
Interview: Dr. Fritz G. Will

Cold fusion critics are 'non-scientific'

Fritz G. Will, an electrochemist, has directed the National Cold Fusion Institute at the University of Utah since February 1990. Previously he had worked since 1960 at General Electric's Development Center in Schenectady, New York. Will gained international recognition for developing an electrochemical technique to study electrode surfaces. The author of more than 50 publications, he also holds two dozen U.S. patents.



Will was interviewed by Marjorie Hecht, the managing editor of 21st Century Science & Technology on March 28, 1990, on the eve of the first international cold fusion conference, hosted by the institute, in Salt Lake City.

EIR: It's unfortunate that after the initial burst of excitement in March 1989, the curtain fell down on anything positive in cold fusion research. That has made it very hard for people who ordinarily would get excited about this kind of work—and maybe even contribute both ideas and money—to do that.

Will: I could not agree more with you. There was an original hype built up, that raised the expectations of people sky high. It is an absolute fact that these very high expectations have not been met, and in fact, they couldn't be met. It was simply built up too high. The criticisms that exist, in a large part from the scientific community, have had a negative impact, a very undesirable negative impact.

One has to pose the question, what are the motivations of groups of scientists out there that are lashing out against scientists that have decided to work in this area? It makes it very unfairly difficult for those that are courageously making a commitment to this field to work in this field.

Furthermore, the danger is that, due to what appears to be an almost constant effort by some groups of scientists, it may become more difficult in the future to get research funding. One has got to ask the question: What is the motivation? Do they wish this field dead? If so, why? Do they want to give the scientists that are making a commitment to this field

a fair chance, as I think any scientists should have a fair chance, to develop in an orderly fashion? Or do they want to interfere with the freedom of science? . . .

EIR: This kind of thing is very "unscientific." Science is about ideas; that's how mankind has progressed through history, breaking old rules and making new ones.

Will: It is totally non-scientific: One tries to play number games and probability games. One says, well, if so many scientists have been unsuccessful to confirm the results, the results must be erroneous. The second argument that has been developed among many of the physicists, in particular, is that, if the results don't fit the theories that we know, the experimental results must be wrong. My answer is obviously, that science has progressed with revolutionary new experimental findings, and theories have usually come afterwards, in order to ultimately support good, solid, experimental science. . . .

EIR: You have advocated a larger research commitment so that the U.S. doesn't fall behind—as it has when we pioneer a technology and then don't develop it. What would you like the national commitment to be in the cold fusion research effort?

Will: I would like to see a situation in which the laboratories in the United States that are capable and eager to work in this field, in order to get to the bottom of cold fusion phenomena, would have available the kind of funding they need. . . . There is absolutely no question that those laboratories that are involved in cold fusion research are strapped for funding and that everybody is scrambling for the little bit of money that some organizations in the United States are presently making available, such as the Department of Energy and EPRI [the Electric Power Research Institute].

EIR: What is the role of the private sector?

Will: The private sector should, in my opinion, have interest in it. We have seen such interest emerging; in fact, there was and is a lot of interest among many companies. However, the *huge* interest that existed in the first few weeks after the announcement was made on March 23, 1989, has subsided, to some extent. This is because what was the belief held at the time—namely, that these were simple experiments, and that this might lead very quickly to some technology—those hopes were not realized, and we have come to believe now that we are dealing with very complex phenomena that take much longer time to get to the bottom of. This has led to a large number of companies no longer showing the interest that they appeared to be showing initially. I see the role of corporations as a very important one; namely, that some key industries that stand to gain from any future technology would be enlightened enough to make larger sums of money available in order to spearhead the research and development that is being carried out. . . .