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To: "Catanzaro, Michael (EPW)" <Michael\_Catanzaro@epw.senate.gov>  
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Subject: EPW: MOLLY IVINS

Liberal columnist Molly Ivins took it upon herself to set the record straight on global warming in her June 26 column. She did that by criticizing the Bush Administration's "Orwellian" tactics--she got positively frothy over the White House's prudent deletion of scientifically questionable global warming language in an EPA draft report--and savaged President Bush for lying about this issue and many others.

President Bush, of course, is not lying or using Orwellian tactics. He's acting responsibly by following objective, fact-based science, and rejecting silly, counterproductive schemes such as the Kyoto Protocol, schemes that appeal to Ivins's 'New Europe' sensibilities.

Because she is so convinced of the President's mendacity, the EPW Committee examined Ivins's claims to determine their basis in fact, or in anything that looks remotely like fact. Unfortunately, Miss Ivins, whose column is nationally syndicated, appears to be, at best, terribly, woefully, misinformed.

Problem-solving worthy of Orwell  
By Molly Ivins

IVINS: You've got to hand it to those clever little problem-solvers at the White House. What a bunch of brainiacs. They have resolved the entire problem of global warming: They cut it out of the report!  
RESPONSE: What was cut out of the report, Molly? You don't say. The earlier draft of the EPA report introduces the "Global Issues" section with this sentence: "Climate change has global consequences for human health and the environment." A redraft of the final version instead begins: "The complexity of the Earth system and the interconnections among its components make it a scientific challenge to document change, diagnose its causes, and develop

useful projections of how natural variability and human actions may affect the global environment in the future."

Seems like sensible language, rooted in objective science. Don't believe us, Molly? Please, consult the National Academy of Sciences, which wrote in 2001: "Because of the large and still uncertain level of natural variability inherent in the climate record and the uncertainties in the time histories of various forcing agents (and particularly aerosols), a causal linkage between the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the observed climate changes in the 20th Century cannot be unequivocally established."

And further, the NAS showed why EPA's initial claim about health impacts and climate change was scientifically baseless: "The understanding of the relationships between weather/climate and human health is in its infancy and, therefore, the health consequences of climate change are poorly understood. The costs, benefits, and availability of resources for adaptation are also uncertain."

IVINS: This is genius. Everybody else is maundering on about the oceans rising and the polar icecaps melting and monster storms and hideous droughts, and these guys just ... edit it out.

RESPONSE: Who's maundering, Molly? You? NRDC? The Sierra Club? Are these catastrophes you recount really occurring (or going to occur) because of fossil fuel use? Perhaps you should ask the American Geophysical Union, which found that the Arctic was warmer in 1935 than it is now. Take a look for yourself: "Two distinct warming periods from 1920 to 1945, and from 1975 to the present, are clearly evident ... compared with the global and hemispheric temperature rise, the high-latitude temperature increase was stronger in the late 1930s to early 1940's than in recent decades." Also remember, Molly, in the 20th century, 80 percent of the increased CO2 concentrations in the atmosphere occurred after 1940.

"Hideous droughts?" You mean, of course, because of fossil fuels inducing global warming. Molly, researchers with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found otherwise. In the last 700 years there have been two "mega-droughts" that lasted for two to four decades each. A sixteenth century mega-drought lasted 20 to thirty years and may have stretched from the West to the East Coast. According to Connie Woodhouse, one of the researchers at the University of Colorado, "There's this 20-year periodicity of drought, we're not sure what that is due to, but it seems to be fairly regular." Molly? What about monster storms? That's alarmist code for "severe weather events," like heat waves, induced by global warming. "The fact that it's hot for a week has nothing at all to do with global warming, which would be measured over decades, not days," says National Weather Service meteorologist Richard Tinker.

IVINS: "The editing eliminated references to many studies concluding that warming is at least partly caused by rising concentrations of smokestack and tailpipe emissions, and could threaten health and ecosystems," reports The New York Times. Presto -- poof!

FACT: Molly, you realize that you are relying on a statement that is essentially meaningless, yet couched in such a way as to dramatize the issue. Presto! You've been duped! Consider again: Is "at least partly caused" by "rising concentrations of smokestack and tailpipe emissions, and could threaten health and ecosystems." How much is partly, Molly? Can you quantify that for us? Does that mean .0006 percent? 5 percent? 85 percent? At what percent should we be concerned? "Could" threaten health and ecosystems? Isn't the science of global warming supposed to be, according to your lights, settled? Shouldn't it be "will" threaten health and ecosystems? Guess not. Don't forget what the National Academy of Sciences found in June 2001: "The understanding of the relationships between weather/climate and human health is in its infancy and, therefore, the health consequences of climate change are poorly understood. The costs, benefits, and availability of resources for adaptation are also uncertain."

IVINS: Inspiring as the remarkable Bush approach to resolving global warming is -- the simplicity of it, the beauty of it, I cannot get over it -- does it

not suggest a certain cavalier je ne sais quoi about the future? What I mean is, is anybody there concerned about what happens to people?

FACT: Yes, as a matter of fact, which is why President Bush proposed Clear Skies, the most aggressive presidential initiative in history to reduce power plant emissions. It would reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and mercury by 70 percent by 2018. Yes, it addresses those emissions that have demonstrated health impacts on people's lives. Problem is, Molly, it can't get passed because environmentalists, presumably those folks you enthusiastically support, would rather obstruct Clear Skies in order to fundraise and play politics over regulating carbon dioxide, something that has no health impacts--we humans exhale it with every breath.

IVINS: I realize that the energy industry and the auto industry and other major campaign contributors would prefer to think global warming does not exist, but how long do you think it will take before reality catches up with all of us? The White House editors (hi, Karl) instead chose to insert a new study on global non-warming funded by -- ta-da! -- the American Petroleum Institute.

RESPONSE: First, Molly, it's not that it doesn't exist. The Earth has cooled and warmed for centuries. The key question is: what role do humans play? Not much at all--but you could only understand that if you read the scientific literature. Or maybe you have?

As for the API issue: Molly, did you know, or care to find out, that API funded less than 10 percent of the study? Did you know that researchers from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics conducted the study? Had you read (or maybe you did) the Harvard-Smithsonian press release announcing the study, you would have found that most of the funding came from federal grants through NASA, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (hi, Molly).

Another question: What if API funded the whole study? If that means the study is automatically corrupted, would you at least deign to show us what's wrong with it? Can you refute it, any of it, substantively that is?

IVINS: Fond as I am of many of API lobbyists I have known over the years, I am not quite sure I want those bozos calling the shots on global warming. I have watched them buy law and bend regulations for decades now, and although I admire their chutzpah, I am impelled to warn you: They have no scruples, they have no decency, and they have no shame. (See 50 years worth of reporting on the industry by The Texas Observer.) Also, they lie.

RESPONSE: "Bozos." That's a brilliant, trenchant critique of API. "They lie." This is a scurrilous charge, bordering on libelous. Which API lobbyists are you speaking of? By asserting that, "they lie," you cast a wide net over current and past API lobbyists. You seem to be saying lying is part of their permanent condition. Specifically, Molly, what are they lying about?

IVINS: FYI: If you put "George W. Bush" and "lies" into the Google search engine, you get 250,000 references in nine-tenths of a second.

RESPONSE: Molly, let's be fair here. "Bill Clinton lies" got 122,000 hits in 0.27 seconds, and "Molly Ivins lies" got 5,480 hits in 0.24 seconds.

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