

The Dangers of Climate Emergencies



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An emergency-shaped world

COBRA – national security



WHO - epidemics



DEC - humanitarian



Early visions of climatic emergency

CLIMATE-ENGINEERING SCHEMES TO MEET A CLIMATIC EMERGENCY

Earth Science Reviews, 1971, 7:87-95

H. H. LAMB

Meteorological Office, Bracknell (Great Britain)

“There could be other, unforeseen emergencies due to unexpected features of the climatic pattern arising through miscalculation or unpredictable secondary effects and the superposed vagaries of the natural climate itself”

The 'climate emergency' is everywhere

CLIMATE EMERGENCY RALLY

12 noon Speakers Corner, Hyde Park

DEMAND :

- Declaration of a Climate Emergency
- 10% cuts by end 2010
- A million Green Jobs by end 2010
- Ban domestic flights
- 55 m
- End

**ARCTIC
METHANE
EMERGENCY
GROUP**



A Buddhist Response to

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Edited by John Stanley, David R. Loy, and Gyurme Dorje



**CLIMATE
EMERGENCY
NETWORK**

CLIMATE EMERGENCY COUNTDOWN

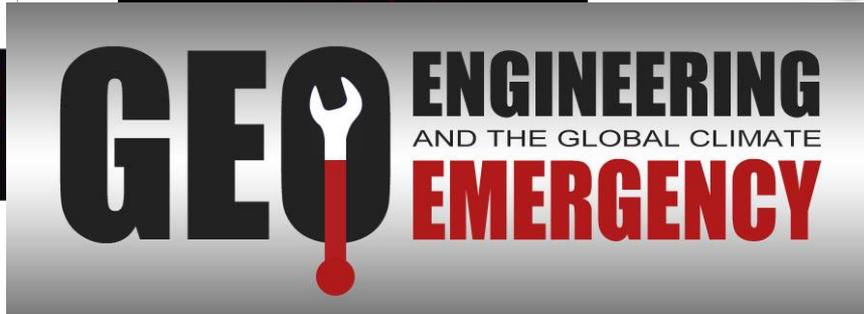
FROM THE DIRE WARNINGS OF
THE IPCC AND OTHER REPORTS,
TO THE IMPERATIVE FOR AN
EMERGENCY ACTION
AGREEMENT AT THE 2015
PARIS CLIMATE SUMMIT
(VIA NYC AND LIMA 2014)

800,000 YRS AGO (CO2 IN ATMOSPHERE)

SUNDAY, JUNE 22
PRESENTATIONS VIDEOS FOOD



1PM - 5PM
REFRESHMENTS



What is a climate emergency?

*“We have reached a point of **planetary emergency** ... elements of a perfect storm, a global cataclysm, are assembled ...”* Hansen (2008)

*“Our world is far beyond dangerous interference with the climate system, **in a state of worldwide emergency**”* Climate Emergency Institute

*“... **climate emergencies**, such as melting Arctic sea ice and polar ice sheets and a food crisis in the tropics ...”* McCusker et al. (2012)

*“... **a regional emergency**, such as an altered monsoon”* Barrett et al. (2014)

*“The Indian government, **in a national state of emergency** for the past two years, is struggling to avoid the fall of the 5th government elected since the famines began. The slums of Mumbai, Kolkata, new Delhi and others are filled with refugees ...”*

Responding to ... or pre-empting a climate emergency?

Climate change – as opposed to weather extremes – is a systemic phenomenon, not an event-based one

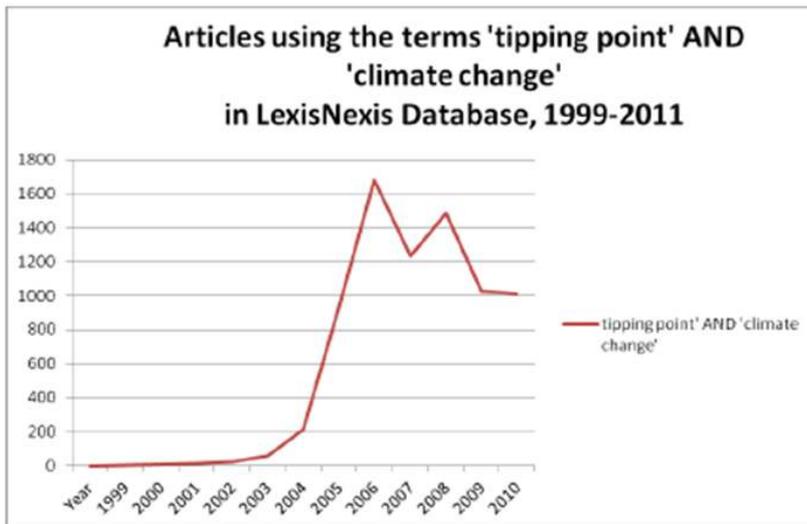
Typhoon Haiyan last November was an emergency ... but it was not a ‘climate change’ emergency

What then might constitute ‘grave and imminent peril’?

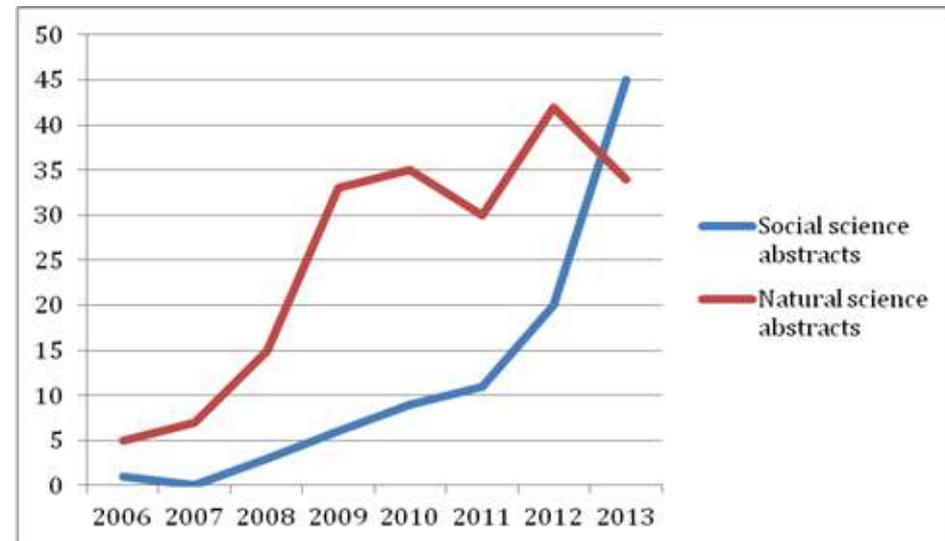


Responding to .. or pre-empting a climate emergency?

‘to prevent tipping points being crossed’
‘to avoid 2 degrees being reached’



Source: Chris Russill



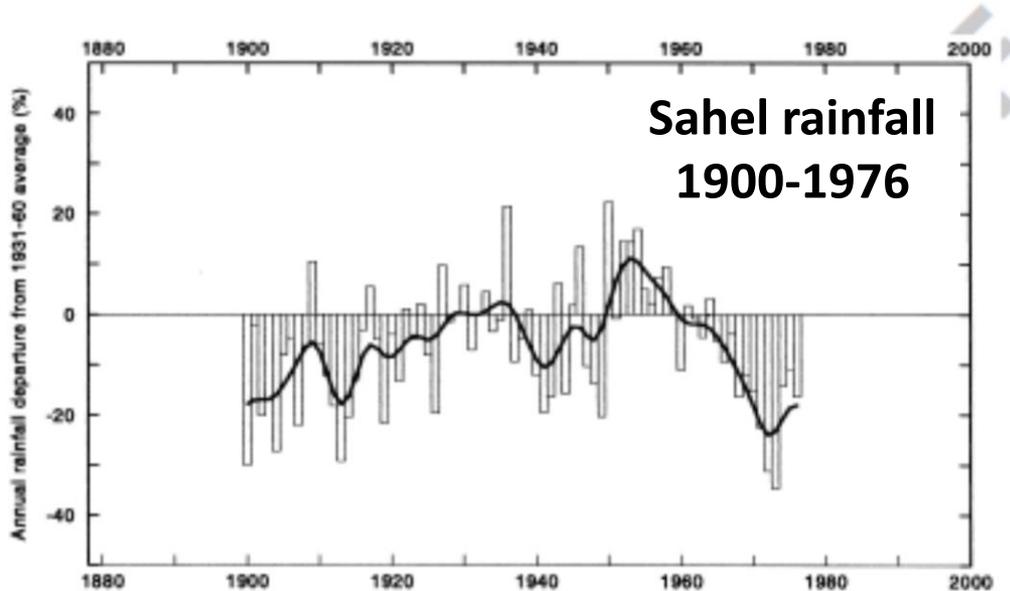
Source: Bjørn-Ola Linnèr

Who declares the climate emergency?

At what spatial scale is an emergency constituted?

For whom is it an emergency?

Who declares emergency?



With what effect in mind would 'emergency' be called?

- **To mobilise a response? – ‘an emergency management perspective’ on climate change**
(e.g. Schneider, R.O., 2011)
- **To pre-empt an emergency? – SRM (even less CDR) will not ‘prevent’ climate emergencies**
- **To create the rhetoric of ‘action’?**

The rhetoric of emergency

“If there's no action before 2012, that's too late. What we do in the next two to three years will determine our future. This is the defining moment.” Pachauri, Nov 2007

*“This is an emergency and for emergency situations **we need emergency action**”* Ban Ki-Moon, Nov 2007

*“I fear that the real-world equilibrating mechanism is that greenhouse gases will pile up in the atmosphere until some clear and present climate danger appears that demands **something like immediate action**”* Weitzman, 2014

The dangers of climate emergencies

Calling upon climate emergencies to justify radical techno-fixes carries multiple dangers (quite apart from the dangers of the fixes themselves):

- **Suspension of normal governance**
- **Coercive rhetoric**
- **‘desperate measures’**
- **Shallow thinking and deliberation**
- **Militarisation**



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can science fix climate change?

MIKE HULME ed. with Scott from Routledge

Exploring Climate Change through *Science and in Society*

An Anthology of Mike Hulme's Essays, Interviews and Speeches

EDITED BY MIKE HULME AND HENRY NEUFELDT

Making Climate Change Work for Us

European Perspectives on Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies

WHY WE DISAGREE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity

Mike Hulme

CAMBRIDGE

Mike Hulme

Streitfall Klimawandel

Warum wir uns in Kontroversen verlieren und dabei versäumen, das Klima zu retten

oekom