

# PETR CHYLEK: OPEN LETTER TO THE CLIMATE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

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by Petr Chylek | December 5, 2009

I am sure that most of you are aware of the incident that took place recently at the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit (CRU). The identity of the whistle-blower or hacker is still not known.

The selected release of emails contains correspondence between CRU scientists and scientists at other climate research institutions. My own purely technical exchange of emails with CRU director Professor Phil Jones is, as far as I know, not included.

I published my first climate-related paper in 1974 (Chylek and Coakley, *Aerosol and Climate*, Science 183, 75-77). I was privileged to supervise Ph. D. theses of some exceptional scientists - people like J. Kiehl, V. Ramaswamy and J. Li among others. I have published well over 100 peer-reviewed papers, and I am a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union, the Optical Society of America, and Los Alamos National Laboratory. Within the last few years I was also honored to be included in Wikipedia's blacklist of "climate skeptics".

For me, science is the search for truth, the never-ending path towards finding out how things are arranged in this world so that they can work as they do. That search is never finished.

It seems that the climate research community has betrayed that mighty goal in science. They have substituted the search for truth with an attempt at proving one point of view. It seems that some of the most prominent leaders of the climate research community, like prophets of Old Israel, believed that they could see the future of humankind and that the only remaining task was to convince or force all others to accept and follow. They have almost succeeded in that effort.

Yes, there have been cases of misbehavior and direct fraud committed by scientists in other fields: physics, medicine, and biology to name a few. However, it was misbehavior of individuals, not of a considerable part of the scientific community.

Climate research made significant advancements during the last few decades, thanks to your diligent work. This includes the construction of the HadCRUT and NASA GISS datasets documenting the rise of globally averaged temperature during the last century. I do not believe that this work can be affected in any way by the recent email revelations. Thus, the first of the three pillars supporting the hypothesis of man-made global warming seems to be solid. However, the two other pillars are much more controversial.

To blame the current warming on humans, there was a perceived need to “prove” that the current global average temperature is higher than it was at any other time in recent history (the last few thousand years). This task is one of the main topics of the released CRU emails.

Some people were so eager to prove this point that it became more important than scientific integrity. The next step was to show that this “unprecedented high current temperature” has to be a result of the increasing atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels.

The fact that the Atmosphere Ocean General Circulation Models are not able to explain the post-1970 temperature increase by natural forcing was interpreted as proof that it was caused by humans. It is more logical to admit that the models are not yet good enough to capture natural climate variability (how much or how little do we understand aerosol and clouds, and ocean circulation?), even though we can all agree that part of the observed post-1970 warming is due to the increase of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration.

Thus, two of the three pillars of the global warming and carbon dioxide paradigm are open to reinvestigation. The damage has been done. The public trust in climate science has been eroded. At least a part of the IPCC 2007 report has been put in question. We cannot blame it on a few irresponsible individuals. The entire esteemed climate research community has to take responsibility. Yes, there always will be a few deniers and obstructionists.

So what comes next? Let us stop making unjustified claims and exaggerated projections about the future even if the editors of some eminent journals are just waiting to publish them. Let us admit that our understanding of the climate is less perfect than we have tried to make the public believe. Let us drastically modify or temporarily discontinue the IPCC. Let us get back to work.

Let us encourage students to think their own thoughts instead of forcing them to parrot the IPCC conclusions. Let us open the doors of universities, of NCAR, NASA and other research institutions (and funding agencies) to faculty members and researchers who might disagree with the current paradigm of carbon dioxide.

Only open discussion and intense searching of all possibilities will let us regain the public’s trust and move forward.

Regards,

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