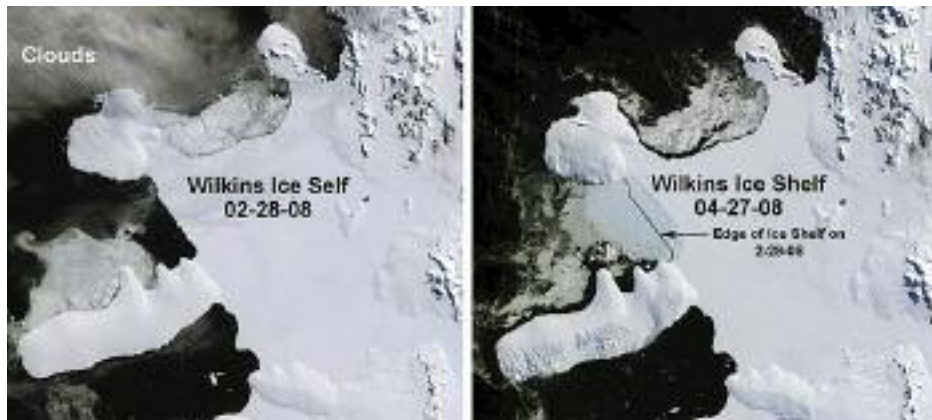
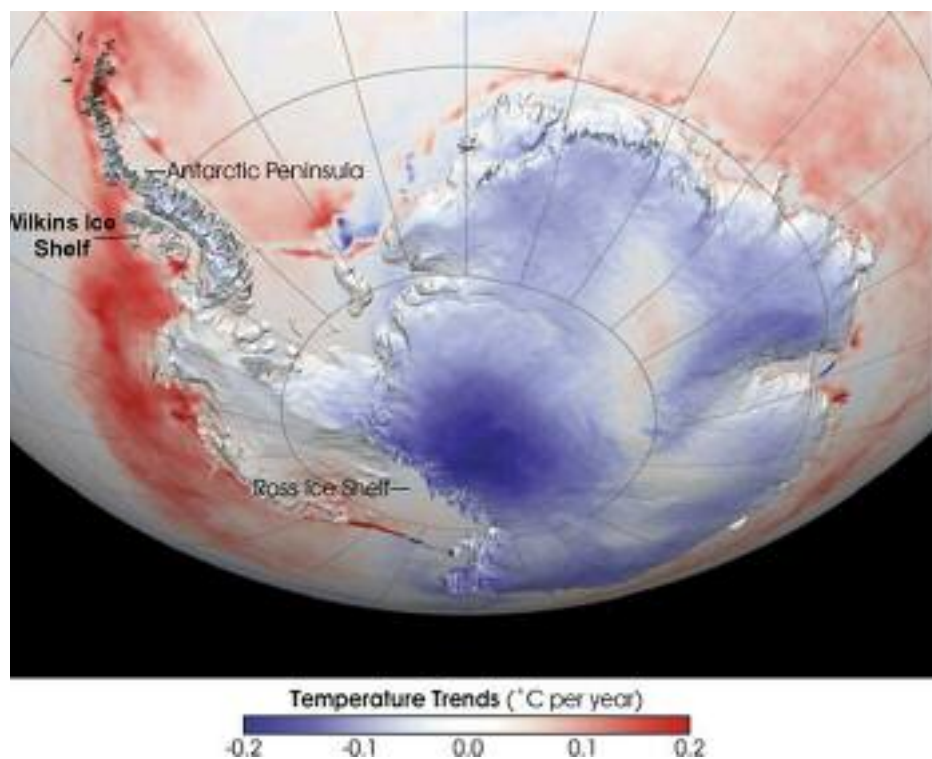


Chicken Little and the Polar Bear

To base policy on biased information inevitably leads to poor policy decisions and human misery.

By Michael S. Coffman, Ph.D.

Remember the media coverage last March of the disintegrating Wilkins Ice Shelf in the Antarctic? They told us that the disintegration was merely another example of how man-caused global warming was devastating the Antarctic, and by extension, the Arctic and Greenland ice packs and glaciers. The average viewer came away with the idea that all Antarctica was melting. The implication was that species like the polar bear were threatened with extinction, and melting ice would flood the world's coastlines and islands.



A whopping “220 square miles of the ice shelf collapsed,” warns Ted Scambos, a glaciologist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Jim Elliot, who captured video of the disintegration, says, “Big hefty chunks of ice, the size of small houses, look as though they’ve been thrown around like rubble. It’s like an explosion.”

The media used powerful adjectives like “collapse,” “explosion,” “threatened,” and “hanging by a thread” to dramatize the event to cataclysmic levels. What was not reported was that the 220 square miles represented only 2.67 percent of the entire Wilkins Ice Shelf and only 0.01 percent of the entire Antarctic ice cover. Within that context, the media reporting is obviously Chicken Little hyperbole. Dismayed by the exaggerated reporting, Joseph D’Aleo, former director of meteorology at the Weather Channel and current executive director of Icecap.com, says that the breakup was more comparable to “an icicle falling from a snow-and-ice covered roof.”

Unfortunately, the media and alarmist scientists are not content with putting this issue into perspective. To their credit, they admitted the breakup will not raise the sea level because floating ice had already displaced all the water it was going to. But they then somberly reported that research reveals the area surrounding the Wilkins Ice Shelf had warmed an incredible 4.5°F since the 1950s—faster than any place on earth. The reader or viewer is left with the idea that such warming is also melting continental ice, which will cause ocean levels to rise 20 feet or more as Al Gore incorrectly but graphically depicts in his video, “An Inconvenient Truth.”

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LEFT: The breakup of the Wilkins Ice Shelf in Antarctica during March 2008. The media and alarmist scientists give the public the impression that Antarctica is warming so fast that it is causing catastrophic melting, when in fact the warming is only occurring in the ocean along the western Antarctic Peninsula. This warming is probably caused by volcanic activity, not global warming. Almost all of Antarctica is cooling, not warming. SOURCE: NASA Earth Observatory.



POLAR BEAR © MARK NEWMAN, TOM STACK & ASSOCIATES

Why did the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service list the polar bear as a “threatened” species with no science to back it up? In what can only be described as a leap of irrationality, the FWS justified its decision on computer models that predict rampant warming and continued melting of polar sea ice. These are the same computer models that admittedly have over a 100 percent error level and were shown last year to predict warming that has not been demonstrated in real life. Sen. Inhofe (R-OK) says, “The decision to list the polar bear as ‘threatened’ appears to be based more on politics than science.”

Consensus? What Consensus?

*The IPCC’s “solid consensus” is a myth.
By Michael S. Coffman, Ph.D.*

We have all heard the litany in the news that 2,500 scientists working in conjunction with the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) agree with a 90 percent certainty that man is causing potentially catastrophic global warming. They even received the Nobel Peace Prize, along with Al Gore, for their exemplary work in the field. This, we are told, is a solid consensus having very few dissenters. The problem is that this so-called consensus is a myth—it never existed. Ever!

In early 1992, 47 of the top climatologists in the world signed a petition during an annual conference on climatology held in Heidelberg, Germany, decrying “the unsupported assumption that catastrophic global warming follows from the burning of fossil fuels and requires immediate action.” Back in 1992, 47 Ph.D. climatologists represented a sizable chunk of all the climatologists in the world. The press ignored it.

Stung by the press’s rebuke, the signers redoubled their efforts and were successful in obtaining 424 signers at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, also in 1992. Known as the Heidelberg Appeal, it once again was ignored by the media, even though the number of signers eventually reached 4,000, including 72 Nobel Prize winners in science.

Several other petitions over the years met with the same fate. They were all ignored by the media. Then, in 2001, the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine (OISM) launched the Petition Project (petitionproject.org), spearheaded by Dr. Frederick Seitz, past president of the National Academy of Sciences and of Rockefeller University. The Petition Project amassed 17,800 signatures, all with degrees in the physical sciences. This time the media did take notice, but not in the way one might expect.

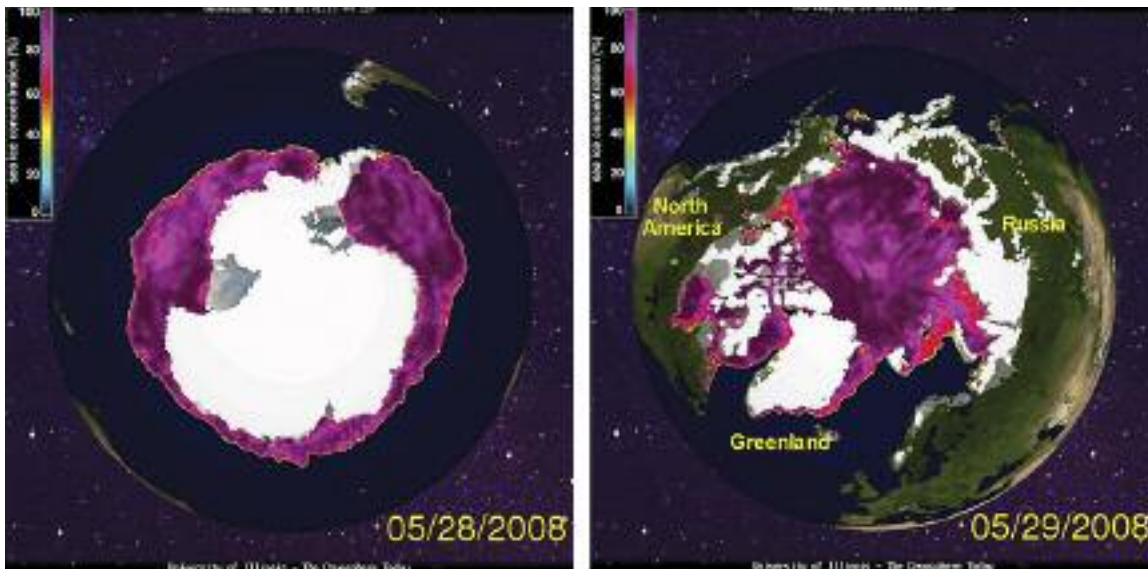
Instead of reporting that nearly 18,000 scientists refuted the man-caused global-warming theory, the media trumpeted alleged flaws in the petition. The petition drive was accused of filling the petition with duplicate signers. That allegation was proven false. Not surprisingly, many scientists happen to have the same name. Other names that seemed to be phony—such as Michael [J.] Fox, the actor,

and Perry Mason, the fictional lawyer in a TV series—were actually real, credentialed scientists. No retraction was ever made by the media, nor did they even acknowledge the authenticity of either the signers or the petition.

Outraged with the sheer duplicity of the press and global-warming alarmists, OISM launched the same petition again in 2008. It used a subset of the mailing list of American Men and Women of Science—a who’s who of science—to mail the petition, requesting the recipient sign the petition if he/she agreed that Kyoto Accord was a danger to humanity.

The results show that 31,072 scientists, 9,021 of whom are Ph.D.s, signed the petition. Every signature has been vetted for authenticity.

Ironically, using the Freedom of Information Act, it has been proven that the so-called 2,500 scientists the IPCC claims make up their “consensus,” are really not scientists at all. Of that total, only 308 scientists reviewed the 2007 IPCC report. Many of them disagreed, some strongly so. Not surprisingly, all their comments were rejected and not included in the report. The remaining 2,192 so-called scientists come from all walks of life: politicians, government bureaucrats, social



LEFT: Sea ice extent for the 2008 Antarctic winter is on track to break the 2007 record. Only the western Antarctic Peninsula has remained ice free due to ocean currents and recent volcanic activity discovered this year.

RIGHT: Sea ice extent for the 2007-08 North Pole winter was greater than it has been for years. The ice extent retreat this summer is predicted to be much less than it has been in recent years.

SOURCE: *The Cryosphere Today*, University of Illinois.

Consensus? What Consensus? (Continued from page 49)

workers and, apparently, even a hotel manager. Less than 40 of the 308 scientists were generally supportive of the hypothesis, and less than five actually endorsed the report. Yet, the report was hailed by the media as the consensus of thousands of scientists.

Let's put this in perspective. For every scientist who even slightly favored the IPCC conclusions, 792 signed the petition saying there is no convincing evidence that there is man-made catastrophic global warming. For every Ph.D. who endorsed the IPCC report, 1,800 signed the petition refuting it. If anything, there is a scientific consensus that man is not responsible for global warming. What did the media do with this potentially explosive story? They ignored it, as usual. A few, like Fox News, were gracious enough to have a byline on their Web sites. Only the conservative media highlighted this phenomenal story.

It seems that the media and, by extension, the people who depend on it for accurate news, would rather believe a lie than the truth. This realization led Dr. Ross McKittrick, who discredited the hockey-stick theory of the 2001 IPCC report, to lament, "We are now at the stage where mere facts, reason, and truth are powerless in the face of the global-warming propaganda."

It is a scary thought, but he is correct. Ignorance and propaganda now form the basis of our policy on climate change (and on many other environmental issues). We are treading a dangerous path. ■

Chicken Little (Continued from page 48)

This cataclysmic scenario just isn't going to happen. What the media and global-warming alarmists fail to tell the public is that all the ice-shelf disintegration in the past decade is confined to northwestern Antarctica, especially the Antarctic Peninsula. The disintegration of ice shelves in this region is due to a warming of the ocean, not of the atmosphere. The rest of Antarctica has been cooling and accumulating ice since the early 1970s. This is exactly the opposite of what the man-caused global-warming theory predicts should occur.

There is another problem with this cataclysmic warming/melting hyperbole. Research published this past year reveals that the ocean warming is likely due to volcanic activity, not global warming. In January 2008, one volcano was even found to be actively warming the underside of the glaciers overlying it, causing them to melt from the bottom up and advance much faster than would otherwise be expected. Also not reported is the fact that some 3,000 scientific temperature-measuring robots plying the oceans have found that earth's oceans are

cooling, not warming, as the man-caused global-warming theory demands. Of course, none of this is ever reported by the media or acknowledged by the alarmist scientists. So there is no way the average reader/viewer can put the issue into context.

Most people are acutely aware that the winter of 2007/2008 was the coldest in nearly three decades. They are still reeling from their heating bills. There is a reason for that. The

For every scientist who even slightly favored the IPCC conclusions, 792 signed the petition saying there was no convincing evidence that there is man-made catastrophic global warming. For every Ph.D. who endorsed the IPCC report, 1,800 signed the petition refuting it. If anything, there is a scientific consensus that man is not responsible for global warming.

earth's temperature plummeted by about 1.3°F, ironically wiping out all the warming of the last 100 years. Although this does not mean we are heading for the next ice age, Antarctica's sea ice nonetheless reached record levels. As I write in May, the 2008 Antarctic winter has not yet reached its midpoint and already the sea ice is on track to break the 2007 record. Likewise, formation of the North Pole's sea ice this year was much faster and thicker than in recent years and the 2008 polar summer melting should be less than it has been in the immediate past.

That is good news for the polar bear; its populations have been at record numbers the past few years—even with the melting polar sea ice. Yet, in spite of all the good news, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) bowed to hysterical environmentalist pressure this May

and listed the polar bear as a “threatened” species. There is little to no scientific evidence to list the polar bear. Sen. Inhofe (R-OK) says “the decision to list the polar bear as ‘threatened’ appears to be based more on politics than science.” Environmentalists have been salivating for years over the prospect of listing the polar bear as endangered so they can use the Endangered Species Act as a weapon to limit the U.S. economy. Watch for an avalanche of lawsuits.

Why did the FWS list the polar bear with no science to back it up? In what can only be described as a leap of irrationality, the FWS justified its decision on computer models that predict rampant warming and continued melting of polar sea ice. These are the same computer models that admittedly have over a 100 percent error level and were shown last year to predict warming that has not been demonstrated in real life.

It is disingenuous at best for the media to report only those facts that paint a dire picture of out-of-control global warming. To base policy on biased information inevitably leads to poor policy decisions and, as we are beginning to see, human misery. The current \$4-a-gallon gasoline can be traced directly back to congressional decisions to protect the environment at any expense. First, it prevented development of the existing vast U.S. oil deposits to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Second, it created feel-good but counter-productive regulations that have made the building of refineries uneconomical for the past 30 years. Third, it passed an expensive requirement to create biofuels from food, which, in turn, has also caused skyrocketing food prices. These examples of environmental overkill are coming back to haunt us. Unfortunately, it will get worse before it gets better. Congress is blaming everyone but itself.

Vaclav Klaus, newly reelected president of the Czech Republic, sees an even greater danger. Having lived most of his life under communism, he provided some disturbing insights on the global-warming agenda when he addressed the National Press Club on May 27, 2008:

“There will be the same attraction, to a great extent pathetic, and at first sight quasi-noble idea that transcends the individual in the name of something above him (of something greater than his poor self), supplemented by enormous self-confidence on the side of those who stand behind it. Like their predecessors, they will be certain that they have the right to sacrifice man and his freedom to make their idea reality. In the past it was in the name of

the masses (or of the Proletariat), this time in the name of the Planet. Structurally, it is very similar.... I ask: ‘What is Endangered: Climate or Freedom?’ My answer is: ‘It is our freedom.’ I may also add, ‘and our prosperity.’” [Bold original]

Vaclav Klaus speaks from experience, which he discusses in his book, “Blue Planet in Green Shackles.” We are just now seeing the tip of the iceberg that is coming at us like an ice breaker. It is time to hold our politicians accountable to bring reality back to our policy decisions.

We will never have a better time to do it than this November. ■

Dr. Coffman is president of Environmental Perspectives Incorporated (epi-us.com) and CEO of Sovereignty International (sovereignty.net) in Bangor, Maine. He has had more than 30 years of university teaching, research and consulting experience in forestry and environmental sciences. He produced the acclaimed DVD, “Global Warming or Global Governance” (warmingdvd.com). He can be reached at mcoffman@roadrunner.com or 207-945-9878.