

The green Opposition MPs are like Remain

Listening again to the tired and repetitious high level arguments of the Opposition MPs advocating faster progress to net zero whatever the cost, I am reminded of the years of their lectures on the dangers of Brexit . On both topics they are sure they are right. They despise anyone who questions their beliefs or suggests amendments to their position. They arrogantly dismiss opponents as too stupid to have a worthwhile view, or too badly informed to take seriously. They do not even want to hear an alternative way of meeting their high level aim which presumably is a better quality of life for the many, whilst tackling flood or drought risk proportionately.

They proceed by making a series of very gloomy forecasts for us all unless their policy is followed. They refuse to analyse why their forecasts have often been wrong in the past, and ignore or explain away repeated errors in their forecasts as new data emerges. Above all they ignore the views of many voters. When challenged on the gap between what they think and what a lot of voters think, they say the political elite has a duty to act and needs to teach the public to accept the actions.

They get plenty of help from traditional media. There is an accepted framework to the green debate. The science is settled. Global warming of more than 2 degrees is coming unless we adopt early net zero. That will flood low lying cities, cause water shortages and forest fires and melt the poles. CO₂ aided by methane rather than water vapour is the main culprit. Pricing carbon is part of the answer. People must be taxed, priced or regulated out of plane travel, off meat and dairy, out of diesel and petrol cars and away from fossil fuel heating.

One of the reasons a lot of voters say they broadly agree with this yet do nothing to change their own lifestyles is the perception of double standards. If the great powers actually thought this was a life and death matter wouldn't China and Germany be closing their coal power stations now? Wouldn't the EU cancel the Nord stream 2 Pipeline and fund a green alternative to Russian gas? Wouldn't all the experts behind the COP 26 climate conference ban all those jet flights to it and go virtual?

Above all they fail to deal with the fundamental dilemma faced by China and emerging economies. They need fossil fuels to achieve higher living standards, but their incremental demand tips the world over the top on these carbon accounts. Does the advanced world have the right to stop fossil fuel growth in large populated developing countries? Is there anyway the advanced countries can help them leapfrog to low carbon economies? So far the use of oil, gas and coal in countries like China and India is rising remorselessly up for billions of people.