The IPCC loses its last credibility

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The period from November 2009 to March 2010 was a bad time for climate-change alarmists. That four-month period included the posting of thousands of emails and computer files from leading climate scientists showing that they had been cooking their global-warming data, working together to keep independent researchers from examining their raw figures and pressuring academic journals against publishing studies that contradicted the man-made climate-change orthodoxy.

Also during that time, it was shown that the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had included questionable data on Himalayan glacier melt in its major 2007 climate assessment report and that it had done so deliberately to provoke government leaders to speed up environmental legislation. Indian climate scientist Murari Lal, the scientist in charge of the IPCC’s glacier chapter, admitted he was aware at the time that the melt prediction had not been peer-reviewed, but included it anyway because “we thought that if we can highlight it, it will impact policy-makers and politicians and encourage them to take some concrete action.”

By the end of March 2010 it had been shown that at least 16 claims of impending climate doom in the IPCC’s vaunted 2007 report had been based on work done by environmental activists, most of which had not received independent reviews before being swallowed whole by the UN climate body. For instance, the IPCC’s insistence that up to 40% of the Amazon rain forest was under imminent threat came from a World Wildlife Fund-International Union for the Conservation of Nature joint report written by a scientist-consultant and a freelance environmental journalist.

Of course, since that dark period, the environmental Sanhedrin has worked hard to re-establish its control over the climate-change debate. Four whitewash investigations — one conducted by one of the leading investors in wind power in Europe — have sought to exonerate the scientists most deeply enmeshed in the Climategate email scandal.

Pressure to conform to the alarmist orthodoxy is once again so great, that even scientists who discover data that contradicts alarmist scaremongering feel obliged to defer to the mongers anyway. Just in the last few months there have been major studies showing that the sea level is not rising dangerously and that solar activity is about to enter a phase so quiet that we could experience two or three decades of global cooling. Yet the authors of both studies have felt obliged to caution reporters that their findings in no way upset the IPCC’s forecast of dangerous warming ahead.

Still, who could have imagined that the IPCC would have emerged from these setbacks so cocksure that it would return to its old ways of conflating environmentalist propaganda with scientific investigation? But it has.

Canadian researcher Steve McIntyre discovered earlier this week that the IPCC’s recent report on alternative energy — which asserted that it was possible to convert the world to 80% green energy by 2050 if politicians would simply tax conventional sources and spend billions on alternative sources — was lifted largely from Greenpeace reports.

The lead author of the IPCC report turns out to be Sven Teske, a Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner, who the IPCC does not identify as such in either the report or its media releases. Mr. Teske is also the author of much of the Greenpeace material on which the IPCC report is based, in effect making him a peer reviewer of the validity of his own material.

Imagine the reaction, for instance, if a government had produced a fossil-fuel friendly report based on work by an oil sands engineer, without revealing the source, and had paid the same engineer to write its own summary of his initial work.

That is what the IPCC has stooped to in this case and it eliminates any credibility the organization had left on the climate file.

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