



Even if aggregate global temperatures are warming, the question is whether this will lead to civilizational cataclysm unless humans radically rearrange how they live. Many capable interpreters of the evidence think the answer is no.

But what has finally convinced ordinary people that the doomsayers are wrong isn't any interpretation of climate figures. It is the palpable sense that very few of the doomsayers believe what they say.

Why aren't the moguls and corporate executives who claim to be unnerved by the predictions of climate science giving up their carbon-heavy lifestyles and living in caves—or at least in simpler dwellings than mansions? If progressive VIPs in media, politics and entertainment believe sea levels are ready to rise precipitously, why do they keep buying properties in Martha's Vineyard, Bar Harbor, Provincetown, Santa Monica and Malibu?

The climate lobby can wave aside these questions if it wishes, but appeals to reports and studies weigh little against the appearance of insincerity. If activists predicting global mayhem really believe what they predict, they would favor an instant transition to zero-emission nuclear power. But they mostly don't. Every September the transnational elite gather at the U.N. General Assembly to denounce America for its failure to limit carbon emissions—and clog the streets of Manhattan for a week with their privately chartered oversize SUVs.

Disdain for climate alarmism has gone mainstream. Last year the liberal comedian Bill Maher delivered a monologue on his television show in which he blistered celebrities who insist on the need to reduce our “carbon footprint” but zip around the globe on private jets. It is a masterpiece of political invective and has been viewed online by millions.

I don't call any of this “hypocrisy,” because that term properly refers to the difference between private behavior and public words, and in the case of climate alarmism there is no attempt to hide the behavior or to make it match the words. So, for instance, the Defense Innovation Board, a group sponsored by the Pentagon and chaired by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, issued two studies this month recommending the reconstitution and strengthening of America's defense industrial base. The reports have merit. But following all their recommendations would require the procurement of vast arrays of manufactured materials produced with natural gas, petrochemicals and coal. Meanwhile, Mr. Bloomberg oversees two nonprofit organizations, Beyond Coal and Beyond Petrochemicals, whose stated aim is to end the country's use of natural gas, petrochemicals and coal.

Mr. Bloomberg isn't embarrassed by the contradiction. He hasn't tried to explain it, except indirectly in a vaguely worded Washington Post [op-ed](#), co-authored with David H. Berger. “The technology needed to make today's advanced military supplies,” Messrs. Bloomberg and Berger write, “relies on computer chips more than blast furnaces and on research labs more than assembly lines.” Sure. But it does rely on blast furnaces and power stations of the sort Mr. Bloomberg's activist groups want to shut down. Which will make any thinking person wonder if he believes the catastrophism emitted by his nonprofits.

Climate skeptics grouched about these and many similar contradictions for two generations, to little effect on the consensus that ruled unquestioned in boardrooms, universities and government agencies. Then Los Angeles burst into flames. California has been run for many years by people who believe, or say they believe, that climate change is an immediate threat to civilization. Yet now, as thousands of homes are destroyed by fires spread by a seasonal wind so historically predictable it has a name, state and local officials, with the endorsement of a cheerleading media, blame climate change.

These same officials have told us for decades that they accept the direst predictions of climate activists, but they have done little to counter what they now purport to be the effects of climate change. Mayor Karen Bass's 2024-25 budget proposed a 2.7% cut to the Los Angeles Fire Department, mainly in areas of new equipment purchases. And although the department's total budget later increased as a result of salary negotiations, it's pretty obvious that the dangers of wildfires—supposedly the outcome of climate change—weren't foremost on city leaders' minds. California has for years underinvested in land management, which might have inhibited the fires from spreading, and water storage, which would have enabled firefighters to put out more fires.

Climate catastrophism has begun to die, the victim of its apostles' unbelief.

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