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THE HOT BLOG

Wednesday, October 08, 2008

Man of Science [\[Edward John Craig\]](#)

Roy Spencer interviewed in the *Houston Chronicle* after a talk at Texas Public Policy (thanks, Drew, for the heads-up). An excerpt:

For you is there any observation that would make you believe humans are causing the planet to warm significantly? In order to have a smoking gun we would have to have about 50 years of really accurate satellite temperature data. It's even questionable whether the satellite data we have from the last seven years, which are our best, are good enough. But I think 50 years of satellite measurements would do it. But we don't have it.

The global temperature trend since the year 2000 has been relatively flat. Have you seen any change in climate scientists' point of view as a result? Does this cause them consternation? Not that I know of. I think too much is being made of that. I don't use that, or see that as any evidence that global warming has stopped. Because if you just look at the last 30 years we've had periods of no temperature increase for 7 or 8 years. That's because of natural climate variability on top of the global warming signal, whatever the global warming signal is due to. So I don't point to that. . . .

In *Science*, in 2005, you, John Christy and others admitted there was a correction needed in some of your data. Has that actually been incorporated into your temperature data? Yes. I can't believe this keeps coming up. We made the corrections. It's a non-issue although it's one the BBC, I think it was two weekends ago, they had a special and they interviewed skeptics. It was a hit piece. I remember them interviewing me for two hours, and they kept asking me about this whole satellite data thing and basically what they wanted me to do was admit on camera that I made a mistake. Which I did, and we corrected it. That's science. But that's all the BBC showed from the interview.

You've argued that temperature doesn't necessarily move in lock step with carbon dioxide emissions. But it's still not a good idea to emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide were 270 parts per million in the atmosphere. We're now at 385 or 390 ppm. Big greenhouses run CO₂ at 1,000 ppm. I think the assumption that CO₂ is necessarily bad is a philosophical assumption, not a scientific statement. Nature has picked a certain balance, but I don't see it as preordained, or necessarily the best balance. If you talk to some plant physiologists they make it sound like life on Earth is actually starved for CO₂. I think that is a position that ought to be impassionately considering, rather than automatically assuming that putting more CO₂ into the atmosphere is bad because that is not a scientific statement.

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