

Letter: Is Superstorm Sandy the new normal?

To the community,

In the popular movie “The Day After Tomorrow” audiences are confronted with disturbing scenes of a “superstorm” that dwarfs all other storms. At the time, most experts derided the movie and questioned whether such sudden catastrophic superstorms are really possible.

Today, with the emergence of Superstorm Sandy, there is no longer any doubts about the potential for massive superstorms to emerge from our global climate change. Many people believe we are headed for global warming, but new evidence suggests global cooling may be where we are actually going.



Steve Kubby

Until recently, scientists considered any theory of catastrophic change to be heresy. However, science has undergone an astonishing paradigm shift and now accepts the compelling evidence that catastrophic climate change can occur much more rapidly than previously thought.

An example of an extremely quick climate change came during a period of time known as the Younger Dryas, which happened right after the last ice age ended, about 12,000 years ago. The Younger Dryas itself lasted about 1,000 years. What we didn't know until recently was just how quickly the Younger Dryas started and stopped.

In a period of less than 50 years, the climate from the eastern U.S. and Canada to much of Europe went from climate conditions much like today's, to frigid readings more like the Ice Age, at least a ten degree Fahrenheit change. That's how it stayed for a thousand years – and then the climate flipped back to normal in as little as 20 years.

Greenpeace released a classified study, prepared for the Pentagon, that warns of increasingly unstable and violent weather. This Pentagon Weather Report paints a grim picture of the Gulf Stream failing to deliver warm water to the North Atlantic, triggering widespread weather disasters: "A world thrown into turmoil by drought, floods, typhoons. Whole countries rendered uninhabitable. The capital of the Netherlands submerged. The borders of the U.S. and Australia patrolled by armies firing into waves of starving boat people desperate to find a new home. Fishing boats armed with cannon to drive off competitors. Demands for access to water and farmland backed up with nuclear weapons."

The idea that the Earth has been molded by sudden, catastrophic climate change is something that scientists have resisted for many decades, according to a scientific analysis of the past few decades of climate research by Spencer Weart, director of the Center for History of Physics at the American Institute of Physics.

In an article published by *Physics Today*, Weart explains how weather scientists have historically refused to comprehend the evidence before them supporting rapid climate change. Each new discovery keeps shortening the time in which massive global climate changes are recognized and understood to have occurred.

Here's how the National Academy of Sciences describes the situation: "Paleoclimatic records show that large, widespread, abrupt climate changes have affected much or all of the earth repeatedly over the last ice-age cycle as well as earlier –

and these changes sometimes have occurred in periods as short as a few years.”

The sudden appearance of Superstorm Sandy may be a freak event, or it may become the new normal. Is Superstorm Sandy the harbinger of things to come? Are we headed toward a new Ice Age?

Apparently, we are about to find out.

Steve Kubby, South Lake Tahoe