

Feeling the heat — data vs. politics

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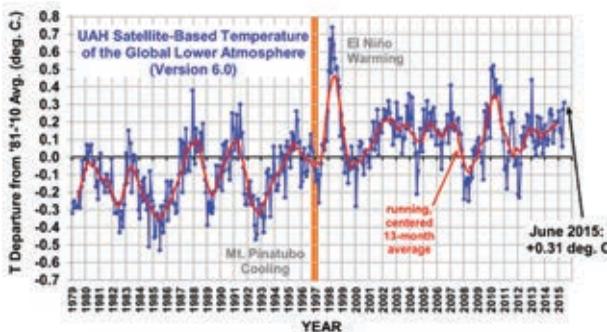
Part 53

It is often parroted by some politicians that the science of global warming is “settled.” If this were really true, then why is there so much controversy over basic climate temperature data? One reason is there are two main competing temperature data sets — a land-based set that lends support to the global warming theory and a satellite-based set that doesn’t.

Since 1979, satellites have been recording daily temperature data in different layers of the atmosphere over about 85 percent of the earth’s surface. Satellites are meant to overcome the deficiencies of land-based temperature measurements and ocean temperature measurements by ships. The goal is to capture the earth’s “global” temperature as opposed to grouping “local” temperatures to investigate global temperature.

Two organizations analyze and provide satellite temperature data. The first is Remote Sensing Systems (RSS), a private science research company based in Santa Rosa, Calif. The University of Alabama (UAH) in Huntsville, Ala., maintains the second satellite data set shown in figure 1. Note the UAH data set shows a slight global temperature rise since 1979 but also a

Figure 1

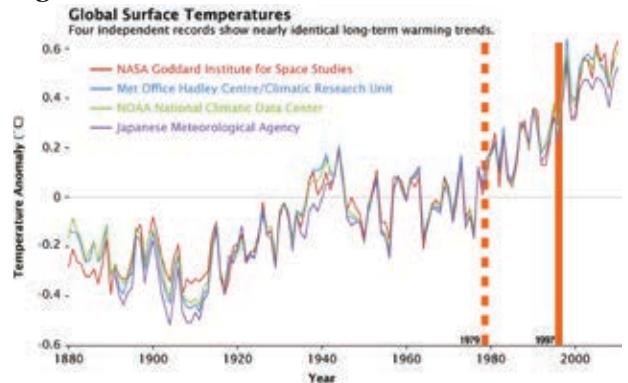


www.drroyspencer.com, Dr. Roy Spencer, Ph.D., climatologist, author and former NASA scientist

“pause” in warming since 1997, which the RSS data also shows. Those skeptical of the global warming theory point to figure 1 as supporting evidence, especially when compared to climate change computer model temperature projections for the same period. However, even the United Nation’s International Panel on Climate Change (U.N. IPCC) acknowledged this “hiatus” or “pause” in global surface warming in their 2014 Fifth Assessment Report.

Figure 2 is a combination of four-land based temperature records kept by NASA and the National

Figure 2



NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, NOAA National Climate Data Center, Met Office Hadley Centre/Climatic Research Unit, and the Japanese Meteorological Agency

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the U.S., the Japanese Meteorological Agency, and the Met Office Hadley Centre/Climatic Research Unit in the United Kingdom. The four temperature records are very similar. They extend back to 1880, which is considered close to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution when human beings began burning fossil fuels. The increased release of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from burning fossil fuels is considered by the U.N. IPCC to be the main cause for the global temperature increase in the last century, and this assumption is built into the IPCC’s climate models.

Note the solid vertical orange bars at year 1997 on both figures 1 and 2 showing the “pause” in temperature rise. This “pause,” which is almost 20 years in length, obviously causes a problem for supporters of the U.N. IPCC global warming theory. The Met Office Hadley Centre’s July 2013 report *The Recent Pause in Global Warming (2): What Are the Potential Causes?* concludes with the following comments about additional needed research: “We note, however, the need for better continuous long-term records of the net radiation at the top of the atmosphere in general, and of solar radiation in particular, to understand decadal changes in global climate. We also need to maintain and extend to deeper levels (below 2000m) the monitoring of the heat content and thermal structure of the oceans by [on-site] measurements, building on the tremendous advances made in recent years with the introduction of Argo floats,” or temperature buoys.

In other words, the “pause” is causing them to rethink their global warming theory assumptions. Maybe something other than CO₂ (like the sun) caused the post-1880 warming, or maybe the global warming is going into the ocean instead of the atmosphere.

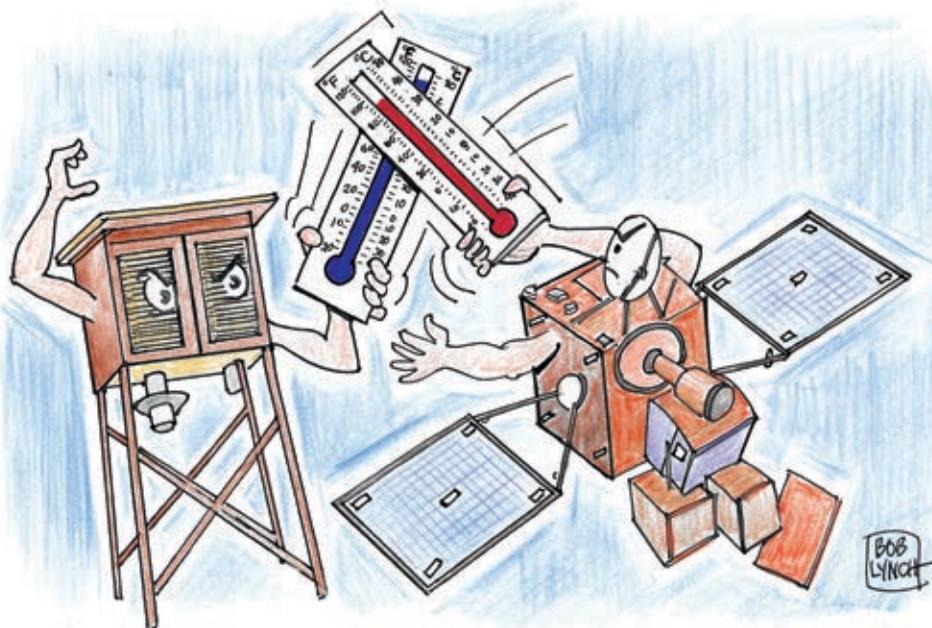
As noted in previous editorials, when the actual data does not match your theory's prediction, then the problem is with the theory, not the data! Or is it? Or can you simply "adjust" the data? These bombshell questions became real with the June 4, 2015, release of a research paper by NOAA scientists in the journal *Science* titled "Possible Artifacts of Data Biases in the Recent Global Surface Warming Hiatus." The lead author, Tom Karl, is the director of the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) and Chair of the Subcommittee on Global Change Research of the U.S. Global Change Research Program.

The paper suggests there may not have been any "pause" at all. The researchers from NCEI "adjusted" their data on land and ocean temperatures to address "residual data biases" that affect a variety of measurements, such as those taken by ships over the oceans. And they found that "newly corrected and updated global surface temperature data from NOAA's NCEI do not support the notion of a global warming 'hiatus.'"

Other climate researchers are not convinced. For example, Dr. Judith Curry writes in *Has NOAA "Busted" the Pause in Global Warming?*: "The greatest changes in the new NOAA surface temperature analysis is to the ocean temperatures since 1998. This seems rather ironic, since this is the period where there is the greatest coverage of data with the highest quality of measurements — ARGO buoys and satellites don't show a warming trend. This short paper in *Science* is not adequate to explain and explore the very large changes that have been made to the NOAA data set. The global surface temperature datasets are clearly a moving target. So while I'm sure this latest analysis from NOAA will be regarded as politically useful for the Obama administration, I don't regard it as a particularly useful contribution to our scientific understanding of what is going on."

On Oct. 13, 2015, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), chairman of the U.S. House Science, Space and Technology Committee, noted that other studies contradict Karl's NOAA paper. He issued a subpoena demanding the global data sets, methods of analysis, and documents and communications related to sea-temperature readings from NOAA and the Karl paper's scientists. Smith said, "The American people have every right to be suspicious when NOAA alters data to get the politically correct results they want

DUELING DATA



and then refuses to reveal how those decisions were made. NOAA needs to come clean about why they altered the data to get the results they needed to advance this administration's extreme climate change agenda. The agency has yet to identify any legal basis for withholding these documents."

Why is this debate over temperature data important? Because over time, it either does or does not support the U.N. IPCC global warming theory, which is the foundation for the use of Social Cost of Carbon discussed last month. It is also the driver for the Paris Climate Change negotiations held Nov. 30 to Dec. 11, 2015, in Paris, France.

What is the goal of these Paris negotiations? Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of U.N.'s Framework Convention on Climate Change, said, "This is the first time in the history of mankind that we are setting ourselves the task of intentionally, within a defined period of time, to change the economic development model that has been reigning for at least 150 years, since the Industrial Revolution. ... This is probably the most difficult task we have ever given ourselves, which is to intentionally transform the economic development model for the first time in human history."

Folks, capitalism has been the reigning economic model for at least 150 years. Remember, we elected a president who wanted to "fundamentally transform America," and we can see his energy policies. Now the Paris negotiators want to fundamentally "transform the [world] economic development model" (or economy). Perhaps now one can see the real significance of the "dueling data"! ☹