

Global Warming Theories receive cold blast



Claims of alarming changes in nature because of global warming are being discredited. The results of two new studies of historical hurricane patterns add to a growing body of research that discredits global warming alarmism, said James M. Taylor, an environmental policy senior fellow at The Heartland Institute.

Reports on the studies were carried in the June 7, 2007 issue of *Nature*, but unsurprisingly have been largely ignored or overlooked by most news reporting services. In that report, scientists documented their reconstruction of Atlantic Ocean hurricane activity back 270 years. Compared with historical norms, the research found the 1970s and 1980s were periods of "anomalously low" hurricane activity compared with historical norms. The higher frequency and intensity of Atlantic Ocean hurricanes since then is not an unnatural surge of destruction due to global warming, the researchers said, but merely "a recovery to normal hurricane activity ..."

The scientists further discovered that warm temperatures have never been associated with elevated hurricane activity, Taylor said. Analyzing the six periods of elevated hurricane activity during the 270-year record, it was observed that in each of these periods, air and sea temperatures were notably lower than they are today.

Researchers found the common denominator of elevated hurricane activity was not warmer air and sea temperatures, but periods when vertical wind shear was at a minimum. In the April 18 issue of *Geophysical Research Letters*, a team of scientists documented that global warming will enhance wind shear, and thus limit future hurricane activity, Taylor pointed out.

Supporting the finding that air and sea temperatures are, at best, minor factors in hurricane activity was another report in the May 24, 2007 issue of *Nature* by another team of scientists. They reconstructed a 5,000-year history of major hurricane strikes in the Atlantic basin, finding that long-term trends in the El Nino/Southern Oscillation and West African monsoons were far more predictive of frequent and intense hurricane seasons than were air and sea temperatures. Dramatic fluctuations in hurricane activity were shown to be a common and natural occurrence, linked quite closely to periods when El Nino was weak and West African monsoons were strong.

The latest reports discrediting claims of a link between global warming and hurricanes should not be surprising, Taylor observed. While all newly conceived predictions of some catastrophic result due to the effects of global warming get widespread attention, sound scientific study conclusively refuting almost every one of the scares goes almost unnoticed, he added.

One example cited is a well-publicized report of the World Wildlife Fund on March 14, 2005, claiming "Himalayan glaciers are among the fastest retreating glaciers globally due to the effects of global warming." Yet the September 2006 issue of the American Meteorological Society's *Journal of Climate* reported: "Glaciers are growing in the Himalayan Mountains, confounding global warming alarmists who have recently claimed the glaciers were shrinking and that global warming was to blame."

A Reuter's News Agency report Nov. 6, 2001, said "Africa's highest mountain might lose its all-year ice cap and snow by 2015 due to climate changes threatening to worsen an already tight water supply, the environment group Greenpeace said Tuesday." Yet an article in the Nov. 23, 2003, issue of *Nature* said, "Although it's tempting to blame the ice loss on global warming, researchers think that deforestation of the mountain's foothills is the more likely culprit."

In a 2006 policy brief, Earthjustice asserted, "The contracting winter sea-ice around the Antarctic Peninsula due to the earth's warming trend is responsible for the dramatic decrease in Adelie Penguin populations on the Antarctic Peninsula." In February 2007, Taylor said, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change noted that Antarctic ice mass is growing rather than shrinking, and will continue to do so for at least the next full century.

Recently there have been warnings portending disaster because global warming caused by man threatens to melt much of the ice covering Greenland. But researchers reported a few days ago that Greenland was really green a half-million or so years ago, covered with forests. Who was to blame for that warming trend?

Global warming scares seem likely to keep coming a while no matter what real science discovers. Once established, however, it is scientific truth that stands the test of time.