

Why the Green Agenda Is Crumbling

By Victor Davis Hanson

For most of my life, at least for the last 35 years, we have accepted the [climate change](#) orthodoxy. We used to be global warming, and then, when things were not always warming, but they were cooling, they changed the name to climate change to suggest that whatever the temperature extreme was, it was all due to [carbon emissions](#) caused by, in general, humans, but in particular, Westerners, who were polluting the planet with heat.



That was the dominant narrative. I didn't think in my lifetime that I would see an end to that dominance, even though there were inconsistencies.

The planet is 4 billion years old. And man has only been here for 300,000 years. And we only have accurate record-keeping of temperature fluctuations for the last 150 years. And even within that period, we have cyclical changes between decades of abnormal temperatures, whether too hot or too cold. And before the Industrial Revolution, in some cases, by tree rings and ice in the Arctic sampling.

There was always debate. But the dominant narrative said, "No, we have to radically change our economy and move away from fossil fuels to renewable," and that was usually wind and solar.

And then something's happened lately. King Gustaf XVI, the hereditary monarch of, you know, figurines, as it is, not an actual person in power, in Sweden kind of mused openly the other day—he's known as a rabid environmentalist. He said, why are you—basically, I'm not quoting him literally. He said, why are we ruining the economy of Europe by having exorbitant power cost, electricity cost, when we only contribute to 6% of global warming worldwide?

Then Bill Gates shocked the world when he said he no longer believes that there is an impending climate change crisis. This was followed by a lot of other people who said, "Let's take a different look at this." And of course, the second tenure of [President Donald Trump](#) has people in it, in energy, interior, treasury, who were saying, "You know, we're not gonna subsidize this anymore."

And this is collated with the disasters that were caused by global climate change worries or Armageddon, such as the high-speed rail program in California that was supposed to replace automobiles—\$15 billion, \$20 billion. Not one foot of track laid. The solar plant down in the desert of California that is being dismantled. Or the battery storage in Moss Landing, near Monterey, that has caught fire twice. I could go on.

So, there was a lot of skepticism, both by individuals who were influential and by the general public, for good cause.

What is causing this? Well, the first thing is, in reference to [Bill Gates](#), is artificial intelligence. It's going to require an unprecedented level of electrical generation. It takes huge amounts of electricity. We don't have it. And we will not get it by subsidizing wind turbines and solar panels.

Sam Altman, one of the pioneers of artificial intelligence, said, if the United States wants to achieve preeminence in the field—and this seems to be the greatest technological breakthrough since the Industrial Revolution—we're gonna have to build 100 gigawatt, 1-gigawatt plant, that's the size of a large nuclear reactor, a thousand megawatts. We're gonna have to build, he says, a hundred per year or the equivalent of clean coal or natural gas.

So, that influenced Bill Gates. That shook him up. That's not compatible with his prior green idea that we're gonna supplant fossil fuels.

Another reason is geostrategic. People are starting to become aware that Russia is a bad actor and Iran is a bad actor. And they depend on oil exports and, therefore, the high price of oil to fuel their military ambitions.

The United States became the largest producer of fossil fuels during the first Trump administration, then [President Joe Biden](#), for all of his green rhetoric, pivoted in his third and fourth year, so he could win the election, and began pumping oil again. Donald Trump took that 12 million to 13 million barrels, has increased it to 14 million. And the price of world oil is going down. And that hurts Iran. And that hurts Russia. And that benefits our allies, like Europe and Japan, that would like more liquified natural gas shipped from the United States. And so, there were geostrategic reasons.

Let's be frank. Everybody has sort of seen what China's doing.

It's playing the West. It talks a great game about global warming: "You guys, we all have to reduce our admissions." And then what does it do? Two things.

It subsidizes cheap export of solar panels and wind turbines, below the cost of production, to bankrupt competing industries in Europe and the United States to get the West hooked on solar and wind, even though it is a very expensive and unreliable source of electricity. Meanwhile, as we get hooked on Chinese exports, they build two to three coal or nuclear plants per month, affordable energy that will give them a competitive edge over the West.

Then there's the Third World that has been telling us for the last 20 years that we are culpable for global warming, even though the two greatest heat emission areas in the world are China and India.

Nonetheless, governments in Latin America, Africa, and Asia say: You people owe us because you started the Industrial Revolution in the mid-19th century. And you've been polluting the planet ever since. And you create all of your industries and your affluent lifestyles by burning fossil fuels. And therefore, you should pay us. Not we pay you, or we don't have to cut back, we're late to the game.

And we should say to them, "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. We burned more fossil fuels in the past because we created the Industrial Revolution. And we do today. We provide you the cars, we provide you the industrial plants, we provide you the plastics. If you want us to stop, we won't export it to you. And then, maybe we'll pay reparations. And you can do your own industrialization. Don't take stuff from us that requires fossil fuels that's essential to your economies and then tell us that we have to pay an added tax on it because we're warming up the planet, as if it's only for our purposes as well as yours."

Then there's the, I guess it would be—what would we call it? The hypocrisy. The people who have been the avatars of climate change never suffer the consequences of their own ideology.

Former President Barack Obama said the planet would be inundated pretty soon if we didn't address global climate change. Why would he buy a seaside estate at Martha's Vineyard or one on the beach of Hawaii if he really did believe that the oceans would rise and flood his multimillion-dollar investment?

Why would John Kerry fly all over the world on a private plane and then tell the rest of us that we're flying too much commercial when his carbon imprint was a thousand times more than the individual American?

Why would people on the California coast say, "We have to have wind and solar, and we have to get kilowattage up to 40 cents a kilowatt—the cost—because we want to use less fossil fuels"? And then the temperature from La Jolla to Berkeley is between, what, 65 and 75 year-round, where here in Bakersfield or Fresno or Sacramento it can be 105. And poor people can't afford to run their air conditioners.

Add it all up: the inconsistency of the global warming narrative, the self-interest in the people who promote it, and the logic that they have not presented, empirically, the evidence that would convince us that we have to radically transform our economies on the wishes of a few elites that do not have the evidence, but do have a lot of hypocrisy in the process.

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