

SPINNING THE CLIMATE

By Dr Vincent Gray, IPCC Expert Reviewer

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was jointly set up by the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environmental Programme in 1988. It was set up In order to:

- Assess available scientific information on climate change: Working Group I.
- Assess the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change : Working Group II.
- Formulate response strategies: Working Group III.

The second and third objectives depend heavily on the first, which will be discussed here.

The three Working Groups are made up of nominees of the two sponsors, but are dominated by Government employees, or recipients of Government finance. As Governments throughout the world have come to adopt policies dependent on the belief that greenhouse gas emissions are causing harmful effects on the climate, all of the Working Group members tend to be supporters of this view. as are the “Lead Authors” of the Reports who are nominated by them.

Drafts of all the main Reports of the IPCC are circulated for comment. Initially this was only to Government Environment Departments, who then consulted with local experts and interested parties before forwarding comments received. Nowadays almost anyone can comment, provided they tell the right story. There are three drafts of each Report, the third being circulated only to Governments. There is evidence that some of the most extravagant claims only appear in the Final Draft.

The first report “Climate Change: The IPCC Scientific Assessment” was published in 1990 by the Cambridge University Press. It was edited by J T Houghton, G J Jenkins and J J Ephraums. It had 305 pages, a Foreword, a Policymakers Summary, an Introduction, 11 Chapters and 8 Appendices.

The report was used as a background to the 1992 “Earth Summit” at Rio de Janeiro which launched the campaign to reduce greenhouse gases, in the belief that they are responsible for “global warming”.

The “Earth Summit” resulted in the setting up of the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) which initiated a system for reducing greenhouse gases by “Annex I” Governments.

The FCCC defined “Climate Change” in Article 1 as follows:

“a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”

The whole exercise was set up in order to accumulate “evidence” that the “globe” is undergoing “global warming” as a result of increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. From the beginning there have been scientists who disagreed with this proposition but their views have not been included in the IPCC Reports. This was made clear in Appendix 4, of “Climate Change 1990” in an introduction to a list of Reviewers, with the statement:

“While every attempt was made by the Lead Authors to incorporate their comments, in some cases these formed a minority opinion which could not be reconciled with the larger consensus”

The Governments who signed the FCCC (which included New Zealand) have accepted the FCCC definition of “Climate Change” as legally binding. This means that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has the function of seeking to provide evidence to support this definition. The 1995 and subsequent reports however, had, as a footnote on the first page a disclaimer, as follows:

“Climate change in IPCC usage refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as the result of human activity”.

Even in this disclaimer, only greenhouse gases are allowed to “change” the climate. “Natural” climate phenomena are only “variable”

The IPCC still retain the term “Climate Change” in their Title, to make their real objective plain, and throughout the report, “natural” climate influences are only considered in order to rule them out, marginalize their importance, or even recruit them as greenhouse effects.

The “Summary for Policymakers” arises because the Governments that have sponsored the Report wish to authorize it and ensure that it corresponds with their “Climate Change” policies. It is agreed line-by-line by Representatives of the Governments. It is drafted mainly by selected scientists from the main Report, but it is sometimes not understood that they are acting on orders, not as independent scientists. The “Summary for Policymakers” is actually a “Summary BY Policymakers” as it is not just advice to other policymakers, it is a summary approved by the policymakers themselves. It is also a genuine consensus of their views, agreed by all of them, and it does not necessarily coincide with the views of any single Government, or of the scientists who participate in the Report.

The Chapters of each Report are arranged in such a way as to promote the idea of climate change caused by greenhouse gas increases. Actual climate observations are either obscured, or “smoothed”, “filtered”, “linearized”, “interpolated”, with “outliers” eliminated, in order to try and find “trends” which can be fitted into the mould decided for them.

The First Report set the pattern for all of them. The Chapter Headings were:

1. Greenhouse Gases and Aerosols.
2. Radiative Forcing of the Climate
3. Processes and Modelling
4. Validation of Climate Models
5. Equilibrium Climate Change
6. Time-Dependent Greenhouse-Gas-Induced Climate Change
7. Observed Climate Variations and Change
8. Detection of the Greenhouse Effect in the Observations
9. Sea Level Rise
10. Effects on Ecosystems
11. Narrowing the Uncertainties

Note that the Observations only appear towards the end (Chapter 8) and then only to illustrate the selected theory. As with all the Reports, much emphasis was placed on the Mean Annual Global Surface Temperature Anomaly Record, which is based on scientifically unacceptable basic data (unrepresentative samples), unacceptable average daily temperatures (based on a varying mean of maximum and minimum) from sites almost never monitored for suitability..

The first Report summarized the obvious fact that their models did not fit even this biased record by the statement

“The size of the warming is broadly consistent with predictions of climate models”.

Actually, they are “broadly inconsistent”.

They thereby established the pattern they have followed throughout of qualitative, ambiguous statements without scientific support which are invariably regarded as certain proof by their sponsors.

This first Report gave a graph of past global temperatures that included the “Medieval Warm Period” and the “Little Ice Age”, and they blamed the latter for the temperature rise shown in their record from 1910 to 1940. These opinions were denied in subsequent Reports.

The first Report also launched the “scenarios” of the future which are exaggerated beliefs of changes in human activity for the forthcoming century. This was the birth of the “Business as Usual” scenario. Two other sets of “scenarios” have been added since then.

The details of the scenarios were kept away from the scientists by confining the work to a sub-Committee of WGIII where they could even ignore the views of reputable economists. The scientists have found themselves lumbered with scenarios they are unable to question in the WGI Science Reports.

In “Climate Change 1992” (A supplementary Report to “Climate Change 1990”) appears the statement

“Scenarios are not predictions of the future and should not be used as such”..

“In a Report entitled “Climate Change 1994”, there was the statement

“Since scenarios deal with the future they cannot be compared with observations”

This means they do not need to check whether any of them actually happen, so they tend to prefer “projections”: so far ahead nobody can check.

In my comments on the first report I complained that the observations should be at the beginning, not the end. In the 1995 (Second) Report, they changed the Chapter headings, possibly to meet my comment, as follows

1. The Climate System: An Overview
2. Radiative Forcing of Climate Change
3. Observed Climate Variability and Change
4. Climate Processes
5. Climate Models : Evaluation
6. Climate Models – Projections of Future Climate
7. Changes in Sea Level
- 8 Detection of Climate Change and Attribution of Causes
9. Terrestrial Biotic Responses to Environmental Change and Feedbacks to Climate
10. Marine Biota Responses to Environmental Change and Feedbacks to Climate
11. Advancing our Understanding

The “Observations” had been moved up to number 3, and they no longer claim that they are only interested in their greenhouse properties. However, Chapter 1”The Climate System” and Chapter 2. “Radiative Forcing” are still there to sell the greenhouse effect first.

I could claim a major improvement. The first draft of the 1995 Report had a Chapter 5 “Validation of Climate Models” as in the First Report. I pointed out that it was wrong since no climate model has ever been “validated”, and they did not even try to do so. They thereupon changed the word “Validation” to “Evaluation” no less that fifty times and have used it exclusively ever since.

Perhaps I should explain what is meant by “validation”. It is a term used by computer engineers to describe the rigorous testing process that is necessary before a computer-based model can be put to use. It must include successful prediction over the entire range of circumstances for which it is required. Without this process it is impossible to find out whether the model is suitable for use or what levels of accuracy can be expected from it.

The IPCC has never attempted this process, and they do not even discuss ways in which it may be carried out. As a result the models are worthless, and their possible inaccuracy is completely unknown. The IPCC has developed an elaborate procedure for covering up this deficiency which is well described in the IPCC document on “Guidance Notes for Lead Authors on Addressing “Uncertainties”. .It includes attempts to “simulate” those past climate sequences where suitable adjustment of the uncertain parameters and equations in their models can be made to give an approximate “fit”, but they rely largely on the elaborate procedure for mobilizing the opinions of those who originate the models. Most of them depend financially on acceptance of the models, so their opinions are handicapped by their conflict of interest..

The outcomes of the models are classified in the following levels of confidence;

Very High Confidence. At least 9 out of 10 chance of being correct

High Confidence.. About 8 out of 10 chance

Medium Confidence About 5 out of 10 chance

Low Confidence. About 2 out of 10 chance

Very Low Confidence. Less than 1 out of 10 chance.

These figures do not possess statistical significance as they are pure guesswork. As might be expected Low confidence and Very low confidence are extremely rare.

In addition there are levels of Likelihood of the value of their “projections”, which take the place of “predictions”.

Virtually Certain: >99% probability of occurrence

Very Likely: >90% probability

Likely: > 66% probability

About as Likely as not: 33 to 66% probability

Unlikely: <33% probability

Very Unlikely: <10% probability

Exceptionally Unlikely: <1% probability

As before, you search very hard to find anything at all that is below “Likely”; and as before, the probability figures are pure guesswork and have no relationship to mathematical statistics.

These procedures are merely an orchestrated litany of guesswork.

From the 1995 Report on, the IPCC always makes “projections”, never “predictions”. They thus admit that their models are not suitable for “prediction” at all.

Also as everything is “evaluated” but not “validated”. There can never be never preferred models or scenarios, as they have no way of choosing between them..

Almost all the “opinions” expressed are based on assuming that a correlation implies a cause and effect relationship. This defies a fundamental logical principle, but it is evaded by calling the process “attribution”. They agree that this is unfair, but cover it up as follows

“unequivocal attribution would require controlled experimentation with the climate system. Since that is not possible, in practice attribution of anthropogenic climate change is understood to mean demonstration that a detected change is ‘consistent with the estimated responses to the given combination of anthropogenic and natural forcing’ and ‘not consistent with alternative, physically plausible explanations of recent climate change that exclude important elements of the given combination of forcings”.

Since the alternative explanations are always marginalized or distorted, “attribution” to “anthropogenic change” always wins. It is strange, though, that very little credence is given to “anthropogenic” changes that do not involve greenhouse gas emissions, such as land use and urban changes.

The 1995 Report suffered from the problem which arises by agreeing the “Summary for Policymakers” after the Final Version of the Main Report has been produced. Since the conclusions of the “Summary” did not agree with the Government Approved “Summary”, one of the scientists (Ben Santer) had the thankless task of altering statements in the full report to coincide with the “Summary”.

The details of these changes are as follows:

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Second Assessment Report, Working Group I, Chapter Eight

The original Working Group I report was approved by the IPCC in December, 1995. Subsequent to that approval, IPCC has apparently allowed additional edits to the document. Some changes are editorial, serving to add clarification or to correct sentence structure. However, other changes appear to go beyond that and have the effect of changing the substance and tone of this chapter. The most significant edits are identified below. New material is italicized, deleted material has a strike through it.

Summary

“ ~~Many but not all~~ *The Majority* of these studies show that the observed changes in global-mean, annually-averaged temperature over the last century is unlikely to be due entirely to natural fluctuations of the climate system.”

deleted:

“The evidence rests heavily on the reliability of the (still uncertain) estimates of natural variability noise levels.”

new:

“Furthermore, the probability is very low that these correspondences could occur by chance as a result of natural internal variability. The vertical patterns of change are also inconsistent with the response patterns expected for solar and volcanic forcing.”

“Viewed as a whole, these results indicate that *the observed trend in global warming mean temperature* over the past 100 years is ~~larger than our current best estimates of natural climate variations over the last 600 years.~~ *unlikely to be entirely natural in origin.*”

Section 8.1

“The attribution of a detected climate change to a particular causal mechanism ~~can be established only by testing~~ *involves tests* of competing hypotheses.”

“The claimed statistical detection of an anthropogenic signal in the observations must always be accompanied by the caveat that other explanations for the detected climate-change signal cannot be ruled out completely, ~~unless a rigorous attempt has been made to do so.~~”

new: *“There is, however, an important distinction between achieving ‘practically meaningful’ and ‘statistically unambiguous’ attribution. This distinction rests on the fact that scientists and policymakers have different perceptions of risk. While a scientist might require decades in order to reduce the risk of making an erroneous decision on climate change attribution to an acceptably low level (say 1-5%), a policymaker must often make decisions without the benefit of waiting decades for near-statistical certainty.”*

Section 8.1.3

“We now have: * more relevant model simulations, both for the definition of an anthropogenic climate change signal ~~and for the estimation of natural internal variability.~~ * *more relevant simulations for the estimation of natural internal variability, and initial estimates from paleoclimatic data of total natural variability on global or hemispheric scales;* * more powerful statistical methods for detection of anthropogenic change, ~~and a better understanding of simpler statistical methods~~ and increased application of pattern-based studies with greater relevance for attribution.”

Section 8.2.2 Inadequate Representation of Feedbacks

new: “Deficiencies in the treatment and incorporation of feedbacks are a source of signal uncertainty.”

Section 8.2.5

“Current pattern-based detection work ~~has not attempted~~ *is now beginning* to account for these forcing uncertainties.”

Section 8.3.2

“Initial attempts are now being made ~~For these reasons and many others, scientists have been unable to use paleoclimate data in order to reconstruct a satisfactory, spatially-comprehensive picture of climate variability over even the last 1,000 years. Nevertheless, The process of quality-controlling paleoclimatic data, integrating information from different proxies, and improving spatial coverage should be encouraged. Without a Better paleoclimatic data bases for at least the past millennium, it will be difficult~~ *are essential* to rule out natural variability as an explanation for recent observed changes, ~~or and to~~ validate coupled model noise estimates on century time scales (Barnett et al., 1995).”

Section 8.3.3.3

deleted: “While such studies help to build confidence in the reliability of the model variability on interannual to decadal time scales, there are still serious concerns about the longer time scale variability, which is more difficult to validate (Barnett et al., 1995). Unless paleoclimatic data can help us to ‘constrain’ the century time scale natural variability estimates obtained from CGCMs, it will be difficult to make a convincing case for the detection and attribution of an anthropogenic climate change signal.”

Section 8.4.1

deleted : “While none of these studies has specifically considered the attribution issue, they often draw some attribution-related conclusions, for which there is little justification.”

Section 8.4.1.1

“The conclusion that can be drawn from this body of work, and earlier studies reported in Wigley and Barnett (1990) is that the warming trend to date is unlikely to have occurred by chance due to internally-generated variability of the climate system, ~~although this explanation cannot be ruled out. This, however, does not preclude the possibility that a significant part of the trend is due to natural forcing factors. Implicit in such studies is a weak attribution statement—i.e., some (unknown) fraction of the observed trend is being attributed to human influences. Any such attribution-related conclusions, however, rest heavily on the reliability of our estimates of both century time-scale natural variability and the magnitude of the observed global warming mean trend. At best, therefore, trend significance can only provide~~ *provides* circumstantial support for the existence of an anthropogenic component to climate change, ~~but does not directly address the attribution issue.”~~

Section 8.4.1.3

“*These empirical estimates of* ~~In summary, such studies offer support of~~ a DT2x are subject to considerable uncertainty, as shown in a number of studies (see, e.g., Wigley and Barnett, 1990; Wigley and Raper, 1991b; Kheshgi and White; 1993b). ~~In summary, such studies offer support for a DT2x value similar to that obtained by GCMs, and suggest that human activities have had a~~

measurable impact on global climate, but they cannot help to establish a unique link between anthropogenic forcing changes and climate change.”

Section 8.4.2.1

new: “Implicit in these global mean results is a weak attribution statement—if the observed global mean changes over the last 20 to 50 years cannot be fully explained by natural climate variability, some (unknown) fraction of the changes must be due to human influences”.

deleted: “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.”

Section 8.4.2.3.

new: “To date, pattern-based studies have not been able to quantify the magnitude of a greenhouse gas or aerosol effect on climate. Our current inability to estimate reliably the fraction of the observed temperature changes that are due to human effects does not mean that this fraction is negligible. The very fact that pattern-based studies have been able to discern sub-global-scale features of a combined CO₂ + aerosol signal relative to the ambient noise of natural internal variability implies that there may be a non-negligible human effect on global climate.”

Section 8.5.2

new: “Simultaneous model-observed agreement in terms of changes in both global means and patterns, as in the recent study by Mitchell et al. (1995a), is even less likely to be a chance occurrence or the result of compensating model errors.”

Section 8.6

“Finally we come to the most difficult question of all: ~~‘When will the detection and unambiguous attribution of human-induced climate change occur?’~~ when the detection and attribution of human-induced climate change is likely to occur. The answer to this question must be subjective, particularly in the light of the very large signal and noise uncertainties discussed in this Chapter, ~~it is not surprising that the best answer to this question is ‘We do not know’.~~ Some scientists maintain that these uncertainties currently preclude any answer to the question posed above. Other scientists would and have claimed, on the basis of the statistical results presented in Section 8.4, that confident detection of a significant anthropogenic climate change has already occurred. ~~would and have claimed, on the basis of the results presented in Section 8.4, that detection of a significant climate change has already occurred.~~ As noted in Section 8.1, attribution involves statistical testing of alternative explanations for a detected observed change and Few ~~if any~~ would be willing to argue that completely unambiguous attribution of (all or part of) this change ~~to anthropogenic effects~~ has already occurred, or was likely to happen in the next several years.”

new: “However, evidence from the patterned-based studies reported on here suggests that an initial step has now been taken in the direction of attribution, since correspondences between observations and model predictions in response to combined changes in greenhouse gases and anthropogenic sulphate aerosols:

have now been seen both at the surface and in the vertical structure of the atmosphere;
have been found in terms of complex spatial patterns rather than changes in the global mean alone;
show an overall increase over the last 20 to 50 years;
are significantly different from our best model-based estimates of the correspondence expected due to natural internal climatic variability.

Furthermore, although quantitative attribution studies have not explicitly considered solar and volcanic effects, our best information indicates that the observed patterns of vertical temperature change are not consistent with the responses expected for these forcings.

The body of statistical evidence in Chapter 8, when examined in the context of our physical understanding of the climate system, now points toward a discernible human influence on global climate. Our ability to quantify the magnitude of this effect is currently limited by uncertainties in key factors, including the magnitude and pattern of longer-term natural variability and the time-evolving patterns of forcing by (and response to) greenhouse gases and aerosols.”

Section 8.7

Apparently deleted!

This problem has been reduced in subsequent Reports by the use of elaborate “guidelines” which the Lead Authors are expected to impose on all contributors.

The 1995 Report had acquired an additional “Technical Summary. It had a strange halfway house status, being considered as “accepted by the IPCC but not approved in detail”

The 1995 Report let in some disagreement in the Chapter entitled “Climate Processes”, which included R S Lindzen, who is a prominent critic of the whole process, and it did develop the general theme that the models were far more inaccurate than is generally assumed. This happened also in the 2001 Report, but it has been eliminated from the 2007 Report.

The 2001 Report is the one I discussed in some detail in my book “The Greenhouse Delusion: A Critique of Climate Change 2001”

In this Report the “Observations” Chapter moved up to No 2 and “Radiative Forcing” moved down to No 6, but the rest are otherwise unchanged. However, the authors of Chapter 1 “The Climate System: An Overview” signed their own death warrant when they wrote:

“The fact that the global mean temperature has increased since the late 19th century and that other trends have been observed does not necessarily mean that an anthropogenic effect on the climate has been identified. Climate has always varied on all time-scales, so the observed change may be natural”

This true statement has led to the replacement in “Climate Change 2007” of this introductory Chapter with a completely different Chapter entitled “Historical Overview of Climate Change Science” which is a highly selective history boosting the activities of the IPCC.. One of its features is to conceal the very existence of measurements of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration before 1958 which show a variability which would interfere with the IPCC calculations of “radiative forcing”.

The Chapters in “Climate Change 2007” are only slightly rearranged and they all push the same message, enforced by an increase in gloomy “opinions” derived from the “spin” process described here. The key claim of “Climate Change 2007” is

“Most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperature since the mid-20th century is *very likely* due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations’

This is a typical example of the technique they have used throughout. There is enough for enthusiasts to persuade themselves that the “science is settled” plus sufficient qualifications for the IPCC to claim they never said they were certain, when they are eventually proved wrong. Since there has been no “global warming” for the past 8 years, and we are currently shivering from the cold in New Zealand, and elsewhere, perhaps that day will come soon.

It is all a magnificent example of what public relations can achieve, but the consequences for most of us, and for the scientific community before it is eventually exposed for the deception that it is, do not bear contemplation.

I have been an “Expert Reviewer” for the IPCC right from the start and I have submitted a very large number of comments on their drafts. It has recently been revealed that I submitted 1,878 comments on the Final Draft of the current 4th Report. Over the period I have made an intensive study of the data and procedures used by IPCC contributors throughout their whole study range. I have a large library of reprints, books and comments and have published many comments of my own in published papers, a book, and in my occasional Newsletter the current number being 157.

I began with a belief in scientific ethics, that scientists would answer queries honestly, that scientific argument would take place purely on the basis of facts, logic and established scientific and mathematical principles.

Right from the beginning I have had difficulty with this procedure. Penetrating questions often ended without any answer. Comments on the IPCC drafts were rejected without explanation, and attempts to pursue the matter were frustrated indefinitely.

Over the years, as I have learned more about the data and procedures of the IPCC I have found increasing opposition by them to providing explanations, until I have been forced to the conclusion that for significant parts of the work of the IPCC, the data collection and scientific methods employed are unsound. Resistance to all efforts to try and discuss or rectify these problems has convinced me that normal scientific procedures are not only rejected by the IPCC, but that this practice is endemic, and was part of the organisation from the very beginning. I therefore consider that the IPCC is fundamentally corrupt. The only “reform” I could envisage, would be its abolition.

Part 4 of the book is a description of the scientific publications of the IPCC and how they have been used to distort climate science to make false claims for the proposition that human greenhouse gas emissions are harming the climate.

By drawing attention to these obvious facts, I have found myself *persona non grata* with most of my local professional associations, as I am questioning the integrity of these award-winning scientific leaders of the local science establishment. .

I somehow understood that the threshold had been passed when I viewed “The Great Global arming Swindle” Channel4 documentary. Yes, we have to face it. The whole process is a swindle, The IPCC from the beginning was given the license to use whatever methods would be necessary to provide “evidence” that carbon dioxide increases are harming the climate, even if this involves manipulation of dubious data and using peoples’ opinions instead of science to “prove” their case.

The disappearance of the IPCC in disgrace is not only desirable but inevitable. The reason is, that the world will slowly realise that the “predictions” emanating from the IPCC will not happen. The absence of any “global warming” for the past eight years is just the beginning. Sooner or later all of us will come to realise that this organisation, and the thinking behind it, is phoney. Unfortunately severe economic damage is likely to be done by its influence before that happens

Vincent Gray
75 Silverstream Road
Crofton Downs
Wellington 6035
New Zealand
Phone/fax (0064) 4 973 5939

"The desire to save humanity is always a false front for the urge to rule it"
H L Mencken

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