

Headline: The day after tomorrow

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That's the title of a movie that seemed particularly appropriate for the recent deep freeze in the United States due to the "polar vortex," a giant swirling of cold air in the atmosphere.

Rare as it is, the polar vortex is an occurrence normally confined in the Arctic. But with the rapid melting of the polar sea ice, the Arctic is heating up quicker than the rest of the world.

And because of the acceleration of the Arctic heat-up, the polar vortex unexpectedly moved further to the south of the United States, thus causing a deep freeze in the Midwest, the Eastern seaboard, indeed the rest of America.

The extreme temperature dropped to the minus 20s and minus 30s in the Midwest, "enough for boiling water thrown from a pot to turn into snow," as Wisconsin-based meteorologist Eric Holthaus demonstrated in a video.

On the other side of the world, in Australia, it was reported that over 100,000 bats fell from the sky because of the extreme heat.

Global warming is now indirectly causing occurrences such as the unusual polar vortex that gripped the United States and gave it an Ice Age experience.

(Looking back, while the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change was holding its Conference of Parties, or COP 19, in November 2013, the world was witness to the devastation wrought by Supertyphoon "Yolanda/Haiyan" on Tacloban City and other parts of Central Philippines. It will take years before these unfortunate areas fully recover.)

Photographs and footage of the winter freeze in the United States were eerily similar to scenes we saw in the movie "The day after tomorrow." Reports of people dying in the brutal cold were literally chilling.

All these must change or we will not see the last of the polar vortex. Such phenomena can change the old business model that is destroying our planet. This business model based on greed and gold is a model of extraction, logging and deforestation.

If the UNFCCC will not find a negotiated agreement of mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, then others will do on their own. Germany, for example, has expanded its renewable energy base a thousandfold.

In the Philippines, we may have been battered but our resilience is holding. We will overcome. We will continue planting mangroves and reforesting our country.

We will abate and mitigate. We will protect our oceans and forests because these sustain life and absorb 50 percent of atmospheric carbon dioxide.

We will heed the recent intense warning signs of nature, such as Yolanda and the polar vortex.

I repeat myself: We all must do our role in the fight against climate change. Otherwise, we will all perish.

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