



“ Darfur should outrank Afghanistan or Iraq as a cause for intervention ” Simon Jenkins

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From The Sunday Times

April 29, 2007

Climate change hits Mars

Mars is being hit by rapid climate change and it is happening so fast that the red planet could lose its southern ice cap, *writes Jonathan Leake*.

Scientists from Nasa say that Mars has warmed by about 0.5C since the 1970s. This is similar to the warming experienced on Earth over approximately the same period.

Since there is no known life on Mars it suggests rapid changes in planetary climates could be natural phenomena.

The mechanism at work on Mars appears, however, to be different from that on Earth. One of the researchers, Lori Fenton, believes variations in radiation and temperature across the surface of the Red Planet are generating strong winds.

In a paper published in the journal Nature, she suggests that such winds can stir up giant dust storms, trapping heat and raising the planet's temperature.

Fenton's team unearthed heat maps of the Martian surface from Nasa's Viking mission in the 1970s and compared them with maps gathered more than two decades later by Mars Global Surveyor. They found there had been widespread changes, with some areas becoming darker.

When a surface darkens it absorbs more heat, eventually radiating that heat back to warm the thin Martian atmosphere: lighter surfaces have the opposite effect. The temperature differences between the two are thought to be stirring up more winds, and dust, creating a cycle that is warming the planet.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Contrary to what was said below, CO2 is not triangular. It is linear. Not a biggie in this discussion but my job revolves around such details.

Wally, Tahuya,

I strongly believe that the real reason for the "Larm-Reports" concerning "The Greenhouse-effect" may be the fact that countries like China and India are demanding a greater bite of the "Oil-Cake"Which may be very inconvenient for the other Industrialised Part of the world .Thus we "Ordinary People" must be induced to save fuel for the factories and ,not least for the military supplies! The ice caps on Mars is melting !That can hardly be our fault!-Can it?

K. Lund, Gothenburg Sweden

Kjeld Lund, Gothenburg, Sweden

Too many opinions and not much in the way of genuine evidence in this whole climate change 'industry'. The truth is that a person will believe whatever suits their preconceptions unless they are genuinely willing to change - and that is indeed a rare thing for a creature as arrogant as a human being. Water and CO2 share similar properties in terms of thermal capacities. They are each tri-atomic molecules with similar 'triangular' structures and the same number of degrees of freedom in terms of storing energy quanta. However, there is about 100 times as much water in the atmosphere as there is CO2 so a 1% drop in atmospheric water would have a similar thermal effect to completely removing ALL CO2 from the air, and likewise a 1% increase in atmospheric water would have a similar effect to doubling the CO2 in the atmosphere. Puts it into perspective, huh? Yes there is climate change but be damned if CO2 is doing it.

ben, vic, australia

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Melanie Reid

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