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Romney Aide Andrea Saul Denied Climate Connection to Hurricane Katrina, Is Sandy Next?

Over half a decade ago, Andrea Saul, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney's press secretary, denied any link between Hurricane Katrina and climate change.

Working as a hired gun on behalf of ExxonMobil at the Washington, DC PR firm DCI Group, Saul was listed as the contact person on a press release that denied that global warming is intensifying extreme weather events:

"Coming off one of the most devastating hurricane seasons in recent memory, many are quick to blame the strength and frequency of these storms on global warming. Leading climate scientists, however, say there is no link between increased storm activity and a massive change in global climate."

The 2006 Saul/DCI press release quotes the Koch-funded Cato Institute's Patrick Michaels, who stated, "There are many more factors determining hurricane frequency and severity, some of which (such as westerly wind strength) should become LESS conducive to hurricanes as the planet warms."

Michaels is a notorious climate change denier who stated in August 2010 on CNN that 40 percent of his funding comes from the oil industry. As with Hurricane Katrina, Pat Michaels this week denied any connection between climate change and Hurricane Sandy.

Will Andrea Saul, speaking on behalf of team Romney/Ryan, be next to deny that global warming added the steroids that increased the devastation of Hurricane Sandy? Andrea Saul isn't the only Romney aide with a connection to Exxon's former PR shop, DCI Group. David Halperin notes on Republic Report that Saul's colleague Matt Rhoades, Romney's campaign manager, also worked at DCI, from 2007-10.

Every year, nearly 400,000 deaths are attributable to climate change, "mainly due to hunger and communicable diseases that affect above all children in developing countries," according to a 2011 report published by DARA's Climate Vulnerable Forum. On a parallel track, 443,000 people "die prematurely from smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke," according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Obfuscation or denial of a link between climate change and extreme weather is as irresponsible as denying the link between cigarettes and cancer, yet both Romney and his running mate Paul Ryan continue to re-fortify their posts in Camp Denial.

The question must be asked: how much of an influence do Andrea Saul and Matt Rhoades have over this campaign's ostrich-like climate denial? Their former employer, DCI Group, after all, made its name in the PR world working on behalf of the tobacco industry.

Desmogblog (<http://s.tt/1rAmU>)