



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on December 8, 2009

UN Launches Climategate Probe

The United Nations is launching an investigation into Climategate, the scandal involving incriminating e-mails from a leading climate change research center in England.

Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) announced the investigation last week and told [BBC News](#), "We certainly don't want to brush anything under the carpet. This is a serious issue, and we will look into it in detail." His concern stems from the fact that the facility in the Climategate spotlight, University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit (CRU), is a key source of information for IPCC reports, used in turn by governments around the world to shape environmental policies and regulations.



CRU Director Phil Jones has stepped down temporarily during an internal review by the university. He is implicated in attempting to exclude from IPCC reports data that does not support the idea of anthropogenic (man-made) global warming (AGW) and in manipulating reported data. One of his colleagues, Michael Mann, a professor of meteorology at Pennsylvania State University, is under investigation for mismanaging IPCC data as well.

Telegraph commentator [Nile Gardiner](#) calls the investigation ironic, claiming it is impossible for the UN to conduct a credible review. "I spent several years working on UN issues in Washington and served as an expert on the Gingrich-Mitchell Congressional mandated Task Force on the United Nations, and nothing I have seen of the UN convinces me that it is capable of carrying out a remotely objective investigation," Gardiner lamented. He maintains Pachauri will whitewash the study, pointing out he is a leader in promoting the idea of AGW. Judging from the [official IPCC statement](#) about the controversy, Gardiner's fears are well founded. It opens with the announcement that "the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change firmly stands behind the conclusions of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, the community of researchers and its individuals providing the scientific basis, and the procedures of IPCC Assessments."

However, the UN is not alone in investigating the CRU e-mails. Republicans in the U.S. House and Senate are calling for a review of [EPA climate change efforts](#), according to the [Wall Street Journal](#), and [Senator James Inhof](#) (R-Okla.), ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, has ordered an investigation. Saudi Arabia is also launching an independent inquiry. [BBC News](#) reports that Mohammad Al-Sabban, lead negotiator for Saudi Arabia at Copenhagen, declared the e-mails reveal "there is no relationship whatsoever between human activities and climate change. Whatever the international community does to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will have no effect on



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the climate's natural variability." According to [Politico.com](#), another Saudi delegate said, "We believe this scandal ... is definitely going to affect the nature of what could be trusted in our deliberations. The level of confidence is certainly shaken."

Despite these strong statements, other Copenhagen envoys are optimistic. The [Wall Street Journal](#) reports that Michael Oppenheimer of Princeton University said of the controversy, "I don't even see it registering on the meter." And UK climate-change secretary Ed Miliband dismisses Climategate as insignificant. Other officials do not share such optimism. According to [BBC News](#), former chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, Jonathan Porritt, is worried about the effect the scandal may have on politicians' confidence in past and future IPCC reports. "Clearing up the issue is absolutely crucial," he warned.

Meanwhile, major US media networks continue to disregard the controversy. An editorial in Monday's [Washington Times](#) noted that since release of the CRU e-mails, ABC, NBC and CBS have completely ignored the story. "The networks found plenty of airtime to cover rumored family problems plaguing professional golfer Tiger Woods," opined the commentator. "Yet, even though there is climate-regulation legislation pending in Congress that could cost Americans trillions of dollars, network producers don't see anything newsworthy in a scandal exposing fraud in global-warming research. Such omissions make mainstream news complicit in the cover-up."

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