

Analysis of great global warming swindle

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Analysis of Great Global Warming Swindle BY rohtni315 Analysis of The Great Global Warming Swindle The Great Global Warming Swindle (GGWS) is a controversial documentary on climate change by British television producer Martin Durkin¹. It first aired on the BBC's channel 4 on March 8, 2007². This documentary argues against conventional scientific understanding of the degree and cause of recent, observed climate change. The overwhelming view amongst climate scientists is that twentieth century global warming is largely due to an increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases resulting from increased industrialization during the last 100- 150 years.

His program collides sharply with the premise outlined in former Vice President Al Gore's Oscar-winning documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," which presents a bleak picture of how a buildup in greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide affects the global climate, with potentially disastrous consequences. Durkin presents an alternative view that recent global warming is neither significant nor due to human activity. The documentary does not attempt to argue the latter view through any critical deconstruction of climate science orthodoxies.

Rather, it contends that modern climate scientists are at best seriously misguided in their collective opinion on the nature and causes of global warming, or are at worst guilty of lying to the rest of the community.

Publicity for the documentary leans heavily towards the latter, stating that global warming is "the biggest scam of modern times".

³ The documentary uses a series of techniques to shake the viewer's belief in current orthodox understanding and to present an amenable contrary

viewpoint. Several experts, labeled as ‘authoritative’, are interviewed to lend credibility to the documentary.

These commentators are presented as ‘insiders’ who cast doubt on the integrity of climate change science and the IPCC assessment process that has led to current orthodox understanding. Alternate scientific contentions are presented in a credible way by selectively presenting facts and heightening uncertainties without context or by specious reference to the actual published science. The motivation and morality of scientists driving current orthodox understanding is questioned through aspersions that are conspiratorial in nature. Many of the people that were interviewed did not have the proper credentials and were under qualified.

For example, Patrick Moore is a Canadian Professor who has no training in climate science. He makes public statements in favor of genetic engineering and logging in the Amazon. In 1986 Moore had an altercation with Greenpeace and has since put most of his energies into undermining the arguments of environmentalists, particularly his former colleagues. His main claims involve the idea that environmentalists treat humans as ‘scum’. In the 1990s, Moore worked as a consultant for the British Columbian Timber Products Association, undermining the attempts of Greenpeace to preserve forests.

Also various large corporations and companies paid many of the people that were interviewed off. Fred Singer is a retired Professor from the University of Virginia and has never had an article accepted for a peer reviewed scientific Journal in the last 20 years⁶. He has argued that CFCs do not cause Ozone

Depletion. There are numerous scientific studies that disprove his ludicrous assertion. 7. In 1990, Singer founded 'The Science and Environment Policy project', which contradicts climate science and has received direct funding from Exxon, Shell, Unocal and ARCO 2000 8.

Patrick Michaels is another such person interviewed in The Great Global Warming Swindle. He is one of the most prominent climate change skeptics in the US and made the claim (in the movie) "I've never been paid a nickel by the oil and gas companies" 9. This is actually not true as according to journalist Ross Gebspan, Michaels has received direct funding from German Coal Mining Association (\$49, 000), Edison Electric Institute (\$1 5, 000), and the Western Fuels Association (\$63, 000), which is one of the most powerful funders of Global Warming Skeptics in the USIO.

However, one of the more credible people interviewed in the movie was Richard Lindzen. He is a meteorology professor at MIT and is known as one of the most reputable climate change skeptics in the US.

Some of his most notable claims include those published in the Wall Street Journal in June 2011 maintaining that "there is no consensus, unanimous or otherwise, about long-term climate trends or what causes them" 11. Lindzen is known to charge oil and coal interests 2, 500 USD a day for his consulting services and in 1991, he testified in front of a senate committee, after receiving funding from the company Western Fuels 12.

He is a member of the Advisory Council of the Annapolis Center for Science Based Public Policy which receives a large proportion of its funding from Exxon Mobil 13. In summary the documentary is not scientifically sound and <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-great-global-warming-swindle/>

presents a flawed and very misleading interpretation of the science. While giving the impression of being based on peer-reviewed science, much of the material presented is either out-of-date, already discredited or of uncertain origin.

A number of the graphs and figures used in the documentary are not based on any known or published climate data, while others are presented schematically, and hence may confuse and mislead the viewer.

The general arguments in the movie are; that climate change is a natural occurrence, that Global temperature actually dropped during the period of greatest anthropogenic Greenhouse Gas Emissions, that carbon dioxide is not a significant greenhouse gas that the greenhouse effect isn't being enhanced and that carbon dioxide concentration increases do not cause increased temperature.

The format of the documentary itself is sound in that it shows the opinions of various source, the problem is that the interviews were taken out of context and visual imagery was often manipulated. 4 The documentary attempts to support the claim that temperatures were higher in the recent past with the graph 'Temp - 1000 Years' - attributed to the "IPCC".

This graph purports to show global average temperature between AD 900 and "now", with the highest values recorded between about 1100 and 1300 (labeled as "Medieval Warm Period"). The graph is actually reproduction of a schematic diagram published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its First Assessment Report in 1990 (Figure 2). It is important to note that this schematic is largely based upon early
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econstructions of European temperature changes such as that of Lamb (1988).

Critically, the C Report cautioned, “ it is still not clear whether all t fluctuations indicated were truly global”, and underlying the fact that neither regional temperature averages nor temperature records from single locations can be used as proxies for global temperature. This 17 year-old graph has been superseded by numerous more recent studies, with the IPCC successively publishing updated records of “ near global” temperature in its Second Assessment Report in 1995, its Third Assessment Report in 2001, and its Fourth Assessment Report in 2007.

The most up-to- date figure for the Northern Hemisphere, from IPCC (2007), is reproduced in Figure 3, which shows 12 different reconstructions. These consistently show that, for the Northern Hemisphere, the past century is exceptionally warm, and that the warmth of recent decades clearly exceeds that of the Medieval Warm Period in all cases. The United States National Academies published a report in 2006 (NAS 2006) that reviewed the published scientific evidence on surface temperature reconstructions for the last 2000 years.

It found that “ evidence for regional warmth during medieval times [centered around AD 1000] can be found in a diverse but more limited set of records including ice cores, tree rings, marine sediments, and historical sources from Europe and Asia, but the exact timing and duration of warm periods may have varied from region to region, and the magnitude and geographic extent of the warmth are uncertain”. 1 5 Based on a review of the scientific

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literature, the report concluded “ none of the large-scale surface temperature reconstructions show medieval temperatures as warm as the last few decades of the 20th century. Very clearly, the ocumentary has misrepresented the early IPCC figure, and ignored all IPCC updates to this figure. The analyses published by the IPCC strongly contradict the documentary. Another such scientific inaccuracy is the claim that the rising temperatures of the planet stared to plateau around 1940 and then didn't continue to rise again until 1970, and therefore that this represents evidence that human activities don't influence the climate.