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The 'special report' by the IPCC urging the world to use only renewable energy is pure fantasy

So astounding are the implications of that "special report" published last week by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that the media didn't really know how to handle it. Inevitably, last Monday, the BBC went into overdrive, leading its news bulletins with the story from morning till night. But most newspapers gave it only fairly perfunctory coverage, tucked away on an inside page.

To avert complete climate catastrophe, with wars, famine and disease spreading across the globe, says the IPCC, what it now proposes is nothing less than "unprecedented changes in all aspects of society" - ones that will affect almost every aspect of all our lives. This means, it says, that during the next 30 years we must reduce our CO2 emissions from fossil fuels to "net zero".

We must stop using virtually all the coal, oil and gas on which our modern industrial civilisation has been built. To appreciate the scale of what this would involve, we may recall that, according to the International Energy Agency, the world currently relies on fossil fuels for 81 per cent of all the energy it uses.

As one measure of how far the report is based on wishful thinking, it does allow for very limited amounts of coal and gas still to be used; but only on condition that we find ways to capture their "carbon emissions" to bury them under the ground and to suck vast quantities of CO2 out of the atmosphere, both of these using technologies that, the report itself admits, have not yet been developed.

What we must do to replace those fossil fuels, we are told in a brief paragraph on page 29 of the 33-page report, is spend a mind-boggling \$2.4 trillion (£1.8trillion) every year until 2035 on new "energy infrastructure". This will enable us to draw up to "85 per cent" of our energy from "renewables", such as wind and solar.

These currently supply only three per cent of the world's total energy needs. And, of course, the report does not explain that the only way to keep the lights on when the wind isn't blowing or the sun shining would be to use instantly available backup from the gas that the IPCC wants to see eliminated.

The IPCC fondly imagines that all this would somehow keep the rise in global temperatures to "1.5C (2.7F) above pre-industrial levels". But already the world has warmed by one degree of that amount since the 19th century, in the Modern Warming, which began when we emerged 200 years ago from the Little Ice Age. Until now, the IPCC has recognised

that much of this was due to natural causes. But now, without proper explanation, this is all blamed on human activity.

So how does the IPCC justify its new mega-panic? This was summarised by one of the report's organisers as "more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice". But even the IPCC itself, in its last major report in 2013, found that there had been no discernible increase in extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, floods and extreme heatwaves.

As for the controversial subject of those rising sea levels, as the world-renowned atmospheric physicist Dr Richard Lindzen put it in a lecture in London last week: "Sea level has been increasing at about eight inches per century for hundreds of years, and we have clearly been able to deal with it." As for Arctic sea ice, a graph from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) shows that, contrary to all those computer model predictions that the summer Arctic would soon be ice-free, there has, in fact, been only a comparatively modest decrease in the extent of Arctic sea ice since satellite records began in 1979; and there is evidence that there has been significantly less ice at times in the past.

Back in the real world, much more relevant to how we should view this latest IPCC report, and exactly as they indicated they would do at Paris in 2015, the leading CO₂-emitting countries outside Europe, led by China and India, have continued to build fossil fuel power stations just as if Paris had never happened. However much those behind this report may delude themselves and try to delude the rest of us, the fact is that the rest of the world is no longer being taken in by their make-believe.