

## Transcript of interview with Lord Lawson on *Today* programme, 10 August 2017

Presenter: *"We heard earlier in the programme from Al Gore, who's in Britain plugging his latest climate change films. And one of the points he makes, in that film, and made to us, is that the economics of climate change are changing. Never mind how convinced you are about the need for altered behaviour and reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases, actually it just makes sense to be on the front edge of solar power, he was claiming in particular. Lord Lawson is on the line, Conservative former chancellor of course, and chair of the Global Warming Policy Foundation. Lord Lawson, good morning."*

Lord Lawson: *"Good morning."*

Presenter: *"What do you make of that point? That people like you, who have been saying the costs are too great, are now on the back foot, because the costs of doing what Al Gore wants us to do are fast reducing?"*

Lord Lawson: *"Well, look, the point is not just the costs, although we do have in this country, in England, one of the highest energy costs in the world, which is very hard on the poor and hard on business and industry. Which is because of our absurd climate-driven energy policy. The energy, the renewable energy, so-called, is heavily subsidised, and if they say it's economic, well, then let's get rid of the subsidies!"*

Presenter: *"The point Al Gore makes is that we subsidise all energy, including fossil fuel energy."*

Lord Lawson: *"No we don't. That's not true. We tax fossil fuel energy. Anyway, we subsidise renewable energy. But the main point is that the conventional energy is reliable and cheaper, and that is important. And what is the reason for, Al Gore, I listened to the interview you had with him, and he was talking complete nonsense. I'm not surprised that his new film has bombed completely, it's been a complete fiasco at the American box office."*

Presenter: *"Which bit? Which bit of it was nonsense?"*

Lord Lawson: *"For example, for example he said that there has been a growing, increase which is continuing, in extreme weather events. There hasn't been. All the experts say there hasn't been. The IPCC, the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change, which is the sort of voice of the consensus, concedes that there has been no increase in extreme weather events. Extreme weather events have always happened. They come and go. And some kinds of extreme weather events, there's a particular time increase, whereas others, like tropical storms, diminish."*

Presenter: *"Yeah, he was interesting on that because I challenged him on that and he said no, actually, the thinking now among scientists who look at this, and he uses the phrase in the film "join the dots", that actually, when we look at, I dunno, Hurricane Sandy, when we look at the terrible hurricane that there was in the Philippines, when we*

*look at other individual world events, we are simply kidding ourselves if we don't join them together and say what is causing it."*

Lord Lawson: *"No, it's not happening! The reputable scientists, reputable experts like Professor Pielke, and as I said the IPCC, have confirmed that there has been no increase in extreme weather events. And as for the temperature itself, it is striking that he made his previous film ten years ago. And, according again to the official figures, during this past ten years, if anything, mean global temperature, average world temperature, has slightly declined."*

Presenter: *"Well, which is an argument on both sides. I just want to stick on his general advice and in a sense get back to this point about the economics of it. He makes a particular point about solar power and he talks in the film about battery technology – the ability, our ability. And he goes to a conservative Republican in a place in Georgia, I think it is, in the United States. And the conservative Republican says, well why wouldn't we do this? If it's becoming cheaper, if we're not putting stuff into the atmosphere that probably isn't good for it, why not do it?"*

Lord Lawson: *"Look, two things. First of all of course, Al Gore has a substantial commercial interest in renewable energy. But secondly, the, if it is fully economic, why on earth do we subsidise it and support it by all sorts of government policies? Which are driving up the costs of energy, particularly in the United Kingdom!"*

Presenter: *"You going to go and see the film?"*

Lord Lawson: *"Er, I don't think so. I've heard what Al Gore has to say and it's the same old claptrap. People often fail to change, and he certainly hasn't changed. He's like the man who goes around saying the end of the world is nigh on a big placard! To begin with you might be a little bit scared, but after ten years of him doing that and the end of the world isn't nigh, then you think, well maybe we should forget that and concentrate on real problems. Like North Korea, which you've been talking about, like world poverty, like disease, and all these other issues which we should be devoting our attention to. And international terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism. These are real problems. The world is not short of problems. And to devote resources and energy to non-problems is really ridiculous."*

Presenter: *"Lord Lawson, thank you."*