

Original URL: http://www.theregister.co.uk/2009/12/17/russian_data_cherrypicked_says_sceptic/

'CRU cherrypicked Russian climate data', says Russian Newly released info probed as Climategate, um, snowballs

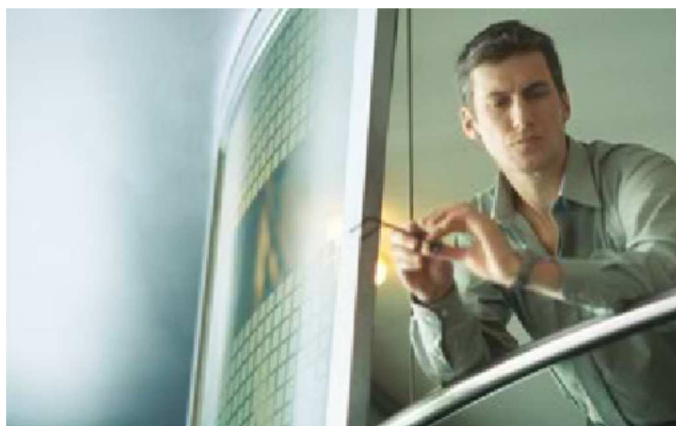
By [Lewis Page](#)

Posted in [Environment](#), 17th December 2009 11:29 GMT

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A prominent Russian climate sceptic and free-market economist says that the British HadCRUT global temperature database - much of which has now been released to the public following the "climategate" email scandal - has been manipulated to show greater warming in Russia than is actually the case.

Andrei Illarionov, a former economic adviser to then-Russian President Putin, is head of his own thinktank in Moscow, the Institute of Economic Analysis (IEA). He is also a [senior fellow](#) (<http://www.cato.org/people/illarionov.html>) at the Cato Institute, a libertarian American thinktank. He has always been a climate sceptic, having vigorously opposed Russia's signing up to the Kyoto protocols.



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On Tuesday, Illarionov released the following report ([pdf in Russian](#) (http://www.iea.ru/article/kioto_order/15.12.2009.pdf)), comparing the newly-released HadCRUT data to records from the Russian meteorological service, which supplied the parts of HadCRUT covering Russia.

According to Russian newspaper *Kommersant*, as [relayed](#) (<http://en.rian.ru/papers/20091216/157260660.html>) via the RIA Novosti news wire, Illarionov says that the HadCRUT dataset doesn't include the records from many of Russia's meteorological stations. He adds that the missing records, if they had been included by the British climate scientists, would have significantly reduced the amount of warming shown for Russia by the HadCRUT database.

As Russia accounts for 12.5 per cent of the world's land mass, according to Illarionov the use of complete Russian records would significantly reduce the figures on global warming in recent times.

Climatologists at the Climate Research Unit (CRU) had long been criticised for refusing to reveal the raw data on which their global-warming figures and graphs were based. Last month an anonymous

hacker posted a large amount of data, including private emails sent to and from CRU personnel, triggering the so-called "climategate" brouhaha.

The emails didn't appear to show that the CRU scientists had actually falsified any figures in an attempt to strengthen the case for human-created, CO₂-driven global warming. However they did show that the climatologists were extremely keen to push that case and to suppress scientific dissent on the matter.

The affair has so far led Phil Jones, head of the CRU, to "step aside" from running the unit pending an "independent review"; and the announcement by the UK Met Office - in charge of climate change research in the UK - that it will publish all its raw data as soon as it can. Some was released [nine days ago](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2009/pr20091208a.html) (<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2009/pr20091208a.html>), and it is this which Illarionov has been examining.

The HadCRUT dataset is very important in the climate change debate. It was used by the UN in determining that exceptional global warming is taking place, and that this is caused by human activity - primarily thought to be greenhouse gas emissions such as CO₂.

The CRU has always defended the HadCRUT results on the grounds that the two other comparable global databases - both in America, one run by NASA and one by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - agree with it. However it's perhaps worth noting that the NASA database is under the control of Dr James Hansen, head of the Goddard Institute in New York. Hansen is the world high priest of human-caused global warming, a man whose personal beliefs are well-known: he has travelled to the UK for the purpose of joining protests against new power plants, for instance. (Even Hansen, however, has [lately admitted](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2009/12/15/soot_bigger_than_co2/) (http://www.theregister.co.uk/2009/12/15/soot_bigger_than_co2/) that greenhouse gas emissions may not be the dominant factor in climate change.)

More studies of this type - though not necessarily clashing with the HadCRUT figures, of course - may appear in coming weeks, as analysts around the world trawl through the newly-released data.

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