

*Scare*Watch

**BBC: “Global temperatures going down
imply temperatures will go up”**

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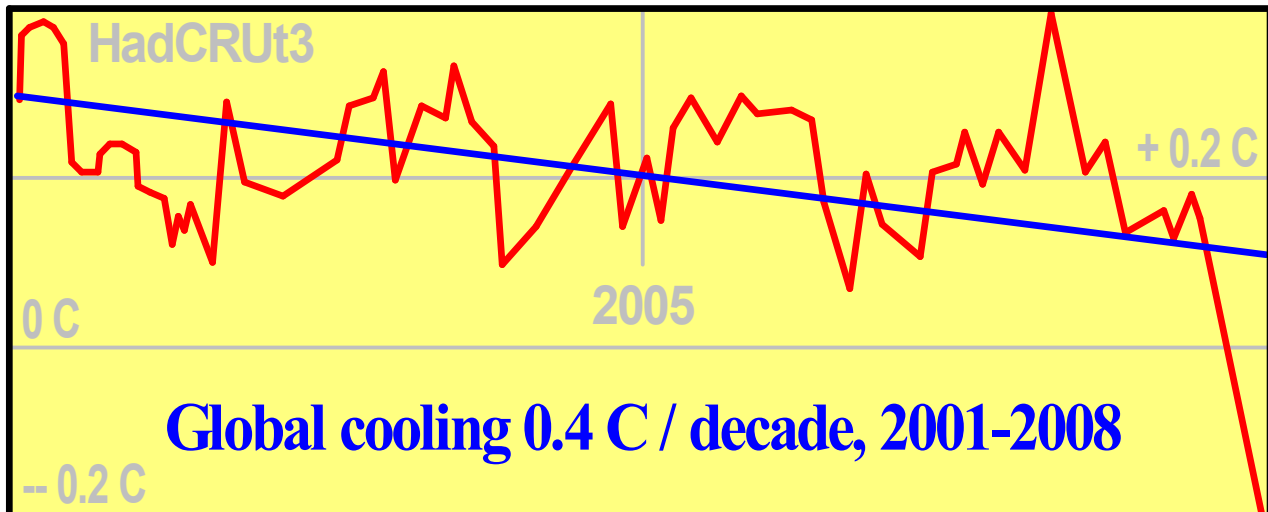
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“Global temperatures going down imply temperatures will go up”

The scare: The BBC published an article by its “environment analyst”, commenting on an announcement by the World Meteorological Organization that 2008 was likely to be the tenth successive year in which global temperatures had not risen. The BBC’s story stressed that the stasis in global temperatures was only temporary and that anthropogenic “global warming” would inexorably resume.

The truth: The BBC opens its story with the words “Global temperatures will drop *slightly* this year ...” However, the BBC somehow fails to mention that, according to the UK’s Hadley Centre for Forecasting and the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, global temperatures have already been falling for more than six years, and that the downtrend, far from being *slight*, is equivalent to 0.4 degrees Kelvin (almost 1 degree F) per decade:



The downtrend that the BBC somehow failed to mention: Since late 2001, the trend of global surface temperatures has been firmly downward. “Global warming” stopped in 1998; and, though it may resume in future years, the rate of warming is self-evidently less than official forecasts had shown, and is very likely to be harmless.

Next, the BBC uses a favorite tactic, citing unnamed “experts” as a way of falsely giving apparent legitimacy to what are in fact its own biased opinions. It says, “Experts say we are clearly in a long-term warming trend.” So we are. Since the end of the Maunder Minimum in 1700, global temperatures

have recovered from the Little Ice Age at a near-linear rate of 0.5 degrees K (almost 1 F) per century (Akasofu, 2008).

In the 20th century, an additional 0.2 degrees K of warming occurred, over and above the long-term recovery from the Little Ice Age. However, part of this very small addition to the long-established warming rate probably arises from the 70-year Solar Grand Maximum that peaked in the early 1960s and now appears to have ended. Also the direct output of heat by human activities and machines has contributed. It is by no means certain that anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide either has had or could possibly have had more than a very small influence on global temperatures.

The BBC, as usual, fails to point out that temperatures in the Arctic were warmer in the 1940s than they are today; that the Greenland ice sheet actually thickened by 5 cm (2 inches) *per year* in the decade 1993-2003 (Johannesen *et al.*, 2005); that most of the Antarctic continent has been cooling for half a century (Doran *et al.*, 2002); that there has been no increase in ocean temperatures in recent years (Lyman *et al.*, 2006); that global temperatures were warmer than today in the Mediaeval Warm Period¹ (McIntyre & McKittrick, 2005), in the Roman Warm Period; and, for at least 2000 years, in the Bronze Age Holocene Climate Optimum. The BBC's story also fails to mention that global surface temperatures, as inferred from oxygen isotope ratios in ice-core samples from Antarctica, were at least 5 degrees Celsius (9 F) warmer than today's in *each* of the four previous interglacial periods (Petit *et al.*, 1999, etc.).

The BBC goes on to say that the unidentified "experts" predict a new record high temperature within the next five years. However, it somehow fails to point out that not one of the computer models relied upon by the IPCC predicted ten years ago that global temperatures would be lower in 2008 than they were in 1998.

Next, the BBC deploys another favorite tactic: it quotes the World Meteorological Organization as saying that "the decade from 1998 to 2007 was the warmest on record." The WMO did not in fact say anything of the kind. The phrase "warmest on record", not uttered by the WMO, is deliberately chosen by the BBC because it sounds far more drastic than the truth, which the BBC somehow fails to mention, that the "record" extends back only as far as 1880. Also, the BBC somehow omits to note that the January-to-January *fall* in global mean surface temperatures between 2007 and 2008 was the largest since records were first kept in 1880 – or, in the BBC's loaded language, the largest "on record".

The BBC also somehow fails to point out that, given that global mean surface temperatures have been rising at a near-linear centennial rate for the past three centuries, the fact that the most recent decade is the warmest "on record" is not in the least surprising: and it certainly provides no basis for the implicit assumption that the warming which stopped in 1998 is principally (or at all) attributable to anthropogenic "global warming".

Next, the BBC says that unnamed "researchers" say that the long-term temperature trend will be upward. However, it is possible that the rapid slowing of the solar sub-surface magnetic convection currents presages a long-term solar cooling. If so, on the evidence of the Maunder Minimum, when there were no sunspots for 60 years, the small warming effect of additional anthropogenic carbon dioxide will at least be mitigated and potentially altogether eliminated by the cooling Sun and the cooling oceans.

¹ <http://www.co2science.org/data/mwp/mwpp.php>

Then the BBC says, “Temperatures have not risen globally since 1998 when El Nino warmed the world.” The BBC somehow fails to say that there have been two El Ninos since 1998, leaving its audience with the impression that the only reason for the fall in global temperatures in recent years was the magnitude of the 1998 El Nino event.

The BBC moves on to another questionable tactic: the unverified headcount. It says: “A minority of scientists question whether this means global warming has peaked and argue the Earth has proved more resilient to greenhouse gases than predicted.” The BBC offers no evidence that it is “a minority of scientists” who question whether ‘global warming’ has peaked.

It was this very tactic that the BBC’s “Head of Newsgathering”, Fran Unsworth, deployed when making her public announcement – at a conference of news organizations in Amsterdam in November, 2006 – that the BBC would not in future provide balanced coverage of the climate scare. Here is what she said:

“Once we’d got one person setting the case for man-made global warming, and somebody opposing it, the viewer is probably left with the impression that there’s equal weight to these arguments. And I think that we have now moved on in our coverage of it. There is now a dwindling band of scientists who don’t accept that there is man-made global warming.”

And what expertise does Fran Unsworth have in evaluating how many “scientists” accept or do not accept that there is man-made “global warming”? How many scientific papers has she read? Has she *ever* read a scientific paper on climate from a peer-reviewed, learned journal? Would she have understood it if she had? We are entitled to ask all these questions, because Fran has adopted the BBC’s traditional tactic of not providing any evidence whatsoever for her proposition, which she merely recites, mantra-like, as though it were an article of blind, religious faith.

Besides, the question is not so much *whether* there is what Fran describes as “man-made global warming”, as *how much* of the warming that began in 1700 and ended in 1998 was attributable to human activities, including greenhouse-gas enrichment of the atmosphere. On that question there is not and has never been a scientific consensus: indeed, the IPCC’s calculations of climate sensitivity in each successive quinquennial assessment report are mutually incompatible and contradictory in several fundamental respects.

Next, the BBC quotes a Mr. Jarraud of the WMO as saying, “When you look at climate change you should not look at any particular year. You should look at trends over a pretty long period and the trend of temperature globally is still very much indicative of warming. La Nina is part of what we call ‘variability’. There has always been and there will always be cooler and warmer years, but what is important for climate change is that the trend is up; the climate on average is warming even if there is a temporary cooling because of La Nina.”

The graph from the Hadley Centre does not demonstrate that “the trend is up or that “the climate on average is warming”, or that there is nothing more than “a temporary cooling because of la Nina.” A diligent journalist would have looked at this graph before interviewing Mr. Jarraud, and would have asked him to explain it further in the light of the very clear evidence to the contrary. The BBC, of course, asked no such questions: Mr. Jarraud was saying what they wanted to hear.

Mr. Jarraud, on being shown the Hadley Centre's graph, might have replied that the period covered by the graph is too short. And that is why we have gone back 300 years, noticing that the uptrend began in 1700 for well-understood and entirely natural reasons, and continued until 1998. Of course, it is possible that the up-trend will resume in the coming years: increased carbon dioxide concentrations do cause *some* warming. However, the fact that the warming began 300 years ago, long before the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide had begun to rise, and the fact that the warming ceased as solar activity declined from the Grand Maximum, and the fact that global mean surface temperatures today are still well below the median value for the past half-billion years (some 7 degrees K, or 12.5 F, warmer than the present), do suggest that there are credible natural explanations for the warming that has been observed, and that the warming effect of carbon dioxide – whose magnitude is highly speculative, and which the IPCC's computer models are tuned to assume as a given – may be far less than the assumptions pre-programmed into the models.

Such doubts and cautions as these do not appear in most of the BBC's reports. Fran Unsworth has publicly made it explicit that the BBC intends henceforth only to present biased coverage of the "climate" scare, just as it whipped up needless and scientifically-unjustified alarm about a host of previous and equally baseless scares, such as "salmonella in eggs", "Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease in British beef," and "the bird-flu pandemic". The BBC was wrong, relentlessly wrong, about each and all of these previous scares, and about many others like them. It is wrong, relentlessly wrong, about the "global warming" scare too. **End of scare.**

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