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## Politics in debate on climate change

DES MOORE

**T**he visit by Family First Senator Fielding to New York to attend the third conference on climate change by the Heartland Institute, and to speak to White House staff with whom he left graphs and tables, has attracted much attention.

Given the importance of his vote on the Government's legislation to control emissions of carbon dioxide, he was invited on to the ABC's *Insiders* program last Sunday.

In this interview Fielding was asked why he did not accept "the conclusion of the United Nations panel, representing thousands of scientists [who had] studied the issue for years, and concluded that man-made carbon emissions are the major cause of global warming".

Fielding gave two responses.

He indicated, first, that he was told that in the States "there's thousands of scientists that have a different view".

And, second, he said that he had been presented with "information that showed that over the last decade or so carbon emissions have been going up, but global temperature hasn't".

Fielding has exposed the Government's failure to hold an independent inquiry into the science used in Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports. Although those reports were based on contributions from about 800 scientists, that does not make them indisputable.

There is a long history of similar claims of climatic change/environmental threats by scientists that have turned out to be totally false.

As Fielding said, there are more-over many expert scientists (and others) who reject the IPCC science but have been ignored by the Government and, overseas, by the United Nations too.

The Senator could also have added that an examination of the history of temperature changes indicates that, over the 158 years for which instrumental records have been kept in Britain, there were 117 years in which the global average temperature was either stable or falling and only 41 years in which it was increasing.

That is, it is not simply the last decade in which temperatures failed to increase.

That also happened during the industrialisation period from 1850-1920 and again from 1940 to 1976.

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That moral integrity will make his new job easier. No one needs to waste time going through Faulkner's pecuniary declarations looking for missing trips to China or gifts from insurance companies. And although it was the Sussex Street Right that always had the reputation as military history buffs, Faulkner developed his own extensive understanding of strategic affairs. The former veterans' affairs and defence personnel minis-

ter won't be starting from scratch. Neither will Greg Combet, who will fit comfortably into the seat as Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science Minister – while ridiculously attempting to balance this with his duties as the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, Penny Wong. This spectacle makes an utter farce of the reshuffle's pretensions to good governance. Combet is capable – that's not the issue – but really! Exactly why is it desirable to spread his skills? Obviously Rudd must believe Wong desperately needs someone competent to help her out; otherwise, he would allow her to handle the issue by herself. If Rudd is serious about a double dissolution on climate change, he'll need to sort out that portfolio quickly as well.

■ Nicholas Stuart is a Canberra writer. nicstuart@hotmail.com

## Russia's grumpy mood

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"politically unreliable" people in the newly conquered territories. (Twenty thousand Polish officers who had surrendered to the Russians were murdered in Katyn forest to decapitate any resistance movement.) So it's not surprising that some people in the Baltic states welcomed German troops as liberators in 1941, and that very few people anywhere in Eastern Europe saw Red Army troops as liberators when they came back in 1944. This has always infuriated the Russians, who see the Red Army as heroes and liberators.

Kovalev's article blaming the Poles for the war was bound to appeal to Russian patriots just as much as it would apall Poles, Estonians and all the other Eastern Europeans who had to live for decades under the Soviet yoke.

The Polish ambassador in Moscow protested and Kovalev's article has now been removed from the Ministry of Defence's website, but the broader trend in Russia is clearly to rewrite history in ways that rehabilitate the Soviet past. Indeed, last month

Russian President Dmitri Medvedev ordered the creation of the Commission to Counteract the Falsification of History to the Detriment of Russian Interests.

That sounds slightly less weird in Russian, but not much. And there's now legislation before the Duma (parliament) that would outlaw any portrayal of the Red Army as invaders, even on the territory of former Soviet republics. Of course, Russia could not enforce that legislation without invading (sorry, liberating) them again, so it has little practical effect, but it is indicative of the mood in the country.

Russia isn't planning to invade anybody, but it is feeling spectacularly touchy and grumpy at the moment. So far Medvedev (and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin) are managing to ride the tiger, but if they fall off they could be eaten up in a flash.

■ Gwynne Dyer's new book, *Climate Wars*, was published recently in Australia by Scribe.

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That is, it is not simply the last decade in which temperatures failed to increase.

That also happened during the industrialisation period from 1850-1920 and again from 1940 to 1976.

Yet the thesis that humanity faces the threat of dangerously rising temperatures is based on the view that increasing temperatures will occur in line with increases in emissions of greenhouse gases.

But such emissions did increase over the whole of this period.

So why didn't temperatures also rise at the same time?

It is impossible to have any confidence in the need for a policy of reducing emissions on the basis of this analysis.

Some believers in the IPCC analysis provide possible explanations of the failure of temperatures to increase over the period since industrialisation started.

They suggest this may reflect influences that interrupted the forces of radiation, such as aerosols in the sky blocking the rays.

But such explanations do not stand up once it is realised that temperatures were also higher than now in the Medieval Warm period from about 800-1100 AD and the Greco-Roman Warm Period (250 to 0 BC).

These earlier warm periods were, in fact, recognised by the IPCC in its first and second reports but were omitted in the third report because of the prominence given to another thesis.

However, when that thesis was proved incorrect, and dropped from the next IPCC report, the earlier warming periods were not restored.

These and other changes in the science used by the IPCC reinforce Senator Fielding's case for an independent inquiry.

They also highlight the fact that IPCC reports are not pure science: political beliefs have influenced their conclusions too.

■ Des Moore is director of the Institute for Private Enterprise