

# German researcher warns climate scientists to not kowtow to politicians

May 7 2015, by Bob Yirka

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Credit: Alfred Palmer/Wikipedia

(Phys.org)—Oliver Geden, a researcher with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs has published a *Comment* piece in the journal *Nature*, warning of the dire consequences of climate scientists bowing to pressure exerted by politicians and government officials. His

admonitions come just a month before the UN is to meet to discuss and report on the progress of the 2C goal.

The 2C goal aka the Copenhagen Agreement of 2009, refers to an agreement and signing of a document by multiple countries promising to attempt to prevent global temperatures from rising 2 °C—a threshold that some suggest was arbitrary and others derided as being far too reckless. Countries most likely to be the most heavily impacted by such a rise, such as small island nations worried about ocean's rising, pleaded for a lower standard. In his comment piece, Geden suggests that some climate scientists are stepping outside their domain and into the domain of politics, and the results could be disastrous.

One particularly galling example, Geden notes is the very idea of "negative emissions" where [carbon emissions](#) continue to pour into the atmosphere for a number of years, in the hope that some new technology or plan will come along that will offer a way of actually taking out more carbon than we add. Such a plan (BECCS: bioenergy) now calls for dedicating a piece of land the size of India to serve as a dump of sorts. The plan, dreamed up by some climate scientists Geden notes, has no basis in science. It is not known if such an approach would work, or if removing carbon after the fact would save the planet from the impact of years of high carbon levels.

Talks next month at the UN, which are supposed to lead to another meeting in December in Paris, and perhaps the signing of another document, Geden suggests, should not include politicized science offered by researchers who have had to make a choice between offering watered down versions of reality, or being ignored. He very nearly begs [climate scientists](#) reading his words to consider whether they want to inform, or to be a part of the political process—such scientists, he cautions, and the scientific community as a whole needs to defend its independence from dominance or interference by governments,

politicians and businesses with their own agendas.

**More information:** Policy: Climate advisers must maintain integrity,  
[www.nature.com/news/policy-climate-advisers-must-maintain-integrity-1.17468](http://www.nature.com/news/policy-climate-advisers-must-maintain-integrity-1.17468)

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