

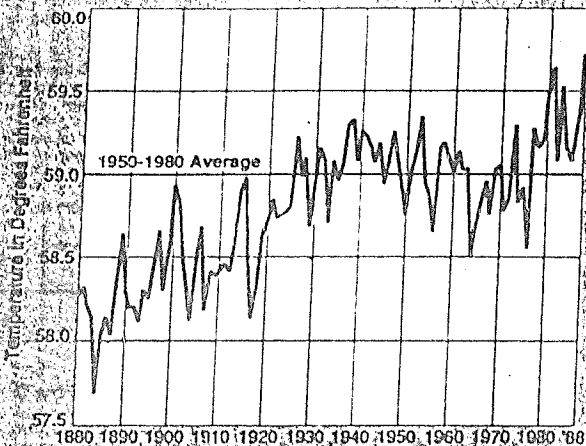
24. Juni 1988

Global Warming Has Begun, Expert Tells Senate

Sharp Cut in Burning of Fossil Fuels Is Urged to Bttle Shift in Climate

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

Special to The New York Times



Global Warming: Greenhouse Effect?

Average global temperatures through the first five months of 1988. As a baseline, scientists use the global average from 1950 to 1980.

Source: James E. Hansen and Sergey Lebedeff

The New York Times/June 24, 1988

WASHINGTON, June 23 — The earth has been warmer in the first five months of this year than in any comparable period since measurements began 130 years ago, and the higher temperatures can now be attributed to a long-expected global warming trend linked to pollution, a space agency scientist reported today.

Until now, scientists have been cautious about attributing rising global temperatures of recent years to the predicted global warming caused by pollutants in the atmosphere, known as the "greenhouse effect." But today Dr. James E. Hansen of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration told a Congressional committee that it was 99 percent certain that the warming trend was not a natural variation but was caused by a buildup of carbon dioxide and other artificial gases in the atmosphere.

An Impact Lasting Centuries

Dr. Hansen, a leading expert on climate change, said in an interview that there was no "magic number" that showed when the greenhouse effect was actually starting to cause changes in climate and weather. But he added, "It is time to stop waffling so much and say that the evidence is pretty strong that the greenhouse effect is here."

If Dr. Hansen and other scientists are correct, then humans, by burning of fossil fuels and other activities, have altered the global climate in a manner that will affect life on earth for centuries to come.

Dr. Hansen, director of NASA's Institute for Space Studies in Manhattan, testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Some Dispute Link

He and other scientists testifying before the Senate panel today said that projections of the climate change that is now apparently occurring mean that the Southeastern and Midwestern sections of the United States will be subject to frequent episodes of very high temperatures and drought in the next decade and beyond. But they cautioned that it was not possible to attribute a specific heat wave to the greenhouse effect, given the still limited state of

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