



Trump Official “Embeds” Discredited Denial Arguments into Interior Dep. Reports

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Five years ago, the leading climate denial organization in the UK, the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), published a pamphlet entitled: “*Carbon Dioxide, the good news.*”

The paper reiterated many of the climate deniers’ favorite, but long discredited, arguments. In many ways, the GWPF’s claims on climate science would be laughable if the ramifications were not so serious. They boil down to two main arguments: firstly, that there has been no warming and secondly, even if there has been warming, carbon dioxide is good for you.

The paper was written by Indur Goklany, described as “an independent scholar and author.”

He stated that the “benefits of increasing carbon dioxide have been under-estimated” and that “the risks from increasing carbon dioxide have been overestimated.”

Goklany continued: “there is little or no empirical evidence that the warming that has occurred – or any changes it may have caused – since the end of the last ice age or since the putative start of manmade warming around 1950 is actually causing net harm or diminishing human or environmental wellbeing.”

And also that: “the direct effects of higher carbon dioxide levels may benefit mankind and the natural world.”

How anyone can describe tens of thousands of peer-reviewed research papers, along with numerous reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, along with hundreds if not thousands of other scientific assessments by Governmental panels or scientific bodies, plus thousands of credible reports by NGOs all describing our increasing climate crisis and the role that man-made emissions of carbon dioxide have had, as “no empirical evidence” – is beyond me. It is just plain stupid.

The deniers have long argued that CO₂ is good for plant growth, and I had heard it in the early nineties at an OPEC conference, spoken by Dr. Richard Lindzen. At the time, the OPEC

delegates lapped it up as a simplistic and fundamentally flawed argument that would allow them to carry on drilling with a so-called clean conscience.

Goklany has also written papers for other denier organizations such as the Cato Institute and the Heartland Institute. Over a decade ago, he appeared in a film entitled “Policy Peril: Why Global Warming Policies are More Dangerous than Global Warming Itself.”

It was made by Marlo Lewis, a Senior Fellow, from the Competitive Enterprise Institute, which took millions from Exxon to deny climate science.

But for years, Goklany’s day job has been an official at the U.S. Interior Department. You can understand why someone like Goklany, with his die-hard denial views, would flourish well under Trump. And so when Trump was elected, he was promoted to the Office of the Deputy Secretary, with responsibility for reviewing the agency’s climate policies.

Therefore, today’s New York Times story is on the one hand not surprising, but at the same time, deeply worrying.

The paper notes that Goklany “embarked on a campaign that has inserted misleading language about climate change – including debunked claims that increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is beneficial – into the agency’s scientific reports.”

According to the *Times*, the misleading language appears in at least nine reports, and became so embedded in documents that it was colloquially known as “Gok uncertainty language.”

The *Times* outlined how in Interior Department emails to scientists, Goklany pushed “misleading interpretations of climate science” reminiscent of his GWPF briefing:

“Firstly, that we “may be overestimating the rate of global warming, for whatever reason,” and secondly that rising CO2 was beneficial because it “may increase plant water use efficiency” and “lengthen the agricultural growing season.”

As the *Times* points out: “Both assertions misrepresent the scientific consensus that overall, climate change will result in severe disruptions to global agriculture and significant reductions in crop yields.”

Samuel Myers, a research scientist at Harvard University’s Center for the Environment told the *Times* that the language “takes very specific and isolated pieces of science, and tries to expand it in an extraordinarily misleading fashion.”

But that is what the climate deniers do: set out to mislead and confuse. The reviewers for Goklany’s GWPF paper, included known climate skeptics Craig Idso and Will Happer. Both men authored a petition sent to Trump in 2017, asking him to withdraw the United States from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Trump, Goklany, Lindzen, Idso, and Happer exist in a denial echo chamber. They will continue to deny the evidence as the earth warms and burns around them. We must resist this – with a new energy and vigor. In this new decade, we must ensure that the deniers’ day is finally done. As

Greta Thunberg and the millions of young climate activists demand every week: it is time to listen to the science.