

THE GOLD STANDARD

by David Lungren



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SPPI BLOGWATCH SERIES ♦ December 21, 2009

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In 1971, the United States abandoned [the gold standard](#), effectively ending the ability to convert dollars into

gold. Now another gold standard has taken its place, i.e., the science produced by the UN's [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC). According to NOAA Administrator [Jane Lubchenco](#), the IPCC is "[the gold standard for authoritative scientific information](#) on climate change because of the rigorous way in which they are prepared, reviewed, and approved." Unfortunately for some, the "gold standard" is at the heart of Climategate.

One salient clue to the IPCC's central involvement is the scientists who wrote the troubling emails. They are not of the basement-and-garage variety: they stand on the summit of climate research. Moreover, they are the key contributors to, and lead authors of, the IPCC's major science assessment reports-making them, for better or worse, the architects of the climate change "consensus."

Consider Phil Jones, heretofore director of the [University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit](#) (CRU), who resigned temporarily pending an internal investigation of his role in Climategate. Jones was a "Coordinating Lead Author" of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report issued in 2007, specifically Chapter 3, "Observations: Surface and Atmospheric Climate Change." Remember it was Jones who wrote Climategate's iconic email, in which he explained a "trick" he used to "hide the decline" of temperatures after 1960.

Kevin Trenberth, head of the Climate Analysis Section of the [National Center for Atmospheric Research](#) (NCAR), is another notable figure in Climategate. It was Trenberth who wrote, among other things, "The fact is we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment, and it's a travesty we can't." Trenberth was, like Jones, a Coordinating Lead Author of the [2007 Fourth Assessment Report](#). (<http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/press-ar4/wg1/wg1authors.pdf>)

In addition, Ben Santer, research scientist with the [Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory](#), and Tom Wigley, a former director of the CRU, both served as Lead Authors of the IPCC's Second Assessment Report in 1995. And Jonathan Overpeck, now of the University of Arizona, was a Coordinating Lead Author, Chapter 6: "Paleoclimate," and Climategate brethren Keith Briffa, with CRU, was Lead Author of the same chapter, in the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report.

And don't forget Michael Mann, who served as Lead Author of Chapter 2, "Observed Climate Variability and Change," in the IPCC's 2001 [Third Assessment Report](#)-a report, incidentally, that prominently featured Mann's now-debunked hockey stick graph. Mann is now [under investigation](#) by his employer, Penn State University, for his central role in Climategate.

The IPCC's centrality to Climategate is important for several reasons, possibly the most consequential of which is that EPA's endangerment finding is in good measure supported by the IPCC's work (it's also supported by the US Climate Change Science Program, US Global Change Research Program, and the National Research Council, all of which rely heavily on the IPCC and the research of Climategate scientists). As noted below, there are numerous references to the IPCC and many of Climategate's scientists in EPA's ["Technical Support Document"](#) (TSD)-a document that explains the scientific basis for the endangerment finding. While the references below require further review and analysis-specifically on how and whether the noted research was influenced by Climategate-it's clear from the TSD that EPA's endangerment finding largely stands or falls on the IPCC's conclusions and the research of Climategate's leading figures.

Here are just a few examples in the TSD:

- "According to climate model simulations summarized by the IPCC, through about 2030, the global warming rate is affected little by the choice of different future emissions scenarios." (page 8)
- "Radiative forcing values presented here for GHGs and other factors come from the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report of Working Group I (IPCC, 2007a)." (page 35)
- "Surface temperature is calculated by processing data from thousands of worldwide observation sites on land and sea. Substantial gaps in data coverage remain, especially in the tropics and the Southern Hemisphere, particularly Antarctica, although data coverage has improved with time. These gaps are largest in the 19th century and during the two world wars (Trenberth et al., 2007)."
- "Biases may exist in surface temperatures due to changes in station exposure and instrumentation over land, or changes in measurement techniques by ships and buoys in the ocean. It is likely that these biases are largely random and therefore cancel out over large regions such as the globe or tropics (Wigley et al., 2006)."
- "The following trends in global surface temperatures were observed for the period 1850 to 2005, according to the IPCC (Trenberth et al., 2007)..."
- "The global surface temperature trend analysis in IPCC (2007a) includes data through 2005 from the United Kingdom's Hadley Centre (Hadley Centre, 2009), referred to as HadCRUT [Hadley-CRU temperature data]." (page 28)

- "The global upper air temperature trend analysis in IPCC (2007a) described above includes data through 2005." (page 30)
- "The IPCC (Trenberth et al., 2007) cites North America regional studies that all show patterns of changes in temperature extremes consistent with a general warming." (page 44)
- "Karl et al. (2008) conclude the number of heat waves (extended periods of extremely hot weather) has been increasing over the past 50 years." (page 44)
- "The second line of evidence arises from indirect, historical estimates of past climate changes that suggest that the changes in global surface temperature over the last several decades are unusual (Karl et al, 2009)." (page 47)
- "The Third Assessment Report in 2001 concluded that most of the observed warming over the last 50 years is likely to have been due to the increase in GHG concentrations (IPCC, 2001b). The conclusion in IPCC's 2007 Fourth Assessment Report (2007b) is the strongest yet." (page 47)
- "The IPCC (Hegerl et al., 2007) reports that analyses of paleoclimate have increased confidence in the role of external influences on climate, and that key features of past climates have been reproduced by climate models using boundary conditions and radiative forcing for those periods." (page 49)
- "Climate model simulations by the IPCC, shown in Figure 5.1, suggest natural forcings alone cannot explain the observed warming." (page 49)
- "The IPCC states that the substantial anthropogenic contribution to surface temperature increases likely applies to every continent except Antarctica (which has insufficient observational coverage to make an assessment) since the middle of the 20th century." (page 50)

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