

June 4, 2017 – CLIMATE

Some of our favorites comment on the withdrawal from the Paris Accord. Richard Epstein posted a few days before Trump's decision.

The Trump administration is currently facing a major decision—whether to withdraw the United States from the Paris Accords on climate change. The huge multi-national agreement was finalized in the closing weeks of the Obama administration, just days before Trump's surprise victory in the presidential election. The key commitment made by the United States under the accords is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the next decade by about a quarter of their 2005 rate, with further reductions to come thereafter. But during his campaign, Donald Trump promised to pull out of the accords, and, at the recent meeting of the G-7, was the lone holdout against a ringing endorsement of the agreement. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been insisting that the United States stay the course, but it appears as if Trump is inclined to honor his campaign promise to pull out of the accords, a position in line with that of Scott Pruitt, the new head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The President's instincts are spot on here. He should withdraw the United States from the accords and be prepared to stoutly defend his decision on both political and scientific grounds. Ironically, the best reasons for getting out of the accords are the evident weaknesses in the reasons that a wide range of businesses and environmental groups offer for staying in. ...

Craig Pirrong celebrates.

The wailing, gnashing of teeth, and rending of garments that has followed Trump's widely expected decision to withdraw the US from the Paris Climate Accord is truly amazing to witness. It is virtue signaling taken to a new extreme. Indeed, since so many people want to signal simultaneously, each apparently feels obliged to outdo the other in hysterics in order to attract the attention their precious egos crave. Hence the apocalyptic paroxysms of rage that started the moment Trump spoke.

Truth be told, even if one believes the predictions of standard climate models, and even if one believes there will be compliance with the commitments of the Accord (which is slightly less likely than my becoming Pope), it would have a trivial impact on global temperatures: on the order of .2 degrees. The impact of the US withdrawal alone, given its declining CO2 emissions relatively (especially compared to China and India) and even absolutely (something the pious Europeans have not been able to manage despite their moribund economy and costly—and insane—commitment to renewables), means that Trump's action by itself will have an immeasurable effect on climate in any time frame.

So despite all of the screeching that Trump has doomed—doomed I say!—life on earth, in reality the accord is not a practical agreement, but a ritual. And like all rituals, its primary purpose is to provide an opportunity to display obeisance to a creed, theology, doctrine, or dogma.

Which explains the overwrought reaction: ...

Roger Simon likes getting rid of one of Obama's "three authoritarianisms."

Sometimes -- maybe almost always -- the world seems to run on Freudian projection. One of the salient recent examples is Barack Obama's supporters -- and Obama himself, literally and by implication -- calling Donald Trump "authoritarian."

But in non-projected reality, during his administration, Obama is the one who imposed what we might deem -- in appropriately Maoist parlance -- the "Three Authoritarianisms." They were the Paris climate accord, the Iran deal, and US intelligence agencies being used to surveil American citizens.

All three of these "authoritarianisms" were entirely ex-Constitutional. ...

... Even a cursory look at history reveals that totalitarianism does not always come with the obvious iron fist of a Comrade Stalin. Sometimes it arrives in a subtler manner, as it did in the Obama administration when the then president's amanuensis/lackey Ben Rhodes was so naive or arrogant (or both) as to brag to a New York Times writer how he duped young and uneducated reporters into parroting what the administration wanted them to say about the Iran deal. The KGB couldn't have done it better.

In the cases of Paris and Iran, it's clear the (totalitarian) decision to avoid Congress was deliberate. But now Trump has put a crimp in the former by pulling out of the Paris climate (né global warming) accord. The international chorus of hissy fits was so instantaneous and predictable -- no more eminent scientist than actor Mark Ruffalo has declared "Trump will have the death of whole nations on his hands" -- one must ask the obligatory question: Was it ever really about climate or was it, in the immortal words of H. L. Mencken, "about the money"? ...

David Harsanyi says the Dems have lost on climate change.

... Cuomo claims he "is committed to meeting the standards set forth in the Paris Accord regardless of Washington's irresponsible actions." Yet as governor, he's blocked natural gas pipelines and banned fracking, which has proven to be one of the most effective ways to mitigate carbon emissions. U.S. energy-related carbon emissions have fallen almost 14 percent since they peaked in 2007 according to the OECD -- this, without any fabricated carbon market schemes. The driving reason is the shift to natural gas. Why do liberals hate science? Why do they condemn our grandchildren to a fiery end?

Fact is, Obama—as was his wont—tried to shift American policy with his pen rather than by building consensus (which was also an assault on proper norms of American governance, but the "Trump is destroying the Constitution!" crowd is conveniently flexible on this issue.) It's not a feasible or lasting way to govern, unless the system collapses. It is also transparently ideological.

This, I suspect, is one major reason climate change isn't really a salient politic issue. No amount of hysteria is going to reverse this dynamic. Because, in the end, Malthusianism is no better than denialism -- it is denialism, in fact. It is a belief that ignores history, human nature, and most importantly tradeoffs. Lots of people seem to understand this, either in stark political terms or intuitively. Sure, they say the things expected of them, but their actions betray a trust in human adaptability and technology more than in guesstimates. Many of them have lived through the

eco-scaremongering of the 70s and 80s, and yet, they now see innovation spreading in a cleaner world where poverty has dramatically fallen and, by almost every quantifiable measure, human existence is improving.

Scott Adams wants a global warming betting exchange.

... There is social pressure to say you side with the majority of climate scientists. To do otherwise would make many people feel like ignoramuses. So they craft their personalities around a belief in climate change doom because they are people who respect science. It fits their identity preference.

Until you ask them to invest their money.

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Here I'm not talking about every person. I'm talking about a tendency for some members of a group to be frictionless-only members. As soon as you give them friction – such as a financial risk – some (not all) climate alarmists might become climate skeptics.

That's just a hypothesis.

Another hypothesis is that markets are short-sighted. But how much short-term benefit does the entire economy get from leaving the Paris Accords? I haven't seen the argument for it helping directly in the next quarter or two, except in terms of optimism for the long-term.

And yet another hypothesis is that the people who have extra money to invest have a different view of climate risks than people who don't have money. And that could be because the investor class is either smarter or dumber on this topic, on average, than non-investors.

All of this makes me wonder why there isn't a more robust betting market for climate change predictions. ...

Another example of pseudo-science and government gone awry is the campaign against dietary fat. It turned out to be wrong. Worse it led people to adopt diets that have started an epidemic of obesity. A summary comes from the **Tonic Blog**.

Let's say you want to lose some weight. Which of these foods would you choose: A skim-milk latte, or the same drink with whole milk? A low-cal breakfast bar or steak and eggs? A salad tossed in light dressing or the same salad doused with buttermilk ranch?

If you're like most Americans, you either aren't sure how to answer, or you're very sure—but very wrong. And it's not your fault. It's the fault, experts say, of decades of flawed or misleading nutrition advice—advice that was never based on solid science.

The US Department of Agriculture, along with the agency that is now called Health and Human Services, first released a set of national dietary guidelines back in 1980. That 20-page booklet trained its focus primarily on three health villains: fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.

Recently, research has come out strongly in support of dietary fat and cholesterol as benign, rather than harmful, additions to person's diet. Saturated fat seems poised for a similar pardon. "The science that these guidelines were based on was wrong," Robert Lustig, a neuro-endocrinologist at the University of California, San Francisco, told Tonic. In particular, the idea that cutting fat from a person's diet would offer some health benefit was never backed by hard evidence, Lustig said.

Just this week, some of Lustig's colleagues at UCSF released an incendiary report revealing that in the 1960s, sugar industry lobbyists funded research that linked heart disease to fat and cholesterol while downplaying evidence that sugar was the real killer.

Nina Teicholz, a science journalist and author of the The Big Fat Surprise, said a lot of the early anti-fat push came from the American Heart Association (AHA), which based its anti-fat stance on the fact that fat is roughly twice as calorie-dense as protein and carbohydrates.

"They had no clinical data to show that a low-fat diet alone would help with obesity or heart disease," Teicholz told Tonic. But because fat was high in calories, they adopted this anti-fat position, and the government followed their lead. Surely the 1960s research rigged by the Sugar Association, which was published in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*, added to our collective fat fears. ...

Hoover Institution [Forget The Paris Accords](#)

by Richard A. Epstein

The Trump administration is currently facing a major decision—whether to withdraw the United States from the Paris Accords on climate change. The huge multi-national agreement was finalized in the closing weeks of the Obama administration, just days before Trump's surprise victory in the presidential election. The key commitment made by the United States under the accords is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the next decade by about a quarter of their 2005 rate, with further reductions to come thereafter. But during his campaign, Donald Trump promised to pull out of the accords, and, at the recent meeting of the G-7, was the lone holdout against a ringing endorsement of the agreement. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been insisting that the United States stay the course, but it appears as if Trump is inclined to honor his campaign promise to pull out of the accords, a position in line with that of Scott Pruitt, the new head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The President's instincts are spot on here. He should withdraw the United States from the accords and be prepared to stoutly defend his decision on both political and scientific grounds. Ironically, the best reasons for getting out of the accords are the evident weaknesses in the reasons that a wide range of businesses and environmental groups offer for staying in.

One constant refrain of both large American corporations and environmental groups is that by withdrawing from the Paris Accords, the United States will suffer a "huge missed opportunity" to work on the cutting-edge technologies of wind and solar energy. But why? At this point, solar and wind energy, as the indefatigable Matt Ridley points out, amount to at most a trivial portion

of the global energy supply, less than one percent in total. Indeed, most of that production comes from state-subsidized ventures that could never survive on their own. And while firms race to collect government subsidies to develop so-called cleaner energy, none of their research is likely to solve the intractable problem of how to store wind or solar energy efficiently.

Further, to label wind and solar as "green" energy simply ignores the substantial environmental costs associated over their life-cycle of development, fabrication, installation, and maintenance. Covering the ground with huge solar panels is a form of thermal pollution; wind turbines emit a low hum injurious to people and are notorious for killing birds; and mining the materials required for the manufacture of each form of energy results in more environmental harm.

On the other hand, it is a given that coal, oil, and natural gas will remain central pillars of the world's energy supply for the indefinite future, given their energy richness and operational reliability. Research that reduces harmful emissions from these widely used sources has a far higher rate of social return than any improvements in wind and solar, which are large enterprises that require a huge number of workers to generate a tiny amount of energy: 374,000 people work in solar and 100,000 in wind, compared to 160,000 for coal and 398,000 for natural gas. These "green" energy sources are clearly inefficient, which is why so much labor is wasted on so little output.

On the other hand, there have been major technological advances in the production of natural gas, oil, and coal (the cost of fracking dropped 30 percent in less than two years), and these sources remain as vital as ever to global energy production. It is mere propaganda to insist that "The End of Coal is Near" now that China has decided to scrap the construction of 103 new power plants. China's five-year plan still calls for a nearly 20 percent expansion of its coal production capacity by 2020. India and Japan are following suit. Germany, pace Merkel, produces huge quantities of coal annually, virtually all of it lignite, or brown coal, the dirtiest variety. Coal from these sources not only produce all the traditional forms of pollution, but also causes ailments ranging from asthma to radiation diseases (from mining rare earths)—making the issue of carbon dioxide emissions an afterthought. Improving the efficiency of coal production will thus yield far greater returns than fine-tuning the production of wind and solar energy.

A further reason to get out of the Paris Accords is to make sure that the United States does not get dragooned into researching areas that only promise, at best, low rates of return. If wind and solar were worth their salt, private capital would flow into their research and development, just as it does for fossil fuels. The accord's supporters have the basic economics exactly backwards, for there is no reason to think that superior American technology will be spurned by countries that can use it to increase energy yields while reducing pollution.

The defenders of the Paris Accords are as dogmatic on the science as they are on the economics. To them, it is an axiomatic truth that carbon dioxide emissions pose a grave threat to the environment, even though the putative causal chain is filled with missing links. The current practice is to assume that every adverse climate event is somehow the result of the rather smallish increases in carbon dioxide levels over the past 65 years. In order to reach that result, however, it is necessary to exclude other explanations for the adverse events. An observed rise in sea level in Florida, for example, is more likely attributable to the draining of local aquifers than to increases in global temperature. Indeed, sea level rises have, if anything, slowed down in recent years, notwithstanding increases in carbon dioxide levels. In a similar vein, the rapid melting of ice on the western part of the Antarctic is more likely attributable to underground volcanic activity, particularly given that the overall ice levels in the Antarctic are up and not down. And highly variable adverse events are probably more closely associated with

changes in water vapor patterns, the recent El Niño, active sunspots, aerosol levels, and a host of other factors, some of which are well known and others of which are only dimly understood.

The situation is even more complex if one looks to the long run. Climate variability has been a constant long before human beings inhabited this earth. Of course, carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that can trap energy. But so is water vapor, and its levels are far harder to track because its amount and distribution are not constant across the earth's surface. Most crucially, observed cyclical patterns of temperature change do not correlate with slow but steady increases in carbon dioxide. Recent work by climate scientists Richard Lindzen and others shows that during the so-called Holocene period (roughly covering the last 11,000 years), there was a *negative* correlation between temperatures and carbon dioxide concentrations—strongly suggesting that carbon dioxide levels cannot be the main driver of temperature changes. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that recent climate models that have predicted sharp temperature increases have consistently run "hot," so much so that observed increases are less than 50 percent of those predicted. As climate scientist Judith Curry points out, the uncertainties involved are large and the role of natural forces in driving temperature change are systematically underestimated.

More specifically, the over-hyped climate models have ignored two key constraints that undercut the usual doomsday projections. First, changes in temperature occur much more slowly than changes in carbon dioxide concentration. At the same time, the increase in plant growth on land has vastly outstripped temperature changes, contributing powerfully to the greening of the earth in the last ten years, and suggesting that the social "cost" of carbon dioxide could be positive. Second, recent work suggests that "doubling sensitivity"—which adds the multiplier effect needed to determine the ultimate impact of carbon dioxide changes on temperature—is far lower than the previous estimates put forward by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ten years ago.

There is, therefore, no good reason to think that carbon dioxide could bring about any short-term crisis in temperature, let alone a crisis that can only be abated by instituting very costly (and likely ineffective) changes through the Paris Accords. The agreement could easily result in trillions of dollars in wasteful expenditures. What's worse, the agreement seems to set its targets on autopilot, without accounting for new data that might require revisions to the initial figures. Right now there is little reason to believe that putting all the accord's provisions into place would lower global temperatures by even a fraction of a degree.

I see no gain in having the United States participate in a treaty that combines bad science with bad economics. In the long run, the United States will gain in both wealth and influence if it adopts a more restrained approach to climate change. President Trump should not let himself be scolded to move in a fashionable but unsound direction.

Streetwise Professor

[Trump Rejects the Climate Gateway Drug: Global Progressives Go All Spanish Inquisition](#)

by Craig Pirrong

The wailing, gnashing of teeth, and rending of garments that has followed Trump's widely expected decision to withdraw the US from the Paris Climate Accord is truly amazing to witness. It is virtue signaling taken to a new extreme. Indeed, since so many people want to signal

simultaneously, each apparently feels obliged to outdo the other in hysterics in order to attract the attention their precious egos crave. Hence the apocalyptic paroxysms of rage that started the moment Trump spoke.

Truth be told, even if one believes the predictions of standard climate models, and even if one believes there will be compliance with the commitments of the Accord (which is slightly less likely than my becoming Pope), it would have a trivial impact on global temperatures: on the order of .2 degrees. The impact of the US withdrawal alone, given its declining CO2 emissions relatively (especially compared to China and India) and even absolutely (something the pious Europeans have not been able to manage despite their moribund economy and costly—and insane—commitment to renewables), means that Trump's action by itself will have an immeasurable effect on climate in any time frame.

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Which explains the overwrought reaction: those rejecting creeds, theologies, doctrines, and dogmas are heretics, and heretics must be attacked, ostracized, ridiculed, and in the dreams of some, burned. Trump is accused of heresy on three counts — heresy by thought, heresy by word, heresy by deed, and heresy by action — four counts! Yet he does not confess, and indeed revels in his heresy, only infuriating his inquisitors all the more.

There is much dispute over the concrete effects of Paris *qua* Paris. Some claim it is merely symbolic. Others claim that it will lead to real policy changes. Whatever the practical effects, there is no doubt about the *ambitions* of those pushing Paris, and [Trump rejected them all](#). He rejected the delegation of authority over the United States to an unelected and unaccountable (self-perceived but actually utterly failed) elite. He rejected the exploitation of climate concerns to implement a vast scheme of international wealth redistribution.

And perhaps most importantly, he called out, confronted, and rejected the role of Paris as a gateway drug to even more intrusive supranational elite control and power:

The risks grow as historically these agreements only tend to become more and more ambitious over time. In other words, the Paris framework is a starting point — as bad as it is — not an end point. And exiting the agreement protects the United States from future intrusions on the United States' sovereignty and massive future legal liability. Believe me, we have massive legal liability if we stay in.

Absolutely. Climate concerns (hysteria, really) have become an engine for rent seeking and power grabbing on a global scale never seen before, and it needs to be throttled in the crib. For it is evident from years of experience how the leftist-statist-dirigiste march through the institutions works. Stake out a modest set of policies to achieve a lofty goal. When the policies fall short, impose more draconian ones. When those policies in turn fail, unleash more bureaucratic dragoons to intrude on every aspect of institutional life. And in this case, the institution at stake is the world. Better to stop it now, then to watch it metastasize later.

The reaction has been predictable. Corporate rent seekers—Goldman Sachs' Lloyd Blackfein, GE's Jeffrey Immelt, and our favorite among them Elon Musk—have expressed their rage and dismay. Political power seekers, the Euros most notable among them, are beside themselves.

The Euros are particularly amusing. After Trump spurned them, they are now looking to China's Xie for climate policy leadership, just as they did on "free trade" at Davos. Daddy didn't give them what they wanted, so they are throwing themselves into the arms of the leader of a biker gang. That will show that meanie, harrumph!

That won't end well, and don't bother come crying to us when it doesn't! China is a mercantilist environmental disaster that will pump out increasing quantities of CO2 for the foreseeable future. China is in this for China, and will exploit climate policy to advance its economic interests while paying lip service to green pieties. Only the willfully self-deluded refuse to see otherwise.

The economic costs of any actual implementation of Paris promises would have dwarfed any benefits accruing to its effects on climate. Force-feeding of renewables will increase energy costs, thereby impairing growth—which will have a disproportionate effect on the poor. Taxes to fund global wealth transfers will have similar effects: and if you think that money transferred to poor countries is going to go to the poor, rather than sticky-fingered elites, you are truly a fool.

So Donald Trump has said we'll never have Paris. And that's a damn good thing. Arguably the best thing he's done—and the shrieking of global progressives is about the best proof of that I can think of.

Pajamas Media

[Paris: Trump Blocks First of Obama's 'Three Authoritarianisms'](#)

by Roger L. Simon

Sometimes -- maybe almost always -- the world seems to run on Freudian projection. One of the salient recent examples is Barack Obama's supporters -- and Obama himself, literally and by implication -- calling Donald Trump "authoritarian."

But in *non-projected* reality, during *his* administration, Obama is the one who imposed what we might deem -- in appropriately Maoist parlance -- the "Three Authoritarianisms." They were the Paris climate accord, the Iran deal, and US intelligence agencies being used to surveil American citizens.

All three of these "authoritarianisms" were entirely ex-Constitutional. The first two were in essence treaties on which Congress (and by extension the American people) never got to vote or, for that matter, discuss in any serious way. The Paris accord probably would have failed. As for the Iran deal, we still don't know the full contents and therefore debating it is somewhat moot. We have, however, seen its consequences -- corpses littered all across Syria, not to mention untold millions of refugees.

Admittedly, too, the third of "Three Authoritarianisms" is still, shall we say, occluded. We don't know the extent of this surveillance and may never. But this too is typical authoritarian behavior.

Even a cursory look at history reveals that totalitarianism does not always come with the obvious iron fist of a Comrade Stalin. Sometimes it arrives in a subtler manner, as it did in the Obama administration when the then president's amanuensis/lackey Ben Rhodes was so naive or arrogant (or both) as to brag to a *New York Times* writer how he duped young and

uneducated reporters into parroting what the administration wanted them to say about the Iran deal. The KGB couldn't have done it better.

In the cases of Paris and Iran, it's clear the (totalitarian) decision to avoid Congress was deliberate. But now Trump has put a crimp in the former by pulling out of the Paris climate (*né* global warming) accord. The international chorus of hissy fits was so instantaneous and predictable -- no more eminent scientist than actor Mark Ruffalo has declared "Trump will have the death of whole nations on his hands" -- one must ask the obligatory question: Was it ever really about climate or was it, in the immortal words of H. L. Mencken, "about the money"?

I learned firsthand just how much it was the latter when covering COP15 -- the UN climate conference in Copenhagen at the tail end of 2009. That the event occurred in near-blizzard conditions with temperatures hovering close to single digits was the least of it. As we all know, that's weather, not climate. Right?

Naturally, most of the conference was deadly dull -- except for watching junketing U.S. politicians scarfing down modernist Danish jewelry in the Marriott gift shop. But during one of the tedious panel discussions, I found myself sitting next to the representative of one of the Pacific islands said to be on the edge of being submerged. A pleasant fellow, I engaged him in conversation, attempting to commiserate with him about the fate of his homeland. The diplomat started laughing. "Don't you believe in global warming?" I asked. "It's nonsense," he said. He went to explain that his island was just fine. They had some bad weather and had put up sandbags, but now they were gone. So I then asked why he had come all the way from the South Pacific to Denmark and he looked at me in astonishment. "For the money," he said, continuing to stare at me as if I were some kind of cretin who had wangled a press pass. (Okay, I wouldn't have been the first.)

Look, I know that's entirely anecdotal but it is funny to think about and somehow meshes with the absurd amounts of money the accord would presumably have forced the American taxpayer to cough up in return for, at best, a puny amount of cooling. No one explained how that would be consequential and perhaps that's the point. It would have exposed the whole thing as a sham.

Of course, the folks who take global warming at face value like that other eminent scientist, the newly minted French president Macron, probably believed in imminent catastrophe even *before* they saw Al Gore's famous movie warning of a global armageddon that was supposed to have occurred five years ago. To have altered their opinions since in any way would have been to much of an effort, like trying to read a scientific paper by MIT's Richard Lindzen. Science is, after all, complicated and *never settled*. Worse yet, it takes background to understand it. Far better to accept the conventional wisdom and not be ostracized.

Anyway, Trump is to be congratulated for resisting all these would-be bureaucratic totalitarians and walking out on this absurd accord before it bankrupted us. I am reminded of a trip I took to then still fully Communist China in 1979 when signs urging the populace to "Resist the Gang of Four!" (Mao's wife and her Cultural Revolution colleagues) were everywhere. In that spirit I say "Resist the Three Authoritarianisms!" One (hopefully) down. Two to go.

PS: You will note I did not include the Affordable Care Act in my list of authoritarianisms. It was, after all, enacted by our representatives in Congress, even if most of them didn't read it. So you can't call it strictly totalitarian. You can just call it stupid.

The Federalist

Democrats Have Lost On Climate Change, And It's Their Own Fault

This is what happens when science is hijacked in pursuit of ideologically driven economic policies.

by David Harsanyi

Whenever the United States fails to adopt climate-change policy favored by the Left, advocates like to point to polls that allegedly illustrate how a vast majority of Americans support “fighting climate change” or “reducing carbon emissions” or “believe in global warming.” These vague, feel-good moral declarations are equivalent to voters saying they are in favor “reducing poverty” or “helping children.” The more useful question is what are you willing to do? Give up one of your cars? Pay more for energy, food, housing, and everything else? Do you want to empower government to run the economy to help fix the problem?

When it comes to perfunctorily treating global warming as an evil, Democrats have won. The importance of “greening” everything has saturated society. Everyone gets it. When it comes to policy that supposedly mitigates climate change, though, they lose. Mostly, because they’ve hijacked “science” in pursuit of ideologically driven economic policies.

The Paris Agreement is [substantively a joke](#). The widespread rage about President’s Trump’s withdrawal is, as many people have already noted, a case of mass virtue signaling. But the episode does reflect a larger problem for the Left.

The cycle goes something like this: Americans are marginally (or what some of us believe, appropriately) concerned about carbon emissions. For Malthusian progressives, and increasingly the rest of the Democratic Party, this won’t do. So they ratchet up the apocalyptic rhetoric in an effort to scare those people into embracing a slate of economic policies. The problem, of course, is that many people don’t like progressive economic policies. So liberals ratchet up the doom and gloom, to the point where they’re talking about this as an extinction-level event. Lots of people ignore these hysterics. Progressives then go from scaring to attempting to humiliate and bully those who won’t accept that progressive economic policies are tantamount to “science.” Half the country goes from being increasingly immune to becoming increasingly angry.

Many people comprehend – either intuitively or in stark terms—what tradeoffs mean. On one hand, liberals claim that our massive overindulgences have created a catastrophic future, and on the other, they act like it can be fixed with minimal pain or change. Those two positions do not align.

When people who hop on planes every other day lecture people about living more prudently, they react accordingly. Like human beings. Take this typical fare from *New York Times* columnist David Leonhardt, [who writes](#) that “Climate change, clearly, is real. It’s already doing damage in our country and abroad.” The statement is factually true, but woefully incomplete. For whatever harm they accept global warming is doing – which by now means any weather-related event – they plug in the massive benefits of fossil fuels.

I often hear pundits claim that science-denying voters either don’t understand the long-term consequences of global warming, or are selfishly ignoring the future. Maybe they see the future as a choice between a thriving free economy or an economy that runs through a centralized worldwide climate-change agreement? Maybe they choose the former for their grandkids? I do.

Moreover, many voters don't see Democrats acting like people who believe we're facing an extinction level event. For instance, why aren't we talking about adding hundreds of new nuclear power plants to our energy portfolio? Such an effort would do far more to mitigate carbon emissions than any unreliable solar or windmill boondoggle –certainly more than any non-binding international agreement. Maybe there are tradeoffs, who knows.

Or take prospective presidential hopeful Andrew Cuomo. Setting intentions aside, in all practical ways, he's been worse for the environment than Trump. Cuomo claims he "is committed to meeting the standards set forth in the Paris Accord regardless of Washington's irresponsible actions." Yet as governor, he's [blocked natural gas pipelines](#) and [banned fracking](#), which has proven to be one of the most effective ways to mitigate carbon emissions. U.S. energy-related carbon emissions have fallen almost 14 percent since they peaked in 2007 [according to the OECD](#) – this, without any fabricated carbon market schemes. The driving reason is [the shift to natural gas](#). Why do liberals hate science? Why do they condemn our grandchildren to a fiery end?

Fact is, Obama—as was his wont—tried to shift American policy with his pen rather than by building consensus (which was also an assault on proper norms of American governance, but the "Trump is destroying the Constitution!" [crowd is conveniently flexible on this issue](#).) It's not a feasible or lasting way to govern, unless the system collapses. It is also transparently ideological.

This, I suspect, is one major reason climate change isn't really a salient politic issue. No amount of hysteria is going to reverse this dynamic. Because, in the end, [Malthusianism](#) is no better than denialism – it *is* denialism, in fact. It is a belief that ignores history, human nature, and most importantly tradeoffs. Lots of people seem to understand this, either in stark political terms or intuitively. Sure, they say the things expected of them, but their actions betray a trust in human adaptability and technology more than in [guesstimates](#). Many of them have lived through the eco-scaremongering of the 70s and 80s, and yet, they now see innovation spreading in a cleaner world where poverty has dramatically fallen and, by [almost every quantifiable measure](#), human existence is improving.

Dilbert's Blog

[Betting on Climate Change](#)

by Scott Adams

Did you notice the stock market rising sharply after President Trump announced he would pull out of the Paris Climate Accord and – according to CNN – destroy the entire planet? Markets are irrational, but still, it's hard to reconcile a decision to destroy civilization with a rise in investor confidence.

What should I make of the fact so many citizens say global warming is an existential danger while the people who have money are (apparently) betting against it? How does that make sense?

One way it makes sense is that markets move for lots of different reasons. But in my experience, a sharp move in the markets timed to a political action is like an instant vote of thumbs-up or thumbs-down on the decision. Apparently, leaving the Paris Accord was a thumbs-up for investors.

And so I give you this hypothesis: There is social pressure to say you side with the majority of climate scientists. To do otherwise would make many people feel like ignoramuses. So they craft their personalities around a belief in climate change doom because they are people who respect science. It fits their identity preference.

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That's just a hypothesis.

Another hypothesis is that markets are short-sighted. But how much short-term benefit does the entire economy get from leaving the Paris Accords? I haven't seen the argument for it helping directly in the next quarter or two, except in terms of optimism for the long-term.

And yet another hypothesis is that the people who have extra money to invest have a different view of climate risks than people who don't have money. And that could be because the investor class is either smarter or dumber on this topic, on average, than non-investors.

All of this makes me wonder why there isn't a more robust betting market for climate change predictions. Folks could bet on sea level changes and temperature averages using some agreed standard for measurement. That way, the climate alarmists can hedge against the economic catastrophe they see coming, at least for their own families. Given the certainty of climate scientists, I would think the people betting on their side would be making easy money. Those winnings could help offset the higher expenses caused by climate disruption.

Apparently, [bad versions](#) of the betting market idea already exist, or did exist at one time. I'm sure you'll tell me about others. But the lack of a big-time betting market in this space tells me there wouldn't be enough bets on one side of the topic to make a market.

I wonder which side that would be.

Disclosure: My current view on climate science is that the climate scientists are probably right on the basic science, and their climate models are probably directionally right too. But no one has created a credible **economic** model around climate change. Until you have a long-term economic model that you can trust, you have no way to know what to do about climate change or when to do it. The climate science models don't tell you any of that. They aren't designed for that. If you want to make rational decisions about climate change **economic** risks, you need credible long-term **economic** models, not climate models.

On a related note, there's no such thing as a credible long-term economic model. It isn't a thing.

Tonic

[We're All Guinea Pigs in a Failed Decades-Long Diet Experiment](#)

by Markam Heid

Let's say you want to lose some weight. Which of these foods would you choose: A skim-milk latte, or the same drink with whole milk? A low-cal breakfast bar or [steak and eggs](#)? A salad tossed in light dressing or the same salad doused with buttermilk ranch?

If you're like most Americans, you either aren't sure how to answer, or you're very sure—but very wrong. And it's not your fault. It's the fault, experts say, of decades of flawed or misleading nutrition advice—advice that was [never based on solid science](#).

The US Department of Agriculture, along with the agency that is now called Health and Human Services, first released a set of national dietary guidelines back in 1980. That [20-page booklet](#) trained its focus primarily on three health villains: fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.

Recently, research has come out strongly [in support of dietary fat](#) and [cholesterol](#) as benign, rather than harmful, additions to person's diet. Saturated fat [seems poised](#) for a similar pardon. "The science that these guidelines were based on was wrong," Robert Lustig, a neuro-endocrinologist at the University of California, San Francisco, told Tonic. In particular, the idea that cutting fat from a person's diet would offer some health benefit was never backed by hard evidence, Lustig said.

Just this week, some of Lustig's colleagues at UCSF released [an incendiary report](#) revealing that in the 1960s, sugar industry lobbyists funded research that linked heart disease to fat and cholesterol while downplaying evidence that sugar was the real killer.

Nina Teicholz, a science journalist and author of the [The Big Fat Surprise](#), said a lot of the early anti-fat push came from the American Heart Association (AHA), which based its anti-fat stance on the fact that fat is roughly twice as calorie-dense as protein and carbohydrates.

"They had no clinical data to show that a low-fat diet alone would help with obesity or heart disease," Teicholz told Tonic. But because fat was high in calories, they adopted this anti-fat position, and the government followed their lead. Surely the 1960s research rigged by the Sugar Association, which was published in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine, added to our collective fat fears.

By the 1990s, when Teicholz says the epidemiological data started piling up to show that a low-fat, high-carb diet did not help with weight loss or heart disease—calories be damned—much of the damage was already done. The US public was deep in what nutrition experts sometimes call the "Snackwell phenomenon"—a devotion to low-fat and low-calorie processed snack foods, which people pounded by the bagful because they believed them to be healthy.

"This advice allowed the food industry to go hog-wild promoting low-fat, carb-heavy packaged foods as 'light' or 'healthy,' and that's been a disaster for public health," Lustig said.

The stats back him up. Since the US government first published a set of national nutrition guidelines in 1980, rates of obesity and related diseases like diabetes have more than doubled. "Childhood diabetes was basically unheard of, and now it's an epidemic," Lustig said.

Overseas, national health authorities followed America's lead on fat. The results have been similarly grim. Earlier this year, a UK nonprofit called the National Obesity Forum (NOF) published [a blistering condemnation](#) of its government's diet and nutrition policies.

In its report, the NOF argues that advice to cut back on fat and cholesterol is "the root cause" of Britain's skyrocketing rates of obesity and diabetes. Speaking shortly after the report's publication, Aseem Malhotra, a British cardiologist who consulted on the NOF report, said, "The change in dietary advice to promote low-fat foods is perhaps the biggest mistake in modern medical history.

Along with ripping its government's "failed policies," the NOF report called for a "complete overhaul of dietary advice and public health messaging."

In [a recent editorial](#) appearing in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, researcher Zoe Harcombe from the University of the West of Scotland explains that obesity rates among British men and women rose from 2.7 percent in 1972 to 23 percent and 26 percent, respectively, by 1999.

"There are only three macronutrients," Harcombe told Tonic, "protein, fat, and carbohydrates." Nearly everything you eat or drink contains one or more of these. And if you followed the government's advice to eat less fat, it's inevitable that your carb consumption would shoot up, she said. That's just what happened at a population level during the 1980s and 90s.

To give credit where credit is due: The latest iteration of the US government's dietary guidelines no longer makes a point of capping total fat and cholesterol intakes. But this omission is more a furtive walking back of bad advice than a public acknowledgment of error, Teicholz said. Worse: "When you look at the actual nutritional modeling that the government uses to inform its feeding programs, such as the National School Lunch program, they are all still low in fat," she said. Another example of the government's persistent crusade against fat: The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans still push low-fat dairy over full fat—a recommendation [the latest research](#) doesn't support.

"Studies have not shown benefits of low-fat dairy over full-fat for weight loss, especially if the fat calories are replaced with sugar," Walter Willett, chair of nutrition at Harvard School of Public Health, told Tonic. "If anything, the evidence goes the other way."

Willett is quick to point out that he doesn't consider whole milk and full-fat cheese "health foods." Nuts, for example, are a healthier source of fat, he said. But if you're going to sip some milk or eat some yogurt, the evidence suggests your waistline may be better off with the full-fat stuff—probably because it's more filling and so curbs excessive eating.

Teicholz said it's hard to overstate the effect of national health authorities' pro-carb, anti-fat stance. A whole generation of health professionals accepted—and passed on to their patients—the government's guidance to avoid fat and cholesterol. Many still do.

"Both professional and institutional credibility are at stake," she said when asked why more doctors and policymakers aren't making noise about the harms caused by the government's dietary guidance. She also mentioned food industry interests, the potential for "massive class-action lawsuits," and the shame of copping to nearly a half-century of bad diet advice as deterrents for USDA and other health authorities when it comes to admitting they were wrong.

In the United Kingdom, the disconnect between nutrition science and government dietary policy has opened rifts within the public health community. Since its report's publication, the National Obesity Forum has lost four of its senior members, and the fallout has sparked a national debate among doctors, nutrition scientists, and policy makers over what sorts of food truly belong in a healthy diet.

"Our previous reports had garnered little interest, so we had no way of knowing this one would go interplanetary," David Haslam, chair of the National Obesity Forum and a professor of obesity sciences at Robert Gordon University, told Tonic.

Repeating the advice put forward in his organization's report, Haslam said he firmly believes public health would be greatly improved if we all just ate fewer refined carbohydrates—stuff like baked goods, chips, breakfast cereals, and other packaged goods—and instead ate more "natural foods" regardless of their macronutrient content.

This last point—that we should all pay less attention to a food's nutrient makeup—is an important one. Harvard's Willett said focusing only on a food's specific macro and micronutrient content is confusing, and not a good way to evaluate an item's health impacts.

So what's a confused dieter to do?

Jenny Knight, 30, is a speech therapist and mother of two in Norman, Oklahoma. "I've struggled with my weight since I was eight years old," Knight told VICE. At 5-foot-9 and close to 250 pounds, she's obese by any definition.

Like many heavy Americans, Knight has experimented with a hundred different diets that, when you boil them down, all advocate for cutting fat or calories in order to lose weight. Sooner or later, all of them failed her. "Even when they were working, it was all about willpower," she said. "I'd be so hungry I'd be shaking, and eventually I wouldn't be able to keep that up anymore, and I'd gain all the weight back."

But since February, Knight has been on a fat-centric diet championed by David Ludwig, a professor of nutrition at Harvard.

Speaking to Tonic, Ludwig said that cutting fat from your diet in favor of processed carbs can trigger a cascade of unhealthy metabolic shifts that fuel diseases like diabetes and cause your body's fat cells to lock in—rather than dump—their energy. All this results in "out-of-control" hunger, he said. Cutting more calories from your diet just adds fuel to that fire.

His plan, which he lays out in his book [Always Hungry?](#), champions a shift away from carb-heavy processed food in favor of a diet heavy in fats from nuts, full-fat dairy, natural oils, and other whole foods.

So far, Knight has lost 32 pounds on Ludwig's plan. But it's not just the lost weight that has her feeling optimistic. "This is the only diet I've ever tried that feels effortless—just no willpower required," she said. "It honestly feels decadent to eat things like dark chocolate or peanut butter or coconut milk, and I'm not hungry like I used to be."

Ludwig's diet may or may not be the answer to all our weight-loss prayers. But one thing is clear: Dietary fat was never the boogeyman health authorities made it out to be.

Let's look at how the Paris Climate Agreement will protect the environment.

Before

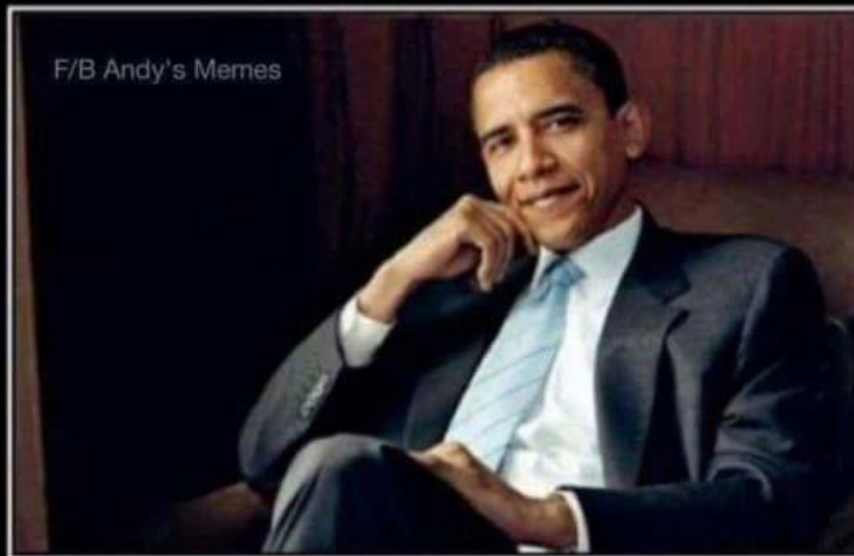


After



Wait, what?

**HE TALKED ABOUT HOPE AND
CHANGE FOR 8 YEARS.**



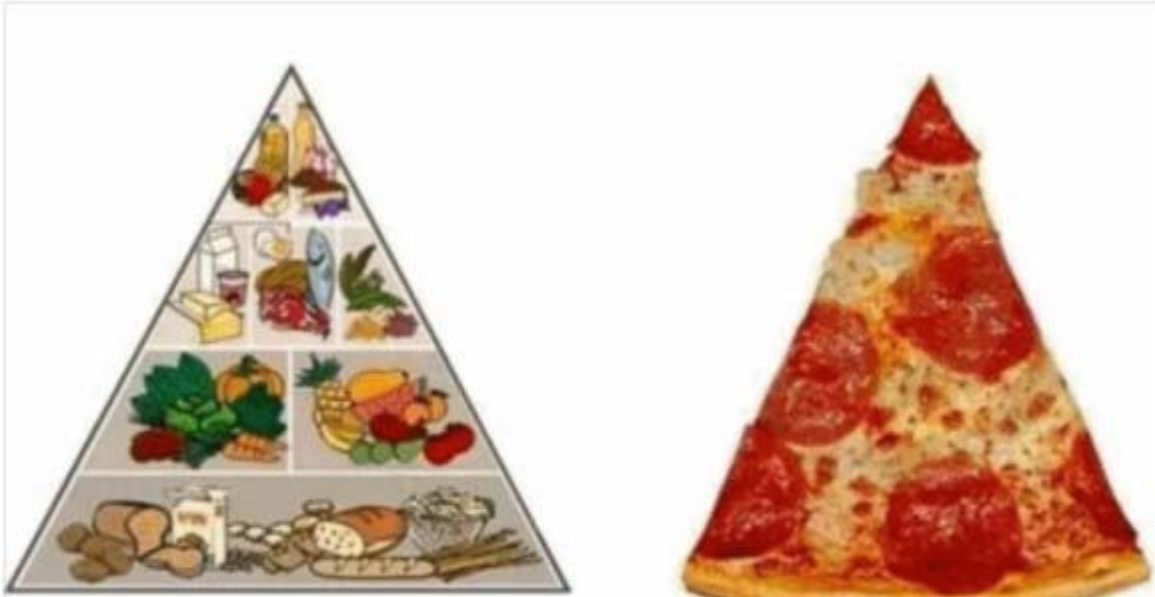
**WHAT HE FAILED TO MENTION WAS
THAT IT WOULDN'T COME UNTIL
AFTER HE LEFT OFFICE.**

Trump Shows Obama



What He Can Do With His
Paris Agreement





CLOSE ENOUGH