

CLIMATE CHANGE: IS THE SCIENCE REALLY SETTLED?

by Lawrence Solomon



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A PRESENTATION TO THE COLORADO MINING ASSOCIATION

by Lawrence Solomon | February 10, 2010

Thank you, Stuart, for that introduction. I'm grateful for the opportunity to address this gathering, although I'm not that pleased anymore with the title of my talk.

"Climate Change – Is the Science Really Settled?" That seemed like a good title back in October, when Stuart invited me to come here. But a lot has happened since October.

Chiefly, Climategate happened, one month later, in November. For those of you who haven't heard of Climategate, this was the release – probably by a whistleblower – of some 3000 documents, many of them emails between some of the most important promoters of the global warming hypothesis. I call the "doomsayers," not to be pejorative but because that term, "doomsayer," most accurately describes their message.

Before those emails came to light, the doomsayers were already in trouble. Public opinion in the US, the UK and other countries had already swung against the thesis that man is responsible for dangerous global warming.

After the Climategate emails came to light, elite opinion began to turn against the doomsayers. I can now tell you with great confidence that there won't be a cap and trade bill, there won't be a national carbon tax, there won't be national legislation of any significance, not in the US, not in other countries that have not yet adopted greenhouse gas legislation.

I can also tell you that countries that do have carbon trading schemes will be phasing them out in the coming years. Even the fate of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – the IPCC – the body that has orchestrated the global warming doomsaying for more than two decades now – is now in doubt.

The Climategate emails confirmed much of what the sceptics had been saying for years.

- They confirmed that the peer review process had been corrupted, that scientists were arranging friendly reviews.
- They confirmed that the science journals had been corrupted. That journals that refused to play ball with the doomsayers faced boycotts and their editors faced firing.

- They confirmed that sceptical scientists were being systematically excluded from the top-tier journals.
- The Climategate emails confirmed that journalists were likewise threatened with boycotts if they didn't play ball.
- The Climategate emails confirmed that the science itself was suspect. That the doomsayers themselves couldn't make the data work. That they were debating among themselves some of the same points that the sceptics raised, and were privately acknowledging that they didn't have answers to the issues that the sceptics raised.
- The Climategate emails confirmed that the doomsayers were so determined to hide their data from inquiring minds that they were prepared to break the law to hide it – and did break the law – by avoiding Freedom of Information requests.
- The Climategate emails confirmed that raw temperature data collected from countries around the world was destroyed. It appears the UK is missing raw temperature data going back to 1850.

The scientists at the heart of the Climategate emails aren't fringe players on some periphery. They operate what's known as the Climatic Research Unit at East Anglia University in the UK.

This is the group that collects temperature data, messages it, and then feeds it to the UN and others. This is the data that we have been relying on to tell us if the globe has been warming or not. This same data is then used by virtually everyone in the climate science field who is concerned with historical temperatures.

Without the raw data, it is impossible to confirm that the planet has been warming over the last 150 years. The only ones who now know by how much the planet has been warming, if at all, are the same people who have destroyed the raw data.

There are now six separate investigations underway which have been spawned by the Climategate emails. One of those six is by the UK Met Office, which partnered with the Climatic Research Unit in producing the data sets.

The UK Met Office – this is the UK government's meteorological department – says it will need three years to recreate the data that has been destroyed.

In three years, in other words, we may know with some confidence whether the globe has been warming over the last century.

The real significance of the Climategate emails doesn't come from having revealed all these details.

Most of these details, and much more, the sceptics knew long ago. Such information appears in numerous sources, my book being but one example.

No, the real significance of the Climategate emails comes from the panic they instilled in the ranks of the doomsayers.

With all these investigations going on, the doomsayers are starting to point fingers at each other. The conspirators are turning on each other in attempts to exculpate themselves.

Canada's top climate scientist, for example, for years a faithful insider at the IPCC, is now calling for the head of the IPCC chairman, and for the IPCC to be reformed.

The IPCC's past chair has started to criticize his successor. Even Greenpeace UK is demanding that the IPCC chair resign – otherwise, Greenpeace believes, the IPCC has no hope of regaining its credibility.

More importantly, the press has stopped being a mouthpiece for global warming propagandists and has begun to show some curiosity in the views of the sceptics. Not the U.S. press – with the exception of the Wall Street Journal and Fox News, the US press is still protecting the doomsayers.

Both the British press and the Canadian press and the Australian press now smell blood and are starting to cover this scandal, the greatest scientific scandal in history.

So now the truth is being reported in the media of most countries. Since Climategate we've learned that glaciers in the Himalayas won't melt by 2035, as the IPCC claimed.

This claim – now known as Glaciergate – stemmed from an off-hand comment an Indian glaciologist told a journalist as a popular magazine in 1999. Several years later, WWF used this speculation in a report and fundraising campaign. Then the IPCC picked up WWF's repeat of a speculation and published it as if it was authoritative.

No peer review. Not even a study.

Glaciergate is only one of the post-Climategate revelations to surface.

It turns out WWF was used many times as a source for the IPCC. So was Greenpeace and other activist organizations.

Not exactly what was advertised as the IPCC's unimpeachable peer-reviewed science.

In one case, a student writing a paper for a master's course claimed that the ice peaks of mountains in the Alps were disappearing. The IPCC cited that, too. It also cited the views of mountaineers as reported in a popular mountain climbing magazine.

And it cited civil servants from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia who made a submission to the UN based on a study by a Canadian NGO – none of this peer-reviewed. Based on this NGO study, the IPCC reported that North Africa could lose half of its rain-fed crops by 2020!

Then there's Climategate USA, which few in this room would have heard of because the US press has not yet given it the coverage it deserves.

Two US government agencies are implicated here – NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, right here in Colorado.

These agencies, like the one in the UK, collect temperature data from around the world and then "add value" to it, as they say, by slicing and dicing it to tell us what it means. Here's what your agencies have been doing.

In the 1970s, they were collecting data from 6000 weather stations around the world. Over the years, that number steadily dropped, to 5000 to 4000 to 3000 to 2000 to 1500, where they now stand. The weather stations they dropped tended to be located in mountainous and rural areas. These are the cold weather stations. That left 1500 weather stations in warmer areas, which they used as surrogates for the colder areas.

Let me give you some examples. In Canada, these two agencies discarded data from 565 of 600 weather stations, including most of the ones in the Rockies and in the Northern Territories – the Arctic.

In Bolivia, a country in the Andes, every last weather station was discarded. To get Bolivian temperatures, NASA and NOAA used readings from 1200 miles away – from the Amazon and the beaches of Peru.

California, a bit closer to home, as of 2009 has only 4 weather stations left in the dataset – three on the beach in Southern California and one at the San Francisco airport. None in the Sierra Nevada, or the Cascades, or any of California's other mountain ranges.

Since the Climategate emails were released the press has increasingly become bold. More and more are challenging the orthodoxy. More and more now fear for their own reputations. They, too, don't want fingers pointed at them for not doing their jobs.

Why didn't the press do its job before, and investigate the claims of the sceptics? Most of all, I believe, they were intimidated.

And their intimidation comes down to one number that the press reported over and over again – 2500. That's the number of scientists associated with the UN's Panel on Climate Change who have endorsed the UN Panel's conclusions. These are the conclusions that get

released in the UN's mammoth reports every six years or so. The press couldn't easily buck 2500 scientists even if they wanted to. And they didn't buck them.

If you do a Google search on news articles that claim that the science is settled on climate change, you'll see that the reporters almost always rely on this number.

"2500 scientists can't be wrong," they always say, explicitly or implicitly. If they didn't have that number, they would have had no basis for the claim that they repeated over and over again – the claim that there's a consensus on climate change.

2500 is an impressive number of scientists. I wondered who, exactly, were these 2500 scientists associated with the UN. To find out, I contacted the Secretariat of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and asked for their names and contact information. The answer that came back was negative. I learned that the names were not public, so I couldn't have them. And I learned that the 2500 scientists were reviewers, not endorsers.

Those scientists hadn't endorsed anything. They were merely people who had reviewed one or more of the many background studies that were part of this immense United Nations bureaucratic process. They virtually all would have reviewed some small part of the inputs that went into the bureaucratic maw. They did not review the final report or endorse it.

Their reviews weren't even all favorable. I know that from many sources, including from among some of the scientists that I profiled – several of the deniers in my book are among those 2500. And those deniers, and others, generally consider the UN's work a travesty.

So there was no endorsement by 2500 top UN scientists. The press was taken. And so the public was taken.

The extent to which the press and public was taken goes even further. Not only was there no consensus, the scientists who are skeptics – the deniers – have extraordinary credentials. They are the Who's Who of Science.

They include Antonino Zichichi, the president of the World Federation of Scientists and the discoverer of nuclear anti-matter. He is Italy's best known scientist.

They include Claude Allegre, who may be France's best known scientist. And they include one of Germany's best known scientists and Britain's and America's, Freeman Dyson, the physicist, the inventor of the TRIGA, the nuclear reactor used in hospitals and university labs around the world around the world to create isotopes.

They include Reid Bryson, the father of scientific climatology.

One thing I noticed in profiling these deniers – unlike IPCC scientists, they don't all sing from the same song book. They each have different specialties, they each do different research,

they each have their own reasons for disputing the conclusions that the UN Panel has arrived at.

One of them is Edward Wegman, one of the top statisticians in the US. He was called in by a US Congressional committee to assess the statistics used in the UN Panel's Hockey Stick Graph.

You may not have heard of the Hockey Stick Graph but you've heard of the claims made because of it. This graph claimed to show that Earth's temperatures have been fairly constant over the last 1000 years -- that's the long handle of the hockey stick -- and then in the last 100 years the temperatures shot up -- that's the blade of the hockey stick.

This graph is the single biggest reason that the public became persuaded that the Earth was heating up in a dangerous way. Because of that graph, we heard that 1998 was the hottest year of the hottest decade of the hottest century of the last 1000 years.

Were the statistical methods used in that hockey stick valid? To find out, the US Congressional Committee held hearings and called in Wegman. What he discovered dumbfounded him, and not just because the graph was bogus.

He was dumbfounded because the scientists who produced that Hockey Stick Graph had no grounding in statistics, even though the study depended entirely on an advanced understanding of statistics. Not only did they not understand statistics, they didn't consult anyone with an advanced understanding. And the peer reviewers did not have an advanced understanding.

With no one knowledgeable in the use of statistics, it was no wonder that their results were invalid. The scientists who produced that graph used a model that would always produce a hockey stick shape. You could put almost any data into their model and get a hockey stick shape. You could throw baseball stats into that model and it would tell you that the Earth was burning up.

Another scientist who had a good reason to take issue with the UN Panel was Christopher Landsea, a hurricane expert. Not just a hurricane expert, he was the UN Panel's own hurricane expert. He was the one who wrote the hurricane section of their reports. And what he always found, as it turned out, was that there was no connection between hurricane activity and global warming.

So you can imagine his surprise when he learned that his boss at the UN Panel was holding a press conference to tout a connection between hurricane activity and global warming. This was a few years back, when we were getting all those hurricanes and everyone was speculating -- or saying with certitude -- that global warming must be the cause.

The UN Panel didn't want to disappoint all those people and it didn't want to lose an opportunity to proselytize. So it held that press conference, over Chris Landsea's objections.

And the press conference worked. Huge headlines. But they were based on no science. Landsea resigned from the UN Panel when it would give him no assurances that it wouldn't mislead the public the same way in future.

Another scientist who took issue with the UN Panel was Paul Reiter of the Pasteur Institute. He disputed the UN Panel's claim that malaria would spread due to global warming. He has a good case to make. Not one major research scientist in his field – anywhere in the world – endorses the UN conclusions. Not one.

Some of my deniers do not try to explain the climate changes that we have experienced. They are merely objecting, as in the case of Wegman and Landsea and Reiter, to what they saw as the UN Panel's baseless claims.

But other scientists do have explanations for the global warming we've experienced.

For example, there's Syun Akasofu, at the University of Alaska. He's the discoverer of the causes of the storms of the aurora borealis. He notes that the Earth warmed about 0.5 degrees Centigrade in the 20th century. In the 19th century, it also warmed 0.5 degree Centigrade.

In the 18th century, it again warmed 0.5 degree C. And in the 17th century.

For the last few hundred years, he explains, the Earth has simply been climbing out of the Little Ice Age, at the same, slow steady rate. This is a natural process, he believes, and not one dominated or precipitated by carbon dioxide.

Habibullo Abdussamatov is another scientist with an explanation for the warming that we've experienced. He's a Russian. He heads research on the Russian half of the International Space Station, and he notes that global warming has been indisputable– on Mars! And it has likewise been indisputable on Earth. He states with confidence that these global warmings cannot be blamed on either Martians or Earthlings. He says that there can only be one reasonable explanation for the simultaneous warmings of these two planets -- they both have the same Sun.

Abdussamatov will soon have some of the best climate change data going – from the vantage point of the International Space Station, solar activity can be observed without distortions caused by Earth's atmosphere. He thinks he'll have some precise answers by 2016 as to what might befall the climate on Earth but I can already tell you what he thinks is happening, based on the research he's done to date. He thinks that we're about to enter a new Little Ice Age.

Abdussamatov has been predicting a new Little Ice Age for some time, and his predictions are looking better with each passing year.

About 10 years ago, the global warming we have been experiencing stopped -- the temperatures plateaued and stayed fairly stable. And of late, the temperatures have been falling.

We're seeing the results across much of the world now. Europe was in a deep freeze and much of the US has experienced unusual cold.

The global warming debate has two camps.

In one camp, we have many of the world's top scientists, with data and models that are being borne out.

In the other camp, we have mostly no-name scientists associated with the UN bureaucracy wielding data that cannot be verified. Their entire case for doom rests on computer models that don't work -- these models not only fail to predict the future, they can't even model the past.

Virtually every major claim made by the UN has now been falsified:

- The Arctic ice did not continue to melt, as the models predicted. The Arctic ice has been recovering.
- The Antarctic is thickening; it isn't melting and contributing to a rising of the oceans.
- Hurricanes haven't been spurred by global warming.
- Malaria isn't spurred by global warming.
- The planet hasn't been warming, it's been cooling.

This talk shouldn't be titled , "Is the science settled?" This talk should be asking, "Is there any science from the doomsayers left standing?"





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