



Written by on February 10, 2010

Blizzards Caused by Global “Warming”?

According to *Time* magazine’s very latest wisdom, the epochal blizzards that have hit the Northeast this winter are a likely consequence of global warming.

Really? As I write these words, blizzard number two rages unabated outside, with bitter cold (12 degrees at last check) combining with wind and heavy snow to deposit (so far) at least nine inches of new white stuff on top of the nearly two feet visited on my zip code by last weekend’s blast. And these figures, coming from west-central Pennsylvania, are benign in comparison to the two to three feet of snow visited on portions of Maryland and the Philadelphia and D.C. metropolitan areas last weekend. At the moment, we in the Alleghenies are cut off (by interstate highway closures and general paralysis) from points east, but all indications are that this blizzard is striking already hard-pressed Philadelphia and Washington with strength comparable to the first blizzard. The First Great Blizzard of 2010 set all kinds of snowfall records, including in the D.C. area; one can only wonder what the record books will tell us about the second.



And it hasn’t just been the snow. In the wake of the first great storm, temperatures plunged into the single digits for several nights in a row, ascending (in the bright sun) into the upper teens or low twenties by day. In short, if this is global warming, I’d hate to see what global cooling might entail!

Yet *Time* hasn’t missed a beat in its latest contribution to what must be regarded as one of the most persistent mistaken orthodoxies in the history of science and politics. “There is some evidence that climate change could in fact make such massive snowstorms more common, even as the world continues to warm,” writes *Time*’s Bryan Walsh — even as the snow continues to fall. “As the meteorologist Jeff Masters points out in his excellent blog at Weather Underground, the two major storms that hit Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., this winter — in December and during the first weekend of February — are already among the 10 heaviest snowfalls those cities have ever recorded. The chance of that happening in the same winter is incredibly unlikely.”

Oh, so? What if the climate were in a cooling cycle? Or were the people who experienced the Little Ice Age a few hundred years ago (or the Big Ice Age a few millennia back, for that matter!) merely being vexed by persistent flurries? What, in point of fact, produced those massive glaciers that overwhelmed



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the northern portions of what is now the continental United States and all of Canada, if not snow, and lots of it? While it is true that warmer temperatures can produce heavier snow — as anyone who lives within range of lake-effect snow, which mostly falls before the Great Lakes freeze over or become too cold to generate the condensation responsible for heavy snow, can attest — we have been seeing both heavier snow and colder temperatures, both in the United States and in Europe, and not merely this winter, but for a number of winters running.

Ah, but weather and climate are two different things, insist the global warming gurus. “It’s a mistake to use any one storm — or even a season’s worth of storms — to disprove climate change (or to prove it; some environmentalists have wrongly tied the lack of snow in Vancouver, the site of the Winter Olympic Games, which begin this month, to global warming),” Walsh reminds his readers, in that infuriating way that global warming pseudoscience has of avoiding falsifiability. “Weather is what will happen next weekend; climate is what will happen over the next decades and centuries.”

In other words, weather really isn’t a reliable indicator of long-term climate trends — but that isn’t going to stop Walsh and his ilk from making sweeping predictions and (which is much more important) insisting upon sweeping policy changes just in case they turn out to be right one of these millennia.

In one positive development, meanwhile, the Federal Government has been shut down the entire week, and is likely to be shuttered at least one more day as D.C. struggles to remove more snow than it has ever received in a single week in its entire history.

President Obama, probably dismayed by the capacity of Mother Nature to hold even the apparatus of the state in abeyance, called the storms “Snowmageddon.” In a similar vein, the ancient Norse — drawing, perhaps, on some racial memory of climate change in the prehistoric past — insisted in their eschatology that the end of the world (Ragnarok, marked by warring among gods and men and great natural disasters) would be preceded by three great winters or “fimbulwinters.” The attribution of such forces of nature to divine wrath, while not scientific, at least has an internal logic that the doctrine of global warming — driven more by ideology than by level-headed science — lacks absolutely.



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