

Time for the climate insanity to stop

By Conrad Black

We must by now be getting reasonably close the point where there is a consensus for re-examining the issue of climate change and related subjects. For decades, those of us who had our doubts were effectively shut down by the endless deafening repetition, as if from the massed choir of an operatic catechism school, of the alleged truism: "98 per cent of scientists agree ..." (that the world is coming to an end in a few years if we don't abolish the combustion engine). Decades



The polar bears are doing just fine, writes Conrad Black. PHOTO BY POSTMEDIA FILES

have gone by in which the polar bears were supposed to become extinct because of the vanishing polar ice cap, the glaciers were supposed to have melted in the rising heat and the impact of melting ice would raise

ocean levels to the point that Pacific islands, such as former U.S. vice-president Al Gore's oratorical dreamworld, the Pacific island state of Tuvalu, would only be accessible to snorkelers. There has been no progress toward any of this. Ocean levels have not risen appreciably, nothing has been submerged and the polar bear population has risen substantially.

A large part of the problem has been the fanaticism of the alarmist forces. This has not been one of those issues where people may equably disagree. There was a spontaneous campaign to denigrate those of us who were opposed to taking drastic and extremely expensive economic steps to reduce carbon emissions on the basis of existing evidence: we could not be tolerated as potentially sensible doubters; we were labelled "deniers," a reference to Holocaust-deniers who would sweep evidence of horrible atrocities under the rug. For our own corrupt or perverse motives, we were promoting the destruction of the world and unimaginable human misery. There has been climate hysteria like other panics in history, such as those recounted in Charles MacKay's "Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds," particularly the 1630's tulip mania, in which a single tulip bulb briefly sold for the current equivalent of \$25,000.

In western Europe, and particularly in the United States, where the full panic of climate change prevailed, the agrarian and working echelons of society have rebelled against the onerous financial penalties of the war on carbon emissions. There have been movements in some countries to suppress the population of cows because of the impact of their flatulence on the composition of the atmosphere. This has created an alliance of convenience between the environmental extremists and the dietary authoritarians as they take dead aim at the joint targets of carbon emissions and obesity. Germany, which should be the most powerful and exemplary of Europe's nations, has blundered headlong into the climate crisis by conceding political power to militant Greens. It has shut down its advanced and completely safe nuclear power program, the ultimate efficient fuel, and has flirted with abolishing leisure automobile drives on the weekends.

Claims that tropical storms have become more frequent are rebutted by meticulously recorded statistics. Claims that forest fires are more frequent and extensive have also been shown not to be true. My own analysis, which is based on

observations and makes no pretense to scientific research, as I have had occasion to express here before, is that the honourable, if often tiresome, conservation movement, the zealots of Greenpeace and the Sierra Club, were suddenly displaced as organizers and leaders of the environmental movement by the international left, which was routed in the Cold War. Their western sympathizers demonstrated a genius for improvisation that none of us who knew them in the Cold War would have imagined that they possessed, and they took over the environmental bandwagon and converted it into a battering ram against capitalism in the name of saving the planet. Everyone dislikes pollution and wants the cleanest air and water possible. All conscientious people want the cleanest environment that's economically feasible. We should also aspire to the highest attainable level of accurate information before we embark on, or go any further with, drastic and hideously expensive methods of replacing fossil fuels. Large-scale disruptions to our ways of life at immense cost to consumers and taxpayers, mainly borne by those who can least easily afford it, are a mistake. We can all excuse zeal in a sincerely embraced cause, but it is time to de-escalate this discussion from its long intemperate nature of hurling thunderbolts back and forth, and instead focus on serious research that will furnish a genuine consensus. I think this was essentially what former prime minister Stephen Harper and former environment minister John Baird were advocating in what they called a "Canadian solution" to the climate question. Since then, our policy has been fabricated by fanatics, including the prime minister, who do not wish to be confused by the facts. The inconvenient truth is now the truth that inconveniences them.

Western Europe has effectively abandoned its net-zero carbon emission goals; the world is not deteriorating remotely as quickly as Al Gore, King Charles, Tony Blair and the Liberal Party of Canada predicted. Some of the largest polluters – China, India and Russia – do not seem to care about any of this. Canada should lead the world toward a rational consensus with intensified research aiming at finding an appropriate response to the challenge. What we have had is faddishness and public frenzy. Historians will wonder why the West made war on

its own standard of living in pursuit of a wild fantasy, and no immediate chance of accomplishing anything useful. We have been cheered on by the under-developed world because they seek reparations from the advanced countries, although some of them are among the worst climate offenders. It is insane. Canada should help lead the patient back to sanity.

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