

Inquiring Minds Topic – 18 February 2022

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Migration | Emigration

This paper will not educate anyone on global warming, except to note that it has been occurring since the last ice age many thousands of years ago. Now the pace has accelerated and the consequences are significant. Ice is melting. This can be seen with the disappearance of glaciers. That has the consequence of a reduction of the reservoir of water to maintain the flow of rivers which are the source of water for cities, farms and the breeding grounds for many fish, among other things. The ice caps of Greenland and Antarctica are melting. This water raises the level of the oceans. The water no longer in glaciers also raises the oceans. The warming of earth causes the oceans to warm which causes the water to expand.

Weather is also changed by all of the above. There are many factors which will make portions of the earth uninhabitable or undesirable. The rise of the level of the oceans and the reduction of river flows is more than enough to start with.

Estimates which I obtained through Google state that the ocean levels may increase more than 230 feet with a total melt of the antarctic ice cap and the Greenland ice sheet. These estimates show that by 2030 storm surge can be 5 feet over today's level. Large parts of Florida would be subject to tidal inundation or storm surge as would parts of New York City, Bangladesh and many other parts of the world. This would displace many people!

The decrease of river flow will upset the water supplies of cities and farms all over the world. The decrease of river flow has resulted in water drawn from aquifers. In many places that has caused the land to subside. Salt water intrusion to aquifers can also occur.

Flooding will likely displace millions of people. Reduction of river flow and the consequent water shortages will displace millions more.

Where will these people go? Will there be conflicts which will displace more people? Where will they go?

Displaced people would like to go to places where they may live in peace and do well.

Those dislocations occur now. People want to go to the United States or Europe. Should they be welcome?

The birth rate in the developed part of the world has been declining. To maintain industry, tax base etc. more people are needed. Should those people be those who are displaced? Politicians in developed countries (Poland, Hungary etc.) object. They build walls and pass laws to exclude these displaced people. This is now but the future will have much more dislocation! How should this be dealt with?

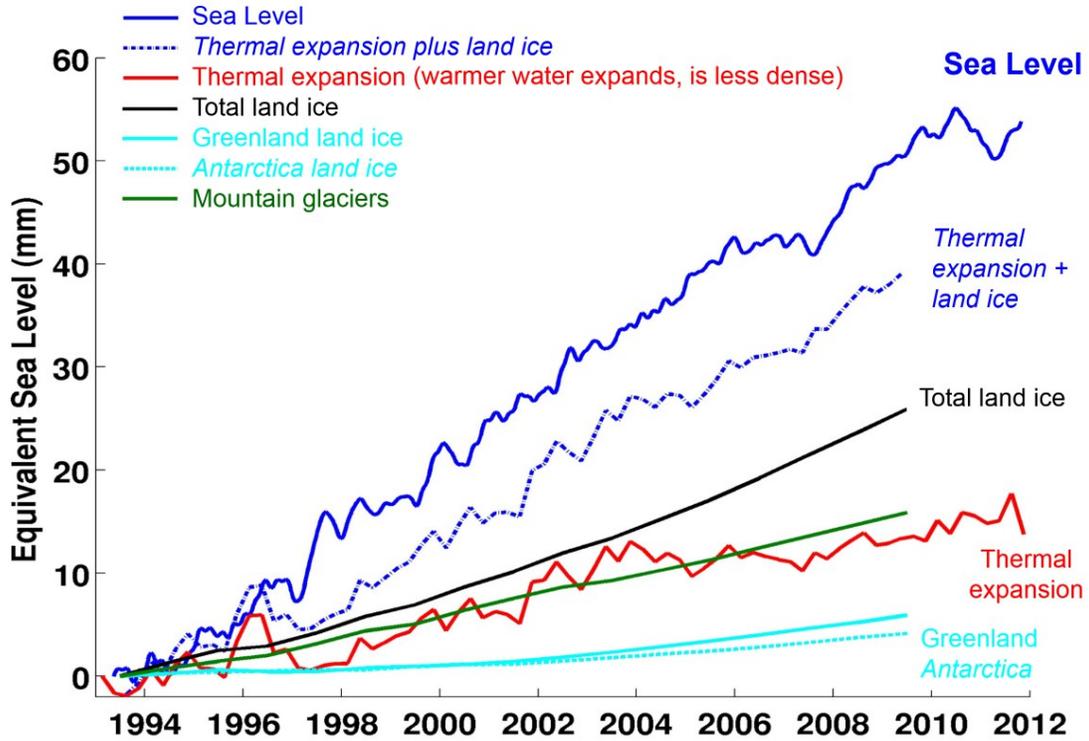
This question of where people should go raises lots of issues. Do we have an obligation to care for people who live in places other than the one we live in? If these people are in the United States we have been providing government aid to them. [Note Albert Myers' paper of December 17.] What if they live in central America, or Haiti? Has something changed? How about Syria or Africa? Where should lines be drawn? Has the contribution of the Western world to global warming created an obligation to help those displaced? When do we

identify what is needed for our own survival? How do we define who we are? Is the “we” only people? Does it extend to other creatures? Can people be separated from the environment? For our survival do we need food and shelter? What do we need to do so that we can have these? Do people need a quality of life which may include art or the opportunity to be curious which is provided only in economies of surplus which can support art or science?

How much time do we have to consider these questions? The Thwaites ice shelf is at risk of breaking away from Antarctica. Since it is floating this will not raise the sea level. However, it is the “cork” that bottles up the Thwaites glacier which could raise the level of the oceans of the world two to three feet in a very short time. People fleeing economic disaster are really the same as those fleeing political disaster. Do these people have rights? If so what are they?

I hope these questions will provide something to occupy our discussion.

Causes of Sea Level Rise



Local sea level can “appear” to drop if the land is rising faster (rebound from glacier weight)