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*Andrew Neil: Now, are you ready for a puzzle? Well, here's one. Can global warming be happening as expected, when the world has stopped getting hotter? That's the brain-teaser that's troubling scientists and which threatens to shatter the consensus over global warming.*

*Global temperatures have increased by 0.8 degrees Celsius since the industrial revolution. But since the late 1990s, they've stalled, despite the fact that emissions of greenhouse gases have continued apace. The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached 400 parts per million for the first time earlier this year. The pause has led some climate scientists to question whether there could be something wrong with their models. One eminent German professor [Hans von Storch, University of Hamburg] has said: "So far, no one has been able to provide a compelling answer to why climate change seems to be taking a break. We're facing a puzzle..."*

*The Climate Change Secretary, Ed Davey, has said that this normal expression of scientific uncertainty is no reason to reconsider energy and climate change policies, even though his department says they're already adding £112 to annual household bills, a number which is set to rise. Speaking last month, he described people who cast doubt on the scientific consensus as "crackpots and conspiracy theorists", and he warned the press not to give an "uncritical campaigning platform" to people who deny that climate change is man-made.*

*Ed Davey, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, joins me now for the Sunday interview.*

*Andrew Neil: Ed Davey, welcome. In a speech on June 2nd you said that healthy scepticism is part of the scientific process. Then, a couple of weeks later, you described anybody who challenged the climate change consensus as - quote - "crackpots and conspiracy theorists". So, what is it?*

*Ed Davey: Well, I do think we should always challenge the science - of course, we should - and there's a healthy debate amongst climate change scientists. But the vast majority of climate change scientists believe that climate change is happening and that man-made activity is causing it. So it's a tiny number of people who believe that it's not happening and that man isn't responsible for it. And I have to say that I agree with President Obama in his recent speech, when he said we don't need another meeting of the Flat Earth Society. We need to get on and tackle climate change, and I agree with him.*

*Andrew Neil: So the scientists who challenge the consensus are "crackpots".*

*Ed Davey: No, what I was saying - I was referring to a particular issue there. I do think there's a - of course, we should have a debate, I'm not against debate. What we've seen in the press -*

*Andrew Neil: You said that newspapers shouldn't publish their views.*

*Ed Davey: No, no, I didn't say that. What I've actually said, and I completely stand by that, is that we've seen a completely unchallenged view of the climate change deniers. I think we need rather more balance in the debate, particularly when we saw recent analysis on 12,000 scientific papers, and of the scientists who expressed a view - on climate change papers - of the scientists who expressed a view, 97% said that climate change was happening and that it was human-made activities - human activity that caused it.*

*Andrew Neil: That survey, of course, has been substantially discredited.*

*Ed Davey: Well, I don't believe it has -*

*Andrew Neil: Oh no, it has. Let me tell you - 35% of the abstracts were misclassified, and they were classified to the pro-global warming side. Professor Richard Tol, the expert most quoted approvingly in this report, has disassociated himself from this survey - he said it's not reliable.*

*Ed Davey: If you look at -*

*Andrew Neil: That's your survey.*

*Ed Davey: If you look at what the scientists are saying - take the Chief Scientist to the government who's just stepped down, Sir John Beddington. You and I, through our taxes, pay for these scientists. He said, in his speech as he left, that the evidence was unequivocal, unambiguous. The Chief Scientist in my department, Professor David McKay, is of a similar view. So I have to say, the science is on the side that we need to take action. And let's just - hang on for a second, let's just imagine that the huge majority of scientists are wrong. Let's just say that climate change deniers are right. Do you think it's sensible that we gamble, that we say "Well, actually, even if most of the scientists say it's happening, we should ignore them"? I say that we take a cautious approach and just as you, and many others - I hope, all your viewers - insure their houses against the very unlikely chance of fire burning their house down, I think, given the risks of climate change are much greater, with more more devastating effects, we should - to humankind - we should invest in a little insurance policy to tackle climate change.*

*Andrew Neil: Right, well, let's just look at this [shows graph of global temperatures between 1980 and 2012, rising and then levelling off] graph going up here - shows temperatures rising since 1980, it's a trend. We've flattened it out a little bit, just to get rid of the ups and downs - that's the trend. Then it sudden - it rises and then it suddenly, around 1997, it plateaus and it's still plateauing. Isn't that a bit of a puzzle?*

*Ed Davey: Well, actually no. When you talk to people at the Met Office, at the Hadley Centre, they expect, in their models, that there will be short-term variation in this century, a rather longer-term time series than you've shown there. If you took that much longer, you'd find that the beginning of the 20th century there was a plateau, in the 1950s there was a plateau -*

*Andrew Neil: That's nothing to do with global warming.*

*Ed Davey: - so the short - of course, we were emitting -*

*Andrew Neil: No, the IPCC reports says that the real CO2 emission, rising temperatures, really kicked in after 1980. Now there is no -*

*Ed Davey: No, I'm afraid you're wrong -*

*Andrew Neil: - there is no Met model, there is no Met model that predicted this plateau.*

*Ed Davey: First of all, you're completely wrong to suggest that people in the climate change science community think it only started in 1980. That is simply not true. And in terms of the most recent decade, let's remember - it was the warmest on record. And even if you look at the temperature analysis, that is pretty striking. But I think that's a very narrow way of looking at climate change science. If you talk to the climate change scientist community, you've got to look at things like the temperature of the seas, because that's surface - land surface temperature. The oceans have continued to warm. And you've got to look at sea levels - sea levels have continued to rise.*

*Andrew Neil: Let me show you this -*

*Ed Davey: No, no, no, it's very important we hear the actual science, because you're not showing the full picture there.*

*Andrew Neil: Let me show you this -*

*Ed Davey: If you look at the ice caps - the ice caps are continuing to melt. All that is part of the -*

*Andrew Neil: We still have a puzzle. [Shows graph comparing temperature rise and CO2 levels between 1980 and 2012, with a widening gap towards the end.] We still have a puzzle, because this is the temperature and here we have superimposed the carbon dioxide, the CO2 going up in quantity. Now, is there not, at least when you look at that, clear at least that there is a possibility - I put it not higher than that - that there is something of a disconnect, now, between CO2 emissions and temperatures.*

*Ed Davey: If you had a longer time series, most climate change scientists would say that is completely consistent with data we've seen previously. And I go back -*

*Andrew Neil: Climate scientists can't explain this disconnect, at the moment.*

*Ed Davey: No, they can, actually. What they are saying -*

*Andrew Neil: Well, let me put you to - you may react to this, but this is just to amplify the question. [Screen shows a quote from Dr. Doug Smith, Met Office: "It's fair to say that the world warmed even less than our forecast suggested... We don't really understand at the moment why that is."] Dr. Doug Smith, climate scientist at the Met Office: "It's fair to say that the world warmed even less than our forecast suggested... We don't really understand at the moment why that is." So we don't know why there is a disconnect.*

*Ed Davey: And I went to the Met Office recently and did a speech at the Met Office, talked to the leading scientists - Doug Smith was there - and what they are saying is: you shouldn't just look at surface temperature. You should look at the temperature of the oceans. You should look at the level of the sea, which are still rising. You should look at the ice caps, which are still melting. You should look at the increasing frequency of severe weather events. So if you just look at one bit of it, information, which is what you're doing today, I'm afraid you're not seeing the full picture.*

*Andrew Neil: Just sticking with that one bit of information - when this plateau started to develop, and some academics started to write about it in 2006, the people who advise you - so, Phil Jones at the Climate Research Unit, University of East Anglia, in a world centre of climate science - he described the idea of a plateau as nonsense and stupid. The Met Office denied that a plateau was even happening.*

*Ed Davey: And Andrew, and Andrew - that's what I, as I said in my Met speech, which you read out a few minutes ago, I think we should have a healthy scepticism within the climate change science. Why? Because climate science is incredibly complicated - it's new, innovative science. And so no-one, actually, if you talk to the climate change scientists - including the people you mention - none of them actually say we know everything for sure. Of course they don't - few scientists say they know anything. But the question is: would you be - would you be prepared, would any government be prepared to take a gamble on the future of our planet, when the vast majority of the science shows that climate change is happening.*

*Andrew Neil: All right. Can - on this plateau, though, you said that simulations show this plateau happening. We could - the Met Office could produce none to show that this plateau could happen. Scientists at the University of Hamburg, which is one of the world's leading centres, institutes of climate science - they have looked at all the climate models, they've run the simulations and they produce a 15-year plateau in only 2% of the simulations. They just don't happen on the models you depend on. And if I just show you what the professor at the climate institute in Hamburg [Hans von Storch] said: "If things continue as they have been, in five years, at the latest, we will need to acknowledge that something is fundamentally wrong with our climate models..."*

*Ed Davey: Well, very interesting, obviously I'd like to see more of that, but since when you just quoted Dr. Doug Smith at the Met Office, you came to a conclusion which the Met Office wouldn't have agreed with. I don't know what the University of Hamburg thinks, whether they think that climate change is clearly not happening or whether - as in that quote, actually, he was saying - we need to look at our models. No-one is suggesting, I'm not suggesting, I don't think climate change scientists are suggesting that we know our models are completely perfect. That would be nonsense, to suggest that. But given the evidence, not just in temperature rises, which is what you're focussing on, today - you're ignoring all the things I'm saying about the rising heat in the oceans, the caps on the - the ice caps, the Arctic and Antarctic, the rising sea levels, the extreme weather events - why are you choosing to ignore that?*

*Andrew Neil: Because I'm sticking to the temperature, because that is what the computer models are most concentrated on.*

*Ed Davey: Well, I'm afraid you're looking at a partial part of the science -*

*Andrew Neil: I could get into ocean temperatures with you -*

*Ed Davey: Please do.*

*Andrew Neil: - and I could point out that the Arctic ice melt did not happen other than normally this year, and last winter grew back. But I want to stick with the temperatures -*

*Ed Davey: Let's - can we talk about the ice caps -*

*Andrew Neil: No, I want to stick with the temperatures.*

*Ed Davey: - because I've got the figures for you, because your figures are very -*

*Andrew Neil: Professor Storch says that if there's a 20-year plateau, then we'll need to have a fundamental re-examination of climate change policy - not to abandon it but to wonder whether we should be doing it so quickly and in the way we're doing it. Now the Met is now predicting - that's the Met that denied a plateau was happening - they're saying that this plateau could now continue to 2017. That would be 20 years. If it's still plateau in 20 years, will you re-evaluate the situation?*

*Ed Davey: Well, we re-evaluate our policy all along, but the climate change science - under the fact that the world is warming because of CO2 emissions in the atmosphere - I think is unambiguous. The science is clear, the physics is completely uncontested - if you put carbon emissions in the atmosphere it warms up the world, that is uncontested. What is a debate - and it's quite a reasonable debate - is how quickly that is happening -*

*Andrew Neil: That's right.*

*Ed Davey: - and looking at all the different aspects of it. But that does not mean that we shouldn't take action, Not only if you take the insurance argument that I've talked about - it's very - if there's a risk, surely you insure against it - but also because the things we are doing -*

*making people's homes warmer through energy efficiency, investing in clean energy that doesn't pollute - that's good for people's health, it also creates jobs. If you go to China - and I'm speaking, actually, later today to the relevant minister from China, about what's happening there - they're worried about pollution from coal power stations -*

*Andrew Neil: Of course.*

*Ed Davey: - not simply because of climate change but because of air pollution it's causing. So there are many reasons for taking up policies. Let me finish this point, because one of the great things about the way we're tackling climate change is a lot of our policies are "no regrets". If you've actually cleaned up the energy, you've cleaned up the atmosphere, you've absolutely -*

*Andrew Neil: All right. But your policies are hugely expensive, they're over £400 billion -*

*Ed Davey: No they're not. No they're not.*

*Andrew Neil: - in the Climate Change Act, it's the £400 billion that's in the Climate Change Act*

*Ed Davey: Well, I'm happy to talk about the cost.*

*Andrew Neil: The point I'm trying to get to you is: there are a number of climate scientists out there - they're not denying that CO2 emissions can increase the temperature. What they're looking at, again, is whether it leads to such a quick and large rise in temperatures that the IPCC has predicted - that central forecast was 3% for this century. Now if I could just [Ed Davey is trying to respond] - even I get allowed to finish the point, just as you have. Professor Piers Forster, Leeds University, climate change professor: that the higher temperatures now are "unlikely". Professor of Geosystems at Oxford [Myles Allen]: the higher temperatures' outlook - "iffy". Professor Judith Curry, Head of Climate Science at the world-famous Georgia Institute of Technology: "the models are running too hot. Temperatures could stay flat for another decade or two". Now if, as we originally thought, it's not working out, my point to you is: don't you want to step back and reconsider policy?*

*Ed Davey: If our policies were as expensive as you suggested, we would obviously want to look at them, but - the figure you gave at the top of the programme. You said that our policies are putting £112 on people's bills. well, let's look at that.*

*Andrew Neil: That's your figure.*

*Ed Davey: I'm about to - I'll give you the breakdown of that. The vast majority of that £112 is tackling fuel poverty, making people's homes warmer. That's a no-regrets, because it reduces energy bills long-term. That's what I mean. A lot of the policies we're doing you should do anyway. Only a small part of that £112 that you mentioned, which you tried to say was the cost of climate change - completely falsely, I have to say - only a small amount is in subsidising renewable and low-carbon energies. That's why we're taking a very rational, sensible, moderate approach to this. So it may well be - and I'm not denying it - that the climate change won't go in the central forecast. If you look at what the models, all the scientists you talked about - they*

*believe you have a range, you have a range of scenarios, just like you do when you forecast inflation or growth.*

*Andrew Neil: I understand that.*

*Ed Davey: And the science behind that is actually rather more developed and mature -*

*Andrew Neil: What I put to you is that there's a lot of climate scientists are now saying as a result of this pause, that perhaps the lower range is now more likely than the higher range.*

*Ed Davey: The lower range is still scary.*

*Andrew Neil: Well - well, let me... If temperatures were to rise by 1 degree Celsius, what would be the consequences for Britain?*

*Ed Davey: Well, we are seeing some of the consequences, if you talk to the farmers, if you look at the money we're spending on floods and so on, we can't absolutely prove that it's down to climate change, but -*

*Andrew Neil: You can't prove it at all.*

*Ed Davey: - many people think it is. But -*

*Andrew Neil: What would the consequences, be if you had a -*

*Ed Davey: - the moment [inaudible] and you can reply -*

*Andrew Neil: - the central forecast you proceeded on has been - IPCC central forecast of almost 3% rise in temperatures. If it turned out, as some climate scientists are now saying, there is actually going to be 1%, what would be bad for Britain?*

*Ed Davey: First of all, very few scientists are saying that, so your viewers need to understand that what you've talked about there, a 1%, is held by a tiny minority of scientists. The vast majority of scientists, who advertise [sic] us, other countries, American President Obama and others, are worried that we're not going to hit the 2 degree target which we set, that we said we needed to stay within, where on all the projections that you're talking about will go above that. Frankly, if we kept to 2 degrees, that would be a real step forward and we would reduce the amount of damage that we would see. So, I have to tell you that if you are a serious government, looking at the science in an objective, neutral way, you would take action. You wouldn't gamble on our children's future, on our grandchildren's future - that would be deeply, deeply irresponsible.*

*Andrew Neil: Nor would you necessarily rush to spend, as you're doing, £100 billion on wind power and you would perhaps, if you thought that temperatures were now not going to be as aggressive as the IPCC, you would take time to develop carbon storage, you would take time to develop proper battery storage so that wind power -*