

Lorenzo GASCÓN*

THINKING ALOUD ABOUT THE CLIMATE CHANGE

Abstract: Humanity, and concretely we, the inhabitants of the first world, are exhausting in an irrational way the resources that Nature is offering to render possible a worthy life to all humans. The electric energy production is an expensive and contaminating process in all the, so far known methods. The massive deforestation and tree clearing means to eliminate woods, the great consumers of carbon dioxide to be converted in starch and sugars. It is a fallacy to consider the electric car a solution against contamination. It is also a fallacy to talk about hydrogen burning as a clean system for energy production. If we do not want the Earth warming, the only solution is, drastically, to reduce and rationalize the energy consumption. Let's remind all the fuss in the sixties and early seventies about the ozone hole, skin cancer and all that. Finally, all the developed demagogy was behind and at the service of a multinational interests with the candid collaboration of good faith people... and the whole story of the ozone hole is forgotten.

INTRODUCTION

“The Economist” in an article dated March 8, 2014 stated that between 1998 and 2013, the Earth's surface temperature rose at a rate of 0.04 ° C a decade, far slower than the 0,18 ° C increase in the 1990 s. In the meantime, emissions of carbon dioxide (which would be expected to push temperatures up) rose uninterruptedly.

This pause in warming has raised doubts in the public mind about climate change. In fact, the three main causes to take on account when considering the climate change are.

- The human action
- The different ways to produce electricity
- Natural reasons

Let's think aloud a little bit about all of this.

Humanity and concretely, we, the inhabitants of the first world, are irrationally draining the resources that nature offer to make possible a worthy life. We have

* Vice President, Royal Academy of Economic Sciences of Spain, WAAS fellow

to say that whenever the first world energy consumption grows in an exponential way, we are talking, specially, of the noblest energy, i. e. the electric one.

The production of the electrical energy, through any of the known methods, involves a contaminating and expensive process. We cannot talk of clean energy. We must refer to a more or less dirty energy.

According to data of 2007:

- the 80% of the energy production came from the combustion of coal, crude oil or natural gas with the consequent emission of carbon dioxide greenhouse effect.
- A 10% came from biomass burning, i. e. fire-wood and residues.
- The 7% was nuclear. It doesn't throw out carbon dioxide but it involves a certain danger (like any other industrial installation, by the way). It is duly orchestrated by interests of different kinds. Mainly economical.
- A 2% proceeded from hydraulical electric plants. They change the fluvial ecosystems.
- The remaining 1% was composed, especially, by eolic energy, with the consequent visual-impact, and the solar photovoltaic. This one, represents a very high energy expenditure in order to manufacture the solar plates. And, moreover they have a limited life.
- Not yet fracking in 2007!
- The massive deforestation for economic reasons means to eliminate the trees that are the big consumers of carbon dioxide to convert it in starches and sugars.
- The vehicles circulation is a significant source of ambiental contaminating.
- It is a phallacy to talk about the electric car as a solution against the contamination. The electric car spends energy that has been produced in another place. We can say that it avoids to contaminate the city but it is contaminating another space. Perhaps in poorer countries. In exchange of money they accept their ambient to be polluted. But at midterm the contamination balances all the atmosphere.
- Likewise it is, also, a phallacy to talk about hydrogen burning as a clean system to produce energy. Actually, to burn this gas is a clean process, very energetic but it requires a big and costly employment of electrical energy. Which is contaminating.
- The carbon dioxide present in the atmosphere has passed from 280 mg/Kg of air in the year 1750 to 379 mg/kg air in the year 2007. And it is continuously, growing. Nearly a 50% comes from the energy production and industry in general. And the 17% proceeds from the vehicles and internal combustion engines. The remaining 33% proceeds from deforestation cutting the absorption of this dioxide.

1. THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT

This is a magic word. Everybody talks about it. Its catastrophic effects. But nobody is ready to afford effective solutions. Shortly, the sun sends to the earth an enor-

mous amount of energy that, in a small part is utilized to activate the vital processes and the remaining, is reflected, again, to the space. If, in the atmosphere there was no obstacle for this remission of the surplus of solar energy the Earth would enter in a cooling process and life would become impossible. But Nature, our good Lord, has made things well done and has wrapped our planet with a gaseous atmosphere, mainly nitrogen and oxygen with small quantities of water vapour and carbon dioxide which prevent the leak of the left over of thermic energy. So that, the climate supports the necessary values compatible with life.

The scientific studies regarding the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere often are sloped with the way of thinking of each investigator. For example, frequently, they don't take into consideration, the natural climate cycles, that have taken place since prehistoric times when there were neither factories nor cars. Without going back so far, in the Furkagletscher, Switzerland has, recently, appeared a bridge upon the Rhoneriver built up by the romans in the II century b. C. Buried with ice during centuries. This, means that 2.200 years ago there was, there, a river that some centuries later became frozen and covered by ice and now has defrosted.

It is worth to think about the natural changes before to attribute everything to human activity.

Let's now remind all the fuss in the sixties and early seventies about the ozone hole. Skin cancer and all that. Finally all the developed demagogy was behind and at the service of a multinational interests with the candid collaboration of good faith people... And the whole story of the ozone hole is forgotten.

The target was to stop the production of CFC indispensable in, for example, the African countries, to operate cooling engines in order to keep the food.

The ozone is an oxygen compound found in the high atmosphere filtering the quite harmful ultraviolet radiation. But, in fact, the thinness of the ozone mantle, due to natural reasons oscillates with or without chlorederivates.

A multinational had the exclusivity to produce these chlorederivates, absolutely necessary for the cooling industry. The caducity time of the patent was near and, therefore, the manufacture of these products should be liberalized.

So, the corporation developed, underhandedly, a campaign intending to forbid the production of these products as responsible of the thinness of the mantle with the serious entailed dangers. And almost everybody believed it.

One year later, the multinational appeared with another product guaranting that it didn't harm the ozone mantle. And got the exclusivity for fifty years more!

By the way: the vulcanoes throw these products to the atmosphere in a volume more than one thousand times than the world production of CFC since it was discovered. And mankind has lived during generations and generations with healthy skin.

To conclude. If we do not want the Earth warming there is no other solution but reducing drastically the energy consumption and to rationalize it.

When we want to spend energy like up to now and we do not wish to increase the carbon dioxide, there is no other way than the nuclear fission energy. Honestly, I think that this is not a demagogic point of view. The tsunami in Japan caused some hundred thousands of victims and the nuclear accident only some twen-

ty. Therefore, the cause that originated the terrible loss of so many deaths was the natural phenomenon. Not the Fukushima plant. Politically is all right to say that Japan has decided to close up all the nuclear centrals. This measure will earn a lot of votes in the elections.

If the Japanese want to live like now, they will have to buy energy from other countries. Which, most probably, will get it from nuclear processes.

On the other hand, the solar photovoltaic energy, still is in a stage requiring a lot of study for the manufacture of the panels. Moreover, they have caducity. And its making requires huge amounts of energy.

We can, also, think of eolic energy, but nobody likes to have high mills in the landscape.

And, last but not least, we have the recent, and I add, big questioning mark: fracking. The shale gas. So far it is obvious that fracking is a toxic subject:

- It requires a lot of water.
- To be operated far from cities.

All this is ideal for the U. S. A. Very difficult in Europe.

European climate policy pushed by the ecologists lobbies, is damaging the competitiveness forcing the shift of industrial production of world leading industries to much less efficient and polluting other parts of the world

Meanwhile, unbelievably, the swithe to shale gas cut American emissions by 12% in 2007–2012 more than in Europe. The European nuclear debate will soon be reopened. There's nothing else to do.

The problem of the energy is the transport. U. S. A. has strongly pushed the home production of oil and coal. And hydraulic fracking to get shale gas. With the industry, there, in the neighbourhood. Minimazing the transport cost compared with Europe and the Far East.

He who has energy has all. Power is power.

But now, we have fracking, as a new source of energy. And as Rudyard Kipling said: "This is another story".