

QUADRANT

July 19th 2016

[Home](#) \ [Opinion](#) \ [Doomed Planet](#) \ Global Warming's Grand Inquisitors

Walter Starck

Global Warming's Grand Inquisitors

If Hillary Clinton wins the White House, her party's platform makes no bones about what is in store for those who dare to dispute the "settled science" of assorted computer modellers, grant-grabbers, propagandists and professional alarmists: a visit by the authorities



On news just in, the drafting committee for the party [platform of the Democratic Party](#) in the US has [unanimously adopted a provision](#) for the Justice Department to investigate [businesses that question the threat of dangerous global warming](#). This comes on top of recent efforts by various climate alarmist academics, politicians, NGOs and a consortium of state attorneys general [to pursue criminal charges](#) of fraud and/or racketeering [against those who dispute the threat of climate change](#).

Such prosecution is predicated on a conviction that the threat of catastrophic anthropogenic climate change is a self-evident truth backed by irrefutable scientific evidence and affirmed by a virtually unanimous majority of expert opinion. Such a belief then leads to the conclusion that any expression of doubt can only be evidence of some mental disorder or a deliberate attempt to defraud the public.

However, and despite the absolute certainty and trembling righteousness being displayed on this issue, the best available evidence simply does not support such conviction and the threat remains only an unproven hypothetical. It is still based primarily on projections from un-validated computer modelling which have increasingly departed from the real world record of climate itself.

Of a hundred different climate models constructed by various researchers all but one projected temperatures increasingly higher than the actual record has in fact shown. The sole exception is an obscure Russian model which has been effectively ignored by the alarmists.

Beyond the failed modelling there are four aspects of the alleged climate peril, all of which are said to be increasing to dangerous levels at unprecedented rates:

- **Global temperatures**
- **Sea levels**

- **Ocean acidification**
- **Extreme weather events**

Contrary to all the hype, careful examination of the actual evidence indicates that all of these things remain well within the natural range of variability over the past millennium.

The best available record of **surface temperatures** over the millennium is based on the oxygen-isotope indication of past temperatures that is found in polar ice cores, sediment cores, coral skeletons, shells of giant clams and stalactites. Hundreds of such records from all over the world repeatedly indicate a Medieval Warm Period that was warmer than the present climate. This was followed by a cooler Little Ice Age (LIA) between about 1300 and 1870 with a more recent modest and erratic warming. This overall pattern is further supported by numerous historical accounts including crop records which also clearly indicate a Medieval climate that was somewhat warmer than the current one.

The best available record of recent **global atmospheric temperatures** comes from satellite monitoring over the past three decades. These show only a very modest warming trend, well below the modelled projections and entirely consistent with the natural trend which began at the end of the Little Ice Age decades before the greatly increased use of fossil fuels. This record also shows no statistically significant warming trend at all over the past 18 years, despite it being the time of greatest increase in the use of fossil fuels.

The generally accepted average **sea level rise** from several hundred tide gauges around the world has been about 1.7 mm per year over the past century with no acceleration over recent decades. That's about 7 inches in a century and entirely in accord with the modest warming since the LIA. Various studies from around the world also indicate that current sea levels are several metres lower than they were only a few thousand years ago.

Ocean acidification is another bugaboo which fades away on sober examination. For a start, the terminology is misleading. The oceans are, and have always been, alkaline. They are also highly buffered and won't become acidic even if we manage to consume all of the recoverable fossil fuel on the planet. At most they may become a bit less strongly alkaline.

The claim that the average pH of the oceans has become 0.1 pH unit more "acidic" (*i.e.* less strongly alkaline or lower in pH) since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution is only another projection from unvalidated computer modelling in a single study. The best empirical evidence available comes from a database of around a million measurement of oceanic pH taken over the past century. A recent analysis of this data found no indication for any trend of declining pH.

It is worth noting that the natural daily, seasonal and regional variability of pH in the oceans ranges over several tenths of a pH unit. Interestingly, the regions with the lowest readings are generally found where there is upwelling of nutrient rich deep water. This results in flourishing marine life and the world's most productive fishing grounds.

The remaining horseman of the climate apocalypse is **extreme weather**. Like the others, this one quickly becomes unhorsed under critical gaze. Numerous studies have repeatedly found that recent storms, floods, droughts, heat waves and blizzards are all well within the limits of naturally occurring variability over the past few centuries and well below the extremes of the past millennia.

Although the threat of catastrophic climate change remains only a hypothetical future possibility of doubtful severity this has not prevented its advocates proclaiming it is here already and now wreaking havoc. This has been achieved by re-badging “global warming” with the much wider appellation of “climate change”, thus facilitating the claiming of every extreme of weather or fluctuation of nature as evidence for it. Such claims have been further enhanced by repeatedly making unexplained and unannounced “adjustments” to the historical record. Somehow, virtually all of these always result in making the more recent records become the extreme. Then, even if the amount only differs by a hundredth of a degree from something recorded a century ago, the new record is bannered as being unprecedented while the past extreme is quietly ignored.

All this evidence and manipulation is a matter of readily accessible information but finding, understanding and assessing it demands far more time, effort and specialised knowledge than all but a rare few have been willing or able to invest. The result has been uncritical acceptance of self-appointed experts, with a compliant mainstream media naively regurgitating undigested press releases from a well-funded alarmist industry. Meanwhile, all who dare question the absence of evidence are besmirched and dismissed as a denialists.

On balance, the best available evidence strongly indicates that the risk of continuing to use fossil fuels to maintain a healthy economy while we seek to develop new energy technologies is likely to be far less than the economic consequences of unnecessary restrictions on abundant affordable energy from fossil fuels. To the contrary, such restriction is almost certain to significantly impair development of the advanced energy technologies being advocated.

The increasingly strident claims of imminent climate catastrophe now appear especially contradictory when the only reasonably sound evidence of a noticeable widespread environmental effect from fossil fuel emissions has been a marked greening of arid regions, plus a significant increase in agricultural productivity from the fertilising effect of increased CO₂.

The calls for a 21st century witch hunt against disbelievers would be difficult to imagine were they not real, or perhaps more accurately, surreal. In particular, it is difficult not to notice that the mindset being displayed presents a disturbing similarity with that of another faith-based one currently afflicting many societies. Certainly, both share a toxic combination of zealous certainty, seething self-righteousness, studied ignorance and a desire to severely punish any and all dissent.