

Scientist Says Budget Office Altered His Testimony

By PHILIP SHABECOFF
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 7 — The White House's Office of Management and Budget has changed the text of testimony scheduled to be delivered to Congress by a top Government scientist, over his protests, making his conclusions about the effects of global warming seem less serious and certain than he intended.

The testimony had been prepared by Dr. James E. Hansen, director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, for delivery Monday before the Senate Subcommittee on Sci-

ence, Technology and Space, Congressional sources said. Dr. Hansen confirmed that the testimony had been changed.

In his original testimony, he said that computer projections of climatic changes caused by carbon dioxide and other gases released into the atmosphere would cause substantial temperature increases, drought, severe storms and other stresses that will affect the earth's biological systems.

The text of his testimony was edited by the budget office to soften the conclusions and make the prospects of change in climate appear more uncertain, Dr. Hansen said in an interview.

The budget office and other officials in the White House have been urging a go-slow approach to policies dealing with global warming, called the greenhouse effect by scientists. Those officials have opposed the State Department and Environmental Protection Agency, which have been urging President Bush to take the lead in mobilizing the international community to meet the threat of rapid climate change. The Administration is deeply split over whether to endorse an international treaty that would require action to deal with global warming, high-ranking ex-

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Administration Alters Testimony To Congress by N.A.S.A. Scientist

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Executive branch officials said.

Senator Albert Gore, Democrat of Tennessee and chairman of the subcommittee, who had been told by Dr. Hansen of the alterations in the testimony, said that White House officials were attempting to change science to make it conform to their policy rather than base policy on accurate scientific data.

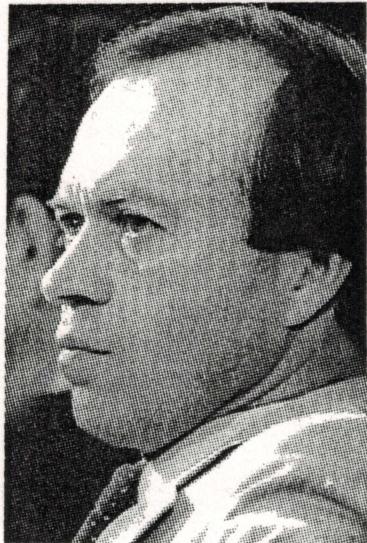
"They are scared of the truth," Mr. Gore said. He charged that the testimony was censored to support those in the Office of Management and Budget and other parts of the Administration who are seeking to keep the United States from proposing an international treaty to ameliorate the now widely anticipated global warming trend.

Mr. Gore said that at a future hearing "I intend to ask O.M.B. officials who have substituted their scientific judgments for those of atmospheric scientists to come in and testify about the basis for their conclusions. I want to determine their qualifications, the climate models they have used, the amount of study they have given to the subject and the evidence that they found most persuasive. And I intend to pursue this at great length."

Budget Office Review Is Routine

A spokeswoman for the budget office reached Saturday said that she made repeated attempts to seek an explanation but that no one from the office was available to respond to questions about the changed testimony. She also said that the only press official who will agree to have her name used in connection with budget office statements is Barbara Clay, who was among those not available.

The Office of Management and Budget routinely reviews testimony to be presented to Congressional committees by officials to make sure that Federal policy conforms to the President's budget.



The New York Times

Dr. James E. Hansen, director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, whose testimony on the effects of global warming was altered by the budget office.

The United States heads an international panel assigned the task of preparing a policy response to the global warming trend. The panel is scheduled to make recommendations at a meeting sponsored by the United Nations in Geneva this week.

Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William K. Reilly are said to be urging that the United States take the lead on a convention to meet the threat of global warming. But officials in the White House, including the Office of Management and Budget, as well as in the Department of Energy, are urging a wait-and-see approach, saying the scientific information and data on economic effects of a remedial action are inadequate.

Dr. Hansen's testimony, before it was changed, would have given strong support to the position that while there are still many uncertainties, enough is known now about the general and even

regional effects of the global warming trend to start acting now to mitigate and prepare for those effects. Dr. Hansen concluded, for example, "We believe it is very unlikely that this overall conclusion — drought intensification at most middle- and low-latitude land areas, if greenhouse gases increase rapidly — will be modified by improved models."

At the end of the section of his testimony dealing with regional effects of global warming, however, the Office of Management and Budget, over Dr. Hansen's objections, added this paragraph: "Again, I must stress that the rate and magnitude of drought, storm, and temperature change are very sensitive to the many physical processes mentioned above, some of which are poorly represented in the G.C.M.'s [general climate models]. Thus, these changes should be viewed as estimates from evolving computer models and not as reliable predictions."

Scientists Criticizes Change

Dr. Hansen said in an interview that the additional paragraph served to "negate" the entire point of that part of his testimony, which was that scientific understanding has now reached the stage where "we can begin to draw significant conclusions about droughts, storm, temperature — conclusions which are unlikely to change as the models and observational data become more detailed."

Another change required the testimony to say that the relative contribution of human and natural processes to changing climate patterns "remains scientifically unknown." In fact, Dr. Hansen said, he and his colleagues at NASA who helped prepare the testimony "are confident that greenhouse gases are primarily" of human origin.

"It distresses me that they put words in my mouth; they even put it in the first person," Dr. Hansen said, adding that he had tried to "negotiate" with the budget office over the wording but "they refused to change."

"I should be allowed to say what is my scientific position; there is no rationale by which O.M.B. should be censoring scientific opinion," Dr. Hansen insisted. "I can understand changing policy, but not science."

While there is strong consensus within the scientific community that the greenhouse effect is real, there have been a substantial number of challenges to Dr. Hansen's contention that long-term global temperature trends show a high probability that it is already taking place. Dr. Hansen's testimony that the global warming trend is already occurring was presented to Congress last July and attracted widespread attention.

While the O.M.B., in its function of coordinating policies within the executive branch, reviews and edits such testimony, the research findings of Government scientists are subject to peer review, not to change by the policy-oriented budget office. Dr. Hansen's testimony was based on his and his colleagues' research, which had been subjected to such peer review.

Mr. Reilly, asked about what proposals the United States would take to the Geneva meeting on global warming, said "the United States Government would be very positive and very involved." As for United States sponsorship of an international treaty, he said, "We are still looking at whether a convention is desirable and what it should contain."

A number of foreign leaders have been urging the United States to take the lead on global action to meet the threat of global warming, recalling President Bush's campaign pledge to exert such leadership.

Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, who discussed the issue with the President last week, said in an interview on Friday: "A United States leadership role is essential. The United States has to step forward in this process."

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White House Admits Censoring Testimony

Climate expert says
changes involved
more than policy.

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 8 — The White House confirmed today that it had censored Congressional testimony on the effects of global warming by a top Government scientist, but it insisted that the changes reflected policy decisions, not scientific conclusions.

Marlin Fitzwater, the White House press secretary, said the Office of Management and Budget had changed conclusions about global warming data contained in the testimony of Dr. James T. Hansen, director of the space agency's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. He said the action was taken because the ideas presented were "not necessarily those of all scientists who have considered this matter."

In his original text, before it was changed, Dr. Hansen asserted that computer projections showed that global warming caused by pollution from human activity would cause up-

heavals in the earth's climate. He warned of substantial increases in temperature, drought in mid-latitudes, severe storms and other stresses.

But his testimony was changed to make his conclusions seem less certain.

In response to questions at the regular White House briefing this morning, Mr. Fitzwater said that an official of the Office of Management and Budget "five levels down from the top" had changed Dr. Hansen's testimony to reflect that "there are many points of view on the global warming issue and many of them conflict with those stated by Dr. Hansen."

But Dr. Hansen, appearing today before the Senate Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space, said that the testimony he had submitted specifically stated that the conclusions represented his own scientific opinion, not Government policy or a scientific consensus.

He said he had been forced by the budget office to make changes that raised questions about the reliability of scientific evidence on expected climate changes. Another change imposed by the budget office made it seem as if there was some doubt that human activity was chiefly responsi-

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ble for the pollution that, it is now widely agreed, will cause a global warming trend. This would occur as carbon dioxide and other manmade pollutants trap and retain heat from the sun in a process similar to what happens in a greenhouse.

"I don't think the science should be altered," he said in response to a question by Senator Albert Gore, the Tennessee Democrat who is chairman of the subcommittee. "As a Government employee, I can and certainly do support Government policy. My only objection is changing the science."

Similar Complaint Reported

Another Government scientist testified at today's hearing that the budget office had tried to change his testimony on scientific issues earlier this year.

The scientist, Dr. Jerry D. Mahlman, director of the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said that the changes proposed for his testimony on issues related to global warming were "objectionable and unscientific" and that the testimony would have been "embarrassing."

Dr. Mahlman said that he had refused to accept the changes in his testimony. "We in the scientific community demand the right to be wrong," he said. Dr. Mahlman said he prevailed in his effort to prevent the budget office from changing his testimony. Dr. Hansen said, however, that the budget office insisted on editing his testimony despite his strong objections.

Gore Assails Administration

Senator Gore said Dr. Hansen's testimony was changed because the Bush Administration did not want to take action to cope with the expected global warming trend.

He said United States officials now meeting in Geneva with delegations from other countries were arguing that more study was needed before beginning work on an international treaty aimed at reducing the impact and mitigating the effects of climate change.

"President Bush, only months ago, told us he was an environmentalist," Mr. Gore said. "Yet, in the past few days alone, we've seen his Administration back away from a critical diplomatic initiative on global warming."

Mr. Fitzwater said President Bush's "personal view is that this is a serious problem that America needs

"But the science is something that still has to be sorted out," he said. "Obviously, the President hasn't made a judgment about scientific assessments."

The White House spokesman said that Dr. Hansen had a right to voice his opinion and that no punitive action would be taken against him for objecting to the changing of his testimony.

Mr. Gore said that if there was any retribution against Dr. Hansen, the Bush Administration would face "the equivalent of World War III" with Congress.

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The White House and the Greenhouse

The world has started to take very seriously the established threat to the life-protecting ozone layer from industrial chemicals. Many countries are now eager for President Bush to take the lead on another threat to the global climate — the feared warming of the earth's atmosphere by pollutant gases like carbon dioxide. But despite Mr. Bush's ringing campaign pledge to do just that, his Administration flounders in confusion and timidity.

This week, the U.S. is chairman of an international meeting in Geneva to discuss the greenhouse effect. Yet Washington's various bureaucracies have not agreed on a position, and the American delegates will sit on the sidelines.

Leadership on the issue has thus fallen to Europe. Last month Prime Minister Thatcher made her Cabinet sit through a daylong briefing on the greenhouse effect from climatologists. And yesterday the British delegate to the United Nations called for a new international convention to deal with global warming.

Washington's only recent activity on the greenhouse effect seems to have been the Office of Management and Budget's decision to soften public testimony on that subject by a Government scientist. James Hansen, a NASA climatologist, complains that the O.M.B. toned down his conclusions about the severity of global warming before he presented them yesterday to a Senate committee

headed by Albert Gore. The O.M.B.'s duty is to coordinate Government policy. But its heavy-handed intervention sends the signal that Washington wants to go slow on addressing the greenhouse problem.

This contrasts strangely with Mr. Bush's campaign oratory last summer. "Those who think we are powerless to do anything about the greenhouse effect forget about the 'White House effect'; as President, I intend to do something about it," he said in Michigan on Aug. 31. Mr. Bush promised to convene an international conference on the environment. "We will talk about global warming," he said, "and we will act."

Mr. Bush has not acted. He hasn't called for an international conference or even arranged a conference of his own policy makers to resolve their differences. Hence he is hearing no clear advice.

The threat is clear enough, even though experts disagree on how immediate it is. Pollutant gases do indeed trap the sun's heat and might seriously warm the earth's climate. It's far too soon to advocate the most direct and drastic remedy, which is to stop burning coal. But it makes eminent sense to buy insurance against global warming with steps that are worth taking in their own right, from raising auto efficiency to protecting tropical forests.

The threat cannot be addressed unless America assumes a major role. Far from leading the charge, the White House hasn't even joined it.

White House Says Bush Will Call Meeting About Global Warming

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 9 — The White House said today that President Bush would call an international meeting to consider a response to global warming and other environmental problems.

The Administration, however, is divided over the advisability of seeking a treaty to address the warming problem. The White House said Monday that the President believes there is insufficient scientific data on which to base rational policy decisions.

Some Administration officials, particularly in the State Department and Environmental Protection Agency, are urging that the United States take the lead in negotiating such a treaty as soon as possible because of the seriousness of the threat.

Scientists believe that global temperatures will rise because increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other man-made gases will trap and retain heat from the sun in a process similar to what happens in a greenhouse. Such a warming trend could cause sea levels to rise, cause severe droughts and storms and severely disrupt the earth's biological systems.

Commitment to Meeting

In a meeting this morning with the Dutch Prime Minister, Ruud Lubbers, the President committed himself to convening an international meeting on the environment, Marlin Fitzwater, the White House press secretary, said at a briefing. Mr. Fitzwater said Mr. Bush would discuss such a meeting when he met with other allied leaders later this year, probably at the economic summit meeting in Paris in July.

Mr. Bush pledged in his election campaign last year that he would hold an international meeting to consider the problem of global warming. While it is possible that such a conference could still take place this year, the international agenda may be too crowded to find time for such a gathering by December, said Stephen Hart, another White House spokesman.

Mr. Hart said the President wanted a gathering of experts on the global problems but that it was not yet decided whether heads of Government would be invited to attend. In addition to global warming, other issues likely to be on the agenda are the destruction of the earth's protective ozone layer by industrial chemicals, and acid rain.

No Treaty Recommendations

The President's pledge to call an international environmental conference comes amid growing criticism in Congress that he has failed to assert leadership on the threat of global warming.

At an international meeting on the greenhouse effect now under way in Geneva, the United States, which heads a panel on potential policies to deal with global warming, is making no

recommendations for action on a treaty, government officials here said.

The E.P.A. and its Administrator, William K. Reilly, as well as officials in the Department of State, have said that the United States should be in the vanguard in seeking international action to help lessen the expected warming trend and in planning for mitigating the effects of such change.

The environmental agency has been arguing that the evidence is clear that a buildup of carbon dioxide and other gases in the atmosphere produce the greenhouse effect and that there is growing consensus that a long-term warming trend and severe climate change is inevitable. While many details on the nature and scope of the changes are still to be determined, prudent policy demands that some actions be taken now before it is too late to limit the damage, agency officials insist.

But others in the Administration, including the budget office, the White House science adviser's office, the domestic policy staff and the Energy and Agriculture Departments, are arguing that more needs to be learned about the implications of a global treaty for domestic policy, including its potential effect on the economy.

William R. Graham, the President's science adviser, said that while there is a theory that prudent steps could be taken now to meet the global warming threat, he subscribed to a second theory that "we should have regulations be a consequence of what we understand and be determined by a knowledge of the consequences of regulating or not regulating."

U.S., in a Shift, Seeks Treaty on Global Warming

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 11 — In an important switch, the White House authorized American negotiators in Geneva tonight to lead the way toward an international treaty to control global warming.

The new development followed widely published reports that the White House staff, concerned about the costs and the technical feasibility, was re-sisting calls from the State Department and the Environmental Protection Agency that the United States take such a lead.

In an interview tonight, the White House chief of staff denied any resistance to the idea. But a Bush Administration official acknowledged that the initial instructions to the American delegation at Geneva, where a United Nations conference on global warming

is under way, had made no reference to any Washington initiative toward a treaty.

The fresh instructions by the White House were contained in a telegram from the chief of staff, John H. Sununu, which called for a "global warming workshop" to be held in the United States this fall.

The workshop would prepare analyses of legal, scientific, economic and social issues that must be resolved in order to reach agreement on a treaty to deal with a growing scientific consensus: that gases resulting from industrial and other human activity are trapping the heat from the sun and will cause the earth's surface to warm by 3 to 9 degrees by the middle of the next century, portending immense environ-

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White House, Switching Stance, Seeks Treaty on Global Warming

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mental consequences.

In his telegram, Mr. Sununu directed the American delegation to take a leadership role in planning the workshop, whose studies would then be used to develop "full international consensus on necessary steps to prepare for a formal treaty negotiating process."

In the telephone interview tonight, Mr. Sununu said President Bush was optimistic that an agreement on the workshop would be reached Friday and was prepared to send a note of congratulation to participants at the Geneva meeting.

"This is the thing we were hoping to get," he said, although adding, "It is important that we make sure we deal with the problem in a reasoned scientific and technical way."

There were two reasons for the turnaround by the White House, an Administration official said. One was that the progress of the Geneva meeting had been so encouraging that members of the delegation thought more could be accomplished with a more positive role by the United States.

The other reason, the official said, was this week's Congressional and public criticism that Mr. Bush was failing to exercise the leadership on global warming that he promised in his Presidential campaign last year.

On Monday, the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, called for a convention on climate changes caused by global warming, but the United States had no specific response. The State Department and environmental officials have been debating with budget and agriculture officials over a treaty. A NASA scientist testified Monday that the White House budget office had softened his testimony prepared

for Congress on the problems of the greenhouse effect.

In his telegram to the delegation, which is headed by Assistant Secretary of State Frederick Bernthal, Mr. Sununu urged "strongest efforts" to persuade other nations to attend the workshop in the United States this fall. "The scope and importance of this issue are so great that it is essential for the U.S. to exercise a leadership role," the message said.

Mr. Sununu warned, however, that because "the size of the potential problem is so large, improper or ill-advised actions could have enormous unintended environmental, economic and social consequences."

Concern about these consequences had prompted the White House staff, including the Office of Management and Budget, to urge a go-slow approach toward a global warming treaty. Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William K. Reilly have been urging the President to move more quickly to establish a United States leadership role on the global warming issue.

Mr. Sununu told the delegation that in preparing for a global warming treaty, the interests of developing countries be taken into account.

Economists have pointed out that countries just beginning the industrialization process cannot afford, and do not have the technical capability of developing, the kind of pollution control measures that would be required to come to grips with the global warming problem. Accordingly, it is widely accepted that the industrialized nations will have to transfer the necessary technology to the developing nations if those poorer countries are to be enlisted in the struggle with the greenhouse effect.