

Subject:NRSP organized open letter to UN
Date:Wed, 02 Jan 2008 11:38:15 -0800
From:<SourceWatch contributor deleted>
To:Doug Kelly <email deleted>

To: Douglas Kelly, Editor-in-chief, National Post

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I am writing to bring to your attention facts that suggest highly questionable conduct on the part of Financial Post editor Terence Corcoran. The facts show that Corcoran knowingly allowed the National Post to play an active role in a public relations campaign concerning climate change and that he deliberately withheld information about the campaign from readers of the National Post.

On Dec. 13, the Financial Post section of the National Post published an open letter to the UN signed by a group of scientists that discredits the scientific process used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and arguing against the idea that abnormal climate change is occurring. In an accompanying commentary by Corcoran, headlined "A new call to reason," Corcoran describes this letter as having been "signed by more than 100 specialists" and having been "assembled under Robert M. Carter, a professor at the Marine Geophysical Laboratory of James Cook University in Australia."

In fact, the letter was organized by the Natural Resources Stewardship Project (NRSP), a body dedicated to discrediting the scientific consensus on climate change theory. Carter is not just a concerned "specialist" but is on the NRSP's Science Advisory Committee. And internet documents show that Corcoran agreed to disseminate this letter and allowed the National Post to play a role in the organization's PR campaign.

Here are the details:

On Dec. 6, an e-mail was circulated soliciting potential signatories of the open letter. The text was posted at canadafreepress.com, freedominion.ca and bogotafreeplanet.com. (The text has been removed from the Canadian websites, but remains at bogotafreeplanet.com:
<http://www.bogotafreeplanet.com/index.php/article/196>)

The second sentence of the e-mail reads: "It is intended that this [open letter to the UN] ... will also be published by a major media outlet towards the end of the current UN Conference on Climate Change in Bali,Indonesia."

This sentence clearly suggests that a deal had already been struck to have the letter published in the National Post.

The e-mail also states that the open letter is "co-ordinated" by Professor Bob Carter of James Cook University in Australia, and Tom Harris, executive director of the NRSP. Bob Carter, also known as Robert M. Carter or R.M. Carter (the name he used in signing the open letter), is listed on the NRSP's Science Advisory Committee on the "People" page of the NRSP website. In fact, all five of the NRSP committee are also signatories, as are most of the NRSP's 25 "allied scientists."
(<http://nrsp.com/people.html>)

After the letter was published in the National Post Dec. 13, the NRSP sent out a press release on the Canada News Wire. The press release does not contain a text of the open letter, but instead links to the National Post online version of the open letter (<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/December2007/13/c2742.html>)

From all this, two reasonable inferences may be drawn:

- a) Terence Corcoran played a key role in an expertly organized and well funded public relations campaign designed to discredit the work of the IPCC and indeed the entire UNFCCC process.
- b) Even worse, Corcoran deliberately withheld information about the role of the NRSP in the open letter, and misled National Post readers about the true provenance of the letter.

It is legitimate for columnists or editorialists to express strongly held beliefs about issues such as climate change, no matter how illogical or ill-informed those beliefs, as Corcoran has in the past. However, this latest behaviour is a clear breach of journalistic ethics and damages the credibility of the National Post.

I urge you to take the following actions:

- 1) Publish a correction clarifying the provenance of the letter and the National Post's role in its dissemination.
- 2) Secure Corcoran's recent e-mail and phone records so you can establish whether he abused his position as editor of the Financial Post to play a role in a public-relations campaign.
- 3) Enjoin Corcoran from any contact with the NRSP, Tom Harris, Tim Ball or Bob Carter pending further investigation.
- 4) Following a complete investigation of the matter, consider appropriate sanctions, including possible suspension or dismissal.

Thank you in advance for your prompt consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
<SourceWatch contributor deleted>