

Who should we believe on climate change?

The world's climates have changed radically over many thousands of years, often slowly, but sometimes quickly. Whether recent and current changes are natural, as in the past, or to some extent or even mainly man-made, is the subject of much disagreement.

Climate science is very complicated. It involves other sciences such as meteorology, physics, chemistry and astronomy. Most people who want to know what to believe about possible catastrophic man-made global warming have to trust experts or those who advise which experts to believe. This still leaves the difficulty of deciding who to trust.

There is a great amount of evidence showing that many alarmists should not be trusted. Here is some of the evidence concerning their behaviour.

APOCALYPTIC WARNINGS

Noel Brown, director of the New York office of the UN Environment Programme, said in 1989 that entire nations could be wiped off the face of the Earth by rising sea levels if the global warming trend is not reversed by the year 2000. He said governments had a 10-year window of opportunity to solve the greenhouse effect before it goes beyond human control.ⁱ

Prince Charles, whose advisers were the leading environmentalists Jonathon Porritt and Tony Juniper, said in a lecture in July 2009 that without "coherent financial incentives and disincentives" we had just 96 months to avert "irretrievable climate and ecosystem collapse, and all that goes with it."ⁱⁱ

Alarmist claims about the disappearance of polar bears due to global warming have been made for years,ⁱⁱⁱ sometimes accompanied by a misleading photograph of a polar bear standing on a small piece of floating ice.^{iv} However, an expert with 35 years' experience, Dr Susan Crockford, points out that there are more polar bears (in 2017) than there were 40 years ago.^v

In February 2019 the BBC reported, on the basis of a study by the think-tank IPPR that, since 2005, the number of floods across the world has increased by 15 times, extreme temperature events by 20 times, and wildfires

seven-fold. At first the BBC defended its report but then accepted, with the minimum of publicity, that the statement was totally incorrect. However, listeners who had been told the false story were not told about the retraction.^{vi} The IPPR radically pruned its report,^{vii} and the BBC offered a disingenuous acknowledgment of its error.^{viii}

Despite their record of failure, apocalyptic warnings continue. For example, in September 2019 the Los Angeles Times stated that, "It is late -- terribly late -- for action", and that, "2020 could be your last chance to stop an apocalypse".^{ix}

THE COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The government's Committee on Climate Change is made up, according to its website,^x of experts in the fields of climate science, economics, behavioural science and business. Few of them are climate scientists^{xi} and they are unlikely to have been chosen impartially.

However, In February 2019 it emerged that Lord Deben, the CCC's chairman since 2012, who was formerly chairman of a company building a large offshore wind farm, runs a family company that has received payments of more than £600,000 mainly from firms involved in renewable energy and electric cars.^{xii} The Committee's website states that its members are obliged to "act impartially and objectively" and must "avoid conflicts of interest". Its chairman seems to ignore this.

However, when Lord Deben was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's Today programme on 30 June 2015, he made the outrageous claim that, "the only people who oppose it [belief in disastrous man-made climate change] are people who have a very vested interest from the fossil fuel industry".

His calumny was made despite Nigel Lawson having written in the previous year, concerning the Global Warming Policy Foundation: "As I have pointed out on a number of occasions, the Foundation's Board of Trustees decided, from the outset, that it would neither solicit nor accept any money from the energy industry or from anyone with a significant interest in the energy industry.

And to those who are not – regrettably – prepared to accept my word, I would point out that among our trustees are a bishop of the Church of England, a former private secretary to the Queen, and a former head of the Civil Service. Anyone who imagines that we are all engaged in a conspiracy to lie is clearly in an advanced stage of paranoia”.^{xiii}

Boasting that, “No critic is taken seriously any longer” and even that, “we know that what we say is absolutely true”, Lord Deben claimed that, “Bangladesh will practically be unable to be lived in if we do not halt the march of climate change”.

He ignored a detailed study published the previous year which said there are “serious misconceptions about the potential impacts of a rising sea-level on Bangladesh with global warming”, and that “the impacts of a slowly-rising sea-level are currently much less than those generated by rapidly increasing population pressure on Bangladesh’s available land and water resources and by exposure to existing environmental hazards”.^{xiv}

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

Professor Frederick Seitz said on the IPCC’s Second Assessment Report: “In my more than 60 years as a member of the American scientific community, including service as president of both the National Academy of Sciences and the American Physical Society, I have never witnessed a more disturbing corruption of the peer-review process than the events which led up to this IPCC report.”^{xv}

Dr Roy Spencer said: “While you might believe otherwise, climate scientists back in the 1980s did not get together and decide ‘let’s create the IPCC and investigate the evidence for and against manmade climate change’. Instead, politicians and politically savvy opportunists saw global warming as the perfect excuse for instituting policies that would never have been achieved on their own merits.”^{xvi}

He said: “I know, because I witnessed some of the behind-the-scenes planning. It is not a scientific organization. It was organized to use the government-funded scientific research establishment to achieve policy goals.”^{xvii}

Dr Vincent Gray was a member of the IPCC Expert Reviewers Panel from its inception. He

said: “Over the period I have made an intensive study of the data and procedures used by IPCC contributors throughout their whole study range. ... I began with a belief in scientific ethics, that scientists would answer queries honestly, that scientific argument would take place purely on the basis of facts, logic and established scientific and mathematical principles. ... Resistance to all efforts to try and discuss or rectify these problems has convinced me that normal scientific procedures are not only rejected by the IPCC, but that this practice is endemic, and was part of the organisation from the very beginning. I therefore consider that the IPCC is fundamentally corrupt.”

Regarding the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide Dr Gray said that, “they refrain from publishing any results which they do not like, and they have suppressed no less than 90,000 measurements of atmospheric carbon dioxide made in the last 150 years. Some of these were made by Nobel Prizewinners and all were published in the best scientific journals.”^{xviii}

Dr Philip Lloyd, an honorary research fellow at the Energy Research Center at the University of Cape Town, concluded: “It isn’t necessary to list all the changes I have identified between what the scientists actually said and what the policymakers who wrote the Summary for Policy Makers said they said. The process is so flawed that the result is tantamount to fraud.”^{xix}

In 2007, 2008 and 2009 the IPCC’s chairman claimed repeatedly that the IPCC makes use only peer-review science.^{xx} However, a detailed examination found that, of the 18,531 scientific references cited in its 2007 report, 5,587 were not peer-reviewed but from sources like newspaper and magazine articles, or advocacy literature published by environmental groups.^{xxi} Moreover, a review in 2010 of IPCC procedures identified numerous areas of concern, including the startling fact that, 22 years after it had been established, the IPCC had no conflict-of-interest policy.^{xxii}

The IPCC claimed in its 2007 report that Himalayan glaciers were very likely to disappear by 2035. This was dismissed as baseless in an official report by India’s leading glaciologist, Dr Vijay Raina. The IPCC’s chairman reacted angrily, accusing him and others of “voodoo science”. It wasn’t until January 2010 that the IPCC admitted

that the claim in its 2007 report had no scientific basis.^{xxiii}

Meanwhile, thanks to the alarm caused by the false claim, the IPCC chairman's own Energy Research Institute benefitted by receiving \$500,000 from the Carnegie Corporation and the lion's share of around \$4 million of EU funds. The original author of the false claim was made a Distinguished Fellow of the Institute.^{xxiv}

In July 2010 it turned out that one of the most widely publicised statements in the 2007 report, that climate change was putting at risk up to 40 per cent of the Amazon rainforest, which could react drastically to even a slight reduction in precipitation, was not based on peer-reviewed science, as repeatedly claimed, but originated solely from propaganda published in 1999 on the website of a small Brazilian environmental advocacy group.^{xxv}

In October 2018 the journal "Nature" published a major scientific paper, which claimed to have found rapid warming in the oceans as a result of manmade global warming. Within days major errors were found by an independent researcher and reported in November 2018,^{xxvi} eventually resulting in the paper being retracted. However, in September 2019 the IPCC produced a Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate^{xxvii} which was based partly on the flawed study, failing to acknowledge its errors.^{xxviii}

MORE FRAUD

In June 2015, not long before the Paris Climate Conference, a report claimed that, contrary to what had been generally accepted, there had been no pause in global warming. An American magazine described the news as a "science bomb" dropped on sceptics. The report's conclusions were widely discussed by delegates in Paris. When the US House of Representatives Science Committee examined the claims, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) refused to comply with subpoenas demanding internal emails, and falsely stated that no one had raised concerns about the paper internally. Gradually it became clear that the man in charge of NOAA's climate data archive, the lead author of the report, had manipulated the data in order to influence climate policy.^{xxix}

THE ROYAL SOCIETY

The misbehaviour of the Royal Society, or rather of some people within it who promoted their views using its name, is described in detail in a study, "Nullius in Verba: The Royal Society and Climate Change". In his foreword Professor Richard Lindzen notes that the Society's presidents involved with this issue (Robert May, Martin Rees and Paul Nurse) were all profoundly ignorant of climate science, their alleged authority stemming from their positions in the Society rather than from scientific expertise.^{xxx}

REFUSAL TO DISCLOSE DATA

In 2005 Professor Phil Jones, head of the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia, said in reply to a request: "Why should I make the data available to you, when your aim is to try and find something wrong with it?"^{xxxi} On another occasion, Professor Vincent Courtillot, a member of the French Academy of Sciences, asked Jones for the temperature data he used. Jones refused.^{xxxii} So Courtillot went direct to weather stations, and when he analysed the data he was given the result was very different from Jones's.

The CRU's Professor Keith Briffa refused to disclose tree-ring data used in one of the most important global-temperature reconstructions. Briffa made the startling claim that the coldest year of the millennium was AD 1032, a statement that, if true, would have completely overturned the Medieval Warm Period.^{xxxiii} An approach to the journal "Science" for the data was deflected to another journal and got nowhere. However, Briffa later wrote in a third journal which finally enforced its own data policy and made him release his figures. These revealed that parts of the dataset were unreliable, being based on just a handful of trees.

Alarmists have repeatedly been found out, although it can take months or years due to their secrecy. In New Zealand the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research published a graph showing significant warming. Sceptical scientists used the same data and found almost no warming. It turned out that for the official graph the figures had been adjusted, with earlier temperatures reduced and later ones increased,

but they wouldn't say why. When taken to court the official body withdrew its false claim.^{xxxiv}

Another example of refusal to reveal the data and calculations on which an alarmist climate claim is supposedly based concerns Professor Michael Mann. He was the author of the famous "hockey-stick graph" of the temperature record of the past 1000 years which showed a big increase in recent decades.^{xxxv} The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) publicised it. When Dr Tim Ball asserted that Mann's graph was a deliberate fraud, Mann sued. In August 2019, having refused a court order to produce his documents, he lost the case.^{xxxvi}

CONSENSUS?

It is often said that 97% or even more than 99% of climate scientists believe humans are the main cause of global warming.^{xxxvii} A study producing the 97% figure in 2013 looked at peer-reviewed research papers from 1991 to 2011 that use the terms "global warming" or "global climate change", but the published result was misleading in several ways. In fact, under a third of the papers explicitly or implicitly endorsed man-made warming (and even then not necessarily to the extent claimed by the IPCC), while two-thirds expressed no view but were therefore removed from consideration.^{xxxviii}

Even if there is some degree of consensus, though much exaggerated, a likely factor is the phenomenon of "groupthink" which was written about more than 40 years ago by Irving Janis, a professor of psychology at Yale. His analysis appears to apply in the case of climate change.^{xxxix}

Also relevant is the extent to which an apparent degree of consensus results from the silencing of sceptics (see below) and pressure to conform. The physicist Professor Harold Lewis said: "It is of course, the global warming scam, with the (literally) trillions of dollars driving it, that has corrupted so many scientists, It is the greatest and most successful pseudoscientific fraud I have seen in my long life as a physicist."^{xl}

A new, high-level global network of 500 prominent climate scientists and professionals stated in September 2019 that there is no "climate emergency". They have invited the United Nations to organise with them a constructive high-level meeting between

world-class scientists on both sides of the climate debate early in 2020.^{xli}

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC)

The BBC is committed by its charter to report with "accuracy and impartiality". Yet on climate change it has adopted a partisan view which has run through almost every aspect of its broadcasting. At a meeting in January 2006, 30 of the BBC's most senior staff listened as a former president of the Royal Society, Lord May, told them that "the scientific debate over climate change" was over, and that the BBC must "stop reporting the sceptics". As a result, many eminent scientists who are sceptics are ignored, while alarmists are given publicity.

As a result, the BBC abandoned impartiality and promoted the alarmist view vigorously, even through concerts and children's programmes. Former BBC news reporter Peter Sissons, who saw this from the inside, explained in his memoirs that the BBC had become "a propaganda machine for climate-change zealots".

The BBC has betrayed the trust of its audience by failing to give a fair and balanced picture.^{xlii} A detailed study of its deceitful behaviour shows how badly it has behaved.^{xliii} An example is the television programme in 2019, "Climate Change - The Facts", which was presented by Sir David Attenborough^{xliiv} who later told MPs, "We cannot be radical enough in dealing with these issues".^{xliv} An article by Paul Homewood explains the programme's exaggerations and errors.^{xlvi} As usual when climate change is the subject, the BBC allowed no alternative opinion to be offered, despite its obligation to be impartial.

EXTINCTION REBELLION

A radical organisation called Extinction Rebellion, launched in 2018, has achieved widespread support. It wants governments to declare a "climate emergency" and to take immediate action. It describes itself as a "non-violent civil disobedience activist movement". However, it has defended causing criminal damage, such as smashing windows, saying that such tactics are sometimes necessary.^{xlvii}

When a sympathiser made some observations over Easter 2019 of Extinction Rebellion's April protests in London he found, "a generally quite low level of understanding of climate science and the politics around it, and the proliferation of a lot of alarmist misinformation".^{xlviii}

When challenged in October 2019 over its alarmism, a spokesman for Extinction Rebellion admitted that "unfortunately alarmist language works". Despite the organisation saying that people should "listen to the scientists", it demands net zero emissions by 2025. When told that to achieve this all flying would have to come to an end; all cars would have to be confiscated; and all gas boilers and cookers would have to be removed from every home, the spokesman merely replied, "we put a man on the moon".^{xlix} Perhaps she forgot the huge amount of paraffin that was burnt in doing so.^l

ABUSE OF SCEPTICS AND SUPPRESSION OF DISSENT

Climate activists' intolerance of dissent has been evident on many occasions. In 2007 UN special climate envoy Gro Harlem Brundtland declared the climate debate "over", adding that "it's completely immoral, even, to question" the UN's scientific "consensus." In 2008 a prominent scientist and broadcaster in Canada, Dr David Suzuki, called for political leaders to be thrown in jail for ignoring the science behind climate change.^{li}

Robert F Kennedy Jr said of global warming sceptics in 2007: "This is treason. And we need to start treating them as traitors."^{lii} James Hansen, one of the world's leading climate scientists, called in 2008 for the chief executives of large fossil fuel companies to be put on trial for high crimes against humanity and nature.^{liii}

Sceptic Marc Morano says that climate activists and scientists supporting the alleged "consensus" on man-made global warming have a long history of suppressing debate and intimidating scientists into silence. Hollywood producer and climate activist James Cameron once challenged sceptics to a public debate, which he organised but cancelled as it was about to start.^{liv}

The attitude of intolerance was shown yet again in September 2019 by the following comment on a website named "The

Conversation": "Climate change deniers, and those shamelessly peddling pseudoscience and misinformation, are perpetuating ideas that will ultimately destroy the planet. As a publisher, giving them a voice on our site contributes to a stalled public discourse. That's why the editorial team in Australia is implementing a zero-tolerance approach to moderating climate change deniers, and sceptics. Not only will we be removing their comments, we'll be locking their accounts."^{lv}

Abuse is often directed at dissenters. According to Ed Davey, when Climate Change Secretary, the global warming dissenters are, without exception, "wilfully ignorant". In the view of the Prince of Wales they are "headless chickens". When Lord Lawson, who wrote a book on the subject, was allowed for the first time to discuss it on BBC's Today programme he received a barrage of complaints to the effect that it was an outrage he was allowed to discuss the issue on the programme at all, and the BBC received a well-organised deluge of complaints.

Although Lawson said he was strongly tempted to agree that, since he is not a climate scientist, he should be silent on the subject, it would be on the clear understanding, of course, that everyone else plays by the same rules. No more statements by Ed Davey, or indeed any other politician, including Ed Milliband, Lord Deben and Al Gore? Nothing more from the Prince of Wales, or from Lord Stern?^{lvi}

The double standards of many global warming campaigners are evident. They object to someone like Lawson being heard, even if only occasionally, to express a sceptical opinion, but they welcome enthusiastically a teenager, Greta Thunberg, who was invited to express her anger at a meeting of the United Nations.

In 2014 a climate scientist, Professor Lennart Bengtsson, was strongly attacked for not agreeing with the alarmists. Fearing for his health, he resigned from the advisory board of the Global Warming Policy Foundation. To his credit, Mike Hulme, professor of climate and culture at King's College London, condemned fellow scientists for "harassing" Bengtsson, and warned that climate science had become too political.^{lvii}

In 2015 a well-known French weather forecaster, Philippe Verdier, was sacked^{lviii} by a

national television channel following publication of his book criticising the politicisation of climate matters and accusing the IPCC of publishing deliberately misleading data.^{lix}

In Australia in 2018 Dr Peter Ridd was sacked by James Cook university for disputing alarmist claims about the impact of climate change on the Great Barrier Reef which he had studied for decades. When the matter went to court in 2019 the judge said that the university had failed to respect Dr Ridd's rights to intellectual freedom and was wrong to sack him. Later the judge criticised the university for a "blatantly untrue" and "appalling" public statement it issued following his ruling.^{lx}

In August 2018 sixty climate alarmists declared, in a letter to The Guardian, that they refuse to debate climate change: "If 'balance' means giving voice to those who deny the reality of human-triggered climate change, we will not take part in the debate, say Jonathan Porritt, Caroline Lucas, Clive Lewis and 57 other writers, politicians and academics".^{lxi}

In August 2019 the scientific journal "Nature Communications" published a defamatory and

misleading paper^{lxii} attacking 386 people referred to as contrarians and deniers. It is described by Judith Curry as "the worst paper I have ever seen published in a reputable journal". Paul Matthews says it is "a clear breach of ethical standards" and "a stunning illustration of the irrational fanaticism of the climate cult".^{lxiii} The paper's authors propose steps to help ensure that "communicating authoritative information" would not have to compete with the views of sceptics. Wanting "global action", they seek the censoring of scientific opinions with which they disagree.^{lxiv}

CONCLUSION

The examples given above show how many leading climate alarmists choose to behave. Their conduct, in concealing data, in making false claims, in manipulating data to suit their purpose, in outright fraud, and in maligning sceptics or seeking to silence them, shows how little they and their claims should be trusted.

RBC, 14 October 2019.

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