

[Spiking the Road to Copenhagen](#)

The Western obsession with curbing carbon emissions is wicked and also economically foolish

Deepak Lal

25th August 2009

Three cheers for Jairam Ramesh! India at last has an environment minister who is willing and able to denounce the hypocrisy and immorality of the West in twisting the arms of India and China to curb their carbon emissions. He is right to make it clear that India has no intention of signing the new 'climate change' treaty in Copenhagen in December, which would put curbs on the carbon emissions of the Third World. If they do not comply they are being threatened by the draft bill going through the US Congress to levy carbon tariffs on their exports.

As this column has argued many times, this is a blatant attempt to prevent these countries from industrialising and achieving the standards of living of the West. For, until technological advances can allow alternative 'green' energy sources to compete with the fossil fuels, whose use is gradually eliminating poverty in the Third World as in the West's own ascent from poverty, a call to put any curbs on carbon emissions is in fact to condemn their billions to continuing poverty. Whilst numerous Western economists and do-gooders shed crocodile tears about the Third World's poor, they are willing at the same time to prevent them from taking the only feasible current route out from this abject state. Nothing is more hypocritical and immoral than rich Westerners driving their gas-guzzling SUVs emoting about the threat to Spaceship Earth from the millions of Indians who want to drive Nanos. Whilst the salving of their consciences by buying carbon offsets (as Al Gore claims to do every time he jets around the world) is akin to the Papal indulgences sold by the Catholic Church, which allowed its richer adherents to assuage their guilt and 'fornicate on clean sheets'. For Gore to have the lights on his mansion blazing throughout the night, and seek to restrict the emissions from Indian power stations, when most Indians don't even have an electric light bulb, is deeply wicked.

A study of the costs to the Indian poor of curbing carbon emissions has estimated that, over a 30-year time horizon, with a 10 per cent annual emission restriction the number of poor increases by 21 per cent, even in the short run, and by nearly 50 per cent for a 30 per cent annual emission reduction (Murthy, Panda, Parikh: 'CO2 emission reduction strategies and economic development of India', Margin, 2007). Those development economists and sundry celebrities, who on the one hand, want to see the end of world poverty and on the other, to curb Third World carbon emissions, should be ashamed of themselves for advocating the latter path which will make the former goal impossible to achieve.

This is particularly heinous as the claim by the IPCC that, it is scientifically proven, CO2 emissions are the cause of global warming, is increasingly being questioned by climatologists. Particularly, as since 1997, both the terrestrial and more accurate satellite temperature readings (which are not contaminated by the 'heat island' urbanisation effect) show global cooling, even though there has been a large increase in CO2 emissions. This is also the period in which the sunspot activity in the Sun has ceased. My earlier column on climate change (June 2007) had outlined the rival theory for climate change developed by the Danish physicist and climatologist, Henrik

Svensmark — cosmo-climatology. In a remarkable March 2009 internal study on climate science suppressed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), but put into the public domain by the Competitive Enterprise Institute (see www.cei.org) the whole scientific basis of the current CO2 theory of climate change is put into question. It emphasises that “global temperatures have declined — extending the current downward trend to 11 years with a particularly rapid decline in 2007-8. At the same time atmospheric CO2 levels have continued to increase and CO2 emissions have accelerated”(p. iii). This means that “the IPCC projections for large increases [in global temperature] are looking increasingly doubtful” (p.3). On the IPCC’s rejection of the alternative explanation of solar variability as the cause of climate change, it states: “There appears to be a strong association between solar sunspots/irradiance and global temperature fluctuations”. “A new paper by Scafetta and Wilson (Geophysical Research Letters, 3 March 2009) suggests the IPCC used faulty solar data in dismissing the direct effect of solar variability on global temperatures. Their research suggests that solar variability [rather than green house gasses] could account for up to 68% of the increase in Earth’s global temperature.” (p.iv)

It then provides a table (p.58) from K Gregory (Climate Change Science 2009) which summarises the evidence for CO2 and the Sun/Cosmic Ray Warming hypotheses for climate change. This table, shows that, on a number of predictions involving observable evidence on the two hypotheses, the sun/cosmic ray explanation for climate change wins hands down. Moreover, as on this hypothesis it is the sunspot activity which controls the climate, as the sun seems to have gone to sleep over the last 12 years there is a growing likelihood “that sunspots may vanish by 2015. Given the strong association between sunspots and global temperatures, this suggests the possibility that we may be entering a period of global cooling” (p.60). Perhaps another ice age.

This new and growing scientific evidence that human CO2 emissions have little to do with climate change makes the current Western political obsession to curb carbon emissions at a vast economic cost extremely foolish. For India it would mean not only reversing the current trends in poverty alleviation, but a vast increase in the numbers of the poor who would otherwise be pulled out of poverty. India should have nothing to do with Copenhagen. If this means there is no climate change treaty, it might also save the West from its current path to committing economic hara-kiri.