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Certainty of Catastrophic Global Warming is a Hoax

by James K. Glassman

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[CapMag.com] MILAN, Italy -- On many of the walls here at the Feira Milano conference center, site of the giant United Nations meeting on climate change, Green activists have posted flamboyant posters showing a picture of Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla), with a quotation from him: "Global warming is 'the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people.'"

The idea being proffered by these sophisticates, of course, is that Inhofe is a typical American rube. Global warming a hoax! What a dope!

In fact, Inhofe is one of the best-informed Senators on the science and economics of global warming. And "global warming" -- as it's used by environmental extremists -- is indeed a hoax.

Yes, the Earth's surface has warmed a bit over the past century, but is that warming caused mainly by humans or by natural cycles? And can changes in human activity -- specifically reductions in carbon-dioxide emissions -- have anything more than a tiny effect on temperature? The answers to those questions, which are at the heart of the Kyoto Protocol and other attempts to force cuts in energy use, are simply unknown.

It is the claim of certainty that is a hoax. It's a dangerous one, too, since using global-warming theory as the basis for extreme policy mandates could plunge the world into a long-term recession or even a depression.

The quote on the poster comes from Inhofe's speech during debate over the McCain-Lieberman bill that would have curtailed greenhouse-gas emissions in the United States, a measure similar to the Kyoto Protocol, which President Bush rejected in 2001 as "fatally flawed" and which still lacks enough ratifying nations for implementation six years after it was signed. McCain-Lieberman was rejected, too -- in part because of Inhofe's strenuous efforts as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee.

One of the themes being promoted by Greens at this conference is that the American people want Kyoto-style measures to cut greenhouse gas

emissions and that the close vote on McCain–Lieberman proves it. Wednesday's issue of ECO, the daily conference newsletter backed by WWF International, Greenpeace and other environmental groups, refers to "mounting anger at home" to President Bush's stance on climate change. "The American public is catching on to this charade," claims ECO.

But several times this week, Inhofe has patiently explained the real arithmetic behind the Senate vote. First, it was 16 votes short of the 60 effectively needed for passage under Senate rules. Second, it was riddled with concessions to win votes. Without the amendments, Inhofe figures only 32 Senators would have backed it. Finally, the bill was sold under a claim that it would cost only \$20 per household per year. A study commissioned by TechCentralStation and performed by Charles River Associates, the respected economic research firm, found that the costs would be at least 17 times that much.

Inhofe heads a congressional delegation of eight Republicans in Milan. The others are Sens. Larry Craig (Idaho), Craig Thomas (Wyo.) and Jeff Sessions (Ala.) and Reps. Chris Cannon (Utah), Fred Upton (Mich.), Chris Shays (Conn.) and Jim Greenwood (Pa). There are no Democratic members of Congress here but plenty of Democratic staffers.

I sat down with Inhofe at breakfast at his hotel in Milan Thursday morning. Considering the fact that nothing much has been happening at COP-9, the ninth United Nations conference of the parties to the 1992 Rio agreement on the environment, I started by asking why he was here.

"I'm here," he said, "to show that we are not going to ratify Kyoto."

That's Inhofe at his finest. Straight talk. No nonsense.

Unlike some other members of Congress, who accept the scientific basis for Kyoto but say that the treaty costs too much and exempts developing countries, Inhofe disputes the science. He knows the studies, and he recognizes that the tide has turned in the past few years.

"Virtually all of the research since 1999 has been refuting [the theory of human-caused global warming]. It is ludicrous that Kyoto can be as damaging economically as it is when there is no science to justify it."

New research, for example, has challenged Michael Mann's "hockey-stick" formula, which asserts that temperatures have risen sharply, in an

unprecedented fashion. In fact, warming was worse centuries ago, before industrialization and automobiles.

The delegation met Wednesday with counterparts from Europe, and Inhofe and many of his colleagues were shocked at the Europeans' refusal even to consider scientific research that casts doubt on predictions of cataclysmic warming. "They just don't want to talk about the science," said Inhofe. "They don't want to listen. They were Zombies" -- unlike "real people in the U.S." Those Americans, said Inhofe, "we are turning around" with the recent research.

Some members of the delegation have been as forceful as Inhofe on the subject of climate-change science. For example, in 1998, with Bill Clinton in the White House, Sen. Larry Craig said, "As more and more American scientists review the available data on global warming, it is becoming increasingly clear that the vast majority believe the commitments for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions made by the administration in the Kyoto Protocol are an unnecessary response to an exaggerated threat the vice president himself [i.e., Al Gore] is caught up in making."

The talk of the conference has been Russia. Will the Russians ratify Kyoto? The treaty requires the votes of nations producing 55 percent of all emissions from developed countries. Currently, the tally is 44 percent, so the Russians, with 17 percent, hold the key.

Inhofe says that some Russians see negotiations on ratification "as a way to make some money. They want to see how big the bribe will be." But, in the end, he thinks the Russians will reject Kyoto, for reasons of science and economics, just as Bush rejected it as shortly after his inauguration.

"I'm proud of Putin for having the courage to look at the science," said Inhofe, referring to the Russian president. "In this environment, it takes courage."

Inhofe also agrees with the assessment that this has been a particularly depressing conference for the Greens. The plenary sessions are only about half-full, and "there was no enthusiasm in the room."

Meanwhile, Inhofe points out, the United States is shelling out \$4.7 million, footing the bill for about one-fourth of the cost of the U.N.'s extravaganza. But the price may be worthwhile, if only because Inhofe is getting his message out. He's teaching the value of straight talking to the

Europeans and the Green NGO officials who, for a long time now, have assumed they can set the world's agenda. This year, with Kyoto on its deathbed, they're learning otherwise. It's delightful to see.

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