

Die Kalte Sonne

The courage to tell the truth. Hope the authors survive purges and inquisitions.

This is my review of the German edition. The book is so important that I expect an English version before long. You can have this German edition shipped to the US from Amazon Germany. There is a Kindle edition in German, which for reasons unknown is not yet available outside of Germany/Switzerland/Austria. I recommend the Kindle for one big reason. Amazingly for a scientific book, it has no index (!) and no bibliography. You need a searchable document.

The authors of this book got fed up with the sloppy science and outright mendacity of the IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Control. They wrote a book to set the record straight.

Their bottom line is that the global warming which the world witnessed between 1975 and 2000 is the result of the confluence of many factors. The IPCC is willing to see only one factor: anthropogenic greenhouse gases.

Vahrenholt and Lüning believe that the rapid warming up through the year 2000 and was due to several coincident factors, most importantly having to do with sun cycles. It has long been known that solar radiation varies over time in a predictable fashion. There are solar cycles of 11, 22, 87, 210, 1000 and 2300 year durations. When they overlap, it can result in appreciable variation.

More important than the variations in the amount of radiant energy coming from the sun is the variation in the sun's magnetic field. This is not visible, but has a large effect on the volume of cosmic rays entering the Earth's atmosphere. When the sun's magnetic field is strong, it tends to deflect the cosmic rays from Earth.

Cosmic rays collide with gases in the atmosphere, resulting among other things in the particles which seed clouds. More cosmic rays, more clouds. And, the more clouds there are, the more light is reflected back out into space. It took an experiment in the European laboratory for particle physics, CERN, to prove a theory about the mechanism by which clouds are seeded. The vested interests in IPCC appear to have worked to hinder the scientists' access to CERN to conduct their experiment.

The IPCC is quite important in the allocation of funding for climate research. Needless to say, groups that agree with them stand a better chance of getting funded. This creates consensus, but it is the antithesis of good science. Among other things, the IPCC has seeded and funded computerized climate change models in centers all over the world. Read my review of "A Vast Machine" for an appreciation of how great a task this is, and how much good work is actually going into it. Incidentally, this book, by a computer guy, not a climatologist, makes no mention of the inclusion of sun cycles in the IPCC models, and mentions the major cycles only in passing. He concentrates the problems of interpolating and interpreting actual measurements in the past century or so.

The problem is that a computerized model is only as good as the parameters and assumptions which go into it. Vahrenholt and Lüning claim that none of the models now in use do anywhere near an adequate job of taking into account the sun's influence on climate variability. The IPCC actively discourages it, and they control the purse strings. Conversely, all of the models must be based on assumptions about unknowable factors, such as how clouds are seeded, the effect of soot in the atmosphere, the effect of increased carbon dioxide on vegetation growth, and many other factors. Scientists can be open and honest in setting these assumptions, but they can equally well look at them as "fudge factors" to be adjusted in order to make the models fit their preconceptions. It depends on the integrity of the scientists, and that in turn depends on their willingness to bite the hand that feeds them.

Vahrenholt's specialty is renewable energy. The IPCC asked him in 2009 to proofread its summary report on renewable energy. He noted 293 errors and oversights in the thousand page report. On the first of February 2010 he cornered an IPCC expert at a conference in Washington and asked why the IPCC had not acted on his comments. They essentially brushed him off. He was not an expert in climate change, but he does know renewable energy pretty well. This led him to suspect sloppy science and other ways. He was alert to the scandal concerning the supposedly melting glaciers in the Himalayas. The IPCC's 2007 report contained the alarming prediction that they would disappear by 2035. They pooh-poohed critics, and it took them two years to correct this glaring error. Then there was the East Anglia e-mail scandal, in which it was clear that scientists were fudging the data in order to inflate the apparent danger of global warming. The whole thing smelled of foul play and politics, so he decided to do a book.

Sebastian Lüning is a climate scientist. He was appalled by the deceit involved in concocting the "Hockey Stick Illusion," the way in which the authors omitted and fudged data in order to make it as scary a story as possible so they could obtain funding, drive the political process, and gain political power. The co-authors invited shorter guest chapters by leading scientists like Henrik Svensmark whose work they have woven into their thesis.

The IPCC is an elaborate pyramid. Thousands of scientists all over the world participate at the working level. The papers they publish are assembled and summarized by designated groups of scientists, who write the lengthy working papers which the organization publishes. There is a third level of summary in which the results are rolled up into executive summaries, which are all that most people are willing to read. You can find this all by googling "IPCC".

In addition to being divided into three tiers, the IPCC working groups are divided functionally, in order to address the effects of global warming. One working group focuses on the science, whether or not global warming is real and what causes it. A second working group assesses the likely impact on human populations, and a third working group is charged with formulating policy proposals suggesting what government should do about it.

Needless to say this is highly political. The people who summarize other people's work have the ability to editorialize, to slant the work one way or another. The people who are charged with coming up with policy have a vested interest in the existence of the problem that their policies are supposed to solve. In

short, this is a microcosm of all of the well-known problems of the United Nations, or in fact it almost any large bureaucracy. The IPCC chief editors have been taken from Greenpeace, hardly a seedbed of scientific neutrality. Others are associated with radical groups. Google "WBGU Germany" for their position papers, which call for complete elimination of carbon fuels by 2050 through a massive, government-directed investment and government-imposed change in every aspect of our lifestyles.

There is a vast vested interest in carbon dioxide being the primary driver of global warming. Entire industries depend on it: solar cells, wind energy, the infant carbon sequestration industry, and so on. Many political careers, such as that of Al Gore, likewise depend on it. It is a fundamental plank in the platform of organizations such as Germany's Green party. The argument is something like this: (1) greedy, self-absorbed Westerners are despoiling the environment and throwing so much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere that it will poison future generations, and therefore (2) government should have the power to strongly regulate our consumption of energy, and therefore our lifestyles.

Vahrenholt and Lüning fully concur that the world needs to wean itself off of fossil fuels in the long run. Carbon dioxide does contribute to global warming, and excessive global warming is not a good thing. They believe, however, that the heedless stampede towards expensive short-term solutions is a dangerous waste of money. If their thesis is right, we have several decades to resolve the problem. It is not as though oceans are going to rise and we will all drown tomorrow. To put numbers on it, the IPCC has established a bogey of two degrees centigrade for acceptable global warming over the next century. In doing so, they are highly confident that the goal cannot be met and that there will be continued need for strong measures (and for granting funding and power to themselves). Vahrenholt and Lüning claim that because greenhouse gases are only one of many factors which drove the observed global warming in the last quarter of the last century, the two degree benchmark will be easily met without drastic measures. We have time enough to take rational, measured steps toward a solution.

There is genuine anger in this book, towards the IPCC in general and the perpetrators of the most egregious frauds. These include Michael Mann and his infamous "hockey stick," and Al Gore and his Nobel Prize. These are careerists, men of no principle and no love of the truth, who by getting huge amounts of resources diverted to unproductive ends (especially themselves), proved themselves to be significant impediments to the improvement of understanding of our climate.

It is important that this book appear in German. Several similar volumes have appeared in English, most recently S Fred Singer's masterful, 880-page "Climate Change Reconsidered" in 2009. However, as Germany is the epicenter of the green movement, the German public needs access to the full range of scholarship, including the negative side.

Authoring this book will certainly change the career trajectories of both authors. They will perforce be excluded from research circles dominated by the IPCC, which means, as of today, most of the climate research community. I congratulate them for their courage, wish them luck, and hope that courageous politicians and philanthropists will support some honest research in this vitally important area.

Errors: "Global sea levels rose continually and at an increasing rate throughout the 20th century" Wrong. They were using land-based benchmarks on coastlines which were sinking due to plate tectonics. Satellites, which reference the earth's center of gravity, show a declining rate of increase.

What rates of sulfur dioxide emissions to model? Models differ, some using 1960, some 2000 as the date of maximum human SO₂ emissions. Oddly, the dates selected seem to be the ones which display the desired modelling results.

Shrinking of icecaps, glaciers and sea ice. These are shown to be cyclical phenomena. The IPCC ignores their cyclical nature, and overestimates the actual amounts. The press emphasizes the loss of ice in one place (north pole) and ignores the opposite on the other pole.