**Hold the Line on Global Warming**

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What should conservatives do about global warming? Jim Manzi suggests in his June 25 *National Review* cover story ("Game Plan") that conservatives embrace junk science and "manage" global climate change so that they can "peel off" 1 percent of the votes from the "opposing coalition" in some future presidential election.

Manzi's is a recipe for social, political and economic disaster -- not just for conservatives, but for everyone, with the possible exception of the misanthropic, back-to-nature socialists among us.

"It is no longer possible, scientifically or politically, to deny that human activities have very likely increased global temperatures...," intones Manzi, who has apparently spent too much time watching "An Inconvenient Truth."

It's clear from his article that he neither understands the science nor the politics of global warming.

Manzi says we should believe in global warming because of the "underlying physics." He writes, "All else equal, the more CO2 molecules we have in the atmosphere, the hotter it gets."

But both the underlying physics and historical climate data debunk this statement.

Different greenhouse gases absorb different wavelengths of energy emitted by the Earth. The fact that only a limited amount of the Earth's emitted energy is available for absorption by CO2 and that CO2 has to compete with water vapor and clouds for that energy, results in a crucial (but little publicized) logarithimic relationship between CO2 and temperature -- that is, as atmospheric CO2 increases, it absorbs less and less additional energy to produce correspondingly less and less additional warming. At some point, adding more atmospheric CO2 doesn't significantly change atmospheric temperature.

To analogize, consider a window with many shades, each blocking half the incoming light. As successive shades are pulled, the transmitted light is halved and the effect of each shade is diminished. Eventually, there's no additional effect because previous shades have already absorbed the light to all but a vanishing degree. As more shades won't block more light, more CO2 won't cause significantly more warming.

In fact, there's been more than enough greenhouse gas in the atmosphere to cause much greater warming than actually occurs since long before humans discovered fire.

From a historical perspective, consider the relationship between carbon dioxide emissions and global temperature for the period 1940-1970. As atmospheric CO2 levels steadily increased during this period, global temperatures decreased, giving rise to the 1970s-era scare of an impending ice age. It's also clear that, if there has been a relationship between atmospheric CO2 and global temperature since the 1970s, it's not readily apparent.

And let's not forget the third-rail of global warming debate -- one that Al Gore carefully slid over in his movie -- the actual relationship between carbon dioxide and global temperature.

While alarmists would have us assume that increases in atmospheric CO2 precede and cause increases in global temperature, the scientific data say the exact opposite.

Historical data taken from polar ice core samples indicate that increases in temperature have preceded increases in atmospheric CO2 by several hundred years. Not letting this "inconvenient truth" spoil his movie, Al Gore only describes the relationship between atmospheric CO2 and temperature as "complex."

Indeed, it is. So why let it get in the way of the most subtle yet audacious political power grab of our time. Manzi has taken Gore's bait and is running with it. We'll get to the politics in a moment, but there are a few other points to make about Manzi's presentation of the science.

Manzi writes that, "The most important scientific debate is really aboutÖfeedback effects," by which he refers to the notion that changes in atmospheric CO2 cause a complicated set of feedback effects that supposedly magnify and reduce the greenhouse effect. Manzi specifically mentions that higher atmospheric temperatures melt the polar ice caps, which in turn, supposedly causes more warming, and that more atmospheric CO2 increases plant growth which removes CO2 from the atmosphere, thereby cooling the climate.

The reality, however, is that these feedback loops are hypothetical in nature and no one really understands them, if they exist. No one knows why the Arctic ice caps seem to be receding. Glacial melting is a complex geologic event that seems to have little to do with atmospheric temperatures.

During the warming period from 1880 to 1938, it's estimated that the atmospheric CO2 increased by an estimated 20 parts per million. But from 1938 to 2003 -- a period of essentially no increase in Arctic warming -- the atmospheric CO2 increased another 60 parts per million. It doesn't seem plausible, then, that Arctic temperatures are significantly influenced by atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases.

Global warming worriers can take no comfort from Antarctic data either. Over the last 30 years, atmospheric CO2 increased by about 15 percent, from about 328 parts per million to about 372 parts per million. But the Antarctic temperature trend for that period indicates a slight cooling. This observation contrasts sharply with the relatively steep Antarctic warming observed from 1949 to 1974, which was accompanied by a much more modest increase in greenhouse gas concentrations.

As to trees removing CO2 from the atmosphere, well, some do and some don't.

Researchers from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory recently reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (April 17) that while tropical forests exert a cooling influence on global climate, forests in northern regions, because of their absorption of sunlight, exert a warming influence ó and it's not just a trivial climatic effect.

Based on the researchers' computer modeling, forests above 20 degrees latitude in the Northern Hemisphere ó that is, north of the line of latitude running through Southern Mexico, Saharan Africa, central India and the southernmost Chinese island of Hainan -- will warm surface temperatures in those regions by an estimated 10 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2100.

It would seem that climate jihadists might well start their anti-warming campaigns in the chainsaw isle of their local hardware stores, rather than coming for our SUVs, incandescent light bulbs and thermostats.

Manzi's reading of the political situation is as wrong-headed as his facts and reasoning on the science.

He suggests that conservatives turn global warming alarmism into a political advantage by essentially out-marketing the enviros on the solutions. "Conservatives should propose policies that are appropriately optimistic, science-based and low-costÖ A key political question is there fore which side could more effectively use its position on carbon taxes to peel off 1 percent of the relevant votes from the opposing coalition," he writes.

Why won't putting a happy-face on being the low-cost-provider of planetary apocalypticism work? Because averting planetary disaster is not what global warming alarmism is all about. There are many nefarious agendas driving the global warming controversy, none of them have anything to do with "saving" the planet, and to pretend they don't exist is to truly live in denial.

First, there are the radical left-wing environmentalists whose goal -- through control of energy production and use, and ultimately the economy -- is global socialism. As Greenpeace founder Patrick Moore related in the recent Channel 4 (UK) documentary, entitled "The Great Global Warming Swindle," by the mid-1980s, environmental goals -- e.g., clean air and clean water -- had become so mainstream that activists had to adopt more extreme positions to remain anti-establishment. Then when the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended, many "peace-niks" and left-wing political activists moved over to environmental activism, bringing their "neo-Marxist" political philosophy with them. As Moore puts it, environmentalism became the "new guise for anti-capitalism."

Then there are the Europeans who are responsible for launching global warming alarmism in the first place.

When Margaret Thatcher became UK Prime Minister in 1979, her mandate was to reduce Britain's economic decline. Thatcher wanted to make the UK energy-independent through nuclear power -- she didn't like her country's reliance on coal, which politically empowered the coal miner unions, or oil, which empowered Middle Eastern states.

So Thatcher latched onto her science adviser's notion that man-made emissions of carbon dioxide warmed the planet in a harmful way, thereby providing the perfect political cover for advancing her nuclear power agenda without having to fight the miners or Arab oil states.

She empowered the U.K. Meteorological Office to begin global climate change research, a move that eventually led to the 1988 creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations' group that has come to be the "official" international agency for global warming alarmism.

The Europeans now see global warming as a means of hampering U.S. economic competitiveness through increased energy prices. In a global warming-worried world, it becomes more expensive to use coal, for example. About 52 percent of U.S. electricity is produced by burning coal. France, in contrast, gets 80 percent of its electricity from nuclear power. Guess whose economy takes the hit.

The Europeans also know that environmentalists and trial lawyers will ensure that greenhouse gas emissions regulations are strictly enforced in the U.S. The same cannot be said for Europe.

There is also the gigantic global warming bureaucracy that's been created over the last 20 years. Whereas there used to be only a handful of scientists who called themselves atmospheric scientists, now there are legions of self-proclaimed "climatologists" along with the attendant bureaucracies to support them. U.S. taxpayers alone support this gang to a tune of about $5 billion per year.

Where a zoologist might previously have had difficulty getting a grant to study the mating habits of squirrels, a whole new world of possibilities opens up if the newly minted climato-zoologist asks for funding to study whether changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide are making female squirrels friskier.

Perhaps the most effective of these pro-global warming groups is big business.

The alternative energy industry uses global warming fearmongering to sell subsidized, but still high-priced energy. Wal-Mart wants us to pay $5.99 for inferior but climate-friendly light bulbs, rather than $0.75 for traditional incandescent bulbs. Dupont and other manufacturing giants want Congress to dole out global warming pork for their past, voluntary reductions in greenhouse gases. Goldman Sachs owns part of the climate exchanges on which permits to emit greenhouse gases are to be traded.

Global warming hysteria was just that, until big business climbed aboard the climate railroad. Now with its army of lobbyists in Washington, many businesses see global warming as a lucrative endeavor and they are trying to engineer congressional action for their own limited interests.

And let's not forget Congress and other state and local politicians who, not surprisingly, have adopted the Green veneer of virtue. "Green-ness" has become the new moral high ground that few dare to challenge. Those that do are pilloried as "skeptics" and likened to Holocaust deniers. It's no surprise that so many politicians -- not a courageous lot to start with -- have opted to join the Big Green machine.

All this apparently is lost on Manzi whose penultimate thought is, "But by getting past denial and taking a science-based approach to the issue, a clever candidate could take a principled stand that pays major tactical dividends."

But cleverness will not likely protect our freedoms and wallets from the Greens, Europeans, global bureaucracy, rent-seeking businesses and Congress. These groups need to be sternly faced-down with the scientific and economic realities of global warming.

Right now, conservatives are leading the charge in favor of sound science, and against climate clamoring and profiteering. That should continue to be our "game plan." That is the principled stand. *Steven Milloy publishes JunkScience.com and CSRWatch.com. He is a junk science expert, an advocate of free enterprise and an adjunct scholar at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. He can be reached at* *Letters@canadafreepress.com**.*