



LSE Public Lecture

Cool It: global warming and getting our priorities straight

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Cool It

*How we should tackle global warming
and do good in the world*

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www.lomborg.com

Two important points

- Need sense of proportion
 - Doomsday is not nigh
 - We don't have to act in desperation
 - If we only hear one – and exaggerated – side, we're unlikely to make good policies
- Many problems
 - Not enough money
 - Prioritization

Global warming

What to do?





1

Global warming is real
and man-made

Climate change is real

- On the agenda, thanks to Al Gore
- The best information from the UN Climate Panel, IPCC
- Likely temperature rise by 2100
 - 2.6°C (4.7°F)
- Total cost of \$15 trillion
 - 0.5% of 21st century \$3,000 trillion
- Need *smart* strategy

2

Consequences vastly exaggerated
Leading to bad judgment

Al Gore and the standard story

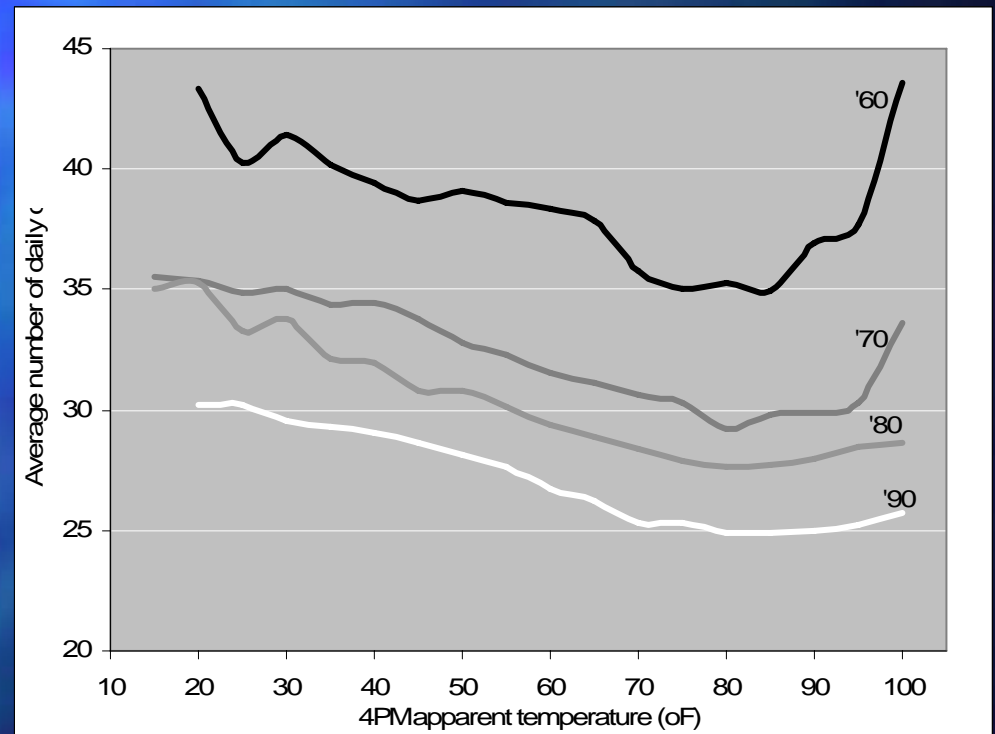
- Gore and many others tell us
 - Planetary emergency
 - “we have just ten years to avert a major catastrophe that could send our entire planet into a tail-spin of epic destruction involving extreme weather, floods, droughts, epidemics and killer heat waves beyond anything we have ever experienced.”
- Four central issues
 - Heat deaths
 - Sea level rise
 - Hurricanes
 - Malaria

1 Higher mortality with heat?

- Heat and cold deaths
 - In the UK
 - 2,000 more heat deaths by 2050
 - But fewer cold deaths
 - 20,000 fewer
 - This also holds true globally
 - Net more than 1.4 million *fewer* deaths by 2050

1 Higher mortality with heat?

- Should we not help people the best possible way?
 - Kyoto?
 - Airconditioning in Philadelphia



2 Sea level rise

- Sea levels will rise
- But not a catastrophe
 - 1 foot (30cm) over the next 100 years
 - Not Al Gores' 20 feet (6 meters)
 - 1 foot the last 150 years
 - Did we worry?

2 Impact of sea level rise

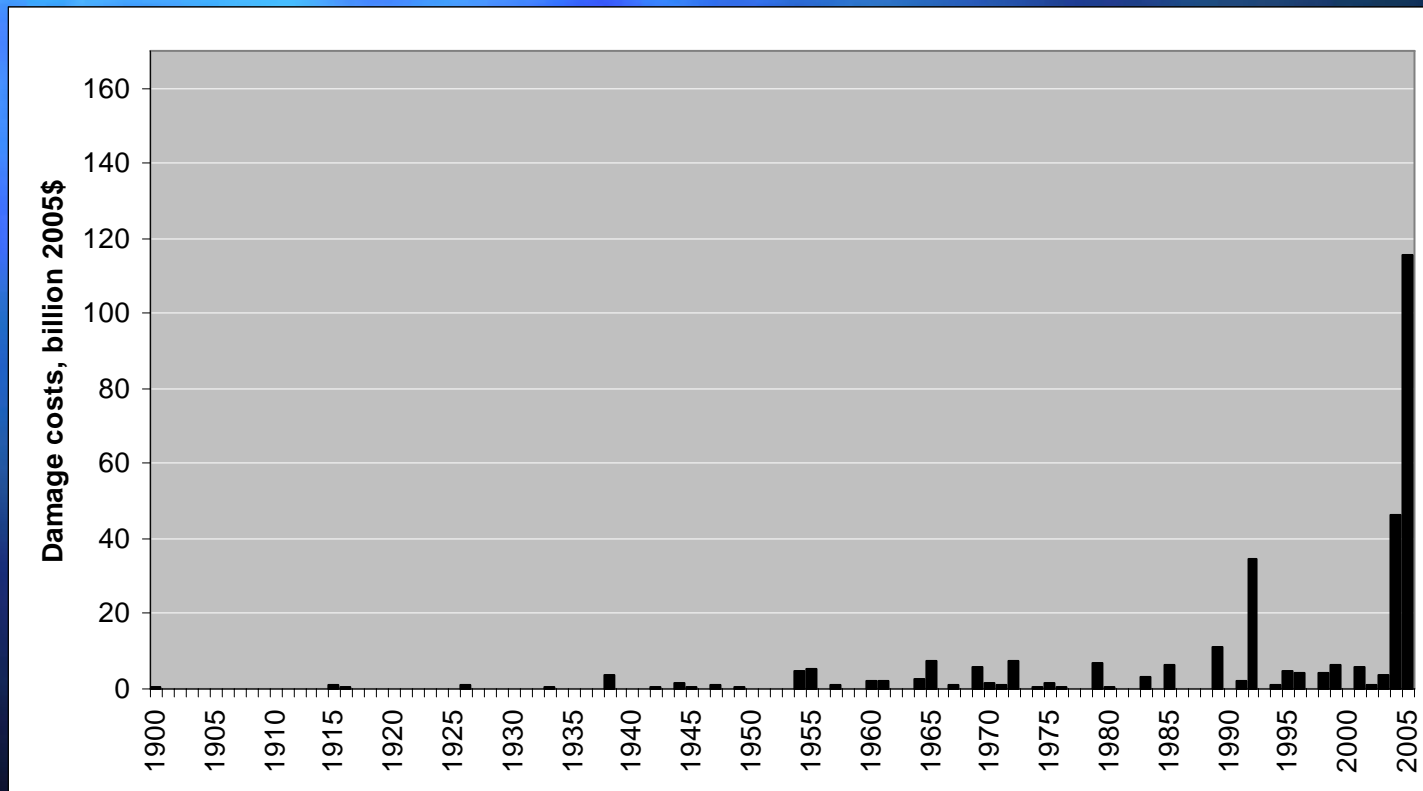
- Getting flooded now
 - 10 million people
- 1 foot sea level rise in 2100 (no change)
 - 100 million people
- 1 foot sea level rise in 2100 (richer)
 - 1 million people

2 Saving the Maldives

- If we just look at 1 foot increase
 - Flood 77% of the Maldives at 121% GDP
 - Yet at 0.04% of GDP they can safeguard everything but 0.0015% of dry land
- At lower emissions
 - Lower sea level rise but also lower wealth
 - About three times more dry land loss

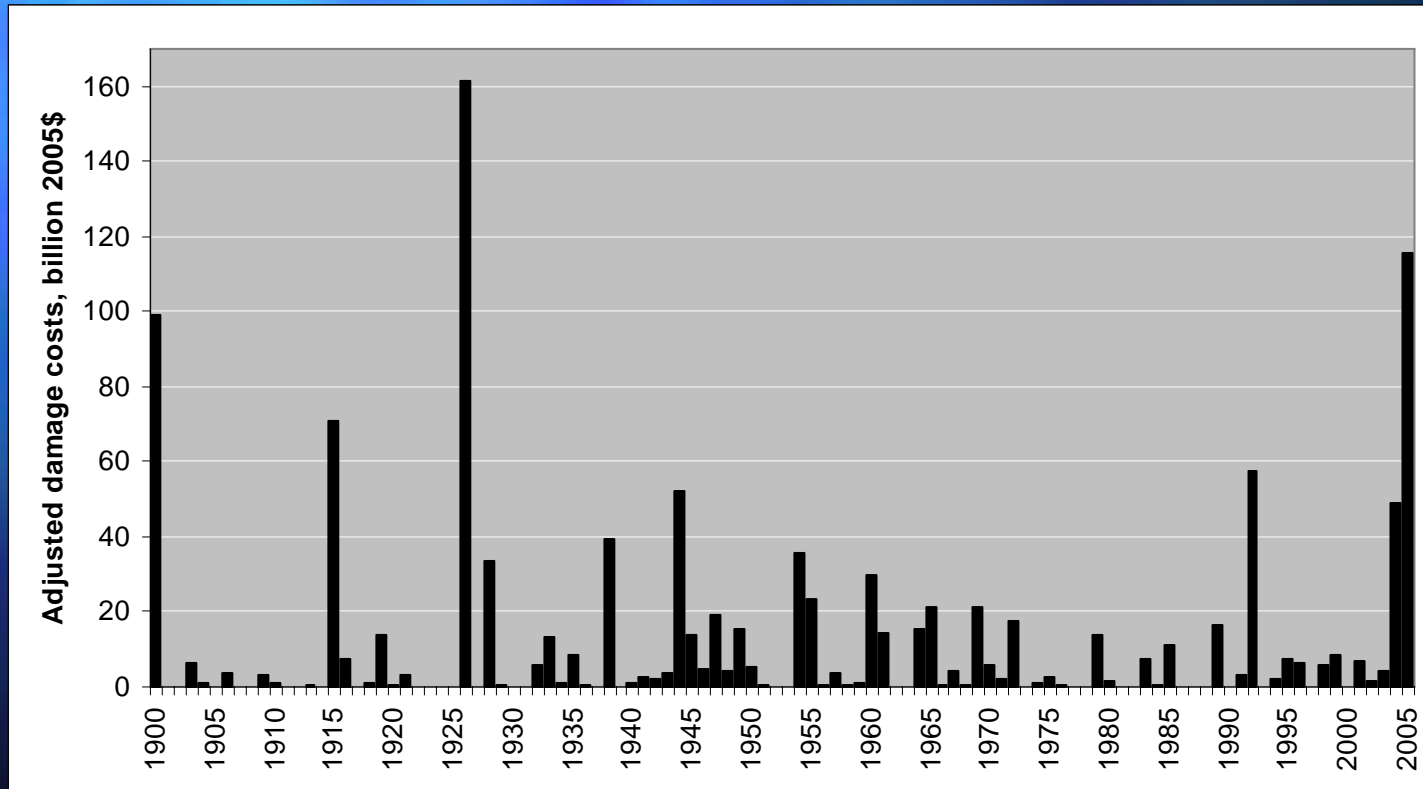
3 Hurricanes: ever costlier in the US

- Damage costs from hurricanes in the US



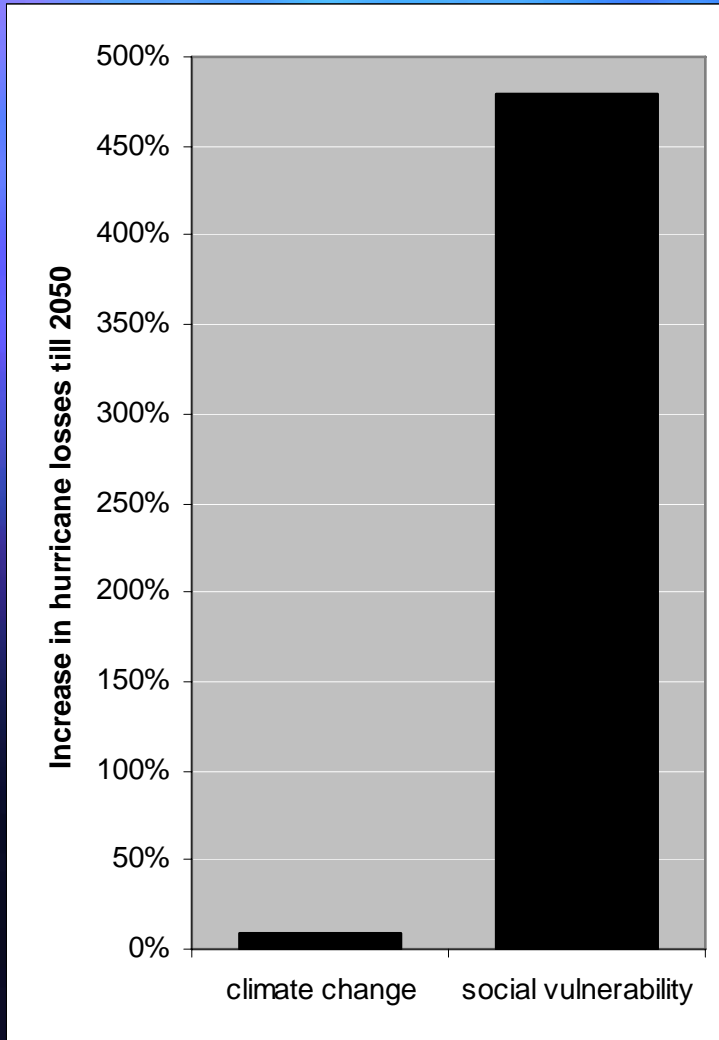
More people with more goods in exposed areas

- Damage costs if all hurricanes had hit the US in 2007



Hurricanes:

Fix climate or social vulnerability



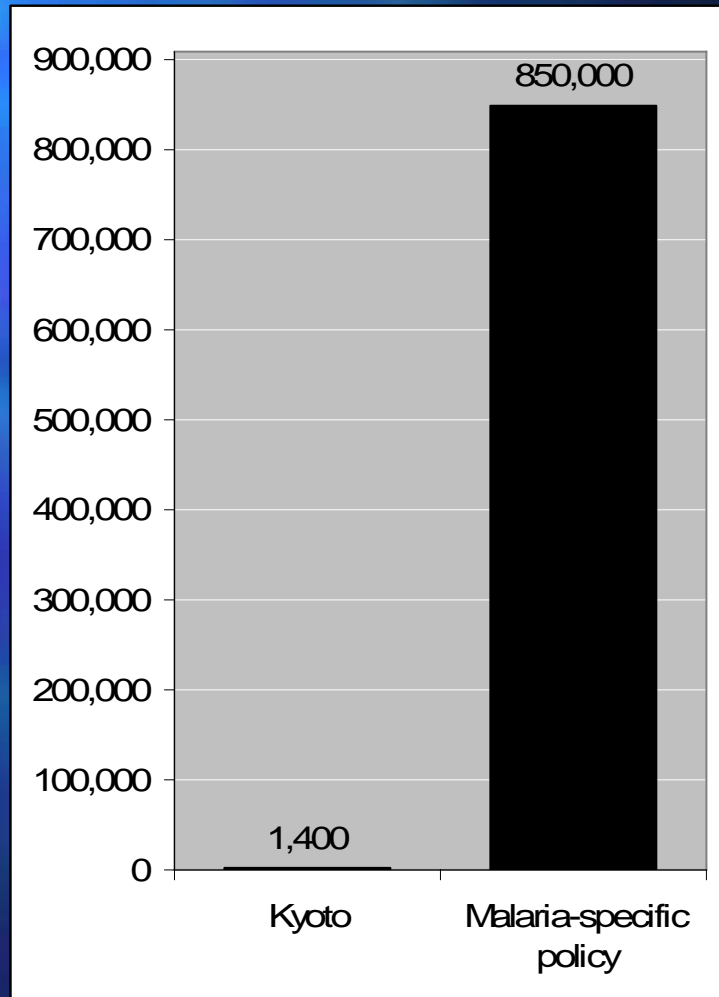
- If we stop climate change
 - Prevent 10% damage increase
- If we end social vulnerability
 - Prevent 480% damage increase
- Which knob should we focus on?

More malaria from heat?

- Malaria is weakly connected to heat
 - But much more dependent on wealth and treatment
 - Malaria endemic in Europe & US in little ice age
 - Even malaria in the Arctic circle
 - 20% malaria in Moscow in the 1940s
 - As we got richer, we dealt with malaria
 - Even as temperatures increased
 - Thus, richer people will not have malaria
 - Is climate the right knob to turn?

Which knob to tackle malaria?

- Deaths avoided per year
 - Kyoto \$180b
 - Malaria \$3b

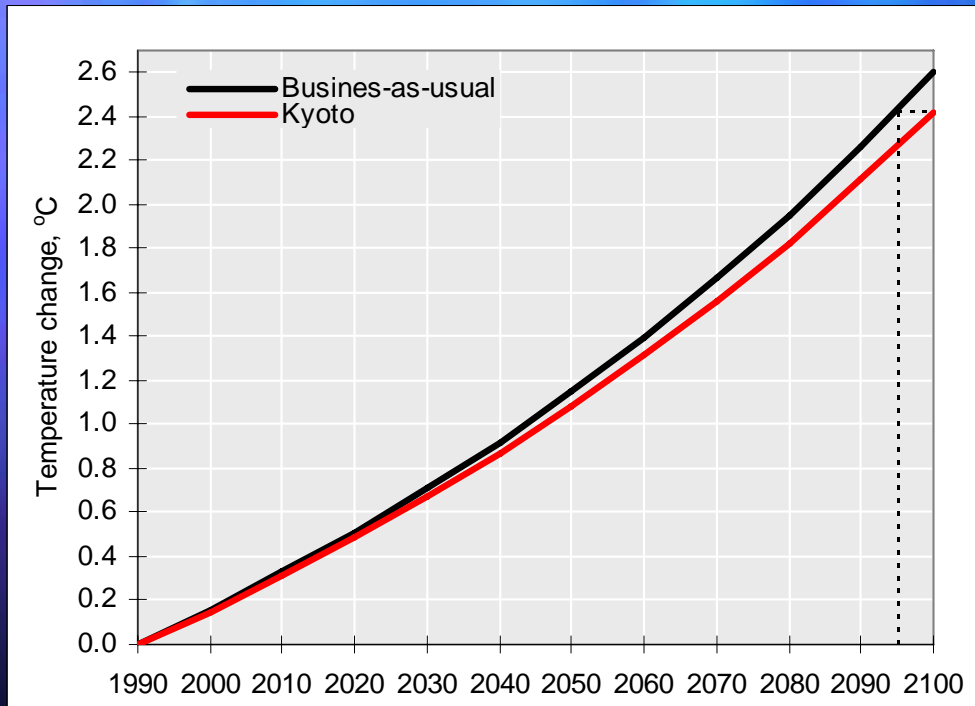


3

Smarter options needed:
Kyoto or EU 20% high cost-no gain

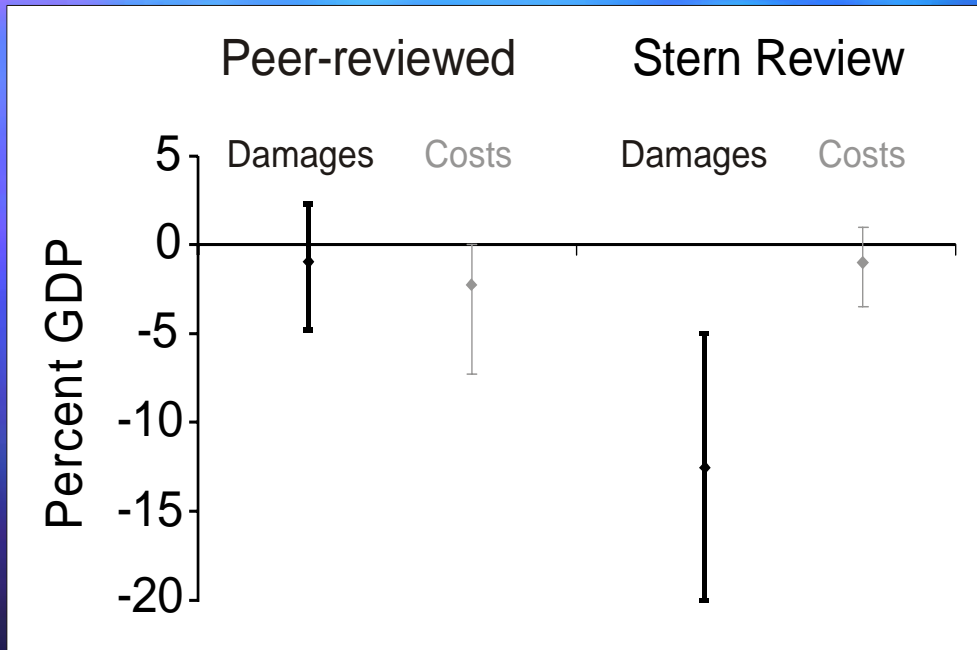
Kyoto:

Postpone warming by 5 years



- Cost of Kyoto
 - \$180 billion per year

All peer reviewed cost-benefit show little effort now



- Only Stern review shows otherwise
 - Easily end up making policies that do more harm than climate change

Lack of smart solutions

- Take polar bears
 - Yes, less Arctic ice means fewer polar bears
 - 1960: about 5,000
 - Now: about 22,000
 - But what can we do?
 - If we implement the Kyoto Protocol
 - Save 1 polar bear each year
 - But each year we shoot polar bears
 - About a 1,000 each year

Smarter way forward

- Cost of cutting CO₂ is \$20/ton
- Benefit of cutting CO₂ is \$2/ton
 - Maybe we need a better way forward?

Smarter way forward

- Long term problem, long term solution
 - Invest 0.05% of GDP in RD&D of non-carbon emitting energy technologies
 - \$25 billion/year – a ten-fold increase
 - Let each country focus on its own future
 - renewables, fission, fusion, conservation, carbon storage
 - Will solve global warming in the medium term

4

Many other problems where we can
do much more good

Gore: our generational mission

- How do we want to be remembered?
 - Spending \$180 billion/year doing virtually no good a hundred years from now? (Kyoto etc.)
- Compare this to
 - For \$75 billion/year the UN estimate we can solve all major basic problems
 - Clean drinking water
 - Sanitation
 - Basic healthcare
 - Education

Copenhagen Consensus

Top economists: Most bang for the buck

Social payback for each dollar

<i>Very good investments</i>	1	Prevent HIV/AIDS	\$40
	2	Micronutrient malnutrition	\$30
	3	Ensure free trade	\$15
	4	Prevent malaria	\$10
<i>Bad investments</i>

	16	Kyoto Protocol	¢30

Summary:

Getting our priorities right

- Global warming is real
- But not top priority
 - Fix global warming in the long run
 - CO₂ tax of \$2/ton
 - Dramatically increased R&D
 - Focus on smart solutions
- Our generational mission?
 - Do a little good at high cost
 - Make a massive difference at half the cost



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