

Gore and the Mayan Civilization collapse - 'Gore is advocating Abandoning IPCC'

By Richard Mackey

"The following appeared on Gore's website of Nov 19, 2008: "[Looking Back to Look Forward](#)" A new study suggests the Mayan civilization might have collapsed due to environmental disasters:

"These models suggest that as ecosystems were destroyed by mismanagement or were transformed by global climatic shifts, the depletion of agricultural and wild foods eventually contributed to the failure of the Maya sociopolitical system,' writes environmental archaeologist Kitty Emery of the Florida Museum of Natural History in the current Human Ecology journal."

As we move towards solving the climate crisis, we need to remember the consequences to civilizations that refused to take environmental concerns seriously. If you haven't read already read it, take a look at Jared Diamond's book, Collapse."

This is a most curious reference.

It means that Gore is advocating the abandonment of the IPCC doctrine and barracking for the study and understanding of climate dynamics that ignores totally the IPCC/AWG doctrine and focuses on all the other variables, especially how climate dynamics are driven by atmospheric/oceanic oscillations, the natural internal dynamics of the climate system and the role of the Sun in climate dynamics.

Brian Fagan in *Floods, Famines and Emperors* El Nino and the fate of civilisations Basic Books 1999, shows that the Maya collapse, whilst having complex political, sociological, technological and ecological factors, was largely driven by the natural atmospheric/oceanic oscillations of ENSO and NAO.

The book is one of three by Brian Fagan, Prof of Anthropology UC Santa Barbara, that documents how natural climate variations, ultimately driven by solar activity, have given rise to the catastrophic collapse of civilisations. The book has a chapter on the Mayan civilisation which collapsed around 800 to 900 AD.

Here are some quotes from his book:

"The "Classic Maya collapse" is one of the great controversies of archaeology, but there is little doubt that droughts, fuelled in part by El Nino, played an important role."

"The droughts that afflicted the Maya in the eighth and ninth centuries resulted from complex, still little understood atmosphere- ocean interactions, including El Nino events and major decadal shifts in the North Atlantic Oscillation, as well as two or three decade-long variations in rainfall over many centuries."

“Why did the Maya civilisation suddenly come apart? Everyone who studies the Classic Maya collapse agrees that it was brought on by a combination of ecological, political, and sociological factors.”

“When the great droughts of the eighth and ninth centuries came, Maya civilisation everywhere was under increasing stress.” “The drought was the final straw.”

“The collapse did not come without turmoil and war.” Brian Fagan describes how the ruling class (the kings had divine powers, they were also shamans and there was a vast aristocracy and their fellow-travellers that the tightly regulated workers toiled to maintain) encouraged population growth beyond what the land could carry; how the rulers enforced rigid farming practices which were supposed to increase food production and the ruler’s incomes but had the effect of undermining farm productivity and diminishing the quality of the poor soils of the area. When there were heavy rains the soil was washed away. In times of drought the soil blew away.

More quotes from Brian Fagan:

“The Maya collapse is a cautionary tale in the dangers of using technology and people power to expand the carrying capacity of tropical environments.”

“Atmospheric circulation changes far from the Maya homeland delivered the coup de grace to rulers no longer able to control their own destinies because they had exhausted their environmental options in an endless quest for power and prestige.”

Gore says that we should use our understanding of the Maya collapse help us solve the climate crisis, noting that “we need to remember the consequences to civilizations that refused to take environmental concerns seriously”.

Given what we know of the Maya collapse, what is Gore really saying?

He is saying that we should take all the IPCC/AWG publications and related papers to the tip and bury them there and put all our efforts into the study and understanding of the reasons for climate dynamics that address every theory except that of IPCC/AWG doctrine.

Specifically, we should understand as well as we can how climate dynamics are driven by atmospheric/oceanic oscillations, the natural internal dynamics of the climate system and the role of the Sun in climate dynamics.

In an overview of his work Brian Fagan concluded: "The whole course of civilisation ... may be seen as a process of trading up on the scale of vulnerability". (Fagan (2004, page xv)).

We are now, as a global community, very high up on that scale.

Allow me to quote a little from my Rhodes Fairbridge paper because of its relevance to Brian Fagan's work and what Gore is really trying to say, but can't quite find the right words. (My paper is [here](#)).

"In his many publications (for example, NORTH (2005)), Douglass North stresses that if the issues with which we are concerned, such as global warming and the global commons, belong in a world of continuous change (that is, a non-ergodic world), then we face a set of problems that become exceedingly complex. North stresses that our capacity to deal effectively with uncertainty is essential to our succeeding in a non-ergodic world. History shows that regional effects of climate change are highly variable and that the pattern of change is highly variable. An extremely cold (or hot) year can be followed by extremely hot (or cold) year.

Warming and cooling will be beneficial for some regions and catastrophic for others. Brian Fagan has documented in detail relationships between the large-scale and generally periodic changes in climate and the rise and fall of civilisations, cultures and societies since the dawn of history. The thesis to which Rhodes Fairbridge devoted much of his life is that the sun, through its relationships with the solar system, is largely responsible for these changes and that we are now on the cusp of one of the major changes that feature in the planet's history. As Douglass North showed, the main responsibility of governments in managing the impact of the potentially catastrophic events that arise in a non-ergodic world is to manage society's response to them so as to enable the society to adapt as efficiently as possible to them.

Amongst other things, this would mean being better able to anticipate and manage our response to climate change, to minimize suffering and maximize benefits and the efficiency of our adaptation to a climate that is ever-changing - sometimes catastrophically - but generally predictable within bounds of uncertainty that statisticians can estimate. At the very least, this requires that the scientific community acts on the wise counsel of Rhodes W. Fairbridge and presents governments with advice that has regard to the entire field of planetary-lunar-solar dynamics, including gravitational dynamics. This field has to be understood so that the dynamics of terrestrial climate can be understood."

References:

North, D. C., 2005. Understanding the Process of Economic Change Princeton University Press.

Fagan, B., 2004. The Long Summer. How Climate Changed Civilization. Basic Books."