

Headline: Inevitable meltdown

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If the planet Earth isn't crying, it sure is sweating a lot. Just this past week, the United States' National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) revealed that for a certain period early this month, the ice covering Greenland was melting at a rate not seen in the three decades that satellites have been used to monitor it.

From July 8 to July 12, the ice melt rate on the Greenland ice surface jumped from a normal 40 percent to a staggering 97 percent, according to scientists using data from Nasa and Indian satellites. "I started looking at the satellite imagery and saw something that was really unprecedented," said climate scientist Thomas L. More.

The scientists were quick to explain that while they have described this finding as an "extreme event," it was normal when studied in a historical context, meaning that there had been serious ice melts like this in the past. Nevertheless, the sheer scale of the ice melt should be alarming, especially when one considers that it fits the dire predictions of what global warming can bring. The same scientists calling the ice melt "normal" also said it was indeed a result of a steady shrinking of Greenland's ice sheet, which was caused by the steady warming of Earth's oceans.

All this combined with the freakish weather and temperatures being experienced by people worldwide is too much of a coincidence, even for those who insist that global warming is a myth. Yet for all the dire predictions, very little has been done to stop or slow it.

Just last March, a study published in the journal *Nature Climate Change* stated that the Greenland ice sheet was actually more vulnerable to global warming than previously thought. Should the ice sheet be melted completely, it would raise the sea level by 7.2 meters (a whopping 23.6 feet) and submerge low-lying areas. Since the start of the Industrial Revolution, the world has warmed by 0.8 degrees, and now human civilization seems intent on proving that, yes, we can melt Greenland if we just pretend it isn't happening.

In February 2011, the first scientific paper to use complex computer programs to simulate weather patterns attempted to prove that the extreme weather could be the result of natural variability. Climate scientists have found that it could not, and thus proved that the bizarre weather patterns—highlighted by the increase in precipitation leading to heavier rainfall and more flooding—are caused by humans and the greenhouse gases left in the wake of their activities, such as burning fossil fuels. They say more rain will come, and that it's our fault.

Perhaps the best example of the ongoing climate of ignorance and hand-wringing is the utter failure of Rio+20. The summit, held in Rio de Janeiro last June, was intended to galvanize a worldwide effort to combat global warming on the 20th anniversary of the first Earth summit also held in Rio. But the draft text disappointed nearly everyone, failing to define concrete goals or set proper timetables for action. European Union climate commissioner Connie Hedegaard, describing "how weak" the draft statement was, said it was "telling that nobody in that room adopting the text was happy."

In particular, Rio+20 had been viewed as a turning point where 100 of the world's governments and the nearly 50,000 delegates would agree to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, which would cut the world's annual energy demand by 5 percent and carbon dioxide emissions by almost 6 percent by

the year 2020. Instead of leading the fight to reduce fossil fuel use and other concerns, the United States did not push the promise to stop global warming, proving once again that the superpower is largely abdicating responsibility when it comes to climate change. This resonates with the criticism heaped upon the December 2009 environmental accord in Copenhagen, which US President Barack Obama labeled “a breakthrough” but the Council of Europe called “a missed opportunity” with no “concrete decisions.”

Three years later, the ice on the edge of the world is melting faster than anyone thinks. Temperatures all over the planet are going crazy, presaging a grim scenario of warm waters rising far over our heads.

The signs are here. When will the world’s governments decide to take action to stop or just slow global warming and preserve Earth for future generations?

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