

ClimateGate 'Whitewash' Helps 'Clear' Scientists, U.S., International Media Claim

Lefties complain about lack of media coverage of Muir Russell report, critics point out study was commissioned by university under review.

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The past year has been rough for climate alarmists, with Americans' growing skepticism about the threat of global warming and a series of scandals that appeared to show a potential conspiracy to distort science.

A March 2010 Gallup poll found 48 percent of Americans think the threat of global warming is "generally exaggerated." That was the highest in 13 years, according to Gallup.

That's all in the past, according to journalists. Recently the news media have reported that the scientists accused of unethical or illegal behaviors have been "vindicated" by Sir Muir Russell's investigation. USA Today, The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN and many other U.S. and international media outlets reported that the most recent British inquiry "cleared scientists of any misconduct."

Despite that, left-wingers who complained that the media hasn't covered the report enough have banded together to urge news outlets to report the investigation's findings, which they say "[completely disprove](#)" the ClimateGate scandal. But the news media have covered Muir Russell's conclusions.

"The British scientists involved in a controversial scandal over global warming are cleared of any dishonesty," Lisa Sylvester stated on CNN July 7. She went on to say that the "independent" report found that scientists "did not exaggerate threats of global warming as critics alleged."

The July 8 Washington Post also reported the "independent commission," but without mentioning who commissioned the report. A Chicago Tribune editorialist even used the Muir Russell report to claim that ClimateGate itself was "something of a hoax."

The Post and many other outlets didn't mention crucial indications that the so-called "independent" investigations were a "whitewash." Cato Institute Senior Fellow Pat Michaels wrote an op-ed for The Wall Street Journal July 12 cautioning people, "[Don't believe the 'independent' reviews.](#)"



Michaels, who was a professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia (UVA) from 1980 to 2007, pointed out that Muir Russell's panel named "The Independent Climate Change E-mails Review" was in fact "commissioned and paid for by the University of East Anglia (UEA), the same university whose climate department was under investigation."

That would be like BP handpicking and paying a panel of experts to investigate its handling of the oil spill. Would the news media take that panel seriously if it "exonerated"

BP? Not likely.

But according to Michaels and others that wasn't the only problem with the review panel.

"Mr. Russell took pains to present his committee, which consisted of four other academics, as independent," Michaels explained. "He told the Times of London that 'Given the nature of the allegations it is right that someone who has no links to either the university or the climate science community looks at the evidence and makes recommendations based on what they find.'"

But there were actually strong links between the reviewers and UEA. Michaels noted that one of the panelists, Prof. Geoffrey Boulton, had been on the faculty of UEA's School of Environmental Science and CRU – the division accused of impropriety was established at the beginning of his tenure.

Michaels isn't the only one crying foul over the ClimateGate reviews. Competitive Enterprise Institute's director of energy and global warming policy, Myron Ebell, also condemned the Muir Russell report as a "professional whitewash."

The report "does a highly professional job of concealment. It gives every appearance of addressing all the allegations that have been made since the ClimateGate e-mails and computer files from the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Institute were released last November," Ebell said in a [statement](#) to The American Spectator.

"However, the committee relied almost entirely on the testimony of those implicated in the scandal or those who have a vested interest in defending the establishment view of global warming. The critics of the CRU with the most expertise were not interviewed. It is easy to find for the accused if no prosecution witnesses are allowed to take the stand," Ebell continued.

In an interview with the Business & Media Institute, Ebell said that he thought such whitewashed "official" reports will actually "damage the alarmist position, because it is so obvious that there was wrongdoing here."

Labour MP [Graham Stringer](#) also found fault with the Russell inquiry, calling it "inadequate." According to Stringer, Parliament was misled by UEA when conducting its inquiry. According to Andrew Orłowski of The Register, "Parliament only had time for a brief examination of the CRU files before the election, but made recommendations."

"MPs believe that Anglia had entrusted an examination of the science to a separate inquiry," Orłowski wrote. But neither a previous investigation known as the Oxburgh inquiry nor Muir Russell delved deep enough into the science. Penn State also investigated and cleared its own scientist Michael Mann, the creator of the infamous, and "[comprehensively discredited](#)," hockey stick graph of global warming.

None of the investigations have been enough for Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, who has subpoenaed documents "[pertaining to an alleged \\$500,000 giant fraud](#)" by Mann while he was at UVA.

Damning E-mails Not Refuted by Investigation, Read Me File Not Mentioned in Russell Report

It's difficult to see how the scientists could be "cleared" after e-mails appeared to show potential manipulation of temperature data, a willingness to destroy information rather than release it under British Freedom of Information (FOI) law and the intimidation of publications willing to publish skeptical articles.

One particularly disturbing e-mail from CRU director Phil Jones to Penn State scientist

Michael Mann (famous for his hockey stick graph of global warming) and two others said:

“I’ve just completed Mike’s Nature trick of adding in the real temps to each series for the last 20 years (ie from 1981 onwards) and [sic] from 1961 for Keith’s to hide the decline.”

A Melbourne newspaper, The Age, reported July 8 that Russell’s investigation “dismissed many of those accusations.” The paper even downplayed that “trick,” saying “Sir Muir found the technique used was reasonable as long as the procedures were properly explained.”

Another embarrassing ClimateGate e-mail, from Kevin Trenberth, head of the Climate Analysis Section at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and lead author of three IPCC climate change reports, to Mann and others including NASA’s James Hansen and Princeton’s Michael Oppenheimer, said:

“The fact is that we can’t account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can’t. The CERES data published in the August BAMS 09 supplement on 2008 shows there should be even more warming: but the data are surely wrong. Our observing system is inadequate.”

Other exchanges asked people to delete e-mails rather than turn them over to Freedom of Information requests. Still others showed a desire to keep the public from getting their hands on raw data.

Steve McIntyre, one of the people who helped discredit Mann’s hockey stick, has been combing through the Muir Russell report. He wrote on his website [ClimateAudit](#) that it was absurd for Russell to conclude they “have seen no evidence of any attempt to delete information in respect of a request already made,” since a May 29, 2008, e-mail from Jones expressly asked Mann and four others to “[delete any emails you have had with Keith re AR4?...](#)”

“This is getting stupid,” McIntyre said. “Jones’ email came immediately following David Holland’s FOI request.”

Christopher C. Horner, CEI senior fellow and author of the newly released book [Power Grab](#), told the Business & Media Institute the investigators chose not to interview “skeptics” most knowledgeable about the allegations, including McIntyre.

“And when speaking to those alleged to have done wrong, they chose not to ask them questions at the heart of the matter, like, did you destroy documents like you said?” Horner explained. “It’s pretty easy to claim no wrongdoing when you only speak with the accused, and then fail to ask them if they actually did wrong.”

According to Horner, none of the investigations “specifically refuted or disproved that what the emails say was done was done.”

Another scientist: Dr. Fred Singer, president of Science and Environmental Policy Project, also criticized the Muir Russell report saying “[As far as one can tell, they consulted only supporters of anthropogenic \[manmade\] global warming \(AGW\), i.e., supporters of the IPCC.](#)”

“As a result, they could not really judge whether Phil Jones (head of the Climate Research Unit at UEA) manipulated the post-1980 temperature data,” Singer concluded.

The 160-page Muir Russell report conclusions made no mention of the more damaging [Harry_Read_Me.txt](#) file that was leaked along with the e-mails. That 247-page file “describes the efforts of a climatologist/programmer” at the CRU to update an enormous database of climate data and temperature records that in his own words were in a

“hopeless” state.

The “Read Me” file included admissions to making up data, as well as references to hiding the temperature decline by using different data after 1960.

CNN Offers Liberal Complaint of Lack of Coverage

Left-wingers on Huffington Post and other blogs have complained that there has been little coverage of the most recent report that supposedly vindicates Phil Jones, Michael Mann and other scientists disgraced by ClimateGate.

Washington Post media critic Howard Kurtz offered a similar complaint July 11 on his “Reliable Sources” CNN program. Kurtz argued that there had been “scant” coverage of the exoneration.

“A British panel this week cleared a group of scientists of the controversy known as ‘ClimateGate.’ This group had charges of hacked e-mails that they had manipulated their research to support their view on global warming. The British panel didn’t completely let them off the hook, but basically said they didn’t cook the books,” Kurtz said before asking his guest why there had been so little coverage.

Kurtz credited The New York Times for putting the story on the front page, but lamented that most major papers “stuck it inside.” CNN did a full story on it, Kurtz said but there was little on cable and “nothing on the broadcast networks.”

Kurtz might need to be reminded that the networks ignored the [ClimateGate e-mail scandal](#) for a full 13 days, before one network report was aired on the 14th day.

Even when they reported the scandals, the broadcast networks didn’t come down hard on accused climate scientists. In fact, more than 90 percent of “global warming” and “climate change” stories between the day the data was leaked (Nov. 20, 2009) and April 1, 2010, made no mention of the allegations.

The few broadcast stories on ABC, CBS and NBC about the climate scandals often downplayed the threat to the credibility of those climate scientists and the global warming movement. CBS trivialized the e-mail revelations as “a series of gaffes” on Feb. 4, 2010.

Reporters including ABC’s Clayton Sandell made sure to tell viewers, “The science is solid, according to a vast majority of researchers, with hotter temperatures, melting glaciers and rising sea level providing the proof.”

Of course, ClimateGate wasn’t alone in stirring up concerns about the validity of global warming science. Moscow’s Institute of Economic Analysis (IEA) reported that Russian temperature data at Hadley Center and CRU had been “cherry-picked” with a preference for hotter urban areas.

In January 2010, a claim that Himalayan glaciers could disappear by 2035 was found to be “speculative,” and undercut the IPCC’s 2007 report. The claim had originated with environmental activist group World Wildlife Fund (WWF). In March, another claim about the impact of warming on rainforests was traced back to a WWF study and called “bunk” and “baseless” by The Register (UK).

Other scandals followed, yet ABC, CBS and NBC barely devoted coverage to them. Instead of digging deep into the allegations, admissions and other problems, network reports swept them aside and sought to reassure the public that the “ClimateGate is a sideshow compared to one overwhelming fact.”

The networks also rarely include voices that dissent from the so-called global warming

“consensus.” A BMI study found that proponents of the global warming agenda outnumber those with other views by a [13-to-1 ratio](#).

The lack of reporting on climate change scandals came as no surprise, given the networks' long history of hype stretching back more than 100 years. The major news media in the U.S. have alternately warned of catastrophic warming and cooling periods over the past century.

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