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Trends. Global Warming, Policymaking, and Asymmetries of Time

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One of the most significant subtexts to political discourse on global warming is that of time: time for individuals to make up their minds about the validity and nature of global warming, time for made-up minds to become unmade-up and then made-up once again, time for global warming as an ontological phenomenon to progress and the speed with which it progresses for various units of time, time beyond which global warming cannot be influenced in any significant way by human intervention, time for various consequences of global warming to occur, and the time beyond which various consequences cannot be influenced regardless of whether such consequences have yet occurred.

All the above may well be on different time schedules and all of them may-- as well--be temporally incompatible with the time schedules of local, regional, national, and international policymaking. Thus it is more than sophistry to suggest that pleas for urgent attention towards global warming are untimely in the sense of needing to make decisions as soon as possible. The urgency instead may be in identifying the various time parameters in a timely manner. Efforts for agreement among political contestants on these parameters may be the optimal global initiative towards global warming. It is time these contestants agree to engage on time--before it is too late. (See Bord, R.J., & O'Connor, R.E. (1997). The gender gap in environmental studies: The case of perceived vulnerability to risk. *Social Science Quarterly*, 78, 830-840; Herbert, B. (September 23, 1999). Dark clouds. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; McComas, K., & Shanahan, J. (1999). Telling stories about global climate change: Measuring the impact of narratives on Issue cycles. *Communication Research*, 26, 30-57; O'Connor, R.E., et al. (1998). Rating threat mitigators: Faith in experts, government and individuals themselves to create a safer world. *Risk Analysis*, 18, 547-556.) (Keywords: Global Warming, Policy, Time.)