

committee's recommendations do provide accurate summaries of the current approach to malaria, particularly in the prefaces to each chapter imaginatively headed "Where we want to be in the year 2010" and in the suggestions for research that are scattered throughout the book.

All but one of the chapters are anonymous, but probably the most interesting is the exception, a dissenting view by Awash Teklehaimanot from the World Health Organization in Geneva, who draws attention to the limitations of the epidemiological approach. He points to inadequacies of control and research in malarious countries and suggests that the logical approach is to rectify these deficiencies. This echoes many of the views put forward in G. A. T. Targett's edited volume *Malaria: Waiting for the Vaccine* (Wiley, 1991; for a review see *Nature* **356**, 300; 1992). The chapter puts the others in the book in context — overall the book is too research-dominated and lacks concrete ideas on how to control malaria in the immediate future.

The last words in the book are Teklehaimanot's: "I recommend that an in-depth review of malaria prevention and control be undertaken in order to come up with fundamental and realistic solutions." Many reading the book will agree — the review should put greater emphasis on what can actually be achieved, the redeployment of scarce resources, cost-effectiveness and, above all, the need to do something now, particularly for children who cannot wait for the year 2010. □

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### New in paperback

- *Too Hot to Handle: The Race for Cold Fusion* by Frank Close. Penguin, £6.99. Reviewed by Sir Brian Pippard in *Nature* **350**, 29 (1991), who said that it "should be read as an exemplary tale by all who are concerned about the conflicting demands of scientific integrity, personal ambition and public interest".
- *The Matter Myth: Beyond Chaos and Complexity* by Paul Davis and John Gribbin. Penguin, £6.99. For a review see *Nature* **356**, 632 (1991).
- *Technological Risk* by H. W. Lewis. Norton, \$11.95, £8.50. Reviewed in *Nature* **349**, 749 (1991).
- *The Vibrational Spectroscopy of Polymers* by D. I. Bower and W. F. Maddams. Cambridge University Press, £19.95, \$34.95.
- *The Fatigue of Materials* by S. Suresh. Cambridge University Press, £24.95, \$39.95.

## Responsible development

Russell D. Thompson

**Confronting Climate Change: Risks, Implications and Responses.** Edited by Irving M. Mintzer. Cambridge University Press: 1992. Pp. 650. £50, \$80 (hbk); £19.95, \$34.95 (pbk).

THE social, economic, political and scientific implications of global climate change are set to dominate decision-making at all levels. This authoritative, up-to-date and superbly produced book examines the "risks, dilemmas and opportunities of the emerging political era" in a warming world, focusing on the possible dangers of climate change, the reliability of this knowledge and the best ways to respond to the changes.

The issues are tackled convincingly by 44 authors (scientists, economists and political analysts) from four continents, who were aided by 25 planners and 58 reviewers. The project was coordinated by the well-respected Stockholm Environment Institute and, indeed, the material represents an impressive continuation of the institute's long concern about inadvertent climate modification.

The text is organized into 23 chapters consisting of a review chapter on global warming and 22 others grouped into five sections. The first section on the science of climate change emphasizes the uncertainties and dilemmas associated with what is known about the climate system. A variety of chemical changes and linkages in the atmosphere are examined, particularly in terms of important feedback mechanisms. The implications of these processes for climate change are assessed through the interpretation of ice-core material and palaeoclimatic and historical evidence.

The second section on the impact of global climatic change assesses the environmental and geopolitical effects of global warming on future sea levels, food production, water resources, extreme weather events and disasters, and population dynamics. The third section on energy use and technology analyses the role of energy sources in the emission of greenhouse gases. The authors examine the environmental and socio-political consequences of uncontrolled use of fossil fuels and suggest technological alternatives and institutional responses for a low-emission future. Section four is devoted to economic issues and responses of international agencies, nongovernmental organizations and individual corporations. The economic benefits and social costs of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are examined

in terms of two strategies which advocate either immediate action (the 'no regrets' principle) or caution and delay (the 'wait and see' policy).

In the final section, the authors address the problems of successfully implementing schemes and protocols to address global climate change, namely the equitable, global distribution of the costs and benefits. Particular attention is given to a workable, cooperative solution between developed and developing countries. There is also an urgent need for a stronger partnership between the public and private institutions dedicated to sustainable development (including the World Bank, the United Nations, the European Communities and the Organization of American States).

A useful glossary explains some of the scientific and economic jargon, and the editor's introduction provides a valuable synopsis of the text. Perhaps a better synthesis of the individual chapters could have been achieved by the inclusion of a final, overview chapter.

Nevertheless, with its level of commitment, expertise and specialization, this book cannot fail to become the leading statement on the consequences of climate change in the foreseeable future. □

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## Post-Halley comets

David W. Hughes

**Rendezvous in Space: The Science of Comets.** By John C. Brandt and Robert D. Chapman. W. H. Freeman: 1992. Pp. 290. \$23.95, £16.95.

COMETARY science changed considerably after 1986. Before then, astronomers had seen about 700 comets. Roughly 550 of these had orbital periods of more than 200 years and had been glimpsed only once. The rest had short periods, some having been seen passing the Sun about 30 times. But our degree of ignorance about the physical, chemical, orbital and evolutionary states of each comet was very similar. Then in 1986 an armada of spacecraft flew past Comet Halley. Suddenly, we knew a lot about one member of the cometary family. For the first time, a low-resolution image of a comet's central nucleus was available; the composition of the dust and gas emitted by a comet had been crudely analysed by spacecraft instruments; and the interaction between cometary plasma and solar wind had been sampled.