

The Climate Conflict: What is it Really All About?

A guest column by Dick Thoenes.

The common opinion has taken hold among most of our authorities, such as government, ministers, MPs and officials, that "it has been scientifically established that the earth is warming and continues to do so and that human activity is the main cause of it." The general explanation is that by burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas), the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere and thus the average temperature of the atmosphere rises and continues to rise. This is said to result in all sorts of serious consequences.

We call this the 'alarmist' position. We can say that this is the general position of 'politicians'. They base this view largely on the findings of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), which are based on a large number of scientific publications. These publications are largely originating from people who call themselves "climate scientists" and who also make such statements through other channels. It therefore seems that the world of climate scientists endorses the alarmist position.

Then there is a large number of scientists who have expertise in other areas, but who have really not studied the climate issue closely. Many of them opt for the views of the "climate scientists for collegiate considerations". These include many leading scientists, such as a number of well-known professors and some presidents of science academies.

I put the term "climate scientists" in quotation marks because their climate expertise is doubted by many other scientists. Indeed, there are also large numbers of scientists who reject the alarmist position with scientific arguments. They are called the 'climate skeptics'. They are usually condemned by politicians. Note that no scientific arguments are used, but mainly political, moral and personal ones. It is often argued that these scientists adhere to "wrong" political views and are immoral because they would not want the best for humanity. Also, their scientific integrity is often questioned. It is often added that they are probably paid for their views by "the oil industry".

There is now a deep gap between the 'alarmists' (people who proclaim the alarmist position) and the 'skeptics' (people who have scientific objections to the alarmist position). The alarmists consist mainly of followers of the IPCC, people who call themselves "climate scientists", and scholars and others who like to join in the *opinio communis*.

The 'skeptics' are mostly independent scientists. Here are many reputable climate scientists (like Richard Lindzen, Fred Singer, Roy Spencer, Bob Carter, Henk Tennekes). In addition, another group of often more basic scientists who have thoroughly investigated this matter (as Vincent Gray, Henrik Svensmark, Gösta Pettersson, Ross McKittrick, Peter Taylor, John Barrett, Arthur Rörsch and the late Frits Böttcher, they are all writers of good books on the climate. (Perhaps the [book by Carter](#) is the most accessible.)

I call these skeptics: the "real" scientists.

The argument of the 'skeptics' is broadly this:

- 1) The IPCC is not a scientific but a political institution. The final report will be determined by representatives of the participating governments, i.e. politicians and officials. According to the skeptics, the IPCC has insufficient scientific authority.
- 2) The final report of the IPCC is not submitted to the scientists whose articles are included in the IPCC report.
- 3) The IPCC has the premise under its original mission (1988) that global warming is caused by man. Natural effects were deliberately omitted. As a result, the IPCC has not been in the position to form a comprehensive picture of climate change.
- 4) Climate change, which is of all time, is primarily caused by natural effects. In principle, Man can contribute to climate change, but this has proved to be negligible.
- 5) The so-called "climate scientists" do not usually conduct climate research. They are primarily modelers who draw climate models based on the existing knowledge of the climate. These models are designed to predict climate change. These models introduce a theoretical connection between carbon dioxide emissions and the average temperature of the atmosphere. This relationship is based on three things: the knowledge of the carbon balance of nature, the so-called 'greenhouse theory' and an assumed positive feedback from water vapor. However, the carbon dioxide balance is not known with sufficient accuracy, because the size of the natural carbon dioxide flows themselves (which are many times greater than the human emission) are not known with sufficient accuracy. The "greenhouse" theory has never been proven experimentally and is completely refuted by the skeptics. The positive feedback from water vapor is no more than a hypothesis and has never been verified.

According to the skeptics, it therefore follows from the foregoing that the statements of the IPCC are not scientifically justified. It is a remarkable fact that the "alarmists" do not - as a rule - go into the scientific arguments of the skeptics. There is in fact virtually no open discussion between the two parties. The alarmists acknowledge no other position than their own. After all, they feel supported (financially) by the governments and politicians.

As I see it , the climate conflict is first of all a conflict between the politicians and the (real) scientists.

Politicians have been using the press by ensuring that the alarmist idea has become commonplace. Politicians also have the habit not to backtrack from once occupied positions. Furthermore, I do not think politicians are interested primarily in the truth, but in political views. And the press is not primarily interested in the truth, but more in the rhetoric of politicians.

The serious scientists who object to this on scientific grounds, are not heard and dismissed as bad guys. This is of course ultimately an unsustainable situation. Nevertheless, it has been going on since around 1996, about 18 years.

I see this situation as a serious undermining of democracy. It has been the basis for totally misguided government policies that cost taxpayers billions each year. In these times of additional cuts it is absurd that this waste of money is continuing.

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Translation: AFJacobs