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2014: Year of Futility in the Fight Against Climate Change

By Steve Goreham

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The year 2014 was another year of futility in the fight against climate change. Climatists redoubled efforts to convince citizens that urgent action is needed to stop dangerous global warming. But the gap between public warnings and actual events produced an endless stream of climate irony.

January began with a frosty bang as an arctic air mass descended on the central United States, following a similar event in December. What was once called a cold snap is now ominously christened a “polar vortex.” Record-low daily temperatures were recorded from Minnesota to Boston, along with all-time seasonal snowfalls in many cities.

In a White House video [released](#) on January 8, John Holdren, chief science advisor to President Obama, made the paradoxical statement, “But a growing body of evidence suggests that the kind of extreme cold being experienced by much of the United States as we speak is a pattern that we can expect to see with increasing frequency as global warming continues.”

Also in January, passengers of the research ship Akademik Shokalskiy were [rescued](#) after the ship was locked in ice for 10 days near the antarctic coast. The expedition lead by professor Chris Turney had intended to study how weather patterns near Antarctica were changing due to man-made global warming.

On February 16, during a presentation in Indonesia, Secretary of State John Kerry [stated](#) that

climate change was “perhaps the world’s most fearsome weapon of mass destruction.” Only two days later, protestors set fire to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, leading to the resignation of President Viktor Yanukovich. In March, Russia seized the Crimea. In July, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down over eastern Ukraine, and political unrest continues today. In the Middle East, slaughter of innocent civilians and beheading of western captives became a growing trend. Man-made climate casualties seem remarkably scarce in comparison.

In March, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the United Nations [released](#) *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*, part of its Fifth Assessment Report. The report said that man-made climate change would reduce world agricultural output. Lead author Dr. Mark Howden [stated](#), “There’s increasing evidence that climate change is also impacting on agriculture, particularly on some of the cereal crops such as wheat and maize. The negative impacts are greater and quicker than we previously thought.”

Meanwhile, farmers continued to ignore the warnings of the IPCC. [According](#) to the US Department of Agriculture, world agricultural production set all-time records for all three major cereal crops in 2014, with rice output up 1.1 percent, wheat up 11.2 percent, and corn up a whopping 14.0 percent over 2013.

The Obama administration continued its attack on coal-fired power plants, which provide about 40 percent of US electricity. In June, the EPA [proposed](#) new restrictions on carbon emissions that would make it virtually impossible to build a new coal-fired plant in the US. At the same time, more than 1,200 new coal-fired plants are [planned](#) across the world, with two-thirds to be built in India and China.

In his 2007 Noble Prize acceptance speech, former Vice President Al Gore [warned](#) that the arctic ice could be gone in “as little as seven years.” But arctic sea ice rebounded in 2014 and antarctic sea ice has been growing for decades. According to the University of Illinois, satellites [measured](#) global sea ice area at above the 30-year average at the end of 2014.

In September, the United Nations held a climate summit in New York City to urge the world to conserve energy and reduce emissions. Spokesman Leonardo DiCaprio [stated](#), “This disaster has grown beyond the choices that individuals make.” Mr. DiCaprio neglected to mention his frequent flights on carbon-emitting private jets or his ownership of the world’s fifth largest yacht, purchased from a Middle East oil tycoon.

In October, climate skeptics [reported](#) the eighteenth straight year of flat global temperatures. Satellite data shows no temperature increase since 1997. The “pause” in global warming is now old enough to vote or to serve in the military.

Hurricanes and tornados are favored events for generating alarming climate headlines, but US weather events were few in 2014. US tornadic [activity](#) was below average and the lack of strong hurricanes continued. No Category 3 or stronger hurricane has made US landfall for more than eight years, the longest [period](#) since records began in 1900.

The last half of 2014 witnessed a steep drop in world petroleum prices from over \$100 per barrel to under \$60 per barrel. Hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, technologies perfected by US geologists and petroleum engineers over the last two decades, produced an explosion in US oil production and triggered the fall in world prices.

But the concurrent drop in US gasoline prices to two dollars per gallon is not welcomed by man-made global warming believers. Former Energy Secretary Stephen Chu [said](#) in 2008, “So we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe.” English journalist George Monbiot has [lamented](#), “We were wrong about peak oil: there’s enough in the ground to deep-fry the planet.”

With all the climate fun in 2014, what will 2015 hold?

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