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## IPCC 2: 'A MAJOR DECEPTION'

Excerpt from the comprehensive and informative book by Christopher Booker. *The Real Global Warming Disaster: Is the Obsession with 'climate Change' Turning Out to be the Most Costly Scientific Blunder in History?* (Kindle Locations 855-862). Kindle Edition.

By the mid-1990s, the Clinton-Gore administration had become closely involved in pushing America's energy interests across the world. In particular it was close to the new Texas-based energy giant, Enron, a significant contributor to Democratic Party funds. The federal government supported Enron with \$4 billion of loans, and supported the company's bids for a series of huge contracts to open up new oil and gas fields and to build power stations and pipelines in India, Russia, China, the Philippines, South America and Africa. Gore took a close interest in some of these projects. In particular, in December 1995 he visited South Africa to lobby the country's new president, Nelson Mandela, on behalf of Enron's bid to develop a large new gas field in Mozambique. 17 The vice-president had not, however, lost his interest in the battle against global warming, and his visit to South Africa coincided with final political agreement being given to the next report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, due to be launched the following summer. The IPCC's 'second assessment report' (SAR) went considerably further than the first in endorsing an anthropogenic explanation for global warming. The biggest media headlines were reserved for its claim that 'the balance of evidence suggests that there is a discernible human influence on global climate'. These words were to be quoted far more often than any others in the report. But the story behind how they came to be included in the Summary for Policy Makers was curious.18 The source of this sentence was given as Chapter 8 of the scientific working group's report, the 'lead author' of which was Ben Santer, a scientist working for the US government's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. This included much the same wording: that 'the body of statistical evidence' now 'points to a discernible human influence on the global climate'. When the report containing these sentences was published, however, some of the scientific contributors who had signed off the working group's chapters the previous year were seriously dismayed. These words had not appeared in the draft they had formally approved. It seemed they had been added subsequently, by the 'lead author' himself. Santer had also, it emerged, deleted a number of key statements from the agreed text, all of which reflected serious scientific doubt over the human contribution to global warming. They included these passages:

- None of the studies cited above has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed changes to the specific cause of increases in greenhouse gases.

- No study to date has positively attributed all or part (of the climate change observed) to (man-made) causes.
- Any claims of positive detection and attribution of significant climate change are likely to remain controversial until uncertainties in the total natural variability of the climate system are reduced.
- When will an anthropogenic effect on climate be identified? It is not surprising that the best answer to this question is "We do not know".'

All these sentences had mysteriously vanished from the original agreed version. What was particularly odd about the new additions to the text was that the only source cited in support of them appeared to be two papers co-authored by Santer himself, which had not yet been published. That much-cited claim about 'discernible human influence on climate change' was based on what were known as 'fingerprinting studies'. These compared the patterns of climate change predicted by computer models with changes actually observed in the real world. Where these coincided (or displayed the same 'fingerprint'), this was taken as evidence that the computer model was correct.<sup>19</sup> However, when Santer and several colleagues published their first, all-important paper, two other scientists, Dr Patrick Michaels and a colleague, examined their evidence. They were surprised to discover that its conclusions in favour of global warming had been based only on part of the data. The supposed 'fingerprinting' parallel between the computer models and observed data applied only to the years between 1943 and 1970, during the 'Little Cooling'. When the full set of data was used, showing earlier years going back to 1905 and years after 1970, the warming trend claimed by Santer and his colleagues disappeared.<sup>20</sup> This was surprising enough, in view of the significance attached to Santer's revised wording of Chapter 8 by the Summary for Policymakers and all the publicity which followed. But the realisation that a single contributor could have been allowed to make such a crucial change after the scientific text had been formally approved, soon gave rise to a considerable uproar. Even *Nature*, which published the Santer paper, was not happy about the rewriting of Chapter 8 to 'ensure that it conformed' with the Summary. A week after the report was published, the *Wall Street Journal* not only expressed outrage in an editorial ('Cover-up in the Greenhouse').<sup>21</sup> The following day it published an excoriatory article by Frederick Seitz, a much-respected former president of the US National Academy of Sciences.<sup>22</sup> It was Seitz who, under the heading 'Major Deception on Global Warming', quoted some of those passages in the original draft of Chapter 8 which had been mysteriously removed. As he put it in his article, the IPCC report would 'surely be hailed as the latest and most authoritative statement on global warming', because the IPCC itself was generally regarded as 'the best source of scientific information' on the subject. Its latest report would be held in high regard: 'largely because it has been peer-reviewed. That is, it has been read, discussed, modified and approved by an international body of experts. These scientists have laid their reputation on the line. But this report is not what it appears to be - it is not the version that was approved by the contributing scientists listed on the title page. In my more than 60 years as a member of the American scientific community, including service as president of both the National Academy of Sciences and the American Physical Society, I have never witnessed a more disturbing corruption of the peer-review process than the events which led up to this IPCC report.' Seitz went on to illustrate his point that the crucial changes had been made 'after the scientists had met and approved what they thought was the final peer-reviewed version'. They had assumed that ,the

IPCC would obey the IPCC rules', nothing in which permitted changes to be made after the wording of a report had gone through the prescribed approval process. And, initially, everything had been done according to the rules. Twenty-eight scientists representing the authors of the technical report had approved the final draft at a meeting in Madrid in November 1995, also attended by 177 government delegates from 96 countries and 14 representatives of NGOs or non-governmental organisations.<sup>23</sup> It had then been given final political approval by a plenary meeting of the IPCC in Rome the following month. Yet now the document was published, it emerged that, subsequent to the Madrid meeting 'more than 15 sections in Chapter 8 of the report - the key chapter setting out the scientific evidence for and against a human influence over climate - were changed or deleted after the scientists charged with examining this question had accepted the supposedly final text.' Furthermore, the effect of every one of these changes and deletions had been to suppress expressions of doubt about man-made warming, and to convey the false impression that the scientists had all accepted by 'consensus' that anthropogenic warming was taking place. Professor Seitz suggested that, for what had happened, the chapter's 'lead author, Benjamin D. Santer, must presumably take the major responsibility'. 'IPCC reports' he went on, are often 'called the "consensus" view. If they were to lead to 'carbon taxes and restraints on economic growth, they will have a major and almost certainly destructive effect on the economies of the world.' Whatever 'the intent was of those who made these significant changes, their effect is to deceive policy makers and the public into believing that scientific evidence shows human activities are causing global warming'. In a final outraged paragraph, Seitz wrote: 'If the IPCC is incapable of following its most basic procedures, it would be best to abandon the entire IPCC process, or at least that part that is concerned with the scientific evidence on climate change, and look for more reliable sources of advice on this important question.' The Wall Street Journal's assault provoked a storm, not least from the IPCC itself. A letter from Santer, claiming that his conduct had been entirely within the IPCC's rules of procedure, was also signed by his fellow 'lead author' Tom Wigley, one of Gore's chief scientific advisers.<sup>24</sup> This was published on 25 June, along with a considerably shortened version of a letter from Bolin and Houghton, making a similar claim. This point was later developed at length in a paper co-authored by Stephen Schneider, who had been present at the Madrid meeting.<sup>25</sup> He described how, when various sections of the draft had aroused objections from national delegations, he and other scientific contributors, including Santer, Wigley and Kevin Trenberth, had gone into another room with the objectors to talk through the science behind them, apparently convincing them that it was sound. But Schneider also described how the changes to Chapter 8 which had caused all the fuss were made by Santer only 'in early December', subsequent to the Madrid meeting. As he reiterated in his paper: 'Santer made the changes himself, and the final version of the chapter was not reviewed again by others. However, as he and his colleagues continually stressed, this procedure was the normal and agreed IPCC process.' Nor, in Schneider's lengthy account, did he refer to the 15 passages from the agreed text which Santer had altered or deleted and which were the real cause of the storm.<sup>26</sup> Even murkier, however, seemed to be the sequence of events which had preceded these changes to the text, to which Schneider referred somewhat obliquely but which were only to come fully to light three years later in evidence to a Congressional committee. Shortly before the scientists gave their final approval to the text in Madrid, the scientific working group's chairman Sir John had received a communication from the State Department in Washington, dated November 15. This read: 'It is essential that the chapters not be finalised prior to the completion of the discussions at the IPCC Working Group I Plenary in Madrid, and that chapter authors be prevailed upon to modify their text in an appropriate manner following the discussion in

Madrid.<sup>27</sup> This instruction that 'chapter authors' should be 'prevailed upon to modify their text' came from the office of Timothy Wirth, chairman of those Senate committee hearings on climate change in 1988 and now the US Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs. As an ardent advocate of global warming, Wirth was a close political ally of Vice-President Gore.<sup>28</sup> In his account of the Madrid meeting some years later, as part of a series on 'Meetings that changed the world', Houghton described how the longest discussion had centred on a sentence drafted for the Summary for Policy Makers which originally read 'the balance of evidence suggests human influence on the climate'.<sup>29</sup> When this was objected to, after a debate lasting well over an hour, during which 'various alternatives were proposed', the UK delegate proposed the addition of the crucial word 'discernible' before 'human influence'. This was 'spontaneously applauded' as a version all could accept, and the new version went into the Summary. What Houghton completely omitted from his article, however, was any mention of why the word 'discernible' agreed at political level should then have been inserted into Chapter 8 of the technical report, along with all the other changes, after the contributing scientists had agreed its text. Without explicitly referring to this, Schneider's account does provide an explanation of why both Wirth and those in charge of the IPCC should have been so eager for the report to reinforce the case for man-made global warming in this way. As Schneider puts it, the forthcoming report 'was fraught with political significance'. Its chief purpose was to provide an underpinning for the major international treaty due to be agreed the following year in Kyoto. Based on the Rio Framework Convention on Climate Change, this would embody a 'Protocol' laying down the first practical foundations for the world's response to global warming. A preliminary pre-Kyoto conference was due to be held in Geneva in June 1996, just after the IPCC's report was published. Nothing was viewed as more important to its success than that the US should throw all its weight behind Kyoto, which meant that there must be 'a sea change in American climate policy'. Until now, as Schneider put it, the official US position had only allowed for 'voluntary, non-binding emissions targets and further scientific research. If the United States were to abandon its resistance to binding emissions targets, a strong international greenhouse policy would become much more likely. Since the more-research, non-binding targets position was officially based on assertions of high scientific uncertainty, the SAR's expressions of increased scientific confidence were viewed as critical. Subsequent events, as Schneider confirmed, were to bear this out. When Wirth addressed the Geneva conference, he announced for the first time that the US was prepared to accept 'a realistic but binding target'. He conveyed that the 'proximate cause' of this dramatic change in US policy was the IPCC's increased certainty that 'the science is convincing, concern about global warming is real'. Nothing had done more to assist the US administration in making its case for this policy change than the changes made to the IPCC's report the previous year, following the State Department intervention instigated by Wirth himself.

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