

Going to COP 27?

I think the PM was right to say he needs to stay in the UK to work with the Chancellor on a good budget rather than flying to Egypt. It would be better if these conferences to urge us all to travel less and to burn less fuel were more often conducted on line to set an example on the issue of jet travel and to make their own contribution to reducing CO₂.

COP 27 faces the same big problem COP 26 faced. China generating 30% of the world's CO₂ intends to carry on increasing its output for most of this decade. President Xi will not be in Egypt for others to lobby him to do what western countries are doing to cut their output. Current policy of us closing down energy intensive activities and fossil fuel mines and wells in order to import goods from China does nothing to cut world CO₂. In many cases it boosts it as we spend more on transport and on less environmentally friendly production in China. India, Russia and Brazil also are large producers of CO₂.

COP 27 does face a new problem from COP 26. As a result of the war in Ukraine and the need for the EU to cut its use of Russian gas, countries like Germany and Poland will be using more coal. China, facing shortages of power from hydro and renewables has also turned to more coal dependence. This is against the main conclusion of COP 26 that countries should make rapid progress to eliminate coal, treating gas as a transition fuel whilst renewable electricity was expanded and technologies developed to store it for times when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine.

It will be interesting to see what solutions they propose to tackle this difficulty.