

## Washington Times attacks IPCC glacier report to say climate change is "dead"

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**SUMMARY:** In an editorial riddled with climate change falsehoods, *The Washington Times* seized on criticism of certain citations the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) used relating to evidence of ice loss in certain mountain ranges to claim that man-made climate change is "dead" and "needs to be buried." But scientific studies do show that glaciers are melting all over the world, and scientists have said recent accusations against the IPCC do not undermine the overwhelming evidence of climate change.

*Times* editorial declares man-made climate change is "dead" and "needs to be buried" because of glacier "scandal"  
From the February 2 *The Washington Times* [editorial](#):

The hitch is that the man-caused catastrophic global warming theory is dead, and it needs to be buried. Evidence had been mounting for years that there were problems with the global warming model; most telling was that the globe refused to warm up. Carbon emissions continued apace, but the world began cooling. This is why true believers abandoned the "global warming" brand name and tried to shift the debate to the more ambiguous label "climate change," which is something the rest of us like to refer to as "weather."

[...]

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is having its own scandal regarding a finding in its Nobel Peace Prize-winning 2007 report that glaciers in India were rapidly disappearing. It is now revealed that this dramatic claim was based not on years of patient observation and research but anecdotes from a hiking magazine and a student's master's thesis. IPCC Chairman Rajendra K. Pachauri knew about the erroneous information before December's Copenhagen climate summit but maintained the falsehood. He even denounced a report from India that showed the glaciers were in far less jeopardy as "unsubstantiated research."

**The Times conflated two different claims about the IPCC's glacier science.** The editorial incorrectly asserts that the IPCC "report that glaciers in India were rapidly disappearing" was based on "anecdotes from a hiking magazine and a student's master's thesis." They are, in fact, two different claims: the IPCC [recently acknowledged](#) that it erroneously cited a paper that said Himalayan glaciers would melt by 2035, but it maintained that glaciers worldwide are on the decline. The other claim -- that the IPCC cited papers reportedly based on anecdotal evidence -- comes from a London *Telegraph* [article](#) and is not about "glaciers in India." The papers, which the *Telegraph* reported were written by Mark Bowen and Dario-Andri Schworer, [looked](#) at areas in the Swiss region of the Alps, the Andes, and Africa.

**Scientists' studies show glaciers throughout the world are melting rapidly**

**World Glacier Monitoring Service data show that glaciers are thinning.** The World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS) -- in coordination with the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP) -- **issued a report** in March 2008 showing that, according to a UNEP **press release**, "Data from close to 30 reference glaciers in nine mountain ranges indicate that between the years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 the average rate of melting and thinning more than doubled." The study looked at 30 glaciers in the Alps, the Andes, the Cascade Mountains, Svalbard, Alaska, Scandinavia, Altai, Caucasus, and Tien Shan. WGMS later **updated its data** for 2007-2008 and asserted that the "new data continues the global trend in strong ice loss over the past few decades."

**2009 study shows Swiss glaciers melted by 12 percent over the past decade.** Scientists at the ETH Zurich university reportedly issued a study in 2009 showing that Swiss glaciers had retreated by 12 percent over the past decade. A Reuters **article** quoted Daniel Farinotti, research assistant at the ETH, as saying, "The trend is definitely that glaciers are melting faster now. Since the end of the 1980s, they have lost more and more mass more quickly." The article also noted that "Swiss glaciers have lost 9 cubic km of ice since 1999, the warmest period of the past 150 years, with the most dramatic decline coming in 2003 when they shrunk by 3.5 percent in 2003."

**Ohio State glaciologist Lonnie Thompson says glaciers all over the world are melting.** According to a January 20 *Guardian* **article**, "Lonnie Thompson, a glaciologist at Ohio State University, said there is strong evidence from a variety of sources of significant melting of glaciers -- from the area around Kilimanjaro in Africa to the Alps, the Andes, and the icefields of Antarctica because of a warming climate. Ice is also disappearing at a faster rate in recent decades, he said." From the article:

From the Alps to the Andes, the world's glaciers are retreating at an accelerated pace -- despite the recent controversy over claims by the United Nations' body of experts, leading climate scientists said today.

Lonnie Thompson, a glaciologist at Ohio State University, said there is strong evidence from a variety of sources of significant melting of glaciers - from the area around Kilimanjaro in Africa to the Alps, the Andes, and the icefields of Antarctica because of a warming climate. Ice is also disappearing at a faster rate in recent decades, he said.

"It is not any single glacier," he said. "It is very clear that these glaciers are behaving in a similar fashion."

[...]

But there was evidence gathered from a variety of sources that there has been significant melting of glaciers - from the area around Kilimanjaro in Africa to the Alps, the Andes and the icefields of Antarctica - and that the rate of ice loss was accelerating.

"Those changes -- the acceleration of the retreat of the glaciers and the fact that it is a global response -- is the concerning part of all this. It is not any single glacier," he said

Scientists now had evidence collected over a long period of that decline from samples of the ice core and even collections of plants from mountains that were left ice-free for the first time in more than 5,000 years, Thompson said.

The World Glacier Monitoring Service shows a similar picture. In a 2005 survey of 442 glaciers, 398 -- or 90% -- were retreating, 18 were stationary and 26 were advancing.

**"Glacier expert" Michael Zemp: "Glaciers are the best proof that climate change is happening."** According to a CNN.com [article](#), glacier expert Michael Zemp said he "believes that the errors shouldn't shake people's belief in climate science." It quoted him as saying, "Glaciers are the best proof that climate change is happening. This is happening on a global scale. They can translate very small changes in the climate into a visible signal."

Editorial also recycles other climate change falsehoods

**Washington Times: The Earth is cooling, as evidenced by recent cold weather.** The editorial also claimed: "Evidence had been mounting for years that there were problems with the global warming model; most telling was that the globe refused to warm up. Carbon emissions continued apace, but the world began cooling. This is why true believers abandoned the 'global warming' brand name and tried to shift the debate to the more ambiguous label 'climate change,' which is something the rest of us like to refer to as 'weather.'" Later, it claimed: "World temperatures continue to decline as carbon emissions increase. Chilly Scotland is facing its coldest winter in a century."

- **FACT: 2000-2009 was the warmest decade on record.** In January, major meteorological organizations throughout the world -- including NASA -- [released reports](#) showing that the past decade, 2000-2009, was the warmest on record. The reports undermine the right-wing media's numerous claims that recent snow and cold weather shows that climate change does not exist or has slowed over the past 10 years.
- **FACT: Cold weather has no relevance to the climate debate.** A March 2, 2008, *New York Times* [article](#) reported that climate scientists -- including at least one who has disputed aspects of the scientific consensus on climate change -- completely reject the notion that short-term changes in weather bear any relevance to the climate debate. The article quotes Gavin Schmidt, a climate modeler at NASA as saying, "It's all in the long-term trends. Weather isn't going to go away because of climate change."

**Washington Times: "Arctic sea ice is not vanishing."** The editorial also falsely claimed, "Arctic sea ice is not vanishing."

- **FACT: Long-term trend of shrinking Arctic sea ice area persists.** *Media Matters for America* [has noted](#) that, in fact, 2008 and 2009 were the second- and third-lowest years on record for summertime Arctic sea ice, and the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) has stated that the data from the past two years are consistent with the long-term negative trend that will result in ice-free summers for the Arctic Ocean.

**Washington Times: "Russian analysts" found that Britain had "rigged" temperature station data.** The editorial also claimed that "[e]vidence is emerging that the data had been rigged all along. Russian analysts noted that British temperature calculations excluded data from 40 percent of Russian territory, much of which showed no increase in temperature in the past 50 years."

- **FACT: Russian report was produced by a libertarian think tank.** *Media Matters* [noted](#) that the Russian organization that produced the report is an economic and social policy think tank headed by Andrei Illarionov, an economist, climate skeptic, and fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute; moreover, the report was not about its own data -- it simply purported to analyze how the U.K. Met Office Hadley Center had used data from Russian meteorological stations. Moreover, a U.K. *Daily Express* [article](#) reported that in response to the allegations, "[A] spokesman for the Hadley Centre said its scientists did not choose which weather stations to collect its data from," and quoted him as saying the stations are "a fair representation of changes in mean temperature."

— D.C.P.

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