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Missile shield accord draws Russian fire

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ec3816b6-6a60-11dd-83e8-0000779fd18c.html>

By Isabel Gorst in Moscow and Jan Cienski in Warsaw

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Moscow lashed out at Washington and Warsaw on Friday, saying the plan to site a US anti-missile defence shield in Poland would undermine the global balance of power and put Poland at risk of nuclear attack.

Washington and Warsaw reached a preliminary agreement on Thursday to build part of the missile defence shield in Poland, station US Patriot missiles there and bolster the two countries' military co-operation.

The US claims the shield in Poland, as well as a radar tracking base to be located in the Czech Republic, is designed to defend against "rogue states" such as Iran.

The timing of this week's agreement, as relations between Russia and the US deteriorated over the Georgia crisis, has strengthened Moscow's conviction that the move is anti-Russian.

"The deployment of new anti-missile forces in Europe has the Russian federation as its aim," said Dmitry Medvedev, the Russian president, at a press conference with Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, on Friday.

Dmitri Rogozin, Russia's Nato envoy, said the fact the agreement "was signed at a time of a very difficult crisis in relations between Russia and the US over the situation in Georgia shows that, of course, the missile defence system will be deployed not against Iran, but against the strategic potential of Russia."

Anatoly Nogovitsin, the deputy head of the Russian armed forces, warned Poland that by hosting the shield it could become the target of a nuclear attack in war time. "The US is concerned with its own anti-missile defence, not Poland's. But Poland, by deploying [the shield], will be exposed to attack."

The melting treasure

16 Aug 2008

By Josephine Chinele

From a distance, one may think it is a picture of a stylish chocolate cake with lots of white icing sugar. Perhaps the questions would be: why should such a huge cake be advertised? What is that advert all about?

As you move closer to it, you see that it has some tiny text. But since the picture is very attractive

and appetising, the curiosity to read the text increases.

Oops! You realise that it is not a cake after all, but a picture of Mount Kilimanjaro! You read the text and sure enough it is the Mountain but there is something not so pleasant about the `icing sugar` - the snow is disappearing and if findings by various scientists is anything to go by, then the snow on the summit within the next two or three decades will disappear.

Tanzania is definitely proud of this mountain because of its uniqueness- it attracts tourists from all corners of the world. Kili is Africa`s highest mountain and uppermost free standing Mountain in the world. Its highest peak, Kibo, stands at 5895 meters.

It is one of the country`s treasured tourist attraction places, which contributes largely to the country`s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Tourism is Tanzania`s third highest forex earner after Coffee and Cotton. According to the Chairman of Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB), Hatim Karimjee (as quoted on Safariweb.com), plans are underway to make tourism the country`s number one foreign exchange earner by the end of the century with the help of foreign investment.

However, as government puts in place measures to boost the tourism industry forex earnings, the idea of including Kili on the list may let them down.

There are fears that the snow that has been there for 11,700 years and that has been attracting many to climb, camp and take pictures at the top of the mountain, might no longer be there by the year 2020.

The massive glacier, which looks like icing sugar on a cake, is melting fast. Only a small patch is remaining now. This has largely been attributed to global warming and climate change.

But Dr Nicholas Pepin, Senior Lecturer of the Department of Geography, University of Portsmouth in the United Kingdom (UK) says careless local activities; more especially deforestation is a major contributing factor to the snow disappearance.

` ` Findings show that the issue of deforestation is more serious than that of global warming. This leads to too much evaporation of moisture into space,` ` says Pepin, who recently led a team of eight people on a research tour of the mountain.

After spending 11 days observing changes, they established that the snow has reduced from 20 square kilometers in 1880 to two square kilometers in 2000.

Pepin says the local people surrounding the mountain were very helpful in the entire period of the research because they believed the mindset the research team was there to help them solve their problems.

` `The locals were curious about what would happen next. They explained that the weather in the area has changed in recent years such that the rains are unpredictable,` ` he says.

Different researchers have done their work on the melting of Mount Kilimanjaro ice and it



appears they also have diverse findings.

A November 2003 nature magazine publication says although it is tempting to blame the ice loss to global warming, researchers think deforestation on the mountain's foot hills is the more likely cause.

``Without the forest`s humidity, previously moisture-laden winds blew dry. Since it is no longer replenished with water, the ice is evaporating in the strong equatorial sunshine,`` reads the magazine.

Another scientist, Phillip Mote, argues that the entire earth is warming, and there is conclusive evidence that average temperatures have increased in the past 100 years.

``Kilimanjaro`s ice melting is so quickly that it lost nearly a quarter of its ice from 2000 to 2006. Melting is accelerating everywhere, the same has happened to the Himalayas,`` he says.

Scientists and researchers are working hard to determine the real cause behind the melting of the snow. In 2005, a Climate Change group that was travelling around the world to assess the environment and document effects of global warming took a stripped picture of Mount Kilimanjaro.

After seeing the picture, environmentalists described it as the peril of global warming.

Denise Meredith of Climate Change says the photograph portrays Kilimanjaro as: `the most dramatic examples of evidence of global warming.`

The Kili image was among the 10 climate change hot spots pictures, whose printed collection was given to environment and energy ministers from several countries who were then in London.

They were also distributed at the G8 meeting which took place in London in 2005. The British Council too toured the exhibitions in 100 cities in 60 countries in 2004 and 2005.

Scientists warn that the vanishing of snow on Kilimanjaro Mountain would trigger major disruptions to ecosystems on the dry African plains that spread out at its foot below. In addition to that, US researchers also say this could have disastrous effects on Tanzanian economy.

People are publishing different versions of the melting of ice on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro. They may be helping us while at the same time having their own interests.

After all has been said and done, the ball seems to be in our court. There is need to put in place tough penalties for culprits of deforestation, which is one of the pointed grounds for ice melting on our treasured Kili.

Let us not buy the idea of snow disappearance by 2020 through our efforts to prevent it from happening.

It is everyone`s responsibility to take part in conserving our natural beauty, other wise the icing chocolate cake will be history.

* SOURCE: Guardian

Poll: Few Americans Worried About Global Warming

Source: Newsmax.com

Only 1 in 4 Americans believes global warming is the biggest environmental challenge facing the world, a new poll reveals.

The ABC News/Planet Green/Stanford University survey found that public concern over the global warming issue has diminished over the past year.

Fewer than half of the poll's respondents, 47 percent, think global warming is an important issue to them personally, down from 52 percent in April 2007.

While 80 percent believe the earth is warming, that figure is down four percentage points from last year.

Doubts over the science behind the global warming issue still linger in people's minds, according to the poll results reported by the National Journal. Just 30 percent of respondents said they trust what scientists have to say about the environment "completely" or "a lot," 39 percent said they trust them "a moderate amount," and 30 percent said they do not trust them.

Also, nearly 60 percent of respondents said there is "a lot of disagreement" within the scientific community as to how dangerous climate change is.

According to ABC News' Gary Langer, the diminished concern over global warming coincides with decreased media attention to climate change, in favor of the election and economy. "A database search finds 50 percent fewer news stories on global warming in the month before this poll was conducted, compared with the month before last year's survey," Langer wrote.

In any case, about 7 in 10 respondents said they're attempting to reduce their energy consumption by driving less, using less electricity and recycling.

But 63 percent are in favor of drilling for oil in coastal waters where it is currently not allowed, and 55 percent support drilling in U.S. wilderness areas where it is not allowed.

RUSSIA CRUSHES EUROPE'S ENERGY STRATEGY

The Globe and Mail, 18 August 2008

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20080818.RREGULY18/TPStory/Business>

Eric Reguly

ROME -- Russia's adventure in Georgia has been described as a "warlet," a contained firing spree that wound up and down within a week. But to Europe's energy markets, it was the equivalent of wide-scale carpet bombing.

With the North Sea oil and natural gas fields running out of puff, Europe, in particular the European Union, is more dependent than ever on imported energy. The biggest single supplier is Russia, whose pipelines snake across Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova before poking into central and western Europe.

Russia's energy supplies are cherished. Germany, France and Italy have almost no oil and gas of their own. Russia's Gazprom, the world's biggest gas company, supplies 40 per cent or more of Europe's gas imports. The company, controlled by the Russian state and led by Dmitry Medvedev before he became Russia's President, is the equivalent of a one-country gas OPEC.

By 2020, Gazprom's exports to the EU are expected to rise by more than 50 per cent. The company is unafraid to wield its mighty power. For four days in 2006, it stopped supplying gas to the Ukrainian market because of a contract dispute.

Since keeping the lights on is the minimum requirement to stay elected, Europe's governments were doing two things. They were buying every molecule of Russian energy available and were working hard to ensure that Russia alone did not control the entire show.

Enter Georgia. The pro-Western country became a convenient bit of non-Russian real estate on which to plunk pipelines to funnel non-Russian (and non-OPEC) oil and gas to the outside world. No fewer than three pipelines originating in Azerbaijan cross Georgian territory.

One of the trio, called BTE, was due for a massively enlarged role in the future. The BTE pipeline currently takes gas from Azerbaijan through Georgia and into central Turkey. An extension, known as the Nabucco project, would take the gas from there on to Austria, making it a hefty counterweight to Russian gas exports. Nabucco is backed by the EU and the United States and counts German power utility RWE among its biggest shareholders.

Thanks to Russia's invasion of Georgia on Aug. 8, Georgia's role as a secure energy transit point to Europe has been shattered. Russia has made clear it can make Georgia a puppet state if it wishes, and will almost certainly recognize the independence of the breakaway region of South Ossetia. Suddenly the risk premiums on oil and gas pipelines that pass through Georgian soil went through the roof. Some analysts are already predicting the death of the Nabucco project, whose construction was to begin in 2010.

So much for Europe's energy diversification plans. New, independent pipelines from Central Asia seem like a lost cause. With Georgia reined in, Moscow's grip on energy supplies to Europe must be close to complete. You have to wonder whether a Kremlin filing cabinet contains a plan that had laid out this very scenario a decade ago.

What is Europe to do? Time for Diversification Plan B. A big part of the plan would have to see Europe turning the Mediterranean into mare nostrum - our sea - as the Romans called it in the empire years. The North African countries of Libya and Algeria, and Syria in the Eastern Med to a lesser extent, have vast, undeveloped oil and gas fields.

Energy companies with an appetite for political risk have been pouring billions into these countries. One of them is Petro-Canada, which is already hauling 50,000 barrels of oil a day out of Libya and has targeted the country for significant growth. Algeria's gas reserves are mammoth. Last year, Italy and Algeria agreed to construct a 900-kilometre pipeline to take Algerian gas to Sardinia, then on to the Italian mainland. Other pipelines will have to be built. Speed is of the essence, because Gazprom's ambitions are boundless. Last month it offered to buy all of Libya's gas exports.

Mediterranean gas cannot be the entire solution. Europe will have to rethink its nuclear strategy. Germany and Spain have committed to phase out nuclear power. Surely, that strategy will have to be reversed. Italy has no nuclear power plants. That will have to change, too.

A few nuclear plants are under construction in Europe after a moratorium that began with the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986. The number will have to soar if Europe is to take energy diversification seriously.

Coal might make a big comeback, too, in spite of the horrendous amounts of soot and carbon dioxide produced by coal-fired electricity plants. Fortunes will have to be plowed into "clean coal" technology, which so far is more myth than reality.

Before the Georgian crisis, Europe seemed to be doing all the right things, with little Georgia at the centre of a sensible energy diversification plan. A column of Russian tanks wrecked that strategy in an instant. Europe is learning quickly that the only way to curtail Russia's energy control is to compete with it. A new energy war is about to begin.

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EUROPE'S ENERGY SOURCE LIES IN THE SHADOW OF RUSSIA'S ANGER

The Observer, 17 August 2008

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/aug/17/oil.gas>

Alex Brett

When Russian tanks poured into South Ossetia, it was the clearest turning point in Russia's relations with the West since the fall of the Berlin Wall: Russia not only managed to destabilise a pro-Western regime but, crucially, demonstrated to its neighbours how defenceless they are against incursions by its armed forces.

For years, the US and the EU have been looking for ways of circumventing Russia for energy, especially in the light of the controversial cuts in supply it made to Ukraine, Belarus and the Czech Republic. The opening of the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) from Azerbaijan to Turkey should successfully enable the flow of 16 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas into Europe without Moscow's interference. However, with Georgia being the only viable country for the pipeline to go through - as Azerbaijan is technically at war with Armenia - the current crisis showed energy majors operating in the Caucasus how tenuous their grip on resources could become should the Kremlin intervene in the affairs of its neighbours again. The SCP was closed for a time during the latest violence.

This is of particular concern to BP, which owns 25.5 per cent of the SCP, and is already in dispute with Moscow over the status of subsidiary TNK-BP.

Nick Day, chief executive of risk consultancy Diligence, says Russia had been using its energy supply as a tool of its foreign policy and that 'the greatest threat to Western companies in the region is renationalisation in former Soviet countries, which has already been taking place in Russia. As a result of this conflict, countries neighbouring Russia may offer oil and gas contracts to Moscow as an olive branch.'

While a spokesman for the EU commission says the situation in Georgia meant that the EU 'had no time to waste' in dealing with energy security, the instability of the region covering the SCP threatens to scupper Europe's policy of diversifying its energy supply, giving Russia a much stronger hand. This is chiefly due to the undesirable nature, as Europe sees it, of the most viable alternatives - Iran, whose nuclear programme is a bone of contention, and Iraq, whose current instability is cause for great concern.

Europe has to look at the viability of projects already on the table for its long-term energy supply. The Nabucco project takes gas from the Shah Deniz gas fields in Azerbaijan, starting from Turkey and ranging into the heart of Europe, with the potential for inputs from Iran and Iraq. By contrast, the South Stream project starts directly from Russia, taking Gazprom gas through new EU member states Romania and Bulgaria and provides ease of access to greater resources. Nabucco aims to provide 10bcm of gas from 2013 rising to 31bcm in 2021, whereas the South Stream aims to supply 30bcm on completion, forecast to be in 2013.

However, the Georgian conflict has caused great damage to the viability of Nabucco. As Charles Ebinger, director of the Energy Security Initiative at the Brookings Institution, points out, 'the South Stream project has been strengthened by the current situation and Nabucco may fall by the wayside'. To that extent; 'Russia has the whip hand over Europe in terms of energy policy'. Ebinger reflects the thoughts of most experts. Valery Nesterov, energy analyst at Troika Dialog, says: 'the resource base for the South Stream is stronger than that of Nabucco. The South Stream has a head start; Nabucco has been dealt another blow.'
Nesterov argues that any plans to supply the Nabucco pipeline from Turkmenistan are not viable as the Turkmen are already supplying around 90bcm of energy to Iran, Russia and China.

The geographic positioning of Turkey and Russia as the only suppliers direct to the continent mean the EU's bargaining position looks weak.
Furthermore, Turkish-Russian co-operation is proceeding at a gallop.
This was confirmed by Ankara's silence on Georgia and comments from the Turkish energy ministry suggesting they would 'increase supplies from Russia and Iran' in the event of a shortfall from the SCP. Nesterov says 'deeper co-operation between Russia and Turkey is likely. It is to both countries' advantage.'

So the South Stream, in terms of viability, can provide guaranteed energy to Europe over the longer term, while Nabucco is beset by unresolved problems. When the only alternatives are gas from Iran and the Persian Gulf, energy from Russia seems to reconcile Europe's regional strategic interests with security of supply at a smaller diplomatic cost. But it is only the lesser of two evils.

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EDITORIAL: THE AXIS OF OIL

Investor's Business Daily, 15 August 2008

<http://www.ibdeditorials.com/IBDArticles.aspx?id=303692978635780>

Security: What do Vladimir Putin, Hugo Chavez and Islamic extremists have in common? They're funded by America's thirst for foreign oil. If drilling isn't a cure by itself, it's a start.

Wars aren't cheap, even when they go well. But Russia has plenty of money to burn on war. It's flush with Western cash because it's flush with oil and natural gas. If Putin wishes to recreate the domain of the tsars, he has the wherewithal for that grand ambition.

The resurgent Russian empire is one of the big winners in the massive wealth transfer that has taken place in recent years with rising oil prices. OPEC countries are cleaning up, too. The U.S., which consumes 24% of the world's oil while producing just 10%, is the main source of the oil powers' new riches. Not all this money goes into war, terrorism or other evils. Some is used to build over-the-top commercial real estate projects in places such as Dubai. Quite a bit finds its way back to the U.S. to finance our national debt.

The membership list of the Axis of Oil seems to include more than the normal share of bad actors. One is Putin, who might be more circumspect if his country were not so rich. Venezuela's Chavez would not be exporting revolution Castro-style if he did not have a cushion of oil wealth that, among other things, keeps his own people pacified with cheap gasoline.

Iran wouldn't be thumbing its nose so brazenly at the U.S. and Europe if it didn't export oil and occupy one side of the choke point for all oil leaving the Persian Gulf. Islamic extremism would be less of a threat if the Wahhabists of Saudi Arabia had difficulty funding its global spread through madrassas and mosques.

Some oil exporters are benign, such as Canada and Mexico (America's two largest sources). But the net effect of cutting U.S. demand for foreign oil, especially from outside North America, is clearly to the upside.

The move would help defund nations and movements that are sowing fear and instability, and it would make the U.S. less of an economic hostage to questionable allies and outright foes.

As to how this can be accomplished, the answer is simple: Do everything, but in a realistic order. Oil's dominance is gradually ebbing and will eventually end. But eventually is a long time, and our energy economy can't totally retool in a decade.

Down the road, there's a future powered by solar, wind, nuclear, biofuels and maybe hydrogen. In the meantime, the fastest way to boost energy security as well as slow the flow of wealth to terrorists, tinpots and would-be tsars is to drill, drill, drill wherever oil in U.S. territory may be found.

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DOHA COLLAPSE MAY BLOCK POST-KYOTO CLIMATE DEAL

Carbon Finance, 18 August, 2008

<http://www.carbon-financeonline.com/index.cfm?section=lead&action=view&id=11456>

The collapse of international trade talks in Geneva at the end of last month could harm UN-led talks on a climate change deal to replace the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012, market observers have told Carbon Finance.

The latest round of talks under the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which started in Doha, Qatar, in 2001, collapsed late last month following a face-off between the US and India, primarily, over a mechanism to protect farmers in developing countries. And, while expectations were low going into the talks, the progress made - with agreement on 90% of the agenda - had buoyed hopes of a conclusion to the seven-year negotiations.

"The main thing is a question of trust," said Nick Mabey, chief executive of environmental group E3G. "This isn't the US administration that will make the climate deal ... but it's not good for efforts to build trust for a climate deal."

Ahead of the talks, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson had warned that failure to secure a deal could jeopardise the climate negotiations, among other multilateral efforts.

"Now, if, collectively, we fail this test in Geneva, it will reduce our ability to pass future tests. The test of climate negotiations. The test of food scarcity. The test of energy security," Mandelson said. "The fact is that the interdependent world that we live in cannot be sustained without collective, multilateral action."

"It's about creating confidence in international agreements and creating a spirit of 'moving forward'," said Antony Froggatt, a senior researcher at London-based think-tank Chatham House. But, he added, the Bali roadmap - agreed at last year's UN climate change meeting on the Indonesian island - is so clear that the talks should not fail.

"There's a long way to go - but people are very clear on what needs to be delivered," he said.

Matthew Stilwell, managing director at the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development, cautioned that the WTO failure could see some delegations try to include trade issues in the climate change talks, potentially slowing the process.

He highlighted three potential trade issues which could be transposed into the talks: tariffs on environmental goods and services; intellectual property rights and transfer, with regards to low-carbon technologies; and border adjustments, such as the imposition of a 'carbon' tax on imports from countries without emission reduction targets, as proposed by the French government and some US politicians.

But Stilwell was more optimistic on the conclusion of the UN-led negotiations: "The experience of past meetings is that failure in one process could help another process along ... countries don't like too many failures all at once."

Mabey was also hopeful about the climate change talks, saying that the collapse of the trade round is "quite a good wake-up call to the diplomatic community". The WTO negotiations show how to create the "conditions for a climate agreement", he said. "The problem with Doha is that there's not a lot on the table that's attractive," but in climate change, there are clearer benefits in striking a deal, he explained.

"If trade talks fail, you can try again in 10 years - but if you lose 10 years in climate change [negotiations], you lose everything," he added.

"If you don't put the political effort in, we won't get anywhere near what we need."

Froggatt also criticised the EU for not seizing the moment to demonstrate leadership: "Too many people are sitting back and waiting to see the US election outcome. This is a missed opportunity for some governments to take a leadership role - and I point to the EU here ... quicker leaders could put flesh on the bone of a new [climate change] framework."

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THE STRANGE DEATH OF THE TORY CLIMATE CRUSADE

The American, 28 July 2008

<http://www.american.com/archive/2008/july-07-08/the-strange-death-of-the-tory-climate-crusade>

By Matthew Sinclair and Chris Pope

Britain's Conservative Party tried to exploit global warming alarmism. It backfired enormously. Lesson learned?

With less than two years remaining until the next general election, Britain's Conservative Party has surged to an historic 22-point opinion-poll lead over the incumbent Labour Party. This turnabout has followed an energetic campaign by the Tory leader, David Cameron, to wrench the party out of its ideological comfort zone and overhaul its public image. Cameron has indeed handled many issues deftly. However, his initial attempt to spark a bidding war over climate alarmism backfired enormously, and it should serve as a warning to other Western political parties that are trying to burnish their green credentials.

From the moment he was elected Conservative leader in 2005, Cameron was eager to woo the upper-class voters who had shunned the party in the post-Thatcher era. He chose to make environmental policy the focus of his stylistic revolution, and he commissioned Zac Goldsmith (a fellow Eton graduate and director of The Ecologist magazine) to chair a "Quality of Life" policy

group. Goldsmith, an heir to a billion-dollar fortune and well-known green activist, claimed "an invitation to be radical."

Goldsmith's policy group soon unleashed a fury of impractical ideas. It proposed placing prohibitive taxes on landfill and big cars, halting investment in air and road infrastructure, taxing parking at out-of-town malls, and even mandating that car advertisements include emissions statistics. The Conservative MP Tim Yeo, who chairs the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, declared that domestic plane flights should be taxed out of existence. (Yeo boasted that he now travels to Scotland by train "as a matter of conscience.")

Without doing much to appeal to suburbanites interested in clean rivers and parks, the new Tory agenda threatened the low-cost flights that had only recently made European travel affordable for millions. It also confirmed the suspicion of many working-class voters that the Conservatives were rich elitists who cared little about job loss.

While many of the Tories' environmental proposals were harmlessly ridiculous and had no real prospect of enactment, the empty rhetoric proved very costly. The Labour government, refusing to let the Conservative Party claim the mantle of environmental champion, swung left on the issue. The failure of environmental taxes to change behavior was taken as a sign that those taxes should be raised even further. Big increases in annual road taxes were rolled out; drivers of Honda Accords will owe over \$500 per year by 2010-11. Taxes on gasoline went up, forcing motorists to pay nearly \$9 a gallon. Meanwhile, taxes on plane flights were doubled, despite evidence that such a change may actually increase emissions.

British leaders have long struggled to convince the public that significant resources should be allocated to fight climate change. Yet the burgeoning global warming industry—a motley assortment of activists and NGOs—has relentlessly driven its agenda through bureaucratic and legal channels that are cut off from democratic accountability. Further insulated from political attack by Cameron's green posturing, the climate change alarmists were able to set the terms of the debate.

While most peer-reviewed cost-benefit analyses of climate change tend to find that the costs of global warming do not merit a radical and immediate shift away from carbon-based fuels, moderate anti-carbon policies have failed to satisfy the demands of climate activists. In response to the inconvenient economics, the Labour government decided to base all its policymaking on a Treasury study by Nicholas Stern. The Stern report used an extremely low discount rate to grossly magnify the future environmental costs of climate change.

Yet, far from rebuking this folly, the Conservative Party's Quality of Life policy group criticised the Stern report for tolerating too much planetary warming. As the Labour government advocated a 60 percent reduction in British carbon emissions by the year 2050, the Tories shot back with a demand that the nation roll back 80 percent of its emissions by that time. This merely upped the ante. The third-party Liberal Democrats responded with a call for complete decarbonization—a 100 percent reduction in emissions. No matter how hard the Tories tried, they could never "out-green" their rivals on the left.

The popular press were less indulgent of such nonsense, and many media outlets lampooned the proposed climate initiatives. Voters did not like having wealthy politicians lecture them on the demerits of prosperity, and every green policy that the Tories promoted was greeted with derision or worse. When the Tory Quality of Life group's disastrous report was eventually released in September 2007, the Conservatives were in disarray. They were so far behind in the opinion polls that Prime Minister Gordon Brown even considered calling an early election.

Cameron had no choice but to change tack. The recovery that saw the Tories rise to their present poll lead began with a call to significantly reduce the inheritance tax. This was followed by proposals for comprehensive school choice and welfare reform. The Conservatives also suggested

some tough new anti-crime initiatives. The idea that proved most useful in de-stigmatizing the Tory brand was a plan to rebuild poverty-stricken communities in disadvantaged areas.

To be sure, the Conservatives have also benefited from a complete collapse of popular support for the Labour government. Indeed, this has been perhaps the biggest factor in the Tories' resurgence. The British economy has faltered, and voters have become less tolerant of fiscal extravagance. They are especially angry about an increase in the annual car tax, which was sold as a green measure. In a recent YouGov poll commissioned by the TaxPayers' Alliance, 63 percent agreed with this

statement: "politicians are not serious about the environment and are using the issue as an excuse to raise more revenue from green taxes."

When a recent Mori poll asked voters to name important issues facing Great Britain, only 7 percent cited the environment, while 42 percent named immigration and 35 percent said crime.

None of this is to say that conservatives should neglect the environment. Over the past few months, Cameron has been trumpeting a more holistic environmentalism, arguing that being green is "not just about the stratosphere, it's about the street corner." He stresses the need to eliminate graffiti and cut crime in local parks. While there is little public appetite for raising energy taxes or overhauling the British economy to deal with climate change, there is widespread support for boosting investment in green-friendly technologies, and the Tories are well-placed to advance this.

The recent success of the Conservative Party has owed little to quixotic environmentalism, and almost every Tory attempt to play the green card has been a disaster. The party seems to have learned its lesson, and is now embracing a results-driven conservation policy that defends green spaces and promotes the development of efficient clean-energy technologies. While the climate debate is often dominated by clamorous activists, ordinary voters tend to favor a more pragmatic approach. If the Tories want to maintain their huge lead over Labour, that is the type of approach they should endorse.

Matthew Sinclair is a policy analyst at the London-based TaxPayers' Alliance. Chris Pope is program manager of the National Research Initiative at the American Enterprise Institute.

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Rudd feels the heat on 60 Minutes

http://blogs.news.com.au/heraldsun/andrewbolt/index.php/heraldsun/comments/rudd_feels_the_heat_on_60_minutes/

Andrew Bolt

Monday, August 18, 2008 at 11:05am

A turning point in the debate: [60 Minutes is suddenly not so sure man is heating the world to hell](#), after all. And it won't have been reassured by Kevin Rudd's shaky grasp of the evidence in spruiking his carbon tax:

PM KEVIN RUDD: But economic cost (sic) of not acting is massive, it's through the roof. Think about food production, the Murray, think about the impact on tourism in QLD, no more Barrier Reef, Kakadu, no more Kakadu. Think about the impact on jobs, it's huge.

Actually, even if Rudd really thinks warming will wipe out the Barrier Reef and Kakadu (neither of which show any sign of going anywhere), he is deceiving viewers by suggesting his carbon tax would make the slightest difference to the climate. Indeed, the only impact will be on jobs - as in costing them, and not, as he claims, saving them.

TARA BROWN: How certain are you that mankind is the cause behind global warming?

PM KEVIN RUDD: Well, I just look at what the scientists say. There's a group of scientists called the International Panel on Climate Change - 4000 of them.

No, it's actually called the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. And no, there are not 4000 IPCC scientists. Try 2500, instead. Rudd is lucky that this exaggeration wasn't picked up by Brown. What's more, [a number of those 2500 don't stand by the IPCC conclusion](#) on man's effect on the climate. [Many others were not even consulted over the report's bottom-line finding.](#) [SPPI NOTE: This link is to the SPPI original research paper: http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/originals/McLean_IPCC_bias.pdf]

PM KEVIN RUDD: ... And what they (IPCC scientists) say to us is it's happening and it's caused by human activity.

Actually, even the IPCC report admits doubts, saying it's only 90 per cent sure humans are responsible for most of the warming in just the 25 years until 1998. But a token alarmist is then rolled on to preach doom:

DR TIM FLANNERY: Stop burning coal and other fossil fuels and stop putting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere because that is what is warming the atmosphere and that is what's driving the changes.

I wouldn't rely on anyone with [Flannery's record of alarmist inaccuracies](#). And in this case [thousands of scientists disagree, actually](#). *60 Minutes*, to its credit, finally talks to some of the "thousands" it agrees are there:

PROF. RICHARD LINDZEN: We need CO-2. It's not a poison, it's not a pollutant. It's essential for life on earth. I mean how much are we going to depend on people's ignorance in order to produce panic?...

DAVID EVANS: (T)here's no evidence that carbon emissions cause any significant warming at all...

And reporter Tara Brown even dares mention the Medieval Warm Period:

TARA BROWN: Perhaps nowhere in the world is there more compelling evidence against the man-made carbon dioxide argument than Greenland. Long before the Industrial Age, the Vikings lived here and happily grew wheat and vegetables. It was known as the 'Medieval Warm Period' and temperatures were even hotter than they are today.

But, wait, there's more:

TARA BROWN: So statistically, in the last seven years, the flattening and perhaps even slight cooling of temperatures - is that significant?

DAVID EVANS: Yes, yes it is significant. Once it gets up to five years or so it's really quite significant. Whatever was driving the temperatures up has taken a break for a while and

meanwhile carbon emissions have continued and the level of carbon in the atmosphere has gone up about 5% since 2001, yet we see no more warming.

But back to Rudd, who can't have counted on being corrected mid-scare by Brown:

PM KEVIN RUDD: Here's a measurement which people should just sit back and pay a bit of attention to - the 12 hottest years in human history have occurred in the last 13 years. That's a fact.

TARA BROWN: It's not my position to correct you Prime Minister but I've been told that in fact during the middle ages the global temperatures were two to three degrees warmer than now. Certainly we've had the hottest 12 years in recent history but the planet's been a lot hotter.

PM KEVIN RUDD: Well, I stand by what the International Panel of Climate Change Scientists have had to say. There will always be argy-bargy about elements of the detail.

Where the world has been hotter in human history is now just "elements of the detail" to Rudd? And is he not even familiar with [this debate over dodgy IPCC claims](#), and what it says about the IPCC on which he relies so heavily?

And still Brown hasn't finished sowing doubts:

TARA BROWN: But one thing climate scientists agree on - if global warming is caused by CO-2 emissions then the CO-2 will leave a distinct signature their computer models predict a big red hotspot above the equator. The problem is thousands of weather balloons equipped with some very sophisticated thermometers have measured the temperatures in the atmosphere to test the theory, and guess what, no hotspots.

DAVID EVANS: There's no hotspot, there's no hotspot at all. It's not even a little hotspot and it's missing. We couldn't find it.

Sadly, Brown then goes on to quote for no clear reason previous *60 Minutes* stories which preached alarmism over drought and Chernobyl, and waffles on without quite finding the courage to admit they swallowed green scares whole. But there is this rally near the end:

PM KEVIN RUDD: The key thing is, how do you bring carbon pollution down in an economically responsible fashion? And having looked at all the detail this is the best way forward.

TARA BROWN: But if you believe the sceptics, and carbon dioxide isn't to blame for global warming then we face massive change for no good reason.

DAVID EVANS: Isn't it a bit dopey to wreck the economy for a purely theoretical reason when the alleged symptom, warming, stopped six years ago.

To conclude: *60 Minutes* has dared to contradict the global warming "consensus", and its own record, to present fairly the growing evidence that supports the scepticism of thousands of scientists. That puts it ahead of the media curve - certainly [ahead of the ABC](#). And having this done on the country's most-watched current affairs show marks a significant turning point in the debate. *60 Minutes*, for one, will now have a vested interest in saying "we told you".

Rudd, already at sea with the evidence, should be very, very nervous.

[New CCSP Report Appears “Weather and Climate Extremes in a Changing Climate” - Unfortunately, Another Biased Assessment](#)

Roger Pielke Sr.

There is another CCSP report that was made available yesterday. It is

CCSP, 2008: [Weather and Climate Extremes in a Changing Climate](#). Regions of Focus: North America, Hawaii, Caribbean, and U.S. Pacific Islands. A Report by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. [Thomas R. Karl, Gerald A. Meehl, Christopher D. Miller, Susan J. Hassol, Anne M. Waple, and William L. Murray (eds.)]. Department of Commerce, NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center, Washington, D.C., USA, 164 pp.

It is led by the same individual, Tom Karl, Director of the National Climate Data Center, who produced the CCSP Report “Temperature Trends in the Lower Atmosphere: Steps for Understanding and Reconciling Differences”, in which I resigned from and detailed the reasons in

Pielke Sr., Roger A., 2005: [Public Comment on CCSP Report “Temperature Trends in the Lower Atmosphere: Steps for Understanding and Reconciling Differences”](#). 88 pp including appendices.

This report perpetuates the use of assessments to promote a particular perspective on climate change, such as they write in the [Executive Summary](#)

“It is well established through formal attribution studies that the global warming of the past 50 years is due primarily to human-induced increases in heat-trapping gases. Such studies have only recently been used to determine the causes of some changes in extremes at the scale of a continent. Certain aspects of observed increases in temperature extremes have been linked to human influences. The increase in heavy precipitation events is associated with an increase in water vapor, and the latter has been attributed to human-induced warming.”

This claim conflicts with the 2005 National Research Council report

National Research Council, 2005: [Radiative forcing of climate change: Expanding the concept and addressing uncertainties](#). Committee on Radiative Forcing Effects on Climate Change, Climate Research Committee, Board on Atmospheric Sciences and Climate, Division on Earth and Life Studies, The National Academies Press, Washington, D.C., 208 pp where a diversity of human climate forcings were found to alter global average radiative warming, including from atmospheric aerosols and due to the deposition of soot on snow and ice. The claim of an increase in atmospheric water vapor conflicts with a variety of observations as summarized on Climate Science (e.g. [see](#)).

To further illustrate the bias in the report, the assessment chose to ignore peer reviewed research that raises serious questions with respect to the temperature data that is used in their report. As just one example, they ignored research where we have shown major problems in the use of surface air temperature measurements to diagnose long term temperature trends including temperature extremes. Our multi-authored paper

Pielke Sr., R.A., C. Davey, D. Niyogi, S. Fall, J. Steinweg-Woods, K. Hubbard, X. Lin, M. Cai, Y.-K. Lim, H. Li, J. Nielsen-Gammon, K. Gallo, R. Hale, R. Mahmood, S. Foster, R.T. McNider, and P. Blanken, 2007: [Unresolved issues with the assessment of multi-decadal global land surface temperature trends](#). J. Geophys. Res., 112, D24S08, doi:10.1029/2006JD008229,

should have been included in the CCSP assessment. It was ignored. Yet the papers that use this land surface temperature data to claim changes in the extremes were included; e.g.

Easterling, D.R., B. Horton, P.D. Jones, T.C. Peterson, T.R. Karl, D.E. Parker, M.J. Salinger, V. Razuvayev, N. Plummer, P. Jamison, and C.K. Folland, 1997: Maximum and minimum temperature trends for the globe. *Science*, 277(5324), 364-367.

Peterson, T.C., 2003: Assessment of urban versus rural in situ surface temperatures in the contiguous United States: No difference found. *Journal of Climate*, 16(18), 2941-2959.

Peterson, T.C., X. Zhang, M. Brunet-India, and J.L. Vázquez- Aguirre, 2008: Changes in North American extremes derived from daily weather data. *Journal Geophysical Research*, 113, D07113, doi:10.1029/2007JD009453.

Since this assessment is so clearly biased, it should be rejected as providing adequate climate information to policymakers. There also should be questions raised concerning having the same individuals preparing these reports in which they are using them to promote their own perspective on the climate, and deliberately excluding peer reviewed papers that disagree with their viewpoint and research papers. This is a serious conflict of interest.