

News media soldiers for Al Gore's doom and gloom crusade

by Rich Noyes

Back in 2001, when Bryant Gumbel hosted CBS's The Early Show, he polled his on-air colleagues. "At the risk of starting an argument, are you a believer in global warming?" The responses were unanimous: "Absolutely." "Of course." "Yeah."

"So am I," affirmed Gumbel, who rued the public's lack of enthusiasm: "I mean, does an iceberg have to come floating down the Hudson before somebody stands up and goes, 'Oh, yeah'?"

Six years later, CBS and the other network morning shows have given up on the iceberg and are busily promoting liberals' global warming scare-mongering as certain fact. A new Media Research Center study of ABC, CBS and NBC's morning news programs since January 1 finds that out of 115 stories on global warming, 97 percent completely excluded any experts, evidence or comments that disagreed with former Vice President Al Gore's predictions of a "planetary emergency" and a "climate crisis."

On the January 31 Good Morning America ABC's Sam Champion trumpeted a United Nations report predicting water and food shortages, as an on-screen graphic blared: "Will Billions Die from Global Warming?" The next day, CBS's Harry Smith was in Miami in advance of the Super Bowl. He asked a local columnist, "Do people here know that very likely in the next several decades all of this is going to be under water?"

After a warm day in January, NBC's Meredith Vieira recounted how she was "running in the park on Saturday, in shorts, thinking this is great, but are we all gonna die?" On January 31, her co-host Matt Lauer referred to climate change as "a controversy over...what literally could be the end of the world as we know it."

Almost exclusively, TV's guest list has consisted of Gore's acolytes. Out of 90 soundbites and comments in interviews, nearly all (96%) came from liberal activists or those arguing the "climate crisis" position. Only one story, reported April 7 by NBC's Anne Thompson, actually quoted an expert dissenting from Gore's line on global warming. After detailing the array of disasters that await humanity, Thompson ran a quick soundbite from noted forecaster William Gray dismissing the link between man-made global warming and hurricanes: "We think that's been exaggerated tremendously."

NBC gave Gray's position a total of 11 seconds. But back on February 3, NBC's Today treated liberal activist (and An Inconvenient Truth producer) Laurie David to a full five minute, 30 second interview "really an infomercial" in which she pushed the liberal line. "It's now the time where we have to put the debate clearly behind us and we have to have action," David insisted.

As for Gore himself, supposedly objective reporters fell all over themselves to sing his praises. CBS's Smith suggested the ex-Vice President was "a prophet," while his colleague Gloria Borger described Gore as "an environmental evangelist....ahead of his time." Over on ABC, reporter Kate Snow giddily touted how Gore's "road show on global warming sold out as fast as a boy band would."

Then, in perhaps the most perplexing speech in recent years, Gore himself stepped forward in the midst of such thoroughly one-sided coverage to complain that the media were biased against his global warming crusade. "I believe that is one of the principal reasons why political leaders around the world have not yet taken action," Gore told a "Media Ethics Summit" at Middle Tennessee State University on February 27. Gore lectured journalists that coverage of views opposed to his own was irresponsible, calling it "balance as bias."

The fact is, the global warming debate is not settled. The regulatory remedies that Gore and company propose could have a crippling effect on future economic prosperity. Money spent today to prevent environmental problems in 2050 or 2100 would be money unavailable for a host of other social needs. Much disagreement remains over whether the today's science is certain enough to justify such drastic action, and whether the environmental benefits would actually outweigh the enormous economic costs.

Gore surely knows that many respected climatologists disagree with his Chicken Little forecasting. Writing in

Newsweek's April 16 International edition, MIT's Dr. Richard Lindzen agreed that the Earth has warmed slightly in the past 100 years, but that Gore's alarmism has no scientific basis: "There is no compelling evidence that the warming trend we've seen will amount to anything close to catastrophe."

Fair and balanced journalism would include Lindzen's expert perspective "whether Al Gore likes it or not. Unfortunately, the broadcast networks have chosen the path of advocacy, not professionalism.

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