



## The Real Deniers

by Richard W. Rahn

ELITES DISMISS THE COSTS OF THEIR CLIMATE POLICIES BORNE BY THE LESS FORTUNATE

No one knows what is going to happen 100 years from now — what problems human beings will face and what advances they’ll make. Are you willing to double your electrical bill — to European rates — to reduce global temperatures by two-tenths of 1 degree 100 years from now?

Are you aware that England has only been an island for about 9,000 years or so? Up until the end of the last ice age, our ancestors could walk from France — which they can, in theory, again do, thanks to the Chunnel. A hundred years ago, air conditioning was almost non-existent. Now we have huge, rich cities such as Singapore, Panama City and even Miami, thriving in the tropics, because air conditioning has made them very livable all year around. A hundred years ago, antibiotics had not been invented, nor had the semiconductor, let alone the smartphone and iPad.

At the present, we do not know how to cost-effectively reduce many carbon-dioxide emissions, but we do know how to adapt to slowly rising sea levels and slightly warmer temperatures. Sea levels have been rising since the end of the last ice age, and there is no evidence that this rate of rise has increased during the past half-century — and mankind has adapted just fine. Despite rising

sea levels, the island of Manhattan has grown in size over the last four centuries — because it makes economic sense to create landfills.

It is odd that many in the media and “public intellectuals” call people climate deniers who merely want to have a civil discussion about the rate of climate change and how much is caused by man — while, at the same time, being in deep denial about the real costs, particularly to the poor, of many of their proposed solutions.

There was predictable outrage this past week when President Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement. The agreement had the goal of reducing the Earth’s temperature by about less than two-tenths of a degree within a hundred years, primarily by reducing carbon-dioxide emissions. Setting aside the issue of whether the required actions by countries would actually achieve the temperature reduction goal, what do you think the probability is that all the countries of the world will actually do what they say they will do, when the required (but voluntary and nonenforceable) actions conflict with domestic political realities?

Air pollution is a real problem in China — something many of us have experienced firsthand. An agreement that gives China a free pass until 2030, while putting U.S. workers and competitiveness at an artificial disadvantage, makes no sense for the United States and the rest of the world.

Rich liberals, like John Kerry and Leonardo DiCaprio, predicted dire consequences (more children with breathing problems) while, of course, conveniently ignoring the hypocrisy of the huge carbon footprint from their private jets and multiple large homes. These folks probably have no idea what they pay for electricity because it does not affect their lifestyles — so they can afford to be moralistic.

Those climate scientists and others in universities who enjoy lucrative government contracts and grants to deal with real or imaginary problems, of course, were unhappy with the president, because his decision might impose a real cost to many of them. (Most of these folks do not think about who pays for their grants and the costs to taxpayers and workers of their climate action demands.) Many

corporate types were unhappy because their companies receive large government subsidies or contracts to work on alternative energy projects — most notably, Elon Musk, whose Tesla would not exist without government subsidies. Rich TV news anchors and other liberal media types who depend on a constant flow of bad news and crisis stories (again, real or imaginary) to maintain ratings also have a self-interest in scaremongering. Many in the bigger government political class who want more power over other people’s lives, such as Gov. Jerry Brown of California, were in full attack mode.

Mr. Brown even went so far as to claim that the president’s decision would kill children — where a more unbiased analysis is likely to show just the opposite. Higher energy costs and higher taxes reduce job creation, and real wages and economic growth — all of which hurt children (and everyone else) and slow medical advances.

Those who have more limited incomes or job prospects know that higher electricity and other energy prices cause real pain, so they tended to applaud the president’s climate decision. Those who have an understanding of business economics — and are not in denial about a world in which there are real tradeoffs and real costs to actions that may or may not yield future benefits — also were likely to have supported the president. And finally, also those who revere liberty and understand that markets are more likely to solve climate (and other) problems — than arrogant, power-seeking, self-proclaimed experts and bureaucrats.

A hundred years from now, mankind will have far more wealth and knowledge about how to deal with climate change than it has now. The greatest legacy the current generation can bequeath to future generations is a prosperous world so there will be enough wealth to invest in new technologies to solve such problems.

*Richard W. Rahn is chairman of Improbable Success Productions and on the board of the American Council for Capital Formation*

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jun/5/climate-change-lobby-are-the-real-deniers/>

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