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## A Closer Look at Climate Change

Mark W. Hendrickson  
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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is widely regarded in the media as the ultimate authority on climate change. Created by two divisions of the United Nations, and recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, its pronouncements are received as if they come down from Mount Olympus or Mount Sinai. The common presumption is that the IPCC has assembled the best scientific knowledge. Let's take a closer look at this organization to see whether it merits such uncritical deference.

The IPCC's Feb. 2007 report stated: It is "very likely" that human activity is causing global warming. Why then, just two months later, did the Vice Chair of the IPCC, Yuri Izrael, write, "the panic over global warming is totally unjustified;" "there is no serious threat to the climate;" and humanity is "hypothetically ... more threatened by cold than by global warming?"

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IPCC press releases have warned about increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere, yet Dr. Vincent Gray, a member of the IPCC's expert reviewers' panel asserts, "There is no relationship between warming and [the] level of gases in the atmosphere."

A 2001 IPCC report presented 245 potential scenarios. The media publicity that followed focused on the most extreme scenario, prompting the report's lead author, atmospheric scientist Dr. John Christy, to rebuke media sensationalism and affirm, "The world is in much better shape than this doomsday scenario paints ... the worst-case scenario [is] not going to happen."

Clearly, the IPCC does not speak as one voice when leading scientists on its panel contradict its official position. The solution to this apparent riddle lies in the structure of the IPCC itself. What the media report are the policymakers' summaries, not the far lengthier reports prepared by scientists. The policymakers' summaries are produced by a committee of 51 government appointees, many of whom are not scientists.

The policymakers' summaries are presented as the "consensus" of 2,500 scientists who have contributed input to the IPCC's scientific reports. "Consensus" does NOT mean that all of the scientists endorse the policymakers' summaries. In fact, some of the 2,500 scientists have resigned in protest against those summaries. Other contributing scientists, such as the individuals quoted above, publicly contradict the assertions of the policymakers' summaries.

To better understand the "consensus" presented in the policymakers' summaries, it is helpful to be aware of

the structure of the IPCC. Those who compose the summaries are given considerable latitude to modify the scientific reports. Page four of Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC Work states: "Changes (other than grammatical or minor editorial changes) made after acceptance by the Working Group of the Panel shall be those necessary to ensure consistency with the Summary for Policymakers or the Overview Chapter." In other words, when there is a discrepancy between what the scientists say and what the authors of the policymakers' summaries want to say, the latter prevails.

Here is a specific example: One policymakers' summary omitted several important unequivocal conclusions contained in the scientists' report, including, "No study to date has positively attributed all or part [of observed climate change] to anthropogenic [i.e., man-made] causes," and "None of the studies cited above has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed changes to the specific cause of increases in greenhouse gases." These significant revisions were made, according to IPCC officials quoted in Nature magazine, "to ensure that it [the report] conformed to a policymakers' summary."

Elsewhere, Rule 3 of IPCC procedures states: "Documents should involve both peer review by experts and review by governments." In practice, IPCC sometimes bypasses scientific peer review, and the policymakers' summaries reflect only governmental (political) review. This shouldn't be surprising. After all, the IPCC is a political, not a scientific, entity. It is the "Inter-GOVERNMENTAL Panel on Climate Change," not a "global SCIENTISTS' panel."

Also, "consensus" is a political phenomenon, a compromise, whereas scientific truth is not subject to obtaining a political majority. (Actually, 31,000 scientists have signed a petition protesting the "consensus" that human activity is dangerously altering the Earth's climate. Consider that against the 2,500 scientists cited by IPCC—many of whom publicly refute IPCC's press releases.)

To its credit, the IPCC debunks many of the alarmist exaggerations of radical greens. However, its scientific authority remains irreparably compromised by political tampering. When a U.S. State Department official writes to the co-chair of the IPCC that "it is essential that ... chapter authors be prevailed upon to modify their text in an appropriate manner," the political character of IPCC is plain.

The sponsors of the IPCC, the United Nations, and liberal American politicians all share the goal of reducing Americans' wealth by capping our consumption of energy with a binding international climate change treaty. They are willing to resort to scientific fraud to further their goal. In the words of Al Gore's ally, former Under-Secretary of State Tim Wirth, "Even if the theory of global warming is wrong, we will be doing the right thing" by reducing Americans' consumption of fossil fuels. Keep that in mind whenever the IPCC is cited in support of a climate treaty.

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