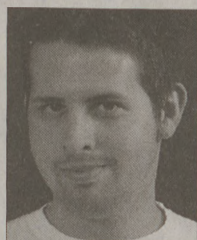


The myth of global warming

'The Day After Tomorrow' reignites debate, but where's the supporting evidence?

Hollywood is playing politics again — this time it's not celebrities protesting a war or promoting their favorite charity, but actors dramatizing the myth of global warming through Roland Emmerich's summer action flick, "The Day After Tomorrow."



MIKE WALTERS

In the movie, global warming alters ocean currents and triggers an ice age, causing bizarre and highly destructive weather to level major cities worldwide. Unlike most science-fiction flicks, however, the filmmakers actually believe that these horrors present a real-life threat. As co-screenwriter Jeffer Nachmanoff describes it, "It's a cautionary tale about what can happen if we continue to provoke Mother Nature."

The film packages and sells what environmentalists have been preaching in schools and in public for decades: the idea that technological advances that prolong and enrich human life come at the cost of destroying the planet through global warming — a suggested increase in worldwide temperatures caused by man-made greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide.

With the release of "The Day After Tomorrow," people and the media have a renewed interest in this topic. However, there seems to be a lack of hard evidence suggesting that the earth really is getting warmer, that such weather patterns are outside of the normal fluctuation ranges or that any of it is caused by human activity.

This isn't just a stubborn denial by politicians or chemical plant owners. More than 17,000 scientists have signed the Oregon Institute Petition, which states that "there is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane or other greenhouse gases is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate."

If this were a small misunderstanding,

it wouldn't be a problem to clear up. However, an incredible amount of people believe in this. In a national survey of 1,000 adults conducted by the polling firm Global Strategy Group this year, 70 percent of Americans polled said they consider global warming to be a "very serious" or "somewhat serious" problem.

And the media doesn't seem to be doing much to clear this matter up. John Houghton, a former member of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change described global warming as "a weapon of mass destruction" in the British newspaper, The Guardian. He further asserted that "The 1990s were probably the warmest decade in the past 1,000 years."

At first glance, this seems to be a staggering statistic affirming a rise in global temperature, but it immediately draws the question: Why was it so warm 1,000 years ago? In 990, power plants, factories, chemical plants and SUVs didn't exist, so why would we assume that the temperature change was a natural occurrence back then yet believe it to be manmade now?

Environmentalists such as Houghton point to 1,500 deaths last year in an Indian pre-monsoon heat wave where temperatures reached 120 degrees, 9 degrees above normal. Indeed, on "The Day After Tomorrow" Web site, such death tolls flash on the screen as if the bodies would make a person forget about actual evidence through an emotional appeal. But truth and evidence speak beyond the tragic loss of life — in 2003, temperatures hit 127 degrees in Palm Springs, Calif., with no reported heat-related deaths. That's 7 degrees hotter and 1,500 less dead people. Like it or not, in this case the difference between life and death is living in the United States, with the benefit of the technology these environmentalists are accusing to be the world's doom.



Karry Mullis, the 1993 Nobel Prize winner in chemistry once said, "Environmentalists predict that global warming is coming, and our emissions are to blame. They do that to keep us worried about our role in the whole thing. If we aren't worried and guilty, we might not pay their salaries. It's that simple." Hopefully most of those perpetuat-

ing the myth of global warming and the doom of our planet are guided by a genuine sense of protecting the beautiful planet we inhabit, and merely need to examine the wealth of facts to the contrary that are readily available on the Internet and in scientific journals. Hollywood and the media must face these facts and debunk this myth, so that another generation of Americans

doesn't grow up trying to hinder economic and technological progress in fear of Roland Emmerich's vision of a judgment day that will never happen.

Mike Walters is a senior psychology major. Graphic by Tony Piedra

MAIL CALL

Bush's internal investigation not enough; 'liberal media' not to blame

In response to George Deutsch's June 1 column:

George Deutsch firmly claims that it is a "lie" that high-ranking military personnel or Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld knew anything about the horrendous abuses occurring in the Abu Ghraib prison. What is Mr. Deutsch's evidence for such a bold statement? Because CIA and Defense Department spokespersons say so? Surely we can all rest more easily now knowing that bit of irrefutable evidence.

Seymour Hersh, who originally made the accusations about Rumsfeld's involvement (www.newyorker.com/fact/content/7040524fa_fact), has stated that he feels confident that his unnamed sources would testify if a Congressional inquiry were undertaken. Perhaps a Congressional investigation would be more honest and probing than relying on Dubya's internal investigation of his own appointees.

Deutsch then goes on to use the typically conservative tactic of blaming the "liberal media" for all the ugliness associated with the Bush regime's tinkering with the otherwise sovereign nations of the world.

I suggest you read Eric Alterman's book "What Liberal Media?: The Truth About Bias and the News" to see how misguided this assertion actually is. You might also find it interesting how the New York Times, often considered the ringleader of the "liberal media," has now had to issue an apology in its pages for its role in promoting the unfounded assertion that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq prior to U.S. intervention.

That assertion, which formed the centerpiece of our administration's rationale for invasion, was largely presented to the U.S. public through the New York Times and some 300 other newspapers around the country which regularly print such articles from the Times.

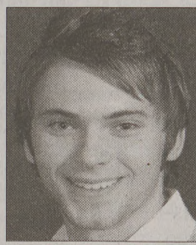
Those stories were largely unsubstantiated and leaked to Times reporters (mainly Judith Miller) by the Pentagon, and then printed and immediately cited by the Rumsfelds of the world as further justification for their actions. Anyone see a problem here?

Robert Powell
Graduate Student

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 200 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters also may be mailed to: 014 Reed McDonald, MS 1111, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647 Email: mail-call@thebatt.com

Pat Tillman is personification of American heroism, ideals

On Friday, April 23, 2004, the nation mourned the death of the 110th soldier killed in Afghanistan: U.S. Army Ranger specialist and former Arizona Cardinal free safety Pat Tillman.



CLINT RAINEY

The Department of Defense concluded that "his patrol vehicle came under attack" by Afghan insurgents during a firefight with anti-coalition forces 25 miles southwest of the U.S. military base at Khost, but recent developments indicate that Tillman was likely killed by friendly fire. Regardless of how he died, tributes and eulogies have appeared and spanned the front pages and Web sites of every major news source in the country. At some point during all this, Pat Tillman became an All-American hero.

This courageous man's death is certainly not the first to come from a soldier in the line of duty. It definitely won't be the last. And he is no more courageous than the other two U.S. soldiers who were injured alongside him. So, what causes an entire country to mourn the death of a single soldier?

It could be his celebrity status — that he has name recognition undoubtedly helps. But the reason he will have legendary recognition and soul-stirring permanence, and the reason his Army fatigue-clad muscular build monopolized the front pages of the nation's newspapers, is that Tillman is a true American — a personification of America. There is the model citizen Tillman, the model soldier Tillman, the model athlete Tillman, the model husband Tillman, and the model American Tillman essentially integrated a little bit of everyone.

Although he may have considered the things accomplished in his life to be normal, there's no doubt that Tillman's legacy is great.

It began at the end of the NFL's 2001 regular season when the young man decided he was ready for a venue change. Driven by the

deep sense of civic duty that defined his life, and spurred by the Sept. 11 attacks on his true home turf, he saw the prospect of spending another year at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe, Ariz. insignificant and selfish. He left a \$3.6 million contract offer with the Cardinals and his fifth NFL season, which proffered him high hopes of bettering the franchise record for tackles that he had set the previous season, and opted for a \$40,000 contract that was everything he had ever dreamed of: a venue change to the arid deserts and craggy wastelands of southern Asia, the crossfire of automatic AK-47s and the prospect of the ultimate sacrifice — death at the hands of the Afghan enemy.

“... there's no doubt that Tillman's legacy was great.”

Tillman's love for America made him the heroic soldier, but this lifestyle of principle, morals and ambition cast him as the model American athlete too. In a league plagued by pill popping, steroid use, drug sentences, domestic violence and star-studded egoism from its "finest" players, Tillman would seem like an outcast. But this demonstration of sanity, normalcy and that he is one player with a head still attached under his helmet is exactly why he's a hero to the rest of the country.

There was nothing flashy about Tillman. There was nothing that screamed greatness or commanded attention — maybe a bit of a mystique and a lot of hard work, but no larger-than-life extravagance. He was just your everyday American. This is because Tillman chose to join the ranks of American heroes with little fanfare. He used the front of a team tackles-leading NFL star turned combat soldier, just as Cpl. Jessica Lynch pretended to be a West Virginia schoolteacher turned Purple Heart recipient; just as 1st Lt. Doyle Hufstедler, who gave his life on March 31 in

Iraq, disguised himself as a proud husband, a proud future father and the proudest member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of 2001; just as the millions of other true American heroes don the guise of an ordinary citizen each day. Indeed, the masked faces of American heroes come in all shapes and sizes, but they all belong to ordinary citizens — that which makes them extraordinary comes from a simple, but poignant love of their country and from principles, morals and hard work.

On Jan. 20, 1961, John Fitzgerald Kennedy ended his inaugural address with what has become the quintessential doctrine of a true patriot. "And so, my fellow Americans," he charged, "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: Ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."

The Pat Tillmans, the Jessica Lynches and the Doyle Hufstedlers have asked their country that question and have been willing to fight for the freedom of man and for the honor of America. The thousands fighting today in Iraq, the hundreds fighting in Afghanistan and those stationed in Kosovo and North Korea have asked their country that question. And, the 725 who have heroically forfeited their lives in Iraq and the 3,864 others who have been wounded in the recent days, weeks and months have not run from the answer they were given.

Tillman's home-state paper, The Arizona Republic, perhaps said it best when it told its readers, "Do not mourn Tillman, follow his lead."

If all who call this great country home dig deep and find that bit of heroic Pat Tillman, that bit of Jessica Lynch gusto busting at the seams, think of what we can do together for the freedom of man — think of what we can do proudly for the honor of America.

Clint Rainey is a sophomore general studies major.