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CLIMATEGATE IPCC OPINION

Climategate & Investigations of IPCC and CRU: Was There a Pattern of Cover Up?

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Guest Opinion: Dr. Tim Ball

Every time a serious threat to IPCC climate science appears, whether scientific or political, diversions and counterattacks are implemented. It usually involves people and agencies at the highest levels, with dissemination and support through major media outlets. One of the earliest examples involved changes to the 1995 IPCC Report Chapter 8 comments agreed on in committee. The response is proportional to the political damage they perceive. Avery and Singer noted about Chapter 8 changes,

“Santer single-handedly reversed the ‘climate science’ of the whole IPCC report and with it the global warming political process! The ‘discernible human influence’ supposedly revealed by the IPCC has been cited thousands of times since in media around the world and has been the ‘stopper’ in millions of debates among nonscientists.”

The misleading item is then **defended and substantiated by a cover-up** and later cited as evidence that nothing was wrong. In that case, an article was quickly produced and published in *Nature* within a year (July 1996). The problem was it used a selected portion of a graph to show a trend that was not evident in the full record. See below:

John Daly recreated Santer et al’s graph (*Figure 1*) of the upward temperature trend in the Upper Atmosphere.

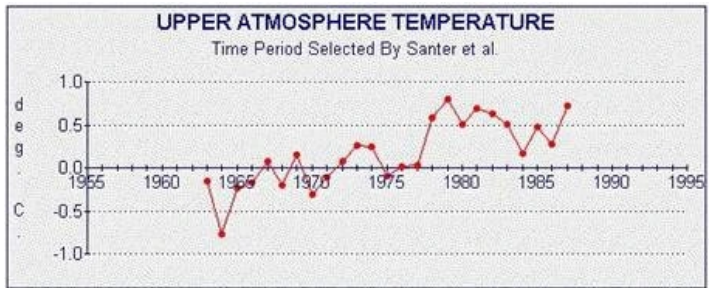


Figure 1

Then Daly produced a graph of the wider data set in Figure 2 and explains, “we see that the warming indicated in Santer’s version is **just a product of the dates chosen**” (*Daly’s bold*).

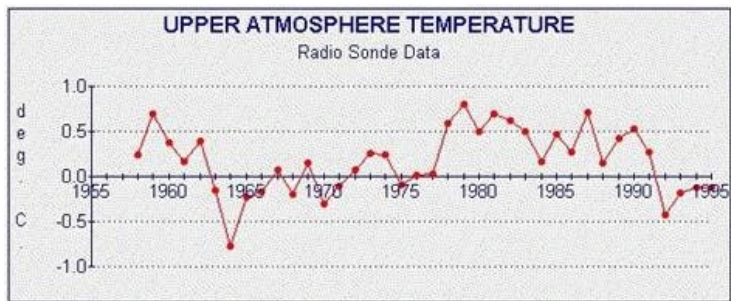


Figure 2

In addition, articles appeared in the *New York Times* attacking the credibility of Professors Fred Singer and Frederick Seitz. The attack on Singer began the now familiar connection of climate deniers as equal to the tobacco deniers because he had written a critique of the bad science in an article on second-hand smoke. His critique was later shown to be correct, but it was used to suggest he was supporting “big tobacco.”

A more challenging cover up was required after the 2009 release of emails from the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia. Recently, Elizabeth May, leader of the Canadian Green Party claimed official investigations exonerated the activities revealed by the emails. I responded that the investigations were

corrupted, but did not have time to elaborate. May suggested my comments indicated I was looking for another lawsuit, referring to the lawsuits against me by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) members Michael Mann and Andrew Weaver. The latter is currently an elected Green Party member of the British Columbia legislature.

Michael Mann also claims these investigations exonerated him and the CRU activities in his lawsuits with [Mark Steyn](#).

“ One of Mann’s arguments is that his work has been “exonerated” by a number of investigations, including that of EPA. As our [reply brief](#) shows, that is simply untrue. But one thing that EPA did examine was Mann’s own claim that the work of certain opposing scientists was a “fraud”. In EPA’s view, “fraud” is an “entirely acceptable and appropriate” term in scientific debate. (CEI [Reply Brief](#) at p.11.)

In short, EPA didn’t exonerate Mann, but it may well have exonerated the defendants.

The greatest threat to IPCC science came with the release of 1000 emails from the CRU in November of 2009. A further 6000 released in November of 2011 expanded and elaborated on the extent of activities and actions taken to produce a specific scientific claim. The emails provided evidence of the methods used to pursue what they referred to as “the cause” by key players in the IPCC Science and Summary for Policymakers reports. In their words, they tell us how they created the ‘scientific’ evidence to support the political agenda. CRU Director Phil Jones dismissed the material as normal scientific banter and added in a classic understatement to the UK Parliamentary [Science and Technology](#) Committee,

“ I have obviously written some pretty awful emails.”

It was no surprise that skeptics understood the significance of the emails because they confirmed what they were thinking and saying. A more accurate measure of their significance was the reactions of mainstream media who had pushed the IPCC AGW line. [Andrew Revkin](#) resigned from the New York Times and [George Monbiot](#) of *The Guardian* wrote,

“ It’s no use pretending that this isn’t a major blow. The emails extracted by a hacker from the climatic research unit at the University of East Anglia could scarcely be more damaging. I am now convinced that they are genuine, and I’m dismayed and deeply shaken by them.

People like Monbiot were rattled, but some, possibly unaware of the implications of the emails, shrugged off the problems. Others, including a few politicians began to ask questions. It appears politicians spot scandals better than others as they are steeped in them directly or indirectly throughout their careers. Pressure to restore confidence in the IPCC and the CRU scientists was intense and growing. Both leaks achieved their objective of stunting advance of climate politics through the Conference of the Parties (COP) at Copenhagen, and ending support for the Kyoto Protocol while blunting the effectiveness of any substitute.

Response to Damage of Leaked CRU Emails

To salvage the entire IPCC process, it was essential to begin by restoring the credibility of the scientists exposed in the emails. Apparently the decision to pursue a cover-up was taken by major agencies directly involved, either because of political commitment, funding or both. They initiated five inquiries, apparently all orchestrated to mislead and cover up what the emails exposed.

Andrew Montford provided an excellent analysis of what went on in [*"The Climategate Inquiries."*](#) The piece opens with a quote from Professor of Climatology Hans van Storch.

“We have to take a self-critical view of what happened. Nothing ought to be swept under the carpet. Some of the Inquiries—like—in the UK—did exactly the latter. They blew an opportunity to restore trust.”

The reason an insider like van Storch thinks they missed an opportunity is because he wanted explanations. Those carrying out the inquiries wanted to fool the public. Comments by Elizabeth May and Mann's use of them in a court indicate their success. Disconnects between what “insiders” know and what the public perceive are central to other major deceptions. As David Wojick, IPCC expert reviewer, explained about the biggest deception, the Summary for Policymakers (SPM)

Glaring omissions are only glaring to experts, so the “policymakers”—including the press and the public—who read the SPM will not realize they are being told only one side of a story. But the scientists who drafted the SPM know the truth, as revealed by the sometimes artful way they conceal it.

Systematically omitted from the SPM are the uncertainties and positive counter evidence that might negate the human interference theory. Instead of assessing these objections, the Summary confidently asserts just those findings that support its case. These actions are advocacy, not assessment.

Leaked Email Inquiries

Lord Turnbull summarized the serious allegations in the Foreword to Montford's report:

- *That scientists at the CRU had failed to give a full and fair view to policymakers and the IPCC of all the evidence available to them;*
- *That they deliberately obstructed access to data and methods to those taking different viewpoints for themselves;*
- *That they failed to comply with Freedom of Information requirements;*
- *That they sought to influence the review panels of journals in order to prevent rival scientific evidence from being published.*

Three United Kingdom Inquiries:

1. The UK House of Commons Science and Technology Committee investigation was required because of the involvement of the United Kingdom Meteorological Office (UKMO) and its links with the CRU. A former Director of the UKMO, John Houghton was appointed the first head of the IPCC.

This inquiry seems pointless, other than as an opportunity for politicians to be able to say they had considered the issue of the leaked emails. They initially canceled their inquiry when the University of East Anglia said they were investigating. Apparently because of pressure or because some saw political opportunities they sought input from the public, but only received 58 submissions. They effectively deferred to the UEA. Sir Muir Russell, Chair of one of the UEA investigations appeared before them to explain what he was doing.

Four other panels were questioned, but nobody qualified or knowledgeable about climatology was included, knowledge essential to understanding what the emails were saying. They did not finish their work because of an election. They assumed the Oxburgh and Russell inquiries would resolve the matter. Attempts to strongly admonish the CRU for their actions were all defeated.

2. The Oxburgh panel was appointed and directed by UEA. It was likely the most compromised of the inquiries so much so that its findings are meaningless except as evidence of a cover-up.

There were no written terms of reference. UEA said Oxburgh was going to investigate the science. He didn't. Oxburgh and his committee of six were recommended by the Royal Society, which was directly involved in promoting the IPCC and CRU. A recent article by the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF) exposed the [Royal Society's activities](#) in distorting and misrepresenting climate science.

Oxburgh was compromised because he is a Fellow of the Royal Society, but more important, he is CEO of Carbon Capture and Storage Association and Chairman of Falck Renewable Resources that benefit from the claim that human CO2 is causing warming. He also promoted the warming claim as UK Vice-Chair of GLOBE International, a consortium of Industry, NGOs' and Government that lobbies for global warming policy.

- The Oxburgh Inquiry was directed to examine the CRU science, but failed. The other failures;
- There were no public hearings:
- There was no call for evidence.
- Only 11 academic papers were examined; a list vetted by Phil Jones, Director of the CRU, the agency central to the investigation.
- Only unrecorded closed interviews with CRU staff were held.
- There were no meetings with CRU critics.
- UEA had effective control throughout the Inquiry.
- The UK House of Commons Select Committee grilled Oxburgh on the shallowness of his study and report and its failure to review the science as promised.

3. The Independent Climate Change Emails Review (ICCER), more commonly called the Muir Russell Inquiry, was also created by the University of East Anglia.

It was compromised from the start by the conflict of interest of members. One appointment was Philip Campbell, editor of *Nature*. He resigned when his bias was revealed. Another appointee, Geoffrey Boulton, had two major problems. He had signed a petition from the UK Met Office declaring full support for the CRU and IPCC science. He had been employed at UEA when the Inquiry said members had no links to the university. He said he was not a climate expert when a CV sent to a Chinese University stated the opposite.

There was a call for public submissions on February 11, 2010 with a virtually impossible deadline of March 1, 2010 (17 days). They did not hold public hearings and only interviewed CRU and UEA staff. Those items alone are sufficient to indicate the bias of the inquiry to a preconceived result. In a commentary on the Muir Russell Report, Fred Pearce of the UK *Guardian*, a paper long known for its strong support of the IPCC wrote,

“Secrecy was the order of the day at CRU. “We find that there has been a consistent pattern of failing to display the proper degree of openness,” says the report. That criticism applied not just to Jones and his team at CRU. It applied equally to the university itself, which may have been embarrassed to find itself in the dock as much as the scientists on whom it asked Russell to sit in judgment.”

Montford's report showed all three Inquiries and their reports had serious flaws. Lord Turnbull summarized Montford's findings as follows.

- *These inquiries were hurried*
- *The terms of reference were unclear*
- *Insufficient care was taken with the choice of panel members to ensure balance and independence*
- *Insufficient care was taken to ensure the process was independent of those being investigated, eg., the Royal Society allowed CRU to suggest the papers it should read*
- *Sir Muir Russell failed to attend the session with the CRU's Director Professor Jones, and only four of fourteen members of the Science and Technology Select Committee attended the crucial final meeting to sign off their report.*
- *Record keeping was poor.*

Turnbull concludes,

“But above all, Andrew Montford's report brings out the disparity between the treatment of the incumbents and the critics. The former appeared to be treated with kid gloves and their explanations readily accepted without serious challenge. The letter [sic] has been disbursed denied adequate opportunity to put their case.”

One North American Inquiry at Penn State:

1. Penn State University appointed an inquiry because of involvement of Michael Mann, director of the Earth System Science Center at that university. Penn State University has procedures for Inquiry and also Investigation of Academic

wrongdoing. In the leaked emails case, they carried out an Inquiry. The rules require five (5) tenured professors with competency, but no conflict. The committee appointed included one tenured professor, one untenured with an MS in Psychology, and an administrator. The untenured professor left during the Inquiry and was replaced by another administrator.

There was no call for evidence or public hearings. They only interviewed three people. Michael Mann was asked about questions for which he had prior notice. Gerald North of Texas A & M and Donald Kennedy of Stanford were interviewed. Neither was involved with the emails, but were publicly sympathetic to the IPCC work.

[Comments by Clive Crook](#) about the Penn State Inquiry provide an excellent summary:

“The Penn State inquiry exonerating Michael Mann—the paleoclimatologist who came up with the hockey stick—would be difficult to parody. Three of four allegations are dismissed out of hand at the outset: the inquiry announces that, for lack of credible evidence, it will not even investigate them. (At this, MIT’s Richard Lindzen tells the committee, “It’s thoroughly amazing. I mean these issues are explicitly stated in the emails. I’m wondering what’s going on?” The report continues: “The Investigatory Committee did not respond to Dr. Lindzen’s statement. Instead his attention was directed to the fourth allegation.”) Moving on, the report then says, in effect, that Mann is a distinguished scholar, a successful raiser of research funding, a man admired by his peers- so any allegation of academic impropriety must be false.”

Steve Milloy, the founder of the web page *JunkScience*, explains why Crook was so dissatisfied and did a similar [analysis of the Penn State Inquiry](#) as Andrew Montford did for the UEA Inquiries:

“The review apparently extended little further than the Climategate e-mails themselves, an interview with Mann, materials submitted by Mann and whatever e-mails and comments floated in over the transom. Not thorough at all.

- Comically, the report explains at length how the use of the word “trick” can mean a “clever device.” The report ignores that it was a “trick... to hide the decline.” There is no mention of “hide the decline” in the report.
- The report concludes there is no evidence to indicate that Mann intended to delete e-mails. But this is contradicted by the plain language and circumstances surrounding Mann’s e-mail exchange with Phil Jones — See page 9 of *Climategate & Penn State: The Case for an Independent Investigation*.
- The report dismisses the accusation that Mann conspired to silence skeptics by stating, “one finds enormous confusion has been caused by interpretations of the e-mails and their content.” Maybe there wouldn’t be so much “confusion” if PSU actually did a thorough investigation rather than just relying on the word of Michael Mann.
- Although PSU is continuing the investigation, its reason is not to investigate Mann so much as it is to exonerate climate alarmism. On page 9 of the report, it says that “questions in the public’s mind about Dr. Mann’s conduct... may be undermining confidence in his findings as a scientist... and public trust in science in general and climate science specifically.”



One International Inquiry:

The Inter Academy Council (IAC) is a UN group designed to act as a public relations panel for national academies of science. It was commissioned by the IPCC to investigate their procedures. It is very limited because of previous close and conflicting connections with IPCC Chair, Rajendra Pachauri.

Brief Overview of the Inquiries:

A brief analysis of each inquiry explains why Clive Crook, Senior editor of The Atlantic wrote:

“I had hoped, not very confidently, that the various Climategate inquiries would be severe. This would have been a first step towards restoring confidence in the scientific consensus. But no, the reports make things worse. At best they are mealy-mouthed apologies; at worst they are patently incompetent and even wilfully wrong. The climate-science establishment, of which these inquiries have chosen to make themselves a part, seems entirely incapable of understanding, let alone repairing, the harm it has done to its own cause.”

George Monbiot as a fierce advocate of the IPCC and the CRU wrote on his [personal blog](#),

“Yes, the messages were obtained illegally. Yes, all of us say things in emails that would be excruciating if made public. Yes, some of the comments have been taken out of context. But there are some messages that require no spin to make them look bad. There appears to be evidence here of attempts to prevent scientific data from being released, and even to destroy material that was subject to a freedom of information request.

Worse still, some of the emails suggest efforts to prevent the publication of work by climate sceptics, or to keep it out of a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I believe that the head of the unit, Phil Jones, should now resign. Some of the data discussed in the emails should be re-analysed.

”

Overall Summary of the Investigations

There was a distinct pattern to the process used in each inquiry, which was clearly dictated by the cover up objective.

- The people appointed to the inquiries were either compromised through conflict or had little knowledge of climatology or the IPCC process.
- They did not have clearly defined objectives and failed to achieve any they publicized.
- Interviews were limited to the accused.
- Experts, who knew what went on and how it was done, that is understood what the emails were saying, were not interviewed.
- Validity of the science and the results obtained as published in the IPCC Reports were not examined, yet the deceptions were to cover these problems.
- All investigations were seriously inadequate in major portions so as to essentially negate their findings. It appears these inadequacies were deliberate to avoid exposure of the truth.

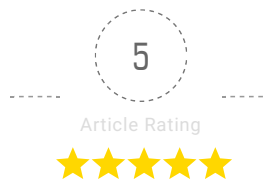
- They all examined only one limited side of the issues, so it was similar to hearing only half of a conversation and what you hear is preselected.

The mock inquiries achieved their objective because the media stopped asking questions. People, like Elizabeth May, accepted their findings as legitimate. It also allowed those people identified in the emails to claim they were absolved of any wrongdoing.

Emeritus Professor Garth Paltridge said:

“Basically, the problem is that the research community has gone so far along the path of frightening the life out of the man in the street that to recant publicly even part of the story would massively damage the reputation and political clout of science in general. And so, like corpuscles in the blood, researchers all over the world now rush in overwhelming numbers to repel infection by any idea that threatens the carefully cultivated belief in climatic disaster.”

But it is more than that. It was a political agenda driven by an ideology that believes the end justifies the means, even if it requires misusing science or protecting the people who misuse science. It is an ideology that requires cover-up of evidence or actions necessary to advance the agenda.



76 COMMENTS



Oldest ▾

John Bills

March 31, 2015 1:19 pm

Ah, Ben Santer who showed that there isn't any significant warming since 1993:

http://www.nature.com/ngeo/journal/v7/n3/fig_tab/ngeo2098_F1.html

