

“Its Global Warming, STUPID”
Headline on Bloomberg Businessweek

Comments from Speakers at the “Building Climate Change Institutions: The Case of Environment & Security” Conference in the European Parliament 21st March 2012.

“Sadly, the devastation wrought by Sandy was entirely predictable. In fact, it was predicted. The National Hurricane Center, among others, has been saying how vulnerable these regions are for years. Predictions also state that, especially as the climate changes, these events are likely to become more common. This underlines the urgency of understanding and accepting that the climate is behaving in new and extreme ways. We need to start listening to the scientists. No one wants to be right about predicting a disaster. They want their predictions to help avoid the disasters. They've done their job. Now we must do ours”.

Cleo Paskal, Associate Fellow, Chatham House/Author “Global Warring”

“Hurricane Sandy should be a wake up call to all who have been paralyzed by climate deniers. Climate change is a clear and present danger, including to sophisticated regions like the East Coast of the U.S., where more than 70 people lost their life and damages likely will exceed \$20 billion, not counting the loss of economic activity and tax revenue. Just as smoking is a systemic cause of lung cancer, so climate change is a systemic cause of Hurricane Sandy. Storms on steroids is what we get from climate change—more energy, more rain, and higher storm surges from sea level rise, and maybe changes in the jet stream that re-direct storms to more damaging paths.

Sandy is a wake up call. We need to accept what climate change is already doing. And we need to learn what fast actions we can take to slow it down. This includes cutting the package of short-lived climate pollutants—black carbon, tropospheric ozone, methane, and hydrofluorocarbons—responsible for up to 45% of climate change and its impacts. Fast action to reduce these pollutants can cut the rate of climate change in half for 40 years or more”.

Durwood Zaelke, President Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

What is the commonality between Hurricane Sandy and the recent 'rogue geoengineering' incident off the west coast of Canada? Both are signs of how the global politics of climate are profoundly changing this decade. The conversation will no longer be about if the climate is changing, but about how to cope with increasingly severe impacts -- like Sandy -- and whether (or which) aggressive responses to ameliorate these impacts -- like geoengineering -- our societies' choose in light of these impacts... possibly in desperation. The global climate conversations need to evolve to encompass these realities, ideally before they further outpace our governance preparations!

Jason Blackstock, University of Oxford