

## The Skeptics on the Global Warming Issue: The Distinguished Veterans

By Gerald T. Westbrook\*

The objective of this essay is to put some faces on the skeptics on this issue. One way to do this is to categorize the skeptics and review these categories, one at a time. In this essay, the category is what I call the *Distinguished Veterans*. These are those scientists, perhaps retired, with incredible credentials and accomplishments to their credit. More on these scientists shortly.

Today, several energy companies have stopped fighting on the global warming issue, and essentially joined the *warmers*. Such companies accept the verdict of news releases from the UN agency—the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—as the final word. There are still some key companies that are skeptical on this issue, and are convinced that the Kyoto Protocol (KP), for example, is at best premature and at worst a fraud. Indeed, there are many skeptics on this issue, but they get very little press coverage, and even less respect. Michael Crichton has been one exception. Because of his reputation as an entertaining and provocative writer he has received the press coverage. His latest book<sup>1</sup>, *State of Fear*, is a James Bond type of novel. The warmers scream that this is a ridiculous book, with even more ridiculous characters, and hence is not worth reading. George Will<sup>2</sup>, in contrast, called this book a political broadside woven into an entertaining story.

What has infuriated the warmers is not really his plot, nor his characters, but the fact he repeatedly brings in current inputs on the global warming issue. These take the form of *discussions* between his characters. He adds tables and graphs to this dialogue. He uses extensive footnotes, and postscripts that includes *The Author's Message*, where Crichton states his convictions, conclusions and positions and *Appendix I, on why Politicized Science is Dangerous*.

In *State of Fear* there is little question that Crichton comes out on the skeptics side of this issue, both in the novel part and in his incorporation of much global warming science in his book. Crichton has been attacked viciously by this group. However, Crichton's effort will show to his many readers that an actual debate exists. As such it may well change the nature of this debate.

George Will noted two major themes in this book.

- Theme 1: "Crichton's subject is today's fear that global warming will cause catastrophic climate change (CCC)." This book is about CCC, but it takes some reading before one realizes that these CCC events will be *manufactured* by the radical environmental groups described in this novel. The events—ice shelf calving, flash floods, and tsunami generation—are all scheduled to occur at or near the time that a major conference on CCC is underway. In this way these groups expect to generate huge publicity, a multiplic-

ity of new members and mega-bucks in donations.

- Theme 2: This theme was: "Crichton's subject is also how conventional wisdom is manufactured, in a credulous and media-drenched society."

Theme 2 is similar to that in a recent book<sup>3</sup> by this writer entitled *'Acid Rains' on Liberal Propaganda* {'AR'}. The key point in 'AR' is that a *war* is going on: warmers versus skeptics; and as a result we live in a tidal wave of never ending propaganda.

Today the global warming issue has become conventional wisdom — it is happening, it is caused by society, it will be terrible, but we, the *warmers*, know what needs to be done to stop it.

A very major contribution of Crichton's book is that it publicizes the fact that a broad and deep debate on this issue is underway. Most *warmers* refuse to admit that such a debate exists. And one will never learn about such a debate in the *mass media*. Instead, the *mass media* presses ahead *manufacturing conventional wisdom* about global warming.

Crichton notes that the PLM (the Politico–Legal–Media) complex, has a vested interest in keeping society in a continuous *State of Fear*, hence the title for his book. The PLM has to resort to endless fear-mongering in order to keep the populace in a constant state of fear. And climate change is a perfect subject to scare the devil out of the average citizen.

In turn 'AR' argues that the *Ultra Liberals, Far Lefters and Global Warmers* must use a tidal-wave of propaganda to gain and hold power.

The average reader may still ask: why should they accept any of the inputs from Crichton, or from this writer. After all, neither are a climatologist or meteorologist or glaciologist etc, etc, etc. (Crichton does have a degree in medicine, and has conducted some biochemical research early in his career). One answer to this question is to shift from Crichton, to review the inputs of other skeptics. This essay will be on inputs from one type of skeptic, what I consider as perhaps the most interesting and compelling set. These skeptics are what I call the *Distinguished Veterans*. These are scientists with incredible credentials and accomplishments. Many of them are retired, some with the word *emeritus* in their title. These individuals do not have to play the game of chasing after grant money. These are scientists that do not have to curry favor with the department chair-person, or other university *brass*. They are free to state their convictions, and to speak their mind. And they are all highly skeptical on the global warming issue.

A quick word of caution is in order here. Note that at times some of the quotes from one veteran may seem to counter the quotes or be inconsistent with the quotes from another veteran. This is due to the individual context or timing where each quote occurred. Readers can rest assured that these veterans are all agreed that the big picture on global warming, as painted by the alarmists, is seriously flawed.

### Hurricane Specialists

*Dr. Neil Frank*

This review will start with Dr. Frank, Chief Meteorolo-

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Footnotes refer to references noted at end of text.

gist for Channel 11 in Houston, since 1987. Frank made this list of Distinguished Veterans because this writer lives in Houston and has had the opportunity to see him deliver the weather news many times, has seen him interviewed on global warming by Dan Rather and others at CBS, and has heard him speak on this issue several times at various professional and service meetings. Before Dr. Frank took this role at Channel 11, he served as head of the National Hurricane Center for 13 years, with a total of 26 years spent at that Center. He started his professional career as a weather officer in the Air Force.

Dr. Frank is highly skeptical about the global warming issue. He comes across loud and clear with his conviction that there is something very wrong with the proponents case. A major part of this concern is in the reliance by the proponents on results from computer models.

- He notes<sup>4,5</sup> that the models, used in weather forecasting can't be relied on for a three day forecast. He also notes, that for global warming predictions, we are being asked to rely on similar, but simpler models than those used in weather forecasting. Yet these climate models are applied in a far more complex arena to prepare climate forecasts for the next two centuries.
- He has also noted<sup>5</sup>: "Scaling back U.S. carbon dioxide emissions will require a considerable reduction in energy use, [but] climate change has nothing to do with carbon dioxide"<sup>47</sup>. — — — "Nothing in the data — — — not the numerical models — — — would force us into a rapid decision [to cut] back on emissions and [to] impose an economic disaster on this nation."

#### **Dr. William Gray**

Gray obtained his BSc degree in 1952, then worked for the Air Force forecasting weather. He attended the University of Chicago from 1957 to 1961, obtaining an MSc degree in Meteorology in 1959, and a PhD in Geophysical Sciences in 1964. He joined Colorado State University, Department of Atmospheric Sciences, in 1961.

Gray has been forecasting the number of hurricanes for many years. He has become the nations preeminent hurricane authority, and is a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society. He is the recipient of many awards including the *Neil Frank* award in 1995, from the National Hurricane Conference, for his work in long range hurricane forecasts.

His statements on global warming are aimed at putting computer models into perspective.

- In a speech in Houston<sup>6</sup> he noted that *climate models, while surely useful, are far from perfect. "The models have been superb when used for the next 5-10 days, but when modelers move out onto the climate area the complexity becomes too damn much."*
- Some have tried to couple the upswing in hurricane activity as evidence of global warming. Gray's reaction<sup>7</sup> to such claims: there is no way such an interpretation can be accepted. Anthropogenic greenhouse gas warming, if a physical valid hypothesis, is a very slow and gradual process that, at best, could only be expected to bring

about small changes in global circulation over periods of 50 - 100 years. This would not result in abrupt and dramatic upturn in hurricane activity.

- Gray has noted that hurricane frequency is somewhat cyclical and somewhat random. The last major storm to come through Florida, before Hurricane Andrew hit in 1992, was Hurricane Betsy in 1965." - - - "Eight of the last 10 years have been very active - - -." " - - -and yet we went from 1992 until last year with no hurricanes coming through Florida." During this period Gray commented that Florida had "just been lucky and that it was going to end." - - - "Although last year was a terrible year for them, it could have been worse because none of the four storms that affected the Florida region went into a highly populated area."
- Gray recently reinforced his views on this subject<sup>8</sup>. "While there has been warming since the middle '70s, especially in the last 10 years. But this is natural, due to ocean circulation and other factors. It is not human induced." - - - "Nearly all my colleagues who have been around for 40 or 50 years are skeptical as hell about this whole global warming thing."
- While Gray is in *retirement* he still works every day. "For years I haven't had any NOAA, NASA or Navy money. But I'm having more fun." - - - "Right now I'm trying to work on this human-induced global-warming thing that I think is grossly exaggerated." He admits he has cut his forecasting project way back, partly do to lack of funding. He noted he had "NOAA money for 30 some years, and then when the Clinton administration came in, and Gore started directing some of the environmental stuff, I was cut off. I couldn't get any NOAA money. They turned down 13 straight proposals from me."

#### **Agriculture/Botany/Food Production Experts**

##### **Dr. Timothy Ball**

Ball was the first Canadian PhD in climatology. His doctoral thesis the University of London, England, was the reconstruction of climate from 1714 to 1952 using the extensive records of the Hudson Bay Company (HBC). Ball worked for the Canadian Air Force for eight years, then for the University of Winnipeg for 28 years, retiring as full professor in 1996.

Ball has given over 600 talks on science and the environment. He has written hundreds of columns for the top Canadian farm magazine—*Country Guide*—under the heading *Weather Talk*. He has written many papers on climate, long range weather patterns, ecosystems, air quality, silting and flooding problems, and impact of climate change on sustainable agriculture. He is the co-author of the book<sup>9</sup>: *Eighteenth Century Naturalists of Hudson Bay*.

Ball has served on environmental, water resources, and climate committees at all levels of government and chaired many provincial boards on environmental issues and water management.

Some key comments <sup>10</sup>

- Is the world getting warmer? "Yes, it warmed from 1680

up to 1940, but since 1940 it's been cooling. The evidence for warming is because of distorted records. The satellite data, for example, show cooling."

- Could you summarize the evidence that suggests the world is cooling slightly, not warming up? "Yes, from 1940 until 1980, even the surface record shows cooling. The argument is that there has been warming since then, but in fact almost all of that is due to what is called the 'urban heat island effect', that is, that the weather stations are around the edge of cities and the cities expanded out and distorted the record. When you look at rural stations - if you look at Antarctica, for example - the South Pole shows cooling since 1957. And the satellite data which has been operating since 1978 shows a slight cooling trend as well."
- Do we have the tools to model the climate? "We don't have the tools." - - - "The fact is the big models don't work. The fact is we don't even understand a fraction of the mechanisms of climate."
- What is the scientific basis for the Kyoto Protocol (KP)? "There is none." - - - "So it is a policy based on ideology and economics and politics and has nothing to do with science."
- Why did Russia sign the KP? Putin signed because Europe essentially blackmailed him in to signing.

#### **Dr. Sylvan Wittwer**

Dr. Wittwer received his undergraduate education in Horticulture at Utah State and his PhD from Missouri.

Wittwer, a distinguished professor of horticulture at Michigan State University, retired in 1996. He is Director Emeritus of the Michigan State University Agricultural Experiment Station. He was Chairman of the Board on Agriculture, for the National Research Council, from 1973-77 and a member of the Climate Research Board, 1978-81. He has served as a consultant for all International Agricultural Research Centers, all U.S. Federal agencies relating to agriculture and environment, the United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank

He is the author of over 750 papers and five books, ranging from *Feeding a Billion - Frontiers in Chinese Agriculture*, down to a best selling gardening book: *Greenhouse Tomatoes, Lettuce and Cucumbers*. The book<sup>11</sup> *Feeding a Billion* was co-authored with three Chinese agriculture scientists. It is now out of print and considered a collector's item.

Wittwer is the scientific pioneer who conducted the original studies on CO<sub>2</sub> enhancement of the production of food crops, starting in 1964<sup>12</sup>. He notes he has "now lived through 8 decades of 'global warming'. - - - "The 'greenhouse effect' warming is non-existent - - -." He has also noted that "the evidence is that the rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide are very favorable for the most essential of human activities - - - namely the production of food." He is the author of *Food, Climate, and Carbon Dioxide*. He writes that the effects of an enriched CO<sub>2</sub> on crop productivity, are positive as to the benefits for global food security. He argues that the rising level of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> is a universally free premium, gaining in magnitude with time.

He has also noted<sup>13</sup> that the "benefits of carbon dioxide are not just limited to photosynthetic efficiency and water use efficiency. When plants are exposed to elevated levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, every kind of stress is alleviated to some extent that we've been able to examine." Whether it is water stress, temperature stress, air pollution stress, deficiency of nutrients stress, even a deficiency of light stress, that stress is alleviated to some extent.

#### **Dr. Sherwood Idso**

Idso obtained his BSc, MSc and PhD, in physics, all from the University of Minnesota. On graduation in 1967, he joined the U. S. Water Conservation Lab in Phoenix as a research physicist. Idso has also served as adjunct professor of Geology, Geography and Botany at Arizona State University. In 2001 he retired from the Water Conservation Lab to become president of his own web site. See below. His efforts in Phoenix would seem to be those of one who has picked up the ball from Wittwer and is carrying it forward. Idso has published over 500 papers, plus the books *Carbon Dioxide: Friend or Foe?* and *Global Change: Earth in Transition*.

Several writings by Idso have been highly influential in my education. The first references<sup>14,15</sup> were on a critique, in the New York Times in 1990, of Al Gore's infamous chart, that compared temperature and atmospheric carbon dioxide content over the past 160,000 years. The former VP was trying to make the case that the skeptics were wrong on global warming issue. Idso refuted these claims and showed that Gore was the one who was wrong on the facts and the reasoning.

The second reference, was his contribution<sup>16</sup>, in a 1996 book on the global warming debate. His conclusion—on the impact of elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide levels—tends to shatter the Armageddon view about global warming: "*Rising levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere promote plant growth and at the same time reduce their demand for water. These effects should lead to a greening of the Earth and signs are that this has already happened.*" Many of the studies show positive results based on a change from 350 to 650 parts per million of CO<sub>2</sub>. Thousands of publications have verified these effects.

The third references are all output from his web site<sup>17</sup>: *The Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change*. This site has been extremely useful to this writer, but it has struck a sore point with the warmers. They have attacked it vigorously accusing Idso and his sons, Craig and Keith, all of being puppets of the energy industry. This charge seems to me to be one of desperation. It surely is a great exaggeration. And it is one of ultimate simplicity. The proof of such a charge would be in the nature and the quality of their postings, which both seem more than adequate to this writer. Further, I have personally not seen any critiques of this web site based on the lack of quality of its work, or on the weakness of its arguments.

#### **Experts in Physics**

Drs. Robert Jastrow, William Nierenberg and Frederick Seitz are authors of the book<sup>18</sup> *Scientific Perspectives on the Greenhouse Problem*. This book, now 15 years old, was one



of the first robust critiques of the greenhouse issue. A quick review of their credentials continues the rather incredible set of capabilities and accomplishments set by the first five distinguished veterans.

**Dr. William Nierenberg**

Dr. Nierenberg, (1919 - 2000) was Director of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography from 1965 to 1986. He was an expert in several areas of underwater research. Nierenberg was known for his long record of national and international service. Specifically he was a former member of EPA's Global Climate committee, the National Academy of Science Climate Research Board and a former chairman of the National Academy of Science CO<sub>2</sub> Assessment Committee. He served on several panels of the President's Science Advisory Committee.

**Dr. Frederick Seitz**

Dr. Seitz was born in 1911, and earned his PhD from Princeton in 1934. Work at Princeton continued in the field of solid state physics. Seitz moved to the U. of Illinois in 1949, rising to the Dean of the Graduate College by 1965. From 1965 to 1968 he became the first full-time president of the National Academy of Sciences. He was president of Rockefeller University—a biomedical research and teaching center—from 1968 to 1978, and is now President Emeritus. He is the former Chairman of the Defense Science Board and a former NATO science advisor.

**Dr. Robert Jastrow**

Dr. Jastrow was born in 1925. He also received his degrees in physics from Columbia University. He joined NASA in 1958 and formed the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in 1961, which he directed until his retirement in 1981. Following 11 years as a Professor of Earth Sciences at Dartmouth College, he became Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Mt. Wilson Institute, which manages Mt. Wilson Observatory. Dr. Jastrow has had a long interest in astronomy, science fiction and religion. He is the author of *The Enchanted Loom: Mind in the Universe*, and *God and the Astronomers*.

These three scientists challenged the IPCC in 1990 and their computer based, global warming range, for the next century, of 1.5 to 4.5°C. They felt this range was far too pessimistic. Their analysis, based on reasonably hard observational data, but no computer models, included:

1. assuming the temperature increase over the 20<sup>th</sup> century was 0.3 to 0.6°C;
2. assuming this rise was all due to a 50% increase in greenhouse gases from pre-industrial levels;
3. assuming a 100% increase in greenhouse gases, from pre-industrial levels, for the current century;
4. as opens then, could see twice the warming, from pre-industrial levels, at the end of this century, or 0.6 to 1.2°C;
5. assuming a correction of 0.2°C for ocean thermal lag, giving a revised range of 0.8 to 1.4°C;
6. finally assuming an allowance, of  $\pm 0.4^\circ\text{C}$  for natural climate variability, giving a range of 0.4 to 1.8°C.

Again, based on this simple analysis, they felt the 1.5 to 4.5°C was far too pessimistic, and represented a major exaggeration of the actual physical situation. Clearly the IPCC paid zero attention to this criticism, as the 2001 IPCC range is 1.8 to 5.8°C.

Separate from the above book, the upper range value deserves additional comment. This increase in value from 4.5 to 5.8°C was not due to any new science, but simply a change in the scenario definition. Unfortunately the high end value gets most of the publicity. The 5.8 °C gets translated to 10.4 °F, then rounded up to 11 °F. The use of this value is outrageous as it is based on a hyped up scenario definition, that includes a ridiculously unrealistic global CO<sub>2</sub> per capita emissions growth. In 1979 this value peaked at 1.23 tons/year per person. This ratio dropped to 1.11 by 1999. But in spite of all the attention paid to energy conservation, in spite of all the pressure to use better fuels and alternative energy, the IPCC ended up with a value of 4.0 tons/year per person by 2100, almost four times current level.

This analysis reinforces the conclusion that the IPCC deals in major exaggeration.

**Conclusions**

Eight key veterans of the climate change battle have been cited. Three of these scientists were experts in the agriculture/botany/food production fields; three were experts in various branches of physics; and two were experts in hurricanes. The individuals cited all have had incredible careers:

- very advanced degrees in many of the most complex fields imaginable;
- broad national and international accomplishments;
- dozens of government committees and
- many awards.

These Distinguished Veterans are all skeptics. Their lifetime publications, speeches and comments gives a sample of the nature of this groups views on the global warming issue.

When considering whether to accept the views from a Michael Crichton or from this writer—where clearly neither of us are research scientists in this field—look at us in the role as news reporters, or better, as science reporters. Such key outlets as the New York Times or Nature magazine or Science magazine have general science reporters. Further all the Non Government Organizations (NGOs) also report such news. And these are the people, and these are the organizations that we are competing with as to who can best tell the public the latest scientific news. And the key news about the global warming issue is that there is a serious, valid and vigorous debate going on and the skeptics may very well have the best of the arguments.

And the very best proof that such a debate exists—that it is relevant and valid, and that the skeptics may be winning—is in the speeches and papers and words of the Distinguished Veterans. To claim that these scientists don't understand the sciences involved is silly. To argue that these veterans are being conned into their positions is spurious. And to accuse them of being puppets of the energy industry is specious at best.

## References and Notes

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(2) Will, George, *Newsweek*, December 23, 2004.

(3) Westbrook, Gerald T., 'Acid Rains' on *Liberal Propaganda*, iUniverse, Lincoln NB, December 9, 2004. Note that this book has nothing to say on the acid rain issue. The acid refers to the acid satire used throughout this book.

(4) See *Houston Chronicle*, April 11, 1998 as reported by the South Florida Sun Sentinel.

(5) See *Richmond Times Dispatch*, April 11, 1998. This was also reported on the Internet at [www.junkscience.com/news2/richtime.htm](http://www.junkscience.com/news2/richtime.htm).

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(10) Houston, Stuart, Ball, Tim, and Houston, Mary, *Eighteenth Century Naturalists of Hudson Bay*, McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal, 2003.

I first became aware of the HBC as a child in Canada, through their fine department store. The HBC was, of course, far more than a department store chain. It was in turn a trading company;

an exploration activity; a map maker; a student of, and keeper of weather data; a recorder of, and guardian of the natural resources of their region; and finally a pseudo government. No organization could have been more interested in the weather, as they had the challenge of getting their boats out of Hudson Bay *in time*. Hence they kept detailed records of weather, animal and bird information, vegetation and celestial inputs. As noted above, Ball did his PhD thesis based on these records, and has done much to preserve them.

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(13) *Greening of Planet Earth Continues*, a panel discussion, Bismark, ND, November 13, 1998. See: [www.co2andclimate.net/premier.htm](http://www.co2andclimate.net/premier.htm).

(14, 15) Gore Jr., Albert, *To Skeptics on Global Warming - - You're wrong on facts and reasoning*, New York Times, April 22, 1990; Idso, Sherwood B., *Carbon Dioxide Warming Is Good for the Planet*, New York Times, May 7, 1990. This letter refuted claims made in the April 22 essay. Idso shows that Gore is the one who is wrong on the facts and the reasoning.

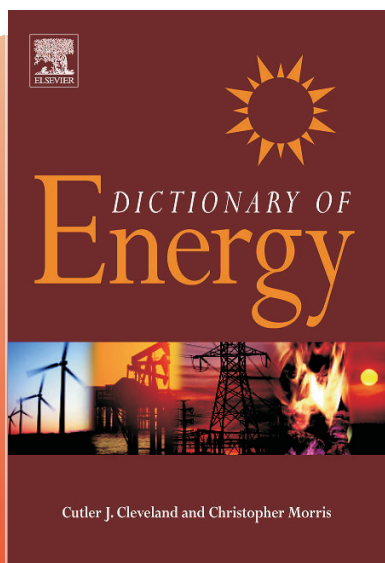
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