

# Review: an inconvenient truth



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Review : An Inconvenient Truth An Inconvenient Truth is a provocative documentary on global warming by director Davis Guggenheim. The film, based on the multi-media presentation given by former Vice President Al Gore in over 1, 000 cities around the world in recent years, presents a disturbing picture of the destruction that global warming is doing to the earth and the horrific future that we are facing if global warming is not addressed.

Despite some serious weaknesses, anyone who is concerned about the future must see this film and join in discussion, debate, and action over what is needed to save the planet. At a time when believing in scientific truth is under attack, and when the Bush administration is gagging government scientists from telling the truth, censoring official reports, and sabotaging international treaties, An Inconvenient Truth defends, popularizes and makes accessible to millions the basic science of global warming.

Because of this, the film has come under attack. Right-wing talk show host Glenn Beck compared An Inconvenient Truth, to Nazi propaganda. Holman Jenkins wrote in the Wall Street Journal: “ Mr. Gore’s narrative isn’t science, but science fiction. ” The movie presents scientific concepts and evidence about global warming in a clear, concise and often entertaining way. It features great nature photography, graphs, and animation to visually express complex evidence. It even has a clip from Futurama. I can’t think of another movie in which the display of a graph elicited gasps of horror, but when the red lines showing the increasing rates of carbon-dioxide emissions and the corresponding rise in temperatures come on screen, the effect is jolting and chilling,” A. O. Scott writes in the New York Times review of the

movie. In the movie Gore shows a graph that demonstrates a link between CO<sub>2</sub> levels and temperature over the last 600, 000 years as revealed by samples from polar ice cores. 1 During this entire period CO<sub>2</sub> levels have varied between 180 and 280 parts per million (ppm).

The level today is nearly 400 ppm, well above anything that has been seen in over a half million years. And Gore points out that the CO<sub>2</sub> levels will rise to 600 ppm if something isn't done quickly. Gore describes the dramatic changes taking place in the world as a result of global warming. He shows pictures taken 15 to 30 years ago of glaciers that have existed for the last 10, 000 years or more and compares them to pictures taken in the last year or two. It is shocking to see the rate at which the glaciers are disappearing!

The film shows the famous “ snows of Kilimanjaro” in 1970. A picture from 2005 shows only a tiny sliver of ice remaining. The movie describes how many new scientific studies are confirming that warmer water in the top layer of the ocean caused by global warming is producing more powerful hurricanes. While it is not possible to attribute any specific storm, like Katrina, to the effects of global warming, an MIT study indicated that as a whole major storms spinning in both the Atlantic and the Pacific since the 1970s have increased in duration and intensity about 50%. And all of this means hardship and suffering for the people. While in the world as a whole it appears that global warming has contributed to a 20 percent increase in rain over the last 100 years. However this increase in precipitation is not uniform, and some areas of the world have suffered from drought. It was striking to see the role this drought plays in the horrors now going on in Africa, which

are generally written off in the imperialist press as the inevitable nightmares of “ uncivilized” people that the West has no responsibility for.

Famine is killing many children and putting millions of lives at risk in the Niger area. In Darfur, a horrific genocide is being carried out. While the causes leading to the genocide and famine are complex, a contributing factor to these nightmare situations is changes brought on by global warming. Lake Chad, once the sixth largest lake in the world, which has shrunk to one-twentieth of its former size, with sand dunes covering its bed. The disappearance of the lake has led to collapsed fisheries, lack of irrigation and crop failures, and millions displaced by hunger.

While the climate changes produced by global warming are beginning to show themselves today in shocking ways, these are just a glimmer of the changes that scientists predict may come about due to global warming: mass extinction of species, flooding in coastal areas due to melting polar ice, spread of infectious diseases, and the destruction of coral reefs caused by rising CO<sub>2</sub> in the ocean’s water. The destruction of glaciers due to global warming does not mean only that our children may never be able to see a glacier.

The Himalayan glaciers, which provide more than half of the drinking water for over 40% of the world’s population, are among the most affected by global warming. Within the next 50 years these people may face a massive drinking water shortage as well as food shortages due to lack of irrigation. This is a one scary movie, made all the more so because the threats it depicts are real. And, unlike so many summer blockbusters, no superhero is going to come to save the day.