

## Reply to the Comment of R.E.T Ward by R.M. Carter

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I thank Robert Ward for writing to me on February 2<sup>nd</sup> this year to point out an error in my 2008 paper, and now for the further interest that he has shown in the substance of the paper by providing a detailed critique. In response to his letter, and after taking the time to check various details of the matter, on May 2<sup>nd</sup> I asked the editors of EAP journal to publish the following erratum:

“ERRATUM. The paper by R.M. Carter, “Knock, knock: where is the evidence for dangerous human-caused global warming?”, was published in 2008 in volume 38 of this journal. The paper contained the following quotation regarding global warming: “unless we announce disasters, no one will listen”, which was attributed to Dr Houghton’s 1994 book “Global Warming: the Complete Briefing”.

No such quotation appears in Dr Houghton’s book, and I therefore withdraw the assertion that it does and apologize to Dr Houghton for my misunderstanding of the issue. The quotation that I had in mind to reflect Dr Houghton’s views, but failed to identify accurately, was published in the U.K. Sunday Telegraph on Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1995 in an article entitled “Sir John Houghton: Me and My God”; it reads “If we want a good environmental policy in the future we’ll have to have a disaster”.

Robert Ward has now provided a more extended critique of my EAP paper, within which I find only one point that necessitates, in turn, further comment from me. That point has regard to the proportion of greenhouse emissions that are of human origin. As Robert Ward asserts, it is indeed true that there is more than one set of such estimates, and one could well have a highly technical discussion about them. But like many other similar discussions that are already available on the web, this would resolve nothing and the ambiguity would remain. The reality is that our quantitative knowledge about the planetary carbon dioxide cycle is limited, and different scientists have different views about which are the best estimates.

To put this matter in proportion, it is helpful to reflect on the estimate of Canadian climatologist Tim Ball that the total human production of carbon dioxide (7.2 Gt C/year; IPCC, 2007) is more than four times less than the combined error (32 Gt) on the estimated carbon dioxide production from all other sources, estimates that range between 192 to 224 Gt/year. The perspective that follows is that even were human emissions to be reduced to zero, the difference would be lost among other uncertainties in the global carbon dioxide budget. What

is presently missing from the public debate, then – and it is not provided by computer model outputs, either – is an appreciation of both the small scale (in context) of human emissions, and the range of uncertainty in the global carbon dioxide budget.

Regarding the other points made by Robert Ward, and his extended discussion of some, his critique comprises a reiterative and heavily IPCC-centric view of a potpourri of matters that have already been hashed and re-hashed in many previous articles, blogs and papers. The arguments he raises are weary ones, and have been put to bed by qualified, independent scientists many times.

In addition, Robert Ward seems to have no comprehension that the IPCC has never been an acceptable authority to quote for a dispassionate ruling on matters of global warming, not least because its founding principles require it to investigate only the effects of human greenhouse gas emissions on warming, rather than attempt a balanced treatment of all aspects of climate change. Now, post-Climategate - and noting other contingent developments, such as the revelation by Canadian Donna Laframboise that of the 18,531 references cited in IPCC's 2007 Assessment Report, no less than 5,587 (30%) refer to student theses, newspaper articles and green activist propaganda leaflets, reports and press releases, i.e. represent "grey", and in most cases very light grey, literature - the IPCC quite simply represents damaged goods that are beyond repair.

In my eyes nothing would be gained by rehashing again the matters that Robert Ward raises. With the Houghton error corrected, my EAP review stands as my independent assessment of the situation. Aside from the brief comments made above, I do not think that reiterating what I have already said before in this journal would add much to the debate. Robert Ward's comments are therefore best treated as representing his own assessment of the potential dangers of human-caused global warming. Interested readers can, of course, contemplate and compare the contrasting conclusions that we draw in our two different essays.