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'Planned recession' could avoid catastrophic climate change

Britain will have to stop building airports, switch to electric cars and shut down coal-fired power stations as part of a 'planned recession' to avoid dangerous climate change.

By Louise Gray *and* Louisegray

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At the moment the UK is committed to cutting greenhouse gases by a third by 2020.

However a new report from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research said these targets are inadequate to keep global warming below two degrees C above pre-industrial levels.

The report says the only way to avoid going beyond the dangerous tipping point is to double the target to 70 per cent by 2020.

This would mean reducing the size of the economy through a "planned recession".

Kevin Anderson, director of the research body, said the building of new airports, petrol cars and dirty coal-fired power stations will have to be halted in the UK until new technology provides an alternative to burning fossil fuels.

"To meet [Government] targets of not exceeding two degrees C, there would have to be a moratorium on airport expansion, stringent measures on the type of vehicle being used and a rapid transition to low carbon technology," he said.

Prof Anderson also said individuals will have to consume less.

"For most of the population it would mean fairly modest changes to how they live, maybe they will drive less, share a car to work or take more holidays in Britain."

More than 190 countries are due to meet in Copenhagen in December to decide a new international deal on climate change.

Speaking at an Oxford University conference on the threat of climate change, Profkj Anderson said rich countries will have to make much more ambitious cuts to have any chance of keeping temperature rise below four degrees C.

"If we do everything we can do then we might have a chance," he said.

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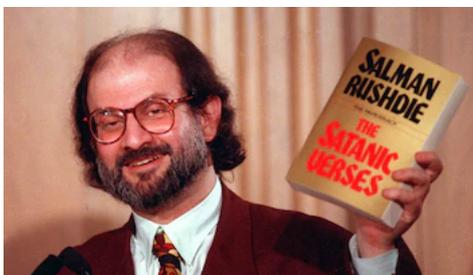
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