

## XVIII. Bush and Global Warming

**AIT:** “One prominent source of disinformation on global warming has been the Bush-Cheney White House...At the beginning of 2001, President Bush hired a lawyer/lobbyist named Phillip Cooney to be in charge of environmental policy in the White House.” (AIT, p. 264)

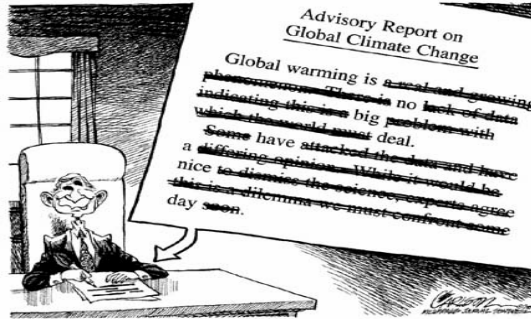
**Comment:** Bush “hired” Cooney to be “in charge?” That should come as a surprise to Jim Connaughton, Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, who hired Cooney and was his boss at the CEQ.

**AIT:** “Even though Cooney has no scientific training whatsoever, he was empowered by the president to edit and censor the official assessments of global warming from the EPA and other parts of the federal government.” (AIT, p. 264)

**Comment:** The “assessments” Cooney edited—*Our Changing Planet* and *Climate Action Report 2002*—were not, strictly speaking, science reports but policy documents. *Our Changing Planet* says as part of its subtitle, “A Supplement to the President’s Fiscal Year 2004 and 2005 Budgets.”<sup>1</sup> *Climate Action Report 2002* (CAR) was a report submitted to fulfill U.S. treaty obligations under Articles IV and XII of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which require periodic reporting of information about greenhouse gas inventories and policies.<sup>2</sup> It is a White House counsel’s job to vet such reports before they are published and become the official position or policy of the U.S. Government.

The editing Cooney did was largely in the nature of damage control. He sought to temper the alarmist biases built into the CAR by editorial decisions taken by Clinton-Gore officials. Chapter 6 of the CAR summarized the scary climate impact scenarios of the Clinton-Gore Administration’s *National Assessment* report. The Clinton-Gore team picked the “hottest” (Canadian Climate Center) and “wettest” (UK Hadley Center) models to forecast U.S. climate change impacts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They persisted in doing so even though they knew that the Canadian model overestimated U.S. warming during the 20<sup>th</sup> century by 300%, and that neither model could replicate past U.S. temperatures better than could a table of random numbers.<sup>3</sup> Cooney was trying to clean up some of the mess left behind by his predecessors.

**AIT:** “In 2005, a White House memo authorized by Cooney (a portion of which appears below) was leaked to the *New York Times* by a hidden whistleblower inside the administration. Cooney had diligently edited out any mention of the dangers global warming poses to the American people.” (AIT, p. 264)



## The politically correct spin on Cooney's editing<sup>4</sup>

### An Editor in the White House

Handwritten revisions and comments by Philip A. Cooney, chief of staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, appear on two draft reports by the Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. Mr. Cooney's changes were incorporated into later versions of each document, shown below with revisions in bold.

"STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE U.S. CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENCE PROGRAM," DRAFT TEXT, OCT. 2002

14 wetlands will expand in areas where meltwater resulting from deeper and longer thaw  
15 periods does not have a natural drainage path to the ocean.  
16  
17 Warming will also cause reductions in mountain glaciers and advance the timing of the melt  
18 of mountain snow peaks in polar regions. In turn, runoff rates will change and flood  
19 potential will be altered in ways that are currently not well understood. There will be  
20 significant shifts in the seasonality of runoff that will have serious impacts on native  
21 populations that rely on fishing and hunting for their livelihood. These changes will be  
22 further complicated by shifts in precipitation regimes and a possible intensification and  
23 increased frequency of extreme hydrologic events. Reducing the uncertainties in current  
24 understanding of the relationships between climate change and Arctic hydrology is critical

Straying from  
research  
strategy into  
speculative  
findings  
here.

### Phil Cooney's edits

**Comment:** Gore never evaluates Cooney's editing on the merits. The mere fact that Cooney deleted a portion of the text is sufficient, in Gore's view, to convict him of distorting science. Here is the portion Cooney deleted:

Warming will also cause reductions in mountain glaciers and advance the timing of the melt of mountain snow peaks in polar regions. In turn, runoff rates will change and flood potential will be altered in ways that are currently not well understood. There will be significant shifts in the seasonality of runoff that will have serious impacts on native populations that rely on fishing and hunting for their livelihood. These changes will be further complicated by shifts in precipitation regimes and a possible intensification and increased frequency of hydrologic events.

In the margins, Cooney explained his reason for deleting the material: "Straying from research strategy into speculative findings from here." Cooney deleted as "speculative" the claim that warming will reduce mountain snow peaks in polar regions. That editorial decision is justified because there is evidence that warming-induced snowfall is thickening the snow pack on East Antarctica and Greenland.<sup>5</sup> Cooney deleted as

“speculative” the claim that global warming will adversely affect native populations in Alaska. That editorial decision is also justified, because Inuit culture flourished during the Medieval Warm period, when Alaska was as warm as or warmer than it is today.<sup>6</sup>

**AIT:** Gore blows up across two pages the following aphorism by Upton Sinclair: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it. Upton Sinclair.” (*AIT*, pp. 266-67)

**Comment:** Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. The greenhouse gravy train feeds many scientists, advocacy groups, energy-rationing profiteers, bureaucrats, and politicians. It is difficult to get a man to question global warming alarmism when his government grant, direct mail income, industrial policy privilege, carbon trading commission, regulatory power, prosecutorial pillage, or political career depends on his not questioning it.

**AIT:** “On June 21, 2004, 48 Nobel Prize-winning scientists accused President Bush and his administration of distorting science.” Gore quotes them as criticizing Bush for “ignoring the scientific consensus on critical issues such as global climate change.” (*AIT*, pp. 269-270)

**Comment:** Gore neglects to mention that the scientists in question are members of “Scientists and Engineers for Change,” a 527 political group set up to promote the Kerry for President Campaign. Indeed, the June 21, 2004 letter to which Gore refers and from which he quotes is first and foremost an endorsement of John Kerry for President.<sup>7</sup>

The group’s leading complaint is that Bush is “reducing funding for scientific research.” Their own fact sheet qualifies this allegation to the point of falsifying it.<sup>8</sup> According to the fact sheet, under Bush’s FY 2005 budget, “government-wide funding for basic research would grow by only 0.6% and funding for applied research would grow by only 0.5%—below the rate of inflation.” So Bush’s FY 2005 budget does not *reduce* science funding, it slows the rate of *increase*.<sup>9</sup>

But why single out the FY 2005 budget? No trend can be inferred from one budget year. In President Clinton’s last fiscal year (FY 2001), the federal government spent \$6.548 billion on general science and basic research. Under Bush, spending in this category (budget function 251) grew from \$7.294 billion in FY 2002, to \$7.993 billion in FY 2003, to \$8.416 billion in FY 2004, to \$8.896 billion in FY 2005, to an estimated \$9.254 billion in FY 2006.<sup>10</sup> So, in the last year of Bush’s first term, federal funding for general science and basic research was \$2.348 billion higher than in the last year of Clinton’s second term—an increase of 35%. Scientists and Engineers for Change accuse Bush of undermining science because they want MORE. That these partisan whiners are also Nobel laureates shows how politicized science has become.

**AIT:** “The image [contained in a pamphlet on “Global Stewardship,” published by the first Bush administration in 1991] features an old-fashioned set of scales.

On one side are gold bars, representing wealth and economic success. On the other side is...the entire planet! The implication is that this is not only a choice we have to make, but a difficult one. But, in fact, it's a false choice for two reasons. First, without a planet, we won't fully enjoy those gold bars. And second, if we do the right thing, then we're going to create a lot of wealth, jobs, and opportunity." (*AIT*, pp. 270-271)

**Comment:** In a famous Jack Benny comedy routine, as retold in Wikipedia, an armed robber accosts Benny and demands, "Your money or your life!"

Benny paused, and the studio audience — knowing his skinflint character — laughed loud and long. The robber then repeated his demand: "Look, pal! I said your money or your life!" And that's when Benny snapped back without a break, "I'm thinking it over!" This time, the audience laughed louder and longer than they had during the pause.<sup>11</sup>

Gore would have us believe that what Jack Benny said in jest, the first Bush administration meant in earnest. But the joke is on Gore. He sees no reason to balance environmental concerns against other priorities, all of which compete for finite resources. Gore might as well say that because we cannot fully enjoy gold if we are ill, no amount of health care spending can ever be too much. Come to think of it, that was pretty much the line the Clinton administration took when promoting Hillary Clinton's health care "reform" package. Clinton officials claimed that a host of new health care spending mandates and regulations would strengthen the economy. The public did not buy it. The claim that Kyoto will make us richer is equally silly.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.usgcrp.gov/usgcrp/Library/ocp2004-5/default.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Testimony of Patrick Michaels, The U.S. National Climate Change Assessment: Do the Climate Models Project a Useful Picture of Regional Climate? House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, July 25, 2002, <http://energycommerce.house.gov/107/hearings/0752002Hearing676/hearing.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> From the June 9, 2005 edition of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=332528&format=print>.

<sup>5</sup> Davis, C.H., Y. Li, J.R. McConnell, M.M. Frey, E. Hanna. 2005. Snowfall-driven growth in East Antarctic Ice Sheet mitigates recent sea-level rise. *Science* 308: 1898-1901; Johannessen, O.M., K. Khvorostovsky, M.W. Miles, L.P. Bobylev. 2005. Recent ice-sheet growth in the interior of Greenland. *Scienceexpress* / [www.scienceexpress.org](http://www.scienceexpress.org) / 20 October 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Robert McGhee, *Climate and People in the Prehistoric Arctic*, <http://www.carc.org/pubs/v15no5/5.htm>; D'Arrigo et al. 2004. Reconstructed Warm Season Temperatures of Nome, Seward Peninsula, Alaska. *Geophysical Research letters* 31: 10.1029/2004GL019756.

<sup>7</sup> Scientists and Engineers for Change, "An Open Letter to the American People," June 21, 2004, <http://www.scientistsandengineersforchange.org/nobelletter.php>.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.scientistsandengineersforchange.org/enterprise.php>

<sup>9</sup> It is far from clear that more federal funding means better science. Government support inevitably politicizes science, and may merely displace private sector funding rather than increase total societal investment in R&D. See Joseph P. Martino, *Science Funding: Politics & Porkbarrel*, (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy07/sheets/hist03z2.xls>

<sup>11</sup> Wikipedia, Jack Benny, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack\\_Benny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Benny).