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Crichton exposes lack of science in theories

By H. Sterling Burnett

Global warming is hot! -- pun fully intended.

Within the space of a year, a blockbuster action movie and now a sure-to-be best-selling novel have both focused on the perils and political intrigues surrounding the question of whether, or to what extent, humans are causing the planet to overheat with all manner of apocalyptic results.

Though the Fox Studio disaster flick "The Day After Tomorrow" was panned by scientists who pointed out its portrayal of climate science was wildly inaccurate, it won praise from environmentalists and some politicians for "focusing attention on the important topic of human-caused global warming."

Of course, in the movie, global warming was a fact and environmentalists were world-saviors. By contrast, novelist **Michael Crichton's** latest book, "State of Fear," has raised the ire of environmentalists.

Why has he not garnered the same praise for bringing global warming to the world's attention? Perhaps because Crichton portrays global warming as hoax and the environmentalist lobbyists pushing the hoax as villains, eager to use bad science to raise money and to attain political power.

Never fear, this is not a work of political screed, but rather a deftly crafted action-adventure novel. Like much of the best fiction on TV, in the moviehouses and in the bookstores it happens to use a

controversial, overly publicized contemporary political and social issue -- human-caused global warming -- as a backdrop for story filled with attractive heroes and heroines, ingenious, seemingly indestructible secret agents, and villains plotting world domination.

There is enough sex, murder and general mayhem to please any connoisseur of spy novels or the action-adventure genre in general, and Crichton fans in particular.

In "State of Fear" Crichton, as he does with many of his books, deals with scientific issues with a detailed eye stemming from his training as a medical doctor.

In the past, Crichton's scientific lens has been trained on topics such as genetic engineering, and environmentalists loved it since the novels were cautionary tales in the vein of "Frankenstein," warning of humanity's overreaching and violating the "laws of nature."

However, now it is Crichton's scientific acumen that seems to be the central cause for the environmentalists' venom.

For instance, Crichton exposes serious problems in the climate models that predict warming. The models don't accurately portray past or current temperature reality, so why should their predictions about the future warming be trusted, much less used to inform public policy? Crichton's research has evidently lead him to be skeptical of the

claim that humans are causing catastrophic climate change and to think that at least some environmentalists are pushing the issue for fund-raising purposes and to gain political power.

The thriller comes equipped with footnotes, charts and two appendices detailing why the author believes politicized science is dangerous.

Environmentalists find this threatening because there is a lot of truth in his thesis, and they know that he has an audience of millions of readers who might, after reading the novel, turn their own skeptical eyes to claims that the "end is near" due to global warming if we don't fundamentally alter our economy.

I must admit, sitting in Dallas in December watching snow fall in the midst of below freezing temperatures -- not typical Texas weather, even during the winter -- it would be hard to take global warming alarmism seriously even had I not, after years of seriously studying and working on the issue, concluded that the disaster scenarios spun by environmentalists from human-caused global warming are more fiction than fact.

As for now, I think I'll curl up by the fire and read a good book -- "State of Fear" fits the bill well.

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