

CHAPTER 26

DENIAL OF SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE: A MAJOR THREAT TO THE BIOSPHERE (AND YOU)

Delay is the deadliest form of denial.

C. Northcote Parkinson

Doubt, indulged and cherished, is in danger of becoming denial; but if honest, and bent on thorough investigation, it may soon lead to full establishment of the truth.

Ambrose Bierce

It's not denial. I'm just selective about the reality I accept.

Bill Watterson

Security is when everything is settled. When nothing can happen to you. Security is the denial of life.

Germaine Greer

 ***“INSTEAD OF FACING CLIMATE CHANGE, SOCIAL ETIQUETTE, CULTURAL NARRATIVES AND BELIEFS HELP FORM A SHIELD ALLOWING US TO ‘LOOK THE OTHER WAY’ AND LEAD OUR DAILY LIVES CALMLY.”¹***

- 🌐 Eighty-three percent of Americans believe Earth is heating up (<http://www.reuters.com/assets/print?aid=USTRE78D5B220110915>).
- 🌐 However, most Americans live as though global warming is not occurring, even while knowing it is.
- 🌐 Some common denial statements follow.
 - (1) It will not happen in my lifetime.
 - (2) Technology will solve the problem.
 - (3) I did not do this.
 - (4) Wind turbines (non-carbon alternative energy sources) kill bats and birds and ruin the view.
 - (5) And, from enlightened cynics: “When on the Titanic — go first class.”

HOWEVER, CULTURAL/GROUP DENIAL IS FAR MORE FORMIDABLE AN OBSTACLE TO FREE AND OPEN DISCOURSE.

 ***“Norway has the highest standard of living in the world and the highest percentage of newspaper readership, as well as extremely high grassroots political and voting activity.”² Global warming has affected Norway dramatically because of its northerly location, but Norwegians still have a global warming denial pattern similar to that in the United States.²***

 **MOST PEOPLE PROFESS SUPPORT OF SCIENCE; HOWEVER, WHEN THEY REJECT TWO OF THE MOST ROBUST BODIES OF EVIDENCE THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS HAS GENERATED (I.E., CLIMATE CHANGE AND EVOLUTION), THEIR ACTIONS ARE ANTI-SCIENCE.**

-  **The scientific process has not generated contrary evidence to either climate change or evolution.**
-  **Rejecting scientific evidence just because it conflicts with one's ideology or generates fear is irrational.**
-  **One cannot rationally reject the science on selected issues (e.g., climate warming) while simultaneously benefiting from the scientific evidence on disease control, drugs that increase longevity, electronics, and national security.**



THE IDEA OF “BALANCE” AS USED BY THE NEWS MEDIA IS TO HAVE A SPOKESPERSON(S) FROM EACH SIDE (BELIEVERS VS DENIERS) ON THE GLOBAL WARMING EVIDENCE.

- ① The distribution in the “balance” is far from equal — “*The UE [unconvinced by the evidence] group comprises only 2% of the top 50 climate researchers as ranked by expertise (number of climate publications), 3% of researchers of the top 100, and 2.5% of the top 200 . . .*”³
- ① In cases such as climate change, “balance” gives the impression that scientists are divided on the issue when they are not.
- ① Use of “balance” distorts the amount of evidence and the number of scientists confident in the evidence.
- ① Science uses the preponderance of evidence usually generated by the majority of qualified scientists in that area of research.

THE UNITED STATES DEFENSE REVIEW TAKES CLIMATE CHANGE SERIOUSLY.

-  ***“Climate change and energy are two key issues that will play a significant role in shaping the future security environment. . . . Although they produce distinct types of challenges, climate change, energy security, ad economic stability are inextricably linked.”⁴***
-  ***“If the QDR [Quadrennial Defense Review] gets any play from the press, it could help convince skeptical Americans — both in and out of public office — that climate change is not a fiction cooked up by environmentalists. It represents the consensus opinion of the American military establishment, and it declares in no uncertain terms that climate change is a grave danger, set to ‘act as an accelerant of global instability and conflict.’”⁴***



RESISTING SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SCIENCE.

 *“That global warming has been made a battleground in the wider culture war is most apparent from the political and social views of those who reject climate science outright. In 2008, they accounted for seven per cent of US voters, rising to 18 per cent if those with serious doubts are added. Among those who dismiss climate science, 76 per cent describe themselves as ‘conservative’ and only three per cent as ‘liberal’ (with the rest ‘moderate’). They overwhelmingly oppose redistributive policies, programs to reduce poverty and regulation of business. They prefer to watch Fox News and listen to Rush Limbaugh. Like those whose opinions they value, these climate deniers are disproportionately white, male and conservative — those who feel their cultural identity most threatened by the implications of climate change.”⁵*

 Clearly, more scientific evidence will not reduce the denial of climate change.

ECONOMIC GROWTH IS DOING MORE HARM, ESPECIALLY LONG TERM, THAN GOOD. CONSIDERING A STEADY STATE ECONOMY IS LONG OVERDUE.

-  Humanity acts as if the human economy is its life support system, not the Biosphere.
-  How else can statements such as “Protecting the environment is acceptable if doing so does not pose a threat to the economy!” be regarded as common sense?
-  Humans act like conquerors of nature, not nature’s dependents.
-  By burning fossil fuel in amounts that, if continued, will result in collapse of the Biosphere, humans are acting as if they are immune from natural law.
-  Mother Nature (the universal laws of biology, chemistry, and physics) can neither be ignored nor appeased by statements of “respect.”
-  “*We [humans] are the giant meteorite of our time.*”⁶

 **CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL IS A FUTILE, ALTHOUGH POLITICALLY POWERFUL, ATTEMPT TO ASSERT THAT HUMANS NEED NOT OBEY UNIVERSAL LAWS AND TO DENIGRATE THE SCIENTISTS AND SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT CONFIRM THE CONSEQUENCES OF IGNORING THESE LAWS.**

-  **The universal laws will triumph — they always do — but, the collapse of the present Biosphere will cause enormous suffering and probably the extinction of *Homo sapiens*.**
-  **Perpetual economic growth is simply not possible on a finite planet with finite resources.**
-  **The anti-science war is a pyrrhic “victory” that is being achieved by staggering damage to the Biosphere.**

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