

Ten Thousand Scientists against Global Warming

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Peter Bowbrick

Global warming is happening. It is serious. My granddaughter will probably die from its consequences.

We are doing nothing to deal with it. Putting our household waste into different coloured bins may make us feel virtuous, but has no effect otherwise. Using uneconomic windpower etc again makes us feel virtuous but does not tackle the problem.

We are running out of fossil fuels.

Our economies are a lot more fragile than people think. The Gross National Product of the Soviet Union fell by two thirds over three years. Other countries have had similar falls. Climate change and high fuel costs will trigger of collapses like this in many countries: in countries which buy from us, and in our own countries.

Only scientific research can tackle the problem. What is needed is a coordinated programme designed to

1. Mitigate the problem. Ideally some way of dealing with CO2 would be identified.
2. Reduce emissions for the future. Develop technologies which would reduce our emissions, and the emissions of countries like India and China.

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3. Develop new power sources. Nuclear fusion is the holy grail, but improved efficiency is absolutely necessary. Wind and wave energy need to be made competitive.
4. Develop coping strategies.
 - a. e.g. Agriculture will face major challenges from climate change and from the increased price of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. Today three quarters of our food comes from fossil fuels. Agricultural research takes years. Action has to be taken now so we are not caught unprepared.
 - b. Reduced fuel use to reduce emissions, and because fuel is so scarce that it is astronomically expensive. This may include projects like better insulation, or just producing less junk.

Ten Thousand Scientists

The ten thousand scientists will include agricultural scientists, nuclear physicists, ecologists, engineers, economists, etc. They will work in concert: communication and joint efforts are the key.

Part of the work is gatekeeping – finding out what other people are doing, and seeing if it will work here.

Part is producing the new research.

Part is disseminating it. It is pointless to find the answers if you cannot get people to implement it.

Public or private?

The Ten Thousand Scientists are to be public employees, with good salaries, safe jobs and good career prospects.

The research is essentially long term and much of it is risky. The big payoffs are likely to come from high risk research. This is not the sort of research that the private sector will fund.

The Ten Thousand Scientists will of course work closely with the private sector when it comes to getting their inventions marketed and put into use.