THE DAILY CALLER

NYT Runs Op-Ed, Inadvertently Debunks Arctic Melting Panic

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The New York Times ran an editorial Saturday about the effect climate change had on discovering the Northwest Passage that appears to contradict claims the Arctic ice is melting at cataclysmic rates.

Global warming would have helped famed fur trader Alexander Mackenzie discover a Northwest Passage connecting North America to China, according to a NYT editorial from author Brian Castner. His piece contains one significant caveat: Mackenzie's 1789 trip happened during an era of above normal ice packed in the North that occurred before widespread fossil fuel use.

"Mackenzie paddled during the Little Ice Age, a few centuries of below-normal cold," Castner wrote before noting Mackenzie's failed attempt probably would have been successful had temperatures been at normal ranges.

"If he had undertaken his trip during average conditions, or at our current global temperatures, he would not have been stopped by ice," he added. "If the ocean hadn't been icebound, would the fur trade have followed him down the river to China? Would a summer Deh Cho have been Canada's own Mississippi River? Would settlers have wagoned in, a northern Oregon Trail?"

The so-called "Little Ice Age," a period stretching from the 14th century to the mid-19th century, is a controversial topic among scientists.

Some scientists argue low solar activity contributed to cooler temperatures over Europe and North America, while others posit volcanic activity drove temperatures lower since the trend began before solar activity fell. It nevertheless resulted in several layers of ice covering large sections of the Arctic.

All the various straits north of Hudson's Bay were explored during the mid-1700s, most of which all were found full of packed ice even in summer. Most 18th century officials recognized the Northwest Passage existed but were unable to confirm their suspicions as the Little Ice age gripped previously passable parts of the Arctic ocean.

Cato Institute Atmospheric Scientist Ryan Maue looked at high Arctic temperature data in February going back to 1958 that show warm spikes are normal. An EKG-like pattern is visible in the data, but there is a warming trend. Data before the satellite-era, 1976, is problematic, so it's hard to say the current spike is for sure a record.

North Atlantic and North Pacific heat has hit the Arctic in the past, NASA sea ice expert Alek Petty told reporters at Earther but added events like this now resemble “a heat wave on steroids” because of global warming.

North Pacific warm air has eaten away at sea ice in the Bering Strait between Alaska and Russia. Sea ice levels are at a record low for the Arctic as a whole. Satellite records go back to 1979.