

Caveat

As a member of the public, I have seen too many inquiries (WMD/Iraq being a notable example) that I am deservedly cynical of any inquiry set up by and for an institution under adverse media pressure. So, whilst making this submission, I do so without wishing to suggest that I believe this is the impartial inquiry which 3000 signatures to the No.10 website requested.

Furthermore, I would like to state up front, that I personally find it insulting to on the one hand be called: a “denier” by the Prime Minister, to be told I am “playing Russian Roulette with the planet” by the new head of the CRU, and generally be told I am like a holocaust denier, by people who are very well-paid out of the taxpayer’s purse . As someone who has researched this area in my own time and at my own expense and found it wanting, I really do want to know what is happening to the climate! I want to see is the CRU and the general climate “science”** community following the proper rules of science and engaging in the open honest debate that is the hallmark of proper science and which would allow me to believe what they are saying. And, so long as they engage in this high-profile smear campaign of people like me, I will continue to suspect that this PR campaign is the desperate attempt by desperate people trying to hide the lack of any real evidence to support their assertions.

**I include quotes because seeing their contempt for the proper procedures of science, I do not think this subject deserves the respect due to real science.

No scapegoats: Politicians and wider science must take their share of the blame.

First, whilst there has clearly been wrongdoing at the CRU, may I respectfully request that no individual in the CRU is made a “sacrificial lamb” to protect those higher up the science and political ladder who are far more culpable. There have been systematic failures in the true sense: the system of checking and cross-checking (aka peer review) and installing a culture of scientific integrity (impartiality) has failed. Allegations of this form have been widespread for years and there is no doubt in my mind that action should have been taken a long time ago to correct the problems at the CRU.

So, whilst the head of the CRU must take some responsibility for its systematic failures, he did so in a wider culture that permitted, even daresay, encouraged his behaviour. Quite clearly given the revelations, there was no smoke without fire, and the wider scientific community, the Met Office and particularly government should have acted a lot earlier, especially given the self-proclaimed importance and high cost of this area.

The Key Problems

Whilst there are questions as to the efficacy of the CRU's interpretation of global temperature and their assignment of its cause to man-made CO₂, if there had been the normal open and honest scientific debate, this would have been a relatively minor problem. Real science welcomes open and honest debate between opposing views because that is the hallmark of good science and this open process is the real “peer review” that tends to eliminate observer bias. Science quite rightly not only tolerates but even encourages mavericks. So, as science needs mavericks, there is no problem (in my view) with scientists stating opinions which go beyond the available evidence – as long as they do so with suitable caveats and whilst there is a general atmosphere where there is ample opportunity to hear contrary interpretations.

The two key problems:

1. The loss of key data, the suspected “slight of hand” in processing that raw data and the failure to provide that raw data for proper assessment by other parties.
2. Colluding with those whose clear aim was not to engage in open honest debate with those who disagreed on their interpretation of the data, but to remove them from the subject altogether. To silence opposition, not by the strength of the evidence, but by the manipulation of peer review and e.g. the allocation of places at conferences so as to force out all who do not agree from the “science”.

Science requires impartial Observers

To use an example which everyone should be able to agree on, it is widely known that Nazi “scientists” used scientific measurements on people of various races and came to the “scientific” conclusion that the Arian race was the supreme race. Obviously the example is highly emotive, but it shows that even when people are trained as scientists, if they approach a subject with such preconceived ideas as the supremacy of one race, however careful their measurements, there is no doubt that the result is biased and unscientific! Whilst the Nazi “scientists” may be an extreme example, the truth that impartial observers create impartial results is true in all fields of science and the climate is no exception.

In contrast, what we see in the emails sent and received by the CRU, is a group of people with very clear ideas of what the science ought to show, who do not brook opposition and who are willing e.g. to subvert the peer review system and exclude conference delegates who do not agree with their view on the climate.

They even ran a covert website called “realclimate.com”, which was clearly designed to use their “insider knowledge” to say behind the protective anonymity of the internet what they couldn't professionally say in public. To turn this around, if they couldn't legitimately engage in such media PR as found on realclimate.com, in public, why on earth was it legitimate for them to engage in such highly biased PR in private?

A Scientist has an Open Mind

At the heart of science is the concept of the “open mind”. Science is not based on opinions and particularly not votes of scientists, because a scientist does not believe the science is true because of opinion of notable people, however august. Nor does a scientist ascribe moralistic values to their theories. Science isn't right because it will “save the planet”, it is right because it properly predicts the data, like e.g. the 21st century cooling. Scientists believe their conclusions are right because the unbiased evidence leads to that conclusion. The conclusion is the natural consequence of the evidence, a scientist is impartial about their conclusion it has no intrinsic value, it is not moralistic, it is merely the consequence of available evidence, and should that available evidence change, then the conclusion must follow the evidence.

In contrast, the emails show a closed mind. People with very strong views on what the climate should be doing and why they had to convince the public to act. Unwilling to accept alternative explanations, seeing that the evidence (like the recent cooling, etc.) did not fit their chosen conclusion, they did not question the validity conclusion but instead believed it was some facet of their measurements.

“The fact is that we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can't. The CERES data published in the August BAMS 09 supplement on 2008 shows there should be even more warming: but the data are surely wrong. Our

observing system is inadequate.” (Kevin Trenberth)

A scientist only believes the conclusion because of the evidence, if the evidence doesn't fit the conclusion, then there is no doubt the conclusion is suspect, but despite the many problems fitting the data to the conclusion, is there one sign in the Climategate emails that they ever questioned the conclusion and not as above suggested that the evidence was at fault? Scientists do not value their interpretation of the data more than the data. That way lies the path of cherry picking data to support the conclusion; a danger all the more real because of the lack of proper scrutiny by peer review in the climate field and by lack of proper scrutiny within the CRU due to poor management.

Unless one is open to the possibility of a change, unless one is willing to seek new evidence irrespective of whether it supports the theory, then such closed their minds will only find the evidence that fits their predetermined and usually false conclusion rather than find the conclusion that best fits ALL available evidence from ALL available sources.

A true scientist welcomes opposing opinions

Science is lead by the evidence, and the good scientist welcomes all new evidence, particularly that which contradicts current views, because only by the exceptional cases that cause us to question current scientific theories, does science progress.

Scientists know that a scientific hypothesis is one that can be invalidated by evidence. Perhaps in the light of Climategate, this should have some additional wording to the effect that not only must it be theoretically possible to suggest an experiment whose result which would invalidate the hypothesis, but it must be socially possible: the resources, people and suitable scientific status must be given to those whose work could invalidate the hypothesis.

But, was this really the case in climate “science” before Climategate? Was it really possible to say that a scientist with any interest in climbing the scientific ladder of respectability would do their prospects any good by questioning the orthodoxy regarding man-made global warming? The answer was no! How could it be otherwise, when “scientists” allow fellow scientists to be publicly labelled as “(holocaust) deniers” which is the intended meaning of “climate denier”? This showed not only a contempt for those which contrary views, but a contempt for science. And, who were the cheerleaders in the PR campaign to silence any opposition to the orthodox view? I think that answer is in the emails! There are numerous examples of people who have followed the evidence and have been compelled by the real evidence to question the orthodoxy and have found themselves sidelined, not for their failure to apply the scientific methodology, but because like some religious court, they have dared to questioned the orthodoxy.

Opposing views strengthen science

The laughable thing watching the humiliation of the Climategate “scientists” and the way the IPCC reports have been ridiculed, is that if only these organisations had welcomed opposing views, and sought to engage openly and honestly with such contrary views, then (if there was any legitimacy in their own views) such opposition could only strengthened their own case. The trials and tribulation of open debate would have ensured the highest standards, preventing the high profile embarrassment of the CRU and IPCC. Instead their own actions to remove all opposition and the steamrolling of evidence has lead to their numerous stupid and highly embarrassing mistakes leaving a clear perception of bias and lack of credibility in the public mind.

And let us not forget the politicians in Parliament (and dare I say it: in the Met Office!) who were responsible for setting up and funding the CRU and IPCC. They must also share the blame for their

failings because the political oversight that encouraged this unscientific behaviour is just as culpable.

The Climategate “scientists” have lost all credibility

If as the Climategate “scientists” suggest, man-made global warming is the greatest crisis facing mankind and if as a result more money is to be spent than probably any other cause in human history, then doesn't the public who not only fund the Climategate “scientists” but who are paying for their “solution”, deserve the highest quality research, research and scientific integrity that matches their own self-proclaimed superhuman status?

I dare anyone to say after Climategate, that these latter day Dad's Army led by their Corporal Jones have met the standards of Dad's Army, let alone their own self-proclaimed importance as the key holders to the data to save planet earth and all life on it.

A scientist doesn't loose data

True science is based on the evidence, on the raw data. In an area as difficult as global climate, with so much time between meaningful changes and with so many questions such as the effect of urban heating, it is certain that later researches will have to revisit data as more becomes known about e.g. the exact effects and influence of urban heating.

I can't imagine any reason for real scientists “loosing” this data. It really does go beyond the bounds of credibility that such ostensibly important data was treated with such contempt.

A Scientist doesn't tamper with data

Lastly I have to recount my own experience. Having monitored the HadCrut3 data for several years I am not happy that the data presented in public truly represents the data from the temperature monitoring stations. It is quite apparent from the record that there are substantial changes to the data, much made retrospectively by up to one year. This gives a clear indication of the latitude available to “massage” the data. Whilst without seeing the original data and how it has been “adjusted”, it is difficult to be certain that tampering has occurred, there are several credible accounts of manipulation which at least deserve thorough investigation.

However, when I monitored the temperature there was e.g. a period of around 4-5 months when I noticed that the last twelve month average stayed the same to within 0.01C. It was also noticeable, that this data “flat line” miraculously disappeared. Unfortunately and unlike the CRU, I'm not paid to keep their data, so I cannot rule out legitimate explanations, however, I was left with a strong suspicion that there was active tampering of the data and that suspicion was only confirmed by what I saw in the Climategate emails.

Conclusion

Whilst I am only privy to the publicly available information I have read too many comments in the emails, listened to too many of their public utterances, and heard too many horror stories of apparently legitimate scientists being forced out of climate “science” to believe there is not something rotten in the CRU and climate science generally. So, whilst stating my reservations regarding the impartiality of this review, I personally would wish that any investigation answer the following questions:

1. Did the Climategate “scientists” loose data or was it purposefully lost to avoid the discovery through legitimate FOIs that it had been tampered with?

2. Why has the UEA run such a high profile campaign against this phantom “hacker” when a more plausible explanation would appear to be that the data was released by some insider furious with their failing to release information under FOI law?
3. Why, if they have nothing to hide, have they tried so hard to hide things?
4. Is it acceptable for an ostensibly impartial profession such as science to endorse those who call others who are properly and scientifically sceptical of their theories: “(Holocaust) deniers”? Is it e.g. acceptable for the head of the CRU to engage in active enviro-political campaigning to collude with covert websites and use such emotive language as e.g. to say of those who want to see proper standards of science that: “you are playing Russian Roulette with the planet”?
5. Do those in the CRU have the necessary impartiality to provide suitable public confidence in the impartiality of Global Temperature data?
6. Do they have an open mind and are led by the evidence or do they seek evidence to support their preconceived views?
7. Do they welcome opposing views, seeing those having such opposing views as a valuable means to check their own assumptions and ensure that their findings are independent of observer bias?
8. Do they actively engage with those of an opposing view seeing such engagement as a valuable way to test and so improve their science?
9. Assuming (as it seems likely) that the CRU continue to produce global temperature data, are there documented systems for backing up data, systematic, documented methodologies used in the application of adjustments to data and overall a quality system appropriate to the worldwide global warming budget which must be in the trillions of pounds?

Preferred outcome

Whilst I know it is not possible in the current political environment for the review to come up with any such suggestion, I would like to set out my own recommendations:

1. It should not be necessary (but it is) to state that the UEA should actively work with the police to ensure that anyone found to have purposefully tampered with data in a fraudulent way or knowingly colluded in the denial of freedom of information requests should be subject to the appropriate judicial procedures relating to fraud and FOI. If however, such prosecutions can not take on purely technical grounds, but there is reasonable grounds to believe such actions were an offence under the FOI act, then the UEA must obviously act to remove such criminals from the CRU.
2. The raw global temperature data together with the algorithms and internal procedures for judging changes (if they exists) must be made public.
3. The global global temperature data must be given to a new body which has not been tainted by the bias in the CRU.
4. Whilst I would not wish to in anyway condone the actions of the personnel in the CRU, if as they say this is the most important issue facing mankind, then, subject to suitable funding of those with a contrary view, and subject to open and honest peer review, and the end to exclusion of “sceptics” (aka scientists) from climate science conferences and journals, then so long as there is strict quality control by impartial management at the CRU and a constraint on the PR and media hype, then, these people are probably too valuable to lock up and throw away the key as they probably deserve. So, subject to these suitable control, the funding of research and the inclusion of contrary views, I personally would wish to keep their experience and hope that with good quality management and guidance their work on the climate might eventually lead to a real understanding of the world's atmosphere.