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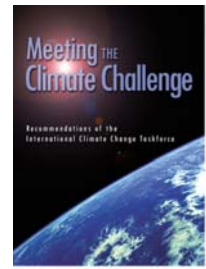
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Global warming

It's a big week for the climate change debate. The International Climate Change Taskforce will, for the first time, give a clear CO2 danger threshold for global warming. Susan Watts examines the science and the politics behind these events.

Speakers:

- 1) BBC's Jeremy Paxman
- 2) Science editor Susan Watts
- 3) Simon Retallack (Institute for Public Policy Research)
- 4) Dave Griggs, Director of Climate Research Hadley Centre
- 5) Professor Tom Burke, Former Government Advisor
- 6) Adair Turner, International Climate Change Task Force



Jeremy Paxman:

.... catastrophe is inevitable. It's not the first time we've had such a warning yet action remains inadequate and in the case of the United States' rejection of the Kyoto Treaty non-existent. Our science editor Susan Watch reports.

Susan Watts:

- 5 [music: from Beethoven's] Up and down the country they're asking if springs come early. Out and about today in Devon it certainly felt one bit. And climate change will be the hot topic for politicians and scientists, too, over the next couple of weeks. We are about to see the Prime Minister's opening gambits in his plan to make global warming along with Africa a key issue during the UK's presidency of the EU and the G 8 this year.

Simon Retallack:

- 10 Governments will need to do a lot more and a lot faster to address the problem of climate change if dangerous impacts are to be avoided. In particular, it concludes that governments must do everything possible to prevent temperature globally from rising more than 2 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels. Why? Because if you accede to 2 degrees centigrade you are likely to see very significant impacts in terms of water scarcity, agricultural production and impacts on the natural world.

Susan Watts:

- 15 The [report](#) takes as its starting point a time known to historians as Europe's little Ice Age. But why can't we go skating on the Thames any more? Today's [authors?] which include one former cabinet minister and a US Republican is the first to make an explicit link between a defined and dangerous temperature rise and the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that would cause it. A quick look at carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere shows a steady rise since the Industrial Revolution when it was 280 parts per million. It rose only gradually to the 1950s when the rate of increase changed dramatically. Today, that
- 20 concentration is around 379 ppm, perilously close, the Task Force says, to that chosen 400 ppm danger level. But theirs is only one view. How much credibility does it have with the scientific community?

Next week scientists from all over the world will gather here at the [Hadley Centre for Climate Research](#) near Exeter to produce a statement on the likely effects of rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. But the [?] increasingly strong statements from the likes of a chief scientific adviser and behind the scenes climate scientists themselves seem to be growing more worried that the

- 25 earth might be more sensitive to mankind's activities than any of us thought. In public though, scientists are notoriously conservative about drawing conclusions from their research and dictating to politicians. And they are wary on reports like today's.

Dave Griggs:

But they try to open up the debate about what a safe level of temperature increase is and the conference next week is to try and provide the science input into that decision making. What other changes and extreme events are going to be is a possible rapid

30 climate change that we don't know about, what are the agricultural impacts, water resource impacts, and how are those going to change depending on what level of temperature increase we allow to happen.

Susan Watts:

And will that be more than just more talk?

Dave Griggs:

- 35 It will definitely be more than more talk. It's trying to provide good science into that debate.

Tony Blair: (September 2004)

What is now plain is that the emission of greenhouse gases associated with industrialization and strong economic growth from a world population that has increased sixfold in those 200 years is causing global warming at a rate that again is significant has become alarming and is simply unsustainable in the long term.

- 40 **Susan Watts:**

Tony Blair has promised that this will be a year of delivery on climate change. But are his fine words borne out by action?

Professor Tom Burke:

In order to deliver on those promises he needs to enlist the world support of the other global leaders and a couple of things recently have undermined his credibility, I think, in their eyes. He went to Washington immediately after President Bush was re-elected. He

45 didn't really raise the issue – the impression left in the White House and elsewhere in the administration was that he wasn't really serious. Then he came back and started to back paddle on our commitment to doing things in Europe and again left the impression that when push came to shove he wasn't actually prepared to follow through.

Susan Watts:

- 50 Today's report calls for the world's industrialized countries to take a lead in putting its recommendations into effect. It wants agricultural subsidies switched from food crops to cleaner bio fuels. A tough target of a quarter of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2025. Plans to prevent average temperatures rising a dangerous 2 degrees above the pre-industrial level and

compulsory schemes for carbon trading. The European union started its own carbon trading scheme this month but it went ahead without the UK. This is because we asked to admit more carbon dioxide. Now there is the treat of legal action and the possibility of the farcical situation where we end up suing the EU for doing the right thing by the world's climate. And it's not just in Europe
55 that Tony Blair has disappointed. America, too, remains out of reach. But there is still time.

Professor Tom Burke:

He has built himself an Everest of expectations and the west face of that: bringing the Americans on board I think is almost impossible for him to climb. So what it now needs to do is add another note to his song and really to lead the EU into developing a really powerful relationship with China and developing a relationship that's investment led and therefore good for business. And
60 yet funnily enough, if that happens you will find lots of American businesses feeling shut out and bringing the Americans under a lot more pressure to join in.

Susan Watts:

Tony Blair will have more credibility with the rest of the world if he first gets his actions to match his words at home. And this, of course, means being prepared to take more political risks with business.

65 **Jeremy Paxman:**

Well, there is now a Adair Turner, who sat on the international climate change task force and ... wearing your CBI (Confederation of British Industry – helps the development of British industry by exchanging information & ideas with the government) hat ? I guess. The Americans refused to accept the Kyoto Treaty 'cause they felt it would damage their economy. If these restraints came in they would damage the British economy, wouldn't they?

70 **Adair Turner:**

No, I don't think they would over the long term. Because the key thing is although it's very important to start taking action we have to take it steadily over a long period of time. And if you actually work out what the probable economic cost is of really radical reductions in carbon emissions stretched over, say, a fifty year period, actually they're relatively small in terms of total economic cost. They are sort of a couple of percent of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in, say, 2050. Let me give you an idea of what that is.
75 That is the UK economy getting in November 2050 to the level of prosperity it would otherwise have got to in January 2050. That's really the scale of the economic cost of dealing with this problem. It's nothing like as big as people suggest when you actually sit down and do some reasonable figures on it.

Jeremy Paxman:

In that case how the Americans got it so wrong?

80 **Adair Turner:**

I think the Americans are just wrong on this. Frankly I think they have allowed some bits of their business community who have particular business interests, but not the national economic interest at heart to lobby and to persuade the government. I think the idea that this is a threat, that action on this is a threat to American jobs, is simply wrong. I think it's an economic fallacy and it's bad economics. Sometimes - I have to tell you as a former business lobbyist - sometimes business lobbyists are guilty of bad
85 economics.

Jeremy Paxman:

Do you think it is – do you get a sense that people who are surprised (?) at the urgency and the problem is unilateral initiatives mean nothing.

Adair Turner:

90 What - that is exactly the problem ... this is a problem that literally you can't solve yourself even as one nation you can't solve. You've got to get everybody involved simultaneously to take action. And it is very difficult, because what's going on at the moment is America is saying: We won't take any action unless China and India, in particular, commit to future action. And China and India are saying: Why on earth should we commit to future action if the richest country in the world isn't willing to take action already. One of the things that this task force has suggested in this report is trying to get everybody back on board, because at some stage
95 that's what we'll have to get is ... an agreement to all start moving at a different pace for different countries, for different prosperity towards the end that we know we'll have to head towards.

Jeremy Paxman:

Could you demonstrate that the economic consequences for a country like China or India ... so much less developed than ... or any of us here in Europe ... would not be greater than they are in a developed economy?

100 **Adair Turner:**

The key end point that we'll have to aim for is a roughly equal for all of us to emit CO 2. And quite frankly that means that Chinese people on average – at the end of this game – will probably emit a bit more than they do at the moment and we'll have to emit much less. But China will – in order to hit even that target, which is some increase, but not a lot of increase have to start planning what it does to its economy now. But actually there are some advantages in doing it at an early stage of industrialization because you can
105 plan to get economic environmentally efficient plant in place to begin with rather than retrofitting what you've got to ... what you've built, which is inefficient to start with. So, there is a lot that China can do – just with technology to make sure that its growth path – although it will produce increases in CO 2 emissions – produces much less increases than if they simply copied our way of industrializing.

Jeremy Paxman:

110 Adair Turner, thank you.