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 Date: Wed, 12 Jun 96 20:10:53 PDT
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June 12th, 1996

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To all Lead Authors of the 1995 IPCC Report, and all contributors to Chapter 8,

Once again I am writing to you to keep you informed of some extremely

disturbing developments regarding Chapter 8 of the 1995 IPCC Working Group I report. The attached editorial by Frederick Seitz was published in today's issue of the Wall Street Journal (June 12th, 1996). The editorial is entitled "A Major Deception on Global Warming". There is no question mark in the title. Dr. Seitz is listed as "president emeritus of Rockefeller University and chairman of the George C. Marshall Institute". He mentions in his editorial that he is also a past president of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences and the American Physical Society". In the words of an editor of the Wall Street Journal with whom I spoke today, Dr. Seitz has "impeccable scientific credentials".

Dr. Seitz makes serious allegations in his editorial. He claims that:

"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 that led to this IPCC report".

Referring to the changes made to Chapter 8 after Oct. 9th, 1995, Seitz is guilty of a serious factual error when he writes that:

"Nothing in the IPCC Rules permits anyone to change a scientific report after it has been accepted by the panel of scientific contributors and the full IPCC".

He then goes on to state that:

"I am in no position to know who made the major changes in Chapter 8; but the report's lead author, Benjamin D. Santer, must presumably take the major responsibility".

As you might imagine, I am very troubled by this editorial. Unlike other pieces on the subject of post-Oct. 9th changes to Chapter 8, such as those in "Energy Daily" (May 22nd) and the Washington Times (May 24th), the piece by Seitz names me personally. The clear implication is that I am personally responsible for "this disturbing corruption of the peer-review process", and that I intentionally suppressed important uncertainties as part of my own devious agenda.

Dr. Seitz is not an atmospheric scientist. To my knowledge, he has not published a single article in the peer-reviewed literature on the subject of climate-change detection and attribution. He was not involved in the IPCC process. He did not attend a single IPCC Lead Author's Drafting Session. He did not attend the Madrid IPCC meeting on which he reports. Most seriously, he did not contact ANY of the Lead Authors of Chapters 8 before writing his editorial, in order to obtain information as to how or why changes were made to Chapter 8 after Oct. 9th. He did not contact Prof. Bert Bolin, the Chairman of the IPCC, or the Co-Chairmen of IPCC Working Group I, Sir John Houghton and Dr. L.G. Meira Filho, in order to determine whether IPCC rules of procedure had been violated by the the post-Oct. 9th changes made to Chapter 8. I seriously doubt whether Seitz has even read the published version of Chapter 8. I must therefore assume that Seitz's editorial is largely based

on information provided to him by the Global Climate Coalition, a less than disinterested party.

In short, Dr. Seitz does not have the technical competence to judge whether there was or was not good scientific justification for the changes made to Chapter 8. He made absolutely no attempt to obtain the facts regarding IPCC procedural rules, and no attempt to ascertain who had made changes to Chapter 8, and why such changes were made.

Science is intimately bound up with the exercise of critical judgement. Dr. Seitz failed to exercise critical judgement, and failed to behave as a responsible scientist should. He obtained only one side of the story - the opinions espoused by the Global Climate Coalition - and accepted those opinions as being immutable fact. I believe that Dr. Seitz's behaviour is a disgrace to the august scientific bodies he once represented.

Dr. Seitz is categorically wrong on the procedural issues that he raises. A letter by Sir John Houghton and Prof. Bert Bolin will address this procedural issue directly. My understanding is that this letter is now being finalized and will be sent to the Global Climate Coalition in the next few days. It will also be copied to roughly 15 Senators and Congressmen who received information on "procedural improprieties" in Chapter 8 from the Global Climate Coalition. I would hope that Sir John and Bert will also send this procedural response to Lead Authors of the 1995 IPCC WG I Report and to all contributors to Chapter 8.

Let me reiterate my own position on this issue of "Climate Changes". Changes made to Chapter 8 after Oct. 9th were in response to comments that we received from governments, individual scientists, and non-governmental organizations. They were also made in response to plenary discussions that took place in Madrid. They were made for scientific reasons, not political reasons. The IPCC had nothing to do with these changes. They were under my full scientific control as Convening Lead Author of Chapter 8. They did not violate IPCC rules of procedure.

I'd like to underscore the issue of requests received for changes with a quote from a letter of Nov. 15th, 1995, by Day Mount of the U.S. Department of State. The letter documents the official U.S. comments on the Summary for Policymakers of the 1995 IPCC Working Group I Report. Towards the end of the letter the following statement is made:

"Finally, in comparing the text in the SPM and in the chapters, we have noted several inconsistencies, including some between different sections of the chapters. In keeping with past practice in WG I, it is essential that the chapters not be finalized prior to the completion of discussions at the IPCC WG I plenary in Madrid, and that chapter authors be prevailed upon to modify their text in an appropriate manner following discussion in Madrid".

Clearly, the official view of the United States was that chapters should NOT be finalized prior to Madrid.

The credibility of the IPCC and my own scientific reputation are now under

concerted attack. One does not require much imagination to identify the underlying culprits. The personal attacks have been distressing to me and to my family. Over the last three months, I have spent virtually all of my time answering questions regarding my alleged misconduct, and replying to articles in Science, Nature, and individual newspapers. In effect, I am being "taken out" as a scientist. It is a real dilemma for me. If I do not respond to these serious allegations, my silence would be interpreted by some as a tacit admission of guilt. If I engage the critics, I have little time or energy to pursue my own research.

There are issues here that are much larger than my reputation as a scientist. At the crux of the matter is the communication of uncertainties to policymakers and the public. Our chapter was charged with assessing what we know and do not know about the possible causes of climate change, and with reporting on what scientists have learned about climate-change detection and attribution since the 1990 IPCC Report. We tried to represent the science in an accurate and balanced way. We did not shout "Eureka! We have found the answer!" It became evident during the course of our work on Chapter 8 that powerful interests were intent on skewing the "balance" of the Chapter, and on accentuating the uncertainties rather than what we had learned in the past five years. Such interests would have preferred us to attach three or four caveats to each statement documenting progress in our field. An extreme case of this was the view expounded at Madrid that there were no scientific basis for any statement made in Chapter 8, and that the entire chapter should have been deleted from the 1995 IPCC WG I Report.

It is clear that there is no unique set of words on the subject of climate-change detection and attribution that would meet with universal approval. It's also clear that important uncertainties have not been suppressed - they are right there in Chapter 8 for anyone who takes the time to read it. As I mentioned in my email of June 3rd, the irony of this situation is that I fought hard during all three IPCC Lead Author Drafting Sessions to keep the extended discussion of signal and noise uncertainties within Chapter 8. I am now being accused by Dr. Seitz and others of his ilk of suppressing such uncertainties. Dr. Seitz's claims would be ludicrous if they were not so serious.

I encourage you to write to the Wall Street Journal and express your dissatisfaction with Seitz's editorial. I will do so in the next day or two; I hope to have a response finalized by Friday, June 14th. I will circulate this as soon as it has been completed. I have been informed today that "Energy Daily" will print our response to their article of May 22nd in tomorrow's issue of that illustrious publication. They have shortened it somewhat, which is a pity, but not entirely unexpected.

I am deeply upset with the unseemly focus on Chapter 8, and hope that it does not have the effect of marginalizing the excellent science in the other ten chapters of the 1995 IPCC WG I Report. That would be the biggest tragedy of all.

With very best regards,

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[The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition Editorial Page]
June 12, 1996

A Major Deception On Global Warming

By FREDERICK SEITZ

Last week the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations organization regarded by many as the best source of scientific information about the human impact on the earth's climate, released "The Science of Climate Change 1995," its first new report in five years. The report will surely be hailed as the latest and most authoritative statement on global warming. Policy makers and the press around the world will likely view the report as the basis for critical decisions on energy policy that would have an enormous impact on U.S. oil and gas prices and on the international economy.

This IPCC report, like all others, is held in such 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 reputations 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 that led to this IPCC report.

(See related material on IPCC: "Time to Phase

Out Fossil Fuels?")

A comparison between the report approved by the contributing scientists and the published version reveals that key changes were made after the scientists had met and accepted what they thought was the final peer-reviewed version. The scientists were assuming that the IPCC would obey the IPCC Rules--a body of regulations that is supposed to govern the panel's actions. Nothing in the IPCC Rules permits anyone to change a scientific report after it has been accepted by the panel of scientific contributors and the full IPCC.

The participating scientists accepted "The Science of Climate Change" in Madrid last November; the full IPCC accepted it the following month in Rome. But 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.

Few of these changes were merely cosmetic; nearly all worked to remove hints of the skepticism with which many scientists regard claims that human activities are having a major impact on climate in general and on global warming in particular.

The following passages are examples of those included in the approved report but deleted from the supposedly peer-reviewed published version:

- * "None of the studies cited above has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed [climate] 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 date] to anthropogenic [man-made] causes."
- * "Any claims of positive detection of significant climate change are likely to remain controversial until uncertainties in the total natural variability of the climate system are reduced."

The reviewing scientists used this original language to keep themselves and the IPCC honest. I am in no position to know who made the major changes in Chapter 8; but the report's lead author, Benjamin D. Santer, must presumably take the major responsibility.

IPCC reports are often called the "consensus" view. If they lead to carbon taxes and restraints on economic growth, they will have a major and almost certainly destructive impact 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 the scientific evidence shows human activities are causing global warming.

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 to governments on this important question.

Mr. Seitz is president emeritus of Rockefeller University and chairman of the George C. Marshall Institute.

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