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Special Report: Networks Hide the Decline in Credibility of Climate Change Science

ABC, CBS and NBC ignore ClimateGate scandal and still advance left-wing global warming agenda.

By Julia A. Seymour
Business & Media Institute
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Read the Executive Summary

It's been a rough five months for the credibility of many of the "leading" climate scientists.

First, the ClimateGate e-mails appeared to show unethical or illegal behavior of high profile scientists and a potential conspiracy to distort science for political gain. These weren't just a few renegade scientists; in the following months, damning information came to light about the world's leading climate alarmists and their work with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Stern Report, the U.S. National Climate Data Center and even NASA.

Even with the 40th anniversary of Earth Day coming up on April 22, Americans are skeptical about the threat of climate change. A March 2010 Gallup poll found that 48 percent of Americans think the threat of global warming is "[generally exaggerated](#)." That's the highest in 13 years, according to Gallup.

The public's receding fear of climate change may be related to the series of scandals and admissions that have been uncovered since Nov. 20 when e-mails from University of East Anglia's [Climatic Research Unit \(CRU\)](#) were leaked. Those e-mails provided "ammunition" to climate skeptics about the authenticity and ethics surrounding the CRU's work on global warming science.

The networks news media were unshaken by the apparent bad behavior on the part of the very climate scientists and organizations whose claims they had pushed for years. Less than 10 percent of stories mentioning global warming or climate change since Nov. 20, 2009, referenced any of the climate science scandals.

The first scandal of many – ClimateGate – involved thousands of stolen e-mails showing the 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 prompted accusations of "manipulation" of temperature data. That e-mail from CRU Director Phil Jones to Penn State scientist Michael Mann (famous for hockey stick graph of global warming which was the centerpiece of IPCC's 2001 report) 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) amd [sic] from 1961 for Keith's to hide the decline."

Other exchanges asked people to delete e-mails rather than turn them over to Freedom of Information requests, which is a crime in the UK.

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The Information Commissioner found that CRU scientists had broken FOI laws by not releasing data, but was unable to prosecute because of the statute of limitations, according to the Jan. 28, 2010, [Daily Mail](#) (UK).

Within two weeks of the e-mail leak, the university was forced to admit that Jones had thrown away raw temperature data – making his analysis unrepeatable. Jones was also forced to step down temporarily pending investigation.

ABC, CBS and NBC barely noticed the ClimateGate e-mails and other climate science scandals. The three networks ignored ClimateGate for 13 days; NBC finally aired a story on the 14th day.

Less than 10 percent of stories (13 out of 133) mentioning “climate change” or “global warming” brought up ClimateGate and other climate science scandals between Nov. 20, 2009, and April 1, 2010. Even in the few stories about the climate scandals, network reporters often downplayed the threat to the credibility of the so-called scientific consensus.

CBS trivialized the revelations as “a series of gaffes” on Feb. 4. ABC’s Clayton Sandell concluded a report on ClimateGate saying, “The science is solid, according to a vast majority of researchers, with hotter temperatures, melting glaciers and rising sea level providing the proof.”

Myron Ebell, director of energy and global warming policy for the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), told the Business & Media Institute why he thought the networks did so little reporting on the climate science scandals.

“I think it’s pretty obvious why the networks and major papers have ignored ClimateGate. It’s because they don’t want to consider the possibility that the sort of monolithic [global warming] consensus that they support and are a part of is based on junk science,” Ebell said.

The scandals also didn’t compel the three networks to adjust their typical global warming gloom-and-doom coverage. ABC, CBS and NBC aired pro-alarmist stories more than six times as often as stories about “errors” in the science.

In those stories, reporters warned about the potential end of French wines, the threat of rising sea levels, melting Andes glaciers, worsening allergies, floods, droughts, dengue fever and the danger posed to animals from the Arctic Fox to Atlantic salmon.

The networks promoted the same liberal agenda, despite new cracks appearing in the foundation of the global warming movement week after week.

The Myriad Flaws of ‘Consensus’ Science

The ClimateGate e-mails were just the beginning of embarrassment for the world’s leading climate alarmists, the same ones the networks had relied on to warn about the dangers of global warming for years.

The leaked e-mails were between prominent climate scientists, the same people who made up the scientific “consensus” used by the network media to dismiss other climate change viewpoints in the past.

One e-mail was 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, creator of the “[comprehensively discredited](#)” hockey stick graph of warming, 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 e-mails revealed a desire to keep the public from getting their hands on raw data, and attempts to prevent certain scientists with opposing views from being published in peer-reviewed journals.

Jones and others' primary defense was that the e-mails were being twisted. Mann reacted that skeptics were [“taking these words totally out of context to make something trivial appear nefarious.”](#) They also claimed that the word “trick” (the trick to “hide the decline”) was a scientific term for a common practice in cleaning up data.

Iain Murray, a senior fellow at CEI, explained the importance of those e-mails, saying, [“The CRU is the Pentagon of global warming science, and these documents are its Pentagon Papers.”](#)

The networks certainly didn't take it that seriously. Instead they dismissed ClimateGate and the other scandals as “mistakes.” Ebell disagreed with the way the networks characterized the activities revealed by the ClimateGate e-mails.

“What they were doing was not making mistakes, they were manipulating data,” he told BMI. The entire argument supporting the theory of carbon emissions causing global warming is based on the temperature record, Ebell explained. The CRU e-mails revealed that “they were adjusting the [weather] stations they were using” to show warmer recent decades and cooler temperatures in the 1930s and '40s.

Despite of a growing list of problems with what Ebell called “junk science,” reporters on NBC in particular attempted to brace the climate change movement against the onslaught of criticism and prevent viewers from questioning climate science.

NBC's chief environmental affairs correspondent, Anne Thompson, consistently downplayed the information threatening to tear at the very foundation of the global warming movement. Speaking of ClimateGate on Dec. 7 Thompson said, “But does this controversy change the science? A team of explorers will present findings on Arctic ice melt in Copenhagen, findings that have nothing to do with the e-mails.”

Ten days later Moscow's Institute of Economic Analysis (IEA) reported that that Hadley Center and CRU [“cherry-picked”](#) Russian climate data using temperature readings from only 25 percent of Russian stations (with a bias for urban areas which tend to be hotter). IEA said that more than 40 percent of Russian territory was excluded from calculations.

By January, new information damaging to climate alarmism was coming fast and furious. On Jan. 11, 2010, New Scientist magazine admitted that a claim that the Himalayan glaciers could [“disappear by 2035”](#) was “speculative.” That was an understatement.

That claim, which was used to promote the IPCC's 2007 report, was actually from the environmental activist group World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Roughly a week later, the IPCC was forced to admit that the Himalayan glacier claim published in its 2007 report was [“unfounded,”](#) according to left-wing newspaper The Guardian (UK).

In March, another claim about global warming's impact on Amazon rainforests from the IPCC report was traced to another WWF study and called [“bunk” and “baseless”](#) by The Register (UK), an online tech publication.

Even as admissions were mounting, network reporters barely covered the ClimateGate story and only one report even mentioned any of the other scandals. Less than 10 percent of the stories mentioned any of the cracks in the “science is settled” theme. Nearly 65 percent (86 out of 133) continued to hype the threat of climate change or praise those looking for a solution.

The Stern Review was another important work that had been used by the mainstream media to promote fear of climate change. It claimed to have determined the economic costs of climate change. At that time in 2006, CBS repeated the Stern report findings, warning viewers global warming would wreak economic havoc [“on the scale of the Great Depression of the 1930s.”](#)

But on Jan. 30, 2010, the Telegraph (UK) found that claims in the Stern Review were “watered down” “because the scientific evidence on which they were based could not be verified.”

CBS did not mention its earlier coverage of the Stern Review, or the Telegraph’s findings.

The Guardian exposed flaws with temperature data from Chinese weather stations on Feb. 1, 2010. The Guardian said that “crucial data obtained by American scientists from Chinese collaborators cannot be verified because documents containing them no longer exist.”

That data concerned the location of 42 weather stations in rural China used by CRU’s Jones and a colleague, Wei-Chyung Wang, in global warming study published in 1990.

Only one network story, a CBS report, even alluded to ChinaGate.

Then the scandals hit even closer to home. On Mar. 30, 2010, NASA e-mails revealed that the U.S. space agencies’ climate findings were “inferior” to findings from CRU and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, according to Fox News.

In an e-mail exchange from 2007, NASA’s Dr. Reto A. Ruedy told a USA Today reporter “to continue using NCDC’s [climate]data for the U.S. means and [East Anglia] data for the global means.”

So NASA’s data was in worse shape than CRU’s data – which may have been “deliberately manipulated.” Another big blow against climate alarmism, but the network newscasts didn’t bother with that story either.

And that wasn’t even a complete list of climate science scandals. Columnist [Mark Landsbaum](#) provided a list of 19 climate science “Gates” for readers of The Orange County Register Feb. 12, 2010.

Downplaying Serious Allegations and ‘Mistakes’

Americans seeking to understand how serious all these admissions were would have to look way beyond the network news for investigative reporting into the numerous scandals – primarily to the London press, who churned out dozens of reports.

British journalist [James Delingpole](#) was very frank about the impact of all the climate science scandals. He wrote of AGW or human-caused global warming:

“AGW theory is toast. So’s Dr. Rajendra Pachauri. So’s the Stern Review. So’s the credibility of the IPCC. But if you think I’m cheered by this you’re very much mistaken. I’m trying to write a Climategate book but the way things are going by the time I’m finished there won’t be anything left to say: the battle will already have been won and the only people left who still believe in Man Made Global Warming will be the eco-loon equivalents of those wartime Japanese soldiers left abandoned and forgotten on remote Pacific atolls.”

His reaction was the opposite of the networks here in the U.S. ABC, CBS and NBC barely devoted coverage to the scandals as a disturbing pattern of problems in the science behind the global warming agenda was being exposed by international media and online.

Instead of digging deep into the allegations, admissions and other problems, network reports swept them aside and sought to reassure the public that the “science is solid.”

After listing a number of scientific groups that accept manmade global warming as fact, CBS’s Wyatt Andrews declared, “To most of them, ClimateGate is a sideshow compared to one overwhelming fact.”

NBC took a different tack in two of its reports. Rather than relegating ClimateGate to a “sideshow,” Andrea Mitchell framed it as a partisan squabble. She claimed “Republicans” were calling the scandal “ClimateGate” and emphasized it as talking point Sarah Palin wanted to “capitalize on.”

ABC’s Clayton Sandell and NBC’s Anne Thompson found yet a third approach – citing further evidence of climate change.

Sandell's Dec. 6 report supported the global warming agenda citing "hotter temperatures, melting glaciers and rising sea level providing the proof."

That same night, Thompson cited "experts" to bolster global warming science against the damage of ClimateGate. She said: "They say it doesn't matter what's in those e-mails. The Earth is changing."

The following day Thompson continued to employ the strategy by saying that evidence was being presented in Copenhagen that has "nothing to do with the e-mails."

Networks Ignore 'Read Me' File about 'Hopeless' CRU Temperature Data

Even more damaging than the e-mails between leading climate scientists was the 247-page "Harry_Read_Me.txt" file which "[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.

Lorrie Goldstein of the Toronto Sun explained that the data being coded was "the foundation of the study of climate change – recordings from hundreds of weather stations around the world of temperature and precipitation measurements from 1901 to 2006, sun/cloud computer simulations, and the like."

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.

"Here, the expected 1990-2003 period is MISSING - so the correlations aren't so hot! Yet the WMO codes and station names /locations are identical (or close). What the hell is supposed to happen here? Oh yeah - there is no 'supposed', I can make it up. So I have :-)," the programmer wrote.

In Sept. 1998, the programmer said, "Apply a VERY ARTIFICIAL correction for decline!!"

In another he explained that artificial correction saying, "[this means that data after 1960 no longer represent tree-ring ... density variations, but have been modified to look more like the ... observed temperatures.](#)"

The file also revealed a history of inconsistencies in weather station data, particularly from Australia: "I've found that most if not all of the Australian bulletin stations have been unceremoniously dumped into the files without the briefest check for existing stations."

Ebell told BMI that what the "Harry Read Me" file showed was that Jones and the CRU "knew that their own reconstruction of the temperatures had problems" yet he would never share the raw data or methodology. Jones knew that if the data went public they "would become a laughingstock," Ebell said.

ABC, NBC Only Report ClimateGate, Ignore All Other Science 'Gates'

ClimateGate didn't get much coverage on the networks, but all the other "Gates" got even less. Only one report – from CBS – mentioned any of the other damaging admissions related to climate science.

That CBS report by Mark Phillips found that "scientists make mistakes in a major study of melting glaciers in the Himalayas" and brought up the problem with weather stations in China.

But Mark's Phillips failed to fully explain why those "mistakes" about the Himalayan glacier prediction were a big deal. He also sympathized with alarmists, saying, "It's a frustrating time for those who believe the basic science in global warming remains true."

The prediction that Himalayan glaciers would melt by 2035 was published in the IPCC's 4th assessment report on climate change, which was used to sell global warming hysteria and garner political cooperation to restrict carbon emissions.

Patrick Michaels, CATO Institute's senior fellow in environmental studies, told CBS "Evening News" "Any scientist that read that 2035 figure just laughed because they knew it couldn't be true."

According to the Daily Mail (UK), the scientist behind that “bogus claim” admitted “it was included purely to put political pressure on world leaders.”

“Dr Murari Lal also said he was well aware the statement, in the 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), did not rest on peer-reviewed scientific research,” the Daily Mail reported on Jan. 24, 2010. In fact, Lal cited literature from an environmental activist group, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), as its source.

When the glacier claim was first criticized in 2009 by Professor Graham Cogley, a glacier expert, IPCC chairman Rajendra Pachauri denounced the criticism as “voodoo science.”

Pachauri has since had to apologize for the IPCC’s use of the unverified glacier claim, but placed the blame on Lal and others.

Another “baseless” WWF claim about the threat to Amazon rainforests from a 2000 study that was not subject to peer review also made it into an IPCC report. The networks ignored the story.

Not only was WWF not subject to peer review, but as an environmental group it has its own agenda. According to its Web site, the conservation group urges Congress “to support strong climate and energy legislation.” Specifically the group supports the “American Clean Energy and Security Act,” also known as the Waxman-Markey bill. A bill that would institute cap-and-trade in the U.S. WWF also supports the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) having authority to regulate “global warming pollutants” a.k.a. carbon emissions.

Most recently, NASA e-mails obtained by the Freedom of Information Act revealed that NASA’s temperature data set (generated by James Hansen) was admittedly “inferior” to data sets at CRU (East Anglia) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, according to Fox News.

In an e-mail exchange from 2007, NASA’s Dr. Reto A. Ruedy told a USA Today reporter “to continue using NCDC’s [climate]data for the U.S. means and [East Anglia] data for the global means.”

Ruedy’s admission that the NASA temperature set was inferior to CRU’s is huge, given the crumbling credibility of the CRU data based on the e-mails and the “Read Me” file.

Disgraced IPCC Chairman Refuses to Step Down

Now that the public know that unverified claims of eco-doom (Himalayan glacial melt, Amazon rainforests) were used to shore up the IPCC’s report and to prod politicians into action, its chairman Pachauri is in hot water.

The IPCC has been forced to admit the errors. But that was only the beginning of Pachauri’s troubles. According to The Telegraph (UK), the scientist who made the “baseless” claim about melting Himalayan glaciers – Dr. Syed Hasnain – [has been working for Pachauri for two years.](#)

Hasnain is a senior employee at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), where Pachauri is director-general, according to The Telegraph.

The unfounded claim also “helped TERI to win a substantial share of a \$500,000 grant from one of America’s leading charities, along with a share in a three million euro research study funded by the EU.”

Based on The Telegraph’s investigation, the glacier claim actually came from a small Indian magazine and was challenged by Dr. Georg Kaser even before the IPCC’s 2007 report was published.

Kaser said it was “so wrong that it is not even worth dismissing.” Yet, a year later Pachauri recruited Hasnain to TERI.

Scientists and others have called for Pachauri’s resignation from the IPCC over this including some on his own side of the climate science movement. Liberal [George Monbiot](#) of The Guardian and [John Sauven](#), head of Greenpeace UK, have both called for Pachauri to relinquish his position.

Sauven told The London Times: "Mistakes will always be made but it's how you handle those mistakes which affects the credibility of the institution. Pachauri should have put his hand up and said 'we made a mistake'. It's in these situations that your character and judgment is tested. Do you make the right judgment call? He clearly didn't."

The Greenpeace leader also expressed skepticism that the IPCC can regain credibility without Pachauri's resignation.

Pachauri claims he and climate scientists are being unfairly targeted and portrayed as criminals.

He has lashed out at his critics for "'a new form of persecution' against scientists who work on global warming," according to The Guardian (UK) March 26, 2010.

ABC, CBS and NBC Support Alarmism in 65 Percent of Stories

Instead of investigating the climate alarmist movement following the ClimateGate scandal, the networks continued to push their catastrophic climate change theme.

In nearly 65 percent of their stories (86 out of 133), the networks supported climate alarmism including reports about the Copenhagen convention and stories warning of the "precarious" situation facing "cuddly" animals.

President Obama went to Copenhagen to seek an international agreement to remedy climate change, with the full support of the network news media. CBS's Sharyl Attkisson declared on Jan. 11, 2010, "Few would argue with the U.S. having a presence at the Copenhagen Climate Summit."

NBC not only supported Obama's trip Dec. 12, 2009, but celebrated the protesters in Denmark who were seeing "climate justice." Anne Thompson called the protests an "extraordinary sight" and described the people (more than 700 were arrested) as "looking for solutions to preserve the planet and stop climate change."

Ultimately, the networks were disappointed by the outcome of Copenhagen. As NBC anchor Lester Holt expressed, the conference "fell far short of what many hoped for."

NBC's alarmist-in-chief Thompson maintained "that role in story after story. On Dec. 8, 2009, she declared that "climate change is to blame" for melting Andes glaciers and that they could be gone by 2020 according to the United Nations.

In keeping with the fluffy stories typical of morning shows, "The Early Show" focused on the San Diego Zoo's exhibit about animals threatened by climate change on its Feb. 2, 2010, program.

After displaying an Arctic Fox, Maggie Rodriguez asked the zoo's Rick Schwartz, "How is this animal in danger now?"

Schwartz replied, "Well, the problem that we're having up north mainly with the polar bears, there's not enough ice forming up there, so the time for them to hunt for their food is being diminished." The problem for the fox is that "they follow polar bears around."

The "Today" show also worried about loss of sea ice on Dec. 17, 2009. Ann Curry interviewed National Geographic photographer Paul Nicklen, asking him what "evidence" he had seen of climate change in the Arctic and Antarctic.

Nicklen replied, "I'm seeing change everywhere ... So the ice is literally melting out from under these people and these animals." Like many climate alarmists Nicklen emphasized that "the effects are now and the debate's over."

Neither Rodriguez nor Curry brought up the facts about sea ice. Despite claims that polar bears and therefore other animals are threatened by diminishing ice, The U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) found evidence the contrary. The Washington Times reported on Jan. 10, 2010, that according to NSIDC Arctic summer sea ice **increased** by

409,000 square miles (26 percent) since 2007.

In fact, in 2008 Daily Tech reported that [sea ice was growing at record speed](#).

Networks History of Hype and Censorship on Climate Issues

Journalistic hype of climate change dates back [more than 100 years](#). In the late 1800s until about 1932 and then again in the 1970s media outlets warned of global cooling and the possibility of another ice age. But in the 1930s through the 1960s and since 1981 reporters have warmed up to the threat of global warming.

In both cases, the media warned of catastrophic consequences. Way back in August of 1923, the Chicago Tribune warned readers about a coming Ice Age. "Scientist says Arctic ice will wipe out Canada," declared the Aug. 9, 1923 headline. That story quoted "Professor Gregory" of Yale who said "another world ice-epoch is due."

Fast forward to the news media's first warm period of 1929-1969. In 1959, The New York Times found glaciers melting in Alaska and that "ice in the Arctic ocean is about half as thick as it was in the late nineteenth century."

It took less than two decades for the media to turn around again. On Jan. 11, 1970, The Washington Post warned "Colder Winters Held Dawn of New Ice Age." That article emphasized doomsday predictions from climatologist Reid Bryson who said "it is something that, if it continues, will affect the whole human occupation of the earth – like a billion people starving. The effects are already showing up in a rather drastic way."

Finally in the 1980s and '90s the media got hot and bothered again about the threat of global warming. The Washington Post worried on Jan. 18, 2006 that a recent slight increase in temperature could "quite literally, alter the fundamentals of life on the planet."

Despite all the historical shifting from one position to another, many in the media no longer welcome opposing views on climate change.

CBS's Scott Pelley made that clear in 2006 when he wrote that the idea of impartial journalism just didn't work for climate stories: "There becomes a point in journalism where striving for balance becomes irresponsible."

That bias has been reflected in network reporting on climate change for years, particularly in the sources included by the networks. The Business & Media Institute analyzed coverage of climate change in 2007 and found a [mere 20 percent of stories](#) that mentioned any divergent opinions from the so-called global warming consensus.

Proponents of the global warming agenda also outnumbered those with dissenting opinions by nearly a 13-to-1 ratio.

Conclusion

If the networks stick to their standard model of coverage, the 40th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22, 2010, will be a day of celebration.

The morning shows will likely offer tips for greener living, interview Al Gore or the latest green Hollywood celebrity. The evening newscasts will probably profile someone who's "saving our planet" or review the accomplishments of the green movement.

But what the networks haven't done in all their reporting is admit that the credibility of the global warming agenda they have pushed for more than a decade is crumbling. They haven't admitted their failure to investigate the motives or science that has been used to promote costly international action against climate change.

In recent months, network reporters have been befuddled by the public's lack of faith in the global warming movement. Both ABC's Clayton Sandell and CBS's Russ Mitchell mentioned the declining concern for climate change among Americans, but without pinpointing a possible cause: the series of climate scandals tarnishing the reputation of prominent alarmist scientists.

Sandell's Dec. 6, 2009, remarks showed just how entrenched the global warming agenda is for network reporters: "Despite growing scientific evidence that humans are to blame for

warming the planet, rising sea level, melting glaciers, more intense droughts, polls show the number of Americans who believe global warming is happening is at its lowest point in 12 years.”

The networks keep selling alarmism, but the public has stopped buying. Journalists on ABC, CBS and NBC have done a terrible job of remaining impartial on issues related to climate science. To improve, they should review and adhere to several points from the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics:

- Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.

Many networks reporters have obviously embraced the global warming agenda. But in order to be responsible journalists they should step back and avoid imposing that agenda on viewers through their reports.

- Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.

In the past, BMI found a 13-to-1 difference between the number of spokespeople pushing the threat of climate change and anyone offering a different perspective. Journalists need to include more divergent opinions in climate stories.

- Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.

Too many network reports are blatant advocacy packaged as news, and some reporters, like CBS’s Scott Pelley, have openly embraced that role. Journalists on ABC, CBS and NBC should be neutral journalists, not climate crusaders.

- Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.

The old saying that “power corrupts” is just as true today as it was yesterday. Journalists love scandals when it suits their agenda, but the climate science scandals clearly didn’t. The public would be much better served if reporters sought to find the truth (regardless of outcome), questioned everyone’s motives and refused to take anyone at their word.

- Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.

The networks repeated the IPCC predictions, the Stern review and other warnings about climate change uncritically for years. It’s time for them to examine their record and admit mistakes now that evidence has been found proving some of those claims to be without merit.

Recommendations

- **Don’t Ignore Problems with Alarmists’ Data:** All three networks avoided reporting on ClimateGate for 13 days; it wasn’t until the 14th day that NBC finally broke the silence. If the cover-up and potential manipulation had been done by scientists arguing against the threat of climate change, would the networks have ignored such a scandal?
- **Report Both Sides of Climate Science Debate, Don’t Advocate One Side:** Reporters have a professional responsibility to remain objective and avoid inserting their own opinions into stories. Many network reporters have sorely missed that mark when it comes to reporting on global warming and climate change.
- **Be Skeptical of Scientists and Politicians Pushing Threat of Warming, Not Just ‘Naysayers:’** Journalists should always look for ulterior motives, possible biases and sources of funding on the part of their subjects rather than taking their word for it. A healthy dose of skepticism especially toward the politicians and scientific alarmists would have resulted in much better reporting on climate change.
- **Find Other Scientific Viewpoints:** There are many scientists who are not part of the global warming consensus. The media often unfairly lump them into one group with labels like “skeptic,” “denier” and “naysayer.” This is an injustice given the widely divergent views in the scientific community. Network reporters should reach out to such scientists and hear what they have to say instead of dismissing and disparaging them. They could begin by attending the 4th International Conference

on Climate Change in Chicago May 16-18.

Methodology

The Business & Media Institute examined every story mentioning “global warming” or “climate change” on ABC, CBS and NBC morning and evening newscasts between Nov. 20, 2009, and April 1, 2010. “Good Morning America,” “Today,” and “The Early Show,” were analyzed along with “World News,” “Nightly News” and “Evening News.”

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