

How Trump Stood Up to the Environmentalist Left

by Conrad Black



Despite noises from Europe, Canada, and the American Left, Trump pulled out of the Paris climate accords.

President Trump has not received adequately grateful recognition for withdrawing from the Paris climate accord and effectively scuttling the Clean Power Plan. These measures, which reinforced each other and were an outright assault on American capitalism and economic growth, were, with the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and the nuclear giveaway to Iran, the core of Barack Obama's effort to be a transformative president. The whole basis of the Clean Power Plan and the Paris climate accord was false from the beginning, yet the premise on which they were based attained a tremendous level of momentum and effectively bulldozed opposition throughout

the Western world and enjoyed an overwhelming preeminence in academic, journalistic, and public opinion.

Everyone is in favor of improved quality of air and water, but out of environmental and conservationist enthusiasm and even zeal, there abruptly arose the movement to reduce carbon use because of the miraculously conjured and promoted but unsubstantiated theory that the world was quickly warming and that carbon use was the reason. Failure to change radically how we lived and how our economies in the West functioned would lead to a catastrophe of rising water levels and skyrocketing temperatures. An Old Testament fate was just around the corner. Historians of the future will wonder how our civilization could have been so thoroughly gulled that it began to undertake a profound economic self-dismemberment, and harried and ridiculed doubters as "climate deniers" as if they believed in a flat earth where stones fell upwards.

The warming argument has been nibbled at and not borne out by much evidence, and so has awkwardly largely given way to climate change – which is only a step from weather change, hardly a novel phenomenon – but which is now solemnly invoked by Bernie Sanders to explain Caribbean hurricanes (though they are not new and have not been unprecedentedly damaging or more frequent). And California governor Jerry Brown blames California forest fires on climate change, though there is no identifiable connection, much less anything linking any of these phenomena to human behavior. The human-generated global-warming theory was formally launched by the Willach (Austria) Conference of 1985, bringing together the leading figures of the United Nations Environment Project (an outgrowth of the Stockholm Conference of 1972, which was itself a product of the political machinations of Swedish prime minister Olof Palme) and the World Meteorological Organization. The Willach Conference produced the assertion that there would be a rise in global temperatures in the first half of the 21st century "greater than any in man's history." Though alarming, the

conference report was numerically unspecific.

Using British Meteorological Office figures, global temperature appeared to rise more quickly in the last 15 years of the 20th century than the first 15 years of this century, although 2016 and 2017 were relatively warm years. Almost all tentative conclusions are within reasonable margins of error, and the mass of data is too ambiguous to support any of the more emphatic claims of factions in the climate debate.

The genesis of the agitation for restrictions of carbon use was in the Swedish movement to promote the use of nuclear power as the cleanest energy. Nuclear energy offended the pacifistic movement that was generally composed of fellow travelers of the environmental movement, and so they transferred their flag to renewable energy. This caught fire in impressionable, erratic, Western Germany, especially after reunification left it with the eco-disaster of East Germany to clean up. This is not the place for an analysis of the political vagaries of Germany, whose contribution to world instability and war is notorious, and which reigns yet in the German consciousness, afflicted by cross-currents of acute guilt for the monstrous crimes of the Nazis and the unhumanitarian militarism of the Prussians, in a country where the Nietzschean nihilistic and Marxist strains of opinion were born and flourished and are visible and audible yet.

In this political hot house, the greatest leaders of the Federal Republic, Konrad Adenauer, Helmut Schmidt, Helmut Kohl, and Gerhard Schroeder knew that Germany was safest and most constructive in a cocoon of economic association and defensive military alliances with the Western Powers, especially the United States, Great Britain, and France, but including smaller and historically uneasy neighbors – the Dutch, Belgians, Austrians, Czechs, Scandinavians, and Poles. Germany was susceptible to the appeal of an environmental and economic policy that was naturalistic, anti-materialist, and radically innocuous in international relationships. Angela

Merkel, chancellor for 13 years, from East Germany, a chemist who studied in the Soviet Union but is the daughter of a Lutheran minister, the reconciler of all German contradictions, drastically cut back nuclear power, and drastically cut carbon emissions, but was caught red-handed promoting diesel automobile engines, which reduced carbon consumption but did savage violence to air quality, and is now walking that one back, blaming the automobile companies.

From Germany, the virus spread. Tony Blair, long-serving British prime minister, bought it entirely and became a passionate advocate of renewable energy. The old environmental organizations, the World Wildlife Federation, which opposed the killing of great beasts, and Greenpeace, which began in opposition to nuclear power and kept shifting focus with the times, moved to the banning of chlorine in drinking water. As this was one of the greatest steps forward in the history of public health, it didn't work. In 1989, Greenpeace, busy promoting a nuclear-free Europe, sold out altogether to the Kremlin, which deployed intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe. Greenpeace deserted the environmental groups in Eastern Europe, but the INF treaty and the collapse of the Soviet Union drove Greenpeace into the arms of the renewables advocates. Solar panels and windmills were now the salvation of opportunistic choice. The defeated international Left emerged from the rubble of Communism and crowded aboard the anti-capitalist anti-industrial bandwagon. The acid-rain myth was a dress rehearsal for the global-warming myth.

What was not so well known about renewables was that recourse to them does not dispense with traditional energy sources and does drastically increase electricity bills for all consumers. The whole initiative for renewable energy was shortly seen as a disaster: Electricity that can't be stored must be used as generated, so renewables, which are dependent on wind and sunlight (and they kill stupefying numbers of birds in their glare and their blades), have always to be backed up by non-

renewable energy. There were many jurisdictions for which this provided a painful lesson, and Greenpeace, like the World Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, and others which had begun bucolically and with memberships of lovable bird and butterfly watchers, metamorphosed into militants at the vanguard of environmental discontent. They succeeded, as one does with trendy left-wing causes, with the support of the great foundations (Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie, Pew) and then co-opted the NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) and then suborned the great corporations themselves, always eager to scatter their benevolent crumbs to take a bow and get the anti-capitalist militants off their backs.

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