



CONTRA MERKEL – THE CLIMATE ARGUMENT

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With Angela “*Mutti*” Merkel’s coming resignation, a minor industry of (capital-L) Legacy “valedictory” salutes has come out of the woodwork. Who knew she was owed so many favours? In any case, a politician’s legacy is rarely decided during or immediately after her tenure – history’s sweep is long and unforgiving of all but the best propaganda.

Needless to say, Merkel’s career is far from over – she now graduates to that coveted elder statesman role – and will likely be following her old friend and fellow European Council member António Guterres (now UNSG) to lead some international body. In the interest of the polemic, however, such a candy-floss *maquillage* campaign should not be allowed to stand unchallenged – Merkel’s record is full of things to criticize, from her dawdling “strategic patience” to her worrying Ostpolitik with Moscow.

Lesser criticisms of Merkel’s tenure would focus on the migration crisis during which she allowed the indiscriminate entry of a 7-figure amount of mainly men of fighting age. Her Jupiterian command of other countries’ governments (and their budgets) during the Euro crisis is another focus of criticism. The details make for worse reading: censorship of sex crimes committed by migrants, the defenestration of Silvio Berlusconi and his Merkel-selected replacement. The blatant disregard for Greek democracy.

There are certainly better grounds to assail her record from: Merkel’s inability to bring Germany’s armed forces up to scratch remains a huge unaccomplished objective which can only really be explained by malice at this point – the consensus is that incompetence doesn’t explain any of her record, after all. Her forays into 4th generation warfare as a replacement (in Libya but especially in Ukraine) have met nothing but humiliation.

I do want to focus on one particularly rich vein of criticism of our beloved Ang – her failure to keep Germany’s climate commitments. The same Germany that was selling emissions-cheating cars to the rest of the world (including, especially, China, but I’ll allow a better pen than mine to cover Angela’s red tendencies) leads the industrialized laggards on decarbonization – all the while installing an unbelievably wasteful amount of solar and wind generation capacity. Breaking the famously efficient *Energiewende*, the grid now peaks at the wrong time and doesn’t have anywhere near the storage capacity necessary to make the most of the times the renewable generators do peak.

Much like Japan, Germany’s overreaction to the Fukushima Dai-Ichi meltdown resulted in political force being applied against the German nuclear industry, shuttering down perfectly safe (and clean!) base

load generators that would end up replaced by much dirtier fossil fuel generation. Worse, a generation of nuclear talent – the most specialized kind of workforce you can imagine – has been wasted just when we need to roll out miniaturized nuclear reactors all over the world to rapidly decarbonize the world's base power load.

That is certainly one regret I hope Merkel dedicates the rest of her career to ameliorating. It is clearly too early to be considering her legacy – Her multiple failed succession plans, from Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, through Ursula Von Der Leyen and now Laschet's second-place finish in the election are just as much part of her record as taking credit for Mario Draghi's good work at the ECB. I'd certainly hope our *Kanzlerin* will consider the lesser institutions of the international order, like the IAEA, where she can still try to make up for her *Schulde* in both energy policy and her beloved Iran.

This moment is valedictory for Merkel only in the sense that one graduates from the Gymnasium to the Universität. Her work is not done.

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The [featured image](#) shows a postcard of Angela Merkel.

