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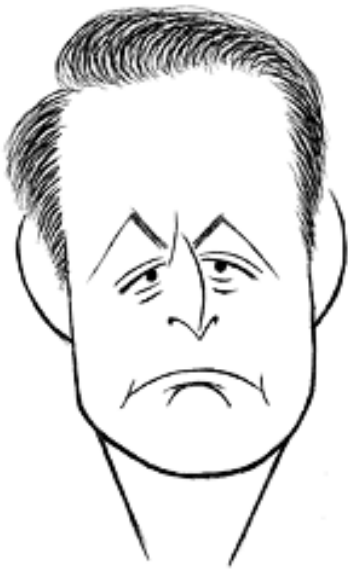
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## Will Al Gore Melt?

By **FLEMMING ROSE** and **BJORN LOMBORG***January 18, 2007; Page A16*

Al Gore is traveling around the world telling us how we must fundamentally change our civilization due to the threat of global warming. Today he is in Denmark to disseminate this message. But if we are to embark on the costliest political project ever, maybe we should make sure it rests on solid ground. It should be based on the best facts, not just the convenient ones. This was the background for the biggest Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten, to set up an investigative interview with Mr. Gore. And for this, the paper thought it would be obvious to team up with Bjorn Lomborg, author of "The Skeptical Environmentalist," who has provided one of the clearest counterpoints to Mr. Gore's tune.

The interview had been scheduled for months. Mr. Gore's agent yesterday thought Gore-meets-Lomborg would be great. Yet an hour later, he came back to tell us that Bjorn Lomborg should be excluded from the interview because he's been very critical of Mr. Gore's message about global warming and has questioned Mr. Gore's evenhandedness. According to the agent, Mr. Gore only wanted to have questions about his book and documentary, and only asked by a reporter. These conditions were immediately accepted by Jyllands-Posten. Yet an hour later we received an email from the agent saying that the interview was now cancelled. What happened?



Ken Fallin

One can only speculate. But if we are to follow Mr. Gore's suggestions of radically changing our way of life, the costs are not trivial. If we slowly change our greenhouse gas emissions over the coming century, the U.N. actually estimates that we will live in a warmer but immensely richer world. However, the U.N. Climate Panel suggests that if we follow Al Gore's path down toward an environmentally obsessed society, it will have big consequences for the world, not least its poor. In the year 2100, Mr. Gore will have left the average person 30% poorer, and thus less able to handle many of the problems we will face, climate change or no climate change.

Clearly we need to ask hard questions. Is Mr. Gore's world a worthwhile sacrifice? But it seems that critical questions are out of the question. It would have been great to ask him why he only talks about a sea-level rise of 20 feet. In his movie he shows scary sequences of 20-foot flooding Florida, San Francisco, New York, Holland, Calcutta, Beijing and Shanghai. But were realistic levels not dramatic enough? The U.N. climate panel expects only a foot of sea-level rise over this century. Moreover, sea levels actually climbed that much over the past 150 years. Does Mr. Gore find it balanced to exaggerate the best scientific knowledge available by a factor of 20?

Mr. Gore says that global warming will increase malaria and highlights Nairobi as his key case. According to him, Nairobi was founded right where it was too cold for malaria to occur. However, with global warming advancing, he tells us that malaria is now appearing in the city. Yet this is quite contrary to the World Health Organization's finding. Today Nairobi is considered free of malaria, but in the 1920s and '30s, when temperatures were lower than today, malaria epidemics occurred regularly. Mr. Gore's is a convenient story, but isn't it against the facts?

He considers Antarctica the canary in the mine, but again doesn't tell the full story. He presents pictures from the 2% of Antarctica that is dramatically warming and ignores the 98% that has largely cooled over the past 35 years. The U.N. panel estimates that Antarctica will actually increase its snow mass this century. Similarly, Mr. Gore points to shrinking sea ice in the Northern Hemisphere, but don't mention that sea ice in the Southern Hemisphere is increasing. Shouldn't we hear *those* facts? Mr. Gore talks about how the higher temperatures of global warming kill people. He specifically mentions how the European heat wave of 2003 killed 35,000. But he entirely leaves out how global warming also means less cold and saves lives. Moreover, the avoided cold deaths far outweigh the number of heat deaths. For the U.K. it is estimated that

2,000 more will die from global warming. But at the same time 20,000 fewer will die of cold. Why does Mr. Gore tell only one side of the story?

Al Gore is on a mission. If he has his way, we could end up choosing a future, based on dubious claims, that could cost us, according to a U.N. estimate, \$553 trillion over this century. Getting answers to hard questions is not an unreasonable expectation before we take his project seriously. It is crucial that we make the right decisions posed by the challenge of global warming. These are best achieved through open debate, and we invite him to take the time to answer our questions: We are ready to interview you any time, Mr. Gore -- and anywhere.

*Mr. Rose is culture editor of Jyllands-Posten, in Copenhagen. Mr. Lomborg is a professor at the Copenhagen Business School.*

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