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AND FINALLY: RUSSIAN SCIENTIST SAYS CO2 NOT TO BLAME FOR GLOBAL WARMING

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ST. PETERSBURG, January 15 (RIA Novosti) - Rising levels of carbon dioxide and other gases emitted through human activity, generally believed to trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere, are an effect rather than the cause of global warming, a prominent Russian scientist said Monday.

Habibullo Abdusamatov, head of the space research laboratory at the St. Petersburg-based Pulkovo Observatory, said global warming stems from an increase in the sun's activity. His view contradicts the international scientific consensus that climate change is attributable to the emission of greenhouse gases generated by industrial activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.

"Global warming results not from the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, but from an unusually high level of solar radiation and a lengthy - almost throughout the last century - growth in its intensity," Abdusamatov told RIA Novosti in an interview.

"It is no secret that when they go up, temperatures in the world's oceans trigger the emission of large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. So the common view that man's industrial activity is a deciding factor in global warming has emerged from a misinterpretation of cause and effect relations."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a UN panel of thousands of international scientists, widely regarded as an authority on climate change issues, has for many years held a consensus view that most of the warming experienced over the last half-century has been attributable to human activities.

Abdusamatov, a doctor of mathematics and physics, is one of a small number of scientists around the world who continue to contest the view of the IPCC, the national science academies of the G8 nations, and other prominent scientific bodies.

He said an examination of ice cores from wells over three kilometers (1.5 miles) deep in Greenland and the Antarctic indicates that the Earth experienced periods of global warming even before the industrial age.

Abdusamatov even disputed the plausibility of the greenhouse effect, claiming it fails to take into account the effective transmission of heat to the outer layers of atmosphere.

Scientists have known about the greenhouse effect since the 19th century. The phenomenon by which gases such as methane and CO2 warm the troposphere by absorbing some of the infra-red heat reflected by the earth's surface has the effect of a global thermostat, sustaining global temperatures within ranges that allow life on the planet to thrive.

However, Abdusamatov insisted: "Ascribing 'greenhouse' effect properties to the Earth's atmosphere is not scientifically substantiated. Heated greenhouse gases, which become lighter as a result of expansion, ascend to the atmosphere only to give the absorbed heat away."

The upper layers of the world's oceans are - much to climatologists' surprise - becoming cooler, which is a clear indication that the Earth has hit its temperature ceiling already, and that solar radiation levels are falling and will eventually lead to a worldwide cold spell, Abdusamatov said.

"Instead of professed global warming, the Earth will be facing a slow decrease in temperatures in 2012-2015. The gradually falling amounts of solar energy, expected to reach their bottom level by 2040, will inevitably lead to a deep freeze around 2055-2060," he said, adding that this period of global freeze will last some 50 years, after which the temperatures will go up again.

"There is no need for the Kyoto Protocol now, and it does not have to come into force until at least a hundred years from now - a global freeze will come about regardless of whether or not industrialized countries put a cap on their greenhouse gas emissions," Abdusamatov said.

The 1998 Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which sets greenhouse gas emission targets for the period up to 2012, entered into force two years ago following ratification by 141 countries, which together account for over 55% of the world's gas pollutions.

Russia ratified the treaty in November 2004, making it legally binding. But the world's top polluter, the United States, is still reluctant to sign on for fear the treaty's emission commitments will slow down the country's economic growth.

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