. This confirms South African research undertaken 60 years ago.

In this situation national as well as international scientists in the natural and applied sciences have an urgent responsibility to work together to develop solutions. Regrettably, the opposite is happening. My calls for collaborative efforts were rejected. On their heads be it. Sooner or later, they will be called to account.

I have retired to the sidelines.

Regards

For reference purposes, here are the links to Professor Alexander's previous memos:

http://www.ilovemycarbondioxide.com/pdf/Bali_failure.pdf

http://www.ilovemycarbondioxide.com/pdf/Memo_0208.pdf

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