



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 1, 2015

## Climate Change: Is a Deadly Ice Age on the Horizon?

The last ice age ended approximately 12,000 years ago, and since then we've been enjoying a pleasantly warm "interglacial period." But given that an interglacial may last only 12,000 years, we're confronted with a scary prospect: Another ice age may be nigh.

And this could have devastating effects on mankind.

So says atmospheric and space physics expert S. Fred Singer, professor emeritus at the University of Virginia and a founding director of the Science & Environmental Policy Project. While he has never been worried about global warming — emphasizing that climate alarmists' predictions have been consistently wrong — he [writes](#) at *American Thinker* today that he has "recently become quite concerned about ice ages and the dangers they pose to humans on our planet — and indeed to most of terrestrial ecology." In fact, he's so concerned that he proposes we try to mitigate any cooling that may occur.



Professor Singer cites a manuscript written by a co-author of his, Dennis Avery, which documents the historic causes of civilizational collapse. Its conclusion, Singer reports, is that "cold periods and droughts appear to be the main dangers to agriculturally based societies in all regions of the world." Of course, this is just common sense. Plants don't grow very well in deserts or during Northeast winters.

But what if it were winter year 'round? The effects would be striking. As Singer tells us, there have been nearly 20 major glaciations "in the past two to three million years. The coolings are quite severe: the most recent one, ending only about 12,000 years ago, covered much of North America and Europe with miles-thick continental ice sheets and led to the disappearance of (barely) surviving bands of Neanderthals; they were displaced by the more adaptable Homo Sapiens."

While Singer says that most experts believe the next glacial period lies just on the horizon, the exact timing is unknown; one scientist claims it may be delayed by another 40,000 years. It's more than just major ice ages that imperil us, however. As Singer also informs, "There are two kinds of ice ages; they are fundamentally different...: (i) Major (Milankovich-style) glaciations occur on a 100,000-year time-scale and are controlled astronomically. (ii) "Little" ice ages were discovered in ice cores; they have been occurring on an approx. 1000-1500-yr cycle and are likely controlled by the Sun. The current cycle's cooling phase may be imminent."



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And while such a period may be called “little,” its effects are anything but. Describing the consequences of the last such age, occurring between 1400 and 1830 A.D., Singer writes, “The Norse settlements were abandoned; indeed, Scandinavia was hardest hit. Climatology pioneer Hubert Lamb documents crop failures, starvation, and disease in Europe, together with ice fairs on the frozen Thames.”

Further illustrating the dangers of global cooling, some researchers believe that an earlier period of cold and dry weather might have contributed to one of history’s major events: the Western Roman Empire’s fall. As the *Daily Need* [wrote](#) in 2011 citing a study published in the journal *Science*, “Climate variability, with other factors, brought about a period of agricultural instability that affected both the Romans and militant migrant populations to the northeast — the ‘barbarians.’ These migrants then fought their way south, toward the warmer Mediterranean weather — and toward an already weakened Rome.”

And while headlines about ~~global warming climate change~~ “global climate disruption” have dominated the news in recent years, predictions of an impending ice age are nothing new. For example, *Pravda* [warned](#) in 2009 that compelling evidence from the field of climate science indicates the Earth is now on the “brink” of returning “to Ice Age conditions for the next 100,000 years.”

This prospect is troubling to Professor Singer, so troubling that he proposes measures to negate severe global cooling, should it become a reality. As he [wrote](#) in May:

An obvious scheme to counter a cooling is to make use of greenhouse (GH) warming. However, carbon dioxide is not the answer: CO<sub>2</sub> is limited in supply and is already saturated — hence additional CO<sub>2</sub> is not very effective. Synthetics, like SF<sub>6</sub>, are too long-lasting and may have risky side-effects. The answer may be water, but in the form of ice crystals; the scheme is easily tested and is transitory — reversible and incurring little risk.

Yet critics might question this prescription. Given that CO<sub>2</sub> levels when dinosaurs reigned were five to 10 times today’s, how could the gas now be “saturated”? Moreover, there’s some question as to whether CO<sub>2</sub> even has a warming effect upon the Earth. As *Principia Scientific International* [reported](#) in 2013, “A recent NASA report throws the space agency into conflict with its climatologists after new NASA measurements prove that carbon dioxide acts as a coolant in Earth’s atmosphere. NASA’s Langley Research Center has collated data proving that ‘greenhouse gases’ actually block up to 95 percent of harmful solar rays from reaching our planet, thus reducing the heating impact of the sun.”

Of course, this doesn’t mean higher CO<sub>2</sub> levels aren’t *correlated* with higher temperatures, but are they a cause? Or an effect? As to this, *Scientific American* [reported](#) in 2007 on research indicating that the last ice age was ended not by an increase in CO<sub>2</sub>, but by warming oceans. The connection is that since cold water more effectively retains the gas, oceans release more CO<sub>2</sub> as their temperature increases. This, mind you, is why soda is best when cold: When warm, it quickly loses its fizz (its CO<sub>2</sub>).

Whatever the case, while the perils of perpetual winter are many, there is little to fear from a warmer world. While the term “greenhouse gases” is meant to evoke fear, it’s important to note that a greenhouse is a structure in which plants grow extraordinarily well precisely because *the temperature and CO<sub>2</sub> levels are high*. Of course, botanists continually pump CO<sub>2</sub> into their greenhouses because, far from being a pollutant, it is “plant food.” Studies have shown that higher levels of the gas increase plant yields upwards of 30 percent across species. This is one reason why the dinosaurs’ age was marked by lush foliage.

This doesn’t mean that radically changing CO<sub>2</sub> levels won’t spell our demise. In fact, astrobiologist Jack



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O'Malley-James [said](#) in 2013 that life on Earth would end because of *declining* CO2 levels, with an ever-hotter sun creating conditions in which the gas will reach low enough concentrations to render plant photosynthesis impossible. Call it the un-Greenhouse Effect.

Fortunately, this prospect lies perhaps a billion years in the future. As for the shorter term, with temperatures having remained stable or actually having decreased for approximately 20 years and warmist predictions chronically wanting, many say that the only man-made aspect of global warming is the data supporting the notion it's occurring. Let's hope we put a freeze on climate-change initiatives before natural forces put a freeze on us.



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