

## How The Media Enables Destructive Climate Change Hysteria

By David Harsanyi | August 27, 2018



Last weekend, the former chairman of psychiatry at Duke University, Dr. Allen Frances, **claimed** that Donald Trump “may be responsible for many more million deaths” than Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Zedong combined. Frances, author of the fittingly titled “**Twilight of American Sanity**,” would later **clarify by tweeting** that he was talking about the “[t]errible damage Trump is doing to world climate at this global warming tipping point may be irreversable/could kill hundreds of millions of people in the coming decades.”

That’s quite the bold statement, considering the hefty death toll the Big Three extracted. But, really, it isn’t *that* shocking to hear. Frances’ pseudohistoric twaddle comports well with the pseudoscientific twaddle that’s been normalized in political discourse. Every year Democrats ratchet up the doomsday scenarios, so we should expect related political rhetoric to become correspondingly unhinged.

All of this is a manifestation of 50 years of scaremongering on climate change. Paul Ehrlich **famously** promised that “hundreds of millions of people” would “starve to death,” while in the real world we saw hunger precipitously drop, and the world become increasingly cleaner. Yet, neo-Malthusians keep coming back with fresh iterations of the same hysteria, ignoring mankind’s ability to adapt.

At a 2005 London **conference** of “concerned climate scientists and politicians” that helped launch contemporary climate rhetoric, attendees warned that the world had as little as 10 years before the Earth reached “the point of no return on global warming.” Humans, they claimed, would soon be grappling with “widespread agricultural failure,” “major droughts,”

“increased disease,” “the death of forests,” and the “switching-off of the North Atlantic Gulf Stream,” among many other calamities.

Since then, the Earth has gotten **greener**. This year, **for the first time since** we began logging data in 2000, there were no “extreme” or “exceptional” droughts across the contiguous United States—although we’ve come close to zero on numerous occasions over the past decade. Every time there’s a drought anywhere in the world, **climate change will be blamed**. But world crop yields **continue** to ensure that fewer people are hungry than ever. I’m not a scientist, but I assume the North Atlantic Gulf Stream is still with us.

It doesn’t matter. Four years after the last point of no return was reached, the noted naturalist David Attenborough **warned** the world at a United Nations climate change summit that “collapse of our civilizations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon.”

Climate change is always an extinction-level event. When the Democratic National Committee rejected counterproductive single-issue debates this week (climate change being the most notable), a member **complained**, “If an asteroid was coming to Earth, there would be no question about having a debate about it, but with this existential crisis facing the world, we all sit and wring our hands.” This is how a lot of Democrats speak. They are never challenged.

And if you truly believe a slight variation in climate is comparable to an asteroid barreling towards the Earth—and if we trust their rhetoric, every Democrat presidential candidate does—why *wouldn’t* you support the authoritarian policy proposals of the **Green New Deal**?

And why wouldn’t you accuse those who oppose more solar panel subsidies and tax hikes of being mass murderers? Why wouldn’t you celebrate the death of philanthropists like David Koch? These people are **literally** “spinning us all toward environmental doom.”

On climate change, you can say virtually anything, and no one will challenge your zealotry.

Recently I noticed that CNN, where Frances accused the president of being the worst mass murderer in history without any pushback, refers to “**climate change**” as the “climate crisis” in news stories—which is editorializing, not reporting.

If journalists did their jobs, they would contest some of the assumptions and exaggerations that have now congealed as “crisis” in their newsrooms. Not necessarily the science, but the predictive abilities of scientists or the hyperbolic statements of politicians. But how can any reporter be skeptical of anyone when news organizations have already conceded that what they’re covering is a “crisis?” It would be an apostasy. Chuck Todd won’t give any airtime to “deniers,” but he’ll open his show any Chicken Little who can get elected.

**Not long ago**, candidates and mainstream media outlets like CNN were acting as if floods in the Midwest were an unprecedented environmental disaster. In reality, deaths from extreme weather have **dropped** somewhere around 99.9 percent since the 1920s. Tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, and extreme temperatures can still be killers, but thanks to increasingly affordable fossil-fueled heating and air-conditioning systems, safer buildings, and better warning

systems—among other technological advances—the vast majority of Americans will never have to fear weather in any genuine way.

Put it this way: Since 1980, **death caused by all natural disasters and heat and cold** is well under 0.5 percent of the total.

Yet, never, to my recollection, has a mainstream reporter asked an environmental activist why, if the world is headed towards Armageddon, humans are better off now than they were 50 years ago, or 20 years ago or 10 years ago? Climate change is supposedly in full swing, yet fewer people are hungry, fewer people are displaced, and we have to fight fewer wars over resources. Extreme poverty has steeply **dropped** over the past 30 years. There is no evidence that this trajectory is about to change.

Worse, instead of conveying this good news, the media keeps cherrypicking problems without any context. They've convinced large swaths of young Americans that everything is getting worse, when the opposite is true.

Nearly every day, I read some new chilling climate change story. "**Climate Change Is Driving An Increase In A Deadly Flesh-Eating Bacteria And Spreading It To New Areas**," says BuzzFeed. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the number of reported cases of the "Vibrio" illness has more than tripled since 1997, from 386 to 1,256 in 201. The same day I read about the Deadly Flesh-Eating Bacteria, I **read**, in far less dramatic terms, about a new pill that researchers believe might be able to prevent a third of all heart attacks and strokes, potentially saving millions of lives.

Or take The Washington Post, which recently offered a **beautifully packaged** article written by a long-time environmental activist turned "reporter." It cobbled together stories of suffering under climate change. What it failed to point out is that the vast majority of Americans rely on cheap energy and will never have to alter our lifestyles because of the climate—other than perhaps using air conditioning a few extra days.

We're going to have to learn to deal with Deadly Flesh-Eating Bacteria, because the billions of people who once lived (and live) in disease-ridden areas in the developing world will want heart pills and cars and air conditioners. No sane nation is going to run its economy on **expensive** and **unproductive** energy sources.

Some people will argue that the failure of previous scares to materialize doesn't mean this one isn't real. Some people will argue human adaptation doesn't mean that climate change isn't happening. Of course not. But adaptation is the point.

The story of humankind is one of acclimatization. We use technological advances and efficiencies to deal with change. We will adapt to organic and anthropogenic changes, as we always do, because it's a lot cheaper than dismantling modernity. That's the reality, no matter how hysterical activists get on TV.