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OPINIONCOMMENTARY

# *David Malpass's Climate-Change Lesson for GOP Candidates*

The World Bank president demonstrates how not to deflect gotcha questions.

By Steve Milloy

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World Bank President David Malpass committed a horrible environmental crime last Tuesday. When asked about his views on climate change, he said, “I’m not a scientist.”

The saga began earlier when Al Gore called Mr. Malpass a “climate denier” and urged President Biden to fire him. It isn’t clear why Mr. Gore was so incensed by Mr. Malpass. Whatever his personal beliefs, the World Bank under Mr. Malpass’s leadership has given a record \$31.7 billion in fiscal 2022 to “climate-related” initiatives.

When a reporter prodded Mr. Malpass about the comment hours later, he said it was “very odd” and declined to discuss his climate views with his words about not being a scientist.

This seeming nonevent developed into front-page news at the New York Times. Calls for Mr. Malpass’s resignation began, including from the White House, despite Mr. Malpass subsequently clarifying that he does believe greenhouse gases cause warming. One wonders where this outrage was when Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson declined to define the word “woman” in her confirmation hearings, pleading, “I’m not a biologist.”

Mr. Malpass has refused to resign, and why should he? He spoke the truth. He isn’t a scientist. He’s an economist, hence his appointment to the World Bank by President Trump. What he said about greenhouse gases is also true, and probably the one thing all sides can agree on in the climate debate. It’s also the end of what science clearly says about global warming. Anything else you hear is guesswork, if not fear-mongering.

But the hysterical reaction to Mr. Malpass’s statement is also an important lesson for Republican candidates.

They're likely to get this sort of "gotcha" question on climate and "I am not a scientist" and similar disavowals of expertise, knowledge and opinion aren't good answers, true as they may be. They instantly make one sound defensive and don't defuse the situation.

Such questions are put to Republicans not to elicit their considered views based on qualifications and expertise. They're used to manufacture an attack on those who don't fall in line with the left's climate narrative. Nothing short of endorsing radical climate policy will avoid that.

The better response is to befuddle the attacker or change the subject.

One could take the time to learn something about the topic and the shoddy scientific foundation of progressive doomsaying. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R., Okla.) has used such knowledge to keep the media on its heels.

You could also prepare tension-breaking quips. Imagine what Ronald Reagan would've done with the idea of the ever-bumbling Mr. Biden trying to control the weather by sending vast sums of taxpayer money to communist China. For the bolder politician, there's also always the ballistic, Trumpian response. The New York Times likes embarrassing meek politicians with the implication that they think climate change is a hoax. Rest assured it hates having to write that someone said it with certainty and bombast.

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